



ENTERPRISE

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HEALTH RESORT ENTERPRISES: BETWEEN STAGNATION AND MODERNIZATION

The present state of operation of health resort enterprises has been analyzed. The reasons for the negative tendencies of development were identified. Conceptual approaches to the development of target programs of health resort enterprises development, which will be based on general methodological and ideological principles, were determined. Long-term actions for the development of health resorts to ensure their competitiveness in both the domestic and international tourism markets have been offered.

Keywords: health resort enterprises, health resort field, target program, tourism, business entities, information technologies, laws and regulations, material and technical base, service quality, marketing strategy.

Мельниченко С. Санаторно-курортные предприятия: между застоєм и модернизацией. Проанализировано современное состояние функционирования санаторно-курортных учреждений, определены причины негативных тенденций развития, концептуальные подходы к разработке целевой программы развития санаторно-курортных учреждений, базирующейся на общих методологических и идеологических принципах. Предложены основные долгосрочные действия по развитию санаторно-курортных учреждений для обеспечения их конкурентоспособности как на внутреннем, так международном туристическом рынке.

Ключевые слова: санаторно-курортные учреждения, санаторно-курортная сфера, целевая программа, туризм, субъекты хозяйствования, информационные технологии, нормативно-правовая база, материально-техническая база, качество услуг, маркетинговая стратегия.

Background. With the development of tourism we re-think the role of establishments of social services whose aim is health promotion. Primarily, this refers to health resort enterprises, whose activity connected with producing, selling and providing health and recreational services to holiday-makers.

The importance of efficient and effective usage of natural curative and recreational resources by means of creation and operation support of zones

of tourism and resorts development, creation of schemes and general layout of tourist area development, implementation of state monitoring of health resort and recreational territories and natural curative recourses is covered in the Concept of the State target program of tourism and resorts development for 2011–2015 [1].

The use of natural tourist and recreational, curative, raw and agricultural resources with the aim of treatment, prevention, rehabilitation and leisure is possible through the development of the health resort field. Despite the fact that in the Concept of health resort industry development the implementation of the State policy in the field of resort activity must be one of the priority directions of the national social policy and economy, the role and place of health resorts in the market of tourist services remains small [2]. Problems connected with laws and regulations of health resorts development, their material and technical resources, ineffective management and marketing, insufficient professional training require gradual solving mainly through the creation of the target program of the development of health resort enterprises.

Analysis of the recent research and publications. M. Borushchak, G. Gudz, O. Hulych, H. Kostenko, S. Omelianets, S. Tsiokhla [3–8] and others devoted their publications to strategic issues of resorts development. These works are related to research at the macro-level.

I. Artiukhova [9], N. Vedmid [10], O. Kolesnyk [11], A. Mazaraiki [12], Y. Mygalyna [13], I. Svyda [14] and others researched the problem of work efficiency of health resort enterprises.

At the same time, we don't have scientific research directed at creating favorable conditions of health resorts operation at the state level.

The aim of this publication is presenting conceptual approaches to the development of the target program of the development of health resort enterprises which will be based on general methodological and ideological principles.

Results. According to the Ukrainian legislation a tourist service consists of basic, additional and specialized services. Health resort enterprises belong to business entities which provide additional services to tourists. According to the Law of Ukraine "On the Resorts" they are health care establishments which are situated in resort areas and provide medical, preventive and rehabilitative services and use natural healing resources [15].

Despite the fact that over the last four years, the development of tourism has been characterized by positive changes, namely: the number of citizens of Ukraine who traveled abroad rose by 38.3 % of foreign citizens who visited Ukraine – by 10.7 %, tourists served by agents of tourism activity – by 32.5 %, the number of consumers fell by 18.1 % (*figure 1*) [16]. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, 85.2 % of tourists were in the country for the purpose of leisure, recreation (80 %) and treatment (5.2 %), 14.5 % of them are foreign citizens [16].

