

Factors Determining the Institutional Efficiency of Self-Governments in the Economic and Spatial Area

Renata Marks-Bielska, Wiesława Lizińska, Karolina Babuchowska,
Magdalena Wojarska

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland

Abstract

The work attempts to assess measures developing institutional efficiency in the economic and spatial area implemented by the local self-governments in Poland, as well as the evaluation of the effects thereof. Two indexes were used (the tasks implementation index—Wr and the effects index—We). The analyses conducted imply that the effects indexes assumed higher values than the implementation indexes. In the self-evaluation of self-government authorities, irrespective of the number of undertaken measures, the ones that are implemented bring the assumed effects. From among the measures undertaken by local self-governments in order to support starting up and conducting economic activity in their territory, the favorable disposition of officials and the improvement in general technical infrastructure of an urban municipality were indicated most frequently. In the area of space management, the tasks related with increasing municipalities' aesthetics were distinguished (on average in Poland—76,31%).

Keywords: institutional efficiency, local economic development

JEL: E02, H70

Introduction

Standards regarding the functioning and evaluation of public administration units, including territorial self-government units, have been continuously evolving. New expectations and tasks resulting from progressing socio-economic development and socio-political transformations emerge with regard to territorial self-government. Territorial self-governments are more and more often evaluated on the grounds of the efficiency criterion (Władyka 2008, 20). Nevertheless, this concept is complex, and in the universal understanding efficiency corresponds to each virtue of practical conduct (accuracy, effectiveness, simplicity) (Kotarbiński 1975, 117–118). With reference to the evaluation of the functioning of an institution, including local self-government, for the purposes of the conducted research, efficiency has been defined as a permanent readiness to simultaneously develop economic and social relations partnerships, both with enterprises and with the local community, and the capability of local authorities to provide a swift and competent response to the needs of enterprises intending to start up economic activity and conduct it within a specific municipality. Among other things, the ability to define objectives and agree on them with a local community, as well as efficient decision taking are taken into consideration. The institutional efficiency of local authorities constitutes an important factor that is analyzed with regard to the functioning of local self-government, which results from the interaction of this area of activity with local economic growth. Therefore, activities aimed at an improvement of local self-government functioning and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations have been undertaken for a long period of time (Marks-Bielska and Babuchowska 2012).

Two main opinions on the interactions between economic growth and institutional efficiency can be found in the literature. On the one hand, the meaning of institutional efficiency as a key stimulant of the level of development (and this opinion prevails) (Evans and Harding 1997, 112);

on the other hand, the dependency consisting in the development determining efficiency is not denied (Fried and Rabinovitz 1980). It can also be noticed that the efficiency of the functioning of a given local self-government can be determined by, among other things, the activity of neighboring self-governments (Geys 2006).

The local authorities' impact on social and economic development depends on equipping them with the necessary instruments. They must be adjusted to a twofold type of task. First of all, these are to identify problems occurring in particular units, diagnose the situation, the area of internal and external development conditions' analysis, as well as to programme the directions of impact and manners of conducting particular operations. Secondly, it is to implement established arrangements and programmes by achieving adopted strategic objectives and including social and economic entities in the process of implementing those objectives (Potoczek 2012, 249). Territorial self-government units have been more and more intensely participating in the conscious development of conditions of economic growth in the local and regional scope. For this purpose, they have used a number of instruments and methods of conduct predominantly aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship (Kozuch 2011, 9; Olejniczak 2016, 35–36). Space and its development have become a crucial factor actuating social and economic development. The meaning of this factor is growing, along with the proceeding spatial diversity of human life, an increase in the complexity and intensity of spatial structures, and a growing deficit of space useful for situating many functions that are socially necessary and, at the same time, an increasing conflict thereof with natural resources and cultural heritage. Taking the above into consideration, the self-government authorities should systematically conduct activities to the benefit of rational use and development of space (Ziółkowski 2005, 106).

From the economic point of view, space constitutes a scarce resource. This comprises a necessary element to start up and conduct business activity. Therefore, changes in the scope of a municipality's spatial development constitute changes in the conditions of starting up and developing local economic activity. A local self-government unit is a basic entity taking decisions on those changes, as well as coordinating and supervising them, and can directly change the spatial development in the municipality. Spatial order provision and land management is included in the scope of the municipality's own tasks (Sztando 2003, 193). It is also important to prevent conflicts that appear between entities competing for elements of the space that can be used for various purposes, in compliance with the law (Żróbek-Różańska and Zysk 2015).

