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MODERN PRACTICES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

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СУЧАСНІ ПРАКТИКИ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ СІЛЬСЬКИХ ТЕРИТОРІЙ

The approach to the management and development of rural areas through a balanced combination of economic growth, social welfare, and environmental preservation is a key factor for the socio-economic stability of the state, especially under the conditions of contemporary global challenges (such as climate change, natural resource degradation, food instability, geopolitical tensions, and migration processes) and territorial transformations (including decentralization, urbanization pressure, and the consequences of armed conflict), which accelerate the change in the functional purpose and structure of rural areas. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine the characteristics and features of the application of modern practices for the sustainable development of rural areas. During the research, it was established that contemporary practices of sustainable rural development constitute an integrated and variable set of strategic, technological, and socio-economic solutions aimed at ensuring the balanced development of rural regions. Their effective combination allows for the harmonization of economic, social, and environmental components of development, which is crucial in the context of global challenges and internal transformations. In particular, practices such as the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural technologies, support for small-scale farming, development of social infrastructure, conservation of natural resources, use of renewable energy sources, citizen engagement in decision-making, and the development of alternative income sources have proven their ability to: promote the sustainable development of rural areas, improve the quality of life for residents, and contribute to the protection of the natural environment. Thus, the implementation and scaling up of these practices can become an effective tool for the sustainable development of rural areas in Ukraine, contributing to their socio-economic stability and resilience to external

challenges. This is especially relevant in the context of the country's recovery, the formation of new spatial development models, and ensuring the well-being of the rural population. Prospects for further research include assessing the effectiveness of implemented sustainable development practices in specific regions of Ukraine, identifying the factors contributing to their success, and developing adaptive models for different types of rural areas.

Управління та розвиток сільських територій на засадах збалансованого поєднання економічного зростання, соціального добробуту та збереження природного середовища є ключовим чинником соціально-економічної стабільності держави. Це особливо актуально в умовах сучасних глобальних викликів — таких як зміна клімату, деградація природних ресурсів, продовольча нестабільність, геополітична напруга та міграційні процеси — а також територіальних трансформацій, зокрема децентралізації, урбанізаційного тиску та наслідків воєнного конфлікту, що сприяють прискорену зміну функціонального призначення і структури сільських територій. Відтак мета статті полягає у вивченні характеристик та особливостей впровадження сучасних практик сталого розвитку сільських територій. У ході дослідження встановлено, що сучасні практики сталого розвитку сільських територій являють собою цілісний і варіативний комплекс стратегічних, технологічних та соціально-економічних рішень, спрямованих на забезпечення збалансованого розвитку сільських регіонів. Ефективне поєднання цих рішень сприяє гармонізації економічних, соціальних та екологічних складових розвитку, що є визначальним у контексті глобальних викликів і внутрішніх трансформацій. Зокрема, такі практики, як впровадження екологічно чистих агротехнологій, підтримка малого фермерства, розвиток соціальної інфраструктури, збереження природних ресурсів, використання відновлюваних джерел енергії, залучення громадян до процесу ухвалення рішень та розвиток альтернативних джерел доходу, продемонстрували свою ефективність у сприянні сталому розвитку сільських територій, підвищенні якості життя населення та збереженні навколишнього природного середовища. Таким чином, впровадження та масштабування зазначених практик може стати дієвим інструментом забезпечення сталого розвитку сільських територій України, сприяючи їхній соціально-економічній стабільності та підвищенню стійкості до зовнішніх викликів. Особливої актуальності це набуває в контексті післявоєнного відновлення країни, формування нових моделей просторового розвитку та забезпечення добробуту сільського населення. Перспективи подальших досліджень полягають в оцінці ефективності впроваджених практик сталого розвитку в окремих регіонах України, виявленні чинників їхньої успішності та розробленні адаптивних моделей для різних типів сільських територій.

Key words: sustainable development; alternative income sources; national food security; socialization of agribusiness.

