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Substantiation of geotourism development strategy in Ukraine

Introduction

Changes in geopolitical situation, social and economical development, modernization of informational technologies significantly influenced the dynamic of international tourism, led to tourism industry transformation with an orientation on meeting the diverse needs of people who travel.

Ukraine occupies a leading position in Europe concerning a level of availability of valuable natural, historical and cultural resources, causing a great interest for native and foreign tourists.

However, according to the World Economic Forum 2012 in the field of travel and tourism, Ukraine among 140 countries ranked only 76th (Czech Republic - 31, Hungary - 39, Poland - 42, Slovakia - 54, Russia - 63, Romania - 68). The above indicates that in international tourism market, Ukrainian national tourism product and natural resources are estimated to be

less attractive and competitive than in other countries, where there is a global trend towards strengthening the role of the state in supporting tourism development. Although in 2010, Ukraine held 85th position, which shows a positive tendency in the world ranking of tourist most attractive countries. According to the World Tourism Organization in 2011, Ukraine entered the top ten European countries by the number of tourists entry (21.42 million) [UNWTO Tourism Highlights]. In order to avoid losing this positive tendency, the development of innovative types of tourism in Ukraine, geotourism particularly, should be encouraged

The main material.

The concept of "geotourism" is fairly new to the community, that is also a reason why tourists use it so rarely, nevertheless in professional circles it is quite common. So what is geotourism?

Result of research

History of the concept of "geotourism" (full title "geological tourism") is not complex. Many books, research papers, reports have been written on the subject of geology. The main idea of geology is that it examines the features of relief on the earth surface, which were formed as a result of various processes. The word «geology» (geology) comes from the Greek «geo» - land and «logia» - knowledge/teachings. Thus "geology" means - "the doctrine of the earth."

While the concept of geology was being detailly researched by scientists, other researchers focused on the concept of "tourism", but only few combined these two concepts together.

One of the first scientists to combine geology and tourism became Myurey Grey in 2004. In her book "Geovariety: evaluation and conservation of abiotic nature" Grey proved that the two are clearly intertwined with each other. The author draws a parallel between geology and tourism from the point of view that the development of different areas is an important economic component, but it can cause damage to biodiversity and geovariety.

During the development of the theme of the book, author concludes that the location of the relief features must be preserved, and moreover, they must be protected, thus the topic of how tourism can affect the conservation of nature attractions was considered. The book also examines positive combination of geology and tourism [Murray, 2004].

Other researchers such as Ross Dovling and David Newsam perceive geotourism as the one that can provide a better knowledge and understanding of Earth, its unusual places, its unique territories and cultures. Geological characteristics of certain areas always inspired and amazed people, which is why these areas are under protection as a world heritage site. Whether the Grand Canyon in the United States, or Machu Picchu in Chile, such a unique place has always attracted visitors from all over the world, according to David Ross Dovlinh Nyuvsam [Ross, 2006].

The term "geotourism" is often equated with the term "ecotourism", "sustainable tourism", "alternative tourism". It is often combined with types of traveling with informative, educational purposes, but the real meaning is much deeper.

Publicly, the term "geotourism" was introduced in 2002 and was approved by the National Geographical Union. The determination was brought by the chief of National Geographic Traveler magazine, which is also the first manager of the National Geographical Union of environmental decision-making - Jonathan Tortelot.

Geotourism – is a type of tourism that proves uniqueness of geographical location – environment, heritage, esthetics, culture, relief features of the area, and the uniqueness of the local population. Geotourism – a kind of travel with an aim of nature conservation as well as protection of cultural heritage and traditions, history and geography exploration, promotion of the area uniqueness, investment attracting, developing of patriotism. Thus, this type of tourism lets travelers explore different places of interest on the specific territory, its cultural or historical heritage.

The object of geotourism is the uniqueness of the area: unusual landscapes, rock formations, unique flora and fauna, coastlines, river valleys,

waterfalls, caves, etc. Along with the natural features of the location, geotourism is aimed at familiarizing with the cultural characteristics of the territory: the unique folklore, crafts, clothing, customs, cuisine, etc.

The subject of geotourism is the geotourist, whose main purpose of travelling is to visit areas with unique natural and cultural resources. At the same time, the geotourist does not harm the environment, but benefits the local people.

