

CHAPTER 3

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THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN INTRODUCING THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SHAPING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE. THE ANALYSIS BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF DYWITY DISTRICT

Introduction

There is no universal definition for the *sustainable development*. According to GIORDANO (2005) there are about 150 definitions of this term. PIONTEK (2002) lists 44. The reason is that the term of sustainable development could be analyzed in many different aspects. Very often the author himself provides a vast array of different definitions according to different criteria.

In this thesis we accepted the definition provided by Polish legal regulations. According to those regulations it is the social and economic development which simultaneously preserves the balance in natural environment.

After we joined the European Union it became clear that it is the district which is the most appropriate territorial unit to realise the principles of sustainable development. Nowadays districts have an impact on organizing their own areas. Thanks to it, they influences the local, and indirectly also national land development according to the rule “Think locally, act globally”.

The local realisation of sustainable development is based on the rules of ecological policy accepted by the national government. The aim of the policy is to act in a way to preserve the balance between the natural environment and economic and social development including the environmental preservation. The borough leader is the person who is responsible for introducing the policy in his or her district.

The role of the district in realising the local ecological development is important. Number of legal articles and international contracts signed by the Polish government consider districts the territorial units which realize the policy of ecological development.

The analysis is based on such legal articles as: the strategy of district development, the analysis of special development trends, the plan

of environmental preservation in the period from 2007 to 2011, the programme of waste management in Dywity district, the analysis of the areas which have a great cultural importance, resolutions connected with the environmental preservation approved by the District Council, the list of planned investments, statistics and literary sources.

Plans and activities in dywity district in terms of environmental preservation

According to GIORDANO (2005) the realisation of the principles of sustainable development in the district is based on an appropriate ecological policy. It decides about the economical and social criteria in terms of natural resources.

According to KOZLOWSKI (2002) these are the major principles of ecological development:

- the major rule – the activities for natural preservation should not go against the economic development
- natural land features should be taken into consideration when the land development is planned
- the rule of law and order – every legal regulation should be respected
- the elimination of the source of pollution
- every citizen who contaminates the environment is responsible for its degradation
- the rule of the economy development – the introduction of ecological credits, tax reliefs, charges for the exploitation of natural resources, fines for the emission of pollution
- the rule of regionalism – each region has a right to lead its own ecological policy
- the ecological policy should be realized with the active citizen's participation.

Additional rules included in the Second National Ecological Policy:

- applying modern technology
- the rule of subsidy – provinces, second levels of local government administration and districts are given the right to decide about their domestic matters by the EU authorities
- the rule of protective clauses – strict rules concerning the environmental preservation which apply to the members of EU
- the rule of the economic and ecological effectiveness – its aim is to gain the highest ecological effectiveness with the minimal use of economic resources.

On 26th April 2000 the District Council of Dywity approved the Study of Spatial Development Trends. This document presents the main role of the local government in Dywity district. It is so called “the mission of the district”. That mission is to improve residents’ life conditions by developing economy (manufacturing, services, tourism and agriculture) and at the same time taking into consideration natural land features.

The aims of overriding importance included in the document:

- the improvement of living conditions of the residents by the rational use of the environment preserving its natural value
- the preservation of spatial order
- the preservation of cultural values.

Additionally the authorities of Dywity district decided to start a long-term policy. These are the aims of the policy:

- the reduction of water absorption and energy consumption in production processes (50%)
- double increase in the use of recycled materials in the production of industrial waste
- recycling and another use of at least 50% of paper and glass from public waste
- the elimination of sewage coming from cities and industrial production
- the reduction of the amount of sewage that flows into the surface waters (50% - industrial waste, 30% - public sewage)
- the reduction of the emission of SO₂, (56%), NO_x (31%), NH₄ (8%) and LZO (4%)
- the remove of the leaded petrol and using the lead-free instead.

The tasks approved by the local government in terms of environmental preservation:

- the tasks founded and realised by the local government itself – they should include the objectives, the period of realization, the units responsible for realization, and funds
- the tasks coordinated by the outside authorities – the description of those tasks should be restricted to the particular region or the role of the district in those tasks
- the periodic tasks – tasks realized in certain periods of time
- the continuous tasks – tasks realized continuously by the local government.

