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WINE TOURISM AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIAN ECONOMY

Abstract. The work is devoted to such an actual problem of the economy as tourism and its importance for the development of the economy of Georgia. Today, the most correct way is to strengthen domestic tourism and create safe tourist zones. The work presents a lot of interesting historical evidence that Georgia is the homeland of wine. In this direction, wine tourism (enotourism) is one of the promising ways of development, and it is considered a growing segment of tourism. One of the favorable conditions for its development will be the active research of wine tourism regions. The paper examines the general theoretical aspects and perspectives of the development of wine tourism in the country, taking into account the experience of foreign countries.

Key words: domestic tourism, wine tourism, brand, model, standard, wine road.

Introduction. Wine tourism is becoming increasingly popular in the world, it is referred to in modern literature as enotourism and includes such activities as vineyard tours, wine tasting, grape picking, attending wine festivals and more.

Georgia, with its historical past of viticulture and winemaking and a special landscape, despite the century-old experience in the field of viticulture and winemaking, is at the initial stage of development in the field of wine tourism.

Purpose. Georgia has a great potential for the development of wine tourism, thus it acquires a very relevant importance for our research. It can solve important problems: development of the industry, creation of new jobs, creation and development of small and medium-sized businesses, development of infrastructure, protection of nature, protection and preservation of historical and cultural heritage, which is the main goal of the development of wine tourism in our country.

Results. It is paradoxical that we should consider wine tourism as one of the new types of agrotourism for Georgia. Today it is already known that Georgian wine is one of the oldest in history in the world. Viticulture and winemaking here originate from the VII-VI millennium BC. Today, the earliest signs of viticulture and wine production found in the world, point to the existence of wine culture in Georgia as early as 8000 years ago, which gives Georgia the status of the homeland of wine.

In the Atlas, „The Art of the Winemaker (New York, 1992)“, authors Hugh Johnson and James Holliday, as well as wine expert and author of The World's Best Wine Guide Oz Clark, agree that mankind was still in the Stone Age when grapes were first grown and wine was obtained in Georgia. According to the ancient map, wine from Georgia first entered Syria, then Egypt and Italy, and then Western Europe.

Out of 2000 grape varieties known in the world, 500 are Georgian. Wild varieties of vines are still widespread in the territory of Georgia. In the 80s of the last century, the Georgian forest vine was included in the Red Book and it is protected by the state. About 500 types of vines are listed in Georgia, 430 of which are preserved in different state or private collection vineyards. In 2013, the Georgian traditional method of making Kvevri wine was granted the status of a monument of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, which indicates the uniqueness of this method and sends a message to the whole world that wine is a constituent part of the ancient Georgian culture. This recognition is important for raising awareness of Kvevri wine and contributes to the worldwide promotion of Georgian wine.

All of the above makes Georgia unique. The world should recognize it as the homeland of wine and thus change the situation that is established today. To achieve this goal, we need to share the experience of the countries that have been involved in this field for a long time: France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece and Austria, which has been one of the main priorities of the Georgian government in recent years. In the last decade, the flow of visitors and revenues from tourism have been growing in Georgia every year. Tourism produces about 11.5% of Georgia's GDP. In 2023, the total number of visitors reached 5.1 million, which is 30.9% more than the previous year. Tourism brought almost 9.1 billion US dollars in profits in 2023, which is 7.3% higher than the same figure of the previous year. Most importantly, the role of wine tourism in the positive dynamics of these indicators is growing more and more.

It is undeniable that our country has a great potential for the development of wine tourism, which can solve important problems: development of the industry, creation of new jobs, creation and development of small and medium-sized businesses, development of infrastructure, protection of nature, protection and preservation of historical and cultural heritage.

As is well known, the development of any direction of tourism begins with a detailed study of the area of interest to it. Wine tourism is no exception. For the further development of this field, it is important to identify the needs of current and potential wine tourists: the motivation of tourists to travel. It should be taken into account that tourists are attracted not only by historical monuments, but also by various activities provided in the form of light entertainment, for example, wine tasting festivals, participation in harvesting and pressing of wine. Today, in the wine regions of Georgia, almost everything is possible for tourists, in addition to traditional wine routes and special events - paying for a wedding in a vineyard, flying in a hot air balloon over the vineyards, picking grapes with farmers, getting to know and tasting local cuisine in family hotels, wine tasting and the opportunity to press wine, horse riding and other.

The awareness of the Georgian wine brand and the historical and economic foundations of the field of viticulture and winemaking provide good opportunities for the development of wine tourism. The following wine tourism products and services are the most developed with us:

In all countries with a wine culture, we see "Wine Road" signs on the roads that lead to wineries. In recent years, such stencils have also appeared on our roads. The "Wine Road" project of Georgia was launched in 2011. It was planned by the state and the international organization USAID. The symbolism of vines and grapes on the sign is Georgian, and the color is Saperavi.

Within the framework of the USAID project, new signs of tourist information centers were installed in the targeted regions.

In the homeland of wine, "Wine Road" is the only large-scale wine tourism project led by the state. A number of large wineries have developed new tourist services, tourist clubs have been created. e.g. "Wine Club" with the financial support of "USAID Economic Security Program" started a new educational project for the development of small wineries and regional wine tourism. The project is called "Wine Village". It is noteworthy and undeniably appreciated that one of the goals of the new project is to eliminate the shortcomings of the old "Wine Road".

On October 23, 2021, at the cultural routes competition held in Italy under the auspices of the Council of Europe, for the first time in history, Georgia won the highest international title -

"Best Archaeobotanical Practice in Wine Tourism". The mentioned title is another step forward for Georgia in the international arena, which contributes to the strengthening of the country's cultural and oenological heritage, the acquisition of experience, and the development of cognitive and sustainable tourism.

