

Research Journal of Pharmaceutical, Biological and Chemical Sciences

Analysis Of Agricultural Tourism And Study Of Its Development Potential.

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ABSTRACT

Currently there is a number of approaches to studying level of agricultural tourism in the country and its regions based on various indicators depending on the ultimate aim of the research. Thus, the academic community distinguished 4 regions as the leaders in rural tourism (Altai krai, Leningrad region, Kaluga region, Krasnodar region) [8]. According to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation there are 16 such regions: Vladimir, Vologda, Ivanovo, Novgorod, Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, Pskov, Samara, Tver, Tula, Yaroslavl, Penza oblast, Republic of Karelia, Chuvash Republic, Moscow region, Saint-Petersburg area [7]. According to the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation rapid growth of rural tourism can be observed in Altai and Krasnodar krai, in Altai, Adygea, Buryatia, Karelia, Tatarstan, Tyva, Chuvash republics; Belgorod, Vologda, Voronezh, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Orenburg, Pskov, Ryazan, Tambov, Tula, Nizhny Novgorod, Yaroslavl oblast; Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug [9]. Thus, we can conclude that academic community and Ministries have different views. That leads to the necessity of developing a unique scheme for assessment of region's level and potential of rural tourism development. The authors present an approach based on integral scoring of rural areas by the potential of rural tourism development. This approach 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.

Keywords: agricultural tourism, potential of tourism development, rural region, government support

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INTRODUCTION

Currently there is a number of approaches to studying level of agricultural tourism in the country and its regions based on various indicators depending on the ultimate aim of the research. Thus, the academic community distinguished 4 regions as the leaders in rural tourism (Altai krai, Leningrad region, Kaluga region, Krasnodar region) [8]. According to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation there are 16 such regions: Vladimir, Vologda, Ivanovo, Novgorod, Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, Pskov, Samara, Tver, Tula, Yaroslavl, Penza oblast, Republic of Karelia, Chuvash Republic, Moscow region, Saint-Petersburg area [7]. According to the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation rapid growth of rural tourism can be observed in Altai and Krasnodar krai, in Altai, Adygea, Buryatia, Karelia, Tatarstan, Tyva, Chuvash republics; Belgorod, Vologda, Voronezh, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Orenburg, Pskov, Ryazan, Tambov, Tula, Nizhny Novgorod, Yaroslavl oblast; Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug [9]. Thus, we can conclude that academic community and Ministries have different views. That leads to the necessity of developing a unique scheme for assessment of region's level and potential of rural tourism development.

The authors present an approach based on integral scoring of rural areas by the potential of rural tourism development. This approach 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.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the practical experience of area development under modern conditions, regionalization of economic reform seems to be an important component. Thus, it is necessary to consider specificity of regions when developing national structural, investment, financial, social, foreign economic and other policies. The other factor is transfer of number of reforms to the regional level (especially in small business, tourism, social sphere, environment protection and natural resources management). This makes area ranking more relevant than ever before. Methods of research of rural tourism development potential in the regions of the Russian Federation are presented in figure 1.

At the same time territorial division of labour and industry specialization of regional economy should be provided by sufficient modernization of economy at the developed regions based on concepts of postindustrial economy as well as promote development of economically grounded and technologically determined business communications between enterprises located in the border area of the Russian Federation and neighboring states involved into single technological systems as an alternative form of employment of rural population and budget revenues.

DISCUSSION

Within the first phase of our research, we have analyzed data on rural tourism development in certain regions. The challenge at this phase was lack of unique database and any information collected using single method. As there is no unique scientific hub that could accumulate statistic data on agricultural tourism in the Russian Federation, in most cases it is impossible to carry out analysis in its usual form. Among the main methods used in the research was expert evaluation method, questionnaire survey, monitoring related indicators. The phase will result in structuring data in a table by presence or absence of the specified criteria.

According to the experts, the projected tourist flow in rural tourism in Russia amounts to 25 million people. According to the experience of foreign countries, rural tourism can provide up to 30% of aggregate income, while in Russia rural tourism generates less than 2% of the total revenue in tourism industry. Consequently, this segment has significant development prospects considering rich history of rural areas in Russia, rural traditions, various arts and crafts. All this confirms its high potential for tourism and recreation development [4].

