

# State regulation of sustainable development of rural areas in the system of food security of Ukraine

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**Keywords:** rural areas; sustainable development, food security, state regulation of rural areas development, strategy for sustainable development of rural areas, agricultural sector, agricultural products, agricultural production

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**Abstract.** *Currently, the issue of sustainable development of rural areas is one of the most important areas of research. The relevance of the issue under consideration lies in the fact that economically stable and socially developed rural areas guarantee the stability, independence, and food security of the state. Therefore, the vector of their development should be a priority direction of state policy. The sustainable development of rural areas is currently being paid close attention to not only in Ukraine, but throughout the world. The sustainable development of the territory implies an increase in the efficiency of production located on it, an increase in the standard of living of the population, the presence of a developed infrastructure in the territory, as well as solving the housing problems of the population, reducing unemployment, and so on. However, the current conditions prevailing in rural areas prevent the formation of socio-economic prerequisites for this process. As a result, we can state the absence of a mechanism that ensures sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas. This requires immediate cardinal changes in the development policy of rural areas of Ukraine to increase their sustainability. The purpose of this article is to identify factors that affect the functioning and development of rural areas in Ukraine and systemic problems that hinder their development. Attention is focused on the formation of effective and efficient mechanisms for promoting the sustainable development of rural areas, as well as the development of a conceptual model for the sustainable development of rural areas. It is also necessary to identify priority areas of state policy for the period up to 2035 in the field of sustainable development of rural areas.*

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## 1. Introduction

At the present stage of economic development, it is necessary to consider issues related to the protection of the environment, as well as social issues of life support for the population, as one of the main issues involved. Awareness of the role of rural areas in achieving sustainable development of countries and their food security has led to the emergence of a new theory of sustainable development of rural areas in modern science.

The sustainable development of rural areas should be the main goal of the policy of every state. Countries should move in the direction of the development of rural areas as a complex that performs production, demographic, institutional, social, economic, environmental, and other functions.

Achieving this goal of sustainable development of rural areas will help to ensure the country's food security. As a result, both the quality and standard of living of the population of the country and the competitiveness of the economy can be increased.

The sustainable development of rural areas plays a pivotal role in ensuring the overall food security of a nation. In Ukraine, a country with significant agricultural potential and a rich rural heritage, the promotion of sustainable practices in rural areas is essential for achieving long-term food security goals.

Current socio-economic situation in rural settlements in Ukraine is characterized by a number of crisis phenomena that impede the transition to sustainable development of the territory. These phenomena include: (1) deterioration of the demographic situation in rural areas; (2) rural poverty and high unemployment of the rural population; (3) declining quality of life in rural areas; (4) reduction of the network of social infrastructure institutions; (5) restricting the access of villagers to basic social services - education and health care; (6) destruction of the evolutionarily established system of rural settlement.

While there are existing studies on sustainable rural development and food security, few have specifically focused on the role of state regulation policies in the context of Ukraine. This research aims to bridge this gap by offering a detailed analysis of the interplay between state-led initiatives, rural development practices, and food security outcomes. By identifying successful strategies and potential challenges, our study seeks to provide valuable inputs for policymakers and researchers striving to enhance the effectiveness of state interventions in building sustainable and food-secure rural communities.

## **2. Research methods**

The theoretical basis of the research and the results presented in the article was the generalization and adaptation of theories and concepts of sustainable global development expressed at international forums, in publications of international and Ukrainian scientists, the results of research recognized by the international scientific community. These include: the need to resolve the problem of sustainable development in the face of global threats and risks for humanity as a necessary basis for the safe development of the global community (World

Economic Forum, 2016); accounting and reducing risks for the development of harmonious relations between the natural and social environments due to the formation of a global information space (Haberl et al., 2016); development of the “cluster” category and its role in shaping the competitive advantages of countries (Porter, 2000); substantiation of the importance of the digital economy in modern agriculture (Pesce et al., 2019); formation of an effective model of food security in Ukraine (Fedchyshyn et al., 2022a); ensuring the proper use of agricultural land, taking into account private and public interests (Fedchyshyn et al., 2022b); development of organic agricultural production (Ignatenko, 2020).

By drawing upon these theoretical frameworks and concepts, the article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state regulation of sustainable development in rural areas and its connection to food security in Ukraine. These theories help to frame the research questions, shape the methodology, and provide a broader context for the findings presented in the article.

