

AGRITOURISM CLUSTER AS A TYPE OF INNOVATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

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INTRODUCTION

Clusters play a significant role in the development of tourism and related business activities. Clusters are networks of interdependent firms and organizations that work together in a specific geographic area, often with shared values and goals, to increase their competitiveness and improve efficiency. In the tourism sector, clusters can bring together businesses such as hotels, restaurants, farmstays, tour operators, attractions, and transportation companies, as well as local authorities and other stakeholders. By working together, these businesses can collaborate on marketing and branding efforts, coordinate their offerings, and pool resources to develop new products and services.

One of the main benefits of tourism clusters is that they can help create a sense of place and a unique identity for a destination. By promoting local culture, traditions, and natural resources, clusters can distinguish a destination from others and create a more attractive offer for visitors. In addition, clusters can help stimulate economic development and job creation, especially in rural and remote areas that have limited economic opportunities.

By facilitating productive cooperation between agritourism cluster members, it becomes possible to generate new investments, increase local revenues and employment opportunities, and strengthen the region's budget. The cluster's activities can also contribute to the optimal use of available natural and recreational resources, help preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the territory, improve the natural environment, modernize rural infrastructure, and innovate new areas of agritourism services¹.

An important role of clusters in tourism is to support sustainable development and practices and cooperation in tourism activities. By working together, businesses can share knowledge and resources to minimize their environmental impact, preserve local heritage and culture, and ensure that tourism revenues are distributed equitably among the community.

Clusters can thus play an important role in the development and success of tourism and related activities. By bringing together businesses and

¹ Дидів І. Б. Кластерна форма організації агротуристичного підприємництва. *Вісник Львівського національного аграрного університету: економіка АПК*. 2014. № 21 (2). С. 184–189.

stakeholders, clusters can increase competitiveness, foster cooperation, and create a more attractive and sustainable supply of tourism destinations.

Agritourism clusters include a group of agricultural enterprises and related tourism businesses that work together to create a cohesive and attractive tourism product. The goal is to offer tourists a unique experience that combines farm visits, food and wine tasting, and outdoor activities in the countryside.

Agritourism clusters in Ukraine are developing rapidly and bring together a variety of actors, such as agro-estates, farms, tourist facilities, eco-shops, apiaries, fish ponds, cheese factories, nature trails, local authorities and communities. This cooperation creates a diverse range of recreational activities for tourists in rural areas, beyond one single farmstead. Each member of the cluster offers unique services such as accommodation, handicraft lessons, horseback riding, and homemade products. This approach expands the range and improves the quality of services, making them more attractive to tourists².

Despite the fact that regional and local tourism clusters have been successfully created in Ukraine, their effectiveness has not been thoroughly evaluated due to an inadequate regulatory framework. In order to accelerate the development of agricultural clusters, a concerted effort is needed to create a strategy accompanied by appropriate organizational and legal structures that embrace the principles of public-private partnership and decentralization. By implementing a cluster-based innovation model for agricultural development, this approach will promote positive development and accelerate progress toward achieving the desired outcomes.

1. The role of clusters in tourism activities

International experience provides for modern high-tech agricultural production based on the integration of scientific innovations and production units of certain areas. For sustainable innovative development in the agro-industrial complex, the cluster approach is being successfully applied today in the context of agricultural transformation and adaptation to environmental changes. The formation of clusters in various sectors of the economy ensures the growth of the region's competitiveness based on innovations, synergistic effects of territorial self-organization and partnership, Clustering promotes territorial and social aspects of economic development³. Global experience

² Давиденко І. В., Михайлюк О. Л. Концептуальні підходи до організації та діяльності туристичних кластерів : монографія. Київ : ФОП Гуляєва В. М., 2020. 497 с.

³ Липчук В. В., Дидів І. Б., Крупа О. М. Інноваційні напрями в агротуристичній діяльності. Причорноморські економічні студії. *Економічний науково-практичний журнал*. 2021. Вип. 71. С. 139–144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32843/bses.71-22>

shows that enterprises united in cluster formations are capable of rapid economic development, technological progress, and viability in domestic and foreign markets.

According to Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter, a “cluster” is a grouping of interconnected and complementary enterprises of various forms of ownership, institutions, organizations, and public authorities, higher education institutions, and various infrastructure components that are common to them on a territorial basis, operating in a defined area for a specific purpose. His theory defines the existence of a “rhombus of mutual interests”, which includes four interconnected blocks: 1) the state of demand; 2) conditions for production factors; 3) related industries that support production; 4) the environment for enterprise strategy and competition⁴.

The main task of the newly created cluster is to gain credibility from the main stakeholders (stakeholders – individuals and legal entities that have a legitimate interest in the organization's activities, which to some extent affects and depends on its activities).

Here are some steps to consider when forming agritourism clusters:

- Identification of potential partners: contacting local farmers, food producers, tourism businesses and government agencies to assess their interest in forming an agritourism cluster.

- Define the scope of the cluster: define the geographical boundaries of the cluster and the types of agricultural and tourism businesses to be included.

- Developing a common vision and ideas: Work with partners to develop a common vision and mission for the agritourism cluster. This should include goals to attract tourists, promote sustainable agriculture, and support local economic development.

- Building trusting relationships: Trust among cluster members is essential for their cooperation, and there is a need for regular meetings and events to share ideas and best practices⁵.

