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## INVESTIGATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT SPECIFICS OF HEALTH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

*Визначено актуальність дослідження розвитку сфери оздоровчого туризму, сформульовано поняття «оздоровчий туризм» та розкрито його складові. Розглянуто концепції просторової організації туризму, та актуальність поширення їх на сферу оздоровчого туризму. Проаналізовано потенціал розвитку оздоровчого туризму в Херсонській області (Україна). Досліджено особливості формування регіонального кластеру.*

**Ключові слова:** оздоровчий туризм, туристсько-рекреаційні ресурси, туристський продукт, кластерний підхід.

### 1. Introduction

The goal of the «Ukraine 2020» Sustainable Development Strategy is the introduction of European standards of life in Ukraine, as well as in accordance with the Government's Priority Action Plan for 2016, the goal of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is to improve the living standards of citizens and improve its quality as a result of sustainable economic development. According to the World Bank, only 15 % of economic growth is formed by material and physical resources, 20 % by natural capital, and 65 % by labor and social capital. That is, the main factor of the country's economic development is human potential, the preservation of which is possible due to reaching the standards of providing health services, characteristic of developed countries. Preservation and strengthening of public health must be considered strengthening the importance of disease prevention and the formation of a healthy lifestyle, the development and implementation of mechanisms to encourage responsible attitude of Ukrainian citizens to their health.

In these conditions, with the purpose of protecting and restoring human health, strengthening and increasing the capital of health, the problem of the development and functioning of regional tourist complexes for health purposes is actualized.

### 2. The object of research and its technological audit

*The object of research* is the processes of health tourism organization in the regions of Ukraine.

An analysis of foreign practices has shown that at present health tourism in the world is a global industry that is developing rapidly and brings tens of millions of dollars in revenue each year. According to a study conducted by the World Travel Monitor, currently health tourism in Europe is 9.4 million tourist trips or 2.4 % of all foreign trips of Europeans. In general, in Europe over the past five years, the demand for health tours has increased by 38 %. Health tourism at a high level is developed in many countries of the world, and its spatial organization acts in the form of a destination, the management of which assumes the linking of often very disconnected elements in order to

provide the tourist with a complete competitive product. But for controlled use of the recreational resources of the destination, with the purpose of their preservation and restoration, certain instruments are needed, the action of which will provide the possibility of destination to offer a competitive tourist product.

Investigations of domestic tourist and recreational resources served as the basis for the conclusion that health tourism in Ukraine, and in particular in the Kherson region, could compete with foreign ones, as thermal springs, mud and other unique natural resources are in the Kherson region. The cluster approach should be based on the task of increase of the tourist attractiveness of the region and realization of its potential in the sphere of health tourism, the basis of which is the use of tools for cooperation and coordination of activities to form, promote and implement a new tourist product.

### 3. The aim and objectives of research

*The aim of research* is to deepen the theoretical and methodological provisions and develop practical recommendations for management of health tourism development at the regional level.

To achieve this aim, the following tasks are set:

1. To clarify the content and functional boundaries of «health tourism» concept to establish its focus and the essence of the organization's processes.
2. To establish the features of management aspects of health tourism development in the form of a tourist destination and a tourist cluster.
3. To assess the current state and prospects for the development of the tourist sector in the Kherson region in order to determine the potential of health tourism;
4. To reveal the features of the formation of regional clusters, to present recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive tourism product of health tourism.

### 4. Research of existing solutions of the problem

Various theoretical and methodical aspects of management of recreational tourism development are reflected in

modern scientific research. The question of terminology in tourism and the patterns of territorial organization of recreational activities are reflected in [1–3], which have a predominantly geographically-oriented direction within the framework of a systematic approach to the study of tourism. This approach represents a destination as a certain territory visited by tourists, or a geographical object with physical and administrative boundaries, and consists of elements – attractions, tourist services, infrastructure, accessibility, image, and price. The management aspects of recreational tourism development are considered in [4–6]. Authors conduct marketing management-oriented studies, according to which the tourist destination is defined as a tourist product, has a multilevel structure and unites such aspects of tourism as demand, transportation, supply and marketing. With the aim of applying marketing and management tools, scientists present the destination as a territory based on tourism and recreational resources with a certain consumer value that determine its market competitiveness. The concept of development of a tourist-recreational territory as a cluster, its functional features is reflected in the works [7, 8]. Researchers cover the principles of cluster formation and believe that tourist clustering is aimed at the integrated use of tourist and recreational resources and increasing the competitiveness of the local tourist product.

