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Evaluation of Local Development Strategies and Process of Their Implementation in the Silesia Region

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Evaluation of Local Development Strategies and Process of Their Implementation in the Silesia Region

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The Silesia Region

The Silesia voivodship is one of 16 regions in Poland (NUTS 2 region). There live 4.83m inhabitants (12.5% of the total number of Poles). This number is the second highest in Poland. Total area of the voivodship is only 12.3 thousands km^2 (14^{th} place in Poland), that makes the higher population density in the country – 393 inhabitants per km^2. The Silesia region has a typical urban character. Nearly 80% of inhabitants live in towns and cities – in comparison to the Polish average, which is 61.7%.

Tab. 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the Silesia region on the background of Poland.

Category	Silesia	Poland
Number of inhabitants	4.83 m	12.5 %
Area	12.3 thousands km^2	3.9%
Population density	393 inhabitants / km^2	124 inhabitants / km^2
Structure of employment		
• Agriculture	12.6 %	29.2%
• Industry and construction	36.6 %	25.2%
• Market services	34.4 %	30.4%
• Non market services	16.4 %	15.3%
Investment outlays	10.4% of total investment in Poland	
GDP created in Silesia	13.8% of total GDP in Poland	
GDP per inhabitant	110.1% of average GDP per inhabitant in Poland	

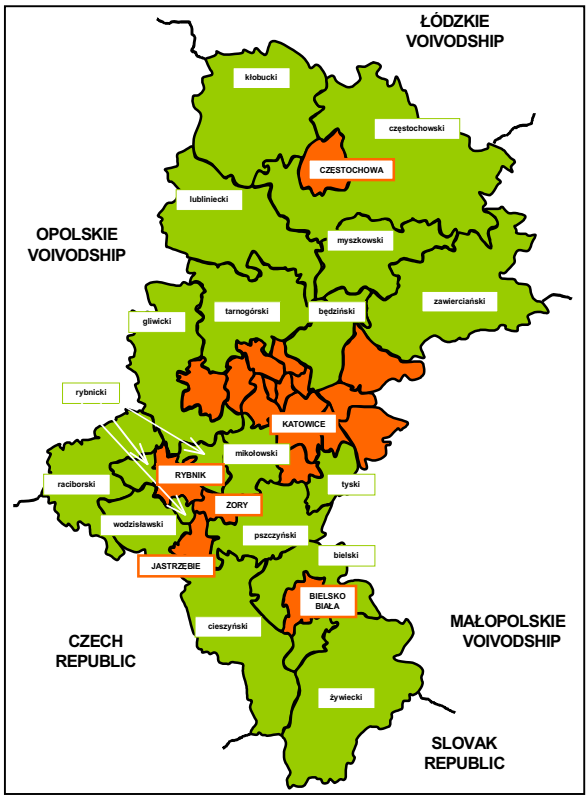
The Silesia voivodship is also the most industrialised region in Poland. Its industry and construction employ 36.6% of people (the Polish average is 25.2%). This number is confirmed by the value of Silesian sold industry production – 17.2% of the total sold Polish industry production, and value of the Silesian sold construction production – 14.6% of total the sold Polish construction production. The industrial character of the region is connected with coal mining (from XIXth century) and development of steel industry on this area.

After the year 1989 above mentioned industrial branches are restructured. Now, in the structure of Silesian sold production, the coal cover less than 20% of its total value. In the group of industrial production dominate: cars – 15.1%, steel 13.4% and food 10.0 %.

Administratively the Silesia is divided into 3 sub-regions (on the NUTS 3 level). There are northern, central and southern sub-regions. On the territorial level NUTS 4[1], the Silesian voivodship has 36 territorial units, 17 are land counties and 19 are cities or towns with a status of a county . Generally, towns and cities have:

- higher population density. In 1999 they had 1,604 people per km^2, while lend counties had 190 people per km^2,
- most of the fixed assets of enterprises - more than two-thirds of the regional total,
- most investment, 79% of the total value in the region in 1999.

Map 1. The administrative division of Silesia



The central sub-region of the voivodship consists of Katowice Agglomeration – there are 14 towns and cities with the status of a county, including the region's capital Katowice. The following of indicators show the significance role of the agglomeration in the scale of the Silesia:

- its population is 43.6% of the total number of inhabitants in the region,
- the number of enterprises is 45% of the total number of enterprises which operate in the region,
- the concentration of fixed assets is 56.5% of its total value in the region,
- and the value of investment outlays per inhabitant is 147% of the voivodship's average value.

Beyond the central part of voivodship there are northern and southern sub-regions. Northern sub-region with the main city Częstochowa, which characterises the low level of

[1] NUTS – national unit for territorial statistics

infrastructure services, the low potential of small and medium sized enterprises and overwhelming agricultural activities in the sub-region's economy structure.

