

# Innovative Development of Rural Green Tourism in Ukraine

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the article was to investigate the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine and to determine the main directions of its innovative development, taking into account global, national, and regional trends. SLR (Systematic Literature Review), methods of expert assessment, selective observation, and graphic method were used to achieve the set goal. The article analyzes the current state of rural green tourism in Ukraine; the tourism and recreation potential of rural areas of Ukraine was assessed; promising types of innovations that are currently relevant for implementation in the practice of providing services in the field of rural green tourism in Ukraine are defined and grouped; and the impact of global, national, and regional trends on the current stage of activity and further development of rural green tourism in Ukraine is determined. It is determined that in modern economic conditions, rural tourism serves as a stabilizing factor that will contribute not only to maintaining the normal living standards of rural residents, but also to the development of the region's economy, service infrastructure, household services, and the social sphere. Thus, rural green tourism is the main tool for stimulating the economic and socio-cultural development of rural areas. The results of the assessment of the tourist and recreational potential of rural green tourism of Ukraine showed that the recreational and tourist attractiveness of rural areas is mainly determined by natural and ecological conditions, cultural and historical conditions, and the tourist infrastructure of the region. Financial economic, socio-demographic, and administrative management conditions negatively affect the recreational and tourist attractiveness of rural areas, resulting in the low ability of the rural population to implement innovations. It has been established that in order for the tourist business to be able to quickly adapt to the normal state, it is necessary to introduce innovative types of tourism that will make it possible to attract a larger number of people to the tourist business and establish additional income due to the introduction of innovative offers, new tours, visits to special places, and the entire range of services of the best quality, which will contribute to the accelerated implementation of online forms and digital tools in the provision of tourist services, etc. It has been proven that the introduction of innovations plays an important role in ensuring the sustainable and balanced development of rural tourism in Ukraine, contributing to the creation of new opportunities and improving the quality of tourist services.

**Keywords:** rural tourism; agritourism; rural areas; development; Ukraine



**Citation:** Roman, M.; Kudinova, I.; Samsonova, V.; Kawęcki, N. Innovative Development of Rural Green Tourism in Ukraine. *Tour. Hosp.* **2024**, *5*, 537–558. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp5030033>

Academic Editor: Brian Garrod

Received: 26 March 2024

Revised: 28 May 2024

Accepted: 17 June 2024

Published: 24 June 2024



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## 1. Introduction

At the current stage of society and economic development, tourism occupies a special place, becoming one of the key industries shaping the global economy [1]. Tourism is an important source of income for many countries; it stimulates economic development, and contributes to the expansion of international relations and cultural exchange [2]. The growing interest in tourism is driven not only by social and cultural factors, but also by technological developments and changes in consumer preferences [3]. Currently, in this

period of pandemic challenges and martial law in Ukraine, this type of tourism is gaining more and more popularity, which includes contact with nature for the purpose of rest, recovery, active recreation, and familiarization with the rural way of life and traditions—rural green tourism.

Tourism provides an important support to the economies of regions and countries, especially in those where it is a key economic sector. It creates new jobs, promotes the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and raises the standard of living of the local population. Additionally, rural green tourism contributes to the preservation of natural and cultural values, environmental protection, and the creation of new places for recreation and leisure [4]. Therefore, the further development of the tourism industry, both in Ukraine and globally, requires the active introduction and expansion of innovative approaches in the activities of tourism enterprises. The introduction of innovations is becoming a necessity to ensure the development and survival of businesses in this industry.

Thanks to innovations, travel companies can provide their customers with a unique and inimitable travel experience, particularly in rural areas, that allows them to stand out from the competition and develop rural areas as tourism destinations [5]. The latest technologies make the travel planning and booking process more convenient and efficient for users. In addition, innovations in eco-tourism and sustainable tourism contribute to the preservation of natural resources and ecosystems, which is an important factor for modern tourists [6].

Thus, innovations in tourism play a key role in increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of tourism enterprises [7–9]. The continuous improvement and implementation of new ideas and technologies helps to maintain tourism as an important segment of the global economy and ensures its further development.

The analysis of scientific works on the development of tourism, in particular rural green tourism, showed that research on the innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine is, unfortunately, limited by sufficient attention to specific innovative initiatives and their impact on the development of this sector. Innovative approaches in the application of information technologies for the promotion of tourist products and the field of environmental sustainability in the development and maintenance of tourist facilities are insufficiently researched, including the introduction of new formats of tourism, such as agro-tourism or eco-tourism and the study of the influence of socio-cultural innovations on the development of rural communities. There is also the problem of limited access to statistical data and information about the current state of the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine, existing innovative projects, and their results, which makes it difficult to objectively assess the state and potential of innovations in rural green tourism in Ukraine. Thus, there is a need for further research to find optimal ways of innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine under the influence of pandemic challenges, the era of digitization and digitalization, and military actions, which would ensure the sustainable competitiveness of the industry and the country's tourism industry in general.

Therefore, the issue of forming a theoretical basis for the innovative development of the tourism industry and the field of rural green tourism and the development of approaches to the formation of innovative strategies for the development of rural green tourism are becoming very relevant.

To fill this research gap, the following research goals were set:

- To analyze the current state of rural green tourism in Ukraine;
- To assess the tourism and recreation potential of rural areas of Ukraine;
- To identify and group promising types of innovations that are currently relevant for implementation in the practice of providing services in the field of rural green tourism in Ukraine;
- To determine the impact of global, national, and regional trends on the current stage of activity and further innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Innovative Directions of Rural Green Tourism Development

A review of scientific articles published on the topic of using innovations for sustainable economic development, circular economy, smart tourism destinations, and innovative ecosystems in the Scopus database during the last decade showed that this field of research is at the nascent stage [6]; therefore, conducting interdisciplinary research and focusing on the introduction of innovations in a certain industry is currently relevant.

Recent research trends among scientists (Miguéns et al. 2008, Gretzel et al. 2013) on the phenomenon of innovation in tourism reflect the importance of implementing information technologies, marketing strategies, and other innovative approaches to improve the quality of services, attract a wider audience, and develop sustainable tourism [10,11]. In the scientific works of Boes et al. [5], however, the authors do not focus specifically on rural green tourism.

A team of scientists led by Buhalis [9,12] noted that innovative technologies revolutionize the tourism industry and determine the strategy and competitiveness of tourist organizations and destinations. Technological changes such as the Internet of Things and autonomous devices, advanced analytical capabilities (artificial intelligence), and multimedia (virtual and augmented reality), according to scientists, are creating a smart environment in the tourism industry. However, the author's team examines in more detail innovative services that affect ecosystems and not the development of rural green tourism.

The following scientists make a significant contribution to the research of innovations in the field of tourism: Bochan [1], Vlashchenko [7], Roman, Roman, Prus [13], Romaniv [14]; however, the implementation of innovations specifically in rural green tourism is only partially mentioned in separate publications, and the recommendations are of a rather generalized nature.

The scientific works of Reed et al. and Cawley et al. [15,16] are devoted to the goals, tasks, challenges, and success strategies in the field of rural green tourism. Practical recommendations for the development and management of agritourism businesses and the planning of events and services, as well as interaction with the local community, only partially reveal the importance of developing innovative, unique, and attractive tourism products and services to take into account the needs and expectations of the target audience.

Taking into account the dynamics of the events taking place in the world (pandemic challenges, the era of digitalization and) and in Ukraine (military operations), the issue of forming a theoretical basis for the innovative development of the tourism industry and the field of rural green tourism in particular becomes important. However, studies of scientific works on the development of tourism, in particular, rural green, confirm that the problems of developing and implementing innovations in domestic tourism, the implementation of which would ensure the sustainable competitiveness of the tourism industry, have not been sufficiently studied, which is directly confirmed by the state of the domestic tourism industry.

