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The impact of the strategy of socio-economic recovery of rural areas on the management of agricultural enterprises

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► **Abstract.** This study was aimed at analysing the effectiveness of comprehensive recovery strategies in rural areas and their impact on management practices in the agricultural sector. The article considered the socio-economic recovery of rural areas as an important and multifaceted task that is becoming increasingly relevant in the world. The process of recovery includes a set of measures aimed at improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of rural regions. The introduction of modern technologies into production processes increases the productivity and competitiveness of the local economy. The article considered the role of different approaches to recovery, including multi-sectoral, resource-based, innovative, inclusive, ecosystem, political and administrative, and sustainable development approaches. Each of them can be adapted to the specific conditions and needs of rural regions, creating a basis for comprehensive and sustainable recovery. The article analysed the impact of the war in Ukraine on the agricultural sector, which is one of the key components of rural development. As a result, the need for further support and investment in the agricultural sector for its recovery and sustainable development was highlighted. Successful socio-economic rehabilitation of rural areas depends on coordinated actions of various stakeholders, including the state, local authorities, business and civil society. An important component is the development and implementation of strategies that take into account local characteristics and needs, ensuring sustainable development and improving the quality of life in rural areas. Only a comprehensive approach to recovery can ensure long-term and sustainable development that will become the basis for future prosperity in rural areas

► **Keywords:** state policy; territorial development; transport and logistics infrastructure; social initiatives; impact of war

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► Introduction

The relevance of studying the impact of the strategy of socio-economic recovery of rural areas on the management of agricultural enterprises is extremely high, as the agricultural sector plays a key role in the economy of many countries, including Ukraine. Rural areas often face numerous challenges, such as deteriorating infrastructure, demographic challenges, and limited access to financial resources and technology. In such circumstances, developing and implementing effective recovery strategies becomes an important task for both local authorities and businesses. The restoration of rural areas and the development of agricultural enterprises are interrelated processes that have a significant impact on the overall economic situation of the country. The study and analysis of existing strategies, as well as the development of new approaches to their implementation, is an important area of research that will contribute to the sustainable development of rural regions and increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector.

The works of leading scholars reveal various aspects of the impact of rural renewal strategies on the development of agricultural enterprises. X. Chen (2020) emphasised that effective socio-economic recovery strategies should take into account regional specificities and include the active participation of local communities. V. Shebanin *et al.* (2022), in turn, pointed out that only with the active involvement of the local population can sustainable development be achieved. S. Rotz *et al.* (2019), S. Polishchuk & S. Pyatachenko (2022) studied the impact of innovative technologies on the development of agricultural enterprises. They noted that the introduction of the latest technologies in the production processes of agricultural enterprises not only increases their productivity but also creates new jobs, which helps to reduce unemployment in rural areas. Y. Liu *et al.* (2020), in turn, studied the impact of infrastructure projects on rural development. Their study showed that improving transport and utility infrastructure is a key factor in attracting investment and stimulating the development of agricultural business. H. Long *et al.* (2019) focused on the role of education and vocational training in rural recovery. They argued that the development of human capital through educational programmes and training courses is important for ensuring the development of the agricultural sector. W. Heijman *et al.* (2019) analysed the relationship between socio-economic recovery and environmental sustainability in rural areas. They pointed out that recovery strategies should include environmental protection measures, as environmental degradation can have a negative impact on agriculture. A. Kliuchnyk *et al.* (2023), in turn, considered the role of public policy in supporting rural recovery. O. Nikolyuk *et al.* (2023) argued that effective policies include financial incentives, subsidies, and tax breaks for agricultural enterprises that invest in the development of local communities. Y. Li *et al.* (2019) investigated the impact of global economic trends on the development of rural areas and agricultural enterprises. Globalization and changes in international trade open up new opportunities for agricultural businesses, but also create new challenges.

In general, the authors' research has shown that the strategy of socio-economic recovery of rural areas is complex and includes various aspects such as innovation,

infrastructure, education, environment, and government support. These factors are interconnected and require coordinated efforts to achieve sustainable development of the agricultural sector and improve the quality of life in rural areas. Despite considerable scientific interest in the socio-economic recovery of rural areas, the long-term impact of environmental measures on the sustainability of agricultural enterprises, the integration of local cultural and social characteristics into recovery strategies, and the role of public-private partnerships in this process remain insufficiently researched.

The purpose of the study was to identify the key factors that contribute to the effective development of agricultural enterprises in the context of comprehensive socio-economic recovery of rural regions. The main objectives of the study were: to analyse the factors that influence the success of socio-economic recovery of rural regions; to assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies for socio-economic recovery of rural regions; to determine the optimal approaches to the management of agricultural enterprises in the context of implementing strategies for rural recovery.

