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Assessment of the activity of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina»: regularities of formation and development orientations

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Abstract. The purpose of the study is to assess the role of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» as one of the areas of regulation of the tourism business in the region and justify its functional significance for the formation of tourist attractiveness of the region. Methodology. The following methods, which used in the study: logical generalization, synthesis, induction and deduction, dialectical and system-structural methods, comparative analysis, graphical method, etc. Results. Investigated that the activity of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» as an effective mechanism for increasing the competitiveness of the region is studied in the work. The tendencies promoting the introduction of the cluster approach in tourism, the basic advantages of creation and functioning of a cluster as the factor of the organization of internal tourism and means of increase of efficiency of use of tourist and recreational resources of the region are defined. It is established that the «Western Cherkashchina» tourism cluster has a leading role in the process of intensifying the innovative development of the region's tourism industry, as its activities optimize tourism, intensify its development, and take advantage of companies' specialization, creating a strong synergistic effect of socio-economic growth, and at the national level. Practical meaning. It is substantiated that the cluster model of tourism development is an effective direction of systemic development of all participants of tourism infrastructure, which are united in a cluster grouping. Prospects for further research of the author are to study the impact of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» on the development of tourism in the region.

Keywords: tourist cluster, tourism, region, tourist potential, tourist destination, cluster policy, branding.

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Оцінювання діяльності туристичного кластера «Західна Черкащина»: закономірності формування та орієнтири розвитку

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Анотація. Метою дослідження є оцінка ролі туристичного кластера «Західна Черкащина» як одного з напрямів регулювання туристичного бізнесу в регіоні та обґрунтування його функціональної значущості для формування туристичної привабливості регіону. Методологія. У ході дослідження застосовано такі методи: логічного узагальнення, синтезу, індукції та дедукції, діалектичний і системно-структурний методи, порівняльний аналіз, графічний метод тощо. Результати. Досліджено діяльність туристичного кластеру «Західна Черкащина» як ефективного механізму підвищення конкурентоспроможності регіону. Визначено тенденції, що сприяють впровадженню кластерного підходу в туризмі, основні переваги створення та функціонування кластеру як чинника організації внутрішнього туризму та засобу підвищення ефективності використання туристсько-рекреаційних ресурсів регіону. Встановлено, що туристичному кластеру «Західна Черкащина» належить провідна роль у процесі активізації інноваційного розвитку туристичної індустрії регіону, оскільки в результаті його діяльності оптимізується туристична діяльність, активізується її розвиток, використовуються переваги спеціалізації компаній, створюючи на цій основі потужний синергетичний ефект соціально-економічного зростання як на регіональному, так і на національному рівні. Практичне значення. Обґрунтовано, що кластерна модель розвитку туристичної сфери є ефективним напрямом системного розвитку всіх учасників туристичної інфраструктури, які об'єднані в кластерне групування. Перспективи подальших досліджень автора полягають у дослідженні впливу діяльності туристичного кластеру «Західна Черкащина» на розвиток туризму у регіоні.

Ключові слова: туристичний кластер, туризм, регіон, туристична дестинація, кластерна політика, брендинг.

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1. Introduction.

The tourism industry is one of those that has been hit hard by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Export losses to the global tourism industry from the COVID-19 pandemic in the first five months of 2020 amounted to \$ 320 billion, three times the losses during the 2009 global

financial crisis. At the same time, international tourist flows were reduced by more than half, more than 120 million jobs were threatened. According to UN forecasts, revenues from the export of tourist services may fall in 2020 by 910 billion dollars. up to 1.2 trillion dollars, which in turn will reduce world GDP by

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1.5-2.8% (UNIAN, 2020).

Restrictions on travel and border closures, which apply to most destinations, travel security issues, virus outbreaks and risks of new bans, deteriorating economic situation are the main factors that negatively affect the confidence and decisions of consumers of travel services. Given these circumstances, the tourism business in modern conditions is forced to step out of the comfort zone and implement a wide range of measures to minimize the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and stimulate the recovery of the tourism sector. It is obvious that under the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the reorientation to the development of domestic tourism is one of the areas of intensification of the domestic tourism business.

One of the factors in the organization of domestic tourism and a means of improving the efficiency of use of tourist and recreational resources of the region is the formation of tourist clusters. Clusters around the world are considered an effective means of forming national competitive advantages, increasing production efficiency through vertical and horizontal integration of both individual industries and enterprises. Due to the active operation of the cluster opens the possibilities of the region as an attractive tourist destination and attracts investment, creates an attractive investment climate that can increase investment in tourism and resort complex and its infrastructure. Of particular relevance is the need to address the problem of forming new approaches to the functioning of tourism clusters, so the question of creating and functioning of tourism clusters as a basis for increasing the tourist attractiveness of the region is relevant and needs further

study.

