

Stages and organization of state strategic development planning in the field of medical tourism

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Abstract

In view of globalization, medical tourism has become a special and multifaceted sphere of international services. It not only combines medical care with travel, but also influences the social, economic, infrastructural, international and tourism policies of different countries. Its uniqueness lies in the variety of reasons that encourage people to go abroad for treatment and recovery, as well as in the differences in the ways of organizing such trips.

Developing a clear strategy is the key to reforming the branches of public administration. At the same time, it is important to determine strategic goals, objectives and success criteria that will become the basis for implementing public policy. In the context of modern internal and external challenges, there is an urgent need to form a holistic vision of the development of medical tourism in Ukraine. This will allow for the necessary reforms in the healthcare system, the hospitality industry, infrastructure, the tourist services market and other related industries.

Having analyzed the scientific literature, it should be noted that the development of public administration involves a combination of methods of direct and indirect influence, as well as the division of methods into general and special. Taking into account the peculiarities of state strategic planning and considering medical tourism as an important area of state policy, the author identified key tools for implementing its development strategy: legal (development and adoption of regulatory legal acts on the development of medical tourism in general and its components in particular); economic (formation of instruments for financial support of medical tourism and entities implementing medical tourism services); organizational (modernization of the subject structure of state administration of medical tourism); informational (providing informational support and popularization of the development of medical tourism from the perspective of both the country of departure and the country of destination). These tools were laid down as the basis of a comprehensive mechanism for implementing the strategy for the development of medical tourism, which will ensure the coordination of medical, tourist, economic, legal, social and international components of the object under study.

As a result of the study, it should be noted that for the successful implementation of the medical tourism development strategy, a multi-component approach is necessary, covering various areas and instruments of state influence.

Keywords: medical tourism; development strategy; state policy; implementation mechanisms; comprehensive mechanism.

Relevance of the research topic. Medical tourism in the countries of the world performs a set of functions that consist in the implementation of social, economic, infrastructure, international, tourism and medical policies. This defines it as a special phenomenon in the development of international service markets. «Medical tourism is the latest socio-economic industry, the development of which is driven by globalisation processes in the world, which requires a unique approach, as it is necessary to take into account the various motives for treatment, rehabilitation and the possibilities of its implementation. Therefore, quantitative differences are significantly inferior to the phenomena that are classified in medical tourism by reference to their

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characteristics» [1]. Strategy development and implementation is a tool for reforming certain sectors and areas of public administration. When developing a strategy, strategic goals, objectives, key performance indicators are determined, which is the basis for the formation of mechanisms for implementing public policy. In the context of current internal and external challenges, there is a need to ensure a comprehensive vision of medical tourism development and, on this basis, reform the healthcare system, hospitality industry, infrastructure, tourism services market, etc. «Medical tourism is developing very dynamically in the 21st century, but it is not a new phenomenon. Back in ancient times and later in the Middle Ages, thermal springs and other areas with natural healing resources were a very popular place for recreation and rejuvenation among the elite of the time. Visiting resorts with medical services was one of the first types of organised travel in the nineteenth century. The dynamic growth of health and medical tourism in the twentieth century is associated, on the one hand, with the deterioration of people's health in industrialised regions of the world caused by environmental problems, and, on the other hand, with an increase in their living standards, as travel with pre-paid treatment is one of the most expensive types of recreation. The development of high-speed and comfortable modes of transport, political and economic liberalisation, the spread of English as a language of international communication, the fashion for an active and healthy lifestyle, as well as the globalisation of the travel market and the growth of the middle class in developing countries, have gradually created the conditions for the expansion of the previously very limited consumer segment of medical tourism. The mass market offers tours for treatment abroad appeared in the twenty-first century. The reason for this is the deep penetration of the Internet, since without it, studying offers, getting acquainted with modern methods of treatment, selecting medical institutions and the process of registration in a foreign clinic (requiring the submission of many documents) was almost an insurmountable task for both employees of specialised travel agencies and potential clients» [5]. The complexity of this social phenomenon determines the multidisciplinary nature of the mechanisms and the need for their harmonisation to ensure a comprehensive vision of medical tourism in Ukraine, taking into account the tasks set by the state policy.

Analysis of recent studies. For the first time, a comprehensive study of the development of state policy in the field of medical tourism was conducted by D.F. Tyshko. Certain aspects of public administration in the field of medical tourism are described in the works of: L.V. Antonova, S.V. Belaia, O.Y. Bordun, G.I. Haponenko, I.V. Dragan, I.O. Dragan, O.V. Yevtushenko, M.P. Malska, N.S. Orlova, S.M. Petryka, L.V. Sergienko, I.M. Shamar, V.I. Yunger and others.