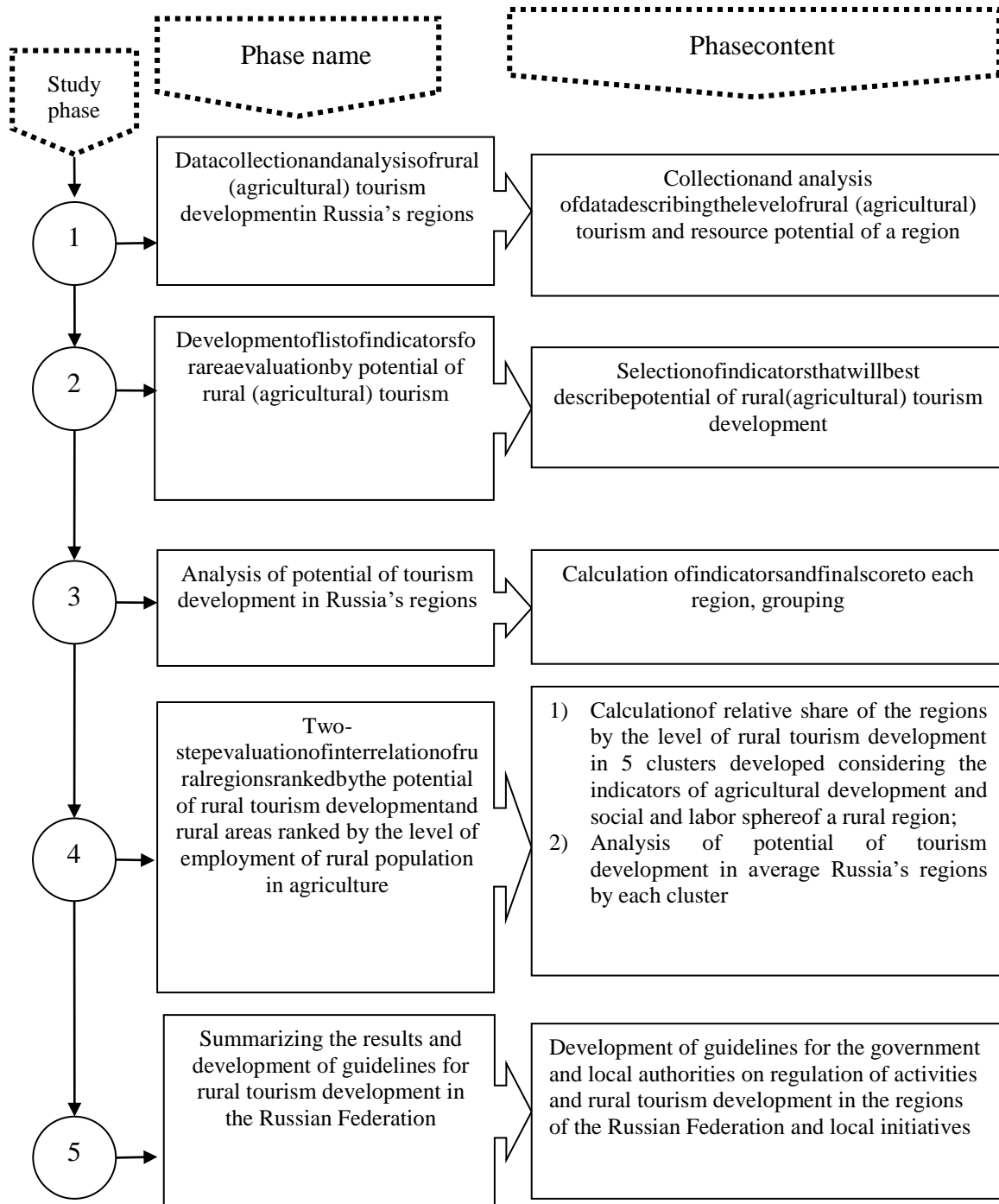


Figure 1: Methods of research of potential of rural tourism development in the regions of the Russian Federation

Thus, the most successful Russian regions by development of rural tourism are Belgorod, Leningrad, Kaluga, Kaliningrad, Moscow, Tambov oblast, Karelian and Chuvash republics, Altai krai. These regions has regional support of rural tourism including targeted support programs. Availability of federal and regional programs for rural tourism and agribusiness development can be regarded as a key aspect for rural tourism development. Table 1 presents general review of certain aspects describing agritourism development in Russian regions.