1 Research methodology

In the article¹ an attempt has been made to evaluate measures developing institutional efficiency in the economic and spatial area executed by local self-governments in Poland, as well as to evaluate the effects of those measures. The hypothesis—local self-governments in Poland have executed several measures developing institutional efficiency in the economic and spatial area in varying degrees and with varied effects—was verified. The analysis covered measures aimed at enabling starting up and developing economic activity as well as measures referring to the improvement of spatial management. For research purposes, a survey questionnaire was established and addressed at the authorities of local municipalities in Poland. The research was conducted on a sample of 1 220 municipalities ($N = 2\,479$, $d = 2\%$)². It was conducted at the turn of the years 2015 and 2016.

1. Results presented in the article refer to the achievement of one of the specific objectives (the identification of factors influencing the institutional efficiency at a local level and the evaluation thereof in researched units) formulated within the implementation of the research project “Institutional efficiency vs. local economic development—determining factors and interactions.” The project was funded by the National Science Centre pursuant to the decision number DEC-2013/09/B/HS4/03039. The main aim of the project was to evaluate the institutional efficiency in municipalities and to indicate its relation with the level of economic development. All identified factors were divided into five areas within which local self-governments fulfil their tasks: economic and spatial, financial, administrative, human resources management, as well as in the scope of social, cultural and educational services.

2. N —number of communes in Poland, d —error results.

[In the journal European practice of number notation is followed—for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style).—Ed.]

Measures undertaken by local self-governments were identified on the grounds of an analysis of the tasks implementation index. Values of this index for particular areas were calculated as the relation of the number of actually implemented tasks by local self-governments and the number of tasks possible to be implemented and included in the research. The value of the index lies in the range between 0 (municipalities do not implement tasks) and 1 (municipalities implement all tasks included in the research).

The effects of the aforementioned tasks within the areas analyzed herein were evaluated on the grounds of the value of the calculated effects index of tasks implemented in compliance with the formula

$$(1) \quad We = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k n_i w_i}{kN},$$

where:

We — the value of the task implementation effects index,

i — the evaluation index,

n_i — the number of municipalities that indicated the factor at the i -th position,

k — the maximum score on the scale from 0 to k ($k = 3$),

N — the number of municipalities that participated in the research,

w_i — the mark which corresponds to the level of the task implementation i ⁽³⁾.

Indexes of tasks implementation and effects thereof were also calculated in a division into voivodships and due to the type of municipalities (urban, urban-rural, rural). The same indexes were calculated for the whole community for comparison purposes.

2 Implementation of tasks by local authorities and effects thereof in the economic area

Local authorities have a number of instruments at their disposal, and can undertake various measures in the process of developing conditions for starting up and developing economic activity. Nevertheless, for those measures to bring intended effects, it is necessary to have knowledge enabling the selection of relevant instruments, proper for the purposes at a specific stage of the enterprises' investment process. The results of the conducted research indicate that the authorities of the researched municipalities support economic activity, although they do not use all the instruments available to them. The index of tasks implemented by municipal self-governments in order to facilitate starting up and conducting economic activity in fact ranged from 0,17 (in Wielkopolskie Voivodship) to 0,39 (in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship and Opolskie Voivodship), whereas, the effects index assumed values from 0,58 (in Lubelskie Voivodship) to 0,66 (in Świętokrzyskie Voivodship) (tab. 1). Irrespective of the fact of how many tasks at particular stages (starting up and conducting activity) were executed by municipalities, the self-evaluation of the implementation effects was high (the respondents evaluated expected effects achievement with a decidedly yes and somewhat yes mark). A low task implementation index also appeared in the Śląskie Voivodship municipalities (0,19).