- Create marketing plans to highlight the unique benefits of the agritourism cluster to potential tourists.

- Provide training and support: to help and improve their skills in working with and serving visitors.

- Monitoring the success of the agritourism cluster and assessing its impact on the local economy, environment and communities.

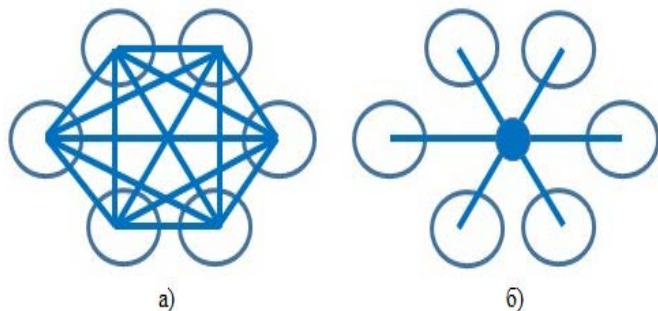
⁴ Носенко Ю., Нечипоренко О., Синельник Л. Інноваційні агрокластери як форма інтеграції наукової та освітньої діяльності та бізнесу. *Економіка АПК*. 2020. № 5. С. 77–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32317/2221-1055.202005077>

⁵ Кернасюк Ю. В. Кластери як інноваційна організаційно-економічна форма ефективного аграрного виробництва в системі сталого розвитку. *Економіка АПК*. 2020. № 9. С. 86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32317/2221-1055.202009086>

By following these steps, agritourism clusters can be successfully formed and provide valuable economic development for rural areas, while contributing to sustainable agriculture, infrastructure and local culture.

In a cluster, partners need to be committed to long-term work, so participants must be able to negotiate and trust each other, rely on support, trust and mutual assistance. Each cluster member has a more advantageous position in the market for goods and services than other entities. Clusters make it possible to strengthen the processes of specialization and division of labor among its members, to encourage potential customers to a greater extent, which promotes close interaction between consumers and producers of goods and services. In addition, the cost of goods and services offered by the cluster will be cheaper and have greater competitiveness. Each cluster should be based on close cooperation between government agencies, business, and science. The absence of any of these links will call into question the existence of the cluster. A recognized point of view of world economists is that regions where clusters are formed become leaders in economic development⁶.

Clusters can be divided into many types, depending on which participants they gather and how they work. The most commonly used classification of clusters includes the following two models (Figure 1)⁷:



**Figure 1. Classification of typical cluster models:
a) decentralized; b) centralized**

⁶ Сидоров Ю. Державна політика кластерного розвитку як невід’ємна складова формування інноваційної моделі сільського господарства: аграрно-правовий погляд. *Підприємництво, господарство і право*. 2017. № 2. С. 115–120.

⁷ Roman M., Zawadka J. Klaster okopski jako forma innowacyjnych działań w agroturystyce. *Gospodarka polska po 20 latach transformacji: osiągnięcia, problemy i wyzwania*. Pangsy-Kania S., Szczodrowski G. (red.). Warszawa, 2009. S. 379–394.

Typical network clusters consist of networks of small companies operating in the same or a similar production sector, characterized by the ability to adapt quickly to changing markets and diverse requirements through cooperation and the use of new technologies. Cluster companies take advantage of advantages that cannot be achieved by companies in other locations, such as access to low transportation costs, labor market, trust, cooperation and local infrastructure. An example of a network cluster is Silicon Valley. An important feature that distinguishes a network-type cluster is the absence of one central point around which entrepreneurs focus⁸.

Promising forms of economic integration include the formation of innovation clusters, which include groups of enterprises and organizations, firms and institutions whose activities are in the same or related areas of business on a regional basis and economic interests. The advantage of the cluster approach is the high importance of the microeconomic component, as well as the social and territorial aspects of rural economic development⁹.

Today, more than 75 countries have cluster development strategies, and three main models of clustering have emerged in world practice: North American, Western European, and Asian. The effectiveness of the cluster strategy in the development of agriculture and rural areas is evidenced by foreign experience, in particular the successful functioning of agricultural clusters in the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Sweden, Italy, Japan, France, Portugal, etc. The association of tourism enterprises and farmers into clusters will allow each participant to benefit from the synergy effect, i.e., the effect that arises when they combine their efforts to achieve large-scale production¹⁰.

Global experience shows that cluster associations have become a widespread form of cooperation and are currently a very effective area of regional development and a form of organizing innovation processes. At the same time, industry complexes compete in the market, reducing their costs through joint scientific and technological cooperation. At present, clusters are no longer strictly tied to territorial parameters, and the "mobility" of its scale allows for greater flexibility, adaptability and mobility of the association's activities. When implementing a cluster strategy in the agricultural production

⁸ Roman M., Zawadka J. Klaster okopski jako forma innowacyjnych działań w agroturystyce. *Gospodarka polska po 20 latach transformacji: osiągnięcia, problemy i wyzwania*. Pangsy-Kania S., Szczodrowski G. (red.). Warszawa, 2009. S. 379–394.

⁹ Липчук В. В., Дидів І. Б., Крупа О. М. Інноваційні напрями в агротуристичній діяльності. *Причорноморські економічні студії*. 2021. Вип. 71. С. 139–144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32843/bses.71-22>

¹⁰ Roman M., Roman, M., Prus P. Innovations in Agritourism: Evidence from a Region in Poland. *Sustainability*. 2020. № 12. 4858.

of Ukraine, it is advisable to use the experience of Poland, Finland, Germany and Italy, since the advantages of cluster formation in these countries include flexible, equal interaction of different-sized entities and their cooperation with the authorities¹¹.