However, the development of problems of organizational and managerial aspects of health tourism development in Ukraine is in the making. Researchers rightly point out that with respect to the term «health tourism» there is no single opinion, an imperfect conceptual framework hinders the process of effective management of health tourism development. It is also necessary to note the necessity of researching a tourist destination, taking into account its multidimensionality and considering it as the basis for physical, spiritual and social recovery.

## 5. Methods of research

The information base of the research is the publication of leading domestic and foreign scientists in the direction of tourism development management. The author used methods and tools of system and statistical analysis, comparative analysis, graphic interpretation of empirical information, formulated his own vision of the main trends in health tourism development at the regional level.

## 6. Research results

The content and functional boundaries of «recreation» concept are quite wide due to various research approaches. Even translation from different languages gives an ambiguous interpretation of the essence of this phenomenon. In translation from the Latin «rekreatio» means to return health, strength. The French translation of «recreation» is entertainment, recreation; a change in activities that excludes labor activity and characterizes the space associated with these activities. In translation from the English language – the restoration of health, mental and physical strength, recovery [9]. The presented interpretations have differences, but similar in that recreation represents various measures for restoring health and working capacity in their spare time from work with the help of recreational, cultural, cognitive and sporting activities.

According to research [10], as a result of the implementation of recreational activities, the average annual labor productivity increases from 0.2 to 0.5 % (depending on the national economy), and in the first month after active rest during the holiday, labor productivity increases by 15–25 %, in the future it decreases and after 4–8 months reaches its previous level. According to the results of other studies, in the sanatorium-resort institution, recreants are 3–4 times more likely and 1.5–2 times faster to restore working capacity. As a result, the incidence rate declines by 2–4 times [11]. That is, it can be assumed that a more extensive introduction of various forms of recreation will help reduce morbidity, reduce losses due to temporary disability, and increase labor productivity.

An important issue in the study of the recreational sector is the definition of health tourism concept, which will make it possible to understand its content, direction and essence of the organization's processes.

In the preamble of the Charter of the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as «a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not only the absence of disease and physical defects» [12]. Based on this definition, it can conclude that health recovery that is the measures to support health in full well-being will lead to the prevention of diseases and the prolongation of active human longevity. Then health tourism, as part of research, is proposed to be considered as a set of directions of physical, spiritual and social recovery carried out by a person with the help of traveling to some locality with favorable climatic, cultural, aesthetic and socio-economic features that will result in not only the prevention of diseases, but also the restoration and development of physical, mental and emotional forces.

Based on this definition, the components of health tourism are:

- physical recovery – ensuring sufficient muscle activity, which will contribute to the prevention of diseases, improve immunity and general tone of the body;
- spiritual recovery – providing positive emotional experiences from increasing the amount of knowledge, broadening the outlook and range of socio-cultural knowledge;
- social recovery – providing a sense of the integrity of one's inner world, the fullness of one's own being.

The organization of health tourism requires an environment with natural and climatic, cultural-aesthetic and socio-economic recreational resources:

- natural and climatic resources – climate, land and water resources, relief, caves, flora and fauna, parks and reserves, picturesque landscapes, unique natural sites, etc.;
- cultural and aesthetic resources – cultural, historical, archaeological, architectural monuments, ethnographic features of the territory, folklore, centers of applied art, etc.;
- social and economic resources – economic and geographical location, transport accessibility of the territory, the level of its economic development, modern and promising territorial organization of the economy, the level of public services, the population structure, labor resources, resettlement features, the level of development of the transport network.

The environment of recreational resources is a component of the tourist and recreational space, consists of interconnected subsystems, including groups of holiday-makers, natural and cultural complexes, technical systems, service personnel, management bodies [13].

The most famous concepts of the spatial organization of tourism are the concept of a tourist destination and the concept of a tourist cluster.

Let's consider features of administrative aspects of development of tourism improvement in the form of tourist destination and tourist cluster.

