

**Multifunctional Development of Protected Areas in Poland
in the Opinion of Its Inhabitants in 2 Municipalities**

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the article is to present multifunctional development of rural areas in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship¹ in the opinion of its inhabitants after 9-10 years of the integration with the EU. The results of the inhabitants' opinions who expressed their views in the questionnaires after the integration with the EU are presented in this paper. The results of their opinions regard the communes in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship in Poland.

The area covered by protected areas in Poland amounts to 33.1%; the region with the highest percentage of areas covered by them is in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship – 62 %. There are 72 municipalities (communes) in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship among which 49 protected areas cover more than the half of the Swietokrzyskie area. These areas are usually landscape parks and protected landscape areas.

The poll was conducted among 32-102 inhabitants who expressed their opinions in the questionnaires after the EU integration. This paper presents the multifunctional development preferred by the inhabitants of 2 communes in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship in the opinion of its inhabitants after the integration with the EU. The research was based on the inhabitants' opinions concerning particular courses of development, i.e. tourism, services, handicraft, industry, agriculture, food processing, and environmental protection.

The results show that industry and tourism, and later agriculture, after the integration with the EU are the most preferred courses of multifunctional development in the rural areas of municipalities. The direct courses of development depend on specific conditions in every commune.

Keywords: multifunctional development, inhabitants' opinions, instruments, Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship

¹ *Voivodeship* is one of the sixteen provinces in Poland.

1. Introduction

Communes may, and even are obliged to, prepare and accomplish strategic plans on their own as well as search for the most efficient strategies of local development (Wiatrak, 1998). The strategy of local development embraces certain purposes and a general way of acting of a subject within the scope of the most significant and crucial decisions concerning the future of a given area. This strategy, as a management tool, enables us to work efficiently and to select appropriate solutions and directions of activity. Working out a strategy of commune development requires an active participation by involving commune authorities, its administration, external experts, representatives of local society as well as district and voivodship government and the voivode (Poskrobko, 1999).

During the preparation of a commune strategy one should take not only opinions of the commune inhabitants and concrete assistance of the outside environment, most frequently consulting companies, but also scientific authorities into account. The strategy of commune development should be quite stable, independent of personal changes in commune authorities, but it should also be flexible in terms of changing social and economic conditions (Klodzinski, 1997). The basis of strategy efficiency is accepting it by the society, which can be achieved including the local society in the process of strategy building, especially local authorities as well as opinion-forming circles. The strategy itself ought to be based upon current development opportunities. During the preparation of the strategy one has to take both specific internal conditions as well as realistic possibilities of encouraging local initiatives and external conditions into consideration. The internal factors embrace: natural conditions, commune resources, the level of infrastructure as well as the labour market, while the external ones include: a national strategy and development politics, social and ecological politics and the legal system.

The conditions of multifunctional development in the protected areas result from the potential of natural resources in this area as well as from objective conditions shaping their position in the region.

The majority of protected areas are located in rural areas, with only a handful situated in cities, such as the Szczecin Landscape Park. The fact that protected areas are located in rural areas means that both functions of these areas must be examined as an integral whole; this is all the more important in the case of landscape parks, since agricultural activity is legal there. Legal restrictions in protected areas, including landscape parks, in many cases determine the living conditions of their residents.

The need to conduct studies on the development of protected areas situated in rural areas

was the impulse for addressing this problem in this research project. An additional argument for pursuing this problem was that fact that the literature on the subject, in the case of the protected areas in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship, was either very scarce or addressed to only selected aspects. In Poland, the only areas where studies on the development of rural areas in landscape parks were conducted are the “Green Lungs of Poland” territory and the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. There are also very few publications about the development of landscape parks in the Mazowieckie and Malopolskie Voivodeships (Poplawski, 2014).

The necessity of carrying out research on development of protected areas was a reason to refer to this problem in this publication, and its goal is to show the multifunctional development preferred by the inhabitants of 2 communes in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship after the integration with the EU (after 9-10 years of this integration).