Table 1: Analysis of agritourism development in Russian regions by the selected evaluation criteria

Region	Indicated as a priority of regional development	Availability of targeted program	Government support	Certification of accommodation	Availability of special accommodation	Regional initiatives, contests, fairs, etc.
Altai krai	+	+	+	+	+	+
Republic of Buryatia	+	+	+		+	+
Ivanovo oblast	+	+	+	+	+	++
Primorsky krai		+				+
Republic of Mordovia	+	+			+	+
Arkhangelsk oblast	+				+	++
Vladimir oblast	+	+	+		+	+
Vologda oblast	+	+	+		+	+
Leningrad oblast		+			+	+
Novgorod oblast	+	+	+		+	+
Penza oblast	+	+	+		+	+
Moscow oblast	+				+	+
Pskov oblast		+			+	
Karelian republic					+	+
Samara oblast			+		+	+
Tver oblast	+				+	+
Tula oblast	+				+	
Chuvash republic		+	+		+	
Yaroslavl oblast					+	+
Kaliningrad oblast		+	+		+	+
Kaluga oblast	+	+	+		+	+
Krasnodar krai	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pskov oblast		+	+		+	+
Tyva republic		+				
Tambov oblast	+	+	+	+	+	+
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous region	+	+	+		+	+

++ availability of educational institution for personnel training for rural tourism, educational institution for tutors in rural tourism.

Thus, based on the analysis of the tools for rural tourism support in the leading regions according to the academic community and experts of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation presented at table 1, the following conclusions on the main approaches to development of rural tourism management system can be drawn. This data can be used in federal and local policies.

1. Tools of strategic target-oriented management prevail. The most efficient policy is in the regions where rural tourism (eco-tourism, ethnographic tourism, gastronomy tourism, agritourism, etc.) is stated as priority. This is also promoted by consistency of the tools.

2. System of rural tourism management is mainly implemented in the framework of tourism management or rural tourism management and rural area development, which is less commonly. In any case, the approach when rural tourism destinations are mentioned among the event schedule seems to be more efficient.

3. Significant importance of building hierarchy line of target-oriented management: when tourism development strategy/program specifies areas of prospective development of rural tourism the chosen municipal entities can easier determine their priority tourist products.

4. Development of efficient interdepartmental collaboration (first of all, departments responsible for tourism, agriculture and culture development) is of especial importance.

5. Coordination of efforts on rural tourism development including creation of public authority or involvement of non-commercial organizations is of considerable importance.

6. Among the integral factors of efficient system of rural tourism management are:

- set of marketing measures aimed at development of rural tourism product, its information availability, branding, promotion;

- series of actions aimed at quality control of tourist-excursion services in rural area, first of all, certification of hostels and other accommodation;

- activities on organizational, information and methodological support in rural tourism including workshops, round tables, schools of rural tourism, consulting service for emergent entrepreneurs;

- actions on increase of entrepreneurial activity in rural area, i.e. assistance to farmers in promotion of tourist services, holding of contests for the best farms/facilities.

7. Among the tools of direct support for rural tourism units are grants (subsidies) for partial coverage of expenses on renovation of physical infrastructure of a farm, improvement of the territory.

8. Locals' initiative should not be left unnoticed.

Modern research and trends in tourist destination management testify to the aspiration for development of competitive tourist product according to tourists' demand, on the one hand, and reveal efficiency of diversification of regional tourist product, on the other hand. [3].

Most scientific researches deal with conceptual problems of characterizing territorial tourist and recreation system [7], specification of tourist regions [1]. Scientists tend to consider various natural and geographic, social and economic characteristics of regional development [2]. As a result a number of application aspects [16] is left uncovered. In our view, more efficient policy in implementation of application aspects requires elaborated tools for tourism zone development based on specification of areas with similar resource potential for rural tourism development. Not questioning the statements delivered by the authors of the approach of tourist and recreation designing and zoning [17] we would note that existing educational materials and guidelines do not cover specific types of tourism, for example, rural tourism as a type of tourism with its special resources.

