

LEADER PROGRAMME AS THE SOURCES OF FINANCING LOCAL ACTION GROUP ACTIVITIES IN THE MAZOVIAN VOIVODESHIP

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Abstract. The article is dedicated to the analysis financing Local Action Group activities of the Mazovian voivodship from the LEADER Programme. The analysis covers LAG support capabilities from sources of the LEADER programme in years 2007–2013. Authors' aim is to evaluate funds used from the LEADER programme by LAGs in Mazovian voivodship. In Mazovian voivodship is 35 LAG which have at their disposal 337 million PLN. It can be noted that the Mazovian voivodship is the leader with the biggest number of submitted applications and signed contacts.

Key words: LEADER Programme, local development, European Rural Development Policy, Local Action Group, Local Development Strategy

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1990s could be observed increasing problems of rural areas, such as: migrations, lower income from a strictly agricultural activities, an aging population, unemployment, social exclusion, low diversification of the labour market, worse access to basic services and pro-environmental role of agriculture and forestry. Those problems have led the EU to work towards for showing the multifunctional role, importance and development rural areas and their resources. Initiative contributes to reduce and solve these problems became the LEADER [Borowy and Sawicka 2007, Borowska 2009].

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The LEADER approach involves a policy drive to promote the socio-economic development of rural areas. It is connected with local initiatives, organised by partnerships between stakeholders within procedures of contractualisation with higher levels in the territorial system. The LEADER programme assumes the involvement of local stakeholders in cooperation networks to design and implement development projects. These forms of cooperation introduce new practices of territorial management referring to the “local governance” paradigm. Implemented principles remove public action from the monopoly of institutions and the administration and transfer it to groups of stakeholders of varying backgrounds and skills [Leloup et al. 2005, Helling et al. 2005].

In the years 1991–2006 programmes LEADER I, LEADER II and LEADER+, according to the plan of the creators, played the role of a laboratory which encouraged the development and testing of new methods of integrated and sustainable development. The LEADER¹ approach has been an important part of EU Rural Development Policy to its replenishment and effective implementation. Since 2007 it has been funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). In the period 2007–2013 it was successfully applied in fisheries areas as Axis IV of the European Fisheries Fund [Chevalier and Maurel 2013].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of research is to evaluate rural development support through sources from LEADER programme on the example of Local Action Group (LAG) from Mazovian voivodship. Analyses, carried out in the paper, cover the period of 2007–2013. Research period and selection of indices were also determined by the time of the financial perspective of RDP. The Local Action Group of Mazovian voivodship are an object of complex investigation.

The data about theoretical and financial issues of the LEADER programme were taken from the official sources the applicable literatures, legal acts, the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD), Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) and the European Commission data. The descriptive and comparative methods were used in the research paper, as well as the simple statistical method in order to analyze the problem from the economic point of view.

The paper starts with the presentation of the main principles and problems of LEADER programme. Later the of main assumptions and the support capabilities of the LEADER programme are enlightened. In the last part, the evaluation of funds used from the LEADER programme by LAG in Mazovian voivodship; finalizing and applicable conclusions are offered.

¹ LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale, meaning “Links between the rural economy and development actions”) is a local development method which allows local actors to develop an area by using its endogenous development potential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LAG support capabilities from sources of the LEADER programme in years 2007–2013

Axis IV of the RDP 2007–2013, includes three activities. The main objective of Axis IV LEADER is to activate people in rural areas by building the social potential of rural areas and increase the possibilities of acquiring financial resources and their use for the implementation of local development strategies, grassroots initiatives inhabitants of rural areas and the implementation of small projects that contribute to improving quality of life and work in small rural localities [Kováč and Csurgó 2013, *Wykorzystanie...* 2015].