2. Materials and methods

The research composed of setting the courses of development of protected areas in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship include, among others, recognising the nature and landscape value of protected areas in the Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship. This research has been carried out since 1998. The stock-taking of environment components was limited to basic factors conditioning multifunctional and eco-development of rural areas and agriculture.

Residents who show an initiative and are interested in development of their commune were selected to participate in the questionnaire, similarly to participating farmers. The selection of residents was made after obtaining preliminary information from the Commune Offices and with their participation, and as a result of consultations with commune authorities.

The basic research instrument was an interview using a questionnaire prepared by the author, supplemented by direct observation and meetings with residents and authorities concerning the development of communes. The poll was conducted among 32 inhabitants in Solec Zdroj and 103 in Imielno, who expressed their opinions in questionnaires after the integration with the EU. The survey was prepared specifically for the purpose of examining the possible development of protected areas; the respondents included commune residents with various levels of education, mainly persons considered to be community leaders (including representatives of farmsteads). This type of questionnaire can be regarded as a quota sampling of the whole population of the area; even though it is not random, in the case of such an approach to the problem, such a procedure is possible and correct, and frequently used in English-language literature.

This paper is based on personal research, in particular: survey results, meetings with authorities of municipalities and inhabitants which concerned the development of the area. The surveys were prepared so as to show the prospects of the protected areas development. People of different levels of education took part in it, including mainly people considered as leaders according to the notion presented by Siekierski (2004) and Zawisza & Pilarska (2003) who claimed that mainly such people set the courses of development actions within a particular rural community.

The carried out survey concerned: favoured courses of development of the research area, ecological awareness, a possibility of maintaining agricultural and tourist activity, problems of everyday life hindering development, some demographic aspects, development chances and obstacles. The research was based on inhabitants' opinions concerning particular courses of development, i.e. tourism, services, handicraft, industry, agriculture, food processing, and environmental protection.

The study also used publications issued by statistical offices and conservation plans (finished or in preparation) of the Voivodeship Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in the city of Kielce.

The obtained data were examined using an analysis of the structure of results, the especially questionnaire results, which were checked for interrelations by means of a chi-squared test applied to qualitative features for the 2 municipalities (Imielno, Solec Zdroj) in which the survey was conducted.

Statistical data and materials obtained from the commune (the Commune Offices) – mainly the local plan for bringing land into cultivation – constituted a supplementary element of the research.

3. Planning of local development in the aspect eco-development

The sustainable development is thus a doctrine of political economy, which sets up the quality of life on the level, which is afforded by the contemporary civilization development. The essential and quite often neglected message is included in the beginning of a famous sentence from the WECD Report ² from 1987, stating that: “at the present civilisation level the sustainable development is possible, which means such a development, in which the needs of contemporary society can be met without decreasing chances of the future generations for their fulfilment”. A model of such an economy presumes appropriately and consciously created

² so Brundtland Report, was named this way from the name of the chairman in the Commission - Gro Harlem Brundtland.

relations between the economic growth, environmental care (not only natural environment but also the artificial one – created by a man) and human health. The doctrine of a sustainable development aims at social justice, by enterprises economic and environmental effectiveness (Rutkowska and Rembielak-Vitchev, 2008).

