

Chapter 4

Algorithms and Tools of Digital Marketing for the Sustainable Development of Agricultural Tourism Businesses



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4.1 Introduction

According to the strategy for developing tourism in the Russian Federation until 2035, the primary efforts should be aimed at stimulating the development of domestic tourism, part of which is agricultural tourism.

It should be noted that agricultural tourism is a type of rural tourism involving not just temporary trips to rural areas but also visits to domestic agricultural producers engaged in tourism activities.

Agricultural tourism currently gains popularity, which is primarily due to the problems faced by the tourism industry as a whole: the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of some countries for entry, exchange rate fluctuations, etc. Moreover, the pace of life is constantly accelerating, and, as a result, residents of megacities increasingly seek solitude and peace in rural areas.

To promote any business (including tourism), it is vital to ensure its marketing support, including in the digital environment, which was the subject of this research.

The research aims to conduct a comprehensive study of the features and problems of the development of agricultural tourism and develop an algorithm for its marketing support using digital tools based on the data obtained.

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4.2 Methods

The research was conducted based on domestic and foreign theoretical and methodological developments in the study of instruments of marketing support for the agricultural tourism business.

The theoretical basis of the research includes the works of classical economic theory, the works of Russian and foreign scholars on the problems of the digitalization of services, and the materials of scientific publications on various aspects related to the discussed issues.

The basis for the analytical work was the data of analytical agencies and publications, observations, and conclusions of the authors received during the study of the experience of regions of the Russian Federation and foreign countries in the promotion and popularization of agricultural tourism.

The methodological basis of the research is a systemic approach to the study of problems associated with the analysis of the problems of marketing support for agricultural tourism business, as well as the effectiveness of the tools used to promote it in the digital environment. Moreover, the authors apply general scientific methods of knowledge (analysis, synthesis, dialectical method, abstract-logical method, and system analysis) and the methods of economic analysis (analogy, grouping, comparison, and generalization).

4.3 Results

In Russia, there is some disagreement in the interpretation of the term agricultural tourism. Most authors identify it with the concept of rural tourism.

However, in our opinion, there is a difference. Rural tourism is the travel of citizens to visit rural areas, rest, receive recreation, and immerse themselves in the traditions and history of rural places. In turn, agricultural tourism is an alternative type of tourism that benefits agricultural enterprises and local communities in economic, social, and environmental terms. Thus, we should consider agricultural tourism as a type of rural tourism.

Increasing the flow of tourists visiting rural areas is a key strategy that accelerates the modernization of agriculture and promotes its sustainable development through the material resources involved.

In this regard, there is a need to create conditions for integrating agricultural and tourism sectors through the diversification of farm services.

The development of agricultural tourism is a driver for agricultural construction. It also makes it possible to improve the tourist infrastructure in the regions of Russia, create new jobs and competitive tourism products, stimulate business activity, and stop the degradation and abandonment of rural areas (Fig. 4.1).

According to the Federal Agency for Tourism of Russia (Rostourism), organized agricultural tourism in Russia accounts for up to 2% of the total tourist flow against a share of 20%–30% in countries where this direction is most developed.

