



Journal of Science and Development Economics
Nam Can Tho University

Website: jsde.nctu.edu.vn



Developing an agricultural and rural tourism model in the Mekong Delta from experience in some countries around the world

Nguyen Thanh Phuong¹, Tran Thanh Khoe^{1*}

¹Nam Can Tho University

*Corresponding author: [Tran Thanh Khoe \(email: khoett96@gmail.com\)](mailto:Tran Thanh Khoe (email: khoett96@gmail.com))

Received: 2/10/2024

Revised: 4/11/2024

Accepted: 5/12/2024

Keywords: agricultural tourism, Mekong delta, rural tourism

Từ khóa: du lịch nông nghiệp, du lịch nông thôn, đồng bằng sông Cửu Long

ABSTRACT

Agricultural and rural tourism is understood as the activity of a community participating in tourism, this activity begins spontaneously in places with attractive tourist attractions and historical sites where local residents participate in serving the needs of tourists. Tourists have a number of activities and experiences including sightseeing, enjoying local specialties, picnicking, enjoying amateur folk music, visiting craft villages, learning about the lives and activities of the people, and some other activities such as digging ditches to catch fish, visiting ancient houses, taking canoes to visit rivers and canals, cooking rustic dishes... Currently, developing agricultural and rural tourism is a growing trend. It is becoming a key economic sector, creating a driving force to promote the development of other industries and fields in countries around the world and in Vietnam. Developing agricultural and rural tourism is also one of the focuses of the strategy. Within the scope of this article, the authors focused on pointing out the advantages and difficulties in developing agricultural and rural tourism, villages in Vietnam, and presented some experiences of some countries around the world in developing this tourism model. From there, some recommendations were made regarding promoting this model in the Mekong Delta region.

TÓM TẮT

Du lịch nông nghiệp, nông thôn được hiểu là hoạt động của một cộng đồng tham gia du lịch, hoạt động này bắt đầu một cách tự phát ở những nơi có điểm du lịch, di tích lịch sử hấp dẫn, nơi

người dân địa phương tham gia phục vụ nhu cầu của khách du lịch. Du khách có một số hoạt động, trải nghiệm bao gồm tham quan, thưởng thức đặc sản địa phương, dã ngoại, thưởng thức âm nhạc dân gian không chuyên, tham quan các làng nghề, tìm hiểu đời sống, sinh hoạt của người dân và một số hoạt động khác như đào mương bắt cá, tham quan nhà cổ, đi ca nô tham quan sông nước, nấu những món ăn dân dã,... Hiện nay, phát triển du lịch nông nghiệp, nông thôn đang là xu hướng. Mô hình này ngày càng phát triển, trở thành ngành kinh tế mũi nhọn, tạo động lực thúc đẩy phát triển các ngành, lĩnh vực khác ở các nước trên thế giới và ở Việt Nam. Phát triển du lịch nông nghiệp, nông thôn cũng là một trong những chiến lược trọng tâm. Trong phạm vi bài viết, nhóm tác giả đã tập trung chỉ ra những thuận lợi và khó khăn trong việc phát triển du lịch nông nghiệp, nông thôn, làng nghề ở Việt Nam, đồng thời trình bày những kinh nghiệm của một số nước trên thế giới trong việc phát triển mô hình du lịch này. Qua đó, đã đưa ra một số khuyến nghị liên quan đến việc thúc đẩy mô hình này tại khu vực Đồng bằng sông Cửu Long.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, agricultural and rural tourism is considered the type of tourism that brings the most sustainable economic development benefits to indigenous residents. This model not only helps protect ecological environmental resources but also promotes unique local cultural features. In general, the Mekong Delta region has a lot of potential in historical values, indigenous cultures of ethnic groups..., which is the basis for developing this type of tourism. For a long time, tourism has become one of Vietnam's key economic sectors, creating jobs for many workers and contributing to national GDP growth. In the world, some countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand... have been very successful in developing rural tourism. From the experiences of other countries, there will be lessons for Vietnam to develop tourism in a sustainable way.