► Materials and methods

The study drew on a wide range of sources, including statistical data, academic articles, reports by international organizations, and the experience of successful and unsuccessful recovery projects in Ukraine. The main source of data was official statistics provided by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. This data included production volumes of major crops and livestock products for the period from 2004 to 2023. The economic accounts of Ukrainian agriculture were also analysed to assess the overall economic situation of the sector and its dynamics during the war. To analyse the impact of the war on the agricultural sector, a comparison was made to assess changes in production volumes before and after the outbreak of the war.

The study of the impact of socio-economic recovery on the development of agricultural enterprises was based on the analysis of specific projects. For this purpose, both successful and unsuccessful examples of project implementation in rural areas of Ukraine were selected. In particular, the projects "Agricultural Receipts" and "Ukrainian Horticulture Business Development Project", which were supported by international donors such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Government of Canada, were analysed (Tomorrow's harvests fund..., 2019; First financial agricultural..., 2018). The positive impact of these projects on the activities of such agricultural enterprises as Agro-Plus Service and Blahodatna Ferma has been identified (Agro-internship: A Ukrainian project ..., n.d.; Blahodatna farm..., 2018). The analysis of these projects allowed identifying key success factors and reasons for failure, as well as determining the main challenges faced by agricultural enterprises.

Particular attention was paid to the role of local communities in the process of rural recovery. For this purpose, the activities of amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) in the Khmelnytskyi region were reviewed, which provided qualitative information on their participation in project planning and implementation (Plan of measures..., 2019). It also helped to understand how local

communities influence the effectiveness of recovery efforts and what challenges they face. The Khmelnytskyi region was also chosen because of its active participation in various grant programmes and initiatives aimed at rural development, which creates favourable conditions for researching the effectiveness of such projects.

For quantitative data analysis, statistical methods were used, including regression analysis, which allowed assessing the relationship between various economic indicators and identifying the main factors influencing the development of the agricultural sector. An analysis of the dynamics of agricultural production and economic accounts of agriculture was conducted. This made it possible to assess the impact of the war on the economic situation in the agricultural sector and identify its most vulnerable components. The level of employment in rural areas was analysed to determine the dynamics of changes in the number of jobs and their impact on the socio-economic development of the region. Employment data was available only until 2021, which made it impossible to identify the impact of the war. For the qualitative analysis of the data, a study of various areas of the topic was conducted, which allowed defining the main trends in reports and scientific articles related to the restoration of rural areas, including an analysis of socio-economic development, the impact of environmental factors, as well as the introduction of innovative technologies and support programmes for agricultural enterprises.

The study took into account the role of modern technologies and innovations in the development of the agricultural sector. For this purpose, data on the introduction of new technologies, such as precision farming, drones and biotechnology, were analysed. The study examined how these technologies affect the productivity and environmental sustainability of agricultural enterprises, as well as the economic efficiency and competitiveness of Ukrainian farms in the international market.

► Results

The socio-economic restoration of rural areas is a multifaceted task that is becoming increasingly important in the world. It is a process that includes a range of measures aimed at improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of rural areas. In the economic context, such recovery involves creating new jobs, supporting local businesses, and introducing innovations and modern technologies. Job creation is a key element that contributes to the economic recovery of a region. Increasing the number of jobs in various sectors, such as agriculture, small and medium-sized businesses, and tourism, contributes to higher incomes and lower unemployment (Rao, 2022). Supporting local enterprises through financial and advisory assistance allows them to develop and remain stable even in difficult economic conditions. The introduction of modern technologies and innovations in production processes increases the productivity and competitiveness of the local economy, making it more resilient to external challenges.

The social renewal of rural areas is aimed at improving the quality of life of the population. This includes ensuring access to quality healthcare, education and social services, which is the basis for a healthy and educated society. An essential component of social recovery is social

integration, which involves the active participation of local communities in decision-making and project implementation. This contributes to increased social cohesion and responsibility, as people feel part of a common process (Martens *et al.*, 2021). Education and training play a critical role in human capital development. Education and training programmes produce a skilled workforce that can contribute to the local economy and contribute to its growth. The environmental aspect of socio-economic recovery is also extremely important. The conservation of natural resources and the implementation of measures to preserve and rationally use resources ensure the environmental sustainability of the region. Environmental initiatives aimed at improving the environment, such as ecosystem restoration, pollution control, and green energy development, have a positive impact on the overall environmental condition of the territory. Adaptation to climate change is another important aspect that helps local communities reduce risks to agricultural production and other economic activities (Wang *et al.*, 2019).

