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## **GEOMARKETING AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Until recently the concept of ‘geomarketing’ had a rather narrow meaning as a special tool in traditional (business) marketing aimed at geographic segmentation (‘geosegmentation’) of the marketplace and geographic positioning (‘geopositioning’) of the products (goods and services). In the middle of nineties the conception of ‘place marketing’ (P.Kotler, D.Haider, and I.Rein, 1994) was developed as a reaction on considerable changes in firm strategies and government policies caused by processes of globalization and regionalization (these two processes are synergetic and interdependent). That was a principal moment for geomarketing because it began to be placed and viewed in context of local and regional development. Such an expansion of geomarketing concept has changed its perception by business community, local governments and non-governmental organizations.

Local governments begin to view geomarketing (marketing of regions and localities) as a tool for promotion of local and regional economic development in conditions of increasing geoeconomic competition (regional competition). Such marketing is aimed at attraction of investors’ interest to these territories with the purpose to make them ‘the gateways to the global economy’. On the other hand, the fact is that new approaches to regional development and policy seek to encourage enterprise and build entrepreneurial capacity in the regions as a means to boost national growth on principles of sustainability. In the emergent ‘bottom-up’ approaches to regional development and policy, localities and regions – whether relatively prosperous or laggard – are increasingly being encouraged to help themselves and become entrepreneurial agents of their own growth and development. The background to this more recent thinking lies in the emphasis upon endogenous (grown from within) forms of economic growth aimed at sustainable development. All these foresee inventory, assessment and marketing of local endogenous resources and factors of economic growth with sustainable perspective. In this case geomarketing helps to promote selected sites and places

within the region as perspective ‘regional poles of economic growth’ keeping in mind their sustainability functions.

The business community also changes their perception of geomarketing and views it more and more through a prism of sustainable development. The farsighted firms while conducting the marketing don’t limit it to the simple ‘geosegmentation’ and ‘geopositioning’, but try to take into account all peculiarities of geographic environment of the place, including its regional development perspectives, economic-geographical location, and environmental awareness of population. Another innovation in this sector is emerging of a new kind of business – production and distribution of geo-technologies (GIS-technologies). It may be viewed as a third dimension of geomarketing – marketing of geographical knowledge and technologies.

Non-governmental organizations find geomarketing as an effective tool first of all for promotion of regional sustainable development and natural environment protection (natural resources and biodiversity preservation). By using of geomarketing (which has in this case non-commercial nature), NGOs try to promote selected territories and localities as the whole natural ecosystems, which need saving and protection at national or international levels.

The next step is in combining of these approaches and conceptions in order to establish public-private partnership as a form of synergy between firm strategies, government policies and NGO activities aimed at promotion of local and regional sustainable development. Making regional development research projects in Ukraine, we were convinced of importance of such broad conception of geomarketing for application in public, private, and community sectors in conditions of transforming economy. So, we propose new complex geomarketing conception, which have to be designed by adoption and elaboration of some new ideas and approaches, such as “place marketing”, “collaborative spatial decision making”, “endogenous regional development”, and “sustainable development”.

The proposed complex geomarketing conception is based on integration of three different interpretations of geomarketing:

- 1) as a traditional marketing tool providing procedures of ‘geosegmentation’ and ‘geopositioning’ in market analysis;
- 2) as a marketing of places (placemarketing);
- 3) as a marketing of geographic knowledge and technologies.

Such a complex approach foresees systematical empirical study of

innovations and changes in these domains with the purpose to develop a general theory of geomarketing as a tool for promotion of sustainable development at local and regional levels.

Finally, the practical issue is to explore how geomarketing in such a comprehension may be implemented in business administration and sustainable development policy making on example of some Ukrainian firms, local governments, and communities.