The above-mentioned publications and sources were used in the article because they:

- directly relate to the subject of our article. They include materials that provide insights into policies, practices, and challenges in this specific area;
- are from reputable academic journals, forums, and books that have undergone peer review. Peer-reviewed sources undergo scrutiny by experts in the field, which ensure quality of the information presented;
- are recent and up-to-date. Given that the article is focused on a dynamic field like sustainable development and food security, it is essential to include the most current research and data available at the time of writing;
- aim to include a diverse range of viewpoints and research from different authors and institutions to provide a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

By applying these criteria, the article can present a well-rounded and evidence-based research results.

Moreover, the article was prepared based on an integrated approach, which made it possible to identify the main theoretical and applied directions for the formation of a balanced, sustainable, and competitive socio-natural-economic space of the agro-industrial complex and rural areas. The application of a systematic approach made it possible to scientifically substantiate the priority areas of state policy in this area. The study carried out a terminological and expert analysis of the current regulatory legal acts of Ukraine, materials of different

regions that implement the concept and strategies of sustainable spatial development.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### *3.1. A Stable agricultural sector of Ukraine as an important factor in ensuring food security throughout the world*

Ukraine is among the countries with the highest rating in terms of potential reserves of agro-industrial production, as the country accounts for almost 1/3 of black soil reserves and 27% of Europe's arable land. During 2014-2021, the role of the agricultural sector in the national economy consistently increased due to the increase in exports by domestic agricultural producers and the growing interest in imports in European countries. To some extent, these trends were facilitated by the association agreement with the EU and its implementation in recent years.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the share of agriculture in the country's GDP was 11%. This sector employed nearly 20% of workers and contributed nearly 40% to export earnings. This is due to the fact that Ukraine occupies the fifth place in the world among the largest exporters of wheat, the fourth of exporters of corn, and the third of exporters of rapeseed. Accordingly, a strong and stable agricultural sector of Ukraine is an extremely important factor in ensuring food security throughout the world. According to a report of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), during the first month of the war unleashed by Russia in Ukraine, world food prices increased by 12.6%, which clearly indicates the status of Ukraine as one of the main breadbaskets of the world (Nesenenko, 2022).

In July 2021, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament of Ukraine) adopted a law on the abolition of the moratorium on the sale of agricultural land, which had been in effect for two decades. This reform opened the market for agricultural land and created opportunities for private investment that will contribute to the economic revitalization of rural communities - primarily through the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in agriculture and related industries. It seems that Ukrainians who live in the countryside will benefit from it.

However, this Law contains many contradictions, ambiguous interpretations, and some issues are not resolved at all. For example, there are no clear answers to the following questions: 1) what kinds of land are formed for the purpose? 2) what

forms of government support are encouraged? 3) what should be the relationship between individual farm smallholders, women`s businesses, and cooperatives on the one hand, and companies on the other?

In addition, many issues related to the actual creation of land holdings in Ukraine remain legislatively unresolved. And such a result threatens further uncontrolled growth of large agroholdings. Today, agricultural holdings use the land based on lease agreements, but after the entry into force of all the norms of the Law, they can become the owners of most of the country's land. There are certain risks in this situation. After all, they grow two or three of the most liquid crops on foreign markets. At the same time, crop rotation is not observed. These structures are not engaged in animal husbandry. In this way, the connection between crop production and livestock production is broken. But the worst problem is that they do not create jobs for the rural population, but - on the contrary - eliminate them without providing other opportunities for workers. In addition, agricultural holdings do not care about the social problems of the village and the social development of rural areas. The main goal of such agricultural formations is to obtain as much profit as possible. From a commercial point of view, this may seem to be correct. But as a result of this kind of careless exploitation, the land is exhausted and its fertility is not restored. On the other hand, it also has a negative impact on local budgets, which causes insufficient damage to the entire region. In most cases, absorbed agricultural enterprises lose their legal independence, and parent companies registered in cities do not pay taxes to local budgets, which reduces the development opportunities of rural areas.

It seems if efforts proceed at such a pace, there will be no less than 200 agricultural holding companies in Ukraine with various types of capital, which will have up to 50% of Ukraine's arable lands. Such consolidation of lands with a small number of agricultural formations can lead to the final destruction of the rural settlement network and the labour market in rural areas.

In addition, the risk of the adopted Law is the possibility of the purchase of land by significant geopolitical players who suffer from a lack of food. And this can pose a threat to national security of Ukraine. Different countries can use the imperfection of the land legislation in order to harm the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Villagers are worried that due to the lack of transparency in the process of buying and selling agricultural land, foreign owners can take it over, and the local population will find themselves in the role of extras.

