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Infrastructural Support of Socio-Economic Development of Rural Territories of Ukraine

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Abstract. Rural territories of Ukraine are locked in a “circle of decline” by two mutually reinforcing trends: firstly, the lack of jobs and sustainable business activity, and secondly, the lack of positive changes in the service sector for the rural population. This is often conditioned upon the low development of infrastructural facilities. This causes the need to finance modern, efficient and environmentally friendly rural infrastructure, which will increase the comfort and quality of living, stop the outflow of the working-age population to cities, improve the demographic situation in rural areas, and contribute to the development of the rural economy. Therefore, the research is aimed at diagnosing the current state of infrastructure support for rural areas and finding effective tools to eliminate the causes of their socio-economic decline. The research methodology is based on the use of such general scientific research methods as economic analysis and synthesis in the interpretation of statistical data sets, comparison in determining dynamic changes in the socio-demographic characteristics of rural areas, logical method in making generalisations and conclusions, graphical and computational-constructive for constructing a Lorentz curve, etc. The essence, definition and types of infrastructure are established. The current level of socio-economic development of rural areas of Ukraine is clarified and its interdependence with infrastructure support is discovered. The level of transport, housing and communal services, medical, cultural and educational, trade, and business infrastructure development is described. The paper highlights the experience of stimulating rural development in the EU countries, in particular, outlines financial instruments and the scope of support and comprehensive assistance to rural businesses, environmental protection, competitiveness, and social integration. European investment funds and their role in the development of EU rural infrastructure are described

Keywords: infrastructure, rural communities, rural population, quality of life, demographic situation, financial instruments, European funds



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INTRODUCTION

Active processes of decentralisation in Ukraine have given new opportunities for the development of spatial organisation of economic systems, in particular rural areas. Rural communities can make their own decisions about their life support. Among the priorities are the restructuring of expensive inefficient services; the redistribution of available capital to the most problematic areas; focusing on a new type of partnership between the state, rural population, rural entrepreneurs, and other partners in rural development; the search for sources of financing for promising projects to reduce dependence on the state budget; the creation of decentralised funds for rural development, which communities manage independently; the development of diversified areas of rural entrepreneurship, etc. To set new mechanisms in motion and implement the best experience of such reforms, it is necessary to revive rural infrastructure, which would stop the negative processes of high mortality, depopulation, poverty, and migration of the working-age population to infrastructure-developed territories. In addition, the destroyed infrastructure of the village hinders investment processes and the development of new forms of rural entrepreneurship: organic production, green tourism, bio-energy, etc. The above makes it necessary to separately study the modern features of infrastructure support for rural areas.

A considerable part of scientific publications of Ukrainian and foreign scientists is devoted to the problems of infrastructure development in rural areas. Chinese researchers Q. Wu, X. Guan, J. Zhang, Y. Xu study the role of infrastructure in the development of agricultural production [1]. They focus on the impact of rural infrastructure on eco-friendly agriculture and reducing production costs of enterprises. In particular, the authors' reasoned relationships between irrigation infrastructure, poor-quality roads, and the cost of agricultural production deserve attention, which is proved by the quantile regression model [1]. I. Manggat, R. Zain and Z. Jamaluddin provide an in-depth analysis of literature sources on the impact of infrastructure and its relationship to the social well-being of rural communities [2]. The authors base their research on proving the importance of institutional support for rural development and the need for the functioning of social institutions. Among Russian scientists, of particular importance is the work of T.M. Yarkova, who studies the relationship between economic and social infrastructure and rural development [3]. Attention is focused on the considerable infrastructure impact on innovation and investment processes. In addition, as a result of the neglect of life-supporting infrastructure facilities, the demographic situation in Russian villages is deteriorating. Italian scientists E. Brovarone, G. Cotella study modern ways of reducing the distance between the socio-economic development of urban and rural settlements, prove the existence of the problem of social inequality and marginality [4]. They draw attention to the

problem of limited accessibility of remote rural communities to high-quality passenger transportation services and the need for effective institutional support for rural areas in Europe. It can also serve as an experience for Ukrainian transport infrastructure stakeholders.

The problem of infrastructure development is particularly acute in developing countries. Thus, an Indian researcher Nenavath Sreenu critically analyses the future challenges of developing India's rural health infrastructure, discussing the burden of disease, widespread financial shortages, vaccination policies, and poor access to health care [5].

This problem does not bypass Ukrainian scientists. Among the recent publications that have made a large contribution to the development of theoretical aspects and practical recommendations for infrastructure support in rural areas, it is advisable to highlight the works of D.S. Bohdanov, who raises the problem of the high capital intensity of infrastructure facilities and limited financial resources of rural communities for their development [6, p. 95]. He notes that important components of the implementation of rural areas infrastructure potential are improvement programmes (water supply, asphaltting, sewerage) with the support of public and private institutions; legislative regulation of the tax system simplification and the provision of benefits to business entities; improving the culture of peasants' living, and many others. O.V. Dovhal and L.S. Bezuhla identify barriers that hinder the effective functioning of the ecotourism infrastructure of the regions [7]. The authors propose a regional innovation model, the implementation of which will contribute to the growth of rural incomes, reduce unemployment, and develop small businesses in rural areas, which will be based on public-private partnership. M. Tymoshenko discloses scientific and theoretical foundations of the social infrastructure of a village and searches for the causes of its destruction in Ukraine [8, p. 134]. The researcher applies multifaceted correlation and regression models to determine the correlation between social factors that affect rural development. A rather exhaustive classification of rural social infrastructure facilities is appealing, depending on the impact on the professionalism and education of farmers, labour productivity, ensuring social and living conditions, living standards, and comfort of living. Attention should be paid to the results of research by O.M. Shubalyi, who carries out a deep comparative analysis of urban and rural housing infrastructure (housing stock, its accident rate, equipment with sewerage, heating, hot water supply, water supply, etc.) and transport [9].

After conducting a literary analysis of these and many other papers, the authors came to the conclusion that Ukrainian literature does not sufficiently cover current problems of infrastructure support of rural areas.

The purpose of the paper is to clarify theoretical and methodological approaches to the development of

infrastructure and evaluates the state, features of functioning and availability of infrastructure facilities in rural areas of Ukraine as an area of their socio-economic development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the research is based on the identification, clarification and use of the framework of categories of research problems, in particular “infrastructure”, “rural territories”, “socio-economic development”, which allowed identifying their essential aspects and properties, find the main patterns of functioning, and establish the relationship between them. The course of the research consists of principles that also form its methodology: assumptions – the construction of a working hypothesis, its proof or refutation; the opposition of processes that contradict each other; objectivity and logic of judgments; quantity, which turns into quality and thus increases the standard of living of the population in a certain territory; continuity of development and variability of socio-economic processes, etc.