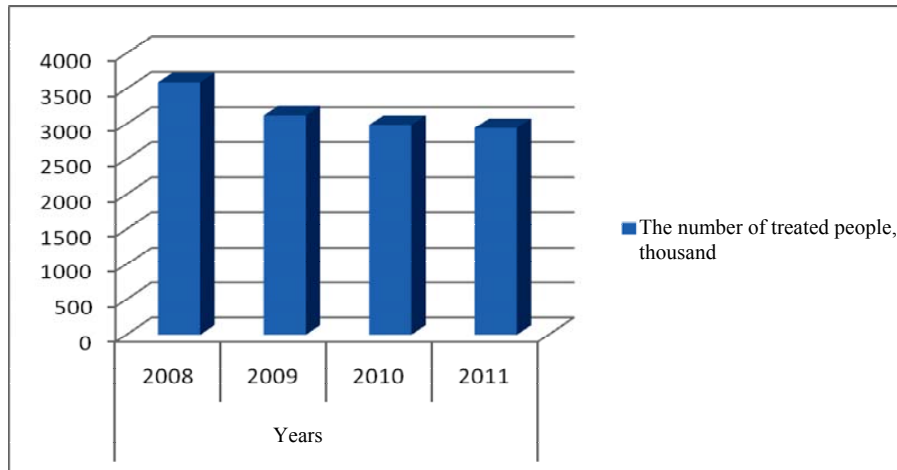


Figure 1. Changes of the number of people attending health resorts in 2008–2011

Negative tendencies which have been observed recently are stipulated by a set of reasons.

First, decreasing the number of operating health resort enterprises.

During 2010–2011 588 enterprises went out of business, 130 of them were refurbished, 272 – didn't have money to operate, 39 – didn't have permission of the sanitary and epidemiological service, 38 – didn't have customers who wanted to be treated, and other reasons – 109. But in 2008 – 2011 there was a tendency to increasing the number of recreational camps by 1.6 %, but the number of sanatoria and recreation houses fell – by 1.9 %, prophylactic sanatoria – 14.5 %, rest houses – by 7.3 %, children health camps – by 5.2 % [16].

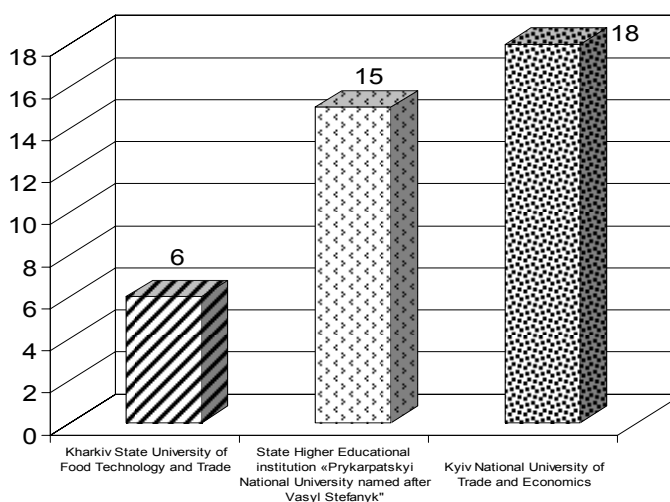
Second, while the cost of health resort vouchers increases the quality of hotel and restaurant services in these institutions is very low. The research results show that price increase leads to the decrease of occupancy rate of establishments on average by 18–20% per year, and at the same time the state of material and technical base and the quality of services are not improved [13].

Third, there is no system of cooperation of enterprises which produce, sell and provide tourist services. Travel agents, social insurance funds, and health resorts give partially true information about their range of services and quality.

Fourth, there exist essential faults in enterprise management. The research results show that the quality of services depends on staff on 50 %, their goodwill, professional skills, culture, decency. However, the skills of the staff of health resorts don't fully meet modern requirements, especially, the level of professional training. This particularly refers to hiring management staff with appropriate degrees. Nowadays, medical staff who don't have the knowledge of theoretical and methodological principles of

management are at the head of most health resorts. Thus, the current situation requires improving training experts for social services and strengthening its scientific component.

As a result, in 2012 higher educational establishments of Ukraine began training specialists for the recreational sector. At present, training in Resort Business is carried out by four universities: Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, Higher education establishment "Poltava University of Economics and Trade", Kharkiv State University of Food Technology and Trade, the state higher educational establishment "V. Stefanyk Carpathian National University". However, in 2013 applicants (for training in this field) applied for admission only to three of them (figure 2).



The number of applications

Figure 2. The number of applications for the speciality "Resort Business" in 2013

The education contents of the speciality "Resort Business" are determined by the field standards of higher education in Ukraine: Educational and Qualification Characteristics (EQC), Educational and Professional Program (EPP) and the Diagnostic tools of level of educational and vocational training. Training for health resort business involves the acquisition of skills and knowledge within the implementation of administrative, technological, forecasting, and research functions (for Master's degree). According to the EPP, the list of compulsory subjects includes those ones which enable to train an expert who will be able to provide competitiveness of health resorts. Getting theoretical knowledge, students acquire practical skills due to practical training.

