Chapter 15

Agrotourism as an Opportunity to Enhance the Development and Competitiveness of Rural Areas

Kirill Postevoy
Omsk State Agrarian University, Russia

Paula Odete Fernandes
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8714-4901
UNIAG, Applied Management Research Unit, Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal

Olga Vitalevna Kosenchuk
Omsk State Agrarian University, Russia

Alcina Maria Nunes
UNIAG, Applied Management Research Unit, Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal

ABSTRACT

Rural tourism increases income sources for rural residents, reduces rural population outflow, and preserves cultural traditions. This chapter considers development of agrotourism in a rural region like the Omsk region, and agrotourism potential of each Omsk district is assessed. To assess the agrotourism potential, integral and rating indicators were calculated using secondary data and the assessment of 40 experts. The analysis allowed a rating of Omsk’s municipal districts. Based on the results, the Southern forest-steppe zone has the highest potential for the development of agrotourism. Several other districts present good conditions to increase the potential of agrotourism development. Some districts are distinct, but conditions for the development of agrotourism exist in all areas of the Omsk region.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-0365-2.ch015
INTRODUCTION

Agrotourism is the sector of the tourist industry oriented to use natural, cultural, historical and other existent resources of rural areas and its features for the creation, growth and development of a complex tourist product. Being considered a subset of rural tourism the concept is more complex and presents a vast socio-economic and landscape impact (Lupi, Giaccio, Mastronardi, Giannelli, & Scardera, 2017; Dubois, Cawley, & Schmitz, 2017). The creation of jobs and, therefore, the enhancement of employment among the residents is one of the main positive social impacts of rural tourism. As mentioned by Sgroi, Donia and Mineo (2018) agrotourism allows agriculture enterprises to remain in their rural location and to unemployed members of farming families to find a full employment namely, providing services for visitors. Hence, the expansion of a path directed to the progress of this type of tourism is a straightway for social development of depressed rural areas avoiding the abandon and consequent degradation of rural areas suffering from permanent outflow of population, in particular, due to a work absence reason. Indeed, agrotourism has proved to be a potential source of additional income and services opportunities for traditional farmers (Maria-Irina, 2017).

Omsk region (hereafter also called just Omsk), a region located in the Russian Federation, faces the abovementioned social problem. Simultaneous, in the region, is observed a lack of organizational and economic mechanisms able to create, integrate and develop the agrotourism potential of Omsk. This problem arose in connection with the need to improve the level of development of the region’s rural areas, which are currently in economic and social crisis. One of the main directions to withdraw these rural territories from the economic and social crisis lays in the diversification of the rural economy. The specificity of the Omsk region, its territorial, historical and cultural features will allow to define new directions and development paths for economic diversification throughout the development of its agrotourism potential.

The value added of the present research work relies on the identification and analysis of the territorial and historical-cultural characteristics of the region countryside, specifically the ones related with agritourism, to improve the organizational and economic mechanisms that engage the population and private investors in agrotourism activities. Indeed, the main objective of the study is to analyse the rural tourism potential of the Omsk region. The main specific objectives of the study go through an analysis of the actual and potential opportunities for the development of agrotourism in Omsk and the development of organizational and economic mechanisms for the creation and development of agrotourism activities in the region, by the population living in the rural areas or through private investors.

To reach the main and specific objectives, statistical information was collected taking in account the presence on the Omsk territory of objects that are suitable to perform rural tourism activities. A SWOT analysis of Omsk region rural tourism is also carried out. Comprehensive and rating methods for assessing the tourism potential of rural areas were used on the empirical study following a methodology proposed to allow a comparative assessment of the potential for agrotourism development in rural areas. The identification and assessment of potential opportunities for the development of agrotourism in Omsk are carried out both at the level of individual rural areas and for the region as a whole. All the empirical analysis is made after presenting a general theoretical framework of the agrotourism concept and the region of Omsk.

Successful implementation of the proposed method of empirical analysis will help: (i) to increase the employment levels of the rural population, and hence avoid the outflows of the residents, (ii) to promote the preservation of small settlements, (iii) the rational and efficient use of natural resources