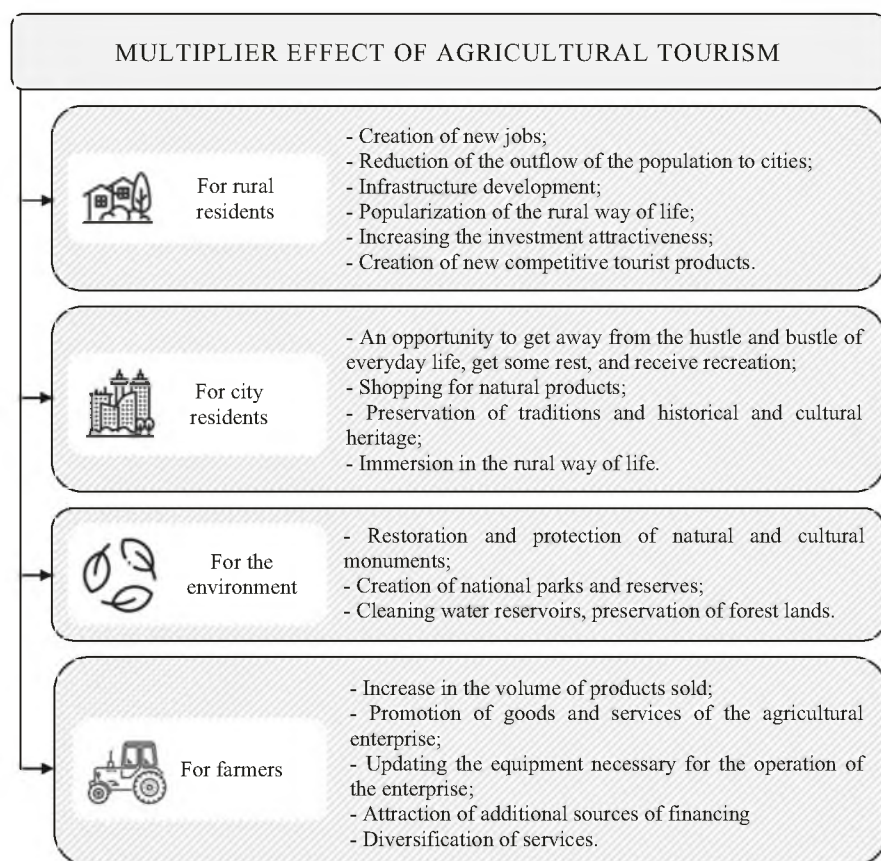


Fig. 4.1 A systemic representation of the multiplier effect of agricultural tourism. (Source: Developed by the authors)

Additionally, agricultural tourism affects the formation of a positive image of the regions and their investment attractiveness, contributes to an increase in tax deductions, and develops the overall regional tourism structure.

Despite the noted multiplier effect of agricultural tourism, its development is slow under the influence of several constraining factors (Fig. 4.2).

Nowadays, the income of Russian farmers in the field of agricultural tourism does not exceed 1%. In connection with the current situation, grant support measures were developed to stimulate entrepreneurs engaged in agricultural tourism.

Grant funds can get those producers of agricultural products that want to develop tourism in rural areas.

It is assumed that state support should help production to increase sales of goods by attracting tourists.

In 2022, the Belgorod Region was the leader in the number of projects that won the selection for grants in the field of agricultural tourism.