The relatively low implementation index can result from the high level of investment attractiveness of the voivodship. Furthermore, a high concentration of enterprises can be observed in this region. This fact can contribute to decreasing the scope of the dynamics of local authorities' measures aimed at helping in starting up and conducting economic activity. Nevertheless, a different situation occurred in the Mazowieckie and Podlaskie voivodships, in which the Wr value was also low, and those voivodships take different positions in the investment attractiveness ranking. In the investment attractiveness ranking in 2015 the Mazowieckie Voivodship took 2nd place, and with the tasks implementation index at a level of 0,27 it took 14th position (tab. 2). However, it should be underlined that the Mazowieckie Voivodship is considerably diversified territorially with regard to investment attractiveness (Godlewska-Majkowska and Zarębski 2012b, 18), and its high

3. The index used was defined on the grounds of the solution proposed by Karaszewski and Sudoł (1997, 17–18).

Tab. 1. Implementation indexes (Wr) and effect indexes (We) of measures undertaken by municipal self-governments in order to facilitate starting up and conducting economic activity

Region	Wr	We
Opolskie	0,39	0,61
Zachodniopomorskie	0,39	0,65
Dolnośląskie	0,37	0,61
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	0,35	0,60
Podkarpackie	0,34	0,63
Małopolskie	0,33	0,63
Lubuskie	0,33	0,59
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	0,33	0,63
Mazowieckie	0,27	0,61
Lubelskie	0,32	0,58
Świętokrzyskie	0,32	0,66
Łódzkie	0,31	0,63
Pomorskie	0,31	0,64
Podlaskie	0,27	0,61
Śląskie	0,19	0,62
Wielkopolskie	0,17	0,63
<i>Poland</i>	<i>0,33</i>	<i>0,62</i>

Note: Measures were considered at the stage of starting up and conducting economic activity, and the set of measures included: tax allowances, an improvement in the general technical infrastructure of a municipality, equipping the area for the purposes of specific investment, favorable attitude of officials and local community, help in finding land or facilities, help in recruiting or training employees, an improvement in social infrastructure, local law-making favorable for investors, informing about the possibility to fund investment, providing counselling services, stimulating cooperation with offices and institutions and others.

Tab. 2. The investment attractiveness of voivodships vs. the tasks implementation index with regard to initiating and conducting business activities by researched self-governments

Voivodship	Ranking	
	Investment attractiveness ranking according to the Gdańsk Institute for Market Economics	Activity to the benefit of starting up and developing economic entrepreneurship (Wr)
Śląskie	1	15
Mazowieckie	2	14
Dolnośląskie	3	3
Małopolskie	4	8
Wielkopolskie	5	16
Zachodniopomorskie	6	1
Pomorskie	7	12
Łódzkie	8	11
Opolskie	9	2
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	10	4
Lubuskie	11	6
Podkarpackie	12	5
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	13	7
Świętokrzyskie	14	10
Lubelskie	15	9
Podlaskie	16	13

Source: Studies according to Tarkowski (2015) and own research results

position in rankings is significantly decided by Warsaw's position. Whereas, Podlaskie Voivodship took similar positions with regard to investment attractiveness (16th position) and the value of the tasks implementation index (13th).

While analyzing the structure of answers to the question regarding supporting enterprises at the stage of starting up and conducting economic activity in the Śląskie Voivodship and Wielkopolskie Voivodship it was noticed that the biggest difference in answers to particular questions occurred with regard to equipping the areas for the purposes of particular investments at the stage of conducting economic activity (27,9% in Śląskie Voivodship and 45,45% in Wielkopolskie Voivodship—the difference amounted to 14,86 percentage points), as well as local law-making favorable for investors (28,7%—in Śląskie Voivodship and 41,82% in Wielkopolskie Voivodship)—a difference of 13,08 percentage points. In Wielkopolskie Voivodship it was declared that tax allowances had also been given more frequently, both at the stage of starting up (30,91%), as well as conducting economic activity (48,18%) than in the Śląskie Voivodship (22,99 and 31,03, respectively).