Ключові слова: сталий розвиток; альтернативні джерела доходу; продовольча безпека держави; соціалізація аграрного бізнесу.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The approach to managing and developing rural areas through a balanced combination of economic growth, social welfare, and environmental conservation is a key factor in the socio-economic stability of the state, especially amid contemporary global challenges (such as climate change, natural resource degradation, food insecurity, geopolitical tensions, and migration processes) and territorial transformations (including decentralization, urbanization pressure, and the consequences of armed conflict), which accelerate changes in the functional purpose and structure of rural areas.

Currently, there is an active change in the functional purpose and structure of rural areas, involving the transformation of traditional roles and ways of using these territories through qualitatively new sustainable development practices. In particular, in the context of decentralization, local self-government is being strengthened, providing rural communities with greater oppor-

tunities for independent development planning while simultaneously requiring adaptation to new managerial challenges and the search for effective models of economic activity.

Urbanization pressure leads to the outflow of young people from rural areas to cities, causing demographic aging, a reduction in the workforce, and changes in the social structure of rural communities. This necessitates a reconsideration of development priorities, including economic diversification and the creation of new jobs.

The consequences of the armed conflict lead to the destruction of infrastructure, changes in land use, as well as the emergence of internally displaced persons, which causes additional socio-economic challenges and alters the demographic and economic landscape of rural areas.

Given the outlined specificity and significance of rural areas, the issue of formulating effective policies for their sustainable development becomes particularly urgent. This is especially important for Ukraine, where rural territories not only cover a

Table 1. Characteristics of the effectiveness of modern sustainable rural development practices

Practices	How the practice contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas	How the practice improves the quality of life for residents	How the practice preserves the environment
Implementation of innovative agrotechnologies and environmentally friendly farming methods.	Increases productivity and production efficiency, reduces resource consumption.	Provides stable incomes for farmers and health-safe products.	Reduces pollution, maintains soil fertility and biodiversity
Support for small and medium-sized farms and local enterprises.	Stimulates the development of the local economy and job creation.	Increases employment and social stability within communities.	Promotes the development of environmentally oriented businesses.
Development of social infrastructure.	Strengthens social capital and the human potential of the region.	Improves access to quality services and the overall standard of living.	Raises awareness of environmental protection among residents.
Conservation of natural resources and biodiversity.	Provides a sustainable ecosystem foundation for regional development.	Creates a comfortable and safe living environment.	Directly protects flora, fauna, and natural landscapes.
Introduction of renewable energy sources.	Reduces dependence on fossil fuels, creates new areas of activity.	Supplies environmentally friendly energy and reduces related costs.	Lowers greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution
Encouragement of public participation in decision-making.	Improves governance efficiency and consideration of local needs.	Strengthens a sense of responsibility and social cohesion.	Encourages environmentally responsible decision-making
Development of alternative sources of income.	Diversifies the economy, reduces reliance on traditional agriculture.	Creates additional opportunities for income generation and cultural development.	Supports the conservation of natural and cultural resources.

Source: compiled based on [1—2; 4—5].

significant portion of the country (over 70% of the territory) but also form the basis of the agricultural economy, ensuring the state's food security. Furthermore, rural regions play a crucial role in preserving natural landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage.

Taking these characteristics into account, the implementation of modern sustainable development practices contributes to strengthening the economic potential, social cohesion, and environmental resilience of Ukraine's rural areas, which is a necessary condition for their long-term prosperity and harmonious integration into the overall national development.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The specific features of sustainable rural development are the subject of numerous studies

both in Ukraine and abroad. Among the researchers conducting such studies are M. M. Tymoshenko [6], F. A. Vazhynskyi, A. V. Kolodiichuk [1], L. I. Halas, M. I. Dzhmulych, and T. O. Shmatkovska [3]. However, these scholars mainly focus on exploring effective economic strategies that promote the sustainable development of rural areas or on analyzing the sustainable development of the agro-industrial complex. Due to the war, economic instability, and migration processes, the scientific focus often shifts toward issues of recovery, security, humanitarian aid, and related topics. As a result, attention to the sustainable development of territories has diminished.