### 2.2. Rural Green Tourism in Ukraine

About 700 million people travel around the world every year, of whom 10–30% choose rural tourism. The number of "green" trips in the domestic market in any country is much higher than that in other sectors of the industry. For example, in France, only 7% of business tourists stay in hotels, while the remaining 93% choose rural hotels and campsites [17].

According to the World Tourism Organization, green tourism was one of the five key strategic directions for the development of the tourism industry in the world until 2020 [17]. Today, green tourism is most common in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain, as well as Spain, Italy, and Germany. These and some other European countries, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, have united in the Central and Eastern European Federation for the Development of Rural Green Tourism.

In global practice, in rural areas, along with the development of agricultural activities, non-agricultural employment, including rural tourism, is becoming a source of additional

income. Since 1972, agritourism has been singled out as a separate sector of the economy. In Western Europe, rural tourism has been characterized by sustainable development since the early 1960s [18]. At present, this phenomenon is very widespread, although regional models of functioning of this type of destination differ significantly.

Today, rural tourism is developing at a fairly rapid pace and, in some countries, attracts a significant number of foreign tourists. Rural tourism, especially in the context of targeted development programs, has a multiplier effect on the preservation and development of rural areas and the rational use of their resource potential. It stimulates the development of private subsidiary farms. It expands the demand for environmentally friendly, natural food, as well as rural development, rural construction, crafts, culture, and identity; i.e., generally, it helps in solving socio-economic problems of rural areas, primarily employment problems. All of this ultimately affects the level of competitiveness of rural areas, which is manifested in the improvement of the welfare of residents [4].

As practice shows, the international community has a serious interest in this type of specific recreation. It is noteworthy that, today in Western Europe, there are about as many beds for holidaymakers in rural areas at the homes of their hosts as in hotels. The development of tourism leads to the dynamization of the village and its life, as it involves local resources, all local opportunities, and products produced in the village: wine, cheese, fruit, vegetables, folk art, and local crafts. However, for the development of rural green tourism, economic and organizational preconditions must be created, local authorities must be willing to promote and develop this type of tourism, and the existing housing stock must be used effectively.

Ukraine has great potential for rural green tourism due to its natural beauty, rich cultural traditions, historical heritage, and hospitable atmosphere. Additionally, rural green tourism in Ukraine is one of the favorable areas for the development of rural areas and the expansion of the country's tourism potential [19]. Picturesque villages, green forests, water bodies, and mountainous landscapes attract tourists who want to take a break from busy cities and enjoy the peace and harmony of nature.

Rural green tourism in Ukraine is not only a means of developing rural areas, but also contributes to the preservation of traditions and cultural heritage, as well as provides additional income to the local population [20]. The development of this type of tourism is important for creating new opportunities for the development of rural communities and preserving Ukraine's natural and cultural values.

However, in order to ensure a high level of competitiveness of rural green tourism in Ukraine, it is imperative to modernize approaches to its development and actively introduce innovations.

The global tourism industry has been in a deep economic crisis since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and forced epidemiological measures introduced by the World Health Organization. The tourism sectors of all countries have suffered great losses and are one of the most affected sectors of the economy in this period [21].

Rural green tourism in Ukraine, as in many other countries, has undergone both negative and positive changes during this period. At the beginning of the pandemic, restrictions on movement and lockdowns led to a decrease in the number of tourists visiting rural areas. Falling incomes of the population reduced the solvency of potential tourists, which led to a decrease in demand for tourist services. The lack of international tourists due to border closures has had a strong impact on those regions that depended on foreign visitors.

However, with restrictions on international travel, many Ukrainians have turned their attention to domestic tourism. Rural green tourism has become more popular as an alternative to mass tourism in big cities and popular resorts. Growing awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the desire to avoid mass gatherings of people has led to an increase in demand for outdoor recreation. The increase in domestic tourism has helped support local entrepreneurs and preserve jobs in rural areas.

Many rural green tourism facilities in Ukraine have implemented stricter safety and hygiene measures to protect guests from COVID-19. Before the outbreak of this virus, digital transformation was not part of the strategic plan of many actors in the travel industry, despite its benefits related to efficiency for saving time, creating a better experience for customers, increasing revenue, and supporting decision making. However, as in many other industries, proper physical distancing practices due to COVID-19 and government restrictions have acted as a catalyst and contributed to the digitalization of this industry as well [22]. The use of online booking platforms, virtual tours, the creation of new tours and activities aimed at small groups and families, and marketing have helped to attract new customers and ensure constant interaction with tourists. However, despite the initial difficulties, rural green tourism in Ukraine has shown its flexibility and ability to adapt to new conditions. The growth of domestic tourism and increased interest in ecological recreation have created new opportunities for the development of this sector [15].

Ukraine's tourism potential in the pre-war period was also enhanced by the active development of local communities. Communities, especially in the regions, created unique projects reflecting the peculiarities of their culture, history, and nature. Such initiatives not only contributed to the economic development of local areas, but also made travelling around Ukraine even more intense and exciting.

The war in Ukraine is the greatest challenge our country has ever faced. It has caused catastrophic destruction and damage and paralyzed many industries, including tourism. The incomes of a significant part of the Ukrainian population have sharply decreased, the primary task for many Ukrainians is survival, most people do not think about rest and travel, and many citizens have left the country to escape from the war.

In general, all tourism and recreation facilities are affected by the martial law due to increased security measures and restrictions on movement. The operation of these facilities is limited or suspended, and visitors face certain difficulties, including security. The specifics of recreation and the operation of tourist facilities in different regions of Ukraine during the period of martial law depend on the specific circumstances of the declaration of martial law and the degree of its impact on the region.

In this situation, domestic tourism, including rural tourism, has its own peculiarities in terms of certain permits and restrictions on recreation and travel introduced during the war in relatively safe western and central regions, which should be taken into account by tourism entities when creating and organizing excursions and travel.

The tourism industry in Ukraine, especially in the eastern regions, began to suffer major losses in 2014, when the Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, which was very popular among tourists, began. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, revenue from the tourism industry decreased from USD 1.8 billion in 2013 to USD 1.2 billion in 2016. Despite these challenges, the tourism industry in Ukraine has seen some signs of recovery in the recent years. In 2019, revenues generated by the tourism industry increased to USD 2.6 billion in the same year [23].

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February has already caused and continues to cause enormous damage to the population and infrastructure in the territory of the whole country. The war also affects the natural environment.

At present, it is not even possible to fully assess the impact of the war on the environment due to a lack of accurate information. There are two reasons for this: the first is that it is dangerous for professionals to collect these data, as active hostilities are ongoing; the second is that not all information can be made public for tactical purposes [23]. However, it is clear that the longer the war lasts, the more damage it will cause to the environment, and the worse consequences we will have in the future.

After the war, we will reap the rewards of hostilities—the destruction of ecosystems, soil pollution, reduced biodiversity, and an increase in the number of pests in forests. In addition, rebuilding the country will require a significant amount of natural resources. It is also important that Ukraine's recovery plan will include measures to restore and preserve

ecosystems with plans to rebuild settlements, including nature-based solutions and climate change adaptation measures.

It is important to emphasize that efforts to develop rural green tourism in post-war Ukraine should also aim to create conditions for every potential visitor (including people with PTSD and people with disabilities).

### 3. Materials and Methods

The main purpose of this article is to explore the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine and to identify the main directions of its innovative development, taking into account global, national, and regional trends.

To achieve this goal, the following methods were used:

- SLR (Systematic Literature Review)—review of published scientific works on the topic of this article for the purpose of critical analysis, evaluation, and generalization of data.
- Method of expert evaluation—studying the opinion of the target audience—owners of categorized rural green estates who are members of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine and conduct their activities in Ukraine.
- Selective observation—research of a selected population of the target audience—owners of categorized rural green estates who are members of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine and conduct their activities in Ukraine.
- Graphic method—for summarizing statistical data and their analysis.

