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## Innovation Approach ToThe Sustainable Rural Tourism Development.

**Anna Grigorievna Ivolga<sup>1\*</sup>, Ivan Ivanovich Ryazancev<sup>1</sup>, Anastasia Gennadievna Stroeva<sup>1</sup>, Zhanna Viktorovna Gornostaeva<sup>2</sup> and Olga Vladimirovna Mandritsa<sup>3</sup>.**

<sup>1</sup>Stavropol State Agrarian University, Zootehnicheskiiy lane, 12, Stavropol 355017, Russia.

<sup>2</sup>Chechen State University, Sheripova str., 32, Grozny 364024, Russia.

<sup>3</sup>MIREA - Russian Technological University, branch in Stavropol, Kulakova Avenue, 8, Stavropol 355000, Russia.

### ABSTRACT

As part of our study, an innovative approach was used to analyze the rural areas of the Russian Federation in terms of the feasibility of rural tourism development. The innovativeness of the study is that, research includes study of various aspects of interaction of potential of rural tourism development and specified types of rural area considering their social and economic condition (also in the sphere of labor resource reproduction).

**Keywords:** rural territories, rural areas, rural tourism, rural population, region classification.

*\*Corresponding author*

**METHODS**

Within the framework of the region classification based on clustering, all the regions of the Russian Federation were divided into 5 clusters by the level of agricultural development: 1 - «relatively advantaged», 2 «relatively disadvantaged», 3 - «urbanized», 4 - «using potential of livestock breeding», 5 - «underusing potential of crop production». When distinguishing the clusters the following indicators of social and labor sphere in rural areas were included: share of rural population, share of population employed in agriculture; relative share of agriculture in gross regional product, relative share of livestock product in agricultural production; level of unemployment in rural areas and others. However, indicators describing rural tourism development were not included into research due to their specificity and complexity. The analysis of practice of rural tourism development in Russia was done with list of indicators, which should be used when evaluating potential of rural tourism development and selecting priority regions for rural tourism development. The final score of the potential of rural tourism development in a certain (n) region was calculated as a sum of scores.

**DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

On the first step of the research in order to specify whether the level of rural tourism development relates to the type of a region according to the clusterization the authors grouped regions differentiated by the priority of rural tourism development in the context of cluster types (Table 1).

**Table 1: The results of grouping by types of territories and by priority development of rural tourism territorial entity of the RF**

Indicator, %	Type of clusters				
	1	2	3	4	5
The share of territorial entity of the RF with low or uncertain potential for the development of rural tourism	36	82	44	65	40
The share of territorial entity of the RF with an average potential for the development of rural tourism	46	18	39	31	10
Share of territorial entity of the RF with high potential for rural tourism development	18	-	17	4	50

The results of clusterization do not demonstrate any rigidity in the relation between area's potential for rural tourism development and level of agricultural and social development. However, most of regions with high potential of rural tourism development are included into the 5<sup>th</sup> cluster, comprising areas that underuse potential of crop farming, most of areas with moderate potential for development fall into the 1<sup>st</sup> cluster - «relatively advantaged» and regions with low potential mainly fall into the 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster – “relatively disadvantaged”.

The obtained results are typical and justify the necessity of availability of specific resources for sectoral rural tourism development (developed sector of agriculture and human resources) taking into consideration modern agrarian policy, where the primary goal of rural areas is agricultural production, not tourism diversification and development, which is considered to be of secondary importance. Unfortunately, authorities in the areas with favorable conditions and high potential for tourism development often do not see the benefits of related sectors development and falling of regions that develop related branches (Krasnodar regions, Stavropol regions) into “relatively advantaged” clusters is more an exception than a rule. Obviously, availability of adequate agricultural resources leads to development of related branches even in case of moderate and low branch potential.

There is scientific point of view supported by some representatives of authorities that rural tourism should be a priority line of development only in areas close to consumers, i.e. city dwellers. Region clusterization in Table 1 does not unambiguously confirm this pattern, however, 17% of regions from the 3<sup>rd</sup> cluster has the largest potential for agricultural tourism development (Kaluga region, the Republic of Karelia, Tula and Yaroslavl regions), are the most urbanized (big share of urban population) and are located in close vicinity to Moscow and Saint-Petersburg (Figure 1, 2, 3, 4). Thus, rural tourism development in these regions is caused by their proximity to big urban centers, not by the level of urbanization of the regions themselves.