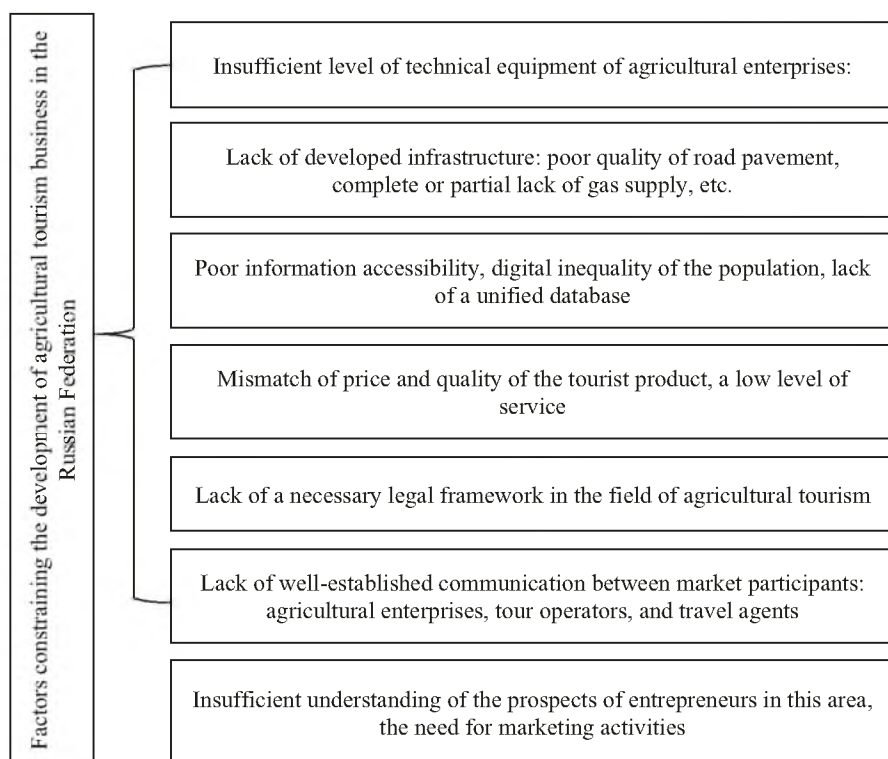


Fig. 4.2 Systematization of factors constraining the development of agricultural tourism in the Russian Federation. (Source: Developed by the authors)

Portal to support medium and small businesses “My Business,” in conjunction with the social network “Vkontakte,” has developed a program to support and promote entrepreneurs. Program participants had the opportunity to study the tools offered by the social network “Vkontakte,” necessary for the successful conduct and promotion of business, as well as to receive bonuses in the form of additional budget for the promotion of their products and services.

Rosselkhozbank has been organizing the retraining program “Farmer’s School” for several years, which unites 85 regions of the Russian Federation; classes are held in person and remotely. The educational program pays special attention to studying mechanisms of development and promotion of agricultural tourism. At the end of the training, farmers receive diplomas of professional retraining. Currently, the lack of proper attention to the problem of marketing support for agricultural tourism is due to many reasons, the main of which are related to the specifics of the industry and the lack of understanding of its necessity by farmers. Digitalization of agricultural tourism makes it possible to attract a new generation of tourists to the business – Millennials. They cannot imagine their lives without digital technology, demanding comfort. These groups of tourists pay special attention to environmental issues, looking for comfortable conditions for travel. Additionally, the emotional

aspect of consumption will play a decisive role in this case; the commercialization of the experience will become decisive in the market.

At a time of universal digitalization of the economy, the most effective marketing tools are Internet technologies that enable a significant restructuring of the business model and make it more efficient. This technology includes big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and machine tools, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), computer vision, blockchain, geoinformation and navigation systems, automated enterprise management systems (AMS), etc. (Fig. 4.3).