In Europe, there are about 2,950 clusters recognized as regional concentrations of participants in the respective industries. Economically active European clusters can provide up to 39% of jobs and up to 55% of the EU's payroll. Unlike the production cooperation relationships of traditional industries, clusters are more innovative – 87% of all EU patents are produced by companies that are members of clusters. For example, in Poland, there are 40 clusters in 30 sectors, of which 15 key national clusters were selected in 2019.

In Hungary, 25 accredited cross-sector clusters were created out of 176 startup clusters in 2014-2020, which will be further reduced in the process of mergers. In Slovakia, there are 11 clusters that are grouped into one common structure, the Union of Slovak Clusters. In the Czech Republic, there are only 74 officially registered clusters, of which 25 clusters have united into a national association. Lithuania has 25 clusters, some of which are part of the Association of Lithuanian Clusters.

In Ukraine, there are 50 clusters, a smaller part of which (22 clusters) are on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. In addition, cluster formation at the regional level has recently been significantly intensified. About 30 cluster associations in Ukraine are officially registered, representing certain types of economic activity: energy – 10%; IT – 31%; aerospace – 6%, agriculture – 16%; woodworking and furniture industry – 13%, etc.¹²

An agritourism cluster is a trend of successfully combining tourism and agriculture. The creation of agritourism clusters is a powerful catalyst for the economic and social development of a region. The rational combination of natural, labor, production, economic, social, tourism and environmental potential, realized through the creation of appropriate clusters, enables the region to develop in a unified way and create new interesting tourism products¹³.

An example of cluster cooperation in Poland is the Bieszczady cluster. This is the first agritourism cluster, and it is also a cross-border cluster (in cooperation with Ukraine). There is cooperation in this cluster. One farmer offers a high

¹¹ Носенко Ю., Нечипоренко О., Синельник Л. Інноваційні агрокластери як форма інтеграції наукової та освітньої діяльності та бізнесу. *Економіка АПК*. 2020. № 5. С. 77–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32317/2221-1055.202005077>

¹² Дайджест аналітичного центру Industry4Ukraine: Проект Національної програми розвитку кластерів до 2027 року. URL: <https://www.industry4ukraine.net/publications/projekt-nacjonalnoyi-programy-klasterного-rozvytku-do-2027/>

¹³ Malska M., Dubis L., Zinko Y. Cluster and Cluster Initiatives of Rural Tourism in Ukraine. *Biuletyn KPZK PAN. Zeszyt*, 2018. No. 269. S. 59–74.

standard of accommodation, and his neighbor has a regional cuisine or a stable. What are called “distributed hotels” have been created. They consist of cooperative farms in neighboring towns. A tourist who stays in one will receive an offer to take advantage of the others. The farms in Duviniach cooperate on these principles. One of them offers bread baking, the other is a horse farm. Guests from one farm move to another, which also offers attractive product and service offers (something like caroling occurs to keep tourists in a particular area as long as possible). An additional attraction is the possibility of a several-day vacation in Ukraine. Ukrainian Old Sambir cooperates with Ustrzyki Dolne. Farms from this region also work in the cluster¹⁴.

The development of agritourism synergies is consistent. An increasing number of participants are involved in the process of creating integrated tourism products. The development of small businesses in rural areas is an effective mechanism that can improve the social situation and contribute to the socio-economic development of rural areas. One of the forms of entrepreneurial activity is now increasingly agritourism, which is dynamically developing new approaches to the principles of implementing effective socio-economic relations through clustering¹⁵.

An important aspect of the problem of development of cluster structures is the level of clustering: state, regional, local (microlevel). The structure of cluster systems by economic regions of Ukraine includes: Podilskyi (Vinnytsia, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi regions), Kamianets-Podilskyi tourist cluster, rural tourism cluster “Oberih” (Khmelnyskyi region); Carpathian (Zakarpattia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi regions), souvenir production cluster “Suzirya”, tourist cluster “Seven Wonders of Ukraine”, hospitality cluster “Rural Family”; Black Sea – Crimea (Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson regions, Sevastopol) tourist and recreational cluster, (Sudak, Chornomorske) rural tourism cluster and many others¹⁶.

In 2017, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine initiated the creation of five agrarian tourism clusters: “Frumushyka Nova” in Odesa region, “Kobleva” in Mykolaiv region, “Medvyno” in Kyiv region, “Dykanka” in Poltava region, and “HorboGory” in Lviv region¹⁷.

¹⁴ Roman M., Roman, M., Prus P. Innovations in Agritourism: Evidence from a Region in Poland. *Sustainability*. 2020. № 12. 4858.

¹⁵ Стан розвитку агропромислового комплексу Львівської області у I півріччі 2019 р. *Вісник Агрофоруму*. 2019. № 12 (107). С. 19–22.

¹⁶ Кудак К. М. Інноваційні напрями розвитку аграрного сектора економіки регіону на засадах кластеризації. *Регіональна економіка*. 2014. №4 (74). С. 172–179.