The working hypothesis consists in suggesting that the proper development of rural infrastructure will contribute to the socio-economic growth of the rural population. To test the hypothesis, an economic analysis of the results was applied.

In addition to categories and principles, the methodology of the research is formed by a system of certain research methods. The dialectical method of cognition in combination with logical and comparative methods allowed establishing the truth in the scientific discussion about the concept and significance of infrastructure in the socio-economic development of a particular community. The paper uses general scientific methods: induction and deduction in reasoning about the cause-and-effect ties between modern trends in infrastructure support and the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas; scientific abstraction and concretisation in identifying the most important problems of infrastructure support in rural areas, system analysis in establishing structural links between various elements of infrastructure support in rural areas and establishing the sequence of research process, reductionism and wholism in explaining the regularity of functioning of the socio-economic system “rural territory – community” and demographic processes and characteristics that arise in it, etc. Statistical methods of comparison in determining dynamic changes in the demographic characteristics of the rural population of Ukraine for 1990-2020, the average monthly salary by type of economic activity, differentiation of the standard of living of the population, providing social and commercial infrastructure of the rural population with objects are of great importance in establishing individual facts and proving their impact on rural development. The reception of mean values is applied in the calculation of

indicators of infrastructure support for rural territories of Ukraine in general and on the example of the Zhytomyr region in particular. Graphic methods are used to visually represent the results of the study: diagrams, figures, tables.

The main data sources are materials from the state statistics service of Ukraine and the Main Department of Statistics in Zhytomyr region. In particular, the sections of demographic and social statistics [10] are of interest, such as: “Population and migration”, which highlights arrays of initial data on demographic processes and phenomena; “Labour market” contains information about employment, unemployment and earnings of the population of Ukraine in various industries and territories; “Income and living conditions” provides an opportunity for in-depth research of the causes of deterioration in the socio-economic development of the rural population. Materials of a sample survey of Ukrainian households on living conditions and the level of their material support, conducted by the department of household surveys of the State Statistics Service through a survey in January 2021 became significant in clarifying the arguments of negative dynamic processes in rural areas [11]. In addition, to evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the rural population with the level of development of individual social infrastructure facilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, statistical materials such as “Access of Ukrainian households to the Internet” [12], “Self-assessment of the population’s health status and availability of certain types of medical care” [13], and others were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Identification of the infrastructure entity as an economic category

The provision of rural infrastructure usually consists of relatively small investments over a geographically large area. Having appropriate management tools and considerable resource potential (large land areas, free labour resources, entrepreneurial initiatives), local authorities have the opportunity to plan and control the functioning of rural infrastructure [14]. In general, rural development is considered necessary to reduce differentiation at the social, economic and cultural levels between regions. The developed infrastructure is designed to improve the quality of life, thereby solving the problem of migration to the city in search of a comfortable life [15]; create the necessary auxiliary production for agriculture, ensure equal involvement of rural entrepreneurship in market relations. Investing in rural infrastructure will provide long-term competitive advantages and a reliable basis for community development [16].

The origin of the term “infrastructure” itself is well known from the Latin words “infra” – below and “structura” – structure [17], but its practical application is found primarily in construction as the basis, the foundation of a building. In addition, it is associated with

“...military sphere as a complex of structures, communications that ensured the success of military operations (training grounds, sites, airfields, radar posts, etc.), and supported the defence capability of the state in peacetime” [18]. Modern interpretations and the scope of the term have changed and expanded. It has penetrated all spheres of society. Referring to the Cambridge Dictionary, infrastructure is interpreted as a system of transport and energy supply services that a country or organisation uses for efficient operation [19]. A similar definition is given in the Oxford Dictionary – “basic physical and organisational structures (for example, buildings, roads, power supply) necessary for the functioning of a society or enterprise” [20]. In the Dutch dictionary, infrastructure is defined as a system of roads,

railways, waterways, ports, airports, electrical equipment, cables, etc. [21], but in fact, it provides the same function – traffic. When studying infrastructure, most often scientists use objects of the transport system, which are certainly the elements of infrastructure support, but such a list is far from complete. A broader interpretation of this category is provided by World Bank experts, who vary it from railway lines and electricity consumption to internet subscribers and daily newspapers [22]. The contradictions of previous visions of the essence of infrastructure consist in an incomplete list of its objects that limit its functional purpose. Thus, for example, infrastructure as a category, should perform social, organisational and economic functions in addition to the function of movement (Fig. 1).