The concept of tourist destination is based on the territorial tourist product, and the actual conditions for the formation of this product. Researchers consider the destination not only as a geographical territory with certain resources, which are perceived as given [1, 2, 14, 15], and taking into account managerial-oriented studies, define it as a complex product satisfying the needs of tourists, and is elected by the tourist based on emotions and sensations [3, 4, 16], forms the culture of modern society [5], providing and developing a complex of special and significant material opportunities for recreation and tourism, as well as develops the value system of people due to tourism in cultural and natural heritage sites [6].

In this sense, tourist destination, as a complex of natural-climatic, cultural-aesthetic and socio-economic resources, is the basis of physical, spiritual and social recovery, and creates conditions for the organization of health tourism at the level of a particular region.

Tourist cluster concept represents a tourist cluster as a group of tourist attractions in a limited geographical area that is provided with a high level of infrastructure and service development, has established social and political ties, and establishes management in companies that form networks for the production of tourist services that provide strategic competitive and comparative advantages [7].

The spread of the cluster approach to the organization of health tourism is relevant, because to meet the various needs of tourists, the necessary goods and services of a large number of enterprises and industries that are technologically unrelated. The formation of a cluster in health tourism will ensure the production of a tourist product, and will also «support destinations, since tourist clustering is aimed at the joint integrated use of tourist and recreational resources and increasing the competitiveness of a local tourist product through cooperation of partner companies» [6]. According to the author, the cluster approach does not disprove or replace, but develops the concept of tourist destination [6]. So, the cluster can be a tourist destination, but not always a tourist destination can be a cluster, since the cluster reflects only a part of the aspects of destination (geographic-territorial, economic, resource and management aspects), mainly concentrating on the production of tourist products.

Thus, cluster and destination are two systems that are created to meet the needs of the tourist. But the basis of destination is a tourist product and under certain conditions of destination itself can be a tourist product, the cluster can't act as a tourist product, its purpose is to increase the competitiveness of a local specific tourist product. In other words, the cluster is a tool for destination development.

The tourist industry of the Kherson region today is one of the important mechanisms for reviving the economy and affects the socio-economic development. The tourist and recreational potential of the region is huge, it has the main resources for health tourism, and also has a number of advantages, including:

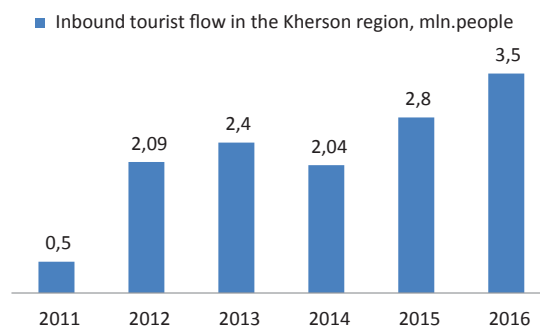
- the advantageous location of Kherson region as one of the largest maritime regions of the country, it has sea links with the countries of the Mediterranean,

Middle East and Asia and creates opportunities for cross-border tourism;

- the neighborhood with the Dnipropetrovsk region, the second largest in Ukraine by population, is an industrial region, the environmental situation in which does not contribute to the good health and well-being of its citizens, does not have its own outlet to the seacoast is a serious resource for health tourism development in the Kherson region;

- a rich history, an original culture (more than fifty objects with historical, cultural, architectural significance);
- an invaluable natural potential, which includes the coasts of two seas, deposits of therapeutic mud, brine, unique salt lakes, therapeutic and thermal waters on the Arabat Arrow, mineral water deposits, biosphere reserves, the Askania Nova dendrological park, parks-monuments of garden art, protected natural landmark, etc.

According to the monitoring of the Tourist Information Center [17], during the resort and tourist season in 2016, about 3,5 million of tourists, holidaymakers and excursionists visited the Kherson region, which is 20 % more than in 2015 and 86 % more than in 2011 (Fig. 1). The positive dynamics of the tourist flow confirms the demand for resources of the Kherson region.