After examining the strategic documents in the field of rural tourism adopted at the federal level, in particular, the potential of rural tourism, resources, we conclude that the level of development of the industry and infrastructure of rural tourism is of an expert nature. This approach is supported by almost complete lack of necessary information in the regular statistical observations of the Federal State Statistics service conducted at the enterprises and organizations of the tourism industry and agriculture. Accordingly, forecasts are also based on expert assessments, which does not contribute to improving their accuracy.

Clearly, the existing practice leads to lower accuracy and reliability of the data obtained, prevents correct contrastive-comparative analysis, preserves subjectivity. All this does not contribute to the reasonableness of managerial decisions on rural tourism development.

The key issue is validity of decisions on selection of priority areas for rural tourism development in the regions of the Russian Federation.

The second phase of developing list of indicators for selection of priority areas for rural tourism development requires domination of objective appraisal, i.e. reduction of the share of subjective (expert) appraisal. Specification of the item subject of evaluation – potential of rural tourism development, is an important step that determines content of work on the current research phase.

The analysis of practice of rural tourism development in Russia presented above offers the following standard list of indicators, which should be used when evaluating potential of rural tourism development and selecting priority regions for rural tourism development (table 2).

The third phase includes data collection and generalization of evaluation results, on the ground of which the priority regions will be selected. The main methods of data collection and calculation of the indicators presented in table 2 are query to the local branch of the Federal State Statistics Service, regional ministry of agriculture and natural resources; method of observation and inventory method, which require field works for revealing and describing destinations and infrastructure of rural tourism; expert methods of raw information gaining; methods of desk study of secondary information also from open sources of statistics and analytical data of Federal State Statistics Service, ministries and agencies.

Choice of methods depends on information availability of a local branch of the Federal State Statistics Service, regional ministry of agriculture and natural resources.

We assume the following groups of areas by the level of potential of rural tourism development:

- areas with high potential of rural tourism development;
- areas with middle potential of rural tourism development;
- areas with low or undetermined potential of rural tourism development.

Methodical approach to interpretation of the results of evaluation of potential of rural tourism development implies implementation of the concept of total information availability, i.e. formed appraisal of indicators by all the regions participated in evaluation.

Each indicator mentioned in table 2 is calculated for each region. Consequently, each indicator can possess n number of values (by the number of regions). Then, the highest value is chosen from all the values calculated.

Then values of each indicator are ranked by the ratio of its value to the highest value.

$$\Pi_{ip} = \Pi_{in} * 100\% / \Pi_{imax}, \quad (1)$$

where:

- Π_{ip} – ratio of Π_{in} to the highest score value among all the regions;
- Π_{in} – indicator of the relevant region;
- Π_{imax} – the highest Π_{in} value.

In order to reduce statistical uncertainty to 5% it is advisable to consider Π_p value to the third decimal place. The indicator gets score by the results of ranking. Ten-point scale for indicator estimation is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Applicable scoring scale of indicators of rural tourism potential

Interval of Π_p values	Score (Π_6)	Interval of Π_p values	Score (Π_6)	Interval of Π_p values	Score (Π_6)
0-10	1	<40-50	5	<70-80	8
<10-20	2	<50-60	6	<80-90	9
<20-30	3	<60-70	7	<90-100	10
<30-40	4				

The final score of the potential of rural tourism development in a certain (n) region is calculated as a sum of scores of ranked Π_{ip} values.

Consequently, it is advisable to hold area grouping by appraisal of potential of rural tourism development based on the value of the final score:

- 360 - 240 scores – regions with high potential;
- 239-120 – regions with middle potential;
- 0-119 - regions with low or undetermined potential.

The forth research phase 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).

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.

On the first step of the forth phase 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.

On the second step of the forth phase 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 fifth phase includes summarizing the results and development of guidelines for the government and local authorities based on the questionnaire survey and analysis of the data obtained.

On the basis of the 5-phase analysis of rural tourism development in Russia the authors proposed

RESULTS

Rural tourism development is more efficient in the regions that adopted federal, transregional or local program and where tourism development is considered as a priority area of regional development. The conception combining development of agricultural production and agritourism (combination of tourist services in rural areas and sale of food products at producer price) seems to be more logic and important for our country.