In Poland there are the largest local action groups among all the European Union countries – initially functioned 338 LAGs, there are now 336. The strategies by the LAGs cover more than 90% of rural areas, which indicates a high potential villagers who saw the value prepared of the resources available in their areas and set themselves goals that they want to realize through their use [*Ocena...* 2014]. The total amount that has the Rural Development Programme for 2007–2013 in Poland amounts to about 17.2 billion EUR, including the Axis IV LEADER has been allocated about 787 million EUR, this including: the Implementation of the local development strategy; Inter-territorial and transnational cooperation functioning of Local Action Group. The broad objectives of the LEADER Axes of the Programme are to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to encourage diversification of economic activity in rural areas including supports for non-agricultural activities. The largest amount of funds was assigned to measure 413 (Implementation of the local development strategy) – Table 1. Total cost of measure 413 was calculated at 1,023.62 mln EUR but 60.6% of them were public expenditure.

Table 1. Allocation of funds between the measures of the Rural Development Programme in Poland in 2007–2013 (million EUR)

Action Code	Name of the Measure/Axis IV	Public expenditure	Private expenditure	Total costs
4.1/413	Implementation of the local development strategy	620.50	403.12	1 023.62
421	Inter-territorial and transnational cooperation	15.00	0.00	15.00
431	Running costs, acquisition of skills and animation of LAG	152.00	0.00	152.00
Total only Axis IV		787.50	403.12	1 190.62
Total Axis III		3 430.18	1 369.16	4 799.35
Total Axis I, II, II and IV		16 951.22	7 842.53	24 793.75
Technical support		266.60	0.00	266.60
Total RDP 2007–2013		17 217.82	7 842.53	25 060.35

Source: RDP 2007–2013.

Within Axis IV established 336 Local Action Groups (LAGs) that implement local development strategies. In implementing actions axis IV LEADER beneficiaries they submitted more than 58 thousand applications. Contained has more than 25 thousand contracts amounting to nearly 2.4 billion PLN. Already paid nearly 1.4 billion PLN. Projects implemented under local development strategies enabled the construction, modernization and equipment 1,724 community centres, houses of culture, sports and recreation buildings, 1,488 sports grounds, playgrounds and recreation places in small towns in rural areas. Local communities implement projects that contribute to attractive recreational areas by building or upgrading 672 landscape architecture, 141 green spaces, parks and other recreation. Also were renovated 149 historic buildings, including religious buildings and 25 monuments of history and memory locations. Redeveloped 64 reservoirs and water courses, and was formed 695 village centres. To support the development of entrepreneurship created 270 jobs. It was also organized at the initiative of the inhabitants of almost 4 thousand cultural and sporting events. In the illustrated publication you presented projects carried out in Poland within the framework of selected activities the Rural Development Programme 2007–2013 action Axis IV – “Implementing cooperation projects” and “Implementing local development strategies”.

Evaluation of funds used from the LEADER programme by LAGs in Mazovian voivodeship

Developed by LAG work plan in the form of a local development strategy (LDS) aims, among others improving the quality of life, creating non-agricultural jobs, activating citizens, promotion of cultural creativity. Under the LDS Local Action Groups choose the projects, which then goes to the provincial governments (i.e. small projects and the renewal and rural development). Among the signed agreements in Mazovia 1805 in the category “small projects” most (831) entered local governments. Frequently funded were training, cultural events, development of public space, tourism and recreation. In the Mazovian voivodeship aid limit on “small projects” 62.46 million; in the category “renewal and rural development” was concluded at that time, 538 contracts mostly on public infrastructure projects, tourism, sport and recreation. This action is to be distributed in the region of 139.2 million PLN. This approach is an effective way of supporting development processes in the country, based on activity residents, who decide what and how they want to do for the community, in which they live. Local Action Group create equal partners, public, private and social. At the moment Mazovia are 35 LAGs (plus two LAGs established outside the province, but also including Mazovian commune), which have at their disposal 337 million PLN. The biggest LAG co-creates 140 thousand residents in 23 municipalities. The average LAG contains approximately seven communes [Katalog LGD 2012].

In Table 2 are presented the financial data concern LAG’s in Mazovia voivodeship. It is noticeable that the planned budget was 328 million PLN. The majority of the budget was devoted to the implementation of the LDS and especially for rural revival and development. The conducted budget included 300 million EUR and we can see that 91% of the planned budget was contracted.