The literature on development planning is very extensive. One of the basic rules is the periodicity and the repeatability of planning. The very fact of periodicity is not a problem in the traditional methods of regional and local planning (analysis-evaluation-synthesis), it exists in the ideal pattern method (synthesis-analysis-evaluation). This problem arises from qualitative changes: in the traditional method we rely on the diagnosis of the existing state, while in the method of the ideal pattern we rely on the construction of the desired picture of reality, which could exist in an ideal situation - that is without internal and external limitations. T. Kudlacz (1999) proposes that the regional and local development planning both methods be used simultaneously. The ideal pattern method should be used for the qualitatively new processes (e.g. sustained development), without a continuation resulting from the up-to-date state and conditions; while the traditional one for the continuation of the existing development of a unit, with the removal of barriers and threats. A new qualitative phenomenon is also the participation of local environments, which should support the actions on their behalf, not limiting themselves only to demand help from the state. The methodical standards of the strategy preparation are commonly known in the traditional method, and the example can be the proposition from picture 1 (fig. 1). The very problem of preparing a strategy based on the method of ideal pattern is still in the research phase, but the mainframe already exists. The problem in this method, often proposed within the range of sustained development, is the issue of „ideal pattern”, or else, the lack of practical interpretation based on concrete models and indicator frames, as well as the tools for their realization, with a far-fetched postulation and varied interpretation of this concept. In the process of development planning, elements considered currently are: a significant participation of local environments, with the involvement of the most significant representatives of this society. Within partnership planning (with the participation of inhabitants) in the form of workshop the following items are accepted (fig. 2) in succession, based on the consensus principle: (*Wskazniki zrownowazonego rozwoju...*,2005): the report on the eco-development state, the mission and a visions of the eco-development, the structure of goals, where the main goal is the eco-development (the strategic plan), the plan of tasks and activities (the operational plan) and the management system of the strategy realisation (Poplawski and Rutkowska-Podolowska, 2011).