2. Literature review.

The following scientists studied the problems of creation, functioning, and development of clusters: M. Porter (2005), O. Kol (2010), I. Davydenko (2018), O. Zhurba (2014), V. Semenov (2010), O. Liashenko and O. Strishenets (2017) and others. Problems of efficiency of tourist clusters, strategic vision of development of branch are a subject of researches of scientists: N. Andrusiak (2014), M. Husarova (2015), S. Koliadenko (2018), Yu. Navrozova and V. Katsiuk (2016), L. Neshchadym, and S. Tymchuk (2017), I. Smirnov (2013), D. Stechenko and I. Bezuhlyi (2014), K. Shylkina (2014), N. Shcherbakova (2016), and others. However, despite the wide range of research results of the above authors, it should be recognized that the disclosure of the problem of forming a tourism cluster at the regional level is insufficient.

3. Methods.

In order to achieve the scientific objectives in the study, the following research methods were used: generalization and systematization; systematic and comprehensive analysis (to determine trends in tourism clusters); calculation-analytical and comparative methods (for research of modern tendencies of development of a tourist cluster in the region); method of system analysis and synthesis (for the development of the concept of tourism cluster development); graphic and tabular methods (for visual representation of statistical material, visualization of theoretical and practical provisions).

4. Research objectives.

The purpose of the study is to assess the role of the tourist cluster «Western

Cherkashchina» as one of the areas of regulation of the tourism business in the region and justify its functional significance for the formation of tourist attractiveness of the region.

The object of research is the activity of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina».

5. Results and discussions.

Cherkasy region is a unique region with a good geographical location, natural and recreational potential, historical past and cultural significance.

On the territory of Cherkasy region there are: 39 state museums and 7 national and state historical and cultural reserves (Shevchenkivsky National Reserve in Kaniv; Taras Shevchenko Homeland National Reserve in Zvenyhorodshchyna; Korsun-Shevchenkivsky National Historical and Cultural Reserve; Chyryryn National Reserve; Kamyansk State Historical and Cultural Reserve, Trakhtemyriv State Historical and Cultural Reserve, Trypillya Culture State Historical and Cultural Reserve in Talnivshchyna, Stara Uman State Historical and Architectural Reserve and Sofiyivka National Dendrological Park in Uman, which introduces tourists to the outstanding monuments of history, culture, architecture and nature of the region.

There are 132 regional sites (churches, residential and industrial buildings, etc.) and 37 sites of national importance (religious buildings, mansions, castles, etc.) in the region. The most significant among the cult buildings, which are not only architecturally unique, but also have historical, scientific and artistic value are St. George's (Assumption) Cathedral in Kaniv (1144), St. Elijah's Church in the village. Subotiv, Chyhyryn district (1653), the Church of

the Transfiguration in the village of Kirov Korsun-Shevchenkivsky district (1738), the Church of the Transfiguration of the Krasnogorsk monastery in the Zolotonosha region, the Church of the Assumption in Uman (1827), the Church of the Transfiguration in the village. Moshnakh, Cherkasy district (1830-1840), Trinity Church in the village of Helmyazevi of Zolotonosha district (1841), Alexander Church in the village of Lebedivtsi, Kamyansky district (1843), St. Michael's Church in Horodyshe (1844), Church of the Assumption in the village of Jabotiny, Kamyansky district (1851).

Among the monuments of public architecture of Cherkasy region are: the estate in the village. Cossack Zvenyhorod district (XVIII-XIX centuries), the estate of Davidov in Kamyansky (XVIII-XIX centuries), the estate of Lopukhin in Korsun-Shevchenkivsky (80s of the XVIII century), the manor house in the village. Dobriy of Mankiv district (beginning of the XIX century), trade rows in Uman (1780), inn in the village of Horns of Mankiv district on the ancient Milky Way (second half of the XVIII century), hunting castle in Talny (1896–1903) and others.

A large number of monuments of industrial and military architecture in the region, including the last of the riveted bridge built in Ukraine across the Dnipro in the direction of Cherkasy-Zolotonosha, sugar factory (1838) Count Bobrynsky in Smila, where in 1848 was introduced steam method, the remains of a fortress (XVI-XVII centuries) on Bogdanova Hill in Chyhyryn, etc. (*Official site of the Department of Culture of the Cherkasy Regional State Administration*).