Geotourism is a special kind of tourism which combines the most popular modern types of travel. Each of these types brings something unique, something that creates the uniqueness of geotourism itself. Therefore, various directions exist in geotourism, based on the preferences of tourists and formed due to the specific natural, cultural, human and other resources involved. (Fig. 1)

It is suggested to single out two main tourism type sets that form the basis of geotourism. The first set includes those directions which are based on cultural resources. Undoubtedly, any kind of tourism involves cultural factor to some extent. The concept of cultural tourism was officially used internationally for the first time in the proceedings of the World Conference on Cultural Policy (Mexico City, 1982).

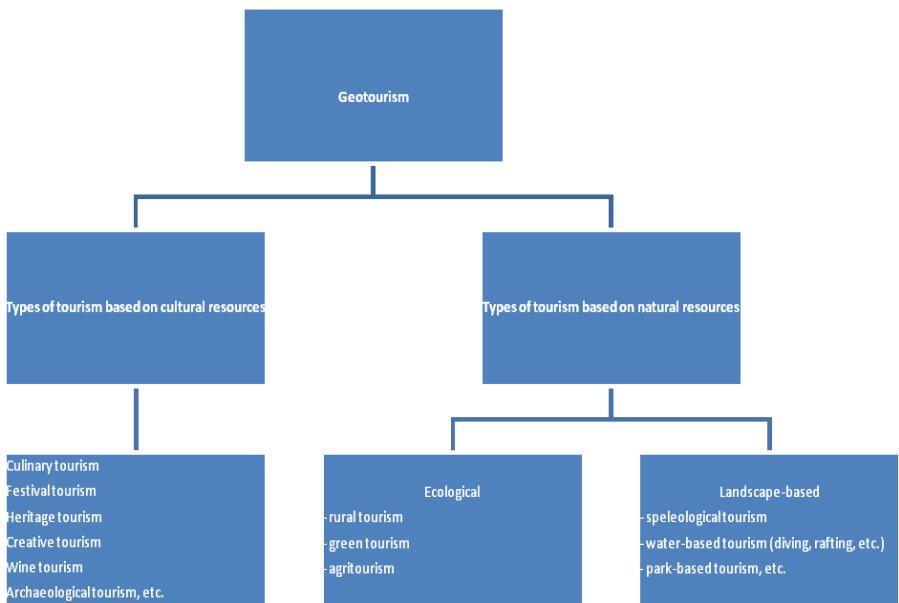
The second set of tourism types is based on natural resources. Primarily, this group includes ecological tourism, which can be represented by green tourism, rural tourism, agritourism, and other types. Ecotourism is a form of travel, favourable to the environment. Ecotourism is aimed at protecting the natural and cultural environment of regions that are visited by tourists. It provides that participants of these trips are people with high environmental awareness.

Geotourism – is a tourism based on “relationship building” with the place of visit – with local culture, with natural environment, with people that live in that area. It is a kind of tourism that by itslef is already unique, it offers tourists special, unique places of the country, it offers authentic culture, but culture of the people who live in the area.

Abroad, one of the most common forms of geotourism are geoparks.

Geopark – a protected area of national importance, on which are located specially important, rare (or unique), esthetically attractive geological – geomorphological objects, that carry scientific, educational and recreational value [*Operational Guideline for National Geoparks seeking UNESCO's assistance*]. These objects are a part of general preservation, education and sustainable development concept, most of them have exceptional geological, mineralogical, paleontological and geographical value. In addition to the objects that represent geological inheritance, geoparks also cover archaeological, ecological, historical and cultural.

Figure 1. The main types of tourism that form geotourism



Geoparks are managed according to the national legislation of a country where it is located [*Operational Guideline for National Geoparks seeking*

UNESCO's assistance], however following the policy of preservation and sustainable development; each geopark has its own management plan.

Geoparks create perspectives for regional geological heritage values protection in conjunction with the landscape and promoting of their meaning. They also provide better opportunities for geotourism and geoharitanace development, more then other environmental agencies. Parks can be as centers that play an essential role in promoting knowledge and education in the field of Earth sciences for society in general and centers of activities and projects aimed at the needs of both geopreservation in particular, and of nature in general; they are also required to maintain historical and cultural values and sustainable development of protected areas [Shevchuk, 2010: 357-370].

The issue of geoparks in Ukraine has been actively discussed in the scientific circles and environmental organizations. Emerging scientific publications with a goal to establish national geoparks in the Carpathian region, Podilya, Pobuzh and Crimea [Manyk, 2006: 9-11]. At the same time Ukrainian scientists, leaders of environmental organizations and institutions are not well informed about the possibilities and problems of environmental institutions.