The main objectives concerning the natural resources and the present conditions of the environment in Dywity district were brought together and following tasks were set (Programme....2007):

- a) taking into consideration the rules of the environmental preservation and biological diversity in spatial planning
- b) the introduction of ecological economy e.g. ecological agriculture in the area of a great natural value
- c) regaining naturally important ecosystems and habitats
- d) outlining the “ecological corridors” – uniting forest complexes, afforestation
- e) the district’s programme of creation the green areas (2007 -2011)
- f) obeying the rules of natural preservation in economic investments (2007 -2011)
- g) the increase in the number of green areas especially in the areas where the lakes merge.

Some of the above mentioned objectives are realized systematically. In terms of improving the forest complexes’ conditions the following activities were carried out:

- in 2007 100ha of unfertile soli were converted into forest
- new nurseries were set up
- special areas were outlined for the research purposes.

In terms of the exploitation of natural resources, according to the principles of sustainable development, the areas of a great natural value are preserved. In terms of renewable energy the following activities were introduced:

- a) taking into consideration the renewable energy in the land development plan
- b) the promotion of renewable energy resources
- c) building the experimental wiring using the renewable energy resources

To provide good water conditions certain actions dealing with water and sewage management were undertaken. There are such actions as: the construction of new sewage systems and the modernisation of the already existing ones (2007 – 2011), the protective actions – to recultivate water bodies which are degraded, to create the green areas around the lakes and protective zones.

To improve the atmospheric air quality the actions concerning changes in the present heat management were undertaken: the expansion and modernisation of the heating plants, the replacement of the old boiler room, building new gas-supply lines.

The actions undertaken in order to protect the area against noise:

- taking into consideration the protection against noise in the local plan of spatial development
- changes in the road traffic by building bicycle lanes and the improvement of roads' surfaces
- the implementation of protective devices against noise such as acoustic screens or the exchange of windows for the soundproof ones

The suggested actions concerning the environmental protection against waste include: the reduction of the newly produced and already existing waste; the prevention from forming illegal rubbish dumps and the recultivation of the already existing ones, the introduction of a proper waste management like recycling or sorting the rubbish

To avoid the negative effects of accidents, mechanical failures or chemical contamination it is suggested to provide the rescue teams with specialist equipment.

Particular emphasis was placed on the ecological education in the district. The undertaken actions include: the introduction of ecological education on all educational levels, raising the ecological awareness by organizing the ecological events – meetings, concerts, festivities etc., the development of ecological activities.

Most of the above mentioned actions are carried out continuously with the active participation of the local government. The local authorities partially or completely fund particular actions. The funds allotted for the realization of the particular aims come from the district budget and other resources as EU Environmental Preservation Funds. The aims are realized by the district authorities themselves or different outside organizations, however with the participation of the community of Dywity.

None of these aims was chosen accidentally. The development of the district should take place according to the principles of sustainable development and following the rules of ecological policy binding in European Union. The actions such as the improvement of landscapes' quality, efficient preservation of the environment and biological variety in the district, and providing the balance between species are connected with the location of the district within the protected area of the Łyna valley. The Łyna valley complies with the requirements for ecological corridors established by the national ecological network ECONET – POLSKA.

The ecological corridors fulfill the role of the migratory pattern for animals and make the exchange of genes possible. They are also biologically active regions essential to maintain the biological balance. In this area the particular care of the beauty of the landscape should be

taken into consideration. The agriculture and industry should not be developed (The Programme... , 2007).

The district area is forested within 26%. The distribution of forests is irregular. They are situated along the Łyna valley and around the lake Wadağ. Whereas there are almost no forests in the northern and southern parts of the district. The age and the composition of trees is varied. In the north-west side of the district beeches dominate whereas along the Łyna valley and near the lake Wadağ there are forests with a great number of pines. As far as the aspect of habitats is concerned the pine forests dominate.

It is also worth mentioning that part of the forests in Dywity district fulfill the role of the protective forests and it has got a legal validity according to the Plans of Forest Farms' Organization in Forestry Commissions of Kudypy and Olsztyn.

In the area of the lake Wadağ the forests which protect against water. are situated In southern and south –west parts of the district the protective forests are outlined because of the immediate neighbourhood of Olsztyn.

The improvement of water quality in the area of the district is the result of the third-class water quality of the rivers: Wadağ, Pisa Warmińska, and lakes: Dywity and Wadağ and the waters which do not meet any standards of cleanness. The waters of second – class quality could be found in the surroundings of Barczewo (2002). Waters are classified according to bacteriological parameters and the phosphorus and nitrogen content. The advantage of the district is the fact that the water which is drawn for the resident's needs comply with the water quality standards. The only thing which is different from the norm is the higher level of iron and manganese. The higher level of these elements results from natural reasons as the higher level of these elements is also found in the soil of the area.