There are many views surrounding the type of agricultural and rural tourism. Specifically: According to the Institute of Tourism Development Research (ITDR) under the General Department of Tourism, it synthesizes different concepts of rural tourism in the world. Accordingly, “rural tourism is a type of exploitation of rural areas as a resource and meets the needs of urban residents in search of quiet space and outdoor recreation rather than just involving to nature. Rural tourism includes visits to national parks and public parks, heritage tourism in rural areas, trips to visit scenic spots and enjoy rural landscapes, and agritourism—industry” [7]. Agritourism is a subset of rural tourism because agriculture is the root sector that shapes the space and economic development in rural areas. The difference between rural tourism and agricultural tourism lies in the nature of agricultural activities, which

is expressed in the following characteristics: (i) Agricultural tourism does not replace traditional farming, therefore, it is necessary for farm owners to pursue agricultural activities, not focusing on tourism but narrowing agricultural activities to replace them with tourism activities, (ii) the nature of this form of tourism is rural areas and rural activities, the focus in creating tourism products is towards specific activities in rural areas. The uniqueness of agricultural tourism products includes four characteristic identities: scenery; traditional (traditional foods, arts, and culture); rural life and living with nature.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Secondary data is collected mainly from documents, resolutions, plans, and reports related to tourism in the Mekong Delta; Comments and assessments of experts on the potential, current situation, orientation, and solutions for tourism development in the province; domestic and foreign research related to the topic of agricultural and rural tourism development in the world and in Vietnam for application to the region. On that basis, analytical methods are conducted to meet the research requirements for developing a development project of this type in the Mekong Delta province.

SWOT analysis is a method of analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a problem, product, company, destination... This method is used for the potential, current status, opportunities, and challenges of developing agricultural and rural tourism in the Mekong Delta. From there, we propose a number of strategic directions and solutions to develop this type in the region effectively and sustainably.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Some issues raised in agricultural and rural tourism development in the Mekong Delta region

Vietnam's rural areas account for about 75% of the population and over 92% of the country's natural area. According to statistics from the Central New Rural Coordination Office, the whole country has more than 1,300 tourist destinations managed by localities, of which about 70% are tourist destinations in rural areas. Particularly in the Mekong Delta region with existing potentials such as 53 “typical tourist destinations in the Mekong Delta” (An Giang 04 points, Bac Lieu 11 points, Ben Tre 09 points, Can Tho 08 points, Dong Thap 06 points, Kien Giang 03 points, Soc Trang 01 point, Tien Giang 01 point, Tra Vinh 04 points, and Vinh Long 06 points); Among them, 10 destinations have just been recognized by the Mekong Delta Tourism Association as typical tourist destinations in the Mekong Delta in 2023 [2] but until now they have not been able to exploit them all potential for agricultural and rural tourism fully (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2023) [2].

According to the report of the Mekong Delta Tourism Association in the first 6 months of 2023, the Mekong Delta region welcomed 26,908,675 visitors, an increase of 33.46% over the same period in 2022, of which international visitors increased the most with 955,463 visitors, an increase 636% over the same period in 2022. Total tourism revenue in the Mekong Delta is estimated to reach more than 26,215 billion VND, an increase of 77.99% over the same period in 2022 [5]. Besides the favorable characteristics of both nature and national culture serve the development of agricultural

and rural tourism. The Mekong Delta region still faces major challenges in tourism development, specifically:

** Exploitation of sea, island and river resources*

Sea and island resources are one of the most important elements constituting the natural tourism product system: There is a view that marine economic sectors gradually become a driving force for socio-economic development. Sea and island tourism is bringing 70% of revenue to the country's tourism industry [2]. Among coastal provinces and cities, Kien Giang has outstanding sea and island tourism resources, with many beautiful beaches such as Phu Quoc, Nam Du, Hon Son, Hai Tac, Mui Nai, Mui Ganh Dau, Long Beach, Khem Beach, Sao Beach, and Thom island... Resources in the sea are very rich and suitable to serve visitors such as groups of marine animals (rare animals that need to be protected, sea turtles, species of aquatic products with economic value), marine plant groups (ecosystems in seagrass beds, coral systems, mangrove forests)... In general, the system of biosphere reserves and coastal national parks in the Mekong Delta rich, UNESCO has recognized a number of world biosphere reserves in Vietnam such as Kien Giang Coastal and Island Biosphere Reserve (2006), Ca Mau Cape Biosphere Reserve (2009) [7] ... The national park near the sea belongs to U Minh Ha and U Minh Thuong National Parks; The coastal national park is Ca Mau Cape National Park, the island national park is Phu Quoc National Park..., Rivers are important factors and strengths that create the unique appearance of the region. Despite many efforts in the process of tourism development, some provinces and cities in the region have still not attracted investment projects, leading to

not fully exploiting river, sea and island resources effectively. Tourist destinations lack connection, unity, and mutual coordination in designing tours and routes, affecting their ability to attract tourists. Except for some island and island sites, garden ecotourism products were once considered specialties of the Mekong Delta region, but there still exists a situation of spontaneity, duplication, and lack of outstanding differences.

** Exploitation of historical and cultural relic resources*

Tourism associated with destinations that are historical and cultural relics is clearly defined in the strategic orientation of tourism development in the Mekong Delta region. Some outstanding relics are put into operation by many travel companies such as: Hon Dat Historical and scenic area, Phu Quoc Prison Relics (Kien Giang); Relics of President Ton Duc Thang Memorial Area, Oc Eo Relics Area (An Giang), Xeo Quyt Relics, Go Thap Relics (Dong Thap), Chuong Thien Victory Relics (Hau Giang), Relics Rach Gam - Xoai Mut Victory Relic (Tien Giang), Ap Bac Victory Site Historical Site (Tien Giang), Dong Khoi Ben Tre Relic Site, Nguyen Dinh Chieu Relic Site and Memorial Area (Ben Tre)... However, the development of tourism to return to the source and learn about indigenous culture is still not commensurate with the potential and value of relics, many relics still have cultural values. chemicalized but not put into exploitation. In addition to a number of special relics invested in and developed by cities and provinces, attracting regular tourists, the remaining relics often operate alone during festivals and only attract visitors. Visit during the day, mostly pilgrims, with short stays. The explanation for

this is that many localities have not linked historical relics and events with on-site witnesses along with other cultural and historical values to create high-quality tourism products, in which tourists not only visit, listen and see like before, but also experience the heroic historical atmosphere through the stories of witnesses, and enjoy culinary dishes.

** Exploiting religious resources and traditional festivals*

Beliefs and festivals clearly reflect the mental and spiritual life of people. In the Mekong Delta, the residential community includes Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer, Cham... along with a rich system of beliefs, religions, and festival activities with their own identities, which have attracted increasing attention and attention from many provinces in the region. Festivals are used as exploitation products in the tourism development strategy in their locality. Compared to other regions in the country, the potential for traditional festival tourism in the Mekong Delta is not much, but there are unique festivals, associated with the natural characteristics and population of the region, attracting tourists such as: Ba Chua Xu festival (An Giang), Go Thap festival (Dong Thap), Nguyen Trung Truc festival (Kien Giang)... In addition, visitors can attend and learn about other unique festivals in the South such as: Southern coconut worshipping festival, Ok Om Bok moon worshipping festival - moon worshipping festival, Bay Nui bull racing festival, Khmer Cholchnam Thmay festival, Nghinh Ong festival... At the festivals, many sports activities are held, folk games such as martial arts, lion dance, Chinese chess, pot banging, stick pushing, calligraphy performances, amateur music... are organized

and restored to meet the needs of enjoying culture and art entertainment for indigenous people and visitors.

Because the duration of the festival is relatively short, the number of people staying overnight is only a small percentage, which makes the exploitation efficiency of the festival not high. Besides, the presence of international tourists only concentrates in a small number at the Ba Chua Xu festivals of Sam Mountain, Ok Om Bok, Ngo boat racing (Soc Trang) ... and other festivals are very few, some festival numbers are not available. The lack of international tourists shows that the advertising and promotion work of the tourism industry is still limited, not marketing the destination, creating a bridge for international tourists to come to the festival and learn about it in particular and culture of the Mekong Delta region in general.