Thus, government when making decision on selection of the priority regions of the Russian Federation for support of rural tourism product development should follow various models of rural tourism development according to the score of indicators of potential of rural tourism development considering specific characters of agricultural development and territorial organization of rural areas.

1) development model №1 for the regions with low or undetermined potential of rural tourism development implies rural tourism development based of small family hotels and available tourist resources of the region without significant change of social and cultural environment. Implementation of this model implies state policy for transition of rural population form agricultural production to the service sector, i.e. adoption of complex social and economic strategy aimed at support of rural regions.

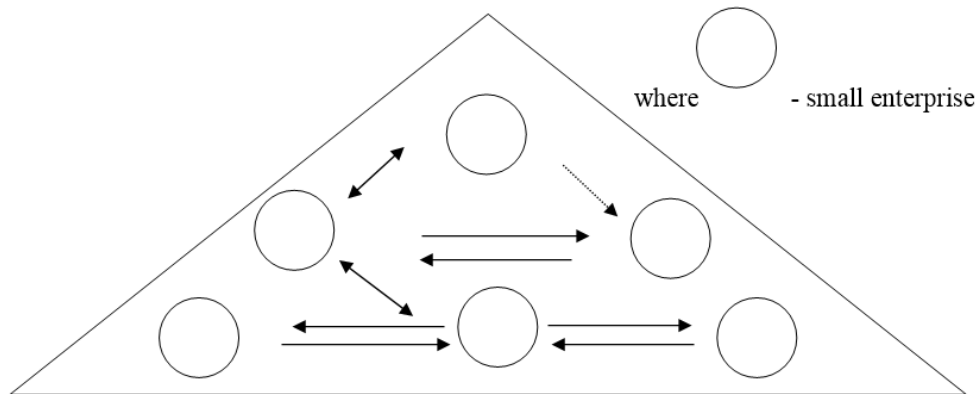


Figure 2: Development model №1 for the regions with low or undetermined potential of rural tourism development

2) building large and middle private tourist attractions in rural areas (based on cooperation of small enterprises and associations): special private hotels designed to resemble «historical or ethnic villages», cultural and ethnographic centers, nobleman's or merchant's estates, etc. Use of this model is typical for the regions with low level of comfort of accommodation located in rural area, but with high tourist potential. Successful implementation of this model requires large investments, development of specific projects, profound scientific, research and marketing work; grants to support the most advanced projects (both private and public).

This model can be regarded as a derivative of the model №1 and does not exclude rural tourism development based on small enterprises, but proposes possibilities for additional earnings.

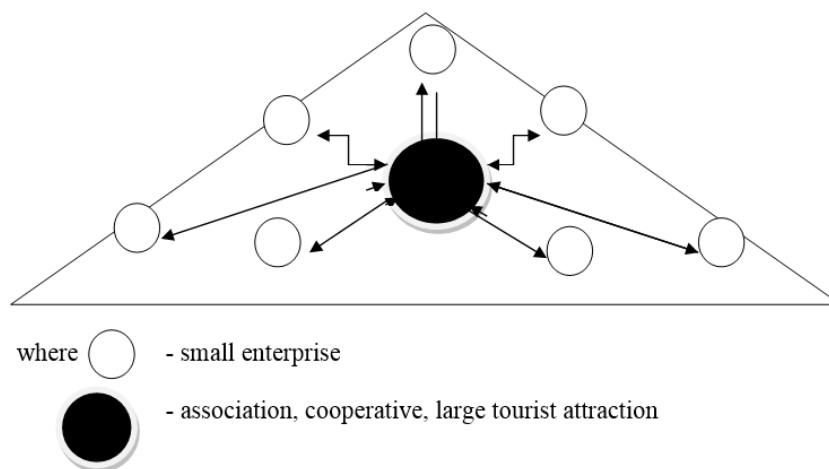


Figure 3: Development model №2 for the regions with middle potential of rural tourism development

3) creation of state agricultural parks based on state support (or private, which is less commonly). Besides tourism development, this conception based on such a model emphasizes promotion of agricultural achievements of a particular country, preservation of practical skills and presentation of the national (traditional) techniques of agricultural production. Worldwide implementation of such a model is usually managed by the authority responsible for agricultural development (not tourism development). Such large-scale projects in rural tourism require interdepartmental coordination (the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and other government authorities as well as parliament units – corresponding committees of the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, participation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation and other organizations) and creation of a coordinating authority (for instance, interdepartmental committee or special agency responsible for all the issues of rural tourism development, as it is in a number of countries).