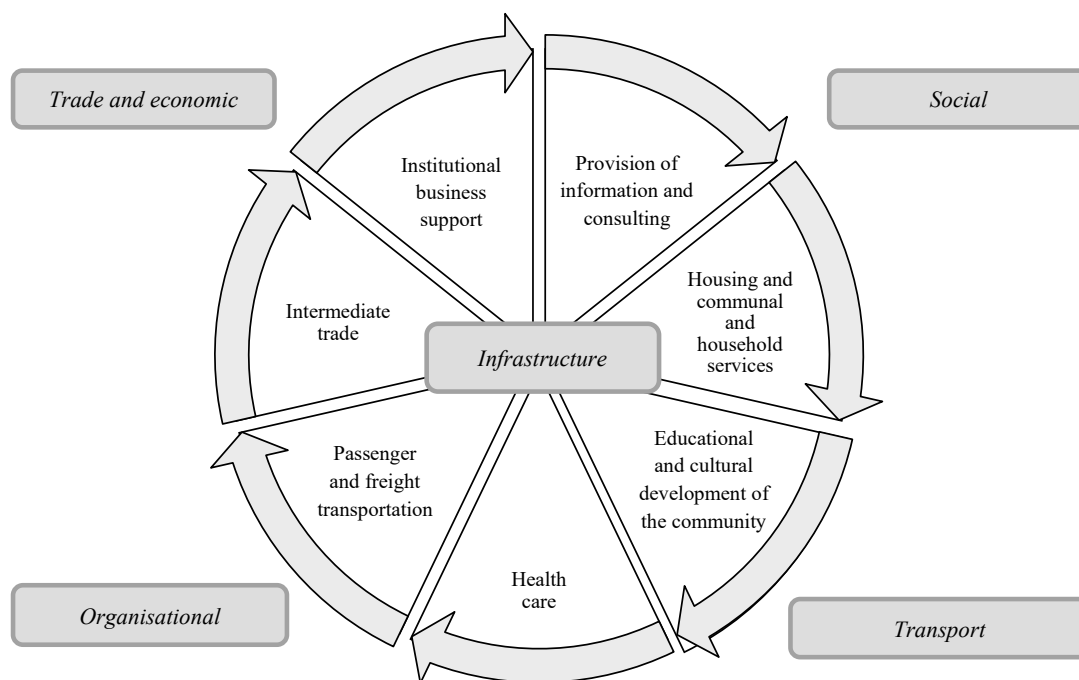


Figure 1. Infrastructure functions depending on the scope of operation

Source: developed by the author

In particular, infrastructure should include objects that perform social functions, such as hospitals, schools, cultural and artistic institutions, public buildings. It is also advisable to include objects that perform market functions and serve the development of entrepreneurship (exchanges, service cooperatives, fairs, exhibitions). In addition, if the infrastructure has the function of an auxiliary basis of society, this should include objects of financial and credit services (banks, insurance companies, credit unions) and information and advisory centres that help with entrepreneurship, financing, employment, education, advanced training, retraining, etc. This list is not complete and depends on the object of research. Gustav Nemes divides the concept of infrastructure into three categories: physical, economic and

political [23]. Physical infrastructure consists of buildings and structures for residential, transport, commercial, and social purposes. The infrastructure that mediates the movement of money, information and labour is considered economic. Finally, the political infrastructure serves the functioning of state and public institutions, as well as contributes to the development of effective partnerships between all participants of economic activity: society, investors, state and local self-government bodies. Thus, infrastructure is a whole system of physical objects and organisational and economic processes, consisting of subsystems designed to ensure the life of business, comfortable life of the population, its way of life, cultural development, health and amenity (Fig. 2).

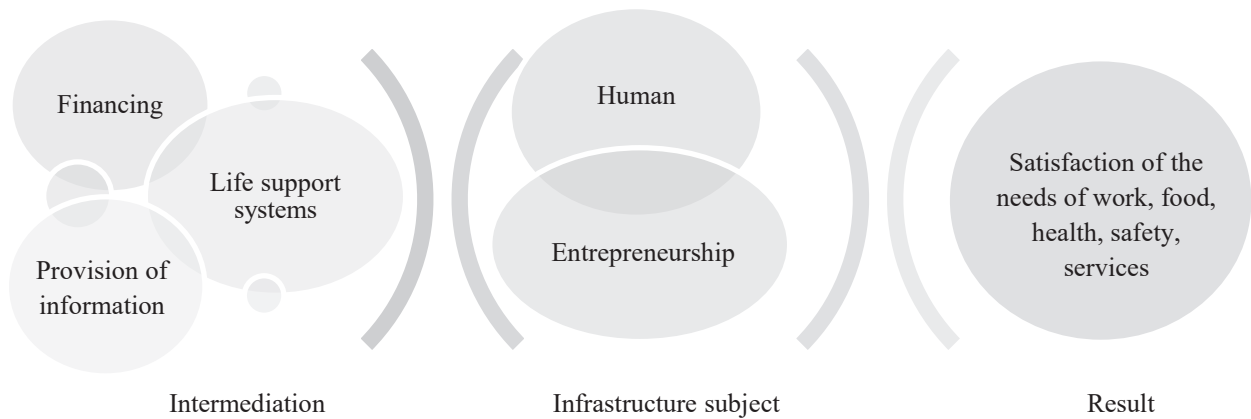


Figure 2. Infrastructure functioning process

Source: developed by the author

Infrastructure can include a fairly wide list of objects that are difficult to limit: road and railway systems, tunnels and bridges; ports, airports, waterways, and channels; public transport systems (buses, trolleybuses, metro); energy facilities (wind, hydroelectric, power plants, etc.); national power grid (power lines and connections); communication (telephone cables, mobile communication

towers, Internet); water supply (reservoirs, dams, pumping stations); medical services, hospitals, clinics, and emergency response systems; education (kindergartens, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions for adults); police and prisons; waste removal and disposal, sanitary conditions. Therewith, all infrastructural facilities can be systematised in the following way (Fig. 3).

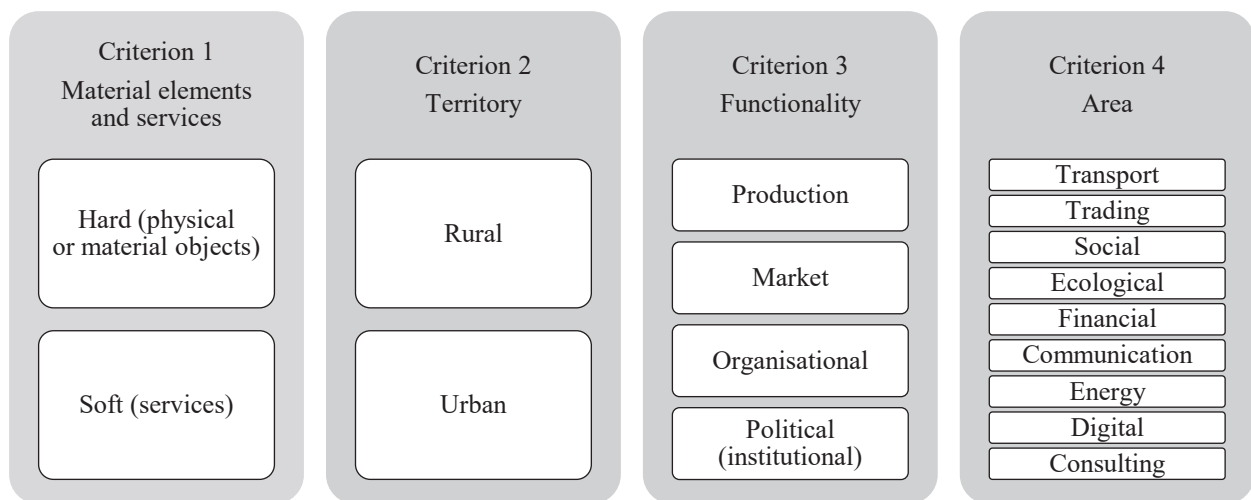


Figure 3. Classification of the main types of infrastructure by criteria

Source: compiled by the author

There are many types of infrastructure, but for the most part, it is divided into two classes: hard and soft [24]. The first one is defined as the physical (material) vector of auxiliary production necessary for the functioning of the economy. The second one applies to all institutions that provide cultural, social, medical, environmental, and economic services in the country and consists of educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, emergency services, parks, recreation centres, etc. From a functional standpoint, the production infrastructure creates conditions for the implementation of the production process (workshops, warehouses); the market promotes the distribution and sale of goods and services; the political

infrastructure provides institutional support for the comprehensive development of the rural community (development of strategies, plans, financial measures); the organisational infrastructure helps to combine all the necessary processes and provide them with systemic unity. Urban and rural infrastructure are distinguished by territorial features.