Southern subregion with the main city Bielsko-Biała and the Rybnik Agglomeration. Bielsko characterises relatively diversified economy structure, great potential of SMEs, development of tourism activities connected with Beskidy mountains and low level of transport infrastructure. Rybnik with the adjoining towns Żory and Jastrzębie forms Rybnik Agglomeration. This area characterises low level of development in the business services, economy mono-structure with dominance of the coal mining branch.

The survey methodology

Evaluation of local development strategies and process of their implementation was executed with the aid of questionnaire research along with interviews. The survey was carried out in the frame of the Polish Science Committee sponsored project: *"Implementation of development concepts in the county towns in Silesia voivodship*" [2]. The survey was conducted in June 2002 at the end of the third term of local self-governance in Poland. It included 32 Silesian county towns. Most of the surveys questions was open-ended, that enabled in consequence to get detailed information. In some cases the survey used the questions with finished list of answers. The scope of the research included:

- Silesian voivodship's degree of advancement in adoption of strategic approach to local development planning,
- justification for taking up the work on a strategy,
- way of project identification, defining and choosing,
- organisational changes connected with adoption of strategic approach to local development planning,
- participation of local stakeholders in this process,
- monitoring and controlling of real strategy impact on local development.

Outcomes of the surveys also allowed to make an initial evaluation of a strategy implementation process, especially with respect to its limitations, and examining the compatibility of the strategic choices among the strategic goals, objectives and realised projects.

[2] Polish Science Committee sponsored project no. 2 H02C 087 22

Degree of advancement in adoption of strategic approach to local development planning in the Silesia county towns

The popularity of the strategic approach to local development planning in Poland increased in the second half of 90s. In the Silesia region only few county towns have a strategy document, which was prepared before 1998. Most of the towns started the strategy preparation just during the third term of the Polish local self-governance. It results in passing the large number of strategies documents in the period from 1998 to 2002. What is significant, the most of Silesian strategies have clearly defined time frame, which is usually 10 or 15 years. Generally, more then 80% of the surveyed county towns have a strategy document with the status of resolution, approved by a towns council.

Among the Silesian county towns, there is also a large group of the towns with no strategy. There are also the cases, in which the works on strategy formulation have started, but a strategy was not approved by a town council. For these towns, local development planning is carried out on the base of spatial development plans or long-range investments programmes (LIP). The summary of formal conceptions of local development planning used in the Silesian county towns is presented in the table 2.

Tab. 2. Silesian county towns and their formal conceptions of local development

No.	Type and date of the formulation of local development conceptions	Number (structure) of Silesia county towns
1.	Strategy prepared by 1998	3 (9.4%)
2.	Strategy prepared during the period 1998-2002.	23 (71.8%)
3.	Other documents (LIP)	6 (18.8%)

Novelty of strategic approach to local development planning was also executed by the survey guided to identification of awareness of basic items used by this approach, there are: strategic goals, objectives; strategy, development. The term of “strategic goal, objective” is perceived in different ways. Usually it is defined as:

- priority domain of activities,
- concentration of activities,
- defined strategic problem, or solution of strategic problem,
- determined state of future,
- detailed elements of vision,

- determined direction of development.

The definition of strategic goals, objectives is also accompanied with verbs like: to aim at something, to desire something, to achieve something. The strategic goals – objectives is also determined in the terms of adjective like: basic, essential, general. It should be noted that degree of awareness of above mention term is not recognisable well. A lot of the respondents usually mixed it up with strategic direction. Also a lot of them had no idea about strategic goals – objectives at all (about 40% of surveyed county towns).

The term of "strategy" is mostly defined by local authorities as: the ways, the activities, the means that are used for achieving the strategic goals and objectives. Remaining answers was connected with: directions and strategic domains, groups of objectives, future vision with priorities, and ordering systems of activities. What is important – a large group of the Silesian county towns have no definition of strategy at all. Among the unique definition are the following:

- "strategy is the signpost in work",
- "strategy is the best way for achieving goals and objectives".

In the table 3 orderly structure of answers to the question concerning the term of strategy was presented.

Tab. 3. Awareness of the term "strategy"

No.	Answer	Frequency of answers	Structure
1.	Ways / activities / means for achieving goals and objectives	10	31.2%
2.	Group of goals and objectives	4	12.5%
3.	Future vision along with priorities	3	9.4%
4.	Orderly system activities	3	9.4%
5.	Direction of activities	2	6.25%
6.	Plan of town development	2	6.25%
7.	Justification for carrying out activities	1	3.0%
8.	Lack of answer	7	22.0%

"Development" mostly is associated with the life quality improvement understanding as a condition of work, services and residence. The respondents often pointed at duty for inhabitants, or making real inhabitants expectations. Development is also comprehend as

socio-economic progresses, or wider as progresses in all human activities. According the Silesian local governments authorities, development means: change for good, improvement of competitiveness, realisation of vision and strategic goals.