Successful socio-economic recovery of rural areas depends on coordinated action by various stakeholders, including the government, local authorities, business and civil society. An important component is the development and implementation of strategies that take into account local characteristics and needs, ensuring sustainable development and improving the quality of life in rural areas. Only a comprehensive approach to recovery can ensure long-term and sustainable development that will form the basis for the prosperity of rural areas in the future. Rural regeneration requires a variety of approaches that consider the unique characteristics and needs of each region. A multisectoral approach involves integrating the efforts of different economic sectors to ensure the integrated development of rural areas. It includes agriculture, industry, tourism, education and other sectors. The multisectoral approach helps to diversify the economy, which reduces dependence on one sector and increases the region's resilience to economic fluctuations (Slavič, 2022). The asset-based approach focuses on using local assets and resources as the basis for recovery. It includes natural resources, cultural heritage, human capital and infrastructure. Using existing assets can reduce the cost of recovery and increase the effectiveness of measures.

A community-based approach involves the active participation of local people in planning, decision-making and project implementation. The community-based approach promotes social cohesion, ownership, and a sense of ownership among local residents. An innovative approach is an important element of rural regeneration. It includes the introduction of new methods of production, management, energy saving and environmental technologies. This increases the productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of the local economy. The inclusive approach is focused on ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for all members of the community, including vulnerable groups. This includes women, youth, people with disabilities and other minorities. An inclusive approach promotes social justice and improves the quality of life for all residents of the region (Tiwari, 2022). The ecosystem approach considers the relationship between human activities and natural ecosystems. It involves the conservation

and restoration of ecosystem services such as clean water, fertile land and biodiversity. This approach is aimed at ensuring long-term environmental sustainability and maintaining natural resources. The policy and administrative approach involves the development and implementation of government policies, programmes, and regulations that promote rural development. It also includes financing, subsidies and other forms of state support. The sustainable development approach is based on the principles of economic, social and environmental sustainability. It involves the balanced use of resources, ensuring equal opportunities for all residents and preserving the environment for future generations. This approach is the basis for achieving long-term success in the recovery of rural areas (Adamowicz & Zwolińska-Ligaj, 2020). Each of these approaches can be adapted to the specific conditions and needs of rural areas, creating a framework for comprehensive and sustainable recovery. Integration of different approaches and cooperation between different stakeholders ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the recovery process.

The socio-economic recovery of rural areas has a direct impact on the agricultural sector, which is one of the key components of rural development. Optimization of the economic environment in rural areas contributes to the prosperity of agriculture by providing it with the necessary resources, markets and highly skilled labour. This recovery is accompanied by improved access to key resources for the agricultural sector, such as land, water, fertilisers, and technology. Improvements in infrastructure and natural resources allow agriculture to operate at a more productive level, increasing yields and product quality. The socio-economic recovery is creating favourable conditions for the development of agritourism and small agricultural enterprises. The development of these sectors helps local farms to earn extra income, contributing to the diversification of their activities and improving the socio-economic status of rural communities. Stimulating local production is another aspect of the impact of the socio-economic recovery on the agricultural sector. The development of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises helps to reduce dependence on imports, ensuring sustainable local agricultural production. The recovery contributes to the efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector by introducing modern technologies, innovations and best practices in production. This allows farms to compete more successfully in the market and ensures their sustainable growth (Pulubuhu *et al.*, 2020). Improved transport links and access to new markets help to increase the volume and monetization of agricultural production. Access to loans, grants, and other

financial instruments helps the agricultural sector to grow and expand, creating new opportunities for development.

The development of agricultural enterprises in the context of rural recovery is a complex and multifaceted process that affects the economic, social and environmental development of the region. Access to land, water, fertilisers and other resources is a critical factor for the development of agricultural enterprises. The restoration of rural areas should ensure sustainable access to these resources, in particular, by improving land use and irrigation. The development of agricultural enterprises is impossible without adequate infrastructure, including roads, railways, storage facilities and other facilities. Effective regulation and a stable legal framework are important factors for the development of agricultural enterprises, providing transparency, stability and legal certainty (Kyfyak *et al.*, 2022). Rural restoration should facilitate the introduction of new agricultural technologies and stimulate innovative development in agriculture. The restoration of rural areas should contribute to the creation of a stable and predictable market environment for agricultural enterprises. Public-private partnerships play an important role in rural regeneration and agricultural development by combining the resources, knowledge, and expertise of the public and private sectors. Through cooperation, the state can provide the necessary infrastructure, regulatory support and financial incentives, while private companies contribute investments, innovations, and management practices. This partnership contributes to the efficient use of resources, increased competitiveness of the agricultural sector and sustainable development of rural areas, ensuring economic growth and improving the quality of life of local communities (Ciolac *et al.*, 2013).

Ukraine's agricultural sector is one of the key elements of the national economy, demonstrating significant potential for growth and development. Agriculture accounts for approximately 10% of the country's total gross domestic product and is an important source of employment for a large part of the population, especially in rural areas. Ukraine has some of the most fertile soils in the world, in particular black soil, which accounts for about 30% of the world's soil reserves. This ensures high yields for major crops such as wheat, corn, barley, sunflower, and soybeans. In addition, the country is one of the world's leading exporters of grains and oilseeds, which has a significant impact on its trade balance. Ukraine's agricultural sector was expected to grow until 2022 due to the introduction of modern technologies and innovations (Fig. 1). However, due to the war, the state of the agricultural sector in the country has deteriorated somewhat.