Table 2. Financial sources of LAGs in Mazovian voivodeship for particular action within local development strategies (LDS) in the years 2007–2013

RDP 2007–2013 Axis IV – Mazovian voivodeship		Planned (M PLN)	The contracts (M PLN)	The use of the budget (%)
Implement- ation of the local development strategy	operations that meet the conditions for granting aid			
	diversification into non-agricultural ac- tivities	26.71	23.27	87.12%
	creation and development of micro-enter- prises	35.10	25.83	73.59%
	rural revival and development	141.03	132.85	94.20%
	small projects	58.97	51.15	86.73%
	total	261.82	233.10	89.03%
Inter-territorial and transnational cooperation		5.81	5.13	88.40%
Running costs		43.73	43.71	99.96%
Running costs, acquisition of skills and animation of LAG	acquisition of skills and animation	17.41	18.65	107.12%
	total	61.14	62.36	102.00%
	Total Axis IV	328.77	300.60	91.43%

Source: Data from MARD, ARMA

On Figures 1 and 2 the number of submitted applications and signed contracts within measure 413 (Implementing local development strategie) by the voivodeship in Poland in 2007–2013 were presented. The difference between number of submitted application and number of signed contract was connected with problems to fulfilled the requirements of the programme. In measure 413_311 (Diversification into non-agricultural activities) can be noticed that the Mazovian voivodeship is the leader with 722 submitted applications and 296 signed contacts. The smallest number of signet contracts within measure 413_311 was noticed in Świętokrzyskie voivodship.

In the same time the Mazovian voivodeship is the leader of measure 413_312 (Creation and development of micro-enterprises). The number of submitted applications is 909, the number of signed contracts is 214. In Opolskie voivodeship the least number of signed contracts was recorded.

In Table 3 the limits and the budget of the measure 413 concerning “Implementation of local development strategies” were presented. Most of local action groups form Mazovian region managed to exploit more than 80% the allocated limit. More than 50% of limits were used by 10 LAGs of Mazovian voivodeship: Kapitał – Praca – Rozwój, Równiny Wołomińskiej, Zielone Mosty Narwi, Aktywni Razem, Partnerstwo Zalewu Zegrzyńskiego, Przyjazne Mazowsze, Dziedzictwo i Rozwój, Puszcza Kozińska, Ziemi Mińskiej and Między Wisłą a Kampinosem.

The biggest budget comes from the LAG “Kapitał – Praca – Rozwój”. In the same time in this local action group the lowest level of implementation of sources was noticed. Among 35 LAG from Mazovian voivodeship only three managed to implement whole limit of sources for measure 413: Między Wisłą a Kampinosem, Echo Puszczy Bolimowskiej, and Na Piaskowcu.