The large number of tourist attractions makes the region attractive for

both domestic and foreign tourists of various categories. Analysis of the dynamics of the number of tourists - citizens of Ukraine (Table 1), who were served by tourism entities in the period from 2000 to 2019 in Cherkasy region shows that there is a tendency to increase their number in 2000-2011, in particular, in the structure of during this period a significant share was occupied by domestic tourists. Since 2012, the number of tourists served by tourism entities has decreased significantly, and only in 2017-2019 there is a tendency to increase their number. It should be noted that the share of outbound tourists increased in the

structure – 32929 people in 2019 compared to 600 people in 2000, while the number of domestic tourists decreased – 6131 people in 2019 against 21120 people in 2000. The share of foreign tourists served by tour operators and travel agents also decreased significantly – 85 people in 2019 compared to 1,010 people in 2000. It is the indicator of the number of tourists (both domestic and foreign) that best characterizes the level of development of the region's tourism sector, but the value of these indicators for Cherkasy region is several times less than in other regions, indicating underutilization of the region's tourism potential.

*Table 1. Number of tourists served by tour operators and travel agents, by type of tourism in Cherkasy region, persons**

Years	Number of tourists served by tour operators and travel agents, total **	Including		
		inbound (foreign) tourists	outbound tourists	domestic tourists
2000	22730	1010	600	21120
2001	23174	602	578	21994
2002	25261	576	533	24152
2003	34353	4110	1049	29194
2004	28322	1151	1900	25271
2005	34459	1449	3301	29709
2006	39046	1791	4884	32371
2007	40901	1112	6930	32859
2008	43049	953	10619	31477
2009	31702	441	6942	24319
2010	36289	712	8260	27317
2011	36289	13	7066	4296
2012	12260	34	8556	3670
2013	15984	11	10451	5522
2014**	9694	12	7504	2178
2015**	8520	-	6742	1778
2016**	11684	-	10015	1669
2017**	20953	-	17618	3335
2018**	26383	24	22995	3364
2019**	39145	85	32929	6131

**Legal entities and natural persons-entrepreneurs. 2000–2010 – according to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, starting from 2011 – according to the State Statistics Service.

*Source: (Main Department of Statistics in Cherkasy region).

To assess the situation on the tourist market of Cherkasy region, consider the

share of the region in the structure of tourism entities in Ukraine (Fig. 1). The

number of tourism entities in the regions of Ukraine is characterized by uneven distribution. The figure shows that in 2019, the largest number of tourism entities was concentrated in Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Odessa and Kyiv regions.

There are 28 legal entities and 84 natural persons-entrepreneurs engaged in tourist activity in the Cherkasy region,

which is 1.5% and 3%, accordingly, of the subjects of tourist activity in Ukraine as a whole. Compared to 2018, the number of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs increased by 11 and 10, respectively. The number of tour operators, travel agents and entities engaged in excursion activities in their structure is shown in (Fig.2).

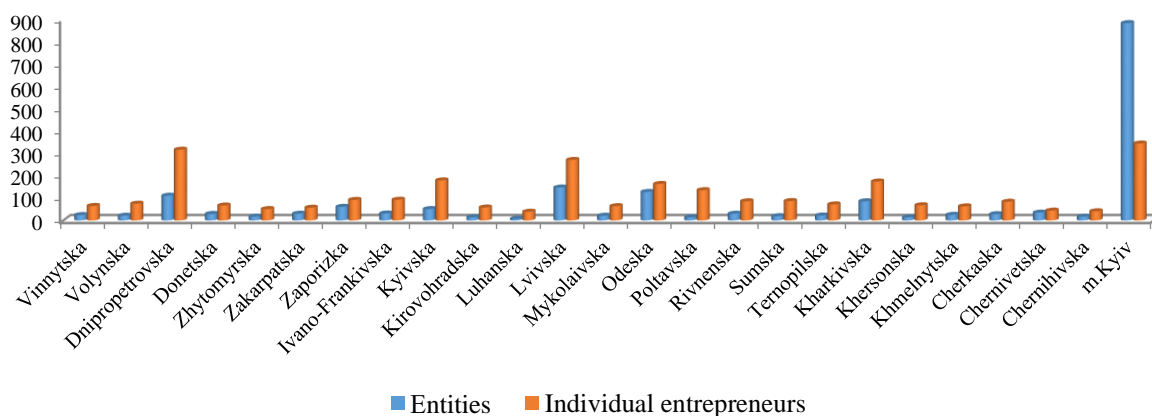


Fig. 1. Number of tourism entities in Ukraine by region in 2019, units*
*Source: (Official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine)