The study of the recreational and tourist potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine was carried out by the authors of this article—the executors of the research work “Theoretical Foundations and Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Recreational and Tourist Potential of Territories” (state registration number 0121U114312), which is being carried out at the Department of Hotel and Restaurant Business and Tourism of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine with the assistance of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine [24].

The assessment was based on the statistical data and materials of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine. In addition to analyzing the available statistical information, a diagnostic survey was conducted among the target audience (the object of the study)—owners of categorized rural green farmsteads operating in Ukraine (52 farmsteads).

The sources of statistical information about tourism activities in Ukraine are tax, administrative, statistical, and financial reporting of business entities.

Today, statistical studies of rural green tourism in Ukraine do not provide complete and detailed information about the processes that take place in this area, users, and subjects of market relations. The huge shortcomings of statistical information on rural green tourism are its incomplete display, non-systematization, lack of a logical and clear structure of its presentation, and the legislative uncertainty of the “rural green tourism” category.

This causes difficulties in assessing the actual development potential of this industry and the underestimation of its development indicators. In addition, in Ukraine, most owners of rural green estates work as individuals, and they are not required to register and submit information about their activities. As a result, a situation arises in which the activities of citizens in the provision of rural green tourism services are accounted for by statistical bodies only partially, within the framework of information submitted by the subjects of relations registered by entrepreneurs, and natural persons, as members of a personal peasant economy, who are also engaged in this sphere, are not taken into account statistically; in order to obtain information about their activities, you have to use your own methods of information collection: relevant publications (newspapers, magazines, electronic resources, etc.) and interpersonal communication (interviews, telephone surveys, questionnaires).

Therefore, in order to find out the current state, existing problems and ways of innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine, it was decided to conduct a diagnostic survey of the target audience—registered members of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine [24]—a professional public organization that represents the field of rural green

tourism on the market of tourist services of Ukraine and unites the owners of peasant and farmer farms in a network under the “Ukrainian Hospitality Manor” quality mark.

The survey was conducted by selective observation; i.e., patterns and characteristics of any general population are determined by the study of a certain part of it. The general population for the survey included 52 registered members of the Union of Rural Green Tourism of Ukraine at the time of the survey (from 14 September to 5 December 2023) [25]; the sample population for the survey was 50, who received questionnaires (96%). The sample population for the survey was considered to be representative, as it accurately reflects the general population.

The potential of 20 farmsteads in the western region, 20 farmsteads in the central and northern regions, 8 farmsteads in the eastern region, and 3 farmsteads in the southern region of Ukraine was studied (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Map of the survey regions. Source: [25].

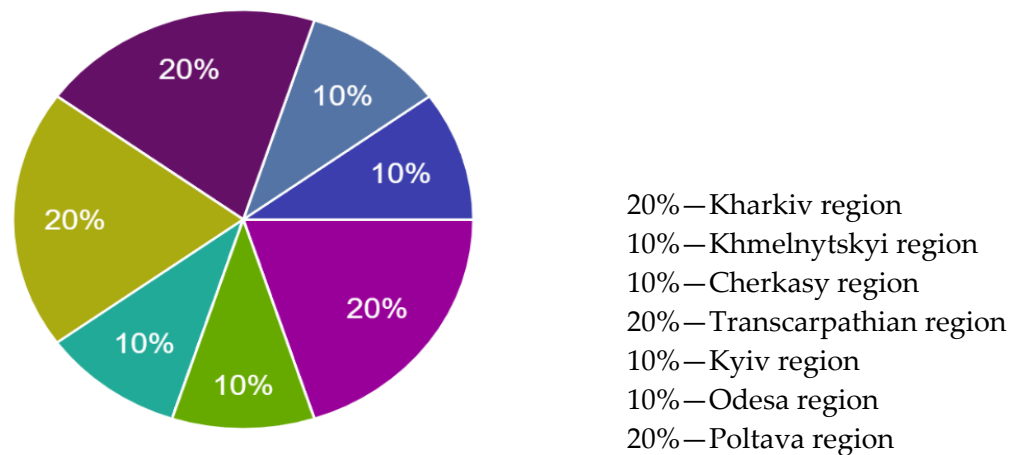
A survey tool was used as a research tool, i.e., a survey sheet, which provides for the recording of answers. The survey questionnaire was developed by the authors of this article on the basis of the components of the potential of rural green tourism determined in previous studies [26] and provided to respondents in the form of Google Forms using social networks (such as Facebook).

It included 16 questions (mostly closed questions, the answer to which consists in choosing one of the given options), with 6 questions for assessing the business potential of rural green tourism in the region of operation and directly assessing the rural green homestead and 5 questions determining the prospects for the development of rural green

homesteads and rural green tourism in Ukraine. A total of 50 copies of completed questionnaires were received.

The purpose of the survey was to Investigate the recreational and tourist potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine to reveal the peculiarities of the development of Ukrainian rural communities and the tourism business in the current conditions. The purpose was to envision their strategy for the future in order to find investors, partners, and all those interested in restoring the tourism business.

The segmentation of the surveyed respondents by region is shown in Figure 2.

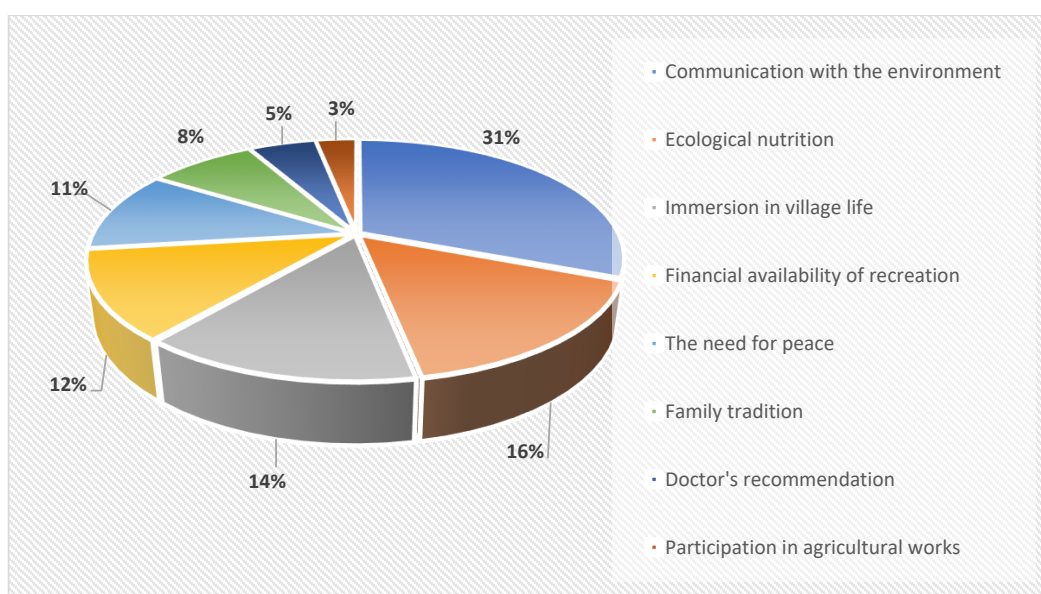


**Figure 2.** Place of activity in the field of rural green tourism of the surveyed respondents. Source: author’s own survey.

The study let assess the recreational and tourist potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine and identify the main directions of its innovative development by taking into account global, national, and regional trends.

**4. Results**

By studying the demand and reasons for using rural green tourism services, the reasons for choosing this type of recreation were identified (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Reasons for recreation in rural areas. Source: [27].