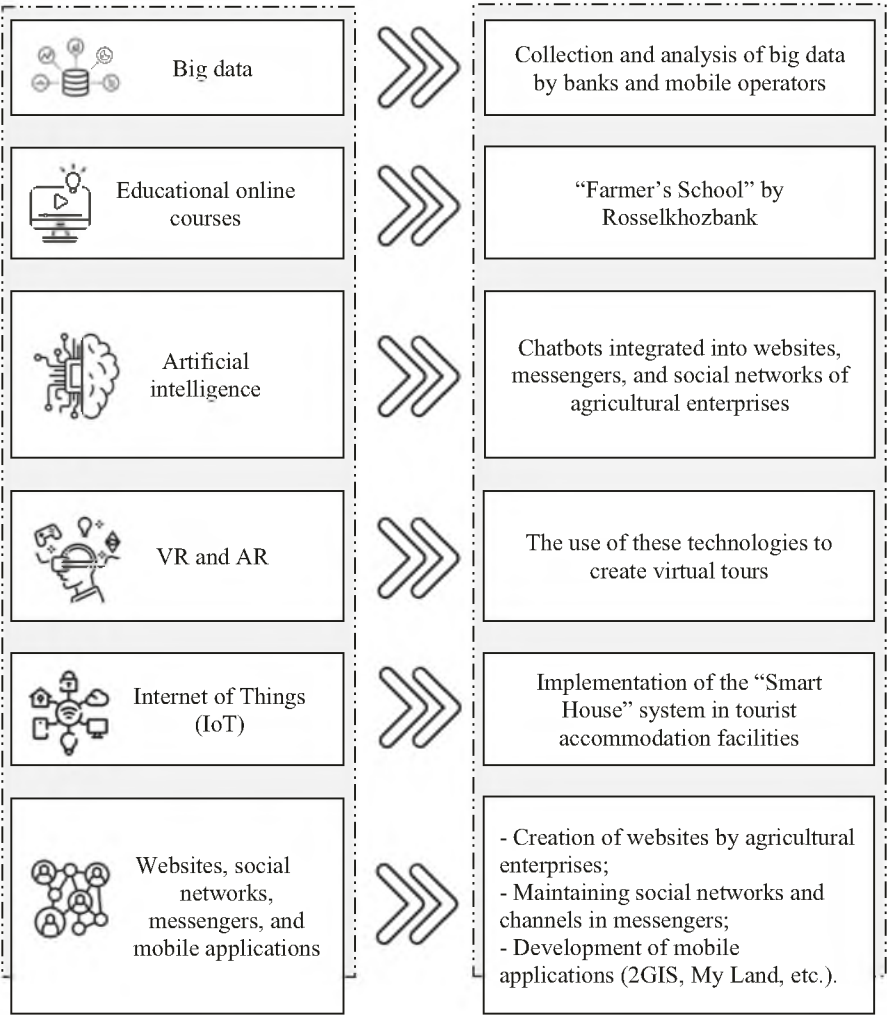


Fig. 4.3 Digital marketing tools to support the development of agricultural tourism. (Source: Developed by the authors)

Let us consider the proposed digital marketing tools for agricultural tourism.

The success of an agricultural tourist enterprise directly depends on its financial and technological capabilities and on an understanding of the need to promote its services using advanced marketing tools.

In the process of planning travel, tourists tend to collect information from many sources: websites, mobile applications, advertising, travel agencies, etc., which is quite a time-consuming process. Therefore, there is a need to synthesize the diversity of communication channels into a single digital ecosystem, which will create a continuous and unimpeded exchange of information between all market participants.

A single tourist information space is a set of communication channels where content is created and consumed by all participants (tour operators, travel agents, farmers, and tourists) to interact, form the tourist product, and ensure its subsequent promotion and realization.

One of the main platforms for communicating with consumers is the company website, which is a recent one-page landing that is informative and intuitive to navigate.

In the early 2000s, the term big data became widely used. Big data is structured or unstructured datasets of large volumes that users leave on the Internet; these datasets are collected, processed, and analyzed using automated tools.

Big data is successfully applied in many sectors of the economy, including the tourism industry. Regarding agricultural tourism, the following types of big data are the most relevant:

- GPS location data from smartphones;
- Data for digital management of tourist flows;
- Data on reservations and accommodation in various means of accommodation.

Russian banks “Sberbank” and “Tinkoff” have developed the “SBER Index” and “Tinkoff Index” services, where they publish data on tourist flows based on the analysis of customer spending.

This data allows representatives of agricultural tourism to track the dynamics of demand for certain services, analyze seasonal fluctuations in the volume of tourist flows, and create new competitive products considering consumer preferences.

Chatbots and the AI that forms them aim to increase the speed and availability of information. They allow users to continuously sort data and respond quickly to consumer requests without human intervention, which saves time and labor resources. In the current environment, the creation of chatbots is available to any Internet user based on Russian digital platforms “Vkontakte” and “Telegram.”

The trend toward combining real experiences with digital ones is gaining momentum, with consumers becoming part of something that is interesting to them. VR makes it possible for tourists, without leaving home, to visit almost any point on the planet: hotels, museums, nature reserves, concerts of favorite performers, or tourist destinations.

The mass use of cell phones and tablets with constant access to the Internet space opens up limitless opportunities for farmers, tourism businesses, and marketers. It makes it possible to introduce various tools to promote their products and services.