Figure 1. Production (gross harvest) of agricultural crops in Ukraine from 2004 to 2023, thousand tonnes

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of the Area, gross harvest and crop yields (n.d.)

The war in Ukraine has had a significant impact on the agricultural sector, causing significant reductions in production of most crops. Despite some recovery in 2023, production levels have not yet reached pre-war levels, indicating the need for further support and recovery of agriculture in the face of ongoing challenges. Table 1 shows the level of livestock production. The analysis of the table shows that the livestock industry in Ukraine has undergone significant changes over the past two decades. The most

significant drops in production volumes occurred after the outbreak of war in 2022. The production of meat, milk, eggs, and wool has declined significantly due to economic difficulties, loss of territories, logistical problems and access to resources. Despite some positive developments in 2023, the overall situation remains challenging, and significant efforts and investments are needed to stabilise and develop the sector. Table 2 presents the economic accounts of agriculture (production account and income account).

Table 1. Production of main types of livestock products in Ukraine from 2004 to 2023

Year	Meat (in slaughter weight), thousand tonnes	Milk, thousand tonnes	Eggs, mln eggs	Wool, t
2004	1,599.6	13,709.5	11,955	3,202
2005	1,597	13,714.4	13,045.9	3,195
2006	1,723.2	13,286.9	14,234.6	3,277
2007	1,911.7	12,262.1	14,062.5	3,449
2008	1,905.9	11,761.3	14,956.5	3,755
2009	1,917.4	11,609.6	15,907.5	4,111
2010	2,059	11,248.5	17,052.3	4,192
2011	2,143.8	1,1086	18,689.8	3,877
2012	2,209.6	11,377.6	19,110.5	3,724
2013	2,389.4	11,488.2	19,614.8	3,520
2014	2,359.6	11,132.8	19,587.3	2,602
2015	2,322.6	10,615.4	16,782.9	2,270
2016	2,323.6	10,381.5	15,100.4	2,072
2017	2,318.2	10,280.5	15505.8	1,967
2018	2,354.9	10,064	16,132	1,908
2019	2,492.4	9,663.2	16,677.5	1,734
2020	2,477.5	9,263.6	16,167.2	1,573
2021	2,438.3	8,713.9	14,071.3	1,497
2022	2,206.7	7,767.7	11,921.8	1,237
2023	2,239.5	7,430.4	11,379.4	1,187

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of the Production of major livestock products (n.d.)

Table 2. Economic accounts of agriculture in Ukraine, billion UAH

No.	Types/groups of products/activities	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Cereals	77.9	107.2	163.9	214.2	226.9	296.6	288.4	309.7	538.9	334.1
2	Industrial crops	52.7	71.4	131.2	170.6	173.8	207.8	189.7	209.9	393.1	294.3
3	Fodder crops	5.5	6	7.3	8	8.6	9.7	9.1	10.4	13.9	11.7
4	Vegetable crops	20.9	22.1	33.9	31.9	33.4	35.7	45.4	49.2	59.7	83.2
5	Potatoes	36.6	41.6	41.1	41.9	53.5	53.3	63.7	60.9	61.2	54.2
6	Fruits, berries, grapes	12.6	12.8	18.4	18.3	23.7	23.5	24.8	26.8	28.8	24.1
7	Other crop products	1.1	1.3	1.9	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.8	3.5	4.6	9.5
8	Crop production in general (1-7)	207.3	262.4	397.6	487.1	522.6	629.2	624	670.4	1,100.2	811.1
9	Animal husbandry (farming)	43.4	48.3	69.1	70.5	87.9	106	108.5	110.4	127.9	136.6
10	Livestock products	48.2	50.4	65.6	67.9	84.3	94.9	92.5	93.6	109.7	107
11	Livestock production in general (9-10)	91.6	98.7	134.6	138.5	172.3	200.9	201	203.9	237.6	243.6
12	Agricultural output (8+11)	299	361.1	532.3	625.6	694.9	830.2	824.9	874.4	1,337.8	1,054.7
13	Output of agricultural services	5.5	7.4	8.3	8.5	9	12.8	13.1	13.5	21.6	14.9
14	Agricultural output (12+13)	304.5	368.5	540.5	634	703.9	842.9	838	887.8	1,359.4	1,069.6

Table 2, Continued

No.	Types/groups of products/activities	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
15	Output of non-agricultural indispensable secondary activities	2.6	2.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.7	4.7	5	7.1	4.4
16	Agricultural output (14+15)	307.1	371.2	544.2	637.8	707.8	847.6	842.8	892.9	1,366.5	1,073.9
17	Intermediate consumption	178.6	214.8	311.8	367.4	414.6	500.1	498.7	511.5	789.6	637
18	Gross value added (16-17)	128.5	156.4	22.7	270.4	293.2	347.5	344	381.4	576.8	437

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of the Economic accounts of agriculture (n.d.)