¹⁷ Липчук В. В., Дидів І. Б., Крупа О. М. Інноваційні напрями в агротуристичній діяльності. *Причорноморські економічні студії*. 2021. Вип. 71. С. 139–144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32843/bses.71-22>

Agritourism clusters have a number of priorities compared to other associations and contribute to the development of the agricultural sector through:

- 1) increase in production productivity;
- 2) stimulating innovation;
- 3) minimizing risks through their distribution among cluster members;
- 4) coordinating the actions of cluster members for more efficient use of external investments;
- 5) the ability to implement significant changes, flexibility, offer lower pricing, and add pressure from competitors;
- 6) development of rural infrastructure.

In Ukraine, the development of the cluster form of agricultural production organization is at an early stage of its development, which is primarily complicated by the weakness of integration ties between agricultural producers, processing enterprises and research institutions, as well as the unwillingness of most farmers to become innovative entrepreneurs who can initiate the formation of agroclusters¹⁸.

In particular, an analysis of current trends in the development of the agricultural sector of the economy in the regional context shows that in the context of the transformation of Ukraine's economy to market conditions, a model of its functioning has been formed when products produced in households do not go through all stages of circulation, and the highest income is received not directly by the producer, but by an intermediary for its sale.

An alternative option for increasing the efficiency of small agricultural entities and “breaking” the “producer – intermediary” scheme is clustering, which is reduced to the “four K” rule (Figure 2).¹⁹

The cluster model of organizing the development of agro-industrial production involves the formation of closed cycles of “production – storage – processing – sale of agricultural products” in a certain territory, operating on the basis of integration and cooperation, to ensure the effective functioning of each of the agro-cluster members, production of competitive products and maximization of profits²⁰.

Agroclusters are more than just cooperatives, they are a broader idea. It is a combination of agricultural production, science, education, and innovation

¹⁸ Сидоров Ю. Державна політика кластерного розвитку як невід’ємна складова формування інноваційної моделі сільського господарства: аграрно-правовий погляд. *Підприємництво, господарство і право*. 2017. № 2. С. 115–120.

¹⁹ Кудак К. М. Інноваційні напрями розвитку аграрного сектора економіки регіону на засадах кластеризації. *Регіональна економіка*. 2014. № 4 (74). С. 172–179.

²⁰ Мальська М., Зінько Ю. Типи і моделі кластерів сільського туризму в Україні. *Вісник Київського національного університету культури і мистецтв. Серія : Туризм*. 2018. № 2. С. 8–23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31866/2616-7603.2.2018.154397>

that yields excellent results for the entire economy, with production, processing, science, research, education, retail, and green tourism forming a powerful economic chain.

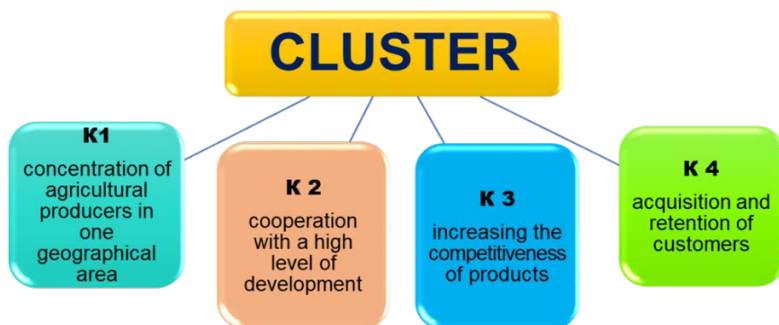


Figure 2. Increasing the efficiency of management of small entities in the agrarian sphere in the cluster according to the concept of “four K”

Today, an agrocluster cannot be created without the support of government agencies, as the cluster concept is based on a modern way of seeing the regional economy. To create clusters in the agricultural sector, it is necessary to unite companies that are geographically connected and have specialized service providers. In addition, there may be organizations that are related to their activities and can often compete with them. Government regulation plays an important role in creating effective clusters. On the one hand, it is necessary to ensure basic conditions, and on the other hand, to prevent monopoly²¹.

The internal logic of the clusters' life process makes it possible to identify the most common and characteristic stages of the life cycle of their development. Each of these stages corresponds to a certain level of consolidation of the cluster members. Reflecting the dynamics of relative advantages, clusters go through a certain life cycle to achieve their greatest competitiveness after a certain period of maturation, and then either transform or decline. The main organizational measures at these stages are: building the structure of the cluster and formulating a strategy for its further development, the choice of which should take into account the state of the cluster.

²¹ Інформаційно-аналітичний портал агропромислового комплексу України: Розвиток агрокластерів в Україні – дієвий інструмент реалізації спільних проєктів з іноземними партнерами. URL: <https://agro.me.gov.ua/ua/news/rozvitok-agroklasteriv-v-ukraini-efektivniy-instrument-dlya-spilnikh-proektiv-z-inozemnimi-partnerami>

Analyzing the world experience of entrepreneurship and own research on this topic, four stages of agritourism cluster development are identified (Figure 3) The first stage (precedents) is characterized by the presence of a critical mass of enterprises and entrepreneurs, etc. However, there is almost no cooperation, as not all entrepreneurs are aware of each other's existence. Therefore, this stage is dominated by scattered actions.