**Fig. 1.** Dynamics of the inbound tourist flow in the Kherson region for 2011–2016. Compiled according to the data of [17]

However, the market for hotel services in the Kherson region is characterized by a deficit of a modern number of hotels in the tourist class, uneven distribution of hotels in the region and a practical lack of alternative accommodation options, given the steady trend of demand for comfortable modern economy-class accommodation. In order to increase the volumes of the inbound tourist flow and the development of tourism in the territory of the Kherson region in general, it is necessary to increase the available resources, as well as the construction of new hotels. At this time, the tourist market of the region is not attractive for large hotel chains, but this opens up opportunities for small businesses that provide services in the tourist business.

One of the key components of health tourism development and improvement of the quality and safety of tourist services is the training of personnel for the tourism industry. At this time in Kherson region a continuous system of personnel and scientific support of this sphere was formed. Preparation of specialists with higher professional education in the sphere of tourism is currently carried out by two universities of the region. Despite the measures taken in the Kherson region to develop the education system in the tourism sector, the difference

between the needs of the tourism industry and the supply from the educational institutions remains very significant. Academicism of profile higher education, with a clear lack of practical skills and knowledge in the field of health tourism, training of specialists without sufficient consideration of the content of the existing tourist and recreational resources of the region, technologies for their use for tourist reception, negatively affects the promotion of the regional tourist product.

For the formation of a competitive health tourism product, an effective strategy for its promotion is needed, focused on key areas of the tourism market that will make inbound and outbound tourism an income component of the regional economy.

The main competitive advantage of the Kherson region health tourism development is its high potential for physical, spiritual and social recovery. The unique territories of nature reserves and parks, favorable ecological situation, cultural and historical monuments, favorable geographical position of the region make it possible to perceive the Kherson region as a promising destination in Ukraine, and the available natural, climatic, aesthetic and socio-economic recreational resources to consider health tourism as one from the priority directions of development of the region's economy. All these circumstances also give grounds to assert that with further development the health tourism sector of the region can become a branch, with relatively small capital investments it can provide economically profitable use of the region's health resources.

However, currently on the territory of the region point tourist products dominate, which can ensure the implementation of a separate component of health tourism, limits the overall potential of health tourism. In our opinion, the destination development should be based on the priority areas for the development of health tourism in the region, as well as in tourist areas identified as supporting and possessing natural and artificial competitive advantages. The «points» for tourism development should be linked into a single system by the existing and planned infrastructure and a single management center. Such association will allow to form complex packages of tourist services of a recreational nature. At the same time, the further development of the allocated tourist support territories will contribute to the comprehensive development of the region. Such territories are currently:

- the national reserve «Askania-Nova» – as a territory of physical and spiritual recovery;
- Arabat Arrow – as the territory of physical recovery;
- Skadovsk's Dolphinarium «Akvariel» – as a territory of spiritual and social recovery;
- Historical and entertainment complex «Green Farms of Tavria» – as a territory for social rehabilitation.

Researches that are conducted at the destination level help to identify areas where there is already a set of enterprises and an industry working on the creation of a tourist product, but for some reason the synergistic effect is not achieved. Accordingly, it becomes possible to determine these reasons and use a latent cluster (the cluster did not show itself, in which there are additional opportunities, but they can't be realized, and the synergetic effect is not achieved [8]) as the basis for the formation of the acting cluster.

Regional tourist clusters are most often latent in nature. So, for example, in the territories of Hola Prystan

and Skadovsk districts, in addition to summer health recovery, there is already an industry of regular trips of citizens with different purposes. However, in the Skadovsk district, the number of tourists in the spring-autumn season is twice that of tourists with recreational purposes, in addition, mostly resting with children, then, as for young people and for older people, the Skadovsk and Hola Prystan districts also may be of some interest in the field of recovery. T. Volynets, Director of the Department for External Relations and Tourism of the Kherson Regional State Administration, is quoted in the media: «Together with the Ukrainian Research Institute of Medical Rehabilitation and Balneology of the Ministry of Health, a resource map of the region has been created, shows the huge potential of the Kherson region, in particular, two pilot projects will be implemented in Skadovsk and Hola Prystan districts: the conversion of two children's health camps in Skadovsk district into a sanatorium status and the creation of balneological resorts in Hola Prystan». Thus, the creation of balneological resorts on the territory of Hola Prystan and Skadovsk will allow combining all the components of health tourism in a comprehensive tourist product, and health tourism itself will act as a catalyst, will stimulate a whole range of economic and social spheres involved in creation of a comprehensive tourism product, which, in turn, will contribute to the sustainable social and economic development of the region as a whole. Obviously, the significant potential for a cluster in such latent situation has not yet been uncovered and mastered.