Thus, the national educational market expands by means of creating another speciality for resort business, which will positively affect the quality of customer service.

Fifth, restricted use of modern information technologies and global reservation systems, e-commerce, specialized information retrieval systems.

The Social Insurance Fund for Temporary Disability introduced the national project "Resorts and Sanatoria of Ukraine" in 2011 [17]. Within this project a Web-portal which helps people to know more about Ukraine health resorts was created. Searching information is done in three languages (Ukrainian, Russian and English) on the following criteria: consumers who are served, disease (main and additional), location of an establishment, natural healing resources, meals and accommodation (infrastructure). But, this specialized portal now covers only 6.7 % of enterprises in Ukraine (200 of 3012 health resort enterprises).

The analysis of existing regional specialized catalogues in which a great number of health resorts are presented shows the efficiency of only three of them, namely: health resorts of Transcarpathia (with e-book for orders), Truskavets information-resort center (on-line booking), Kyiv Tourist. In other regions such catalogues either don't exist or they are catalogues of enterprises of different industries, e.g. Business-catalogue of the Crimea, which includes 69 000 enterprises including health resort enterprises.

In addition, the studies have shown that health resorts sites are characterized by a low level of information contents and operability. It is important to define the functions priorities of the site, which can fluctuate from enterprise advertising to providing communication between the personnel. The main functions of the site, as experts say, are: advertising tourist and recreational and natural healing resources, health resort, institution and services; providing information on enterprise activity; booking. The site is the least effective in providing communication between the personnel. The results of the survey of experts (consumers of the enterprise) as for the functions of the site of a national health resort are presented in *figure 3*. Were not able to answer – 3.2 % of experts.

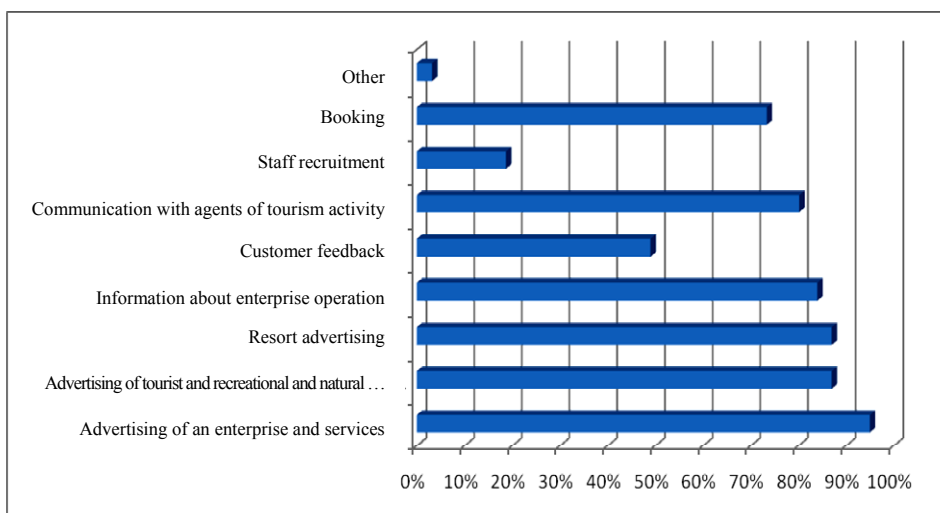


Figure 3. Results of the survey on the priority of site functions of a health resort

A lack of sites of some enterprises as a tool of advertising, the system which informs customers about advantages of leisure and recreation in national health resort enterprises with active advertising of foreign resorts and destinations led to the following situation: for the last three years the number of Ukrainians who went abroad is 60 % of total number of tourists (figure 4).

Sixth, the state of some health resorts are characterized by old material and technical base, which is explained by insufficient financing from the state and local budgets (table) [18–20].