Current level of socio-economic development of rural areas of Ukraine

In Ukraine, after the shocks of the global financial crisis, economic reforms, political instability, and social tension, there is a destabilisation of territorial development. The

situation is complicated by the military conflict in the east of the country, the annexation of Crimea, and the global COVID-19 pandemic. For many years, rural areas have experienced depopulation, population ageing, migration of mostly young people to cities and abroad, lack of jobs and investment. The rural settlement network and the revival of rural infrastructure need to be considered and refined.

Infrastructure development of rural areas has not been given due attention since the development of independence, which, along with other factors, has led to a demographic crisis (a decrease in birth rates, an increase in morbidity and mortality of the population) (Table 1), low standard of living, labour migration of capable rural residents to European countries (Poland, Italy, Germany, etc.).

Table 1. Main demographic characteristics of the rural population of Ukraine

Indicator	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2020 to 1990, +, -, %
Rural population, million people	17.0	16.6	16.1	15.3	14.4	13.3	12.8	-4.2
Share of the rural population in the total population, %	32.7	32.1	32.6	32.3	31.4	30.1	30.5	-2.2
Birth rate, %	12.6	11.1	9.2	9.4	11.9	11.3	8.5	-4.1
Mortality rate, %	17.2	19.1	18.8	20.5	18.6	18.0	17.2	0
including children under 1 year old	13.9	14.7	11.9	10.0	9.1	7.8	7.0	-6.9
Natural growth rate (reduction)	-4.6	-8.0	-9.6	-11.1	-6.7	-6.7	-8.7	-4.1
Average life expectancy at birth, years	68.5	66.8	67.4	66.9	69.0	69.9	70.7	2.2
Migration growth (reduction), thousand people	1.5	-2.6	-2.7	-5.1	-5.2	+11.9	-21.2	-19.7
Demographic burden per 1 thousand population aged 15-64 years.	507	517	465	445	425	443	480	-27

Source: developed according to the state statistics service of Ukraine [10; 25]

The most urbanised regions in Ukraine are the eastern regions, where at the beginning of 2021 the share of the urban population was [25]: Donetsk region – 91%, Luhansk – 87%, Dnipropetrovsk – 84%, Zaporizhzhia – 77%. A large share of the rural population is observed in the western part of Ukraine. Thus, the share of people living in cities is: Transcarpathian – 63%, Chernivtsi – 59%, Ivano-Frankivsk – 56%, Rivne – 52%. In 2020, the worst situation in terms of natural population decline was observed in rural areas of Chernihiv region – -19.7%, as well as Sumy – -14.5%, Cherkasy and Khmelnytsky regions – -13.6% each. The highest mortality rate of the rural population was recorded from diseases of the circulatory system – 70.4%, in second place – from malignant neoplasms – 11%. Compared to European countries, Ukraine has a low life expectancy.

For example, this figure for men in Ukraine is 66.7 years, while in the EU countries it is about 80 years.

The assessment of interstate migration [25] shows that the largest number of rural residents who left for Europe is 46%, in particular to Russia – 27%, to Germany – 19%. A considerable part goes to Belarus, Poland and Lithuania (8% on average). Asian countries are in second place – 30%. 17% of the population of Ukraine left for the United States. The main reason for population migration is the search for work, higher wages, and the desire for better conditions and quality of life. Official data of the statistical service indicate a low level of income of the population in all sectors of economic activity (Table 2). In 2020, the average monthly salary of 1 full-time employee was 430.50 US dollars.

Table 2. Average monthly salary in Ukraine by type of economic activity, USD per 1 full-time employee

Type of economic activity	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 in % to 2015
On average in the economy	192.0	202.46	267.07	325.92	406.86	430.5	335.1
Agriculture and forestry	151.51	163.87	227.71	277.83	343.26	362.7	239.4
Production	219.28	230.55	286.88	354.15	456.90	474.3	162.4
Construction	162.59	184.80	235.00	288.42	362.64	365.5	224.7
Trading	214.84	226.88	286.88	345.74	418.41	419.5	195.3
Transport activities	208.61	225.63	296.35	368.01	455.58	444.2	219.9
Information and telecommunications	325.60	372.27	451.80	524.85	679.96	739.3	227.0
Financial and insurance activities	393.91	399.49	483.65	594.15	741.55	757.5	192.3
Education	143.41	147.23	220.19	258.86	315.31	344.6	240.3
Healthcare	129.53	132.81	187.11	215.18	272.09	328.9	253.9
Art, sports, recreation, entertainment	189.29	189.22	248.42	279.85	337.02	357.7	188.9

Source: developed by the authors according to the NBU [26] and the state statistics service of Ukraine [27]

According to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, in 2020, the average European received 2,073 dollars for a month [26], while a Ukrainian received 430 dollars, which is 4.8 times less. The lowest level of average monthly wages is conventionally recorded in the healthcare sector – 3 328.9 dollars/month; education – 344.6 dollars/month;

culture, sports, entertainment and recreation – 357.7 dollars/month; agriculture – 362.7 dollars/month, which indicates the lack of an effective social policy in the country. The Lorenz curve illustrates the differentiation of the well-being level of the population (Fig. 4).