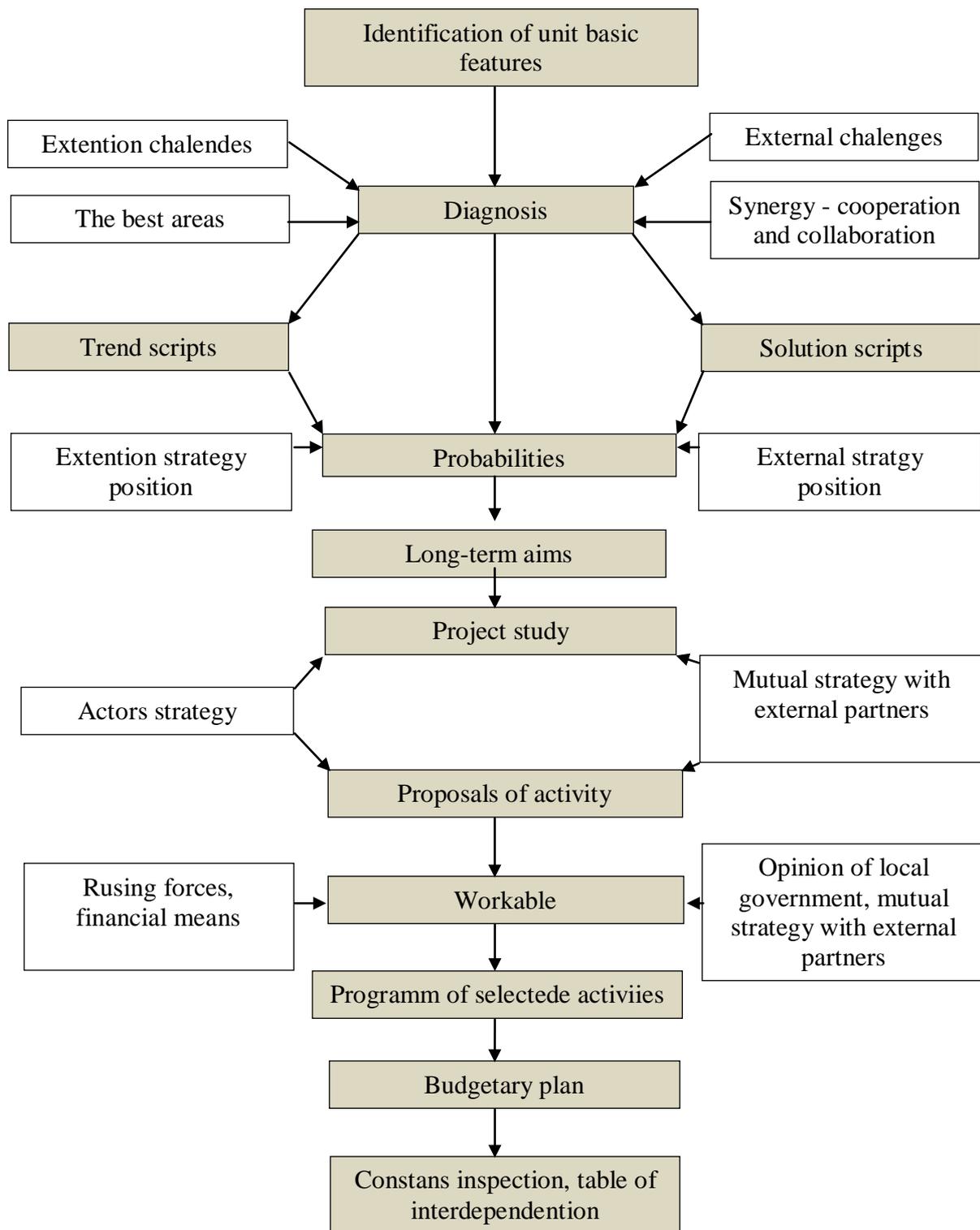


Figure. 1. Planning strategies

Source: Gucnia B., Planowanie strategiczne. [In:] Rozwoj lokalny i regionalny w okresie transformacji gospodarki polskiej, red. A. Jewtuchowicz, UL, Lodz 1993.

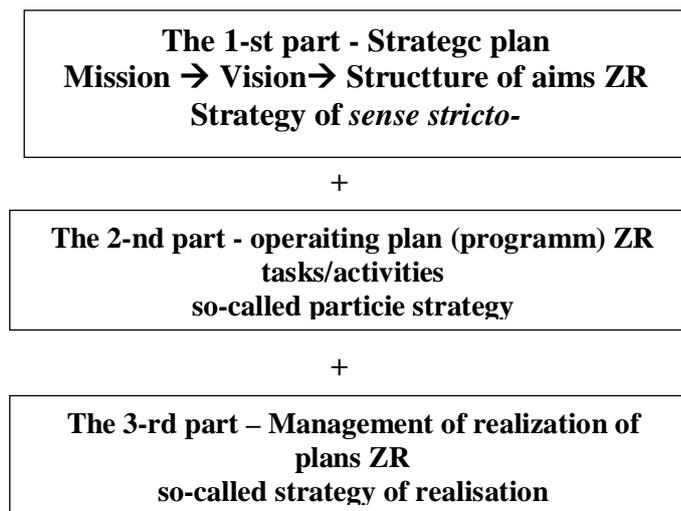


Figure. 2. Range of strategy in local planning of sustainable development

Source: (*Wskazniki zrownowazonego rozwoju...2005*).

4. Results of research

Economic factors play the most important role in local development; their structure, shape, height, or all these elements combined, can encourage or discourage development. Economic factors should be shaped in such a way as to encourage entrepreneurship and local development in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The task can be realised by means of correctly using instruments available to self-government authorities. Instruments that influence budget revenues of a self-government unit, i.e. duties and taxes, play an important role here.

Restrictions following from EU directives on supporting and protecting competition mean that only instruments based on fiscal policy can be introduced, mainly tax deductions and exemptions, as well as fixing tax rates; the inhabitants of protected areas were therefore asked what economic instruments should be used for the development of a given direction.

According to the Polish law, the most important local taxes include: property tax, motor vehicle tax, land tax, agriculture income tax, forest tax, inheritance and gift tax, and flat-rate income tax paid in the form of tax card. The idea of using instruments of stimulating local development by means of tax reductions and exemptions, i.e. by lowering the tax burden, is somewhat conflicting, since it is assumed that by sacrificing the current income we will achieve its increase in the future, e.g. through the growth of entities obliged to pay taxes. In many cases, increasing the number of entities is a positive effect in and of itself, since fully satisfying the needs of a community (the number one objective of a commune), e.g. achieving a lower

unemployment rate or a bigger number of jobs outside agriculture, is paramount to the growth of commune revenues as such.