Thus, the characteristics and specific features of current sustainable development practices in rural areas remain insufficiently covered in the scientific literature.

FORMULATION OF THE ARTICLE'S OBJECTIVES

This article aims to explore the characteristics and particularities of implementing contemporary sustainable development practices in rural areas.

THE PAPER MAIN BODY

Within the framework of this study, the authors emphasize that modern practices of sustainable rural development are interpreted as a variable set of measures, strategies, and technologies aimed at ensuring the balanced development of rural regions, taking into account economic, social, and environmental aspects. Traditionally, such practices include [4–5]:

- the implementation of innovative agrotechnologies and environmentally friendly farming methods;
- support for small and medium-sized farms and local enterprises;
- development of social infrastructure (education, healthcare, culture);
- conservation of natural resources and biodiversity;
- adoption of renewable energy sources;
- encouragement of public participation in decision-making processes;
- development of alternative sources of income, such as agrotourism or handicrafts.

We share the view of M. M. Tymoshenko [5] that the practices mentioned above, in terms of

their effectiveness, help create conditions for the long-term and sustainable development of rural areas. They contribute to improving the quality of life for residents and preserving the environment for future generations. In particular, this statement is supported by the authors' provided assessment of the effectiveness of modern sustainable rural development practices (see Table 1).

Let us take a closer look at the specific features of applying the sustainable rural development practices outlined above.

Indeed, the practices of implementing innovative agrotechnologies and environmentally friendly farming methods form the foundation for transitioning to technologies and methods that increase agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impact. Among such practices are precision farming, organic farming, the use of biopreparations, irrigation systems with minimal water consumption, and the safe application of pesticides and fertilizers. These practices contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas as they help preserve soil fertility, reduce pollution of water resources and air, and improve the quality of agricultural products.

Practices supporting small and medium-sized farms and local enterprises are fundamental to the local economy of rural areas. Specifically, these practices provide the majority of jobs (especially in agrarian-oriented

Table 2. Practices for supporting small and medium-sized farms by type of activity

Types of activities	Key support practices	Expected outcomes
Crop cultivation	Subsidies for purchasing quality seeds, equipment, and pesticides/herbicides. Training programs on agro-innovation. Establishment of cooperatives for product marketing.	Increased crop yields Reduced costs Improved market positions of small producers
Animal husbandry	Preferential loans for farm establishment or modernization. Government vaccination and veterinary support programs. Support for farms maintaining a limited number of animals, mainly for local markets or family consumption with partial surplus sales	Increased livestock numbers Enhanced product quality Creation of new jobs
Crafts and processing	Grants for setting up artisan product workshops Support for participation in fairs and exhibitions Business management training.	Revival of traditional crafts. Growth of local entrepreneurship. Expansion of income sources.
Agritourism	Funding for the development of agro-tourism homesteads. Marketing support and territorial promotion. Creation of hospitality clusters	Income diversification Increased tourism attractiveness Preservation of cultural heritage

Source: compiled based on [3; 6].

regions) and involve various types of activities — including crop cultivation, livestock farming, crafts, and agritourism. This diversification reduces risks related to market fluctuations and natural disasters, making the rural economy more resilient (see Table 2).

Support for these entities is provided through access to financing, training, advisory services, the development of cooperatives, and the creation of distribution networks. This contributes to preserving jobs, increasing rural incomes, and reducing social inequality.

Practices for the development of social infrastructure — education, healthcare, and culture — form the foundation for qualitative improvements in social infrastructure that ensure rural populations have access to basic services, improve living conditions, and create prerequisites for sustainable development [2; 4]. This involves systematic investments in rural schools, rural clinics, and cultural centers, provided that these efforts contribute to reducing migration processes, especially the outflow of youth to cities, and support the socialization of agribusiness. For example, in the Zavodska United Territorial Community (UTC), the renovation of schools, the opening of modern youth centers, and the development of cultural initiatives have helped improve education levels and create new opportunities for active leisure and self-realization among young people. This has contributed to reducing youth migration to regional centers and strengthening local identity, which is an important step toward the community's sustainable development.