** Exploiting traditional craft village resources*

Tourism in traditional craft villages helps restore and develop folk cultural values, create a cultural tourism environment, bring stable income to establishments and workers, and help improve visitors' understanding. Tourism about the history of formation and development of craft villages, contributing to increasing love for the homeland and country. The Mekong Delta region has formed 03 occupational groups with potential to exploit tourism: Handicraft occupation group, culinary service occupation group, and ornamental flower agricultural occupation group. Some traditional handicrafts are recognized as National Intangible Cultural Heritage such as: mat weaving (Dong Thap), Phu Quoc fish sauce making (Kien Giang), Ba Khia salt making, bee rafter keeping (Kien Giang, Ca Mau) ... Visiting craft villages,

visitors can meet and interact with artisans, learn about the historic formation, experience some stages of product manufacturing, and enjoy hometown specialties in the Mekong Delta. Along with the sightseeing journey, tourists can also participate in the spiritual and cultural activities of craft villages such as worshipping ancestors, festivals or other folk cultural activities. Tourists exploit it as a tourist destination such as fish sauce making (Chau Doc), ornamental flower craft village (Sa Dec), candy making (Ben Tre)... Many craft villages are still just places to stop by or pass by in very short time (15-30 minutes) for tourists after buying some souvenir products. In fact, tourists come to craft villages not only to visit, watch artisans craft or buy products, but they also want to listen, share about craft villages, learn about the materials used to make products, production processes, uniqueness and uses of products... Many craft villages are unique and have potential, but due to its model, practice space and experience are still monotonous, the transportation infrastructure is not guaranteed, and travel businesses do not know how to exploit it to become an independent destination on the journey.

The problem is that the development of agricultural tourism in the Mekong Delta is not commensurate with the region's great potential. Agricultural tourism activities are also spontaneous for each household; not focusing on linking with travel businesses to create a source of visitors; The role of the community in agricultural tourism is not clear; Tourism products are poor, monotonous, and of low quality; Information and product promotion activities are limited. It is necessary to form a common tourism brand for the entire region and

create diversity in the journey of tourists to the region; set goals to increase average spending and lengthen visitors' stay; contributing to the region's sustainable economic growth and social stability.

3.2 Experience in developing agricultural and rural tourism from several countries around the world

According to survey results on tourist demand trends recently conducted by AC Nielsen (commissioned by the Netherlands Development Organization), 65% of tourists want to experience culture and tourism local products; 54% of tourists need to experience nature, rest, and restore health; 84% of tourists want to visit local scenic spots; 48% are willing to pay more to experience local culture and heritage... This research result partly explains the shift in the tourism industry development structure in recent years [11]. Therefore, in many countries, agricultural and rural tourism is paid attention and focused on investment and development to bring great benefits to the economy. Accordingly, many countries have succeeded with this model, including:

Experience from Korea: After Korea became an industrialized country in the 1960s, the Korean Government began promoting the development of the tourism industry to promote economic growth. In recent years, Korea's cultural tourism industry has achieved many significant achievements, especially in attracting international tourists. From 2010 to 2019, the number of international tourists to Korea increased from about 8 million to nearly 17 million. As of 2019, the Tourism industry in Korea contributed about 8.3% of the country's GDP (Thin, et al., 2024) [9]. Reality shows that Korea attracts a large number of tourists

from all over the world, developing diverse and rich tourism products and services to meet the needs of tourists, including tours, transportation, culinary and entertainment services, as the country focuses on developing products and services related to cultural tourism such as traditional experiences, festivals, and artistic activities. Thanks to that, many tourists have been attracted to experience unique culture. Aiming to improve service quality and train human resources to meet the needs of tourists, Korea has introduced strict regulations and guidelines to ensure the quality of tourism services, while providing Providing training and coaching courses for employees in the tourism industry. Because of that, Korea has created a team of professional and qualified human resources, helping to improve the quality of tourism services and gain the trust of tourists.