Figure 3 shows that a large proportion (31%) of tourists who holiday in rural areas prefer to communicate with the environment by enjoying the scenery, swimming in water bodies, walking in the woods, and picking berries and mushrooms.

A total of 16% of tourists say that the reason for their holiday is to eat ecologically friendly food, i.e., products that households grow themselves.

Immersion in rural life, learning about customs and traditions, and participating in rural entertainment are typical among 14% of tourists.

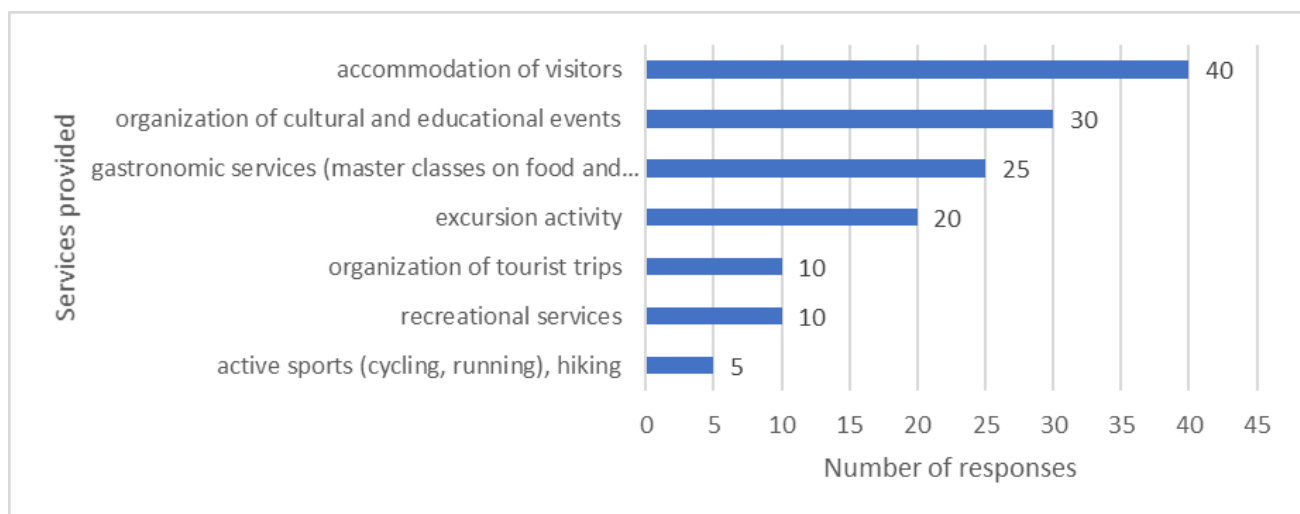
A total of 12% of tourists visit rural areas because of their affordability, as not everyone can afford an expensive holiday at a resort outside Ukraine.

The need for tranquility is significant among 11% of the population, as a result of which people take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city, calm down, and recuperate.

A total of 8.5% of tourists have a family tradition of such holidays, and 5% of the population explained their need to use rural green tourism only on the recommendation of a doctor.

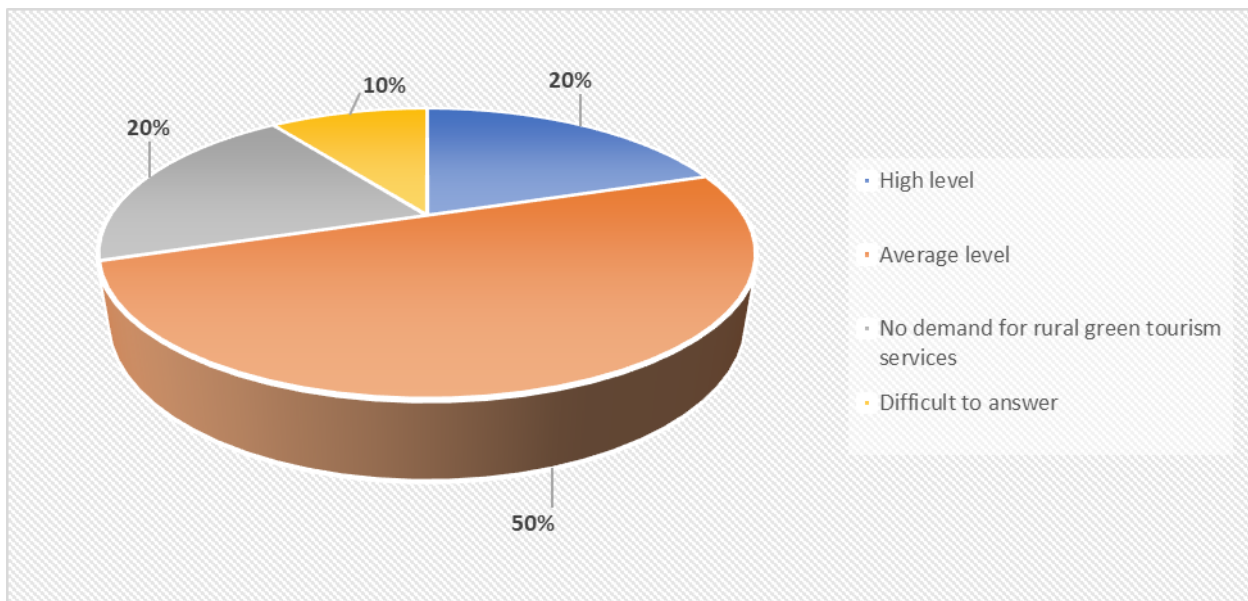
Only 2.5% of tourists explain the use of this type of recreation as an opportunity to participate in agricultural work of their own free will.

In terms of the nature and specifics of the activities of the studied farmsteads, the survey results showed that most of them specialize in accommodating visitors, organizing cultural and educational activities, providing gastronomic services, and organizing cooking and beverage master classes. However, there are also specific services, such as recreational services; organizing hiking trips; active sports, including cycling tours, running, and hiking; tasting craft cheeses; etc. (Figure 4).



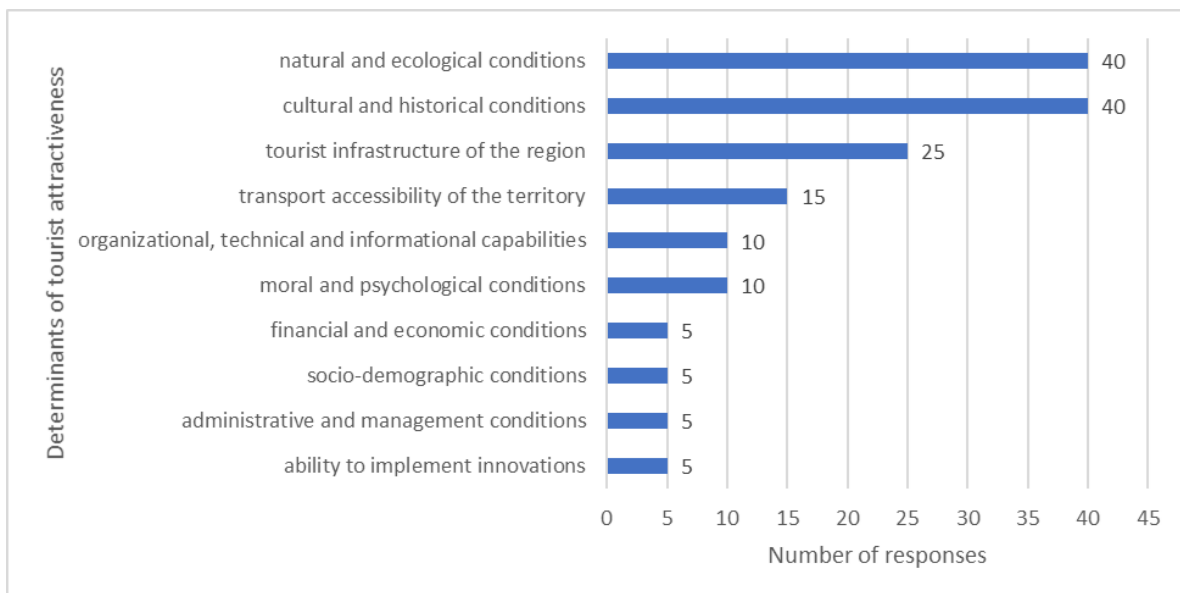
**Figure 4.** Diversification of services provided by the surveyed respondents in the field of rural green tourism. Source: author's own survey.