Despite the availability of many digital tools to promote agricultural tourism, they do not currently bring effective results because farmers often do not consider it necessary to apply them in their activities or do it haphazardly.

In this regard, the authors attempted to develop an algorithm of marketing support for agricultural tourism in the digital environment, consisting of a sequence of the following stages:

- Setting goals and objectives;
- Implementing the tourism development strategy in the Russian Federation until 2035;
- Forming and implementing programs to encourage entrepreneurs;
- Creating a digital ecosystem of agricultural tourism and definition of digital tools for its development (Fig. 4.4).

A systemic approach to the marketing support of agricultural tourism will contribute to the more rapid and effective development of this type of tourism, create a comfortable environment for business activities, and make services competitive in the market and convenient, affordable, and attractive to the mass consumer.

4.4 Discussion

The need for importance and consideration of issues of marketing support of agricultural tourism is steadily growing primarily due to the ever-changing market conditions, the development of digital technology, and the constantly changing preferences of consumers [12].

During this research, the authors relied on the developments of Russian (I. V. Mukhomorova [10]; Y. O. Romanenko, V. O. Boiko, S. M. Shevchuk, V. V. Barabanova, and N. V. Karpinska [13]; M. Sheresheva, M. Efremova, L. Valitova, A. Polukhina, and G. Laptev [14]; S. Yekimov, B. Sobirov, K. Turdibekov, M. Aimova, and M. Goncharenko [16]) and foreign scholars (É. Happ and Z. Ivancsó-Horváth [1]; A. Hassan and R. Rahimi [2]; K. O. Kayumovich, F. S. Annamuradovna, and S. F. Kamalovna [4]; A. Lubis, N. W. Lubis, I. Apriliya, and J. Wardhani [5]; J. Magano and M. N. Cunha [6]; A. A. Merojovich [9]; T. Pencarelli [11]; T. I. Suyunovich and G. Erkin [15]) related to the effectiveness of the implementation of marketing support for tourism business, revealing the use of digitalization as a universal tool for promotion and communication with the target audience. It should be emphasized that the study of this issue has become relevant only in the last decade due to the growing number of Internet users and the popularity of this channel of communication with consumers of goods and services.

Certain provisions of earlier scientific research of the authors in the development of analytical and marketing support for the development of service activities in the hospitality industry, published in co-authorship with E. V. Isaenko and