Presentation of the main material. The strategy of medical tourism is a kind of start of reforming the state policy in the studied area. For the first time, the issue of development of the state policy in the field of medical tourism was considered comprehensively in the dissertation research of D.F. Tyshko. Thus, the scientist points out that "the processes of formation and implementation of state policy are interrelated and complement each other. It is worth noting that it is impossible to identify the start of the state policy in general and the state policy in a particular area. Any attempts to identify the beginning and end of the implementation of the state policy are only of a purely theoretical nature and determine the specifics of solving a certain set of social problems characterised by symptoms that determine the need for changes in the state policy. We propose to understand public policy as a continuous dynamic process of formulation, implementation, verification, evaluation and monitoring of public administration decisions that determine the reaction of the State (public authorities) to a social problem, characterised by a set of procedures, methods, tools, principles of their application for its solution with simultaneous coordination of a set of antagonistic public, social and private interests. Accordingly, we propose to understand the state policy of ensuring the development of medical tourism as: a continuous dynamic process of formation, implementation, verification, evaluation and monitoring of public administration decisions that determine the reaction of the State (public authorities) to the problems of medical tourism development, characterised by a set of procedures, methods, tools, principles of their application for its solution with simultaneous coordination of a set of antagonistic public, social and private interests [4].

In this context, it should be noted that, given the fact that state policy can be considered both activity and inaction, the state policy of medical tourism development in Ukraine is currently characterised as inaction. Accordingly, there is a need to develop a comprehensive mechanism that determines the directions of development of public administration methods. «In the most general form, public administration methods are ways of exercising the power-organising influence of the managing entities on the managed objects. These are specific ways of implementing management functions. One of the key terms of this definition is the concept of «goals». That is, the methods of public administration are conditioned by the general system of relations between the state and society, depending on the goals of the state» [3]. When it comes to medical tourism, the goals of the state are defined in the strategy for the development of medical tourism, because the methods of public administration should be aimed at achieving them in accordance with certain key performance indicators.

Bondarenko K.V. points out that «the peculiarities of public administration methods in general are as follows: 1) they are implemented in the process of public administration; 2) they express the managerial (ordering) influence of management subjects on the objects of management, constitute the content of this influence and always have a specific object (individual or collective) as their addressee; 3) the methods of public administration always contain the managerial will of the State. They are the state-powerful prescriptions of the governing bodies. They express the powers of legal authority belonging to these bodies; 4) they are used by public administration entities as a means of exercising their competence. This means that the legal force of methods is always within the powers of the body that uses them; 5) methods, like any content, have their own form, their external expression. The means of external expression of public administration methods are the forms of public administration; 6) all methods used in the process of management are practically interrelated, complement each other, and are used in organic unity» [2].

Modern academic literature on the development of public administration envisions a set of methods of direct and indirect influence, as well as a division of methods into general and special categories. General methods are understood as a set of techniques and means of exercising administrative influence by a subject upon an object at the relevant stages of the

administrative process. In turn, special methods of public administration are aimed exclusively at the execution of specific functions at certain stages of administrative influence.

A rather interesting and comprehensive position regarding the methods of direct and indirect influence in the context of implementing state policy to ensure the development of medical tourism is presented in the research of D.F. Tyshko [4], in particular:

– Methods of direct influence – These shape the parameters for the development of medical tourism, taking into account the priority strategic goals of the development of socio-economic relations in society, namely: Organizational methods (a set of methods and tools that define the administrative and organizational influence of the state through public authorities on medical tourism (inbound and outbound) and on the entities providing medical tourism services, based on general organizational management principles, and mostly implemented through decrees, resolutions, decisions, orders, and other regulatory acts); Economic methods (a set of methods and tools that define the state's influence on the medical tourism market and the entities providing medical tourism services through fiscal and tax policies, financial instruments, monetary and credit mechanisms, pricing policies, and competition levers, which collectively determine the operational parameters of entities delivering medical, tourism, and related support services, as well as ensuring integrity and fairness in the market); Legal methods (a set of methods and tools that define the directions for the formation and functioning of the legal regulation system for medical tourism as a whole and for its individual sectors, which can be characterized as national, departmental, and intra-systemic. These, in turn, form a set of parameters constituting the legal framework for the functioning of medical tourism) [4].

– Methods of indirect influence – These are used as levers of influence on participants in social relations to form an adaptive environment for the development of medical tourism in the context of achieving priority strategic goals of socio-economic development in society. These include: Socio-psychological methods (methods for assessing the mental health of the population and mass sentiments to shape waves of influence on society aimed at stimulating medical tourism); Incentive methods (a set of methods and tools aimed at activating the activities of entities providing medical tourism services and encouraging the population to use these services); Informational methods (a set of methods that influence the development of medical tourism through informational levers impacting society) [4].