Despite the impact of negative factors such as forced epidemiological measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and full-scale military operations in Ukraine, respondents noted that rural green tourism is in medium demand in most farmsteads (50% of respondents), and only 20% of farmsteads have a significantly reduced demand for services (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Level of demand for rural green tourism services in communities. Source: author’s own survey.

The results of the assessment of the tourist and recreational potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine have shown that the recreational and tourist attractiveness of rural areas is mainly determined by natural and environmental conditions, cultural and historical conditions, and the tourist infrastructure of the region (Figure 6). The recreational and tourist attractiveness of rural areas is negatively affected by financial, economic, socio-demographic, administrative, and managerial conditions, as well as the low ability of the rural population to implement innovations.



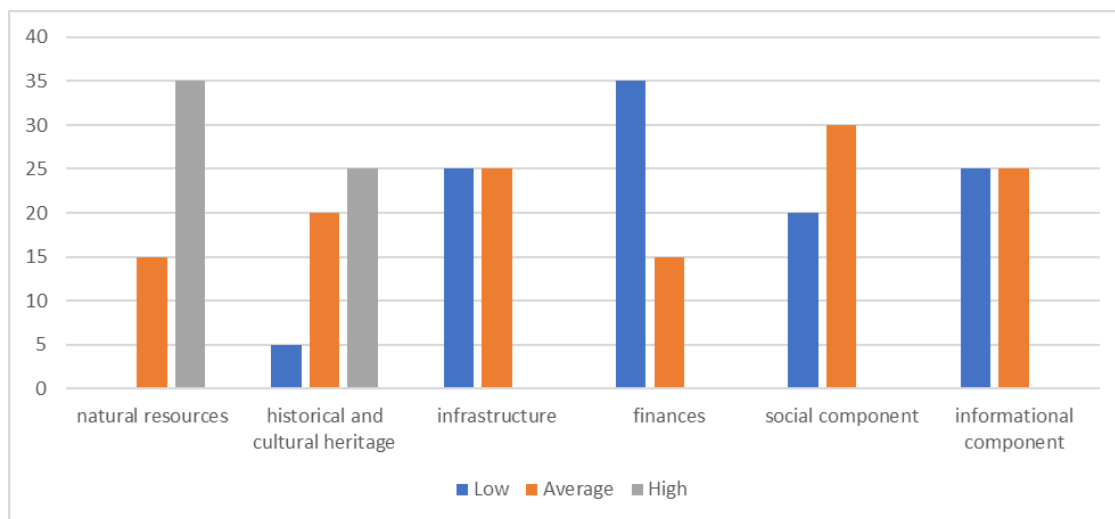
**Figure 6.** Determinants of the tourist attractiveness of rural areas in the regions of Ukraine. Source: author’s own survey.

In previous studies, authors identified the components of the business potential of rural green tourism in communities [26], namely,

- Natural resources (potential of natural resources, recreational capacity of the territory;
- Resilience of natural complexes to recreational pressure, etc.;

- Historical and cultural heritage (saturation of the territory with historical and cultural monuments; historical, cultural, and other value of monuments; current state and level of preservation of historical and cultural resources; etc.);
- Infrastructure (provision of the territory with accommodation facilities for different categories of tourists and recreationists, sufficient number of places in accommodation facilities, restaurant facilities, transport accessibility of the territory, etc.);
- Finance (state subsidies, grant projects, availability of investors, etc.);
- Social component (a sufficient number of professional workers in the tourism and recreation sector, availability or accessibility of educational institutions that train tourism professionals);
- Information component (technological capabilities of using information systems and technologies by NRT entities, availability of specialized information products for NRT, etc.).

The results of the study of the business potential of rural green tourism in communities where services in the field of rural green tourism are provided are presented in the form of a diagram (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** The level of components of the business potential of rural green tourism in communities. Source: author's own survey.

The rural communities in Ukraine undoubtedly have natural resources and historical and cultural heritage at the high level, while at the low level, they mainly have financial support, infrastructure, and information components.

Agreeing with the opinions of leading scientists [8,15,16], it is believed that the introduction of innovations plays an important role in ensuring the sustainable and balanced development of rural tourism in Ukraine, contributing to the creation of new opportunities and improving the quality of tourist services. Innovations expand opportunities to develop new tourism products and services that would meet the needs of modern tourists (development of thematic routes, active recreation in the countryside, culinary tours, or participation in crafts and art workshops).

Innovation helps farms and rural green tourism businesses differentiate themselves in the market by creating something unique and attractive to tourists, which helps to increase the competitiveness of rural regions as tourist destinations.

Innovation can be a stimulus for investment in rural tourism, as the development of new tourist facilities, infrastructure, and services can attract investors who see the potential in the sector and are ready to invest in it.

The innovative development of rural green tourism can contribute to the creation of new jobs and support of the local economy. Additionally, the implementation of innova-

tions can contribute to the preservation and reproduction of cultural heritage and natural resources in rural areas, attracting tourists to unique objects and local traditions. The survey on the vision of the owners of rural green homesteads in Ukraine about opportunities and various innovations in their field of activity made it possible to identify and group promising types of innovations that are currently relevant for implementation in the practice of providing services in the field of rural green tourism in Ukraine (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Innovations in rural green tourism in Ukraine for 2024.

Innovations in Rural Green Tourism	Opportunities and Results of Implementation		
	General Trend	Businesses	Tourists
Eco-consciousness	Demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable practices is growing.	Farms are implementing solar panels, composting, rainwater harvesting, eco-building, and other eco-friendly solutions.	Tourists are looking for farm products grown without chemicals and organic food.
Technologies	Active implementation of digital technologies.	Use of online platforms for booking, marketing, and communication with tourists. Implementation of virtual reality for 3D tours of the estates and the surrounding area.	Use of mobile applications for navigation, information about local attractions, and route planning.
Authenticity	Agritourism is growing in popularity, where tourists can take part in agricultural work.	Farms offer master classes in traditional crafts, local food tastings, themed festivals, and excursions.	Tourists are looking for a unique experience and familiarity with local culture.
Active recreation	Glamping is growing in popularity, combining a comfortable vacation with unity with nature.	Farms set up routes, offer equipment rental, and organize guided tours.	Tourists are looking for opportunities for hiking, cycling, horseback riding, fishing, kayaking, and other activities.
Personalization	There is a growing popularity of custom tours, which are designed to meet the specifics of a particular estate and area.	Farms offer packages tailored to the interests and needs of tourists.	Tourists are looking for an individualized approach and flexibility in planning their vacation.
Accessibility	There is a growing demand for accessible tourism for people with different physical abilities.	Businesses are equipping ramps, adapting bathrooms, and offering services for people with disabilities. Estates specializing in hosting families with small children are appearing.	Rural green tourism is becoming more accessible to different categories of tourists.
Social responsibility	There is a growing demand for tourism that supports local communities and ecosystems. Part of the proceeds from tours can be used to support social projects and environmental preservation.	Farms cooperate with local artisans, farmers, and other entrepreneurs.	Conscious and ethical behavior of tourists, aimed at maximizing the preservation of nature, cultural heritage, and the well-being of the local communities they visit.