The characteristic feature in understanding of the above mentioned items is very large diversity of their meanings. For the respondents these terms are defined in different fields. For example, especially the term of development is perceived in different ways according to the each county town.

In the frame of degree of advancement in adopting the strategic approach to local development planning, it should be noted that recognition of its basic methodological terms is weak. For example, only in three cases development is directly connected with realisation of strategic records like vision, strategic goals and objectives

Justification for taking up the works on strategy

For the Silesian county towns identification of factors concerning the justification, to arrange the works on a strategy, consists in determining the expected benefits from a strategy by local authorities. On the bases on the respondents answers, it is possible to distinguish two main groups of these factors:

- first, concerning the aspects of town office management,
- second, concerning the content-related issues of activities recorded in a strategy document.

In relation to the first aspect, the range of answers includes the following expected benefits factors:

- steering the development and ordering activities (43.8% of answers),
- ability to gain external financial resources (34.4% of answers),
- increase of a town council management effectiveness (15.6%),
- ability for a town diagnosis and creation of a base for other development plans (9.4% of answers),
- implementation standards in the scheme of local development planning (6.3% of answers),
- determination of means for achieving the strategic goals and objectives (6.3% of answers),
- showing to community that “we do something” (6.3% of answers),
- ability for planning large projects (3.1% of answers),
- preparation of local self-governments to functioning within EU structures (3.1% of answers),

- having a strategy as other towns have (3.1% of answers).

The key stimuli for taking up the works on a strategy is connected with an ability to steer local development and ordering the activities. This justification is associated with features entered by the strategic management approach. That are: ability to formulate coherent goals and objectives, establishing activities and hierarchy among them, defining the strategic domains and directions, set up a long-range decision perspective. A strategy is also perceived as a tool that helps to faith with "chaos" by eliminating useless scope of works and elimination of "exotic" inventions of local politics. A long-range planning perspective – as was underline – is especially important for identification and realisation of large projects, which should be executed regardless of terms of local government and political options.

Ability to gain an external financial resources is expanded by potential benefits from involving the Silesian towns into a large scale project too. They often cannot be realised without such a support, especially in difficult financial condition of Polish local self-governments.

The third of basic benefits linked with local development strategies is perceiving them as a tool that enables to increase the effectiveness of a town council management. This increase is an effect of above mentioned features of steering and concentration of activities as well as planning within the strategy the organisational changes which improve current office management.

The respondents also stressed the meaning of diagnosis which is a part of a strategy preparation process. Taking up the works on a strategy imposes the procedure for gathering detailed information concerning a town in a social, economic, environment, or infrastructure perspective. At the same time, it is an opportunity to general assessment of a town development and comparing it to other towns and cities.

The group of less significant benefit factors is open by the aspects of entering the standards of development planning into the town office structure – for example by establishing the principles for programming and implementation of a strategy record. A strategy formulation is also occasion for reflection about identification of ideas and means for approaching the objectives. Thus, a strategy is not only threaten like a record of vision or goals, but also it should contain the ways of their realisation in the form of projects.

That is linked with the benefits which are perceived in an ability to plan large project. A strategy as a long-range development planning document makes possible to enter the records concerning the projects, which realisation is longer than one-year town budget. The one-year budget category was created by Polish law regulations and it determines the

necessity for spending public money only during one year. This limitation is one of the biggest barriers for local self-governments in planning the large scale project.

Process of formulation a local development strategy is also associated with the learning of local authorities and their preparation for functioning within the EU structures, involving the abilities to defining their needs and preparing formal documents. The works on a strategy, if was carried out along with external stakeholders like local community, SMEs, minorities can be also an opportunity for adopting a participation model in planing of local development.

Especially meaningful benefit factors are those, that link a strategy with local self-government as a stakeholder, who is seriously involved in local problems. The respondents also stressed, a strategy is a splendid opportunity to express local government activities ("we do something"). This shows unambiguously what attitude characterises local politics.

The second general group of benefit factors that justified taking up works on a strategy is connected with content-related scope of activities. That are the following:

- increase of investment attractiveness (18.8% of answers),
- identifying new development vision (15.6% of answers),
- better satisfying of community needs by socio-economic development (6.3% of answers),
- lack of benefits connected with a strategy (6.3% of answers),
- increase the community awareness (3.1% of answers),
- ordering spatial economy (3.1% of answers),
- infrastructure improvements (3.1% of answers).