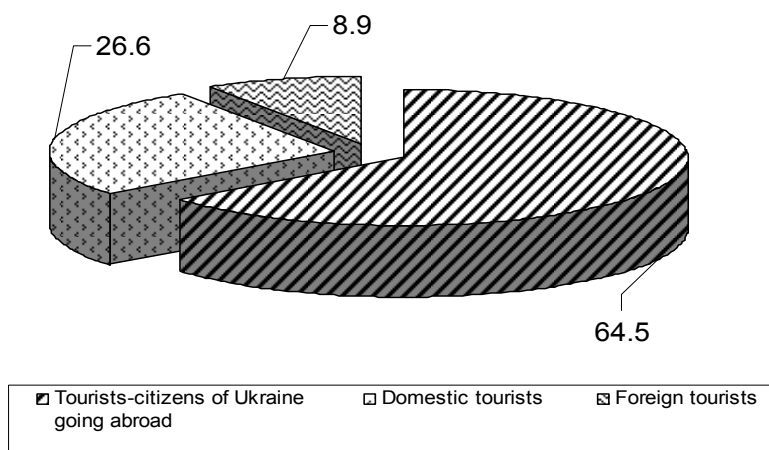


Figure 4. Share of tourists, served by agents of tourism activity of Ukraine in 2012, % (built according to [16])

Table

Expenditures of the State Budget of Ukraine for financial support of health resorts in 2011–2013

Source	Expenditures					
	2011		2012		2013	
	sum, mln UAH	share, %	sum, mln UAH	share, %	sum, mln UAH	share, %
General Fund	129.8	0.04	122.8	0.03	97.5	0.026
Special Fund	78.4	0.17	89.6	0.17	91.7	0.19
State budget Total	208.2	0.06	212.4	0.05	189.1	0.045

From 2011 to 2013 the following tendency was observed in the State budget of Ukraine: reduction of expenditures for financing health resorts by 9.2 %, from the general fund – by 24.9 %, with increase from the special

fund by 17%. This situation is not favorable for the improvement of material and technical base, work efficiency of the staff, raise of enterprise competitiveness. Insufficient amount of investment of self-supporting health resorts and a low level of entrepreneurial and business activity led to the situation when more than half of them are non-profitable.

The problems stated above which slow down the development of modern health resort enterprises must be solved within this target program. Thus, the determination of a long-term program for the development of these enterprises is an effective tool for successful development of health resort business and an urgent task on the way to the European integration.

The objective of the program should be creating an effective mechanism for management of health resort enterprises to ensure their competitiveness in both the domestic and international markets. Achieving this goal is possible due to the improvement of the program components, namely: laws and regulations, material and technical base, marketing policy, professional training, economic conditions of enterprise development. To define the principal measures it is necessary to substantiate each component of the program.

To improve the regulatory framework governing the development of health resort enterprises and harmonize them with international standards we should:

- develop a regulatory framework for the functioning of standardization and certification of health resort services, the construction of service quality management system on the basis of a comprehensive system of quality management TQM;

- develop measures to create the state electronic system for providing tourism business entities (including health resorts) with information about demand, offers, prices, rates at the national and regional levels; create and implement a mechanism for information exchange between business entities that are involved in the process of production, sale and provision of health resort services;

- identify directions for the state support of health resorts at the macro-, mesa- and micro-levels – primarily, through the submission of these institutions to the central body of executive power – the State Agency of Ukraine for Tourism and Resorts. This will allow to provide a comprehensive system of management and control of health resorts, to strengthen interdepartmental coordination and cooperation between the central and local authorities, to implement effectively the programs of target budget financing of resort areas [6]; to establish effective interaction between agents of economic activity that provide basic, support and specific tourism services. In addition, we should ensure at the state level social support of the population in the matters of providing medical, preventive and rehabilitative quality services, and creating the preferential tax treatment for social institutions whose activity aimed at promoting public health.

The measures which can improve material and technical base of health resort enterprises are as follows:

- inventory of equipment (medical, trade, restaurants, etc.) of health resorts, computer equipment etc;
- creating and implementing a single state electronic register of health resort enterprises of Ukraine, integrated electronic statistical database of the central and regional level;
- creating specialized regional electronic information retrieval systems with complete data bank of the enterprises and services;
- providing at the national level the development of specialized tourist and recreational infrastructure that will ensure sustainable rates of growth of tourist flows taking into account the peculiarity of the national tourist product [21], developing a network of historical and cultural institutions, modern entertainment infrastructure;
- reconstruction of obsolete material and technical base of public health resorts, which is possible due to increased funding from the state and local budgets, as well as "the formation of public-private partnership that will help to reduce costs for the maintenance of enterprises, improving the quality of services provided to the public " [6];
- creating an information data bank of domestic and foreign investment projects in the medical, health and diagnostic health resort field.