Korea has been developing many diverse and creative cultural tourism products, from sightseeing tours to traditional art courses. This country has taken full advantage of local cultural values and created unique and impressive tourism experiences. At the same time, Korea has trained and developed quality human resources in the tourism industry, including tour guides, hotel staff and tourism business staff. In addition, the Government also focuses on developing cultural attractions, cultural heritage, and festivals to attract tourists such as Bukchon Hanok Old Town, Gyeongbokgung Castle, Myeong-dong neighborhood, temple Jogyesa Temple, Emperor Taejo's mausoleum. In addition, training centers specializing in cultural tourism and promoting research on the country's culture and history have also been built; Promote

cultural events: organize many cultural events and festivals to promote this country's unique culture, including Seoul light festival, Jinhae peach blossom festival, Busan art festival, Boseong tea festival and Pyeongchang mushroom festival... Korea has also organized many major cultural events such as the Busan Art Exhibition and Korean Kimchi Festival to promote and introduce the country's culture to international tourists; economic international cooperation in the field of cultural tourism: cooperate with international partners to enhance the country's attractiveness to international tourists. All of these products give visitors an impressive experience of Korean culture, history, and art.

Experience from Japan: Since the early years of the 21st century, in addition to promulgating tourism policies (Landscape Law, Law on Historic City Planning,...) Japan has actively promoted its Strengthening the community in tourism development through the motto "Brand of lifestyle", thereby introducing a new concept "where tourists want to visit" is "where local people are actively living", building unique destinations (agricultural - rural sector) and creatively exploiting its cultural features (culinary sector), thereby "branding" historical relics, tourist attractions that attract tourists from each locality. Japanese people have created impressive and artistic tourism products by applying techniques of the 4.0 Industrial Revolution era to agriculture, such as creating rice fields/flower fields. Picturesque, people in this country have used computer design software to draw and calculate images so that they can be seen from afar (including on airplanes) for the purpose of increasing advertising commerce.

Then, when the season comes, people select rice varieties/flower varieties/fruit varieties (genetically modified types) to create many different colors such as dark red, yellow and white, and mix them with other varieties. Traditional plants to create designs as drawn on the computer, turning rice fields/gardens into beautiful paintings, becoming an attractive tourist destination not to be missed. Besides, in the field of cuisine, since being officially recognized by UNESCO as a world intangible cultural heritage (December 2013), Washoku (Japanese Traditional Cuisine) has been recognized by the Agency [12]. Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) is used as an effective tool to promote and develop tourism. After the process of selecting typical dishes representing each region, they organize cultural and tourism week activities abroad - with a focus on typical and unique dish preparation performances customer experience, introducing traditional Japanese culinary culture through the presentation of reportage films, videos and the use of still images of culinary culture. With the above specific and synchronized actions, Japanese tourism has experienced rapid and sustainable development.

Experience from China: The Chinese government pays special attention to developing the tourism industry. With a policy system aimed at promoting strengths and preserving cultural heritage values, Chinese cultural heritage tourism brings many important values not only economically but also culturally, society, promoting the country's image, raising awareness of cultural heritage conservation. To promote and preserve cultural heritage in tourism development, China has built a comprehensive program including the following basic issues:

First, China is constantly perfecting the supply system and improving the quality of cultural heritage tourism. In order to promote heritage values in tourism development, the Chinese Government has built many programs to coordinate between agencies, departments, and many forces (public-private), gathering many capital sources from macroeconomic sources. scale to micro to comprehensively improve tourism infrastructure and services. Other services such as entertainment service information, risk and safety information about heritage tourism destinations are publicly transparent.