Figure 1: Kaluga region



Figure 2: Tula region

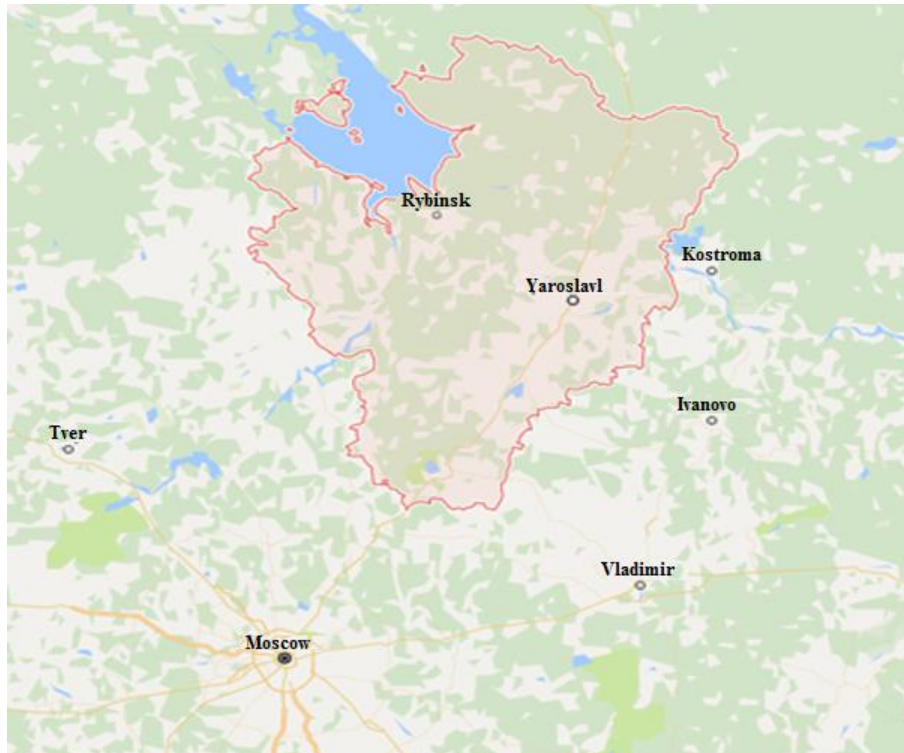


Figure 3: Yaroslavl region



Figure 4: Republic of Karelia

Nowadays rural tourism development in Russia’s regions is a secondary trend associated with agriculture development, not an independent branch that can help disadvantaged rural areas increase the level of social and economic development. This is true even for the regions with the most unfavorable conditions for agriculture development.

On the second step we studied condition and prospects of rural tourism development in the regions of various types in order to make the research more profound and reveal possible interrelations.

The Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, the Republic of Mordovia, Voronezh region, Ivanovo region, Ulyanovsk region were chosen as the most typical representatives of the five clusters. Table2 presents the results of scoringpotential for rural tourism development in the regions under analysis in order todetect cluster distinctness and score received for rural tourism development.

**Table 2: Score by the level of tourism development in Russia’s regions representing 5 clusters**

Cluster type	Region				
	North Ossetia-Alania	Republic of Mordovia	Voronezh region	Ivanovo region	Ulyanovsk region
	2	5	1	3	4
Total score of selecting priority areas for rural tourism development	34	83	135	239	57

North Ossetia-Alania («relativelydisadvantaged») has the lowest potential for rural tourism development - 34 from 360 points. Ulyanovsk region («using potential of livestock breeding») and the Republic of Mordovia («underusing potential of crop production») also have quite low score by the potential for rural tourism development – 57 and 83 pointsrespectively. Voronezh region «relatively advantaged» and Ivanovoregion («urbanized») have the highest score among the current representatives– 135 and 239 respectively.

This sample does not include any region with high potential, but Ivanovo region has the highest score and is between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> categories, thus, it is fair to consider it a leader by the potential for rural tourism within the current sample.

It should be noted that these representatives are the most typical for 5 clusters by the level of agriculture development, employment, household income, etc., but not by the level of rural tourism development.

The results in table 1reveal that figures of North Ossetia-Alania are the lowest.Despite the fact that tourism has existed in the region for all times, but in its “wild” form – provision of accommodation and meals in rural areas (without other tourism services).

Thus, «disadvantage» of agriculture in its relation tolow potential for rural tourism development that could increase local employment and household income demonstrates the worst results.

Usually the incentive for civilized tourism development in the regions is international and national projects and programs that arealsoimplemented in North Ossetia. This is the case of UN development program in the Northern Caucasus with the participation and support of the Ministry of agriculture and food of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania and Information and advice services of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. In 2010 within the framework of UNICEF grant with the participation of Russian center of agriculture consulting in arts and crafts development an internship was organized that included sharing experience of woodcarving, goldwork, doll manufacturing, etc.The main aim of programs and internship is to demonstrate that crafts and arts can bring additional and even primary income. Probably, there is double-talk when the process is being passed off as the result, so the positive effect in tourism turns to be impossible (organized meeting turned off as a result of work of regional tourism committee, agreement between the regions – as an



indicator of interregional cooperation, randomly constructing infrastructure facilities using public resources - as a result of infrastructure development, contests of tourism brands that will hardly become famous among the ordinary consumers, etc.)<sup>1</sup>.

Ivanovo region also organizes workshops, exhibitions and other activities aimed at rural tourism promotion. The school of rural tourism is being developed, «Association of rural and agricultural tourism of Ivanovo region» operates. There is a database of rural guest houses (Catalogue «Rural guest houses of Ivanovo region»). Over 600 individual and corporate consultations on establishment of rural guest houses based on private farms were held<sup>2</sup>. Online resources on promotion of rural tourism services are being elaborated. The investment strategy of Ivanovo region includes development of agrotourism cluster on the area of 100 ha considering favorable location for its loading. Ivanovo region is a leader among the typical regions by the potential for rural tourism development, apart from all the specific resources it has also favorable location, proximity of Moscow and cities included into the Golden Ring – Suzdal and Vladimir. These activities are more efficient than in other regions, as practice shows.

### CONCLUSION

Presented approach based on integral scoring of rural areas by the potential of rural tourism development and was used for studying agricultural (rural) tourism in the regions that are under analysis in this research. The approach is based on the idea of choosing and supporting the most high-potential projects concerning the availability of resources and infrastructure development at the first step of rural tourism development in the country. Region ranking by the potential of rural tourism development will allow to form clusters of rural tourism of different level and lead to more efficient national and local policy. In our opinion, under the current social, economic and geopolitical conditions it is reasonable to consider regions with high potential for tourism development, where authorities realize prospects of its development, as priority areas for rural tourism development, even if the branch is underdeveloped yet.

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<sup>1</sup><http://tour-forum.com/archiv-2016.php>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.agritourism.ru/ru/filial/filial1/>