When we talk about wine tourism, we must talk about the wine museum, which is located in Tbilisi. There is a vine and wine museum on the territory of the National Wine Agency. Ancient Georgian wine vessels - jugs are presented here, and the museum also includes an ancient wine cellar (storage), where up to 25,000 bottles of wine from different periods are kept.

It is necessary for the country to pay attention to the production of high-quality wine in order to be able to take a proper place in the international market and make its wine a brand. The dynamics of recent years have shown us that Georgian wine participates in the international wine and alcoholic beverages exhibitions on a large scale in a unified branded form. The diversification of this field is facilitated by the awards (gold and silver medals) won by Georgian wine brands: double gold - "Saperavi". Reserve 2005", company "Kakhuri"; Gold - "colorful". 2008", the company "Kakhuri"; Gold - "colorful". Family reserve. 2013, "Lucas" company; Gold - "Marani". Kondoli Vineyards. 2013, Telavi Wine Cellar Company Gold - "Marani". Reserve. 2007, Telavi Wine Cellar Company. Silver - "Mucusani Iberian". 2013", company "Shumi"; Silver - "covered". 2013". Company "Shumi"; Silver - "tableware". 2012, Telavi Wine Cellar Company Silver - "Saperavi Kvevri". 2011, "Kindzmarauli" corporation, Georgian Kvevri wines are now considered next to such wine-growing countries of the world as France, Italy and Spain. Participation in exhibitions and tastings is of great importance, which increases the awareness and popularization of Georgian wine, and therefore leads to an increase in the volume of exports and raising awareness in export markets, helps to attract tourists. The world-famous permanent exhibition "Vinopolis" in London began with the Georgian pavilion, which was called "Georgia - the cradle of wine".

On September 7-9, 2016, at the initiative of the United Nations Tourism Organization, UNWTO, the first global conference on wine tourism was held in Kakheti, Georgia (in Kakheti, because 65 percent of vineyards in Georgia grow in Kakheti). 250 delegates from 42 countries and 150 organizations attended the conference. Many speakers called Georgia and Georgians champions and pioneers in the field of wine tourism.

On May 9, 2020, the main wine festival of the year - "New Wine Festival 2020" was supposed to be held in Georgia, but it was postponed precisely because of the pandemic. However, it was still possible to hold several events, among them, the international Kvevari wine competition was organized for the fourth time.

A number of webinars dedicated to getting out of the crisis situation were organized by state organizations and business representatives.

The success of the wine company "Shumi" deserves a special mention, which won the highest international title "Best archaeological practice in wine tourism" for the first time in history at the cultural routes competition held in Italy under the auspices of the Council of Europe on October 23, 2021, which contributed to the promotion of Georgian wine on the international market.

VinePair, one of the largest digital wine platforms in the United States, has published an article titled "The Top 10 Wine Regions to Visit in 2023." Georgia occupies the first place in this top ten,

Mundus Vini 2024, one of the most famous wine competition, Georgia won 52 gold and 31 silver medals. Most recently, on February 27, 2024, an exhibition called "Georgia - the country of wine" was opened in Portugal, which was dedicated to the unique Georgian method of producing Kvevari wine.

According to recent statistical data, according to the statistics of the world's advanced wine tourism countries, for example, wine tourism in Italy generates 2.5 billion euros per year. About 50 million people are interested in this type of vacation in Germany every year, spending 5.5 billion euros on travel. 27 million tourists in the USA choose wine tourism as the best means of

entertainment and relaxation. This interest grows more and more every year and creates thousands of new jobs in these countries, which in itself improves the economic indicators.

In order for Georgia to raise its awareness as the homeland of wine and take a proper place in the international language market, it is necessary for the coordinated participation of the government and the private sector at all levels of this process, because a strong village, a strong wine industry, and developed tourism ultimately guarantee the progress of the country's economy.

Conclusions. The development of wine tourism can solve regional, economic, ecological, social problems; It can develop the local economy in a balanced way; Promotion of the diversification process of viticulture and winemaking; Increasing opportunities for business development, the number of jobs. In order for Georgia to raise awareness as the homeland of wine and take a proper place on the international language market, the state should develop policy directions and complete the legal framework, wine tourism programs, and the private sector should implement the improvement of the quality of wine tourism products.

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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL AGRICULTURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Abstract. The article analyzes the role of digital agriculture in the development of sustainable agriculture. It shows the traditional attitude towards agriculture as an important area of economic development and transformation, which produces different approaches to agricultural sector development. The need to introduce innovative technologies in agriculture that allow intensive use of digitization, automation, and other technologies and increase productivity is justified.

The article presents the main challenges impeding the development of sustainable agriculture in this direction in Georgia. At the end of the article, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made

Keywords: sustainable agriculture, digitization, innovative technologies, development instruments.

Agriculture of Georgia is facing new challenges currently. The question arises about what new role agriculture should play in the country's economy, apart from the traditional content that generally meant to feed the population. This regards to the potential of the agricultural field; whether the products produced in rural areas have relative trade advantages, and special attention should be paid to the field to meet local demand. Technological processes in agriculture are closely related to land as the main means of production. In addition, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the world population will reach almost 8 billion in 2025, and 9.6 billion in 2050. Therefore, global food production must increase by at least 70%, which poses significant challenges to the agricultural sector. The major tasks the industry is facing are the production of quality food products, which are useful for human health, and the preservation of the ecosystem and increasing its vitality; therefore, the sustainable