Second, China focuses on diversification and creating cultural heritage tourism products with Chinese characteristics. China builds the "Tourism +" program (Tourism + modernization of agriculture, tourism + urbanization, tourism + new industrialization...) to enrich and diversify tourism forms and products in general and cultural heritage tourism in particular. With the policy "let heritage live" refers to the creative and reasonable use of cultural heritage to promote tourism development. China strives to restore all heritage values in tourism development. Promote the development of red tourism (moral and spiritual educational tourism for students). Heritage tourism destinations are completely planned from restaurants, hotels, and entertainment areas, especially cultural heritage values are methodically restored. For example, music festivals, in addition to performing to serve tourists, China also creates conditions for tourists to participate and immerse themselves in the general atmosphere to highlight cultural heritage values. The same goes for cuisine. The cuisine is not simply for eating, but China has

organized and meticulously recreated the process of creating products for tourists to enjoy...

Third, apply modern technology to exploit and preserve cultural heritage to develop tourism. China uses heritage values to develop tourism on the principle of promotion and conservation. Conservation is the basis for promotion and promotion, contributing to promoting and preserving heritage [6].

Experience from France: When the tourism industry develops and becomes a smokeless industrial economy, the French Government has determined to exploit the strengths of natural and cultural potential, especially in rural areas, to Tourism is a key economic sector that brings a proportion of GDP to the country. Thanks to effectively exploiting rural heritage and culture into tourism activities, in France culture and tourism have a close relationship and mutual support, creating attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations. According to statistics from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in 2019 there were about 1.458 billion international tourists in the world, France is the country with the largest number of tourists (UNWTO, 2019). After the COVID-19 pandemic passed and tourism flourished again, France is one of the countries in Europe that welcomes the most international tourists in the world. In 2022, France welcomed 66.6 million international tourists and is expected to increase by 12.1% annually from 2022 to 2025, expected to attract 93.7 million international tourists in 2025 (Nguyen Thi Thanh Nga và Phan Thi Ngan, 2023) [3]. Realizing that France has a difference in the global tourism market because Rural Tourism has taken as its subjects the farmers who are the

main participants in tourism activities, including farmers who specialize in cultivating fields. and grape farms (wine experience tourism), this type of tourism provides specific accommodation services (rural inns, or homestays...), food and beverage services (food at home) local people, experiences of enjoying wine, local products... and tourism activities that allow visitors to participate in the experience of discovering rural heritage associated with agricultural livelihoods and occupations derived from farming and herding farming is cheese production and wine production, especially wine production. French rural tourism is associated with the brands: Rural Tourism and the most beautiful Villages in France; Rural tourism and farmer brands; Rural tourism and occupations originating from agricultural activities. The association "The most beautiful villages in France" was established in 1991 with the mission of protecting, promoting and developing the most beautiful village in France. The widely recognized brand is the golden key to developing rural tourism. Up to now, there are 172 villages recognized as the most beautiful villages in France.

Experience from Belgium: In the Wallonia countryside of the Kingdom of Belgium, there is a beautiful, peaceful landscape. People still keep many ancient houses and many traditional cultural features are preserved, so there is potential for developing community tourism. The local tourism management agency has issued tourism development policies such as quality conditions of accommodation and dining establishments, issuance of motel signs, and conditions for joining accommodation business associations, capital support, fee

contributions, and human resource training. To be granted a community tourism sign, the homeowner must be granted a membership certificate and must commit to ensuring the prescribed quality; breakfast and main meals must be served upon request by guests; must always create a comfortable stay for guests through a culture of polite behavior, hospitality and through providing quality services; at the same time, information about local cultural events must be introduced so that guests can participate. Each homeowner can only use a maximum of 5 rooms and to avoid overcrowding, the homeowner can rent other motels in the Association or through the Tourist Information Center. Service prices must be clearly listed [4].

The Mekong Delta is a region with many cultural heritages with many unique regional characteristics, so the formation of agricultural and rural tourism products associated with regional and local brands will create destinations attractive, unique, diverse, and attractive... Therefore, France's experience in creating tourism models is closely combined with rural culture, exploiting rural products and forming brands, associated with farmers' brands, or Belgium's experience in promoting the initiative, creativity, and mastery of farmers in local tourism and exploitation activities. Maximize and effectively use the community's cultural heritage and agricultural products to form tourism products for visitors to experience and attract young workers to work in rural areas. and link. In addition, in the context of integration, globalization, and the scientific and technological revolution that is being promoted, international experience from the models of Korea, Japan, China... is what the tourism

industry The Mekong Delta calendar needs to consult, learn and find ways suitable to current conditions and realities.