The table shows that Ukraine's agriculture showed steady growth until 2021. However, the war that began in 2022 had a significant impact on production volumes, particularly in the grain and industrial crops sectors. Nevertheless, some sectors, such as vegetables and livestock, have shown resilience and even growth in the face of the crisis. This underlines the need for further support and investment in the agricultural sector to ensure recovery and sustainable development in the future. Agricultural enterprises in Ukraine face numerous challenges, but at the same time have many opportunities for development that can contribute to their sustainability and growth. The war is one of the most serious challenges, as the occupation of part of the country's territory, destruction of infrastructure, mining of fields, destruction of production facilities and logistics chains lead to the loss of land and labour resources and increased risks for investors. Economic instability, such as economic crises, inflation, currency fluctuations, and limited access to finance, also negatively affect the ability of agricultural enterprises to expand and modernise (Poltorak *et al.*, 2023).

Climate change is another significant challenge, as deteriorating climatic conditions, increased droughts and natural disasters threaten the stability of crops and require adaptation to new farming conditions. Land reforms, including an underdeveloped legal framework and unresolved land ownership issues, create barriers to investment and development in the agricultural sector. In addition, technological lag, lack of modern technologies, low level of mechanization and automation of production processes reduce the productivity and competitiveness of agricultural enterprises. The shortage of skilled workers caused by the out-migration of the working population and the ageing of the labour force also leads to a shortage of skilled workers in agriculture. Despite these challenges, there are numerous opportunities for agricultural enterprises to develop.

Deepening cooperation with the European Union opens up new markets, access to European funds and agricultural support programmes, and promotes the implementation of European quality and safety standards. The introduction of modern technologies, such as precision farming, drones, biotechnology and IT solutions, allows for increased production efficiency, reduced costs and improved environmental sustainability (Bovsh *et al.*, 2024). Government support programmes, including subsidies, loans, and grants aimed at modernizing agriculture, can significantly contribute to the development of agricultural enterprises.

The growing demand for organic products opens up new opportunities for the development of organic agriculture, which can generate additional income and improve the environmental situation. Cooperation among small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises in the form of cooperatives can increase their competitiveness, allow them to share resources and equipment, and expand market access (Willer *et al.*, 2024). Ukraine has considerable potential for agricultural exports due to its fertile soils and favourable climatic conditions. Expansion of export markets and product diversification can contribute to the economic growth of agricultural enterprises. Improvements in transport and logistics infrastructure, including the construction of modern warehouses, elevators and processing plants, will help to increase the efficiency of product supply and reduce costs. Thus, despite the serious challenges faced by Ukraine's agricultural enterprises, there are many opportunities for their development. The integration of innovative technologies, development of new markets, government support and international cooperation can significantly increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the agricultural sector. Taking advantage of these opportunities will contribute to further growth and development of agriculture in Ukraine. Table 3 shows rural employment in Ukraine.

Table 3. Employment in rural areas of Ukraine from 2017 to 2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Employment, thousand people	5,047	5,082	5,206	4,968	4,877
In % of the total population	54.4	55	48.9	47.1	46.7
Among them:					
Working age, thousand people	4,807	4,871	4,930	4,703	4,605
In % of the population of the corresponding age	61.5	62.9	64.5	62.4	62

Source: developed by the authors on the basis of the Demographic and social statistics/Labour market/Employment and unemployment (n.d.)

Over the period under review, the total number of people employed in rural areas fluctuated, showing an increase from 2017 to 2019, followed by a decline. As a percentage of the total population, employment decreased from 54.4% in 2017 to 46.7% in 2021, indicating a decrease in the share of people employed in rural areas. In terms of working age, the number of employed persons also shows similar dynamics. The share of employed persons among the working-age population remained relatively stable, ranging from 61.5% to 64.5%.

The creation of new jobs in the agricultural sector has a significant impact on poverty reduction, as it provides stable income for the rural population. This helps to improve living standards and reduce migration to cities in search of work. The additional jobs also stimulate the development of local infrastructure and services, which in turn contributes to the socio-economic development of rural communities. In addition, increased employment in the agricultural sector can lead to increased production, improved product quality, and increased export potential for Ukraine. Ukraine has both successful and unsuccessful examples of implementing restoration projects in rural areas. One of the successful examples is the Agricultural Receipts project, which was introduced with the support of international donors such as IFC. This project allowed small and medium-sized farmers to receive financing secured by future harvests, which helped improve their financial capacity and ability to invest in farm development. As a result, many agricultural enterprises have been able to modernise their production and increase their output (*Tomorrow's harvests fund...*, 2019). For example, the farm Agro-Plus Service from the Zaporizhzhia region, thanks to Agrarian Receipts, raised the necessary funds to upgrade machinery and introduce modern tillage technologies, which significantly increased yields (*First financial agricultural...*, 2018).