Results after integration with EU – Imielno commune (Poplawski, 2013)

Taking into consideration external factors a question about institutions' influence on commune's development was asked. The opinion of respondents is as follows: the most favourable influence is exerted by the commune's self-government units (47.1 %).

The respondents think that it should involve health care (53.8 %), and safety of inhabitants (59.0 %).

The respondents believed the following courses of economic development to be of highest importance for the commune:

- agriculture – 63.6 %,
- agricultural and food processing – 59.6 %,
- tourism – 53.9 %,
- environmental protection – 63.1 %,
- services – 53.3 %,
- handicraft – 44.2 %,
- industry – 65.0 %.

Later on the respondents answered the questions concerning barriers and opportunities for development in the above mentioned courses of development.

As main barriers for development of tourism in commune they mentioned:

- lack of organised tourist network – 56.2%,
- lack of tourist infrastructure – 52.9 %.

They saw, however, an opportunity for development in credit guarantees (39.4 %)

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for services development in the was:

- lack of financial resources for such a development – 51.4 %.

Again, an opportunity for development would be property tax allowances and exemptions (42.3 %).

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for handicraft development in the commune were:

- lack of any base for development of handicraft – 40.2 %,
- lack of financial resources for such a development – 50.5 %.

And as an opportunity for development they saw in means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (45.3 %).

In respondents' opinions the main obstacles in the development of industry were:

- the lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 47.1 %,
- lack of financial resources for such a development – 51.4 %.

Free legal and economic consultancy would be an opportunity for the development (49.0 %).

In respondents' opinions the main obstacles for development of environmental protection were:

- lack of financial resources for such a development – 51.4 %,
- lack of infrastructure connected with environmental protection – 50.5 %.

They also saw an opportunity for the development in free legal and economic consultancy services (42.7 %).

In respondents' opinions main obstacles for food processing development in the were:

- lack of investors interested in processing development – 53.9 %,
- lack of market for products of processing – 48.0 %.

And as an opportunity for development they saw in means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (44.3 %).

The main obstacles for development of agriculture in the commune were in respondents' opinions the following:

- unprofitability of agricultural production – 44.2 %,
- lack of organised market for produce – 50.0 %.

And as an opportunity for development they saw in free legal and economic consultancy services (46.7 %).

Results after integration with EU – Solec Zdroj commune

The respondents believed the following courses of economic development to be of highest importance for the Solec Zdroj commune:

- agriculture – 46.67 %,
- agricultural and food processing – 41.38 %,
- tourism – 76.67 %,
- environmental protection – 65.52 %,
- services – 61.29 %,
- handicraft – 45.16 %,
- industry – 35.48 %.

Later on the respondents answered the questions concerning barriers and opportunities for development in the above mentioned courses of development.

As main barriers for development of tourism in commune they mentioned:

- lack of financial resources for such a development – 30.0 %,

- lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 26.67 %,
- lack of tourist infrastructure – 32.26 %.

They saw, however, an opportunity for development in free economic and legal consultancy (50.00 %), credit guarantees (40.0 %) and property tax allowances and exemptions (43.33 %).

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for services development in the was lack of financial resources for such development (34.38 %), and an opportunity for development would be in free economic and legal consultancy (51.61 %), credit guarantees (40.0 %) and means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (38.71 %).

In respondents' opinion the main obstacles for handicraft development in the commune were:

- lack o economic instruments supporting handicraft – 45.16 %,
- lack financial resources for such a development – 50.00 %,
- lack of interest of gmina's inhabitants in handicraft – 38.71 %.

And as an opportunity for development they saw in free economic and legal consultancy (40.63 %), credit guarantees (43.75 %) and means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (43.75 %).

In respondents' opinions the main obstacles in the development of industry were:

- the lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 38.71 %,
- legal restrictions connected with environmental protection – 56.25 %,
- lack of financial resources for such a development – 37.5 %.