As already mentioned, functioning of the tourism industry in the modern business environment is characterized by specific activation, but there is a number of significant restraining factors. The most important among them is inadequate legal framework, the contradictions and inconsistencies of its individual policies, the lack of effective state programs regulating tourism as a promising direction of the development, there is no clear methodology and mechanisms for its implementation [Chkan, 2012: 276-289].

Unfortunately, the tourism sector at the national level does not play a significant role in the full implementation of economic, social and humanitarian functions, in preserving natural environment and cultural heritage, filling budgets on every level, creating new jobs, increasing the share of services in the gross domestic product .

Thus, Ukraine has developed many programs for tourism development. However, in practice, little progress can only be seen among small businesses involved in green tourism. To take full advantage of the rich tourism potential of Ukraine, effective mechanism had to be ensured, comprehensive program to improve tourism attraction of the region at the state level has to be implemented. For this purpose it is necessary to improve the management system of tourism industry at the state level [Muzichenko-Kozlovska, 2008: 91].

To improve the competitiveness of the tourism industry and in particular geotourism, the role of the state needs to be strengthened and at the same time effective model of cooperation between the state, business and society has to be formed.

Overcoming the current negative tendencies, creating systematic and comprehensive geotourism preconditions for the development, improvement of functional and technical quality components of the national and regional tourism products, have to become priorities for sustainable tourism development in general.

Because the actual problem of modern tourism industry development in Ukraine is the lack of government regulation and control, there can be offered following:

1. create at the national level legislated long-term development strategy of geotourism in Ukraine, with its following implementation and control of the regulatory structures;
2. deligate workers into separate units of the executive committee of the regions of the state, for the monitoring and implementation of the national strategy;
3. making the sector of tourism services more transparent;
4. simplification of leading business in the sphere tourism;
5. decreasing of tax pressure from the side of Ukrainian governments in order to involve more international investments;
6. creating a single informational base on the state level with an educational portal segment to highlight the latest news, innovations and

perspectives in the sphere of tourism in general and geotourism services provided by the country in particular;

7. define and adopt national standards in the field of tourism services on European level;

Project of geotourism development strategy in Ukraine is proposed. Aim of the geotourism development strategy in Ukraine is to improve social, economical and intellectual life standar by creating competitive national geotourism product based on rational use of geoheritage in the local and world market. (Fig 2)

Strategic objectives, priorities and key measures for implementation of the Strategy

Objective № 1-Geotourism

Priorities	Key measures
Define legislative and other regulatory legal frameworks regulating geotourism	improve the effectiveness of public policy in geotourism, development and implementation of effective model of governance to harmonize and protect the interests of all participants in this field; establish national and local geotourism development programs according to the EU directives and standards; create schemes and general development plan of the tourist areas; form favorable tax conditions for tourism development; develop regulations to strengthen responsibility for spreading false advertising about geotourism
Development and implementation of competitive national	develop tourism infrastructure, particularly the reconstruction of existing and construc-

Priorities	Key measures
<p>geotourism product based on rational use of geoheritage on the local and world market</p>	<p>tion of new places for accommodation, dining and other tourist infrastructure facilities</p> <p>creat environmentally oriented businesses (mainly in the sphere of tourists service - accommodation, food, recreation and leisure)</p> <p>develop geotouristic tracks, creat a network of tourist itenareries</p> <p>create gaoparks as objects of geotourism which would be included into european and international network in the future</p> <p>create a unified system of marketing support for national geotourism product on local and external markets</p> <p>determin legislation and coordination mechanism for distance selling of geotourism products (including the Internet); Організація та підтримка вже існуючих фестивалів, ярмарок та виставок</p> <p>ensure the safety of tourists and people who travel</p>
<p>Definition of socio-economic framework of geotourism development</p>	<p>create new jobs (reducing unemployment), expansion of rural employment in tourism activities</p> <p>decrease the emigration level of the local population</p> <p>support the development of small and medium enterprises in tourism,</p> <p>efficient use of financial and material re-</p>

Priorities	Key measures
	<p>sources in geotourism activities, filling all budgets due to sources from the results of this activity and increased revenues of currency;</p> <p>prevent unfair competition and monopoly in tourism activities;</p> <p>support and renew local crafts and traditions</p>
<p>Definition of organizational and administrative principles of geotourism</p>	<p>create favorable conditions for providing tourists and people who travel needed tourism, recreation, sightseeing and cognitive services;</p> <p>form informational geotourism platform for rational and efficient use of tourism, natural and recreational resources through establishing and operation of geotourism development zones,</p> <p>strengthen the role of NGOs in establishing the principles of geotourism,</p> <p>improve existing and introduce new mechanisms of interaction between central and local governments, local governments, NGOs, businesses, academic institutions and schools;</p> <p>monitor environmental impact during construction of tourism infrastructure at the site belonging to the natural reserve fund;</p> <p>promote transportation, municipal, border and customs infrastructure</p>