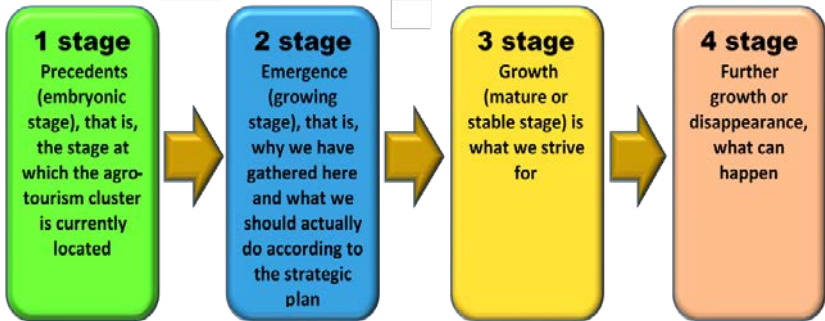


Figure 3. Four stages of development of an agro-tourism cluster

Source: formed by the author based on^{22,23,24}

In the emergence stage, regular meetings of participants begin to take place, and there is an understanding of the importance of cooperation and cluster initiatives. At this stage, joint projects may also be developed and the basis for further development may be laid.

The growth stage sees the implementation of major joint projects, including cluster creation, involving the public, private and educational sectors. Trust between cluster members grows, and the number of cluster members expands. The cluster's effectiveness is evaluated.

At the last stage, the cluster either continues to develop or disappears. The reasons for the disappearance may vary: completion of a large project, inability to reach self-sufficiency, decreased trust between participants, etc. In this case, stagnation processes may also occur.

²² Кудак К. М. Інноваційні напрями розвитку аграрного сектора економіки регіону на засадах кластеризації. *Регіональна економіка*. 2014. № 4 (74). С. 172–179.

²³ Дайджест аналітичного центру Industry4Ukraine: Проект Національної програми розвитку кластерів до 2027 року. URL: <https://www.industry4ukraine.net/publications/projekt-nacjonalnoyi-programy-klasterного-rozvytku-do-2027/>

²⁴ Malska M., Dubis L., Zinko Y. Cluster and Cluster Initiatives of Rural Tourism in Ukraine. *Biuletyn KPZK PAN*. Zesztyt, 2018. No. 269. S. 59–74.

2. Organization of the agritourism cluster “HorboGory”

In 2019, the Department of Agricultural Development of the Lviv Regional State Administration launched the project “Development of Rural Entrepreneurship and Infrastructure of the HorboGory Agritourism Cluster”. The project was planned to be implemented over two years. The total cost of the project is UAH 27.7 million, including UAH 24.9 million from the European Union and UAH 2.6 million in co-financing.

As part of this project, it is planned to build and mark hiking, biking, horseback riding and active tourism routes, as well as a ski trail on the territories of village councils. In addition, a tourist information center for the Gorbohory agritourism cluster will be set up. The agritourism cluster will have tourist campsites, farmsteads, and a master school that will support and encourage the development of alternative forms of rural entrepreneurship.

Another interesting project planned to be implemented in the region is called “New Growth Points for Sustainable Development of Mountainous Areas of Lviv Region.” The project aims to develop cooperation between rural producers in the mountainous part of the Carpathian region to create dairy and berry cooperatives, a slaughterhouse, and develop product promotions²⁵.

The Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster was established in 2017 on the initiative of local farmers, including ATO participants, local and regional authorities, scientific and educational institutions on the territory of three village councils of the Pustomyty district and has the status of a legal entity – Agricultural Service Cooperative, SOC “Gorbohory” (registration date: 11/13/2017). The form of ownership is non-state. The head of the cluster is Anton Milchevych²⁶. The agritourism cluster “HorboGory” includes 33 private farms and individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the Pustomyty district of Lviv region.

The conceptual framework for the development of the HorboGory agritourism cluster was implemented before 2022 due to the pandemic. A significant part of the goals was planned to be realized by the end of 2021. The project is aimed at fulfilling the goals of the State Strategy for Regional Development and is in line with the Lviv Region Development Strategy until 2027, in terms of the following strategic goals: “Prosperous Village” and “Tourist Attraction”.

The project implementation will contribute to:

²⁵ Стан розвитку агропромислового комплексу Львівської області у I півріччі 2019 р. *Вісник Агрофоруму*. 2019. № 12 (107). С. 19–22.

²⁶ YouControl – сервіс перевірки контрагентів. СОК «ГорбоГори». URL: https://youcontrol.com.ua/catalog/company_details/41732433/

- increase in agricultural production and its added value due to additional demand from visitors to the cluster, as well as popularization of these products through their sale under the brand of the Gorbohory cluster;
- increase in consumption of food products produced by local farmers by the population of Lviv region; increase in income of agricultural producers; creation of new jobs in the agricultural sector; increase in the level of knowledge and practical skills of the rural population;
- development of information and marketing infrastructure of the agricultural market in the region of rural cooperation development;
- improvement of tourist and recreational infrastructure and development of tourist facilities;
- creation and promotion of new tourist products, development of green, active, sports and cycling tourism, marketing of tourist and recreational products.

The proximity of the HorboHory agritourism cluster to the regional center, the availability of natural and climatic, agricultural and human resources allows for the development of organic agricultural production, recreational and agritourism services, and the restoration of authentic crafts. However, the development of the cluster requires certain infrastructure facilities and institutional support, which makes this project relevant²⁷.

Strategic goals of the Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster:

Objective 1: Increase in sales of agricultural products produced by the members of the Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster. This is achieved by creating a unified distribution system for the cluster members to distribute their products at the place of production and in retail chains in Lviv region.