3.3 Some solutions for agricultural and rural tourism development for the Mekong Delta region

Agricultural and rural tourism is a direction with great potential and room for development, suitable to the conditions and economic development orientation of many localities in the Mekong Delta region according to the economic growth model. On the basis of practical socio-economic development in recent times. In the current context of integration, globalization, and 4.0 technology taking place strongly, the Mekong Delta needs appropriate directions and solutions, thereby developing agricultural and rural tourism into an economic sector spearhead, ensuring livelihoods, helping farmers and rural residents master the process of agricultural and rural development, bringing agriculture to rapid and sustainable development. From arguments, analysis from practice and some experiences around the world, Vietnam needs to take specific measures such as:

Firstly, change thinking about how to do tourism, including agricultural and rural tourism in the direction of diversity in unity, gradually overcoming the situation of fragmentation, smallness and duplication of diversity in each step of products, destinations, regional characteristics, connection strategies and support. For agricultural and rural tourism to be effective, it must be unified from thinking to action (Phuong, et al., 2024) [8].

Second, develop a strategy to develop agricultural tourism in the Mekong Delta according to agricultural ecological zones

associated with the orientation of developing appropriate and unique types of agricultural tourism products for each locality. Combine the exploitation of OCOP products (one commune, one product - one product for each commune and ward) of localities to create tourism products that both promote and introduce local specialties to tourists, and contribute diversifying tourism products. This is an important condition and premise to restructure agricultural and rural tourism, and is the basis for regions and localities to develop tourism products associated with the countryside, attracting domestic and foreign tourists (Thin, et al., 2024) [9].

Third, develop rural tourism in a sustainable and inclusive direction in accordance with market needs on the basis of effective use, preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values, craft villages, and activities in agriculture and regionally specific ecological environment, associated with digital transformation and innovation. Each region and each locality when building, exploiting, and implementing rural tourism development needs to clearly define its tasks and goals in its development strategy. Rural tourism development must be associated with the New Rural Program and the Tourism Development Program in Rural Construction (Prime Minister, 2022), associated with regional development strategies and resolutions that the Party and State Issued [1].

Fourth, promulgate policies to support the linkage of input values of the agricultural industry and related industries to form a chain of links and cooperation to develop agricultural and rural tourism products such as developing Groups linking production, processing,

technology, consumption, production of goods and services to serve tourism consumption in rural areas while improving the effectiveness of promotion and connection of tourist destinations. calendar in a synchronous and harmonious manner. Use achievements of science and technology effectively in promoting and introducing rural tourism products (Phuong, et al., 2024) [7].

Fifth, focus on protecting resources and the tourism environment through raising awareness and actions for the environment of people and tourists. Promote the learning, exchange and learning of experiences in organizing activities and developing rural tourism from countries and localities to form agricultural and rural tourism models suitable to local conditions specifically. Simultaneously, pay attention to developing appropriate human resources, and training local human resources with knowledge, skills, foreign language proficiency, computer skills, and cultural understanding... to serve tourism activities local calendar (Loi, et al., 2024). [10].

4. CONCLUSION

Vietnam's Mekong Delta region has great potential in developing agricultural and rural tourism with rich and diverse resources, many beautiful landscapes, and historical relics. The culture is rich in national identity, the people are sociable and friendly and is a destination for many tourists. Therefore, developing tourism according to the agricultural and rural growth trend is really necessary and this is also a long-term orientation in the context of changing environmental conditions. The problem is that there needs to be a specific policy mechanism from the state to stimulate people's energy, to develop tourism according to the green growth