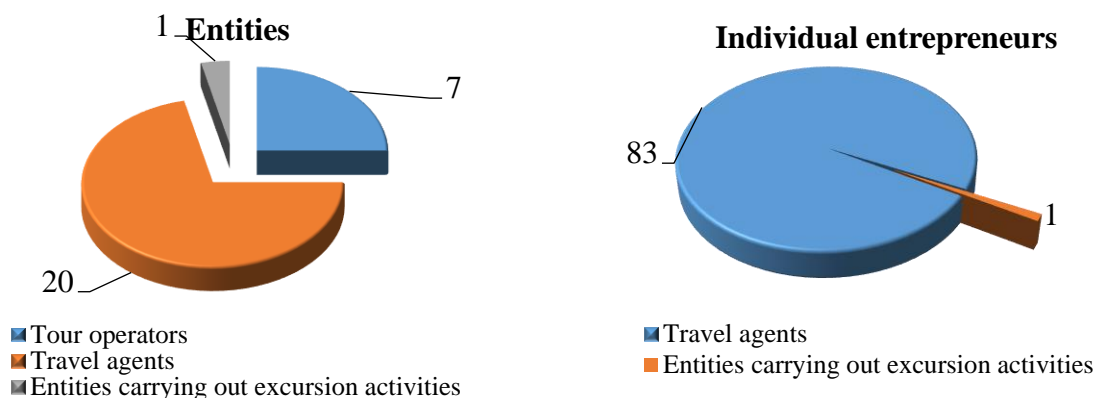


Fig. 2. Number of tour operators, travel agents and entities engaged in excursion activities in Cherkasy region

It should be mentioned that the number of tourists served by both legal

entities and individuals-entrepreneurs tends to increase (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of tourists served by tour operators and travel agents, persons

	Citizen of Ukraine	Foreigners	Citizen of Ukraine	Foreigners
	2018 year		2019 year	
Entities				

Number of tourists served, total	3884682	72941	5236249	83703
including travelers within Ukraine	376569	-	449655	-
abroad	3508113	-	4786594	-
Individual entrepreneurs				
Number of tourists served, total	596820	3004	809008	3137
including travelers within Ukraine	80230	-	70736	-
abroad	516590	-	738272	-

From the table we see that the number of tourists traveling within Ukraine, served by legal entities, although increased in 2019 by 73,086 people, but it is a much smaller share compared to tourists traveling abroad (8.6%) . The number of tourists traveling to Ukraine served by individual entrepreneurs decreased by 9,494. Evidence suggests that tourists prefer to rest and travel outside the country, so it is necessary to take measures to ensure the attractiveness of domestic tourism.

The attractiveness of the region largely depends on its infrastructure, transport networks, the state of the material and technical base of tourist

enterprises, the branching and diversity of their network, the quality and range of services they offer and so on. The main component of the material and technical base of tourism are the means of accommodation of tourists, which provide them with temporary housing and provide household and other services during the trip. The analysis of collective accommodation (*Table 3*) shows that in the period from 2011 to 2019 there is a negative trend in reducing the number of collective accommodation – by 73 units or 57%, while the number of accommodated persons did not decrease, which indicates demand for hotel services, which materially provides functional hospitality.

*Table 3. Collective accommodation facilities in Cherkasy region***

Years	Number of collective accommodation facilities, units	Number of places in collective accommodation facilities, units	Number of persons in collective accommodation, persons
2011	128	9055	107038
2012	115	7293	106398
2013	125	7528	129630
2014	124	8282	125489
2015	119	7806	133913
2016	124	6915	150386
2017	119	6858	174712
2018	54	3978	105209
2019	55	4308	114025

* In 2011–2017, information according to the data of legal entities, separate subdivisions of legal entities and natural persons-entrepreneurs, starting from 2018 - according to the data of legal entities and separate subdivisions of legal entities.

**Source: (*Main Department of Statistics in Cherkasy region*).

One of the reasons for the reduction of tourist accommodation is the outdated material and technical base, low level of service, often inflated prices for accommodation, which does not meet the requirements of tourists. The number of beds in hotels, motels and hostels remains quite low. In addition, there are structural problems in the market of hotel services, namely the lack of certain types of hotels, especially 3-star hotels and hostels, which slows down the development of tourism.