The urgency and importance of the issue of the formation of the land market in Ukraine reflects the complexity of its solving. Most of the problems that arise are

new for Ukrainian society, and to a large extent the approaches to their solution are still being outlined. That is why the issue of reforming land relations in the context of sustainable development of rural areas requires in-depth research.

It is necessary to promote the implementation of critically important reforms in this sector, which should include: 1) creation of a full-fledged and transparent agricultural land market, 2) improvement of state policy in the field of land irrigation, 3) creation of additional opportunities for employment in the countryside, 4) provision of social security, 5) improvement of access of agricultural producers to financial resources, 6) Ukraine's integration into European and global food and economic structures, 7) wider implementation of international food safety standards, which will allow diversification of Ukraine's export opportunities.

### *3.2. Legal support of the concept of sustainable development*

More than fifty years ago, the countries of Western Europe and the European Union faced the problems of a massive outflow of population from rural areas to cities, which is currently typical for modern Ukraine. The fight against the formation of vast depressed zones determined the direction of the state policy of these countries towards the creation of conditions for the sustainable development of rural areas. The main criteria for the rural development policy were targeting and purpose. The events were carried out simultaneously in several directions: 1) the implementation of a policy to stimulate food production and the formation of a set of measures to ensure food security; 2) diversification of the rural economy; 3) development of a program for the implementation of ecological safety of the environment. The implementation of these measures and strict adherence to the prescribed actions made it possible to cope with the situation that had arisen. It helped to bring the rural areas of these regions to a new level of development.

Back in 1980, in the report "World Conservation Strategy", which was presented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the term "sustainable development" was first used. The wording of this term was presented as "the modification of the biosphere and the application of human, financial, living and non-living resources to satisfy human needs and to improve the quality of human" (IUCN, 1980, p.18).

In June 1992, the UN Conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, which highlighted the issues of the environment and its development. Thanks to the decisions of this conference, the concept of "sustainable development" has become

widespread in science. The Council of Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development at this conference developed a declaration, which focused on the fact that improving the quality and standard of living of the population would be achieved with the efficient use of natural and material resources, reducing environmental pollution. It was also argued that long-term cooperation between the business sector of different countries would ensure the economic growth of states with an active investment policy and the introduction of new technologies. The result was the development and adoption of several legislative acts at the same time, dedicated to the protection of the environment at the national level.

Achieving sustainable development within rural areas has become highly relevant. In 1996, a session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was held in the city of Rome. At the end of this event, the participating members adopted provisions for achieving sustainable development relating to the agricultural sector and directly to rural territorial entities. The key points were defined: 1) ensuring food security and sustainable improvement of the level and quality of food production; 2) application of new technologies to ensure the availability of food; 3) decrease in the unemployment rate; 4) reducing the percentage of poverty by increasing the level of income of the population; 5) rational use of natural resources and environmental protection.

Already in 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Declaration on Sustainable Development was adopted, which approved recommendations on priorities and further steps to implement the provisions of previously adopted documents, as well as justified the need for individual states to adopt national strategies for such development of their economies.

The results of this session also affected Ukraine. The concept of balanced (sustainable) development of agroecosystems in Ukraine for the period until 2025 was developed by the Ministry of Agrarian policy of Ukraine (2003). This Concept note is aimed at ensuring the implementation of the ideas and principles declared by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the World Summit on Balanced Development (Johannesburg, 2002), to which Ukraine has joined. It envisages a number of measures for the formation of a balanced – and thereby sustainable – system of nature use in agriculture and ensuring the development of an eco-network, in particular, carrying out a scientifically based transformation of the structure of agricultural lands with the aim of forming a balanced relationship between individual components of agro-ecosystems, ensuring ecological safety and balance of the territory, etc. (clause 3.1).



At the regular UN conference on sustainable development (Rio + 20, Rio de Janeiro, 2012), the final document entitled "The future we want" was approved. It defines the vector for creating a "green economy" for achieving sustainable development, overcoming poverty, and improving international coordination in ensuring such development.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2015 published the report "Achieving Zero Hunger", which pays great attention to the problems of ensuring the sustainable development of agro-industrial production. The report notes that existing governance models (political and economic) do not allow "to make the future the way we want it to be". At the same time, attention is focused on the fact that some countries continue to lag in development, inequality is growing in them, shocks caused by economic crises, conflicts, natural disasters, and outbreaks of diseases that are rapidly spreading around the world. Environmental problems, climate change and other global risks threaten to undermine the successes of the past and hopes for the future.