The most frequently indicated task comprised the favorable attitude of officials at both analyzed stages of economic activity (78,16%—in the Śląskie Voivodship at the starting up stage of the economic activity, and 65,52% at the stage of conducting the activity, whereas, in Wielkopolskie Voivodship—76,36 and 66,36%, respectively). With regard to this task, a similar situation occurred in Podlaskie Voivodship (74,19% at the starting up stage and 64,52 at the stage of conducting an activity) and in Mazowieckie Voivodship (77,04% and 53,33%, respectively). Another position was taken by an improvement in general technical infrastructure of the (urban) municipality—both at the first and the second of the analyzed levels of conducting economic activity—over 50% (the Śląskie Voivodship and Wielkopolskie Voivodship). Whereas, in the Mazowieckie Voivodship and Podlaskie Voivodship, at the stage of conducting economic activity, a percentage of municipalities declaring an improvement in general technical infrastructure was at a level of 40,32% and 45,19%, respectively. Whereas, the research conducted by Pawlak and co-authors (2015) in Wielkopolskie Voivodship implies that a favorable attitude of local authorities to the investor does not constitute such an important factor for investors encouraging them to invest (39% of respondents) as it does for local authorities (84,5% of researched municipalities). A similar relation in the discrepancy of the evaluations of investors and self-governments was noted in the case of infrastructure, which was not as important for investors as it was for self-governments.

Our own research results indicated that the tasks implementation index with regard to helping enterprises at the stage of starting up economic activity was higher (0,36) than during further conduct of an enterprise (0,30). It should also be underlined that the difference between those values is relatively small, despite the fact that the values of both indexes are not high. Taking into consideration the type of municipality, it has been stated that the highest implementation index (0,49) was obtained by urban municipalities, then urban-rural municipalities—0,38 and 0,28—rural municipalities. Thus, it can be observed that the municipalities with already potentially better conditions for economic activity (urban municipalities)⁴ strive to improve those conditions, whereas rural municipalities⁵ most often characterized with less favorable conditions for conducting economic activities unfortunately do not undertake numerous measures in order to improve the conditions to start up and run enterprises.

The research results also indicated that a majority of authorities stated that measures undertaken by them bring effects to a degree, and only 8,44% of researched self-governments decidedly confirmed that those measures bring effects. Such a situation occurred irrespective of the number of undertaken measures. The data included in table 3 imply that the rankings of voivodships with regard to the value of implementation and effects indexes are diametrically different. Only the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship took first place with regard to the value of the *Wr* index and the second place with regard to the value of the *We* index. The biggest in plus differences in the

4. For example: a higher level of communication infrastructure, accessibility of investment areas, office rooms, accessibility of business environment institutions.

5. Rural municipalities can compete with urban municipalities mainly with larger investment areas. However, in general, they have poorer conditions to conduct business activity with regard to the majority of aspects important for enterprises (among others: various infrastructures).

ranking of index values were noted in the following voivodships: Opolskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie, and Lubelskie, whereas, the biggest (in minus) differences were noted in the following voivodships: Pomorskie and Świętokrzyskie, as well as Śląskie and Małopolskie.

Managers of the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship municipalities most often concentrated, like the representatives of other voivodships, on a favorable attitude to enterprises. Nevertheless, it should be noted that they very frequently helped to find land or premises for enterprises. Moreover, they have improved the technical infrastructure of the municipality and informed entities on the possibility to fund economic activity. Local authorities of the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship, where the highest value of the measures implementation index was noted, predominantly concentrated on the activity within the so-called soft factors of investment locations. Those factors were indicated among the three most frequently undertaken measures. Nonetheless, it is worth underlining that despite the highest value of the effects index on average per voivodship, only 4 municipalities in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship that participated in the research were decidedly sure that the measures undertaken by them had positive effects.

Tab. 3. Ranking of voivodships according to the implementation (Wr) and effects indexes (We) of the activity taken

Voivodship	Wr ranking	Wr (value)	We ranking	We (value)	$We - Wr$ ranking
Zachodniopomorskie	1	0,3941	2	0,6533	1
Opolskie	2	0,3880	13	0,6095	11
Dolnośląskie	3	0,3671	11	0,6125	8
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	4	0,3536	14	0,6036	10
Podkarpackie	5	0,3377	6	0,6313	1
Lubuskie	6	0,3333	15	0,5916	9
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	7	0,3265	5	0,6338	-2
Małopolskie	8	0,3261	4	0,6343	-4
Lubelskie	9	0,3243	16	0,5751	7
Świętokrzyskie	10	0,3218	1	0,6601	-9
Łódzkie	11	0,3110	8	0,6279	-3
Pomorskie	12	0,3074	3	0,6379	-9
Podlaskie	13	0,2715	10	0,6129	-3
Mazowieckie	14	0,2709	12	0,6111	-2
Śląskie	15	0,1949	9	0,6206	-6
Wielkopolskie	16	0,1710	7	0,6303	-9

The results of the research conducted by Godlewska-Majkowska and Zarebski (2012a, 75), which concentrated on comparing the entrepreneurship and the level of investment attractiveness for trade and services, indicated that, among other things, the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship was characterized by “entrepreneurship excess.” The case of overinvesting in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship was related with the strongly developed tourist function in this voivodship and generating demand for tourist services, especially in summer.