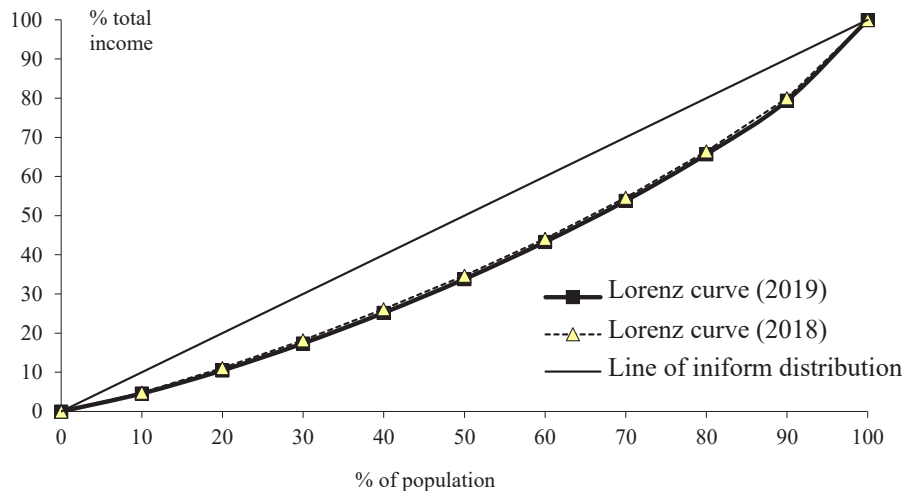


Figure 4. Inequality of distribution of total income by decile (10%) groups of the population of Ukraine in 2018-2019
Source: developed according to the state statistics service of Ukraine [28]

Since the line of the actual income distribution of decile groups deviates considerably from the line of uniform distribution, a large gap in the highest incomes of the 10% of the poorest population and the lowest incomes of the 10% of the richest population can be noted.

Negative trends can be traced in the structure of total household expenditures in rural areas, where the largest share belongs to food expenditures – 50.7% in 2019 and 41.6% in 2021; housing, water, electricity, and fuel costs account for 12%; another 12.6% – clothing, medicines and transport services. Spending on recreation and cultural development is quite low and continues to decrease from 2.6% in 2019 to 0.7% in 2021 [29]. In addition, food insecurity is observed in the most vulnerable population of the 1st decile group with the lowest incomes. In 2021, one person accounted for 3.7 kg of meat and meat products consumed, 1.1 kg of fish, 2.5 kg of fruit, which is half the recommended medical standards [29]. Although Ukraine almost completely provides itself with food, there is an under-consumption of animal food by its inhabitants. A Ukrainian is forced to

compensate for the lack of animal proteins with potatoes, vegetables, bread, butter, which violates a healthy diet.

According to calculations made by M.V. Ptoukha Institute of Demography and Social Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the level of relative poverty is growing due to the coronavirus crisis and amounts to 51% in 2020. The poverty line reached the level of 3017 UAH on average per person per month and increased by 15% [30]. At the same time, data from the State Statistics Committee's report on a sociological study conducted on household self-assessment of their income level in 2020 shows that 67.1% of the population consider themselves poor [11].

The share of poor people among rural households was 31%, compared with urban households – 16%, among households with children – 29% (including 60% of poor large households). In 2020, the population with an average equivalent total income per capita per month below the actual subsistence level was 8.8 million people (Table 3).

Table 3. Differentiation of the standard of living of the population of Ukraine

Indicator	2014	2015	2020	2020 to 2010, +/-
Population with average equivalent total income per capita per month below the legally established subsistence minimum, million people	3.6	2.5	0.6	-3.0
% of the total population	8.6	6.4	1.6	-7.0
Population with average equivalent total income per capita per month below the actual subsistence level, million people	-	20.2	8.8	-
% of the total population	-	51.9	23.2	-
Average annual amount of the legally established subsistence minimum (on average per person per month), UAH	843.2	1227.3	2078.4	1235.2
Average annual amount of the actual subsistence minimum (on average per person per month, UAH)	-	2257.0	3847.2	-
Quintile coefficient of differentiation of total incomes of the population, times	1.9	1.9	2.0	0.1
Quintile ratio of funds (by total income), times	3.5	3.2	3.5	-

Source: developed according to the data [31]

Almost every fourth person in Ukrainian society has an income below the actual subsistence level. Such indicators show a low level of social and economic development of Ukraine, cultural degradation of Ukrainian peasants, and the need to survive in difficult conditions.

Infrastructure support for rural areas of Ukraine

The deterioration of demographic characteristics associated with the low level of socio-economic development of rural areas is aggravated by the unsatisfactory situation of social and industrial infrastructure. This is indicated by argumentative factors. Firstly, rural transport infrastructure ensures the mobility of labour resources and promotes access of the population to services that are not available in rural areas, and farmers to the necessary material and technical resources, logistics of raw materials and finished products. By improving transport links (the presence of paved roads and transport itself), rural areas become investment attractive. A sample survey conducted in January 2020 established that 23% of rural areas do not have regular daily transport links with infrastructure-developed localities [11]. According to a sample survey [11], a significant proportion of households are not provided with housing. The living area of 29% of rural households is below the sanitary norm (13.65 m² per person). Every second person lived in overcrowded housing. 20% of households have poor living conditions: 10.8% of rural homes have leaking roofs, wet walls, rotting window frames or floors; 30.5% have low residential temperatures during the heating period, which leads to an increase in colds, especially among children, and increases the cost of treatment. For comparison, in the EU countries in 2020, the same indicator was 7.3%.

A positive trend is observed in the prevalence, availability and free use of mobile communication and internet services, which is especially important in the context of informatisation, digitalisation and distance learning. In rural areas, the share of people with internet access increased from 40% to 66% during the coronavirus crisis, mainly due to households with children (79% of people used the Internet) [12]. 34% of the rural population does not have internet services, the main reasons are no need, lack of knowledge, poor health, and high cost of services.

The rural water supply system affects the provision of drinking water to the population and water-intensive types of production, in particular agriculture and private

farming. Despite the dense network of rivers in Ukraine, not all localities have a centralised water supply, which forces farmers to independently build wells, pumping stations, and irrigation systems, which creates additional pressure on the expenditure side of the limited budget. According to the state statistics service, 27.6% of the rural population suffers from the lack of water supply in housing, and therefore 32.7% do not have a bathroom or shower room inside the housing [32].

Medical infrastructure serves to prevent and treat diseases. Ukraine has an extremely low level of medical support. There are not enough outpatient clinics, beds, pharmacies, and qualified medical personnel. According to a survey conducted in October 2020 [13], the level of availability of healthcare services and the purchase of pharmaceutical products has improved compared to 2019. Among the households surveyed, almost one in five reported that it was impossible to receive medical care if necessary, which is 1.3 times less than in 2019, and to purchase the necessary medicines. Therewith, there is a problem of provision of medical personnel in rural areas: 35% of households did not receive medical care if necessary; 42% of sick rural families did not have the opportunity to visit a doctor, 30% of them explained this by the lack of a medical specialist of the necessary profile [13]. In addition, 39% of rural areas are not provided with emergency medical care.