We believe that ensuring the achievement of "zero hunger" is possible by increasing the level of sustainability of food systems through the conservation of natural resources and the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices. In this connection, it is proposed: "to reduce the amount of food losses and food waste at the stages of production, storage and consumption, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture and other sectors, to slow down the pace of climate change, to ensure the food security of future generations" (Sundaram, 2015).

The Ukrainian Law of September 16, 2014, ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other. Chapter 17 of this Agreement is devoted to issues of cooperation between the parties in the field of development of agriculture and rural areas. Article 405 of the Agreement enshrines the obligation of Ukraine to support gradual convergence and harmonization with the relevant law and regulatory standards of the EU in the field of agriculture and development of rural areas.

Today, the fundamental national interests of Ukraine are enshrined in Part 3 of Art. 3 of the Law of Ukraine "On National Security of Ukraine" dated June 21, 2018. Among them: sustainable development of the national economy, civil society, and the state to ensure the growth of the level and quality of life of the population, as well as the integration of Ukraine into the European political, economic, security, and legal space, the development of equal and mutually beneficial relations with other states.

Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine "On Environmental Protection" dated June 25, 1991, defines the basic principles of environmental protection. Some of them are directly related to ensuring the sustainable development of agricultural production.

According to the provisions of Section 3 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Basic Principles (Strategy) of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine for the Period Until 2020" dated December 21, 2010, the strategic goals and objectives of the state policy in agriculture included creation of conditions for wide implementation of ecologically oriented and organic farming technologies, together with achievement a two-fold increase in the area of their use in 2020. For this purpose, state support and stimulation of domestic business entities is offered. Such entities must carry out production modernization aimed at reducing the negative impact on the environment.

Therefore, ensuring the sustainable development of agricultural production, in particular by legal means, becomes especially relevant both for Ukraine and for other countries of the world. Indeed, under the conditions of globalization, national economies become interdependent and interacting components of the world economic system with common patterns of development. This is connected with the predicted problems of a global nature (food, environment, energy) and is caused by the need to: (a) ensure food security, (b) increase the competitiveness of the national agrarian sector of the economy, (c) improve social development of rural areas, (d) preserve the environment in the process of carrying out agricultural production activities, minimizing its negative, anthropotechnogenic impact on the environment. All this requires taking appropriate measures on the part of the state, one of which in modern socio-economic conditions is the legal provision of sustainable development of agricultural production (Kurman, 2018).

According to Shulga (2018), the legal basis for the further development of land relations in the agricultural sector should be oriented towards ensuring sustainable land use and its greening. We believe such approach will create the necessary conditions for both the development of agricultural production (including organic) and the improvement of the quality of agricultural products.

It should be noted that the concept of sustainable development of rural areas has been gradually promoted by international and Ukrainian law for many years but has not yet moved beyond the consolidation of general principles. It seems necessary to move to the next stage of implementing the concept of sustainable development of rural areas, discuss and then adopt in the legislation a list of

specific actions for its practical implementation. This should include both static measures aimed at solving the problems of the current state of rural areas, and dynamic counteraction to global threats of our time (for example, climate change processes). This will require the development of additional guarantees for the implementation of this concept, including expanding the number of subjects of land rights, supporting traditional farming culture and agrarian tourism.

In our opinion, regulatory support for the implementation of the concept of sustainable development has to entail: (a) adoption of the special Law of Ukraine "On sustainable development of rural areas"; (b) development of the concept of sustainable development of agricultural production in Ukraine for the period until 2035; (c) development and implementation of long-term target programs in the field of sustainable development of agricultural production, sustainable use of nature, sustainable social development of rural areas.

We think that the priority areas of state policy for the period up to 2035 in the field of sustainable development of rural areas should be:

- improvement of the demographic situation. Its negative nature is manifested both by the general trend of the aging of the rural population, and by the strong dynamic of its natural and mechanical loss;
- providing conditions for the development and diversification of the rural economy. In this case, the administration's efforts will be aimed at increasing the generated added value, increasing employment and increasing the role of the territory's industrial production;
- improving the quality of life of the rural population. At the heart of its growth is a reduction in the differentiation between the availability of vital services and the level of income of the rural and urban population;
- improving the access of rural residents to development resources. This direction of activities is ensured by the growth of information flows and remote access to public services, the development and implementation of smart technologies;
- development of rational nature management and improvement of the ecological situation in rural areas. It is aimed at the formation of mechanisms for handling household waste, respect for nature and the introduction of modern technologies for servicing life;
- increasing the efficiency of local self-government, including through strict subordination of the powers of authorities at different levels;

– improvement of the system of statistical observation and scientific and methodological support for the development of rural areas. The main event in this direction, first of all, will be the formation of a strategic development trajectory and its qualitative and quantitative parameters;

- organization of training, retraining, advanced training of personnel. This will expand the horizons of employment of the population and form the basis for the growth of labor productivity.