Free legal and economic consultancy (40.63 %), credit guarantees (46.88 %) and means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (40.63 %) would be an opportunity for the development (49.0 %).

In respondents' opinions the main obstacles for development of environmental protection were:

- lack of infrastructure connected with environmental protection – 36.67 %,
- lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 38.71 %,
- lack of ecologic consciousness among the inhabitants – 37.5 %.

They saw an opportunity for the development in free economic and legal consultancy (38.71 %), credit guarantees (38.71 %) and property tax allowances and exemptions (40.0 %).

In respondents' opinions main obstacles for food processing development in the were:

- legal restrictions connected with environmental protection – 38.71 %,
- lack of economic instruments supporting such a development – 37.5 %,
- lack of market for products of processing – 40.63 %.

And as an opportunity for the development they saw in means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (45.16 %) and free economic and legal consultancy (46.67 %).

The main obstacles for development of agriculture in the commune were in respondents' opinions the following:

- lack of organised market for produce – 50.0 %,
- too big comminution of farms – 53.13 %,
- lack of positive patterns to follow – 56.25 %.

Free legal and economic consultancy (46.88 %), credit guarantees (53.13 %) and means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (53.13 %) would be an opportunity for the development (49.0 %).

The process of transforming present agriculture based on the traditional way of cultivating and using the land should lead to the multifunctional development of rural areas, which also implies integrated and environment-friendly agriculture combined with recreation and tourism. Agriculture based on ecological methods should be adjusted to the local landscape and its water and soil conditions. The large size of the labour force in agriculture provides a chance for alternative solutions also in such time-consuming branches of specialised agriculture as ecological agriculture, seed production, herb-cultivation, etc. Ecological agriculture should not only be recommended but also the only one permitted in protected areas. Considering the food production in such areas it seems appropriate to promote the most environment-friendly direction of the development, i.e. ecological agriculture (Siekierski, Dudek 2000). The development of tourism (ecological tourism) ought to be supported and treated as an alternative source of income for farmsteads. A similar point of view presented E. Gaule and G. Zilinskas (2013), A. Grzelak (2008), A. Biernat-Jarka (2010), S. Jarka (2012). I. Pilvere (2012) and Y. Yusnita *et al* (2012).

5. Conclusions

In the present conditions, the lack of problem identification, especially social and economical ones, as well as lack of the natural valorization is the main problem of the correct usage of the resources and their protection, which affects the influence on the economic efficiency. The society's participation in the realisation of sustainable development will require a total change of the orientation of all the parties interested, according to the social economy principles. This problem already has and will continue to have a growing importance, because it will no longer be possible to prevent the participation of local societies in creating their own development.

However, offering tax reductions and exemptions decreases its revenues, which are supposed to finance its own activities. Municipalities can have a direct influence on their own development, especially through support the development of private entrepreneurship by fiscal instruments (taxes, fees).

Based on the research in the field of multifunctional rural development in Imielno and Solec Zdroj communes, conclusions are as follows:

- the most important courses of development in communes are: industry in Imielno and tourism in Solec Zdroj (direct courses of development depend on specific conditions in every commune),
- the role of agriculture is now lower, and the inhabitants increasingly prefer tourism and environmental protection,
- chosen by respondents support instruments for courses of development are: free economic and legal consultancy (both communes), credit guarantees and means of transport tax allowances and exemptions (Solec Zdroj).

Despite many restrictions resulting from environmental protection and infrastructure insufficiency, the both communes located on protected areas have development possibilities. The development should be supported by financial source designated to multifunctional development, particularly to create non-agricultural, new job places and agriculture structural changes and infrastructure (especially for environmental protection).

From the point of view of the sustainable development, the basis of all research in this field is accepting as the base of the dynamic character of development, the reflexive relations, the correlations, as well as monitoring the processes, which will take place with the active participation of local societies. The creation of knowledge, the transfer of knowledge, and then the employment of knowledge will favour the improvement of social welfare in various branches of life, and also in the sustainable development planning.

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