In rural areas in Ukraine, the sphere of public utilities remains problematic, in particular, the high cost of electricity and gas and the lack of autonomous thermal power plants from alternative sources lead to high dependence on intermediary structures and an increase in the energy intensity of production. In the structure of expenditures of the rural population, payment for housing, utilities and services increased by 1% over two years and amounted to 9% or 797 UAH per month. Therewith, the cost of services is growing annually: water supply – by 18.4%, sewerage – by 20%, supply and consumption of natural gas – by 2.6%, heating – by 18.3%, compared to 2019 [33]. As a result of such processes, 18.3% of rural households are unable to pay their gas, water and supply bills on time and in full. The presence of household communications as a source of comfortable living is indicated by the data in Table 4. In particular, the differentiation between urban and rural areas in providing water supply, sewerage, and centralised gas supply is illustrated.

Table 4. Comfort of housing for Ukrainian households and the degree of its satisfaction in 2020

Indicator	All households		Including residents					
	2019	2020	Of cities			Of villages		
			Large	Small	Total		2019	2020
					2020			
Number of households, thousand units	14881.7	14784.3	5852.0	4150.2	10037.5	10002.2	4844.2	4782.1

Table 4, Continued

Indicator	All households		Including residents					
	2019	2020	Of cities				Of villages	
			Large	Small	Total		2019	2020
					2020			
Distribution of households by availability in their housing, %:								
Central heating system	36.4	35.6	73.7	22.9	53.7	52.6	0.5	0.1
Individual heating system	45.2	48.0	24.5	65.1	39.1	41.3	58.0	61.8
Water supply system	82.9	85.6	98.9	90.9	94.2	95.6	59.5	64.9
Sewers	82.3	85.2	98.8	90.3	93.7	95.3	58.8	64.2
Hot water supply	46.9	52.6	78.6	44.3	59.4	64.4	21.0	27.9
Electric boiler	1.3	1.4	0.9	2.0	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3
Double-circuit gas boiler	19.6	23.9	15.4	34.6	19.4	23.4	19.9	25.0
Solid fuel boiler	7.8	8.4	1.1	8.6	4.6	4.2	14.5	17.0
Electric water heater	32.7	36.8	36.5	39.2	32.8	37.7	32.6	34.9
Gas-fired water heater	11.7	10.3	10.8	13.4	14.2	11.9	6.4	7.1
Centralised gas supply	78.8	80.5	90.1	85.2	87.6	88.1	60.6	64.6
Bottled gas	11.2	10.3	0.4	6.3	2.8	2.8	28.6	25.9
Electric stove	5.4	5.6	8.9	4.3	6.9	7.0	2.4	2.7
Bath or shower	79.1	82.3	98.0	85.9	91.3	93.0	54.0	59.8
Telephone	14.4	8.3	12.3	7.2	17.7	10.2	7.5	4.3
Garbage chute	12.3	13.3	29.9	5.2	18.3	19.6	0.0	0.2
Distribution of households by a degree of satisfaction with their housing conditions, %:								
Very dissatisfied	2.9	2.9	1.9	2.9	2.1	2.3	4.6	4.1
Dissatisfied	11.7	10.5	7.6	9.6	9.9	8.5	15.3	14.8
Not much satisfied	30.4	26.9	23.3	28.1	28.3	25.3	34.6	30.2
Satisfied	52.9	57.6	64.5	58.1	57.3	61.8	43.8	48.9
Very satisfied	2.1	2.1	2.7	1.3	2.4	2.1	1.7	2.0

Source: developed by the author based on data [32]

The lack of infrastructure for centralised processes of collection, sorting and disposal of economic waste, as well as sewage systems, considerably worsens the quality of life of the rural population. Thus, 38% of the surveyed population in 2020 did not have a toilet inside their home (for example, 45.7% in 2017) [32]. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in environmental infrastructure facilities: sewers, drains, specialised transport, sorting stations and waste processing plants, etc. In addition, part of the organic waste of agriculture, forestry and public utilities is the potential of bioenergy, which in developed countries of the world is a strategic area of energy conservation. This problem sets Ukraine apart from the prospects of a civilised European country for many decades.

Negative demographic processes in rural areas have exacerbated the problems of preschool and school education. Rural schools and kindergartens are being closed and the staff of such infrastructure facilities is being reduced due to the extremely small amount of children in classes and groups. In the village, there is often a 1st graduating class where up to 10 children study. There are often cases when a family that has children moves to a city where there are necessary educational infrastructure facilities. The net rate of pre-school coverage of children in rural areas is 29.3%. For comparison, this indicator was 24.0% in 2010 [34]. 7.6% of the surveyed population do not have money to pay for any professional education (Table 5).

Table 5. Dynamics of infrastructure provision of preschool education in Ukraine

Indicator	2014	2015	2020	2020 to 2010, %
A number of pre-school educational institutions, thousand units	8.5	9.1	9.2	108.2
Places in total	315	333	343	108.9
Kindergartens	124	135	135	108.9
Nurseries-kindergartens	152	128	127	83.6
Others	38	70	80	210.5
Number of children in institutions, thousand people	247	310	266	107.7
The level of pre-school education institutions' coverage of children of different age groups, %	33	40	39	118.2
Number of children in pre-school institutions per 100 places	82	87	73	89.0

Source: developed according to the data [34; 35]

Due to the optimisation of general secondary educational institutions, the number of kindergartens in rural areas is also decreasing. The primary reasons for closing preschool institutions are the lack of a sufficient number of preschool-age children and, most importantly, the lack of funding. In addition, starting from 2027, a three-year senior specialised school will start operating, which provides for the creation of specialised lyceums. This will require appropriate transport infrastructure to ensure access to education for children from remote rural areas with a small population to educational institutions (gymnasiums, lyceums) of other communities. In 2020, the fleet of buses that transport students consists

of 276 units, of which 186 buses meet the technical requirements of DSTU 7013:2009, and the additional need for them is 40 new ones [36].

The full value of life in rural areas is provided by such less important but necessary service facilities as hairdressers, dry cleaners, workshops for tailoring clothes and shoes and repairing household appliances. According to the results of the study, these infrastructure facilities are not available at all in 50% of localities. Considerable potential for economic growth in rural areas now lies in the trade infrastructure as the most profitable area (Table 6).