There are also specialized accommodation facilities in the region, which perform medical, health, sports and other functions. Analysis of the number of sanatoriums and health resorts in the Cherkasy region in the period from 1995 to 2017 shows that their number decreased: sanatoriums and boarding houses with treatment – by 22.2%, and sanatoriums and rest homes and boarding

houses ceased to function at all. This situation is due to the fact that specialized accommodation can be non-profit and need government support and coordinated development. The lack of budget funding was a consequence of the reduction of a number of government programs that ensured the functioning of these institutions.

Concerning children's health and recreation facilities that operated in the summer, there is a trend of growth in the period from 2000 to 2013, and a trend of reduction of these institutions in 2014-2019 (*table 4*). However, the number of children in health facilities has not decreased, which indicates the demand for this type of service and requires further development of these facilities.

Table 4. Children's health and recreation facilities that worked in the summer in the

Cherkasy region **

Years	Number of institutions, units		Number of places in them, units		Number of children in institutions, persons	
	together	including health facilities	together	including health facilities	together	including health facilities
2000	541	15	3074	2744	32629	6426
2001	671	12	2614	2284	37374	5344
2002	744	14	3509	3159	37595	5875
2003	913	14	3650	3220	54982	6452
2004	1043	13	4252	2860	68083	6490
2005	986	14	5088	2960	70159	6772
2006	995	11	4372	2080	66472	6084
2007	1021	12	4096	2210	65469	6262
2008	1038	13	4134	2334	65189	5797
2009	1006	14	4297	2549	61986	5307
2010	1004	10	3410	1815	60417	3644
2011	1025	7	3468	835	60323	1212
2012	1004	16	3375	2610	61195	4673
2013	1025	21	3879	2967	65652	5708
2014	971	21	3606	2856	62264	5583
2015	824	18	3263	2376	48983	3161
2016	830	18	3430	2346	51321	3532
2017	800	16	2763	2073	50903	2968
2018	754	11	2308	1924	46842	2660
2019	714	9	2249	1439	47088	1846

*In 2000-2009 – out-of-town health camps and sanatorium-type camps.

**Source: (Main Department of Statistics in Cherkasy region).

The tourist attractiveness of the region also depends on the development of transport infrastructure, which ensures the mobility of tourists and the ability to reach tourist attractions. In Ukraine, only 10 thousand km of public roads out of 170 thousand km do not need repair, i.e. less than 6%. According to the Ministry of Infrastructure, the worst routes of national importance – in Cherkasy, Mykolaiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions, which significantly affects the tourist's decision to visit the region.

It should be noted that the modern development of tourism in the Cherkasy region is characterized by the presence of deep contradictions in its organizational structure, in the direction of development, in a state of qualitative and quantitative characteristics. On the one hand, the current state of tourism is seen as a crisis, associated with a sharp decline in previously achieved volumes of tourist services, reducing the material base of the tourism industry and a significant mismatch between the needs of the population in tourist services. On the other hand, there are positive trends in the development of tourism, in particular the creation of a tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina».

The effective use of the tourist potential of the western Cherkasy region will be facilitated by the functioning of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» created in July 2018 in the region of Uman. The cluster was created as part of the national project «Tourist Clusters 300+», which is based on the world experience of the cluster model of the tourism industry.

The activity of the tourist cluster is

managed through the Public Organization «Association of Tourism and Hospitality of Western Cherkasy Region». In December 2018 in Cherkasy during the tourist forum «Opening Cherkasy region together» a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between Cherkasy Regional State Administration and the NGO «Association of Tourism and Hospitality of Western Cherkasy», in January 2019 – a Memorandum of Cooperation with Uman City Council and Uman District.

The Western Cherkasy Tourist Cluster operates in nine districts of the Cherkasy region: Zhashkivskoho, Zvenyhorodskoho, Katerynopilskoho, Lysianskoho, Mankivskoho, Monastyryshchenskoho, Talnivskoho, Umanskoho ta Khrystynivskoho and Khrystynivskoho. The total area of the tourist cluster is 7820 sq. Km, the population is 305.3 thousand inhabitants [20].

The purpose of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» is to improve the conditions for receiving tourists in Uman, as well as the creation of modern tourist infrastructure in the Butky Canyon and other popular tourist destinations in the region.

The main tasks of the cluster are to unite entrepreneurs, inventory of tourist objects of the cluster, attract investment in tourism and related industries of the region, create a competitive tourism product, provide advice and information support to members of the tourism cluster and create a strategy for tourism and recreation of Western Cherkasy region.