Objective 2. Increase the area of agricultural and recreational land involved in ecological and organic agricultural production. This is achieved by clearing forested land plots.

Objective 3: Increase demand for products and services produced in the agritourism cluster. To be achieved through the development and implementation of a marketing strategy for the Gorbohory agritourism cluster to generate demand for its products and services.

Objective 4. Increase the potential of human resources of the cluster. It is achieved by improving the educational level of both cluster members and executors who will be involved in servicing consumers of goods and services of the Gorbohory agrotourism cluster. Training involves the implementation of educational and training programs funded by the cluster. It is planned to hold seminars or conferences to exchange information on obtaining resources and services, training in quality management, etc.

²⁷ Агротуристичний кластер Горбогори. URL: https://www.horbohory.com.ua/?page_id=1439

Objective 5: Development of cluster institutions. This objective will allow to institutionalize the project results, ensure the sustainability of its results by transferring the results of work and material assets to the agricultural cooperative and the established utility company, which are part of the structure of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster.

Objective 6. To build an agritourism cluster that will provide each participant of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster with dynamic development of their business and a sense of real pride in their contribution to the Gorbohory ATC²⁸.

Among the main factors that will allow the Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster to develop are new business principles that allow for the active involvement of new cluster members. This will allow achieving serious results through the rapid implementation of the strategic plan and the correct application of all the measures set out in the main provisions of the development of the Gorbogory Agritourism Cluster until 2022 and the project “Development of Rural Entrepreneurship and Infrastructure of the Gorbogory Agritourism Cluster”.

As for the economic sphere of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster, it should be noted that the main initiatives come from the participants. The funds invested during the Project's implementation have already partially enabled the launch of such private initiatives in the village:

- logistics system and distribution network – in the field of growing vegetables and fruits, production of meat and dairy, meat and fruit products
- tourist information center (TIC) and information infrastructure – business in the field of providing excursion, transportation, information and accommodation services to visitors of the cluster;
- utility lines – accommodation facilities for car tourists (campsites);
- clearing of forested agricultural land – growing ecological and organic products;
- clearing of other areas – ski trail and ski rental;
- development of tourist routes – rental of bicycles, tourist equipment and horses;
- establishing the Lipova Dolyna school of craftsmen to produce souvenirs and handicrafts.

The successful functioning of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster involves not only the cultivation and sale of agricultural products, but also the provision of services in the tourism, recreational and commercial sectors, the creation and popularization of the cluster's brand, which can even reach the level of income from the sale of agricultural products in terms of gross receipts.

²⁸ Агротуристичний кластер Горбогори. URL: https://www.horbogory.com.ua/?page_id=1439

The project will create a multiplier effect in the region by increasing the volume of consumer spending on its territory by visitors – on food, other types of goods and services. In the course of the project implementation, the infrastructure conditions for its financial sustainability were formed through the established agricultural service cooperative “HorboGory”, which covers the operating costs of the tourist information center (TIC) in the village. Lipnyky and the school of masters “Lipova Dolyna” in the village of Myloshevychi (Radvany hamlet), technical and operational costs of equipment.

The successful implementation of the project and, as a result, the development of the HorboHory agritourism cooperative will increase the level of investment attractiveness of the territory. And the task of the GorboGory SOC is not to generate new ideas for the development of the cluster, but to implement and scale the existing ideas expressed in the project targets.

This project has not only social significance, but also allows to increase budget revenues, both through the payment of national taxes by cluster members (corporate income tax, personal income tax, VAT, excise tax, environmental tax, subsoil use fee, rent) and local taxes (single tax, transport tax, land tax, tourist tax, etc.).

The strategic planning of the cluster's development pays due attention to the environmental approach. Compliance with environmental standards during the construction of infrastructure facilities and agritourism locations within the project is a prerequisite for its implementation. One of the project's vectors is the development of agritourism and short-term recreation in the cluster, which in itself is a means of maintaining the environmental sustainability of the territory. The application of a scientific approach to the design of tourist routes will, in turn, reduce the environmental burden and limit uncontrolled pollution of the territory.

The project also aims to address the environmental problem of unorganized afforestation, which destroys the forest-steppe natural complexes inherent in the region. Preservation of biodiversity in the territory of the Gorbohory agro-cluster is one of the priority tasks in the environmental sphere. In this aspect, it is important to use shelterbelts, which will serve as eco-ducks between forest lands in the agrocluster and protect the fauna. Particular attention is paid to preserving forest plantations from uncontrolled logging and protecting water bodies.

One of the important issues that has arisen in the agrocluster is the protection of bees from insecticide poisoning. Given that there are many farms in the agrocluster that cultivate their crops, this problem is quite acute. Therefore, in order to preserve bees, the Gorbohory agrocluster is developing

a system for notifying beekeepers about insecticide spraying and appropriate operational response measures at apiaries.

After analyzing the regional market of tourist services, certain business segments with hidden reserves for the successful functioning of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster were identified. The obtained research results confirm that the main types of services of the Gorbohory agrotourism cluster are designed for groups of people with average purchasing power and require optimal quality services for an adequate price. Based on the conducted research, it was found that potential consumers of services in the agrotourism cluster are domestic and foreign tourists (Figure 4).