Source: authors' elaboration.

These are just the main examples of innovations that can make rural green tourism more dynamic, environmentally friendly, accessible, and interesting for tourists. It is important to note that innovations in this area are constantly evolving, and new trends appear every year.

Eco-awareness is becoming increasingly important for tourists looking for opportunities to relax in nature without harming the environment. Here are some examples of how eco-consciousness is being implemented in rural green tourism:

- Energy efficiency, including the use of energy-saving lamps and household appliances, the introduction of solar panels for electricity generation, and the use of alternative energy sources such as wind turbines and biogas;
- Water conservation, which includes installing water-saving nozzles on taps and showers, using rainwater to water plants, and encouraging tourists to use water sparingly;

- Waste reduction, which includes composting food waste, recycling, and using reusable tableware and textiles;
- Environmentally friendly products, including growing organic food without the use of chemicals, purchasing food from local farmers, and offering vegetarian and vegan dishes to tourists.

Eco-transportation involves encouraging tourists to use bicycles, electric cars, and public transport and offering transfers with eco-transportation;

Environmental education involves conducting excursions and lectures about nature and the environment, encouraging tourists to take care of nature, and supporting environmental conservation projects.

Eco-consciousness is not just a trend, but a necessity for environmental preservation. Rural green tourism plays an important role in promoting eco-consciousness and environmentally friendly practices. Tourists who choose eco-conscious farmsteads contribute to the preservation of nature for future generations. Eco-conscious tourism is responsible tourism that contributes to the preservation of the planet.

Technology in rural green tourism is playing an increasingly important role in the development of rural green tourism. It helps in booking and managing estates more efficiently, promoting services to a wider audience, and providing tourists with better service and experience [28].

Below is a characterization of a few of technologies being used in rural green tourism:

- **Online booking.** Tourists can book farmsteads online through websites, booking platforms, and mobile applications. This saves time and resources for both farms and tourists. The online booking system can be integrated with the farmstead's website to show available dates and prices.
- **Marketing.** Farmsteads can use websites, social media, blogs, and other online channels to promote their farmsteads. They can use online advertising to reach a wider audience. Virtual tours and 3D panoramas can help tourists have a better idea of the farmstead and the surrounding area.
- **Communication.** Businesses can use mobile apps, chatbots, and other online tools to communicate with tourists [29]. This can help them answer questions, provide information, and solve tourists' problems. Mobile applications can also be used to navigate the farmstead and the surrounding area.
- **Information.** Farmsteads can use websites, mobile apps, and other online tools to provide tourists with information about the farmstead, local attractions, routes, and other services. This can help tourists plan their vacation and make it more interesting.
- **Personalization.** Businesses can use online tools to offer tourists personalized services and packages. This can help them better meet the needs and interests of tourists.
- **Accessibility.** Technology can help make rural green tourism more accessible to people with different needs. For example, websites and mobile apps can be translated into different languages. Virtual tours can help people with disabilities to better visualize the farmstead and the surrounding area.

Technology is constantly evolving, and new innovations appear every year. Rural green tourism has a great potential to utilize these innovations to become more dynamic, environmentally friendly, accessible, and interesting for tourists [19]. The use of technology can help rural green tourism farms increase their competitiveness, attract more tourists, and make their businesses more successful.

Authenticity is one of the key factors that makes rural green tourism so attractive to tourists. People are looking for an opportunity to get to know the local culture, way of life, and traditions. Innovations can help preserve the authenticity of rural green tourism and make it more interesting and accessible to tourists. Here are examples of how innovations can be used to preserve the authenticity of rural green tourism:

- **Virtual reality—virtual tours of traditional farmsteads, craft workshops;**

- Mobile applications—audio guides to local attractions, stories about local legends and traditions;
- Interactive museums—open-air museums where you can be acquainted with traditional life and crafts;
- Eco-tourism—preservation of the natural environment, use of traditional farming methods.

It is important that innovations do not harm the authenticity of rural green tourism. New technologies and practices should be organically integrated into the local context and meet the needs and expectations of tourists.

By preserving authenticity and embracing innovation, rural green tourism farms can make their businesses more competitive and attractive to tourists.

This will help preserve and develop rural areas and improve the well-being of the local population. It is important to find a balance between authenticity and innovation to preserve the uniqueness of rural green tourism and make it more attractive to tourists. Active tourism is becoming increasingly popular among tourists who are looking for new experiences and want to combine leisure with active pursuits. Rural green tourism has great potential for the development of active tourism, as it offers many opportunities for the following:

- Hiking—scenic routes, eco-trails, thematic excursions;
- Cycling—cycle routes of varying difficulties, bicycle rental;
- Equestrian sports—horseback riding, riding lessons;
- Water tourism—river rafting, kayaking, rafting;
- Fishing—equipped places for fishing, gear rental;
- Hunting—organized game hunting;
- Winter sports—skiing, snowboarding, ice skating;
- Agritourism—participation in agricultural works, tasting of farm products.

Innovations such as the following make active tourism in rural areas more interesting, accessible, and safe:

- Mobile applications for route navigation, booking excursions, equipment rental;
- GPS trackers for tracking routes, ensuring the safety of tourists;
- Virtual reality for visualization of routes, familiarization with local attractions;
- Electronic bicycles to save energy and overcome difficult routes;
- Drones for aerial photography and video recording of routes;
- Eco-tourism—use of environmentally friendly vehicles, preservation of the natural environment.

In Ukraine, the mobile application “Haydamaki” is already used in rural green tourism, which offers routes for hiking and cycling in the Carpathians.

Active tourism can become an important factor in the development of rural areas. It can stimulate infrastructure development, create new jobs, and increase local incomes.

Personalization is becoming more and more important for tourists who are looking for a unique experience and that feeling that their needs and interests are taken into account. Rural green tourism has great potential for personalization, as it offers many opportunities for the following:

- Individual approach—farms can flexibly approach the planning of routes, accommodation, and additional services, taking into account the interests of tourists;
- Thematic tours—farms can organize tours for lovers of nature, history, crafts, gastronomy, etc.;
- Special offers—farms can offer packages of services for families with children, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.

Innovations can help make personalization in rural green tourism more effective by using the following:

- Mobile applications: for booking services, taking into account the interests of tourists, drawing up individual routes;
- System of recommendations for the selection of estates and services, taking into account the previous requests of tourists;
- Virtual reality for the visualization of estates and services before booking.

Personalization helps to make rural green tourism more attractive to tourists and increase their satisfaction from recreation. It is important to collect information about the needs and interests of tourists and use it to personalize services. Personalization can also help rural green tourism businesses improve their competitiveness and increase profits.

Rural green tourism should be accessible to all people, regardless of their physical capabilities and needs, especially in the post-war recovery period of Ukraine. This means that farms must make their properties and services accessible to people with disabilities, the elderly, families with young children, and other population groups.

There are examples of how businesses can make their services more accessible, as listed below:

- Ensure the availability of ramps and lifts for people in wheelchairs;
- Equip bathrooms for people with disabilities;
- Offer interpreter services for people with hearing impairments;
- Provide information about the availability of the estate and services on the website;
- Provide it as well in brochures and other advertising materials.

It is also important to consider the needs of other population groups, such as the following:

- Elderly people may need help with moving and carrying luggage;
- Families with small children may need a playground and other facilities for children.

Accessibility not only is a moral imperative, but also can help rural green tourism businesses increase their customer base. It is clear that by making their services more accessible, rural green tourism farms can make their businesses more successful and attractive for a wide range of tourists. Accessibility can also help make rural areas more inclusive and attractive to live in.