Table 6. Profitability of operating activities of infrastructure entities in Ukraine in 2020, %

Type of economic activity	Ukraine	Zhytomyr region
Total	3.9	7.2
Construction	2.0	3.7
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	16.2	11.8
Transport, warehousing, postal and courier services	-0.4	-6.1
Temporary accommodation and catering services	-12.7	-4.5
Information and telecommunications	24.2	4.6
Financial and insurance activities	5.8	2.6
Real estate transactions	-7.7	-14.7
Professional, scientific and technical activities	-7.8	6.1
Administrative and support services activities	2.5	-5.1
Education	-7.5	3.1
Health and social assistance	7.6	15.7
Arts, sports, entertainment and recreation	-40.6	-6.3
Provision of other types of services	-8.2	-2.2

Source: developed according to the state statistics service of Ukraine and the Main Department of Statistics in Zhytomyr region [37; 38]

Enterprises of wholesale and retail trade, information and telecommunications, financial and insurance activities, healthcare are profitable in 2020. Therewith, social infrastructure entities are the most vulnerable to negative processes in the country, whose operating

profitability was -40.6%. These include art, sports, entertainment and recreation. Transport and warehouse facilities, postal and courier activities, as well as public catering remain unprofitable. The availability of a network of retail enterprises in rural areas is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Network of retail enterprises in rural areas of Ukraine, as of 01.01.2020

Indicator	Value
Retail items in total, units	7429
Including stores	6168
Stands	101
Gas stations	1160
Retail area of retail stores, thousand m ²	7030.8
Including in urban-type settlements	6436.0
In rural areas	594.8
Availability of retail space, per 10000 people, m ²	1659
Including in urban-type settlements	2191
In rural areas	457
Network of pharmacies and pharmacy points, units	1385
Including pharmacies	901
Pharmacy points	484
Retail area of pharmacies and pharmacy points, thousand m ²	619.2
Provision of the population with retail space of pharmacies and pharmacy points, per 10000 people, m ²	338

Source: developed according to the data [39]

The programme “Development of rural territories and territories around the cities of the region” [40] also provides for the creation of regional wholesale markets, which will contribute to the development of the entrepreneurial potential of rural territories. The development of information and advisory infrastructure in rural areas is of great importance in creating a favourable environment for ensuring entrepreneurial potential in the context of digitalisation. Public associations designed to promote and comprehensively support entrepreneurship are the most common in Zhytomyr region, in particular in rural areas. In total, according to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, as of 1.01.2020, Zhytomyr region has 2 business centres, 1 business incubator, 2 technoparks, 4 leasing centres, 2 entrepreneurship support funds, 7 investment funds and companies, 8 innovation funds and companies, 257 information and advisory institutions, 112 public associations of entrepreneurs, 29 coordination councils [41]. Analytical studies show that in 2019, the region hosted 338 training seminars and trainings on entrepreneurship, 50 forums, round tables and conferences, which were attended by approximately 4200 people. As a result of this work, 41324 regional orders were made, 13 business projects were financed [40; 41].

European experience of rural infrastructure growth

Infrastructure support of rural areas is the main vector of rural development not only in Ukraine but also worldwide. The implementation of positive experience of the national policy on the development of rural communities of the European community on the territory of Ukraine is of considerable importance. The main financial instrument for the development of the European economy is the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) [42]: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) (Fig. 5). The European Commission allocates the budget of the five funds to EU member states, which, for their part, use ESIF resources through operational programmes managed at the national and/or regional level by designated governing bodies. Thus, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for 2017-2020 has developed a system of programmes, financing, monitoring, and audit aimed at achieving the main vectors of rural development [43]: competitiveness of rural business, environmental protection, economic diversification, which is a powerful foundation for the growth of the quality and standard of living of the rural population.