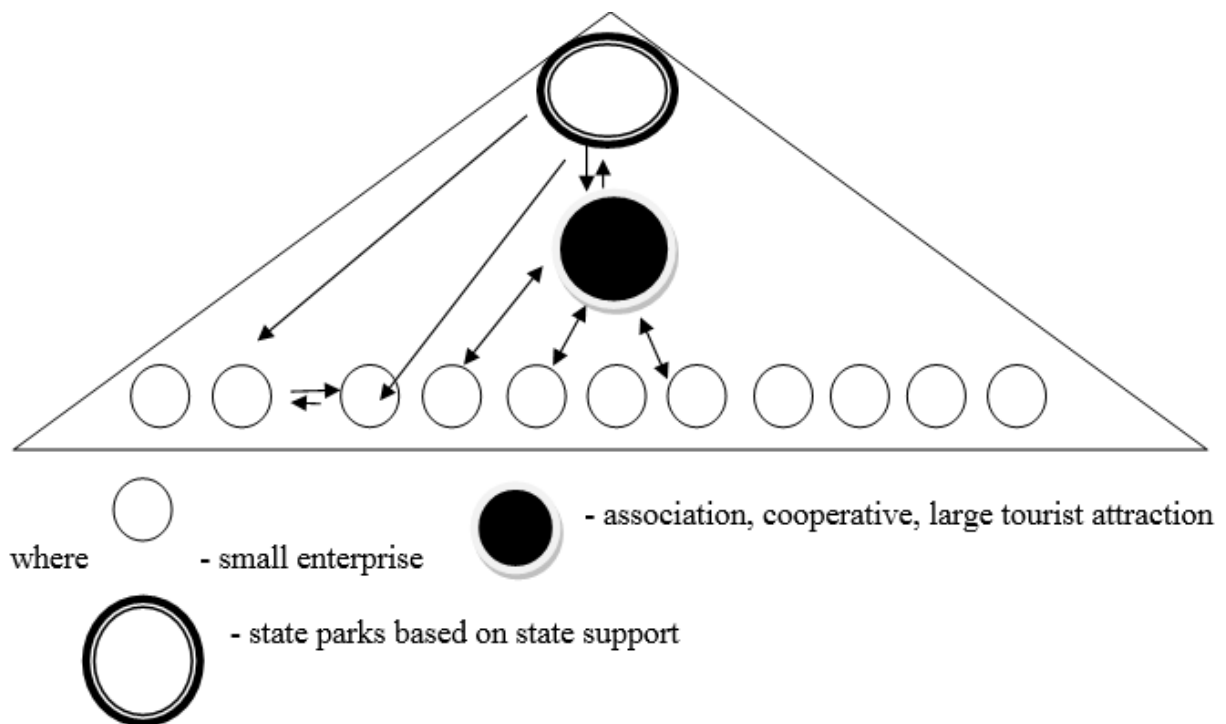


Figure 4: Development model №3 for the regions with high potential of rural tourism development

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis our main recommendations for promotion of rural tourism development are: development of generally accepted national conception for rural tourism development and establishment that should be supported at the regional and municipal level. Decisions-making on rural tourism development within this national conception can be based on the proposed approach of determining advanced areas for rural tourism development. Successful implementation of the federal conception of rural tourism development requires hard work on the local level and involvement of experts in tourism, representatives of agribusiness, academic researchers, regional ethnographers, etc. Considering the research of condition and development of rural tourism, we advise to organize cooperation of the Ministry of Culture of Russia and the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, public organizations and experts for complex and efficient implementation of the guidelines proposed.

Implementation of the programs of rural tourism development in the Russian Federation can and should be an important growing point for economic, social, cultural and intellectual development of rural population in our country.

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