Objective № 2 – Geoeducation

Priorities	Key measures
Popularization of geoharitage preservation ideas, educational direction	<p>develop educational programs for the local population about the value of geoharitage</p> <p>conduct educational events to explain the significance of various components of the nature and form in the mentality of people</p> <p>the need for geoharitage protection</p> <p>hold school trips and excursions in order to help educate children and young people about patriotism, insert love to Ukraine, respect for national traditions, cultural values of Ukrainian nation, for the nature</p> <p>promote sustainable development of protected areas</p>
Development of human resources potential in the field of geotourism	<p>hold seminars, conferences</p> <p>improve the system of training, retraining and skills development in the tourism sector;</p> <p>introduce to university students who study Tourism a new subject "Geotourism"</p>
Formation of information environment for geotourism	<p>Develop internet web-site about Ukrainian Geoharitage</p> <p>Establish Informational centers</p> <p>Publications - publication of popular literature, maps, educational materials and presentations, booklets, posters, calendars, leaflets in several languages</p> <p>Create a positive tourist image of the state;</p> <p>Create museums</p>
Foster the development of	Arrange meetings and field trips with rep-

Priorities	Key measures
international cooperation in geotourism	<p>representatives of the European and World geopark networks</p> <p>Exchange of information, experience and methods of geobobjects and landscapes preservation</p>

Objective№ 3 -- Geoconservation

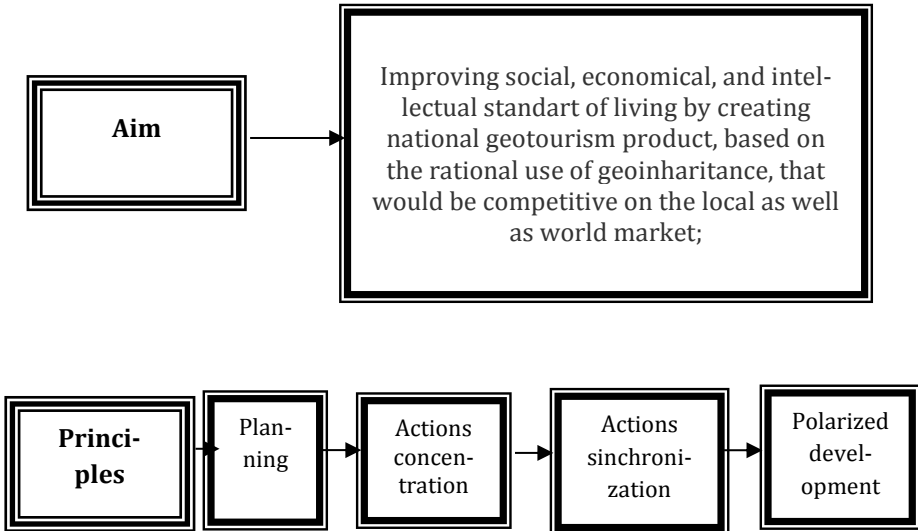
Priorities	Key measures
Geoharitage research	<p>Inventory (certification) of geoobejects;</p> <p>Introduction of the state monitoring system for geoharitage;</p> <p>Hold scientific researches</p> <p>Hold some activities for the study of public opinion on issues of science</p>
Conservation and sustainable use of geoharitage	<p>Include especially valuable objects in the List of UNESCO in order to preserv national cultural heritage,</p> <p>Develop programs for the protection and sustainable use of valuable objects of geoharitage</p> <p>Develop draft laws and other normative legal acts concerning the legal status of geobobjects</p> <p>Improve the legal, institutional and socio-economic conditions for the implementation of national policy on the sphere of geoplaces protection</p> <p>Establish Ukrainian geoparks network</p> <p>Improve and expand methods of geobobjects protection, improvement and promotion</p>