Practices for the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity form the foundation for the transition to the rational use of land, water resources, forests, and the flora and fauna of rural areas. This involves comprehensive measures for the protection of unique natural landscapes, the creation and maintenance of protected areas, and the implementation of agroecological approaches that promote ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation [4—5]. For example, in the rural areas of Rakhiv and Mizhhirya districts in the Zakarpattia region, activities aimed at restoring natural forests and creating buffer zones around the Carpathian National Nature Park are actively being implemented. Thanks to these measures, numerous rare species of plants and animals have been preserved, including the folded snowdrop, wolf, and brown bear. Furthermore, the introduction of agroecological methods

has contributed to the improvement of soil structure and water quality, which positively affects the ecosystem stability of the region.

Practices of implementing renewable energy sources form the basis for the transition from conventional energy supply to local energy generation through the use of solar, wind, bioenergy, and other alternative energy sources. For example, in the village of Vysokyi Zamok in the Lviv region, a solar power plant project has been implemented, providing electricity to local households and social facilities, thereby reducing energy supply costs. In the Poltava region, several farms utilize biogas plants to convert agricultural waste into heat and electricity, thereby addressing the issue of organic waste disposal while enhancing energy efficiency. These practices help reduce the dependence of rural areas on traditional fossil fuels, lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve the environmental situation. They also open up new opportunities for business development and job creation.

Practices that encourage public participation in decision-making form the foundation for involving residents in the processes of developing and implementing development strategies, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of rural area governance. Such participation promotes strengthening citizens' accountability for the outcomes of decisions made, social cohesion, and the building of trust between authorities and residents. At the same time, this creates the conditions for taking into account the real local needs and priorities in rural development [1]. For example, in the Mlyniv community of Rivne region, a participatory approach to budget planning is actively applied — residents participate in public hearings, submit their projects for funding from the local budget, and have the opportunity to vote on the most important initiatives. Thanks to this, several socially significant initiatives have been implemented — the installation of playgrounds, repair of street lighting, and reconstruction of the local community center. This approach has not only improved the quality of infrastructure but also contributed to increased civic engagement and a stronger sense of belonging to the common cause.

Practices for developing alternative income sources form the foundation for diversifying the rural economy. Specifically, this involves the development of agritourism, traditional crafts, and environmentally oriented businesses, which create additional income sources for residents, contribute

to the preservation of cultural heritage, and promote the region's natural resources. For example, in the village of Iza in the Zakarpattia region, basket weaving from willow has successfully developed into a local craft business, tourist routes, and the creation of new jobs. Tourists attend workshops and purchase authentic products, and residents are able to combine traditional activities with modern forms of entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that modern practices of sustainable rural development constitute an integrated and flexible set of strategic, technological, and socio-economic solutions aimed at ensuring the balanced development of rural regions. Their effective combination allows for the harmonization of economic, social, and environmental components of development, which is crucial in the context of increasing global challenges and internal transformations.

Specifically, practices such as the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural technologies, support for small-scale farming, development of social infrastructure, conservation of natural resources, use of renewable energy sources, citizen participation in decision-making, and development of alternative income sources have proven their ability to:

- Promote sustainable development of rural areas by increasing productivity, efficient use of resources, economic diversification, and strengthening the governance capacity of communities.
- Enhance residents' quality of life by ensuring access to services, stable employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and the preservation of cultural identity.
- Contribute to the protection of the natural environment by reducing anthropogenic pressure, rational resource use, and biodiversity conservation.

Thus, the implementation and scaling of these practices can become an effective tool for the sustainable development of rural areas in Ukraine, contributing to their socio-economic stability and resilience to external challenges. This is especially relevant in the context of the country's recovery, the formation of new spatial development models, and ensuring the well-being of the rural population.

Prospects for further research include evaluating the effectiveness of implemented sustainable development practices in specific regions of Ukraine, identifying factors contributing to their success, and developing adaptive models for different types of rural areas.

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