The implementation of the directions of state policy proposed above will make it possible to achieve high economic indicators, ensure the country's food security and increase the welfare of citizens.

As Semchyk (1998) observed, the efficiency of agricultural production largely depends on the level of legal regulation of relations in the agro-industrial complex, which, in turn, significantly affects the food security of the population of Ukraine, and social and political stability in the state depends on this. Stativka and Urkevych (2011, p.104) emphasize that the modern problems of the functioning of agriculture are “determined by many factors, among which the imperfect legal regulation of agrarian relations occupies a decisive place”. Therefore, the question of the development of the agricultural sector under the conditions of sustainability is particularly relevant today. This, in turn, presupposes and requires the sustainable development of agricultural production, which must be ensured by appropriate legal means.

### *3.3. Factors affecting the development of rural areas*

We think there are currently three vectors for sustainable rural development around the world. First, it is the development of new economic activities that can meet potential urban needs; second, the development of local entrepreneurship that can create and expand these new activities; third, the formation of sufficient social capital that can support entrepreneurship in new activities with access to loans, labor, human capital, external markets and knowledge for learning, and innovation.

The development of rural areas can only be ensured if rural areas have a certain resource potential. In the conditions of modern reality, the structural composition and volume of the accumulated organizational and economic potential determines the possibility of obtaining advantages and abilities to get on the rails of long-term sustainable development and functioning, while obtaining various competitive advantages for the most effective interaction in the external and internal markets.

In the process of implementing measures aimed at ensuring the sustainable development of rural areas, it is necessary to achieve socio-economic goals. Such a goal involves the improvement of the quality of life of the population, while actively using the innovative, scientific, and informational potential, and also implements effective entrepreneurial activities that ensure the effective functioning of households through the development and implementation of socio-economic planning. All this ultimately allows, by concentrating internal resources, to create conditions for attracting additional amounts of financial support to rural areas, which will be sufficient to fully implement an expanded list of targeted social and departmental projects and programs that are established at the state level and at the region level.

Next, it is necessary to consider the factors affecting the functioning and development of rural areas. We can say that the main factors in the formation and functioning of rural areas are:

- regional, which include resource factors, location factors, development conditions;
- functional compatibility of various types of activities in a certain territory;
- managerial, including the decision and justification of strategies for the development of rural areas;
- self-organization.

At the same time, rural areas have certain limitations for effective development and functioning: imperfect legislation, insufficient state support, including financial and investment; poor information support and social protection of the rural population.

Having studied all the factors influencing the development of rural areas, we can distinguish five groups that determine the parameters of development of rural areas. Within the framework of the structural composition of the first category, there is a list of factors that are associated with the state policy pursued for the agrarian, foreign economic, food, innovative and social development of both individual entities and the whole country.

The second group of factors should include macroeconomic factors in which one or another rural area is forced to function. In particular, this is the agrarian structure of the rural area; a set of state measures implemented for the purpose of state support of business entities specializing in the agricultural sector of the economy; the impact of inflation; organized system of intersectoral exchange; parameters of foreign economic trade in agricultural products; level of market

development; the certification system used; the effectiveness of the current mechanism for managing risk and reserve reserves; operating financial and tax systems; pricing policy; development of the insurance system and standardization.

The third group of factors is represented by resources and technologies. These factors together are presented as a resource potential for the development of rural areas. These include natural and climatic conditions, the current level of development of the material and technical base, the indicator of the involvement of land plots in economic activities based on the results of assessing the parameters of the quality of land plots, the staffing of agricultural enterprises and the level of development of information exchange processes and support in the implementation of management activities.

The fourth group includes factors that can be defined as infrastructural factors that determine the level of development and functioning of the market, production, logistics, innovation, information, and social infrastructure.

The last group of factors is determined by socio-demographic factors that show the size and age/sex characteristics of the population living in rural areas, determine the levels of income of the population and indicators of their differentiation, as well as the unemployment rate in a given territory and indicators of food security for citizens.

In accordance with the above classification of factors, it can be noted that the list of priority conditions for the effective development of rural territorial elements is formed from a complex of external factors. Accordingly, internal factors demonstrate their subordination to the territories, and for this reason there are prerequisites and opportunities for their increase and improvement. The greatest effect in this case can be obtained through the active introduction of innovative technologies and the implementation of modernization processes, the implementation of actions aimed at increasing investment attractiveness, the creation of new competitive jobs, etc. The general structure of internal and external factors, parameters for assessing the degree of their impact determines the general list of key areas in the development of rural areas.