Social responsibility in rural green tourism is manifested in the fact that rural green tourism has great potential for a positive impact on local communities [16], such as the following:

- Create new jobs;
- Stimulate the development of local business;
- Preserve local culture and traditions;
- Raise the standard of living of the local population.

However, rural green tourism can also have a negative impact on the environment and local communities if not developed responsibly. Social responsibility means that rural green tourism businesses must consider the impact of their activities on local communities and the environment and take measures to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts.

Here are a few examples of how rural green tourism businesses can demonstrate social responsibility:

- Use of local products and services;
- Involving local residents to work in the tourism industry;
- Support of local artisans and artists;
- Preservation of natural resources and protection of the environment;
- Support of social projects and initiatives in the local community.

Social responsibility is an important factor for many tourists choosing a holiday destination and can also help rural green tourism businesses to increase their competitiveness.

In order for the tourist business to be able to quickly adapt to the normal state, it is necessary to introduce innovative types of tourism that will make it possible to attract a larger number of people to the tourist business and establish additional income due to the introduction of new offers, new tours, visits to special places, and the entire range of

services of the best quality, which will contribute to the accelerated implementation of online forms and digital tools in the provision of tourist services, etc.

The results of the assessment of the potential of rural green tourism of Ukraine in the context of global trends in the development of rural tourism proved that the country has certain opportunities for reorientation to the modern demands and expectations of tourists and the active implementation of innovations in the tourism industry (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Assessment of the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine with a focus on global trends.

Global Trends	Assessment	
	Positive Side	Negative Side
Environmental awareness and eco-tourism	Rural tourism of Ukraine actively promotes and implements ecological practices, such as the use of renewable resources, nature conservation, and appropriate land use; this contributes to its attractiveness for eco-tourists.	There are problems with environmental awareness and nature conservation; this reduces the attractiveness of the country for tourists who focus on environmentally friendly recreation.
Agritourism and interaction with local communities	Rural tourism contributes to the development of local communities and stimulates the economy through cooperation with agricultural enterprises, artisans, and local resident; this indicates positive social relations.	In some regions of Ukraine, agrotourism bypasses local communities and does not bring them benefits; this causes certain conflicts and a negative attitude towards the tourism business.
Digital technologies and online sales	Farms and guesthouses are starting to offer digital technologies for reservations and marketing, which makes it somewhat easier for tourists to access and increase their satisfaction with services.	In most agricultural estates in the regions of Ukraine, there is no or limited integration of digital tools; this leads to a loss of tourism demand, as many people search and book travel online.
Loyalty to local products and culture	Rural tourism of Ukraine contributes to the development and popularization of local culture and traditional art and gastronomic traditions, which makes it attractive to tourists.	In some farms, there is a lack of loyalty to local products and culture, which causes a loss of authenticity, which is not in line with the global trend of seeking unique experiences.
General assessment	Taking into account the aspects defined above, the activity of rural green tourism in Ukraine can be called successful; it tries to meet global trends and take into account the needs and expectations of the modern tourist.	Deficiencies in the above-mentioned areas can lead to a loss of competitiveness and a negative impact on the sustainability of the tourism business in the country.

Source: own resource.

The results of our expert research showed that, currently, the greatest positive influence on the development of tourism in Ukraine is global trends such as migration processes and great attention of the world community to Ukraine. The negative influence includes global climate change and military action.

We believe that, in order for the tourism business to be able to quickly adapt to the normal state, it is necessary to introduce innovative areas of activity. The emergence of new directions and the use of world trends is another additional opportunity to attract a larger number of people to the tourism business and establish additional income due to the introduction of new offers, new tours, visits to special cities, and the entire spectrum of the best-quality services.

Countries are beginning to refocus on stimulating the development of domestic tourism and promoting the accelerated implementation of online forms and digital tools in the provision of tourist services. However, taking into account the current unstable situation in the country and restrictions on travel abroad for certain categories of men and women, we can assume that the purchasing power of the population will further decrease, so the demand for budget domestic tours will increase. In this connection, the subjects of the tourism industry need to concentrate their efforts specifically on the domestic travel segment, studying and promoting potentially promising destinations and developing new offers. Due to the population's fear of large crowds, it is likely that tourism will become more and more individualized, and the popularity of ecotourism, which has great potential in Ukraine, will increase. The consequence of such a crisis will be increased attention of tourists to travel safety. Tourist business entities need to direct the vector of their development to the following key points:



- Concentrate on the domestic tourism segment;
- Determine the main priority directions of domestic tourism, taking into account the available resources and folk traditions;
- Develop new offers focused on budget and individual tourism;
- Expand opportunities for ecological, rural tourism;
- Improve the quality of service to tourists;
- Take into account the sanitary and epidemiological state and safety factors of places where tourists stay, the quality of insurance services;
- Contribute to the digital transformation of the processes of operation and development of the tourism industry, etc.

National trends in the development of rural green tourism, nevertheless, contribute to its popularity and success in many regions of Ukraine.

The results of our expert research showed that, currently, the greatest positive influence on the development of tourism in Ukraine has national trends such as the activities of the Association for the Promotion of the Development of Rural Green Tourism in Ukraine and the stimulation of small entrepreneurship. The negative influence includes the political situation in the country, the economic situation in the country, and the legislative framework regarding activities in the field of rural green tourism (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Assessment of the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine with a focus on national trends.

National Trends	Assessment
Government and regulatory support	Attracting support from national authorities and the development of an effective regulatory framework is rather slow, and this has a negative impact on the development of rural tourism.
National tourist programs	Far from all regions of Ukraine are trying to integrate into national tourist programs; if this activity is successful, it will help to increase the volume of tourist flow in the regions.
Natural and cultural resources	Ukraine has significant potential in the form of natural landscapes and cultural heritage. This is one of the key success factors.
Infrastructure and service	Infrastructure development and quality service are local components of rural green tourism. Ukraine has the opportunity to improve hotels, restaurants, and other tourist services.
Active promotion and marketing	Cooperation with marketing agencies, publications on social networks, and other marketing activities help to attract attention and increase the flow of tourists.
Participation of local communities	The involvement of local residents in the development of tourism strengthens the effectiveness of rural green tourism in the regions and contributes to the creation of an authentic and attractive image of the regions.
Environmental sustainability	Nature conservation and environmental sustainability are key aspects of the future development of Ukraine's regions. In many regions, the implementation of environmentally friendly practices and the attraction of environmentally conscious tourists are already underway.
Partnerships with local entrepreneurs and farmers	Collaboration with local rural entrepreneurs and farmers can further enrich tourism offers, creating new opportunities for visitors and promoting the development of agricultural industries.

Source: own resource.

In general, if Ukraine successfully implements strategies to improve infrastructure, promote and preserve natural and cultural resources, and take into account modern trends in the development of rural green tourism when providing services, this can lead to a further increase in the attractiveness of its regions for tourists and contribute to the sustainable economic growth of rural areas [30].

Unfortunately, many regions of Ukraine still have an underdeveloped recreational potential, which requires the search for alternative and effective incentives for its rational use for recreational and touristic purposes [16]. Additionally, the creation and development

of agro-recreational service solves a number of pressing social problems in many regions, in particular, mass unemployment, foreign employment, difficult social climate, etc.

The results of our expert research showed that, currently, the biggest positive impact on the development of tourism in Ukraine is regional trends such as the creation and development of agro-recreational services in the region. The negative impact includes underdeveloped recreational potential of the region, the level of qualification of rural residents of the region, and lack of a strategy and business development plan.

The results of the assessment of rural green tourism in Ukraine with an emphasis on regional trends are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Assessment of the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine with a focus on regional trends.