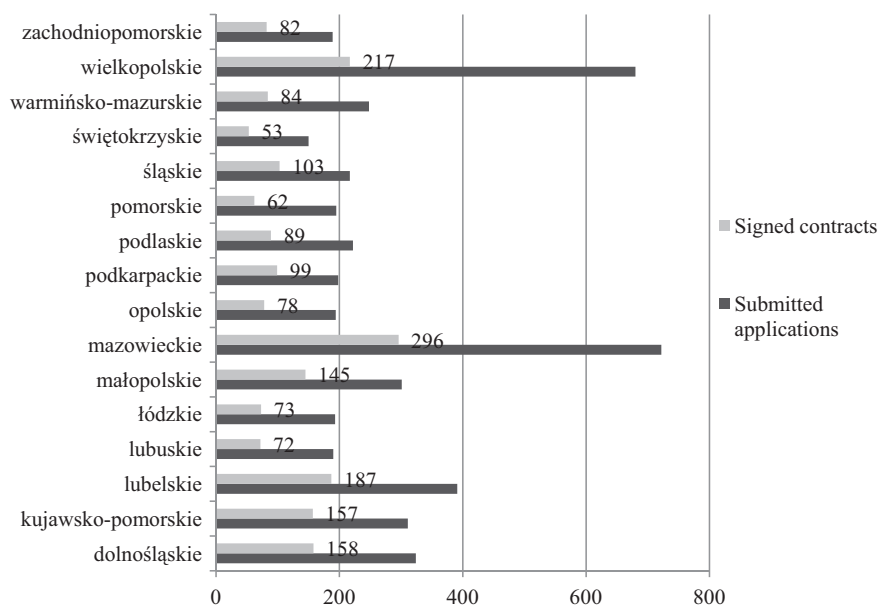


Fig. 1. Number of submitted application and signed contract within Measure 413_311 (Diversification into non-agricultural activities) by the voivodeship in Poland in 2007–2013

Source: Data from MARD, ARMA.

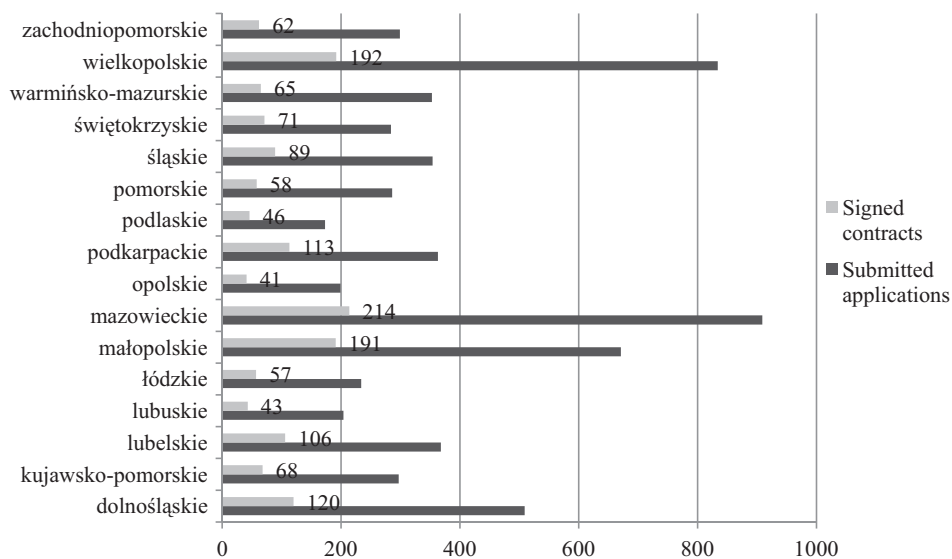


Fig. 2. Number of submitted application and signed contract within measure 413_312 (Diversification creation and development of micro-enterprises) by the voivodeship in Poland in 2007–2013

Source: Data from MARD, ARMA.

Table 3. Limit and implementation of sources for measure 413 among the LAGs in Mazovian voivodeship

No	Name of LGD	Implementation of the sources (%)	Limit (PLN)
1	Kapitał – Praca – Rozwój	75	
2	Równiny Wołomińskiej	85	16 624 084.00
3	Zielone Mosty Narwi	96	13 939 636.00
4	Aktywni Razem	81	12 922 436.00
5	Partnerstwo Zalewu Żegrzyńskiego	87	12 530 000.00
6	Przyjazne Mazowsze	82	11 273 717.00
7	Dziedzictwo i Rozwój	98	11 041 460.00
8	Puszcza Kozienicka	82	10 851 488.00
9	Ziemi Mińskiej	82	10 714 428.00
10	Między Wisłą a Kampinosem	100	10 619 869.54
11	Stowarzyszenie Społecznej Samopomocy	82	10 433 040.00
12	Ciuchcia Krasieńskich	94	10 362 512.00
13	Ziemia Chełmońskiego	91	10 077 268.00
14	Forum Powiatu Garwolińskiego	96	8 673 204.00
15	Razem dla Radomki	96	8 147 952.00
16	Kurpsie Razem	90	7 477 708.00
17	Kraina Kwitnących Sądów	87	6 988 651.98
18	Razem dla Rozwoju	86	6 246 252.00
19	Zielone Siolo	94	6 117 840.00
20	Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Gmin Tarczyn, Prażmów	98	6 045 438.72
21	Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Ziemi Płockiej	94	5 649 780.00
22	Natura i Kultura	98	4 906 026.51
23	Sierpeckie Partnerstwo	96	4 063 596.00
24	Na Piaskowcu	100	4 018 142.06
25	Wspólny Trakt	90	3 995 620.00
26	Zapilicze	95	3 912 564.00
27	Bądźmy Razem	85	3 416 432.00
28	Zaścianek Mazowsza	98	3 262 964.00
29	Orzyc – Narew	93	3 130 028.00
30	Zielone Sąsiedztwo	88	2 918 560.00
31	Wszyscy Razem	82	2 497 480.00
32	Warka	76	2 192 864.00
33	LGD Gminy Nadpilicze	94	2 038 700.00
34	Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Gmin i Miast Powiatu Garwolińskiego	97	1 831 640.00
35	Echo Puszczy Bolimowskiej	100	1 759 461.27