### *3.4. Problems hindering the development of rural areas and ways to solve them*

An important step in the formation of effective and efficient mechanisms for promoting the sustainable development of rural areas is the identification of key development problems, as well as the development of the necessary socio-economic, legal, and administrative measures that would bring rural areas to a

qualitatively new level of development. These measures should be comprehensive, systemic in nature to address the identified economic, social, and environmental problems in rural areas. But at the same time, it is imperative to consider the natural resource and cultural potential of rural areas.

In scientific literature there is a proposition of a model for the formation of investment support for sustainable rural development, which will help to streamline and allocate financial and investment resources and improve rural investment activities. This is considered as one of the ways to activate the sustainable development of rural territories (Savitska et al., 2020).

Unfortunately, the current deformed Ukrainian economic mechanism is not conducive to rural development. Price disparity, the monopoly dominance of the "partners" of the village in the agro-industrial complex, violating the rules of fair market competition, the intensive pumping of depleted natural resources abroad - all this leads to a deterioration in the state of the agricultural sector of the economy.

The development of rural areas is significantly affected by environmental problems. The latter are expressed in the deterioration of the ecological situation, soil degradation, reduced productivity, and the spread of erosion processes (Dzhukha et al., 2019).

The creation of the necessary conditions for ensuring the sustainable development of rural areas plays a huge role in creating conditions and prerequisites for the proper socio-economic development of the entire state. The indicators of the development of rural areas (e.g. significant expansion of the production base; increase in the level of effective demand of citizens; improvement of demographic situation) cannot be achieved if a high level of the quality of life of the rural population is not guaranteed and an effective infrastructure system is not created in these territories.

The main reasons that significantly reduce the effectiveness of the implementation of rural development programs at all levels include:

- the absence of regulatory legal acts that fully regulate the main provisions of the state policy in the field of rural development;
- the implementation of rural development policy does not take into account the diversity of rural areas of Ukraine and is based on a limited set of used tools for financing and implementing program activities;
- state support measures do not provide for anticipation of possible risks and the formation of prerequisites for solving long-term tasks;

- there is no timely transformation of the directions of the state policy for the development of rural areas and program activities, despite significant changes in the institutional environment;
- the institution of local self-government (which is directly related to the development of a particular rural area) is limited in the independent development and implementation of sustainable development programs by a number of factors. The main one of them is the weak financial base;
- insufficient information and statistical support for rural development and the lack of monitoring the effectiveness of the use of budgetary funds allocated for the development of rural areas at various levels of government;
- the institution of the rural family is considered mainly as a tool for solving the demographic problems of the state and providing the urban population with food, and not as a public institution that forms the rural way of life.

In the current conditions, the tasks of state policy in relation to the organizational and economic development of rural areas should be:

- organization of conditions for the sustainable development of the rural economy;
- increasing the competitiveness of Ukrainian agricultural products based on the modernization of the agricultural sector;
- preservation and reproduction of land and other natural resources used in agricultural production;
- ensuring employment of the rural population and increasing their income; - increasing the level and quality of life in the countryside through the guaranteed development of agriculture, ensuring the availability and quality of services provided in the field of education, health care, and culture. Raising the level of engineering arrangement and provision of housing stock, development of transport and energy infrastructure, communication facilities;
- elimination of rural poverty.

Accordingly, state policy regarding the sustainable development of rural areas should be systemic in nature and include a set of legal, economic, and organizational measures aimed at improving the level and quality of life of the rural population, increasing the efficiency of agriculture and rational nature management. Therefore, the improvement of such components of the mechanism for implementing the policy of sustainable development of rural



areas as regulatory, financial, scientific, personnel and information support requires special attention.

On the part of the state, in order to achieve sustainable development of rural areas, it is necessary to use a program-target approach. This approach will allow:

- to strengthen the coordination of measures by the state to support the development of rural areas;
- to increase the efficiency of the use of resources allocated for their intensive and dynamic development;
- to ensure the consistency and complexity of positive transformations, taking into account the solution of priority tasks.