In order to implement *an effective marketing policy* we offer:

- expanding e-commerce in the social sector, aimed at promoting public health, e-marketing implementation in the areas of publicity and advertising of health resort services through information portals of international tourism organizations, travel portals of other countries;
- creation of tourist information centers, whose services can be used not only by national travel companies and domestic tourists, but also all those who use the Internet for advance planning of a destination for leisure, recreation and rehabilitation. In the structure of this center we should have the information and marketing sector for research and analyzing of the results, accumulation of information and creation of electronic databases;
- organizing and conducting virtual exhibitions, which will enable to promote health resort services not only in the domestic but also in international markets and attract foreign business entities in the field of tourism ;
- to ensure the development of an effective marketing strategy for brand promotion (including oversight and insight of a brand) at the state level and at the enterprise level of the health resort field. To focus the efforts of marketing experts and other professionals on creating a corporate brand book and a brand book of a particular service or a range of services. The primary purpose should be saving the identification of a brand, its distinctive features and differences from competitors and the way of presenting them to the consumer.

To train professionals for the health resort field it is necessary:

- to ensure training administrative and managerial personnel who can select, interpret information and use it in decision making;
- to reform curricula and form disciplines contents taking into account the world achievements in the health resort field;
- to implement and develop distant learning taking into account the limited demand for professional training for the given field (because of various regional occupancy rate of health resort enterprises);
- to review at the state level requirements to staffing (administrative and managerial staff) and hire personnel who have degrees in this field and know theoretical and methodological principles of management.

For the development and operation of health resort enterprises it is necessary to provide the following economic conditions:

- creating a favorable investment climate for domestic and foreign investors, searching additional sources of funding health resort enterprises;
- determination of the mechanism of the state regulation of prices and pricing for health resort services, bringing the cost of health resort vouchers in line with the quality of basic and additional services;
- engaging companies that specializing in management of these institutions for carrying out management functions if health resort enterprises are unable to operate effectively. That is, to use the management contract concluded between the owner of the enterprise and the company (operator), which specializes in management of the relevant types of businesses. When choosing an operator we must take into consideration the effectiveness of its activity for the previous contracts with other clients; excellent reputation of a company; control of operator's activity by the owner or his representative; competitiveness of operator personnel and work experience in the health resort field. This type of management of unprofitable enterprises enables to bring them to the next level and ensures competitiveness in the domestic and international markets.

Conclusion. Identifying conceptual approaches to the development of the target program of the development of health resort enterprises will make it possible to take into account a range of measures aimed at improving the current system of management, and facilitate the development of new mechanisms of state regulation in the health resort field.

Further research will include the study of each component of the development program, determining the effectiveness of the proposed measures and assessment of financial, technical and human resources necessary for the program implementation.

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Мельниченко С. Санаторно-курортні підприємства: між застоєм та модернізацією.

Постановка проблеми. З розвитком туризму відбувається переосмислення ролі закладів соціальної сфери, спрямованої на оздоровлення населення. Насамперед це стосується санаторно-курортних закладів, діяльність яких пов'язана з виробництвом, реалізацією та наданням відпочиваючим послуг лікувально-оздоровчого характеру. Наявні проблеми розвитку, що стосуються нормативно-правових питань регулювання розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів, їх застарілої матеріально-технічної бази, неефективного менеджменту та маркетингу, обмеженої професійної підготовки, вимагають поступового вирішення і передусім через формування цільової програми розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів.

Метою дослідження є визначення концептуальних підходів до розроблення цільової програми розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів, яка базуватиметься на загальних методологічних та ідеологічних засадах.

Результати дослідження. Проаналізовано сучасний стан функціонування санаторно-курортних закладів, окреслено причини, що зумовили негативні тенденції розвитку, сформульовано концептуальні підходи до розроблення цільової програми розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів, визначено основні довгострокові дії щодо розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів для забезпечення їх конкурентоспроможності як на внутрішньому, так і міжнародному туристичному ринку.

Висновки. Визначення концептуальних підходів до розроблення цільової програми розвитку санаторно-курортних закладів дасть можливість урахувати комплекс заходів, спрямованих на поліпшення діючої системи управління ними, та сприятиме розвитку нових механізмів державного регулювання у санаторно-курортній сфері.

Ключові слова: санаторно-курортні заклади, санаторно-курортна сфера, цільова програма, туризм, суб'єкти господарювання, інформаційні технології, нормативно-правова база, матеріально-технічна база, якість послуг, маркетингова стратегія.