Creating a modern, interesting, high-quality, safe and affordable tourist product in the tourism cluster will attract

tourists and make them interested in staying for a few days to visit all the tourist attractions in the area it unites. To this end, the specialists of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» together with the tour operator SunCity Travel began to carry out regular weekend tours from Kyiv on the following routes:

- «Another Uman» – the main purpose of which is to show the other side of Uman, in particular, «Little Lviv», because in the city there is an architectural reserve «Old Uman» which includes Roman and Greek Catholic churches and caves; «Little Jerusalem» because the city became home to hundreds of Jewish Hasidic families and the burial place of Rabbi Nachman's Hasidic tzaddik; «Little Vinnytsia», because the city has a unique complex of fountains with a laser show;

- «Ukrainian Stonehenge – Butsky Canyon» – a relaxation tour to the pearl of Cherkasy «little Switzerland» and the fjord in the heart of Ukraine with swimming, trekking and a delicious barbecue lunch;

- «Trypillya Culture Reserve + wine tasting in Uman» – a tour for those who are interested in the history of Ukraine and Trypillia culture and are connoisseurs of wine which is a noble drink. In the village of Legedzyno there is a unique open-air museum – the reserve «Trypillya Culture», which reproduces the settlement of Trypillia life-size. Uman winemaker and professional sommelier holds real wine shows. In the tasting room, tourists have the opportunity to taste the entire line of wines of its own production and elite wines of Ukrainian and foreign production, learn to choose the right glasses for wines and learn about the intricacies of enogastronomy.

For a short period of activity, the specialists of the tourist cluster «Western

Cherkashchina» organized and conducted large-scale events, in particular: tourist fair «Western Cherkashchina»; the cheese and wine festival; Street Music Day; Buky Grill Fest; the 4th HOLI DANCE UMAN 2019 festival is timed to the International Children's Day.

Holding such events unites entrepreneurs from 9 districts of the center of Ukraine, encourages the creation of a modern competitive tourism product for domestic tourism and promotes the development of inbound tourism, attracts a significant number of tourists, which in turn provides additional revenue to the local budget.

One of the important factors in ensuring the effective operation of the tourism cluster is that the region has significant educational and scientific potential, which provides an innovative direction of cluster development and is one of the competitive advantages. Tourist Cluster «Western Cherkashchina» works in cooperation with higher education institutions in the region, which provide training for tourism and recreation, as well as with organizations that provide training or professional training for tourism professionals and HoReCa.

Foreign specialists in the field of tourism are also involved in the cooperation. Thus, in October 2018, the specialists of the cluster organized a visit of Hans Ulrich Trozien, an expert of the Association of Employers in the Hotel and Restaurant Business of Germany DEHOGA, the author of the concept of tourism development in Batumi (Georgia). During his visit, the expert visited the attractions located in the cluster, assessed the tourism potential of the region, gave an open lecture for students studying in higher education in

tourism and hotel and restaurant business, participated in a round table with members of the tourism industry. Cluster «Western Cherkashchina» and representatives of city and district authorities during which the further directions of tourism development in the region were identified, the main problems were outlined and the directions of their solution were identified.

At the initiative of the employees of the tourist cluster, together with the All-Ukrainian Association of Guides, guides were trained in Uman, trained according to the latest technologies of the European level. Training of specialists for the tourism industry provides an opportunity to provide tourism in the region with qualified staff, and the development of tourism in the cluster will help create new jobs for these professionals. Such interaction promotes formal and informal exchange of knowledge, cooperation between organizations with complementary assets and professional skills.

The effective operation of the cluster is determined by the nature of the relationship of its potential members with regional authorities. The cluster approach provides the authorities with tools for effective interaction with business, a deeper understanding of its characteristics and tactical objectives, the possibility of targeted, realistic, and motivated strategic planning of regional resources, territorial development. For the successful implementation of the cluster policy chosen by the regional self-government bodies, the development strategy of the region and the development strategy of individual clusters must be interconnected and coordinated.

To develop the activity of the Western Cherkasy region tourism cluster

in the region, an active cluster policy is needed, which could ensure the removal of various barriers, on the one hand, and contribute to the expansion and strengthening of intersectoral and inter-industrial links on the other. Supportive cluster policy of the state, focused on the development of tourism infrastructure in the region, stimulating innovation, initiating educational programs, projects for tourism businesses, the introduction of certain benefits and preferences to stimulate business development is a necessary condition for further effective development of the tourism cluster «Western Cherkashchina» (*I. Kyryliuk 2020*).

To increase the efficiency of functioning and development of the regional tourism cluster, an organizational and economic management mechanism is needed, the basis of which is the coordination of goals and objectives with methods and means of achieving the planned results of the implementation of decisions. The innovative approach of regional tourist clustering should consist of: finding optimal ways of development; identification of promising interaction of enterprises, organizations and institutions; economic regulation of the process of innovative cluster formation; organizational, legal, investment and other support for the accelerated merger of production and innovative services.