Another example of a successful project is the Ukrainian Horticulture Business Development Project (UHBDP), which is being implemented with the support of the Canadian government. The project aims to increase the competitiveness of small and medium-sized fruit and vegetable producers in the southern regions of Ukraine. Through trainings, consultations and financial support, project participants were able to improve their agricultural skills and expand their markets (*Agro-internship: A Ukrainian project ...*, n.d.). For example, Blagodatna Ferma, a farm in Vinnytsia Oblast, has implemented an organic berry growing system and organised direct deliveries to supermarkets, which has led to a significant increase in revenues, thanks to its participation in the UHBDP (*Blahodatna farm...*, 2018). However, there are also unsuccessful projects. One of them is the programme to restore irrigation systems in the southern regions of Ukraine, which was launched in 2013. The aim of the project was to restore and modernise irrigation systems to ensure a stable water supply for agricultural enterprises. However, due to a lack of funding, poor planning and corruption risks, the project failed to achieve its goals. For example, in the Mykolaiv region, many irrigation systems remained in poor condition and farmers continued to face water supply problems. Ineffective management and insufficient coordination between stakeholders led to delays in project

implementation and failure to utilise the potential of irrigated land (*Restoring irrigation in...*, 2017).

Local communities play a key role in the process of socio-economic recovery of rural areas. Their active involvement in project planning and implementation helps to take into account local needs and specifics, which increases the effectiveness of the measures. For example, in the ATCs of the Khmelnytskyi region, the implementation of cooperative development projects was made possible by the initiative and activity of local residents. They have created several cooperatives that bring farmers together and help them share resources, reduce costs, and improve market access. The role of local governments is also important, as they can attract additional investments, coordinate the activities of different projects, and ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds. Active cooperation between local authorities, communities and agricultural enterprises contributes to the creation of a favourable business climate and sustainable development of rural areas. Thus, the socio-economic recovery of rural areas in Ukraine has a significant impact on the development of agricultural enterprises. Successful project implementation, active participation of local communities and effective governance are key factors contributing to the achievement of positive results and sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

To improve the efficiency of socio-economic recovery and development of agricultural enterprises in Ukraine, a set of measures should be taken. Firstly, access to financial resources should be expanded by introducing new financial instruments, such as agricultural receipts, leasing, and credit support. It is important to create conditions for attracting investment, in particular, by ensuring transparency and reducing risks for investors. It is also necessary to expand cooperation with international financial organizations and donors, using grants and technical assistance to implement infrastructure projects. Modernization of irrigation systems is critical for increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector. Implementing effective programmes to rehabilitate and modernise irrigation systems, ensuring adequate financing, and introducing modern irrigation technologies such as drip irrigation will help reduce water consumption and increase yields (*Havryliuk et al.*, 2022). In addition, the transport infrastructure needs to be improved by developing transport routes and logistics centres to facilitate the delivery of products to markets. Investments in the storage and processing of agricultural products are also important.

Support for innovation and technology is a key factor in the development of agricultural enterprises. Supporting research and scientific institutions in the development and implementation of new agricultural technologies, encouraging the use of digital solutions such as agrodrones, crop monitoring systems, and farm management software will help to increase production efficiency (*Malchenko et al.*, 2024). It is also important to organise pieces of training and educational programmes for farmers to improve their professional skills, and provide access to advisory services and technical support. Strengthening the role of local communities in the recovery process is essential to achieving sustainable results. The active involvement of local communities in the planning and

implementation of recovery projects, the development of cooperatives and other forms of collective management will help to increase the efficiency of resource use. In addition, the institutional capacity of state institutions dealing with agricultural policy and rural recovery needs to be strengthened, and the legal framework for creating a favourable environment for agricultural sector development needs to be improved. Environmental protection and natural resource management are important aspects of sustainable development of the agricultural sector. Implementation of sustainable farming practices that reduce the negative impact on the environment, development of organic farming and environmentally friendly production, creation of mechanisms for rational use of land and water resources, development of biodiversity conservation programmes and restoration of degraded land will contribute to environmental sustainability.

Finally, improving social protection is critical for rural development. The development of social infrastructure, including access to healthcare, education and cultural services, housing programmes for young people and agricultural workers, the creation of new jobs in rural areas through the development of non-agricultural activities, and vocational reorientation and training programmes for rural residents will help improve living conditions and contribute to the overall socio-economic development of rural areas. The implementation of these recommendations will contribute to the comprehensive socio-economic recovery of rural areas and the development of agricultural enterprises in Ukraine, ensuring sustainable growth and improving the welfare of the population.