3 The implementation of local authorities' measures and their effects in the spatial area

For many industries conducting economic activity, it depends on the location in the investment area meeting the requirements of this activity. An important factor also considered by investors while selecting an investment location comprises spatial development possibilities (e.g., related with expanding the enterprise) in a given location. Therefore, rational space management at municipality level constitutes a determinant of social and economic development. Such economic factors also allow the avoidance of conflicts related with space at municipality level between stakeholders that

can extend the investment process and sometimes also lead to an investor's withdrawal from a given investment location.

Calculated implementation indexes (Wr) for the municipalities of particular voivodships regarding measures undertaken by municipal self-governments in order to manage the space assumed values from 0,42 (in Lubelskie Voivodship) to 0,61 (in Opolskie Voivodship), whereas, effects indexes—from 0,61 (in Podlaskie Voivodship) to 0,76 (in Opolskie Voivodship) (tab. 4). The biggest values of indexes related with undertaking measures in the scope of rational space management were obtained by Opolskie Voivodship. Nevertheless, what is characteristic is that Podlaskie Voivodship was characterized with one of the lowest indexes, both with regard to the tasks of self-governments undertaken in order to start up and conduct economic activity, as well as managing space.

In the structure of tasks undertaken in order to improve spatial management, the ones related with municipalities' aesthetics improvement are distinguished (on average in Poland—76,31%, in Opolskie Voivodship—88,6%, in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship—88,0%, in Małopolskie Voivodship—81,7%) (fig. 1).

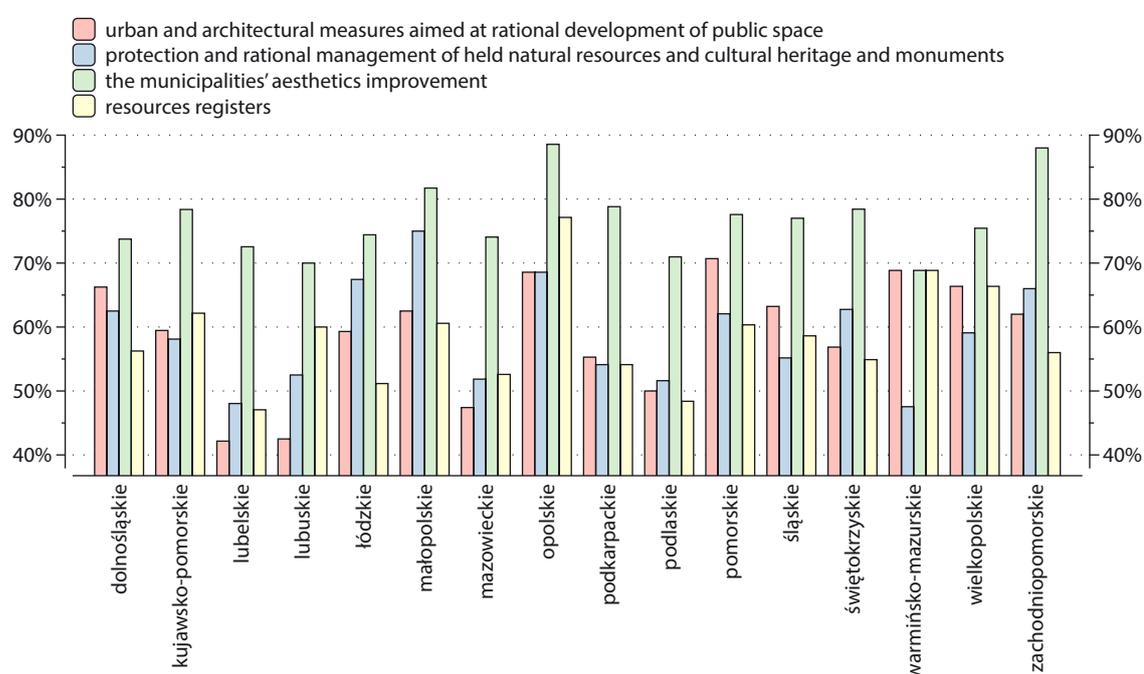


Fig. 1. The structure of activities related with the improvement of space management undertaken by local authorities