First of two expected benefits are directly associated with expectations described above. Only a few respondents could formulate benefits from a strategy in a strict way, for example in one of the questionnaires the representatives of local authorities stated that strategy should contribute in attracting an external foreign investor.

New image is identified with the necessity linked with the strategy reflection procedure, which assumes defining a new vision. The respondents underlined that in the case of giving up the strategy procedure, new vision would have not been recorded in the formal way.

The next benefits that correspond with content-related issues have very general character. The respondents usually mentioned: ability for better satisfying needs of a local community, increasing of socio-economic development, etc. Their general character can be a prove, that local authorities have no idea how they can benefit from a strategy. Thus, in the

content-related aspects justified the strategy preparation benefits were not clearly identified. Moreover, in two cases a strategy is associated with no benefits and the works on this documents have not started yet or finished with failure.

The ways of project identification

The first stage of a strategy implementation procedure consists in identification of ideas that finally take the form of projects and programmes, in relation to the Silesian county towns it takes different forms. Among many others, two approaches are very popular:

- identification of ideas on the base of strategy records (68.0% of answers),
- identification of ideas on the base of current problems (62,5% of answers).

There is, of course, a group of the county towns, which the representatives pointed at both of these approaches. The first approach correspond with a logic hierarchy that transforms a general strategy reflection into operational activities, making the link between procedures of strategy formulation and implementation.

The Silesian county towns, which base their future on strategy, respect the principle of compatibility among the strategic objectives and projects, placing their process of development in long-run perspective. Often in these cases, respondents stressed that a strategy enters a hierarchy among the activities, enables the concentration of efforts on the real strategic problems.

Different group is constituted by the county towns, which looking for ideas for projects on the base of current problems. This attitude effects in focusing on present local problems, leaving the long-range development planning. What is important, that the county towns have relatively "young" (prepared during the period 1998-2002) strategies which include essential strategic priorities and projects.

Very popular way for identifying ideas for programmes and projects is also utilising the opportunities from environment and defining projects on the bases of identified of local community needs. The first aspect mainly corresponds with creating projects in order to gain external financial support from pre-accession funds and national resources. The second aspect for creating the projects has endogenous character. It means, the needs are identified by local society and then presented on the county town council platform. In the case of fitting, that way, identified project to strategy objectives, it can be assumed the procedure guarantee efficient communication between local community and local authorities. So, it can be perceived as an initial condition for participation model into the process of strategy implementation.

The participation model at the phase of project identification is used in each third Silesian county town. It usually takes a form of: local forums, workshops, meetings, or institutions (associations, foundations). They gather representatives of different local stakeholders and they can be perceived as an efficient platform in the process of local society needs and expectations identification, also taking into consideration the strategic perceptive of proposed projects. Additional benefits come from multidimensional character of these groups and public consultation of their work, which increase the quality of projects.

Finishing the project proposals identifications enable their formal recording in the form of appropriate documentation. In the Silesian county towns on this stage are used varied approaches from general description of a project to a project feasibility study that includes technical, financial, economic, social data. Among the most frequently documents use in the Silesia county towns, one should point at:

- technical documentation (as a technical specification, architectural or construction projects),
- cost calculations.

The popularity of above mentioned documents is mainly determined by necessity to use them in a tender procedures. First of all, these documents is applied to hard, infrastructure projects because of constriction law regulation.

Application forms have also great popularity on a project defining stage, if a county town are going to gain external financial support. Most frequently are used the application forms of PHARE or ISPA programme as well as applications to the Polish Environmental Protection Fund and applications to the World Bank. Imposing by external institutions the project planning methodology with application forms contributes to spread the knowledge of strategy implementation among the Silesian county towns. This effects in more and more frequent using of standards of project planing, like project charter which now is a common approach to project planning in a growing number of the Silesian self-governments.

A project charter along with its basic project characteristics like sources of finance or ability to implementation is used by 41% of the surveyed towns. Similar form to the project charter has a description of investment task, which is used by 31% of surveyed towns.

Apart form basic document focused on general project specification, Silesian county towns also use more detailed documents like: initial feasibility studies (22% of answers), feasibility studies (19% of answers), audits (16% of answers), environment impact assessment reports (16% of answers). As far as preparation of a project charters or descriptions of investment task are prepared by county town office, the detailed studies is usually drawn up

be external consulting firms. Moreover, these documents are prepared only to large infrastructure projects accompanied by external finance support.

Project appraisal and choice

In these aspects, the survey was focused on determination at what extent the ex-ante evaluation takes place in the Silesian county towns and what procedures and tools are used within this process. Only 60% of the surveyed towns use systematically the ex-ante project evaluation. Within this group:

- 34% of them apply an initial assessment mainly to infrastructure projects,
- 22% of them apply an initial assessment to projects which are financed from external sources.