► Discussion

The development of rural areas in Ukraine is a complex and multifaceted task that requires an integrated approach and the involvement of various stakeholders. The analysis of the results shows that the socio-economic recovery of rural areas involves not only economic development, but also social integration and environmental sustainability. The economic recovery of rural areas is based on the creation of new jobs, support for local enterprises and the introduction of innovations. The creation of new jobs in various sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, small and medium-sized businesses, and tourism, contributes to the growth of incomes and the reduction of unemployment. Supporting local enterprises through financial and advisory assistance allows them to develop and remain stable even in difficult economic conditions. F. Manzoor *et al.* (2021) studied the impact of financial instruments such as subsidies and soft loans on the development of small and medium-sized businesses in rural areas. They found that financial support is the main factor that stimulates economic growth and job creation. J.M. Pedraza (2021) argued that access to financial resources allows small businesses to expand production, introduce new technologies, and increase the number of employees. The results of the current study also recognise the importance of supporting local enterprises through financial instruments. The studies indicate that financial assistance is critical for stimulating economic growth and business development in rural areas. However, the authors focus mainly on subsidies and loans,

while the current study also emphasises the need for advisory support and innovation that goes beyond financial measures alone.

Social rehabilitation of rural areas is aimed at improving the quality of life of the population. This includes ensuring access to quality healthcare, education and social services, which is the basis for a healthy and educated society. An important component of social recovery is social integration, which involves the active participation of local communities in decision-making and project implementation. This helps to increase social cohesion and responsibility, as people feel part of a common process. A. Calabrese *et al.* (2019) also investigated the importance of social inclusion and local community participation in decision-making. Their study shows that involving citizens in discussions and decision-making contributes to a more efficient use of local resources, increases trust in local authorities, and increases civic engagement. The current study also emphasises the importance of social inclusion and citizen participation in project planning and implementation. Both approaches recognise that without the active participation of local residents, social rehabilitation and regional development can be ineffective.

The environmental aspect of socio-economic recovery is also extremely important. The conservation of natural resources and the implementation of measures to protect and rationally use resources ensure the environmental sustainability of the region. Environmental initiatives aimed at improving the environment, such as ecosystem restoration, pollution control, and green energy development, have a positive impact on the overall environmental condition of the territory (Shahini *et al.*, 2024). Adaptation to climate change is another important aspect that helps local communities reduce risks to agricultural production and other economic activities. G.D. Gann *et al.* (2019) focus on environmental initiatives, in particular the introduction of green technologies and the conservation of natural resources. They believe that sustainable development is impossible without environmental sustainability. The study by Q. Li *et al.* (2022) also highlights the importance of the transition to green energy, the use of renewable energy sources and the protection of ecosystems to ensure the long-term viability of rural regions. This is in line with the approach of the current study, which also recognises the critical role of environmental initiatives in ensuring sustainable development. However, the current findings consider environmental sustainability in the context of not only technological aspects, but also social and economic aspects, to gain a more complete picture of the need for balanced development in rural regions.

Successful socio-economic recovery of rural areas depends on coordinated action by various stakeholders, including government, local authorities, business and civil society (Novak & Dudash, 2023). An important element is the development and implementation of strategies that take into account local characteristics and needs, ensuring sustainable development and improving the quality of life in rural areas. Only a comprehensive approach to recovery can ensure long-term and sustainable development that will form the basis for future prosperity in rural areas. K.M. Johnson & D.T. Lichter (2019) drew

attention in their study to the importance of state support through various mechanisms such as subsidies, development programmes and legal support. They argued that without this effective government intervention, rural recovery may be ineffective or even impossible. The study by B. Dabson & C. Kumar (2021), in turn, demonstrated how support measures can help improve infrastructure, access to finance and other resources, and stimulate entrepreneurship and employment in rural communities. However, there is a need for active multi-stakeholder cooperation, involving not only the government and local authorities, but also businesses, NGOs and local residents. The strategy of the current recovery study recognises the importance of diversity of approaches and the participation of all stakeholders to achieve sustainable rural development.

The socio-economic recovery of rural areas has a direct impact on the agricultural sector, which is one of the key components of rural development. Optimization of the economic environment in rural areas contributes to the prosperity of agriculture by providing it with the necessary inputs, markets and highly skilled labour (Marmul *et al.*, 2023). This recovery is accompanied by improved access to key inputs for the agricultural sector, such as land, water, fertilisers, and technology. P. Prus & M. Sikora (2021) focus on the modernization of infrastructure, in particular transport and irrigation systems, as a key factor for increasing agricultural productivity. Their study confirms that the renewal and modernization of these infrastructure facilities contribute to more efficient use of resources, reduce losses and increase the production capacity of agriculture. The authors' results are consistent with the findings of the current study on the importance of infrastructure investment for productivity. However, other aspects, such as business support strategies and social inclusion, should also be considered. A. Faggian *et al.* (2019) and E.Y. Iis *et al.* (2022) noted in their works the role of education and training as a key factor for human capital development and sustainable economic growth. They emphasised the need for educational programmes and training courses as a means of training qualified personnel. This aspect is consistent with the current research understanding of the critical role of education in producing a skilled workforce, which can be important for sustainable economic development. The interconnectedness between education, economy, social and environmental sectors contributes to a more successful recovery and development of rural areas (Reznik *et al.*, 2021).