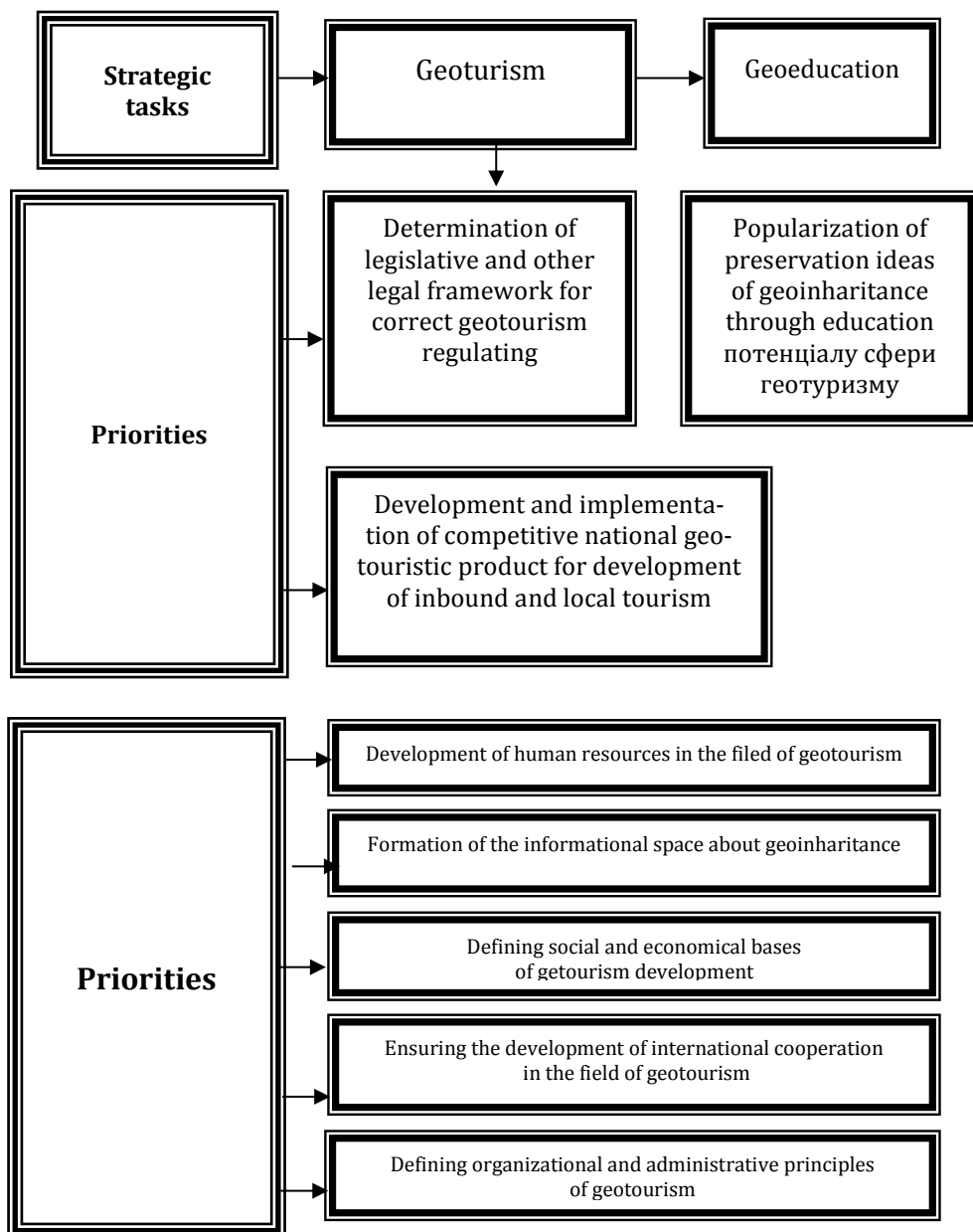
Strategy of geotourism development will be implemented according to the following principles:

- *planning* (this principle provides annual planning of needed budgeted on different level, which promotes transparency, stability and synchronization in geotourism development policy);
- *concentration* (due to limited state and local funds during the implementation of tasks set out in this strategy, resources are concentrated in certain areas, a hierarchy of priorities is established according to defined objectives, defined requirements for cost-effectiveness of their use);
- *actions synchronization* (provides synchronized number of reforms affecting the socio-economic development of territories, coordination of priorities and actions of national and regional authorities, community members and businesses concerning national and regional geotourism development);
- *polarized development* (expected to form a "reference areas" (geoparks), which concentrate financial, administrative, managerial, human and other resources, with further strengthening of innovative geotouristic activities in other regions);
- *balanced development* (leads to a differentiation of state support in different areas according to their potential conditions, criteria and deadlines established by legislation);
- *partnership* (promotes close cooperation between central and local executive bodies, local authorities, NGOs, business entities in implementing strategies, monitoring and evaluation of assigned tasks);
- *subsidiarity* (division of authority, which shows that the place of administrative (management) services as close to its direct consumer considering the completeness of adequate service quality by concentrating material and financial resources at the appropriate territorial level of government).