The activity of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» creates appropriate conditions for investing in new promising projects based on cluster technologies. The integration of tourism businesses into a tourism cluster within the region provides an opportunity to more effectively defend their interests at the local government level and participate in large investment programs. The

initiative to create and implement tourism projects requires appropriate investment, so only new, original, non-standard innovative ideas can interest the investor; only the integration of the efforts of government, business and institutions of public and scientific and educational organizations can be a condition for successful investment in a given area; without the exchange of information about the potential of the region, its priorities, investment attractiveness and development prospects, it is impossible to obtain an investment proposal from potential investors; advertising support of the cluster is one of the priority areas of its development; only economic interest from the invested capital can be a guarantee of successful realization of any real investment project.

An important condition for the development of tourism in the region is the image component of the functioning of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina», which is manifested in the promotion of competitive advantages of the tourism sector in a certain territorial context. Through cluster technologies, a comprehensive view of the region is formed, which is transformed into an image with the help of territorial marketing tools. Image creation and support depend on marketing efforts aimed at cluster development. Territory marketing is a strategic tool that should create a mission and vision for the future development of the region. One of the important tools of territory marketing is

SWOT-analysis of the territory (*Table 5*).

According to the analysis, in order to achieve the optimal level of tourist attractiveness, the activities of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» should be aimed at: determining the uniqueness of existing tourist resources; use of the latest information technologies; involvement of the local population in the regional marketing policy, which directs all efforts to the development of a specific place; use their strengths as an advantage over competitors; setting prices for travel services taking into account the capabilities of consumers.

Branding is one of the effective tools that allow the region to determine not only its uniqueness and uniqueness, but also to give a positive impetus to the development of investment attractiveness of the territory, to increase its competitiveness in domestic and global markets. Improving the brand and image characteristics of the cluster as a whole or individual key economic entities of the cluster (core) helps to reduce advertising costs through the use of a common brand. The result of successful branding is a certain image of the region, which includes its past, present and vision of its future. Successful branding of the region is an effective means of influencing domestic and world public opinion.

The regional brand reveals the tourist attraction, helps to understand the diversity of culture, history, to create emotions that motivate tourists to visit the Cherkasy region.

Table 5. SWOT-analysis of strategic development of the tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina»

(S) Strengths	Weaknesses (W)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High potential of recreational resources. 2. Unpleasant natural and climatic conditions. 3. Favorable transport and geographical position. 4. Developed transport and logistics infrastructure. 5. Attractions of the region 6. A wide range of ancillary services (food establishments, entertainment establishments, etc.). 7. The presence of public and commercial organizations that can promote tourism. 8. Significant potential for the development of religious (pilgrimage) tourism. 9. Availability of free economic zones, which are prepared in the specialties «Tourism», «Hotel and restaurant business», etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unsatisfactory transport and operational condition of some roads and insufficient level of information and communication infrastructure, especially in rural areas. 2. Inadequate maintenance and insufficient funding of most historical and architectural heritage sites. 3. Insufficient information support for the creation and operation of clusters. 4. Low interest of tourist enterprises to unite due to incorrect and incomplete understanding of the principles of cluster associations. 5. Insignificant experience of clusters functioning in the region and Ukraine in general due to insufficient study of world experience in the formation of cluster policy of state development. 6. Lack of investors due to unattractive investment. 7. Insufficient development of the infrastructure of the hotel and tourist complex of the city, its condition does not yet meet world standards in tourism. 8. Lack or difficulty of access to many tourist sites. 9. Imperfection of the legislative and regulatory framework in the field of tourism, in particular at the national level.
Opportunities(O)	Threats (T)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of various elements of tourist and recreational infrastructure. 2. Improving the ecological situation of the region, preserving its biodiversity. 3. Development of new tourist markets (territorial, consumer market). 4. Availability of investment projects for the development of recreation areas. 5. Priority development of tourism business in the region, which is declared in territorial and sectoral development strategies. 6. Possibility of growth of the market of tourist services, at effective use of available tourist resources and infrastructure. 7. Growing interest of citizens in the historical and cultural heritage and natural and geographical components as resources for motivation to travel. 8. Development of information and communication technologies. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes in legislation. 2. Fierce competition in the tourism business. 3. Lack of proper state support. 4. Decline of architectural monuments, often uncontrolled and unreasonable construction. 5. Low purchasing power of the population. 6. Increased outbound tourism to neighboring regions and abroad due to the low level of services provided (price-quality mismatch). 7. Crises – political, military conflicts, etc. 8. Restrictions on travel and border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 9. Increasing the level of danger.