The county towns which systematically used an initial assessment are located in the central part of the region (Katowice Agglomeration). In the other cases, initial assessment is conducted sporadically and it is connected only with externally financed project. There is also the group of county towns where ex-ante evaluation in not conducted at all (13%).

The second aspect of projects appraisal and choice connected with procedures and tools of assessment in the case of the Silesian county towns allows to distinguish a few types of the most frequently evaluation. That are the following:

- financial assessment (47% of answers),
- technical feasibility (28% of answers),
- environmental impact assessment (22% of answers),
- socio-economic assessment (19% of answers),
- project options analysis (9% of answers),
- risk assessment (6% of answers).

The tools of financial assessment are mainly used within the standard what relates to calculation of basic financial balance sheet, comparing costs and revenues, and source of finance. The basic financial effectiveness indicators as NPV or IRR are calculated sporadically.

Technical feasibility is treated as a popular assessment tool only in 28 % of the surveyed towns, although its necessity is determined by construction law for hard projects. Technical feasibility is focused on identification of engineering ability for project realisation. It also includes the cost estimates. Unfortunately technical feasibility does not take into

consideration the aspects of technology assessment, which is guided, for example, to verifying a long-range project impact on local community.

The Environment impact assessment (EIA) is another example of documentation which preparation is required by law regulations to all large-scale hard projects. However, EIA is treated by local governments rather like a "necessity", not as an efficient tool for project appraisal. It was pointed at by only a few Silesian towns.

Social and economic appraisal is recognised only in six of the surveyed towns. Its application was connected with local government's efforts for external financial support for projects. Only in a few cases, the indicators as ENPV or ERR were calculated, so awareness of economic and social appraisal is perceived mainly in qualitative categories.

Project options analysis is also a tool used in the Silesian voivodship very sporadically (only 3 towns). Its conducting was linked with preparation of analysis concerning different options for roads and recycling projects.

The last of identifying appraisal tools – risk assessment – was applied only in two cases. In the first case, risk assessment was carried out to identify the environmental hazard factors and their impact on the local community for the recycling project. In the second case, the identification of risk factors was connected with the supermarket project and its impact for potential community protests.

Apart of above mentioned tools, the survey allowed for identification of another one standard of assessment, which is linked with the conception of a long-range investment programme (LPI). Within its frame, the ex-ante evaluation has a multi-criteria character. Project proposals are evaluated according the strategic goals and objectives. In table 4 all identified tools of project assessment and their popularity among the Silesian county towns are presented.

Tab. 4. Tools of projects ex-ante evaluation in the Silesian county towns

Appraisal tool	Structure [%]
Financial assessment	47%
Technical feasibility	28%
Environmental impact assessment	22%
Socio-economic assessment	19%
Risk assessment	6%
Other (multi-criterions analysis in the frame of LIP)	16%
Lack of answer	41%

The knowledge about project appraisal tools as well as frequency of their application is determined by size of the county town and its activity in gaining external financial support.

The appraisal standards are adopted by the county towns mainly in situation of preparing projects to international and natural supports.

The specificity of choosing public projects into realisation in the surveyed towns, shows that making the allocation decision is determined in different ways by preceding appraisal stage. The principles, which guide local government on this phase of strategy implementation, can be distinguish in the following ways:

- political criterions (59% of answers),
- financial criterions (25% of answers),
- compatibility (with strategy) criterions (16% of answers),
- economic criterions (16% of answers),
- social criterions (16% of answers),
- ability to gain external finance support criterions (16% of answers),
- technical criterions (9% of answers).

Essential impact in the project choosing process in the Silesian county towns has the political criterions. Their perceiving by local authorities is focused into two aspects:

- the first is connected with democracy mechanism of a decision making, in which the choice is determined by majority of votes;
- the second is connected with discretion and authorities' conviction about what is necessary to do.

In the first case, project realisation depends mainly on political support regardless of findings of initial appraisal. The political criterions without any other, additional criterions are used in one half of surveyed towns. Only in three additional towns, political criterions have been accompanied by financial economical or social criterions. Using only political criterions in consequence leads to appearing the government failures, which in the project implementation field are linked with:

- realisation of short-run projects guided to gain fast, but not long lasting results,
- realisation of projects without multidimensional verification of their impacts,
- realisation of projects that are not consistent with strategy record,
- realisation of projects guided to satisfying privilege of local groups.

The financial criterions are another group of criterions, which meaning is perceived in two-dimensional way. First of the most significant dimensions is connected with a project cost size. The cost size is usually discussed from a town budget planning point of view, which

includes (in few cases) creating long-range investment programmes (LPI). Cost size and cash flow determine also the project start and finish dates and project's schedule.