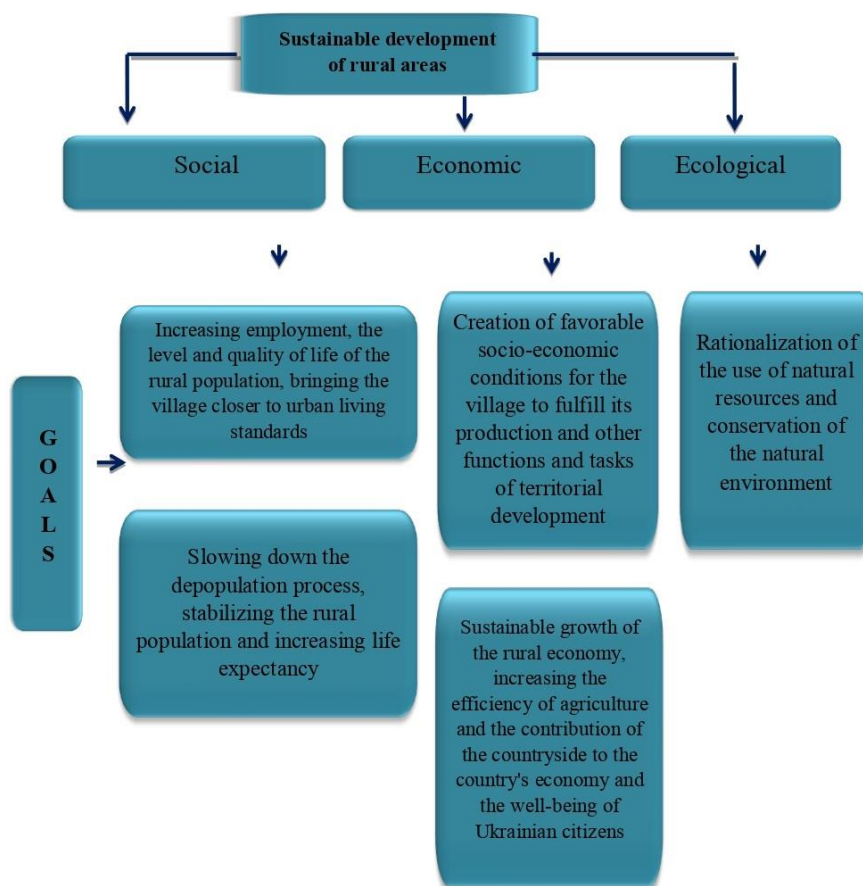
Thus, state regulation of the sustainable development of rural areas requires the formation and improvement of the legal framework aimed at solving the social, economic, and environmental problems of rural areas. As part of financial support, it is necessary to expand access to subsidies and preferential loans for the development of various alternative activities in rural areas (e.g., green tourism, production of cultural heritage goods), as well as the creation of a system of grant incentives for initiatives of rural communities related to the improvement of rural settlements. This will also help to preserve local cultural and historical heritage.

The implementation of the concept of sustainable development of rural areas will not only help to overcome economic and social problems of the village, but also to take effective steps in recreating natural resources and protecting the environment.