Thus, in our opinion, active or latent tourist clusters have already spontaneously formed in some regions of the Kherson region, others have formed certain prerequisites for creation of tourist and recreational clusters. Therefore, when choosing the optimal scenario for the development of the health tourism industry, the solution of the problem is the application of the cluster approach, it presupposes the concentration within a certain territory of enterprises and organizations engaged in the development, production, promotion and sale of tourist products, as well as activities adjacent to tourism and recreation services. It should be noted that the cluster policy of the region, including projects for development of individual clusters, should be developed on the basis of an analysis of the potential and the stage of development of already formed clusters and their interrelations. Within the framework of the health tourism cluster formation based on scientifically sound solutions, as well as using public-private partnership mechanisms, better conditions will be created for health tourism infrastructure development, as well as the scope of related services.

## 7. SWOT analysis of research results

*Strengths.* The strengths of the research result are the theoretical analysis of «health tourism» concept and the establishment of the essence of the processes of its organization. The proposed definition makes it possible to outline the limits of the analysis of the potential of health tourism in the Kherson region, to identify competitive advantages and development prospects in this area.

*Weaknesses.* The weaknesses of research are the absence of complete statistical information on the regional development of tourism and recreational resources, which



could more fully reflect the current state of the tourist industry in the region.

*Opportunities.* The opportunities for further research are the elaboration of proposals for the diagnosis of social and economic processes that play an important role in the formation and development of the cluster in health tourism, in particular the best ways to stimulate the development of cluster members, and assess the effectiveness of the cluster approach in health tourism.

*Threats.* The threats to the results of the conducted studies are increased competition from other regions of the country in connection with more effective use of the tourist and recreational potential, the availability of alternative ways of using the territories suitable for health tourism development.

## 8. Conclusions

1. The content and functional boundaries of «health tourism» concept are clarified as a set of directions of physical (ensuring sufficient muscular activity that will contribute to the prevention of disease, improve immunity, and the general tone of the body), spiritual (providing positive emotional experiences by increasing knowledge, broaden their horizons and range of socio-cultural knowledge) and social (providing a sense of the integrity of one's inner world, the fullness of one's own being) of healing carried out by a person with the help of trip to any country with favorable for the recovery of natural and climatic, cultural, aesthetic and socio-economic characteristics, which will result in not only the prevention of disease, but also the restoration and development of the physical, mental and emotional strength. The use of the proposed definition creates opportunities for more substantiated studies of the essence of the processes of health tourism organization.

2. The specific features of administrative aspects of health tourism development are established in the form of a tourist destination and a tourism cluster, which are considered as two systems for the needs of tourists: destination creates the conditions for health tourism organization at the level of a particular region, cluster formation in health tourism is aimed at supporting and destination development as a competitive local specific tourist product.

3. Taking into account the essence of «health tourism» concept, the current status and potential of the tourist sector development of the Kherson region is assessed, which allowed to consider health tourism as one of the priority directions for development of the region's economy.

4. The peculiarities of the formation of regional clusters as such having a latent character are revealed, the development of their potential will allow to combine all components of health tourism in a comprehensive tourist product and to obtain a synergistic effect in ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of the region as a whole.

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## ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННО-УПРАВЛЕНЧЕСКОЙ СПЕЦИФИКИ РАЗВИТИЯ ОЗДОРОВИТЕЛЬНОГО ТУРИЗМА

Определена актуальность исследования сферы оздоровительного туризма, сформулировано понятие «оздоровительный туризм» и раскрыты его составляющие. Рассмотрены концепции пространственной организации туризма и актуальность их распространения на сферу оздоровительного туризма. Проанализирован потенциал развития оздоровительного туризма в Херсонской области (Украина). Определены особенности формирования регионального кластера.

**Ключевые слова:** оздоровительный туризм, туристско-рекреационные ресурсы, туристский продукт, кластерный подход.

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