Unfortunately only in a few Silesian county towns, the financial criterions are linked with financial effectiveness, calculated on the base of NPV and IRR indicators. They accompanied only with large infrastructure projects, especially with the help of external financial support. Lack of quantifying the financial indicators is associated with limitations of project initial evaluation like insufficient knowledge and experiences in this field.

Compatibility with strategy criterions is shown particularly in the county towns which plan their development on the base of long-range investment programmes (LIP), or operation programmes (OP). Both of these approaches make project realisation depended on strategic goals and objectives, domains, etc. Fulfilment of a strategy records is a condition for project proposals implementation and it is a base for strategic decision making process.

The socio-economic criterions are equivalent to compatibility criterions, but their perceiving by decision makers in most cases has general character, not supported by analysis like cost-benefit analysis, or social impact analysis. Socio-economic criterions are identified with general project's effects like: satisfying social needs, decreasing of unemployment, supporting the SMEs, creation of good leaving standards. Unfortunately, the analysis of socio-economic impact are conducted only to large projects co-financed by external institutions. The level of effects quantifying is restricted. Criterions derived from indicators like ENPV or ERR are hardly ever used.

The ability to gain external finance support criterions are parallel to compatibility and socio-economic rules are also. This type of criterions orientated in some extent the investment activity of the surveyed county towns into the goals of supporting programmes. Significance of external financial support is stressed in infrastructure projects (roads, water supply) and in environment protection projects (waste water treatment, recycling). Taking into consideration the external financial support criterions – even in limited way (16% of the surveyed towns) – shows the growing activity of the Silesian county towns in gaining additional financial resources from supported programs.

No one of the surveyed towns point at environmental criterions and their impact on decision making process – despite of the fact, that environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a common appraisal tool for hard projects. Outcomes of EIA according to respondents are not important, and there are not perceived as information base for the local decision makers. EIA is treated rather like an obligation imposed by law, not as an appraisal standard which facilitates the process of recognition of multi-dimensional impacts of projects.

Lower significance in a decision process is attributed to technical criterions. Their meaning was perceived only in three towns. Using technical criterions is limited only to project scope determination that influence a project time and cost requirements. The surveyed did not confirm if the Silesian county towns used criterions derived from the technology assessment scheme concerning, for example the impact of project's products on creation the base for SMEs development or for development of territorial systems.

Organisational changes

Implementation of local development strategies is also determined by organisational changes in this field. In the surveyed towns, a strategy implementation process was associated with creation of new town office department (37.5% of answers), which was responsible for implementation of the strategy records. These departments was usually called as "strategy departments" or these were linked with a town office activities like: town promotion, economic development, spatial economy, labour market. In consequence, it shifted their activity from overall strategy implementation to domain activities connected, for example only with promotion or economic development.

In the case the "strategy departments" keep their basic responsibility for overall strategy implementation it benefits from distribution of local development planning and implementation functions. Development planning now is linked with the "strategy departments" and implementation function is usually accompanied to the investment departments along with other town office departments depending on projects specificity.

In the second group of the surveyed county towns (31.3% of answers) the process of strategy formulation and implementation was not linked with any organisational changes. In these cases one can risk hypothesis that lack of organisational changes does not support creation of structures that co-ordinate the process of strategy implementation. The size of change made by a strategy in these towns was small, and it was not conductive to acquire knowledge, experience, skills setting up efficient organisational structures for management at the strategy implementation stage.

The next group (18.8%) declared, that strategy implementation process corresponded with organisational changes connected with establishing new units, but at lower organisational level then departments. For example, there are offices responsible not only for strategy implementation, but also for a town promotion, information services, etc. Their low level within an organisational structure makes co-ordination of overall strategy implementation process difficult.

In the analysing aspect of organisational changes determined by strategy formulation and implementation to beneficial behaviours belong the attempts made by few Silesian towns consist in linking the resources, skills, and experiences from different departments into teams, focusing groups, co-ordinator units. These kind of attempts can be perceived as familiar with creation a matrix structures within a town office organisation, that are preferable to strategy implementation by projects. One of the examples, is the local government in which the implementation of strategy started from establishing the co-ordination unit. It was responsible for constant co-ordination of a strategy implementation by setting up the cross-department team, that consists of two sub-teams:

- the team for preparation of implementation process, which was focused on defining the competence for particular town office departments and units in the frame of strategy implementation. This team included the representatives from investment department, architecture department, construction department, unit for external EU support finance;
- the team for operationalisation of implementation process, which was responsible for formulation of implementation procedures and IT support. It contained representatives from: secretary of town, staff department, organisational and training department, computer department.