Agricultural enterprises face numerous challenges, but at the same time have many opportunities for development that can contribute to their sustainability and growth. In Ukraine, one of the most serious challenges is the war, as the occupation of part of the country's territory, destruction of infrastructure, mining of fields, and destruction of production facilities and logistics chains lead to the loss of land, labour and increased risks for investors. Economic instability, including economic crises, inflation, currency fluctuations and limited access to finance, also negatively affect the ability of agricultural enterprises to expand and modernise. Each of the authors focused on different aspects of such recovery, including

financial support, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, infrastructure modernization, education, and government support. The studies reviewed point to the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to rural recovery that takes into account the diverse needs and factors affecting rural development.

► Conclusions

The study found that the socio-economic recovery of rural regions is an important task that is becoming increasingly important in the world. This process includes a set of measures aimed at improving the economic, social and environmental conditions of rural areas.

Economic recovery involves creating new jobs, supporting local businesses and introducing innovative technologies. An important indicator is the decline in employment of the working-age population in rural areas of Ukraine, which fell from 4,807 thousand people in 2017 to 4,605 thousand people in 2021, and the percentage of employed people to the total population decreased from 54.4% to 46.7%. The social rehabilitation of rural areas is aimed at improving the quality of life of the population by providing access to quality healthcare, education and social services, which contributes to the overall well-being and poverty reduction in the regions. The environmental aspect of recovery is key to ensuring the environmental sustainability of the region. The introduction of sustainable farming practices and the protection of natural resources help to maintain the ecological balance that is essential for the long-term development of rural areas.

The socio-economic recovery of rural areas has a direct impact on the agricultural sector, which is a key component of rural development. Support for agricultural enterprises contributes to increased productivity and sustainable growth, which ultimately improves the socio-economic status of rural communities. Successful projects such as Agrarian Receipts and the Ukrainian Horticulture Business Development Project demonstrate the effectiveness of international support and innovative approaches. At the same time, unsuccessful projects, such as the rehabilitation of irrigation systems in the southern regions, highlight the importance of effective management and coordination. Sustainable socio-economic recovery requires increased access to financial resources, modernization of irrigation systems, support for innovation, and strengthening the role of local communities in recovery. Only a comprehensive approach can ensure the sustainable recovery and development of Ukraine's agricultural sector.

A limitation of this study is the limited amount of data and the inability to consider all possible options for rural recovery. Further research could focus on analysing the impact of specific policies and programmes on recovery performance, as well as on the dynamics of change in agriculture and the role of new technologies in this process.

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► Conflict of interest

The authors of this study declare no conflict of interest.

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► **Анотація.** Дане дослідження було направлене на аналіз ефективності комплексних відновлювальних стратегій у сільській місцевості та їхній вплив на управлінські практики в агропромисловому секторі. У статті розглянуто соціально-економічне відновлення сільських територій як важливу та багатогранну задачу, що набуває дедалі більшої актуальності в світі. Процес відновлення включає комплекс заходів, спрямованих на поліпшення економічного, соціального та екологічного стану сільських регіонів. Впровадження сучасних технологій у виробничі процеси підвищує продуктивність та конкурентоспроможність місцевої економіки. Розглянуто роль різних підходів до відновлення, включаючи багатосекторний, ресурсно-орієнтований, інноваційний, інклюзивний, екосистемний, політико-адміністративний та підхід до сталого розвитку. Кожен з них може бути адаптований до специфічних умов та потреб сільських регіонів, створюючи основу для комплексного та сталого відновлення. Проаналізовано вплив війни в Україні на аграрний сектор, що є однією з ключових складових розвитку сільських регіонів. Внаслідок чого виділена необхідність подальшої підтримки та інвестицій в аграрний сектор для його відновлення та сталого розвитку. Успішна соціально-економічна реабілітація сільських територій залежить від скоординованих дій різних зацікавлених сторін, включаючи державу, місцеву владу, бізнес та громадянське суспільство. Важливою складовою є розробка та реалізація стратегій, які враховують місцеві особливості та потреби, забезпечуючи сталий розвиток та підвищення якості життя у сільських регіонах. Тільки комплексний підхід до відновлення може забезпечити довгостроковий та стабільний розвиток, який стане основою процвітання сільських територій у майбутньому

► **Ключові слова:** державна політика; територіальний розвиток; транспортна та логістична інфраструктура; соціальні ініціативи; вплив війни