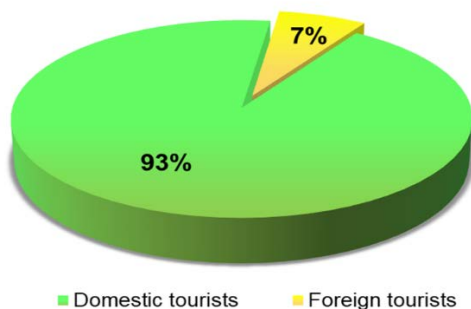


Figure 4. Potential consumers of services in the agro-tourism cluster “GorboGory”

Source: formed by the author based on^{29,30}

The promotion strategy of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster has its own peculiarities. The principles of promotion are based on the constant attraction of the target audience's attention to the accommodation facilities of the Gorbohory agrotourism cluster by disseminating materials in the media and the Internet, creating various information occasions, both in the accommodation facilities of the Gorbohory agrotourism cluster and in Lviv and the region. In particular, it is important to highlight the organization of festivals, excursions, sporting events, and master classes. Thus, the basis of the promotion strategy should be events and propaganda programs. Consumers' loyalty and their transition to regular customers is achieved

²⁹ Агротуристичний кластер Горбогори. URL: https://www.horbohory.com.ua/?page_id=1439

³⁰ Департамент агропромислового розвитку Львівської облдержадміністрації. Проект «Розвиток сільського підприємництва та інфраструктури агротуристичного кластеру «Горбогори» набирає обертів. URL: <https://loda.gov.ua/news?id=54219>

through the development of a customer incentive strategy. According to research, up to 30% of sales are accounted for by regular customers (depending on the availability and quality of loyalty programs).

It should be borne in mind that the promotion of the accommodation facilities of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster is not a one-time advertising campaign, but is carried out on an ongoing basis. In the future, the main idea of achieving the goals should be the thesis that the agritourism cluster “Gorbohory” does not sell rooms, but sells comprehensive services for tourists.

The Gorbohory agritourism cluster has various channels for promoting its goods and services. According to market research, intermediaries account for 30-80% of the customer flows of accommodation facilities (depending on the activity of their work with intermediaries). A positive aspect of working with intermediaries is that they help reduce the level of seasonal fluctuations. The main intermediaries in the provision of agritourism services are travel agencies and tour operators and online booking systems.

The research conducted on the basis of the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster allowed us to conduct a SWOT analysis. It should be noted that the SWOT analysis matrix is a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster. It offers a description of the position that the cluster can take at the present time, and also provides the basis for further planning for this project (Table 1).

The Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster has chosen a growth strategy for its development. Growth strategies are corporate strategies that involve marketing activities to organize intensive growth through various areas of enterprise diversification as part of integrated development. Under such a strategy, the level of short-term and long-term goals increases significantly each year compared to the previous year.

The project aims to create new jobs from the second year of implementation. Significant advantages of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster are the involvement of ATO participants in project implementation activities, as well as unemployed women in the tourist service sector.

The management and planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan of the Gorbohory Agritourism Cluster is carried out by its members, representatives of the ATCs, and supervisory authorities. The main coordinator and implementer of the project is the State Enterprise “Regional Fund for Support of Individual Housing Construction in Rural Areas”, which concludes and pays for agreements with project executors, is responsible for the project to society and the law, and manages the process of interaction between project participants.

Table 1

SWOT-analysis of the agritourism cluster “HorboGory”

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The uniqueness of the agricultural cluster in the western part of Ukraine, which is represented by different categories of participants. 2. Proximity to the regional center of Lviv, which is attractive for tourists, excellent transport accessibility and high-quality road surface. 3. Location near the Kyiv-Chop highway with high transit passenger traffic. 4. Picturesque landscapes. 5. The presence of an initiative group consisting of local farmers and community representatives. 6. Support from the Ministry of Agrarian Policy, local authorities and self-government. 7. Increase in the number of tourists. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural producers do not have sufficient financial resources to create cluster infrastructure. 2. About 14% of land shares are not involved in economic circulation due to afforestation. 3. Insufficient infrastructure support hinders entrepreneurial initiatives. 4. A significant proportion of the population does not contribute to local budgets due to work in Lviv. 5. Lack of tourist service skills among the local population.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of small businesses around the production of agricultural products under the cluster brand. 2. Use of forested land for further cultivation of organic products. 3. Creation of recreational facilities. 4. Concentration of agricultural production and processing facilities, architectural and cultural heritage sites, and healing springs on the territory of the cluster for inclusion in tourist routes. 5. Expansion of the agro-cluster's activities at the regional and national levels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decreased purchasing power of the population. 2. The introduction of a visa-free regime with the EU may reduce interest in domestic tourism. 3. High competition from large agricultural producers and others may create competition for local producers. 4. Competition of mountainous areas of Lviv region in the agritourism segment for consumers of agritourism services. 5. Opening of the land market from July 1, 2021.

Source: compiled by the author based on her own research and ^{31,32,33}

³¹ Офіційний сайт Львівської обласної державної адміністрації. Стратегія розвитку Львівської області на 2021–2027 роки. URL: https://loda.gov.ua/programy_ta_strategii

³² Агротуристичний кластер Горбогори. URL: https://www.horbohory.com.ua/?page_id=1439

³³ Департамент агропромислового розвитку Львівської облдержадміністрації. Проект «Розвиток сільського підприємництва та інфраструктури агротуристичного кластеру «Горбогори» набирає обертів. URL: <https://loda.gov.ua/news?id=54219>

It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the pace of implementation of new tourist locations. In particular, a tourist information center with a shop and a farm café is being completed in the village of Lypnyky, a campsite with an agricultural estate is being built in the village of Rakovets, and a tourist campsite called the City of Masters Center is being built in the village of Vyniavy. In Pustomyty, there is already a shop selling farm products called GorboGory. We have already purchased a vegetable delivery truck, a fish delivery truck, a refrigerated truck, a minibus and a tractor. They are planning to buy a mulcher.