Other organisational activities used by a small group of the surveyed towns (12.5% of answers) was linked with trainings and implementation of quality management systems like ISO 9001. In the first approach, trainings were organised for selected groups of staff and the trainings were connected with knowledge concerning the project management. In the second aspect, the organisational change was determined by implementation of integrated quality management systems. Overall statement of answers connecting the types of organisational changes in the Silesian county towns are presented in table 5.

Tab. 5. Types of organisational changes connecting with a strategy implementation in the Silesian county towns.

Answer	New departments	New units	Quality management systems	Trainings	Teams, focus groups	Lack of changes
Number of towns	12	6	4	4	4	10
Structure	37.5%	18.8%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	31.3%

Participation

Participation aspects in the survey were perceived as inclusion of local community, local institutions, and local business sector into the strategy formulation and implementation process. The research allowed to draw conclusions which participation and communities needs identification are not a common practice in the Silesian county towns. For example, studying the awareness of local development strategy effects only in one case, the local authority use temporal questionnaire research in this field. In another seven towns, questionnaire surveys were conducted sporadically. During the period 1990-2002, there were carried out only once. In most of the surveyed towns (68.8% of towns), this kind of research was not conducted at all. Despite of that, only in six of the Silesian county towns, the local government's representatives point at social consultation during the strategy formulation stage, like meetings with inhabitants or telephone surveys.

Local self-government participation with local stakeholders in the process of project identification within the partnership scheme was organised mainly into the co-operation with other public sector institutions like: other towns and cities, counties, regional government, towns and counties associations.

Co-operation with business sector was declared by 62,5% of surveyed towns. Among the business partners the key role play: coal mines, SMEs sector, foreign firms. Joint projects mainly concern to creation of conditions for enterprise development or establishing economic activity areas[3].

Co-operation with local communities was declared in less then 50% of surveyed towns. Among the partners authorities listed: local associations and foundations, not-formal groups. The mutual projects are focused on: culture, sport, recreation, education, social care activities. Table 6 presents the types of local government partners.

Tab. 6. What are the partners of local government project

Answers	Public sector	Business sector	Community	Lack of partners
Number of towns	26	20	15	3
Structure	81.3%	62.5%	46.9%	9.4%

[3] Within these areas firms usually have reduction of all local real estate taxes.

Monitoring and control

In the field of control and monitoring of results of a local development strategy implementation, no one of surveyed towns has an uniform solution in these matter. Also there are not existing units responsible for constant control and monitoring, or ex-post strategy's effects evaluation – despite the fact, that conceptions of such solutions are usually described in strategy documents.

The question concerning the control and monitoring was completely omitted by 12.5% of surveyed towns, and in another 15 cases the respondents suggested that these functions are played only by major of town. In the next 9 towns, control and monitoring have been entrusted to new established units. In one case the control is made by quarterly reports conducted on the base of a quality management system.

Evaluation of the Silesian local development strategies and their implementation

Taking into consideration the surveys outcomes one should point, that evaluation of local development strategies and process of their implementation in the case of the Silesian county towns can be analyse in two perspectives at least. The first one is connected with methodological and procedural aspects of this process. The second is associated with the real impact of a strategy on local development. From the methodological and procedural perspectives the surveys allows to draw up the following findings:

- in the Silesian county towns the strategy is a popular way for local development planning. It was perceived by more then 80% of them, but in the most cases strategic documents are new. It means they were prepared after the 1998, and their time horizon is expanded to 2015, 2020 year;
- despite of great popularity of strategic approach, awareness of its terminology concerning the basic terms like strategy, strategic goals and objectives, development is diversified and ambiguous. These terms are often mixed up by local government representatives or they cannot be defined in clear;
- in the aspect of justification for strategy, the local governments are convicted that it is a tool enabling: to gain external financial resources, to change a town vision and image, to increase a town investment attractiveness. Local authorities also associate a strategy with medicine for improving town office efficiency through focusing activities. Unfortunately, social justification supported for example by questionnaire surveys are externally rare;

- in the field of preparing and using project documentation at the stage of defining the ideas and activities, the Silesian county towns characterise the low level of advancement in creation of their own standards in this domain. Only a few of the towns have uniform project planning approach (4 towns). This documentation concerns mainly the infrastructure projects and includes: project charter applied to all town departments;
- initial ex-ante project evaluation is not a common practice in the Silesian county towns. Appraisal is associated with hard infrastructure projects for which attempts for external financing have been undertaken;
- both applying and knowledge about ex-ante evaluation tools stay on the low level. This was proved by high percent associated with a lack of answers concerning the evaluation instruments used by surveyed towns. Examples of appraisal tools in many cases were not known by the respondents, even if they were responsible for project planning stage;
- disrespect to ex-ante appraisal is also seen at the stage of choosing project into realisation. In unfavourable large percent of the Silesian county towns (60% of them) decision making process is determined almost only by political criterions. In consequence they break off the methodology of strategic approach to local development planning. It also causes a lack of concentration of activities and frequent changes of strategic goals and objectives;
- adoption of strategic approach to local development planning in more then 50% of surveyed were characterised by organisational changes within a town office structure. These changes consist in creation of new departments or units responsible for formulation and implementation of a strategy. Unfortunately, in many towns these units are finally responsible only for a town promotion, or information services;
- participation aspects in the process of strategy formulation and implementation is another example of neglected area. Local authorities sporadically co-operate with communities and they do not monitor social needs and expectations in formal way;
- the controlling and monitoring are next examples of neglected area of the strategic approach to a local development planning. The respondents do not pay attention on measurement of real strategy effects, which is the basic platform that enables to determinate efficiency of this process. Moreover, the surveyed towns do not apply any indicators or studies for overall strategy implementation impact assessment.