The combination of the aforementioned methods constitutes the mechanisms for implementing public administration decisions and state policy as a whole. In the context of the specifics of strategic public planning and medical tourism as an object of state policy, we consider the following to be the key mechanisms for implementing the strategy for the development of medical tourism:

– Legal mechanism – the development and adoption of regulatory legal acts concerning the development of medical tourism as a whole and its individual components in particular;

– Economic mechanism – the creation of instruments for financial support of medical tourism and of the entities providing medical tourism services;

– Organizational mechanism – the modernization of the institutional structure of public administration related to medical tourism;

– Informational mechanism – the provision of informational support and the promotion of the development of medical tourism, both from the perspective of the country of origin and the country of destination.

These mechanisms should form the foundation of an integrated framework for the implementation of the strategy for the development of medical tourism. Such an integrated mechanism must ensure the coordination of medical, tourism, economic, legal, social, and international components of the subject under study.

When forming a comprehensive mechanism for implementing the strategy for the development of medical tourism, the following requirements must be observed:

– The realization of the strategic goal cannot occur in isolation; only a comprehensive approach to the development of state policy mechanisms in the field of medical tourism can ensure this.

– The comprehensive mechanism must ensure the harmonization of the interests of all stakeholders, including holders of private, public, and societal interests.

– The key performance indicators defined for the entities responsible for implementing state policy in the field of medical tourism and adjacent sectors must be achieved through the operation of the comprehensive mechanism.

– The legal, organizational, economic, and informational components within the structure of the comprehensive mechanism must reinforce one another.

– The comprehensive mechanism must ensure a high level of communication among stakeholders involved in the implementation of state policy in the fields of medical tourism, healthcare, tourism, economics, international relations, infrastructure, and other relevant areas.

The authors' vision of the organizational and methodological foundations of the comprehensive mechanism is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Comprehensive Mechanism for the Implementation of the Medical Tourism Development Strategy

LEGAL MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY			
<i>This mechanism is intended to ensure the achievement of the following strategic objectives:</i>			
Formation of a legal regulation system for inbound and outbound medical tourism	Modernization of the financial management system of state and municipal healthcare institutions that provide services to foreign nationals		Development of state financial support for citizens to enable access to specific types of medical services abroad
Establishment of requirements for foreign healthcare institutions regarding medical tourism	Modernization of the institutional structure of the public administration system for medical tourism		Improvement of international cooperation in the field of medical tourism development
<i>It entails:</i>			
<i>– the development and adoption of the following legislative and regulatory acts:</i>			
<i>Law of Ukraine “On Medical Tourism”</i>		<i>Law of Ukraine “On the Provision of Medical Care to Foreign Nationals”</i>	
Regulates issues of inbound and outbound medical tourism concerning the provision of tourist services and medical care for Ukrainian citizens abroad and for foreign nationals in Ukraine		Regulates the provision of medical care to foreign nationals both within the framework of medical tourism services and independently of tourism service providers	
<i>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Regulation on the Activities of the State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism</i>		<i>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Regulation “On the Approval of Requirements for the Provision of Medical Services to Foreign Nationals”</i>	
Regulates matters related to the establishment, management, financial support, organizational structure, and operational areas of the State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism		Regulates the establishment of requirements for healthcare institutions providing medical services to foreign nationals, the procedure for obtaining permits, and liability for violations	
<i>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Regulation “On the Approval of Licensing Requirements for Tourism Operators Providing Medical Tourism Services”</i>		<i>Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Regulation “On Financial Support Programs for the Treatment of Veterans of the Russo-Ukrainian War in Foreign Healthcare Institutions”</i>	
Governs the establishment of licensing requirements for tourism service providers in the field of medical tourism, the procedure for granting and revoking licenses, defines penalties for violations, and outlines procedures for maintaining the relevant registry.		Establishes the procedure for developing state programs for financial support of treatment, as well as material, informational, legal, psychological, and other types of assistance to veterans of the Russo-Ukrainian War for receiving medical care abroad	
<i>Ministry of Health of Ukraine Regulation “On the Establishment of Quotas for the Provision of Medical Services to Foreign Nationals”</i>		<i>Ministry of Health of Ukraine Regulation “On the Prohibition of the Provision of Certain Types of Medical Services to Foreign Nationals”</i>	
Defines the methodology for setting quotas for the provision of medical services to foreigners, taking into account the capacity of healthcare institutions and prioritizing the quality medical care for Ukrainian citizens		Specifies a list of medical services that may not be provided to foreign nationals by healthcare institutions established as state or municipal enterprises	
<i>– amendments to existing legislative and regulatory acts are to be developed, including:</i>			
<i>Law of Ukraine “On the Fundamentals of the Legislation of Ukraine on Healthcare”</i>	<i>Law of Ukraine “On State Financial Guarantees of Medical Services to the Population”</i>	<i>Law of Ukraine “On Emergency Medical Care”</i>	<i>Law of Ukraine “On Medicinal Products”</i>
<i>– amendments of the following nature:</i>			
– possibility of establishing (or reorganizing) healthcare institutions in the form of state or municipal enterprises with a share of state or municipal ownership exceeding 25% or 50%	– granting permission to healthcare institutions established as state or municipal enterprises to engage in investment and financial activities	– expanding the types of core activities of healthcare institutions, in particular to include the provision of educational, informational, and other types of services	
ECONOMIC MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY			
<i>This mechanism is intended to ensure the achievement of the following strategic objectives:</i>			
Development of state financial support for citizens to enable access to specific types of medical services abroad		Modernization of the financial management system in state and municipal healthcare institutions that provide services to foreign nationals	
Formation of a network of tourism service providers delivering medical tourism services		Modernization of the network of healthcare institutions offering medical services to foreign nationals	
Modernization of the financial management system in state and municipal healthcare institutions that provide services to foreign nationals		Enhancement of international cooperation in the development of medical tourism	