The Strategy is carried out by the state and local budgets, businesses of all forms of ownership, NGOs, targeted bank loans, technical assistance, investment funds and other sources under the law.

Figure 2. Schematic structure of geotourism development strategy





Solving problems related to the conservation and promotion of geoheritage, providing further social, economic and intellectual development of society and gradually bringing existing standards up to European.

At the first stage of strategy implementation it is needed to provide:

- a legal framework harmonized with the European Union on the development of geotourism;
- Formation of competitive national geotourism product;
- strengthening entrepreneurship activities and business entities in geotourism;
- IT support in the sphere of tourism;
- monitoring geotourism resources;
- improving management effectiveness in field of geotourism;
- development of inbound and internal tourism;
- involving investments for development of material and technical base in tourism;
- improving the quality of excursions and similar services;
- safety of tourists and people who travel.

On the second phase there will be provided:

- development of tourism considering quality of life, traditions and culture of the population;
- development of human resources and staff potential in the field of geotourism;
- preservation of resource potential in mentioned field;
- controlling the use of geotourism resources;
- Creating marketing support of national geotourism product;
- improving international cooperation.

The third phase is expected to provide:

- sustainable use and conservation of geotourism resources;
- coordination of interests of businesses and individuals in the tourism sector;
- balance of all components of geotourism development, as socially responsible, environmentally and economically efficient activities;

- providing high quality services to meet the needs of tourists and people who travel;
- functioning according to constitutional rights of citizens in the tourism sector.

At all stages there should be held continuous monitoring and control of the implementation of these measures.

Implementation of this strategy will promote:

- quality of life of population;
- increasing the influence of tourism in the formation of gross domestic product;
- creation of conditions for development of certain areas, timely and complex problems solving concerning environmental protection;
- recovery of national culture and handicrafts, formation of national identity and education of young people on the basis of patriotism;
- preservation and restoration of unique natural, historical and cultural resources;
- Significant improvement of the environment on the territory of tourist infrastructure objects;
- reduce unnecessary budget, rational use of financial and material resources, filling the budgets of all levels, the flow of foreign currency into the country;
- creation of new and preserve existing jobs, development small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector, expansion of temporary employment in rural areas;
- sustainable development of areas in order to improve quality of life, reduce poverty and unemployment, the middle class;
- improve the safety of tourists and people who travel, protection of their rights and interests that respect law, their property preservation;
- creation of equal conditions for participants of tourism activities, conditions for development of effective and transparent tourism market;

- creation of modern tourist infrastructure facilities within areas with a high concentration geoheritage;
- improving the system of information support in the field of tourism, creating favorable conditions for equal access to information;
- significant improvement of public policy in the field of tourism, implementation of functions of coordination, planning, management, promotion, the formation of the national tourist product, standardization and certification, etc., done by the government;
- improvement of existing and the introduction of new effective mechanisms of interaction between central and local executive authorities, local self-government, non-profit community organizations in the field of tourism related enterprises, scientific and educational institutions in promoting geotourism development;
- creating national and local geotourism development programs, economically reasonable plans for their implementation, at the same time considering the framework of socio-economic development programs of the regions;
- development of international cooperation and eurointegrational processes in the sphere of tourism, improvement of the tourist image of the state;
- increasing the amount of investment in tourism.

Conclusion

Ukraine in general and Trascarpathian region in particular is a promising area for the geotourism development, mainly because of existing geoheritage that is the basis for such statement. First step in the development of this field, should be establishment of legislative basis for the formation of this innovative type of tourism, particularly the development strategy of geotourism on the national level. Promoting it in the media and the global Internet network, publication of printed materials and videos, holding advertising actions as well as festivals will only raise a public interest of

community in geotourism, which will lead it not only on the national level but also international.

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Summary

This paper shows the priority of tourism industry development in Ukraine in general, as well as innovative types of tourism, such as: geotourism, in particular. The data clarifies basic approaches to the definition of "geotourism". Indicates the necessity of strengthening government role in the field of tourism, primarily through forming of development strategy of some types of tourism. Development strategies project of geotourism in Ukraine is proposed, which provides three strategic ways of development: geotourism, geoeducation and geoconservation. Each of them includes a list of priorities through the implementation of specific measures.

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