The main idea of the brand is based on the need to create the image of

Cherkasy region as a place for active and healthy recreation with high quality

infrastructure capable of satisfying the most demanding consumers. The result of the success of branding, in addition to quantitative indicators, is a harmonious perception of the brand by residents of the region. A successful brand must be dynamic and must reflect development, show not only the current state of the region, but also give an idea of what it will be like in the future, reflect and activate the local population, embodying community values and communicating its goals.

The main problems for creating the image of Cherkasy region are: the lack of a common image of the territory and attractions as a whole product; available information sources do not provide tourists with relevant and useful information; low involvement of the local community in scientific and cultural programs; unadjusted information policy for effective promotion of the region; imperfection of tourist infrastructure; weak information support of international relations and the presence of Cherkasy region in foreign markets; insufficient number of communication channels and lack of practice of their development.

The team of the Department of Regional Development of Cherkasy Regional State Administration, the Agency for Tourist Initiatives and the working group on branding initiated work on the development of the tourist brand of the region, which took place in several stages:

The first stage is the establishment of a partnership (March–July 2019). In order to create a brand of Cherkasy region, the working group includes representatives of local authorities and business, public activists, educators, and international experts.

Phase II – information campaign

(August–October 2019). With the help of information media, the initiative to create a brand of the region was informed and a competition for a variant of the slogan was announced.

Stage III – choosing a slogan (November 2019–January 20, 2020). To develop the future brand of Cherkasy region, a competition was held to form a slogan: 1st stage (November 20–December 16) – collection of slogan ideas; 2nd stage (13.12.2019–19.01.2020) – holding public consultations by the Institute of the Republic in order to select one of the TOP-3 slogans for the brand of Cherkasy region. The slogan was the message «Cherkasy region – a place of power», which was chosen through open online voting.

Stage IV – logo development and brand book (April–July 2020). According to the chosen slogan, the developed logo and identity, which are elements of the brand, serve as tools for identifying or recognizing the essence of the region. Each region has its own characteristics and this is the strength – in uniqueness. The logo is based on the shape of Bohdan Khmelnytsky's flag and the character of the letter «Ch» from the chronicles of that time. Lettering for the logo is specially designed by Dmitry Rastvortsev. The letters are based on letters from chronicles with characteristic details. The colors of the branding are taken from local landscapes, Trypillia objects and Cossack costumes.

Stage V – implementation and promotion of the brand (2020–2024). A strategy for the implementation of the region's brand has been developed, which involves representatives of government, business and the community. The cooperation of all representatives of the region will allow to get the maximum

effect: officials provide administrative resources, coordinate and lobby the interests of the region before the institutions of the highest order of power; business shares expertise, provides financial and personnel support; residents can provide ideas and political support. None of the commercial, public or state institutions has sufficient resources, authority and professionalism to carry out marketing and branding of the territory independently.

Objectives of the region's marketing strategy: to make the Cherkasy region a famous tourist and business center; support business through active promotion of the region's opportunities; demonstrate attractiveness and openness, readiness for innovation and partnership; intensify cultural life and develop intercultural dialogue to attract tourists and new residents; to provide information support for the promotion of tourist products and services of local business on the markets of Ukraine and the world. The brand is a component of the marketing strategy of tourism development.

To carry out successful marketing activities, it is important to identify all possible partners, ensure interaction between them and cooperation with institutions and organizations at the national and international levels. The development of the Cherkasy region brand will allow the region to emphasize its uniqueness and uniqueness, create a

positive image, reveal various aspects of identity, creativity, increase competitiveness in domestic and global markets, attract investment, export its own products and change stereotypes.

6. Conclusions.

Tourist cluster «Western Cherkashchina» is a catalyst for regional integration, promotes tourism in the region, it is the level of development of clustering processes, the importance and uniqueness of the tourist cluster depends on the attractiveness of the region for potential tourists. Thanks to its active functioning, the region's opportunities as an interesting tourist destination are opened and investment is attracted, inbound tourism development, expansion of regional tourist product markets and entry into the international market, creation of new jobs, filling of local and state budgets, preservation and increase of cultural potential, active participation of regional authorities, territorial communities and business entities, improving the quality of life of the local population. The further functioning of the tourism cluster will increase the competitiveness of the region's economy, intensify innovative processes of coordination of interests of the government, business, science, and education in developing development strategies at the level of individual business entities, cluster members, and at the regional level.

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