

## Chapter 31

# The Implementation of Rural Heritage Measures in Ukraine: Opportunities and Directions

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper describes the current state and tendencies in the development of rural heritage in Ukraine. Special attention is given to the nature reserve fund, forests, water resources, and historical-cultural objects. The preparatory steps for the implementation of rural heritage measures are presented, taking into account the necessity of the adaptation of the rural development policy of Ukraine to the requirements of the European Union. The aims, objects, and main directions of measures regarding the preservation of cultural and natural heritage in the rural regions of Ukraine are identified. The indicators for the evaluation of rural heritage measures are proposed.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Rural heritage includes all the tangible or intangible elements that demonstrate the particular relationship that a human community has established with a territory over time (Council of Europe, 2003).

It is a real asset and resource for territories, a factor and a driving force in sustainable development of the European continent, playing a decisive part in making rural areas more attractive and in the town-country balance (Council of Europe, 2012).

Rural heritage can help sustainable development by two ways: by recognizing today's potential

of rural heritage as a source, which may produce economic advantages for the countryside through the development of tourism; furthermore, by using the experiences offered by rural heritage to the contemporary communities by highlighting the valuable practice of sustainability through the use of natural sources, the organization of the living space and the managing of economic activities, mainly in the context of nature (CULT RURAL, 2009). That is why it can significantly promote the development of the rural economy.

In the EU countries, projects on rural heritage are implemented within the measure 323 "Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage" of

the Rural Development program. The range of actions which can be funded through the measure 323 is quite wide. For example, in Austria, the following projects may be supported:

- Management Plans and Nature Conservation Plans with farmers and foresters (at farm level);
- NATURA 2000 Management Plans and Landscape Conservation Plans;
- Management of protected areas and conservation of protected areas;
- Basic works necessary to conserve and improve important habitats;
- Species and habitat conservation projects;
- Restoration of valuable natural habitats (rivers, creeks and wetlands, etc.);
- Investments in outdoor recreation and education (visitor guidance and education centers in protected areas);
- Land purchase in the interests of nature conservation;
- Awareness raising events; and
- Investments with the aim of raising awareness (nature trails, brochures, exhibitions) (Netzwerk Land, 2012).

Development of rural districts which is based on conservation and upgrading of rural heritage should be also used in Ukraine. Good opportunities for the improvement of the countryside could appear due to the introduction of specific programs. It should be noted that the country has the strong intention to join the European Union. However, Ukraine has to be adapted to new conditions, and certain preparatory steps should be taken. This is particularly related to rural development programs, including rural heritage measures.

The situation is that until now, the development of rural territories in the country has been primarily based on agricultural production. Rural policy is still considered only as a component of agricultural policy. The majority of budget resources are directed to support production of

certain agricultural products rather than to solve the most urgent issues in the countryside (Moroz, 2009). This approach leads to unfavorable socio-economic and environmental changes in rural regions. Under these conditions, the elaboration of target programs aimed at the maintenance of rural heritage objects could be a starting point for positive changes in the rural areas of Ukraine.

The objective of this paper is to investigate opportunities and directions of the implementation of such measures in Ukraine. The paper is based on the data of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine and the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Its main method is the descriptive analysis.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Current State of Rural Heritage in Ukraine**

Rural areas in Ukraine have a number of natural, historical, and cultural objects. It is important that this diverse natural and cultural heritage could be preserved for future generations. In addition, the proper usage of rural heritage provides good opportunities for the diversification of the rural economy, the creation of new jobs, and the improvement of the living conditions in the countryside. That is why the directions with respect to the preservation, the renewal, and the effective use of natural and cultural heritage of rural regions are essential for Ukraine.

One of the main components of the natural heritage is the nature reserve fund (NRF). It includes 641 territories and objects of national significance: 19 natural reserves and 4 biosphere reserves, 47 national natural parks, 307 special nature reserves, 132 natural monuments, 18 botanical gardens, 7 zoological parks, 19 dendrological parks, and 88 parks-memorials of landscape architecture. The total NRF area increased from 1254.7 thousand hectares in 1992 to 3458.9 thousand hectares in

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