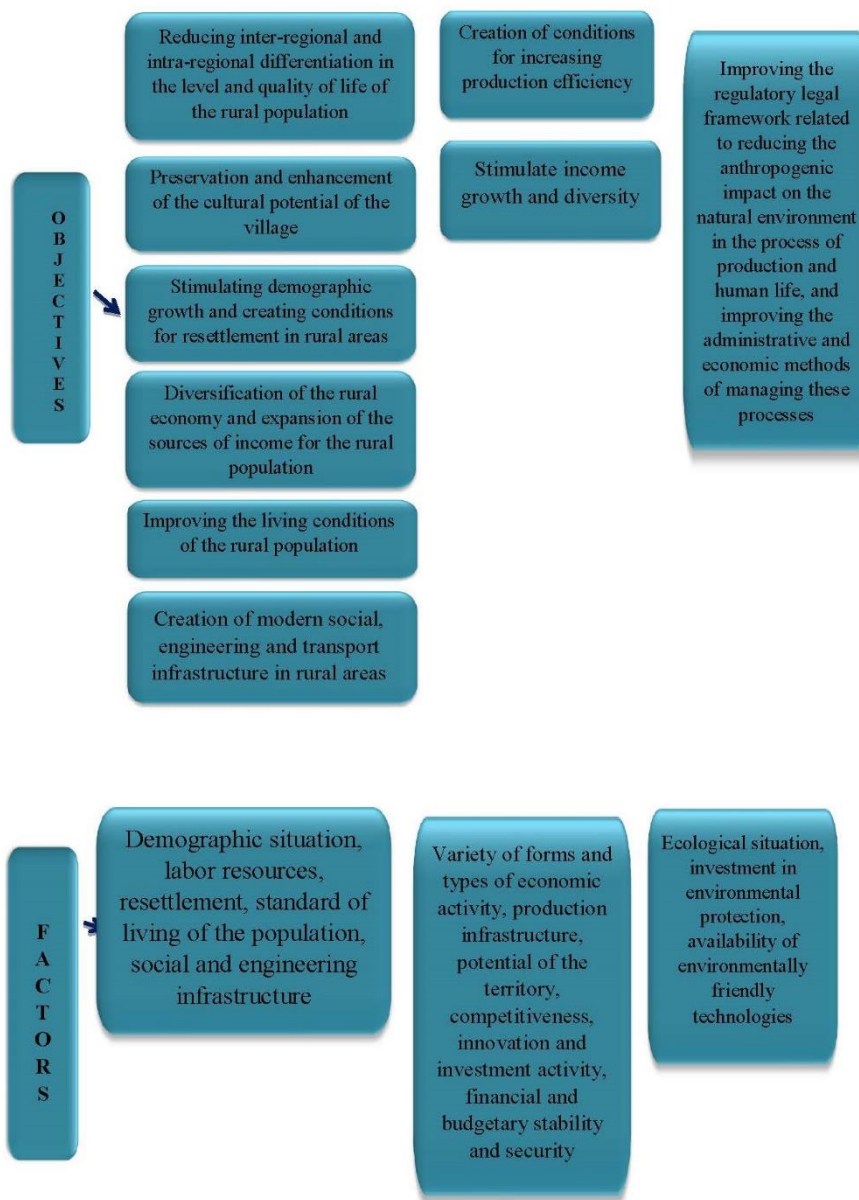
The main goal of ensuring the sustainable economic development of rural areas is to create prerequisites for increasing the parameters of investment attractiveness, improving the functioning of the budget system, and ensuring expanded production on the terms of maintaining their sustainability. A set of measures implemented in order to comply with environmental requirements while ensuring the sustainable economic development of rural areas should be implemented simultaneously with ongoing activities that involve minimizing the negative impact on environmental and ecological objects. The implementation of the social component when entering the course of sustainable development of rural areas implies the need to minimize unemployment rates, improve the quality parameters of services provided by state and municipal authorities, increase citizens' incomes, and improve their quality of life in this territory.

Based on the principles of scientific research, a conceptual model of sustainable development of a rural area is proposed, which is an interconnected system that

includes goals, objectives for ensuring sustainable development, factors affecting its sustainability and mechanisms that ensure this development (Figures 1, 2).



**Figure 1.** Goals of the model of sustainable development of a rural area



**Figure 2.** Objectives and factors of the model of sustainable development of a rural area

We can state that in the study of sustainable development of rural areas, it is equally important to determine the system of goals and objectives formulated in accordance with the nature and essence of the problem. The implementation of this conceptual model will contribute to:

- the growth of resource support for the development of rural areas based on the strengthening of the agricultural sector;
- diversification and development of the entire rural economy;
- increasing the taxable base of rural development and the financial bases of local self-government;
- general economic growth and strengthening of state support for the countryside within the framework of the implementation of state programs.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In conclusion we can state that the current level of socio-economic development of rural areas of Ukraine is at present far from reaching the indicators and criteria for the sustainability of their development. Several problems remain unresolved today, in particular related to the decline of production systems, the decline in the quality of life of the rural population, the destruction of social and transport infrastructure (Sava et al., 2020). Achieving sustainable development in rural areas requires a program-target approach at the state level. In this regard, Ukraine needs to develop and implement at the state level the concept of transition of rural areas to stable and crisis-free development. Through this approach, coordination of support measures, efficient resource allocation, and a focus on priority, tasks can be achieved.

State policy must focus on improving the demographic situation, diversifying the rural economy, enhancing the quality of life for rural residents, and ensuring better access to development resources. Additionally, it is essential to promote rational nature management and ecological improvements, improve local self-government efficiency, and strengthen statistical observation and research support.

By implementing these priority areas of state policy, Ukraine can achieve positive economic indicators, enhance food security, and improve citizens' welfare. The process of transitioning to sustainable development should concentrate on economically sound, environmentally safe, and socially oriented expanded reproduction. This approach will lead to improved living standards in rural areas

and foster responsible agricultural production while bolstering the quality of public administration and local self-government.

Ukraine can certainly lay the foundation for sustainable development in its rural areas, contributing to the nation's overall progress and prosperity. This requires a collective effort, which we believe can be informed by the insights provided by our research and the integration of the concepts presented in the literature. Only through a unified and concerted approach can we unlock the potential for thriving rural communities and ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

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