Continuation of Table 1

<i>It entails:</i>			
<i>The development of financial support programs:</i>			
– state program for the partial or full coverage of treatment costs in foreign healthcare institutions for veterans of the Russo-Ukrainian War who was injured as a result of fulfilling combat missions	– state program for the partial or full coverage of treatment costs in foreign healthcare institutions for military personnel who have participated or are participating in combat operations		
– state program to support the treatment of civilians, particularly children, affected by combat operations, in foreign healthcare institutions	– development of regional programs to support the treatment of special categories of citizens in foreign healthcare institutions		
<i>Implementation of funding from the state or local budgets</i>			
– state and regional support programs for citizens receiving medical services in foreign healthcare institutions	– development of an information and communication system linking domestic and foreign healthcare institutions		
– development and implementation of social advertising campaigns promoting medical tourism opportunities for Ukrainian citizens	– informational initiatives to promote the domestic healthcare system abroad		
– budgetary funding for the activities of the State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism	– budgetary funding for the system of collection and processing of information related to medical tourism		
ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY			
<i>This mechanism is intended to ensure the achievement of the following strategic objectives:</i>			
Modernization of the institutional structure of the public administration system for medical tourism, which is to be achieved through:			
the establishment of the <i>State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism</i>			
<i>which will be responsible for the implementation of additional strategic objectives, including:</i>			
Enhancement of international cooperation in the development of medical tourism	Formation of a network of tourism service providers delivering medical tourism services	Modernization of the network of healthcare institutions offering medical services to foreign nationals	
<i>are implemented through:</i>			
– assignment of tasks related to the activities of the State Agency	– establishment of key performance indicators (KPIs)		
<i>Areas of Activity of the State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism:</i>			
– conclusion of, and/or facilitation of the conclusion of, international agreements with other countries regarding the development of medical tourism and cross-border healthcare services;	– development of measures to organize activities aimed at fulfilling the European Union's integration requirements in the field of cross-border healthcare services;	– formation, continuous monitoring, and revision of the list of countries considered unsafe for receiving medical services;	
– licensing of tourism service providers delivering medical tourism services;	– implementation of licensing oversight over tourism service providers delivering medical tourism services;	– cooperation with the Ministry of Health regarding the activities of healthcare institutions providing medical services to foreign nationals;	
– organization of activities related to the implementation of state support programs	– organization of conferences, roundtables, and other events aimed at the development of medical tourism.	– cooperation with central executive authorities and local self-government bodies.	
INFORMATIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY			
<i>It is intended to ensure the achievement of the following strategic objectives:</i>			
Formation of a system for the collection and processing of information on medical tourism in Ukraine	Improvement of international cooperation in the development of medical tourism	Development of an information and communication system for the exchange of medical information between domestic and foreign healthcare institutions	
<i>Інструменти реалізації механізму</i>			
– development of information and communication systems	– development of a medical tourism statistics system	– development of measures to ensure information security	– development of informational initiatives
– establishment of communication channels with foreign partners	– organization of the information and analytical activities of the State Agency of Ukraine for Medical Tourism (SAUMT)	– development of a system for the public dissemination of information on medical tourism	– development of social advertising campaigns to promote medical tourism

Conclusions. The proposed provisions of the comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of the medical tourism development strategy are structured in such a way as to fully achieve the strategic objectives and ensure the attainment of key performance indicators. The mechanism includes legal, economic, informational, and organizational components for the implementation of state policy. Accordingly, achieving any specific objective is not possible through the use of a single mechanism alone.

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