Regional Trends	Assessment
Development of infrastructure and service	In accordance with the possibilities and the modern tourism situation, the infrastructure is constantly being improved, which creates certain conveniences for traveling in rural areas, including comfort and satisfaction of tourists. Infrastructure development has a positive effect on the attractiveness of regions for visitors.
Attracting investments	Currently, there is no active flow of investments in the field of rural tourism [31,32]. Guest estates are independently looking for grants and projects for development.
Marketing and branding of the region	Regional trends include the active use of marketing and digital channels for the provision of tourism services. Regions try to use these tools to promote their services.
Natural and cultural resources	The region takes measures to protect and economically use its unique natural and cultural resources and support the preservation of traditions and local culture.
Loyalty of local communities	Local communities actively interact with the tourism industry of the regions.
Development of agricultural industries	Partnerships with local farmers and entrepreneurs create new tourism offers and expand sales markets for local agricultural products.
Environmental sustainability	Local communities of the oblasts apply environmentally friendly and sustainability-oriented practices in tourism.

Source: own resource.

In general, the success of rural green tourism in Ukraine in the future in the process of post-war recovery will depend on how effectively these aspects are implemented and taken into account in development strategies. It is important to respond to regional trends, contributing to sustainable development and increasing the competitiveness of regions in the tourism industry.

Despite the spread of rural green tourism in the labor market, its development in the regions of Ukraine is hampered by a number of reasons. There was a problem of understanding the possibilities of the mechanism in which market models function, leading to an innovative approach to reforming the financial and credit system, the management system, and the economic mechanism in the country [33].

In the regions of Ukraine today, the biggest obstacles to the development of rural green tourism are considered to be transport accessibility (remoteness of places of rest) and insufficient tourist facilities in rural areas. The efforts of local and regional authorities and territorial communities must include the following:

- Updating the communication infrastructure;
- The implementation of the use of private cars for visitors in order to overcome the difficulties of visiting regions that are at a considerable distance from the initial points of travel;
- Stimulating the development of touristic forms of small business, in particular, in rural areas, will contribute to the development of the overnight base and will bring the standards of rural hospitality closer to the generally accepted international standards of hotel service [34]. Thus, for the development of rural green tourism in Ukraine,

it is necessary to introduce effective regulation at the both regional and state level, encouraging villagers to engage in this type of activity, encouraging estate owners to register and legalize their activities, developing tourist infrastructure in rural areas, implementing innovations, etc. Only then will this type of tourism be able to gain popularity and fulfill all the functions assigned to it in the regions of Ukraine.

## 5. Discussion

As it has been noted above, research into the directions of innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine is fragmentary; therefore, based on the results of existing publications on this topic [6], the current state of development of the industry was analyzed, identifying trends and determining the main directions of its innovative development, taking into account global, national, and regional trends.

Agreeing with the opinions of leading scientists [8,15,16], this research came to the conclusion that the introduction of innovations plays one of the key roles in ensuring sustainable and balanced development of rural tourism in Ukraine. Based on the results of the study, it was determined that, in modern economic conditions, rural tourism serves as a stabilizing factor that will contribute not only to maintaining the normal living standards of rural residents, but also to the development of the regional economy, service infrastructure, household services, and the social sphere. Thus, rural green tourism is the main tool for stimulating the economic and socio-cultural development of rural areas.

Deepening the research of the potential of innovative development and directions of transformation of management processes of tourism enterprises [2], we assessed the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine during the period of challenges for Ukraine (post-pandemic recovery of the tourism industry, military operations on the territory of Ukraine). We added examples of the application of innovations in tourism [14], promising types of innovations that are currently relevant for implementation in the practice of providing services specifically in the field of rural green tourism of Ukraine through the prism of general trends in the innovative development of the tourism industry and the activities of rural green tourism service providers and needs of tourists.

The importance of implementing information technologies, marketing strategies, and other innovative approaches to improve the quality of services, attract more tourists, and develop sustainable tourism is discussed in some works [9–12], and received further development in our recommendations regarding the ways and possibilities of active implementation of digital technologies in the activities of rural green tourism, namely, online platforms for booking, marketing, and communication with tourists; the implementation of virtual reality for 3D tours of estates and surroundings; the use of mobile applications and chatbots for navigation; and information about local attractions and route planning.

In order to develop the implementation of ecologically clean and sustainable practices and the development of smart tourist destinations in rural green tourism, which is currently relevant in tourism, we added the innovative and intellectual components of sustainable tourism development [5] and the principles of sustainable tourism development by proposing the use of innovative approaches and technologies for the development and promotion of tourist destinations, which emphasize the preservation of nature and the reduction of negative impact on the environment, in particular, the use of environmentally friendly types of transport for the movement of tourists, the creation of ecologically balanced hotels and campsites, and the organization of ecotours with an emphasis on the support of nature reserves and ecosystems.

Theoretical, methodical and practical aspects of increasing the competitiveness of the tourism business in the conditions of globalization through the prism of sustainable development, innovation, and modernization [35] and practical recommendations for success strategies in the field of rural green tourism [36,37] received further development in the directions of innovative development of rural green tourism, taking into account global, national, and regional trends during pandemic challenges [38–42], in the period of military actions and post-war development.

The results of our research on ways of innovative development of rural green tourism in Ukraine will be useful for practitioners, owners of rural green estates, and tourist organizations by providing relevant, scientifically based information about trends and innovative practices in rural green tourism in Ukraine.

The scientific and practical provisions presented in the article can stimulate the owners of rural green estates to implement innovative ideas and solutions in their business processes and help them make more sound strategies for the development of their businesses in rural green tourism, taking into account the innovative approaches indicated in the study, to achieve success and increase the competitiveness of its tourism products and services, as well as to respond more effectively to the needs and expectations of tourists.

## 6. Conclusions

The purpose of the article was to investigate the potential of rural green tourism in Ukraine and to determine the main directions of its innovative development, taking into account global, national, and regional trends. A number of measures were taken to achieve the goal:

- The current state of rural green tourism in Ukraine was analyzed;
- The tourism and recreation potential of rural areas of Ukraine was assessed;
- Promising types of innovations that are currently relevant for implementation in the practice of providing services in the field of rural green tourism in Ukraine were defined and grouped;
- The impact of global, national, and regional trends on the current stage of activity and further development of rural green tourism in Ukraine were determined.

The purpose of the article was achieved, thanks to the analysis of available statistical data and research of the results of the survey of subjects of rural green tourism of Ukraine.

Intermediate conclusions for each stage of the study are given in the “Results” section. Summing up, we note that, taking into account national traditions and mentality, promising directions for the development of the tourism sphere of Ukraine in the near future should be considered—domestic, rural (green), gastronomic, and historical–cultural types of tourism and, accordingly, innovative tourism products and services created on their basis, etc. The main problem in the way of active introduction of innovations in the field of rural green tourism can be called the low ability of the rural population to implement innovations (Figure 6). The issue of interaction between local communities, business, and government structures in the process of innovative development of rural tourism remains insufficiently researched. Here, it is necessary to approach the solution of this problem comprehensively, and our subsequent publications will be devoted to this. However, the preserved ethno-cultural identity of the historical regions of our country, the natural and recreational resources, and the intellectual potential of the nation are an exclusive, international tourist, competitive advantage that will allow Ukraine to be among the main centers of rural tourism development in Europe.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; methodology, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; software, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; validation, M.R.; formal analysis, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; investigation, M.R.; resources, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; data curation, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; writing—original draft preparation, M.R., I.K., V.S. and N.K.; writing—review and editing, M.R.; visualization, M.R.; supervision, M.R.; project administration, M.R.; funding acquisition, M.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Ethical review and approval were waived due to Laws of 2018, item 1668, ACT of July 20, 2018 in Poland (<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20180001668/U/D20181668Lj.pdf> (accessed on 21 May 2024)).

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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