Evaluation of real local development effects from a strategy in the case of the Silesian county towns meets serious limitations. The main obstacle is connected with short time period from creation of Silesian development strategies and their long time horizon. That make, the

most of strategy records like projects will have been executing only in the future. Thus in most of the Silesian county towns sharp effects of strategies have not appeared yet.

Next obstacle is linked with the way's strategic goals and objectives are described. In most cases they are not accompanied by measures of their evaluation. So, determination of the degree of strategic goals and objectives realisation is difficult for verifying. In this connects, the attempt to measure the real effects of a strategy on development, should be directly connected with an individual strategic goals and objectives. Formal measurement of them is possible only with the help of balanced scorecard for particular Silesian county towns. Group of integrated goals and objectives measurement indicators have not been prepared by any of surveyed towns so far.

The third perspective in measurement of real effects of a strategy on local development was an attempt to prove compatibility among declared strategic goals, objectives and real undertaking projects. This compatibility can be changed by:

- realisation of projects that do not correspond with declared goals,
- too large scope of strategic goals (objectives) which allows for realisation almost of all identified project,
- incompatibility among domains of strategic goals (objectives) and the specificity of projects scope.

The strategic goals and objectives in relation to abilities for their realisation seem to include very vast scope. It makes that almost all potential projects are compatible with a strategy record.

In most cases the strategic goals and objectives have not their evaluation measures. Moreover, the authors of strategies did not apply any hierarchy among them. Taking into consideration excessive number of goals and objectives, it is difficult to determine what is really important for future local development. A lack of evaluation measures for strategic goals and objectives also make impossible to evaluate how the chosen projects contribute in achieving a strategy records. Often the only evaluation measure is a very long strategy time horizon. It results in additional difficulties in of strategy evaluation from the real local development point of view.

Heaving the data from the conducted survey, the relation among stages of decision making process was also verified. These stages are the following:

- applying the tools of ex-ante evaluation for project proposals,
- defining the evaluation criterions for decision making stage,

- comparing the relation among strategic goals (objectives) and realised projects.

Determining the dependencies among above mentioned elements allows to show the following impacts:

- there is strong relation among evaluation criterions used at decision making process and the compatibility among the strategic goals (objectives) and realised projects. It means that great number of evaluation criterions like economic, social, financial, environmental supports to assure the compatibility between strategic choices;
- applying tools of projects ex-ante assessment does not guarantee the compatibility among strategic goals (objectives) and realised activities;
- this incompatibility is a result, that despite of using by local self-governments the tools of initial appraisal for projects proposals, decision makers in final projects choosing for realisation do not always take appraisal outcomes into considerations.

Making the allocation decision in more then 50% of surveyed towns is mainly associated with applying only political criterions. This practice favours the ignorance of multi-dimensional public project appraisal, lack of respect to socio-economic efficiency in allocating resources, and incompatibility in relation among strategic goals (objectives) and projects.

Conclusions

Despite of growing popularity of the strategic approach to local development planning in the last decade, there is still a lack of experiences in this issue. That results directly from historic process of establishing the local self-governments in Poland. In relation to European local authorities, which through last few decades have accumulated the knowledge, experiences and systems of gathering information about strategies and process of their implementation. In polish conditions the limitations of strategic approach to local development planning concern the following aspects:

- imprecise way of defining of strategic goals and objectives;
- lack of knowledge and standards in the field of preparing projects, and their initial assessment;
- emphasis excessively the political criterions at the stage of decision making process, which is deprived of support from economic, social, financial, environmental aspects;
- lack of controlling and monitoring systems that makes evaluation of real strategy impact on local development difficult;

- lack of participation approach at the stage of formulation and implementation of a strategy record,
- lack of compatibility among declared goal (objectives) and undertaking projects.

Polish modes experiences in these field are the reason for popularisation the knowledge concerning for example the standards for preparation and assessment of projects.

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