

ABSTRACT

The current agricultural sector of the Ukrainian economy is in a state of transformation under the influence of global challenges of sustainable development, particularly climate change, growing social expectations and integration into the European economic area. Under these conditions, the strategic orientation of agricultural enterprises on ESG-principles (environmental, social and governance) has become crucial for ensuring their competitiveness, sustainability and efficiency of functioning. The monograph deals with comprehensive research of theoretical, practical and organizational aspects of implementing ESG-approaches in the activities of agricultural enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones, which are an important component of the national economy and the development of rural areas.

The first chapter outlines the theoretical foundations and institutional prerequisites of implementing ESG-practices in the agricultural sector. Conceptual approaches to ESG as a complex category integrating environmental, social and management dimensions of business development have been considered. The current state of implementing ESG-principles in Ukraine has been analyzed, achievements and problems of institutionalization have been determined. The social responsibility of agricultural enterprises and the specifics of ESG implementation in small and medium-sized enterprises, which are characterized by simultaneous vulnerability to external risks and high development potential, have been distinctly investigated.

The second chapter is devoted to the risks and opportunities of sustainable development in the context of the application of ESG criteria. The classification of environmental, social and management risks has been carried out, the mechanisms of their management have been viewed, including monitoring, non-financial reporting and adaptation to regulatory and market requirements. Particular attention has been paid to mitigating climate risks through resource-saving technologies, developing organic farming, increasing energy efficiency and attracting «green» investments. Moreover, the prospects for sustainable development of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises have been revealed, including the expansion

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of financial opportunities, integration into international markets and the formation of a positive image.

The third section focuses on the practical aspects of implementing ESG-practices in the activities of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises. The results of current scientific research on the role of environmental, social and management factors in increasing competitiveness are summarized. The challenges of implementing the ESG-strategy are considered, especially limited financial resources, low level of awareness and lack of systemic support, as well as development prospects due to the growing demand for ecological products and adaptation to international standards. Special attention has been paid to the requirements of financial institutions regarding transparency of activities and non-financial reporting, which opens access to soft loans and grant programs. The subsection proposes a step-by-step approach to ESG integration, including the development of partnerships with communities, the introduction of energy-efficient technologies and the formation of internal control.

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