In 2021, the Lipova Dolyna school of craftsmen was opened in the Radvany hamlet of Miloshevychi. Master classes in cheese making, blacksmithing, and pottery are held on the territory of the tourist and recreation complex. It is pleasant to note that from June 2 to June 6, the All-Ukrainian Art Festival “Magic of Pottery” was held here, which the author managed to visit.

The members of the HorboGory agritourism cluster offer tourists interesting locations and are constantly working on development, including their own products, excursions, cycling, hiking and horseback riding. After visiting agritourism farms, tourists have pleasant impressions and positive emotions.

The study identified the main conceptual tasks that need to be accomplished in the Gorbohory agritourism cluster:

- To complete all the work on the “launch” of the project on time, adhering to the approved cost estimate.

- At the first stage, organize the work of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster.

- At the second stage, to solve the problem of maximizing the attraction of individuals and legal entities to the Gorbohory agritourism cluster.

- In the following stages, the main attention should be paid to the economic problems of the Gorbohory agritourism cluster, ensuring the planned efficiency of the project.

- Optimize costs and ensure that the planned results are achieved.

- Create an effective mechanism for managing the Gorbohory agritourism cluster.

By developing their own agricultural businesses in the area, the members of the HorboGory cluster create conditions for the development of agritourism in rural areas. Most importantly, the project has managed to unite people who believe in themselves.

In Lviv region, the potential for developing tourism clusters, including agritourism clusters, is growing every year. The rich nature and recreational resources, combined with the desire of the community, farmers, businessmen, local authorities, research institutions, and all those who care to create a national tourism product, have give.

CONCLUSIONS

Agritourism clusters are a promising approach to promoting rural tourism and agritourism, creating new opportunities for economic development in rural areas. By integrating agriculture, tourism, and other related activities, agritourism clusters provide a unique experience for tourists and generate income for local farmers and communities. Such initiatives contribute to the preservation of rural traditions, culture and natural resources, thus contributing to sustainable tourism development. However, the success of agritourism clusters requires careful planning, cooperation, and investment in infrastructure and marketing. Agritourism clusters can serve as a catalyst for rural development, tourism revitalization and diversification.

By bringing together businesses, organizations and other stakeholders in a specific location, clusters create synergies, knowledge sharing and economies of scale that increase competitiveness, innovation and sustainability in the tourism sector. Clusters can stimulate local and regional economic growth, create jobs, promote entrepreneurship and social inclusion. They also help to improve the quality and diversity of tourism products and services, respond to changing market demands, and adapt to technological advances and environmental concerns. However, the success of tourism clusters depends on several factors, such as effective leadership, cooperation and coordination among stakeholders, access to finance, infrastructure and talent, and supportive policies and regulations. Thus, governments, the private sector and civil society must work together to create an enabling environment for clusters to emerge and thrive, while ensuring that benefits are shared among all involved actors and communities.

The Horbohora Agritourism Cluster Strategy presents a promising approach to promoting rural tourism and agritourism and sustainable development in the Carpathian region of Ukraine. The strategy focuses on the integration of agriculture, tourism and related activities to create a unique and authentic experience for tourists, while generating income and employment opportunities for local communities. The strategy also prioritizes the preservation of cultural heritage, biodiversity and natural resources, thus promoting sustainable tourism practices. The key elements of the strategy include infrastructure development, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, improving the quality of tourism services, and creating a favorable regulatory environment. In addition, the strategy emphasizes cooperation and partnerships between various stakeholders, including local farmers, tourism operators, public authorities, and civil society organizations. If implemented effectively, the strategy has the potential to stimulate economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability in the Carpathian region, as well as improve the well-being of local communities and visitors. However,

the success of the strategy requires the commitment and active participation of all stakeholders, adequate funding, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and continuous learning and improvement.

SUMMARY

The development of agritourism clusters requires appropriate infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, accommodation, and communication facilities. However, many rural areas lack basic infrastructure components, which can hinder the growth and development of clusters. Agritourism clusters require significant financial resources, including investments in infrastructure, marketing and human resources, skills and knowledge, business management and agricultural practices. However, many rural communities and smallholder farmers lack these skills and knowledge, which can hinder their ability to develop and manage successful clusters. In general, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves cooperation and partnerships among various stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and local communities. It also requires the development of supportive policies and regulations, access to finance and technical assistance, and capacity building programs that improve the skills and knowledge of rural communities and smallholder farmers.

By showcasing local traditions, cultural practices, and natural attractions, agritourism clusters can raise awareness and appreciation of the unique characteristics of rural areas, and generate income for their preservation. Agritourism clusters can contribute to environmental sustainability by implementing sustainable tourism practices such as waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and the promotion of eco-friendly transportation. By minimizing negative environmental impacts, agritourism clusters can increase the attractiveness of rural areas and contribute to their long-term sustainability. Overall, the prospects for agritourism clusters are significant, but realizing these benefits requires concerted efforts by all stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities that exist in rural areas.

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