model associated with the community to become a sustainable development direction of Vietnamese tourism. According to experts, the development of agricultural and rural tourism is in line with the trend of the times, meeting the discovery needs of a large number of tourists. With its position as the region in the No. 1 food score of the country, known as the “rice granary”, “fruit granary”, and “shrimp and fish granary” of Vietnam (Dao Ngoc Canh, 2023) [6], Mekong Delta can orient the construction of agricultural and rural models to exploit their inherent potentials and strengths, and can immediately deploy them in different models and scales based on their inherent resources. Farmers are supported by preferential policies on loans, tax exemptions, etc. The experiences

and models of agricultural and rural tourism development of countries such as France, Japan, China, Korea, America, and Belgium will have useful reference value for the Mekong Delta region, especially in the context of integration, development, and competition from the current tourism market. Sustainably developing agricultural and rural tourism will open up new opportunities for the Mekong Delta region to develop a consumer market for goods from commercial activities, creating a driving force for socio-economic development and contributing to protecting the environment, preserving and restoring heritage values and cultural identities of the Mekong Delta to promote to the world the image of the country and people of the Mekong Delta.

REFERENCES

- [1] Prime Minister. (2022). *Decision 922/QĐ-TTg dated on 02//8/2022 approving the rural tourism development program in new rural construction for the period 2021 - 2025.*
- [2] Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. (2023). *Accelerating recovery - Accelerating development, National online conference on tourism in 2023.*
- [3] Nguyen Thi Thanh Nga, Phan Thi Ngan (2023). Rural tourism development, a case study on the impact of cultural factors on rural tourism in France. *Agricultural tourism towards sustainable development between economy, culture and environment in Ben Tre Province.*
- [4] Quang Dai Tuyen (2023). Tourism development in the world: Opportunities and challenges. *Agricultural tourism towards sustainable development between economy, culture and environment in Ben Tre Province.*
- [5] Huynh Bien (2023). *Mekong Delta: international tourists increase by 636% over the same period in 2022.* <https://www.mdta.com.vn/tin-tuc/dong-bang-song-cuu-long-travel-national-tang-636-so-voi-cung-ky-nam-2022.html>.
- [6] Dao Ngoc Canh (2023). *Exploiting potentials and advantages to develop agricultural tourism in the Mekong Delta.* <https://sdmd2045.ctu.edu.vn/van-de-noi-bat/%20Kinh-te-%20xa-hoi/135-opening-thac-tem-nang-loi-the-de-phat-trien-travel-lich-nong-nghiep-dong-bang-song-cuu-long>.
- [7] Phuong, N. T., Khoe, T. T., & Van, T. T. T. (2024). Legal Framework on Noise Pollution Management on SDG: Aqualitative Case Study in Vietnam. *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review*, 4(1), e02006-e02006

- [8] Phuong, N. T., Khoe, T. T., & Van, T. T. T. (2024). Law on environmental protection in tourist villages in the context of sustainable development of the tourism industry: A qualitative case study in Vietnam. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, 8(5), 672-680.
- [9] Thinh, D. Q., Phuong, N. T., Van, T. T. T., Huyen, D. T. N., Khoe, T. T., & Van Dinh, N. (2024). Protecting Consumer Rights in the Sharing Economy-Practice through the Airbnb Tourist Accommodation Sharing Model. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(6), 2133-2139.
- [10] Loi, N. T., Phuong, N. T., Khoe, T. T., Van, T. T. T., & Van Dinh, N. (2024). Factors Affecting Student Satisfaction With The Quality Of Training Services At The Department Of Tourism, Tay Do University. *Journal of Computational Analysis and Applications (JoCAAA)*, 33(08), 238-245.
- [11] Ha Thi Thu Thuy (2023). *Lessons for developing community tourism in localities*, <https://tapchicongthuong.vn/bai-hoc-phan-trien-du-lich-cong-dong-tai-cac-dia-phuong-107187.htm>.
- [12] Institute for Tourism Development Research. (2019). *Practical handbook for developing rural tourism in Vietnam*, http://itdr.org.vn/an_pham/cam-nang-thuc-tien-phan-trien-du-lich-nong-thon-viet-nam-3