Source: ARMA – Aplikacja OFSA PROW 2007–2013.

CONCLUSIONS

In Poland in the rural area live 38.6% of the total population – they constitute a huge social, political and economic potential in micro and macro scale. In the rural areas of Poland, the LEADER system has gradually gained a position as a central place for learning the principles of endogenous development and local governance. It has helped build more partnerships among stakeholders in local economic and social life. It has encouraged experiments with the participatory approach within cooperation networks set up to drive local development on the basis of intervention programmes – development strategies – defined by consultation.

The bottom-up reversal of rural development policies has apparently gone along with convergence in the management practices for socio-economic development in rural areas to such an extent that there has been a degree of formalisation of the participatory approach. By developing LEADER programme and its use in a variety of instruments, it was possible of:

- the bottom-up appointment strategic to regional development concept of rural areas;
- the use of knowledge, experience and management skills of many people representatives of various social groups towards improving quality of life in rural areas;
- renewal of ties and cooperation (local government, farmers, individuals, the business sector, local organizations) for the economic development etc.

Implementation of LEADER methodology allowed local communities to participate in regional development but also use the knowledge and experience of different social groups (such as local authorities, farmers, business sector, NGO) to improve quality of life and put forward economic development in rural areas [Chmieliński 2009].

When analyzing the particular LDS can be noticed that usually the main aims were devoted to making local communities more active, to develop tourism and also protect cultural heritage.

The success of the implementation of particular LDS was possible thanks to properly prepared strategies. Particularly important was the diagnosis of the area, SWOT analysis and the choice of aims. Effectives was much bigger when local communities were involved in the preparation of LDS. Public questionnaires, public discussions were very useful [Podedworna 2013]. Effective implementation of the LDS also depend on properly chosen criteria. The criteria should promote the projects which are in accordance with strategy aims.

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PROGRAM LEADER JAKO ŹRÓDŁO FINANSOWANIA AKTYWNOŚCI LOKALNYCH GRUP DZIAŁANIA W WOJEWÓDZTWIE MAZOWIECKIM

Streszczenie. Artykuł przedstawia analizę finansowania działalności lokalnych grup działania (LGD) województwa mazowieckiego w ramach programu LEADER. Analiza obejmuje możliwości i wykorzystanie wsparcia LGD ze źródeł programu LEADER w latach 2007–2013. Na obszarze województwa mazowieckiego działało 35 LGD, które miały do dyspozycji 337 mln zł. Można zauważyć, że województwo mazowieckie jest liderem w liczbie złożonych wniosków i podpisanych kontaktów. Równocześnie obserwuje się zróżnicowanie w limitach wykorzystanych środków między lokalnymi grupami działania z tego obszaru.

Słowa kluczowe: Program LEADER, rozwój lokalny, polityka rozwoju obszarów wiejskich, lokalna grupa działania, lokalna strategia rozwoju

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