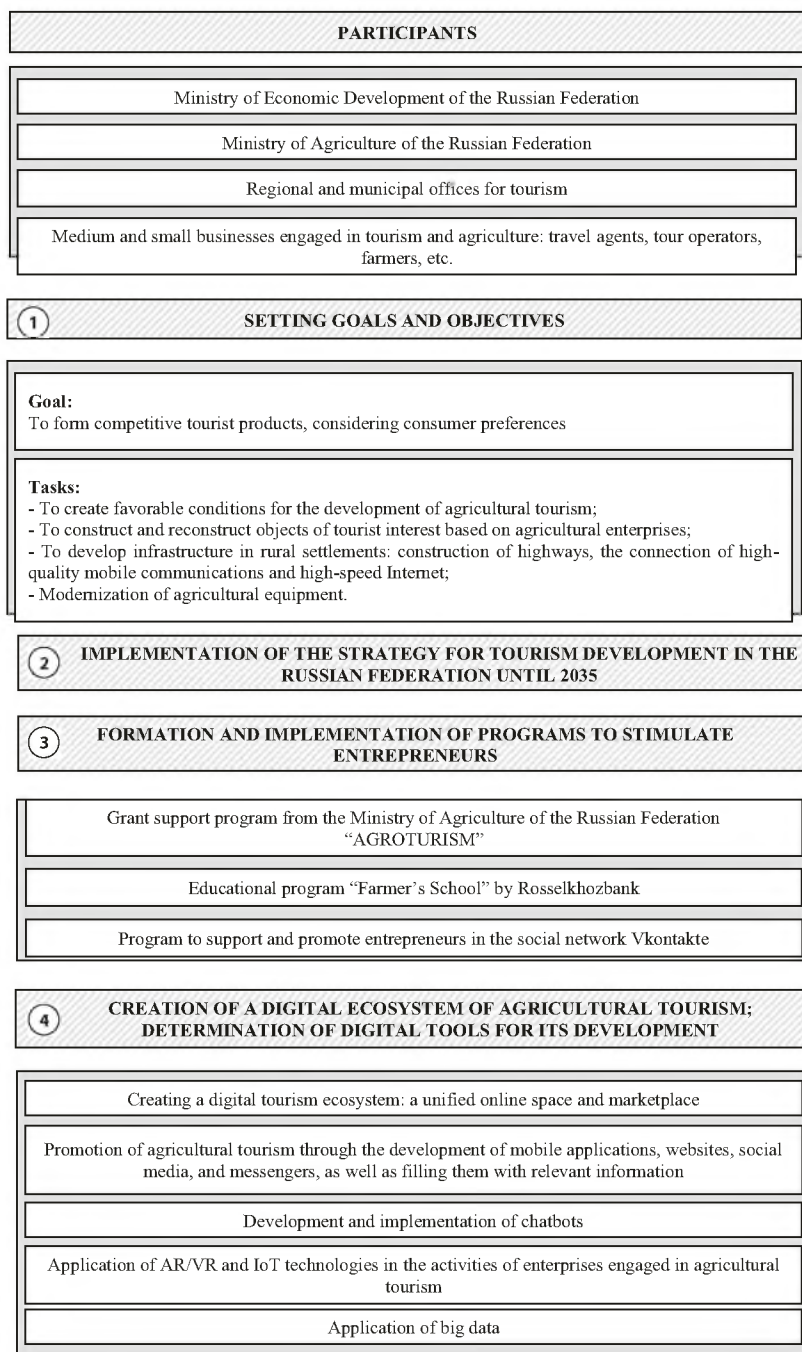


Fig. 4.4 Algorithm of marketing support for agricultural tourism using digital tools. (Source: Developed by the authors)

I. V. Rozdolskaya [3], I. S. Khaydarov [7], and E. A. Zaitseva [8], are further developed in this research in terms of justifying the prospects of agricultural tourism and the need for its marketing support in the digital environment.

4.5 Conclusion

The results of this research confirm the importance and necessity of implementing digital marketing tools for agricultural tourism. Currently, the market for agricultural tourism is not fully formed and is at an early stage of its development, which requires special attention to the study of mechanisms of its functioning and marketing support.

Agricultural tourism affects the formation of a positive image of the regions and investment attractiveness, increasing tax deductions and contributing to the development of the overall regional tourism structure.

Under the influence of political, sanitary-epidemiological, economic, and other factors, there is a permanent transformation of consumer behavior. The authors systematized the multiplicative effect of agricultural tourism on rural and urban residents, ecology, and farmers, which proves its prospects and the need for marketing support, including in the digital environment.

Despite the noted multiplier effect of agricultural tourism, its development is slow under the influence of several constraining factors, including the insufficient level of technical equipment of agricultural enterprises, abandonment of areas, lack of developed infrastructure, imperfect legislative framework, lack of well-established communication between market participants, poor information accessibility, etc.

To retain existing customers and attract as many new customers as possible, it is necessary to constantly improve the business processes of management of agricultural and tourist enterprises and apply innovative methods of promotion and implementation of services in their activities.

The authors developed an algorithm for marketing support for agricultural tourism in the digital environment, consisting of the following successive stages:

- Setting goals and objectives;
- Implementing the strategy for tourism development in the Russian Federation until 2035;
- Forming and implementing programs to stimulate entrepreneurs;
- Creating a digital ecosystem for agricultural tourism and identifying digital tools for its development.

A systemic approach to the marketing support of agricultural tourism will contribute to the faster and more effective development of this type of tourism, create a comfortable environment for business activities, and make services competitive in the market and affordable and attractive to the mass consumer.

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