The fewest respondents, despite their percentage being significant (68,9%), indicated this group of tasks in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. Another position was taken by measures related with the protection and rational management of natural resources and cultural heritage and monuments (on average, in Poland—63,75%). This group of tasks was indicated by the largest number of respondents from Małopolskie Voivodship—75,0%, Opolskie Voivodship—68,6%, Łódzkie Voivodship—67,4%, whereas, the smallest number—from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship (47,5%). Two other separated groups of measures obtained, on average, similar values for Poland. Urban and architectural measures aimed at rationally developing public space (58,19%—on average in Poland, with a maximum value for the Pomorskie Voivodship—70,7% and a minimum value for Lubelskie Voivodship—42,2%). Register of resources (57,46%—on average for Poland, reaching a maximum value—77,1% in Opolskie Voivodship and a minimum value in Lubelskie Voivodship—47,1%). Taking into consideration the type of municipalities, as in the case of the undertakings of self-governments related with facilitating starting up and conducting economic activity, the highest implementation and effects indexes were noted in urban municipalities (0,61 and 0,74, respectively), then, in urban and rural (0,56; 0,70) and rural (0,47; 0,67).

Taking into consideration space management in the researched municipalities, it can be stated that an increase in the municipality's aesthetics comprised the priority for the majority of respondents. On the one hand, this is beneficial, since it contributes to the improvement of the local communities' quality of life, yet, it should also be underlined that the undertaken measures aimed at achieving the objective in the described scope comprise the easiest among all of the enumerated ones. It would be desirable to increase the activity to the benefit of the remaining groups of measures undertaken in the analyzed scope.

Summary

In contemporary social and economic reality, attention is increasingly drawn to efficient operations. This also refers to the efficient functioning of self-government units at a local level. Positive impact on local development depends on equipping entities that are liable therefore with the necessary instruments. For the purposes of the efficient execution of tasks for which they have been statutorily obliged, local authorities were equipped with instruments enabling the undertaking of relevant measures in the following areas: economic and spatial, financial, administrative, human resources, and in the scope of social, cultural and educational services.

On the grounds of the conducted analyses concerning the economic and spatial area, it can be stated that local self-governments in Poland executed several measures developing institutional efficiency in the economic and spatial area in varying degrees and with varied effects. There are differences, both in the values of the tasks implementation index, as well as the effects of the implementation in the researched municipalities of particular voivodships. In the scope of supporting starting up and conducting economic activity the implementation indexes reached a value between 0,17 and 0,39, whereas, the effects index assumed values between 0,58 and 0,66. Irrespective of the fact of how many tasks at particular stages (starting up and conducting activity) were implemented by municipalities, the self-assessment of the implementation effects was high (respondents evaluated bringing expected effects with a decidedly yes and a to some degree yes mark).

In the area regarding space management, those values reached, in the case of implementation indexes, levels between 0,42 and 0,61, whereas, effects indexes reached levels between 0,61 and 0,76. In general, among the measures undertaken by local self-governments in order to support starting up and conducting economic activity in their territory, the favorable disposition of officials was indicated most frequently. Another position was taken by an improvement in the general technical infrastructure of a (urban) municipality. In the area of space management, the tasks related with the improvement of municipalities' aesthetics are distinguished (on average in Poland—76,31%), other places were taken by measures related with the protection and rational management of natural resources and cultural heritage and monuments (on average in Poland—63,75%), then, urban and architectural measures aimed at the rational development of public space.

Local self-governments, although not numerous, undertake measures in the analyzed areas—economic and spatial. The implementation of a given solution is decided by various factors, among which the following can be enumerated: internal resources, creativity of local authorities, current economic situation in a managed area (economic entities saturation, unemployment rate, actual possibilities of attracting other investment projects). Also, the quality of human resources plays a significant role. All of the above factors contribute to the stipulation of specific economic objectives and achievement thereof at local level. The efficiency of self-government authorities determine whether the resources are used in a rational manner, which will have a positive impact on local development and quality improvement for the life of the community.

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