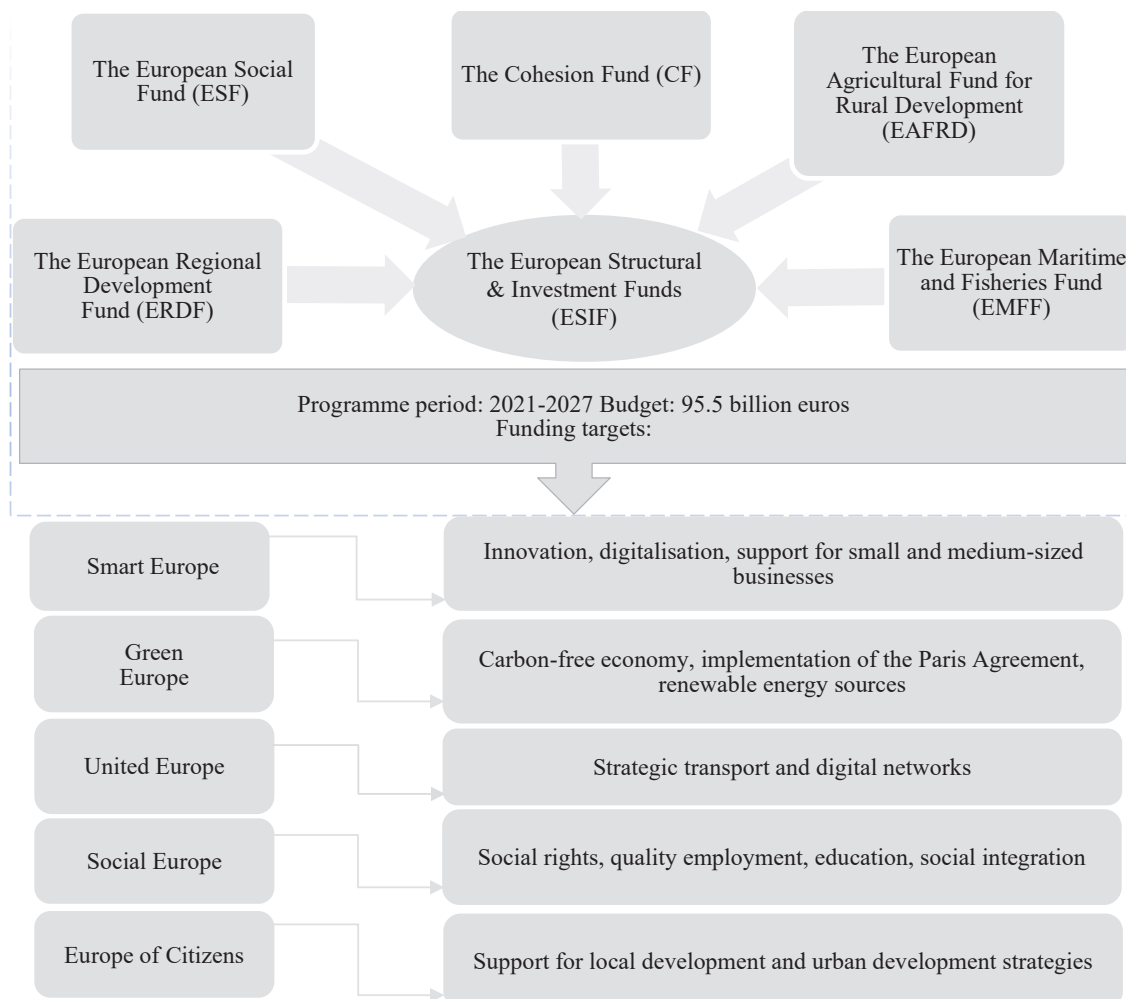


Figure 5. EU rural infrastructure development funds

Source: developed by the authors according to the data [42]

CONCLUSIONS

The priority areas or so-called “areas of attention” of financing in the rural development programmes of European countries were: restoration and preservation of ecosystems – 44%, competitiveness of agriculture – 20%, social integration, economic development and poverty eradication – 15%. The next programme period started in 2021 and will end in 2027 and has the following priority funding vectors: Smart Europe, Green Europe, United Europe, Social Europe, Citizens' Europe. The amount of funding for rural development projects for 2021-2027 is 95.5 billion euros [44].

CEF is a key EU financing tool designed specifically for direct investment in European transport, energy and digital infrastructure to address weaknesses and bottlenecks. Financial support is provided to priority projects. The instrument's budget is 30.4 billion euros (22.4 billion euros for transport, 4.7 billion euros for energy, and 0.3 billion euros for telecommunications) [45]. EFSI was created to encourage investment in the EU-28, which contribute to economic growth in rural areas and employment, in particular in infrastructure and innovation, in the amount of 16 billion euros from the EU budget and 5 billion euros from small and medium-sized enterprises.

The European Commission aims to support rural initiatives not only in EU member states. Much attention is also paid to developing countries. On 28.01.2020, an agreement was signed between the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission on financing the event “EU support for the development of agriculture and small farms in Ukraine” [46], with a total estimated cost of 26 million euros with an implementation period of 108 months. The main purpose of the event was to promote the development of an inclusive, competitive agricultural sector and fight against the impoverishment and depopulation of rural areas of Ukraine.

Therefore, the attention is being paid to rural development and it has the potential for revival, in particular due to financing from European funds. The only condition for such assistance should be transparency and targeted use of funds, as well as the absence of corruption schemes.

1. Infrastructure is a set of enterprises, institutions, organisations, and individuals that provide favourable and comfortable living conditions for people both in the sphere of economic activity and in everyday life. Infrastructure support for rural areas of Ukraine is marked by negative dynamic changes due to the structural crisis of the economy, anti-terrorist operations of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, the complication of doing business, changes in living conditions, and the implementation of work activities of people in the context of a pandemic.

2. The establishment, development and self-fulfilment of people in rural areas is influenced by a number of factors: the specific features of the organisation of a rural family's life, the features of small educational institutions, the settlement network, limited access to institutions of high-quality education, health, communal-housing, sanitary-hygienic, sports, cultural, household, transport, trade services.

3. Problematic areas of infrastructure support for rural areas are: poor quality of roads and transport links; lack of central communications and sanitary facilities, abandoned educational infrastructure; underdeveloped health infrastructure.

4. To achieve socio-economic growth and reduce poverty in the country, it is advisable to implement positive European experience. The main financial instruments for supporting and stimulating rural development of the European Union are 5 investment funds of the European Commission, in particular: the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. Financing is provided in the amounts that correspond to the priority of the development programme. The amount of funding for rural development projects in the EU member states for 2021-2027 is 95.5 billion euros.

5. Positive effects of rural infrastructure development will include: rural business development; reduction of regional inequality, increase in investment in the region, creation of jobs, diversification of the rural economy, and increase in the level of citizens' mobility.

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Інфраструктурне забезпечення соціально-економічного розвитку сільських територій України

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Анотація. Сільські території України замкнені в «коло занепаду» двома взаємопідсилюючими тенденціями: по-перше, нестачею робочих місць і стійкої ділової активності, по-друге, відсутністю позитивних змін у сфері послуг для сільського населення. Часто це відбувається через низький розвиток об'єктів інфраструктури. Означене викликає потребу фінансування сучасної, ефективної та екологічно чистої сільської інфраструктури, що підвищить комфортність та якість проживання, зупинить відтік працездатного населення до міст, поліпшить демографічну ситуацію в селі, сприятиме розвитку сільської економіки. Відтак проведені дослідження направлені на діагностування сучасного стану інфраструктурного забезпечення сільських територій і пошук ефективних інструментів усунення причин їхнього соціально-економічного занепаду. Методика дослідження ґрунтується на застосуванні загальнонаукових методів дослідження, таких як економічний аналіз і синтез в інтерпретуванні статистичних масивів даних, порівняння у визначенні динамічних змін соціально-демографічних характеристик сільських територій, логічний у здійсненні узагальнень і висновків, графічний і розрахунково-конструктивний для побудови кривої Лоренца тощо. Встановлено сутність, значення, типи інфраструктури. З'ясовано сучасний рівень соціально-економічного розвитку сільських територій України та виявлено його взаємозалежність з інфраструктурним забезпеченням. Охарактеризовано рівень розвитку транспортної, житлово-комунальної, медичної, культурно-освітньої, торгівельної, підприємницької інфраструктури. Висвітлено досвід стимулювання розвитку сільських територій у країнах ЄС, зокрема окреслено фінансові інструменти та обсяг підтримки й всебічного сприяння сільському бізнесу, охороні навколишнього середовища, конкурентоспроможності та соціальній інтеграції. Удкладнено європейські інвестиційні фонди та їхню роль у розвитку інфраструктури сільських територій ЄС.

Ключові слова: інфраструктура, сільські громади, сільське населення, якість життя, демографічна ситуація, фінансові інструменти, європейські фонди