As far as the air pollution is concerned the area of the district belongs to the A -zone; it complies with the acceptable norms of air quality. The main sources of air pollution are local heating plants heated with a low quality coal. The undertaken actions deal with the modernization of the heating plants, the replacement of the old ones, the use of the new heating devices, developing gas -supply lines , thermal insulation of buildings. To reduce traffic pollution it is planned to build the ring road, to provide bicycle lanes and to encourage the residents to use public transport.

The efforts to reduce noise are based on the implementation of acoustic screens, outlining the places of urban greenery, the reduction in

the number of cars by using bikes instead. The problem with noise is also taken into consideration when the land development plan is being approved.

The role of the local government in the realisation of the ecological policy in the district

It is the local government which decides about the matters connected with the environmental preservation. In terms of the investments the District Council decides about their development and functioning. The District Council has the right to express its support for the project or the opposition to it. The building of the ring road around Olsztyn could serve as the example. Both the local authorities and the residents of the Dywity district express their strong opposition to the undertaking because of the fact that the planned ring road would cut across the area of the district.

The role of the District Council is also important in terms of the legal aspect. The District council approves the resolutions and acts concerning the environmental preservation in the area of the district. The resolutions concern both formation and elimination of the forms of environmental preservation such as natural features of historic importance, documentary posts, ecologically useful areas, etc.

In terms of the undertaking which is not local but concerns only part of the district, the District Council has a right to express its opinion and residents have a right to take part in social consultative meetings. The already mentioned undertaking – building the ring road around Olsztyn could be also the example.

It is also worth mentioning that the District Council approves all the acts concerning the district's domestic affairs. It is not an easy thing to work out the programmes and regulations concerning the environmental preservation. The documents fall into two categories:

- documents which the local government is legally obliged to prepare, e.g. The Local Plan of Land Development
- the obligatory documents such as business plans, which the district's authorities can prepare in order to receive the financial support from the EU organizations.

The district's authorities frequently sign contracts with firms to prepare appropriate documents. The advantage of such a solution is a high quality of substantive content and a short time of completion. However, the disadvantages are the costs, the lack of residents' participation in the process of documents' preparation, rare verification of motions, and the executor's unsatisfactory knowledge about the

problems of community. What is more the preparation of documents is a process which requires the employment and help of many people and above all, it is extremely time-consuming. It can even last for years. The long-term preparations can lead to the situation when the document loses its validity shortly after the completion or even during the work on it. It sometimes happens when the legal regulations change during the process of document's preparation.

The role of the district as a governing body in the realisation of ecological policy is very important. Realising the aims of the policy the local authorities use appropriate tools. They could be direct – orders and prohibitions, and indirect – economic activities. The economic policy's tools could have administrative and legislative character e.g. the norms for emission of gases, or economic – they encourage choosing the ecological solutions because of the financial reasons. the economic tools are (GIORDANO, 2005):

- the charges for the use of the environment – the charges for the air pollution, water contamination, water consumption and waste disposal
- the administrative charges - the charges for the exploitation of natural resource, cutting down trees, and excluding lands from the agricultural or forest production
- the fines for the illegal use of the environment e.g. illegal emission of gases, water contamination, carrying of the sewage or illegal waste disposal
- subvention – the forms of financial help – non-repayable subsidies, tax reliefs, credits.

Within the area of the district the area of a protected landscape is also situated. That is why the local government must obey the laws established by the governments from the higher administrative levels. This is the evidence that the local government of the district has the influence not only on the ecological policy in the district but also in the region of Warmia and Mazury. The local government can also influence the environmental education in the district. The local authorities and the employees of the local government help the community to complete all formalities connected with the environment. On the Internet the residents can find some interesting information about the current district's affairs. The information also regularly appears in the media and is published in the press.

The development of the environmental awareness among society is the result of the current global trends. The ecological awareness is essential for the psychological, physical, and social development of every human being. We should realize that we are not the masters of the

environment but we are its shareholders. Our use of the environment ought to be reasonable. If we do not develop the ecological awareness, the future generations might not have such chance. That is why the environmental education is so important at every educational level. It is vital to introduce the environmental education to school's syllabuses, to organize certain ecological events, and form the organizations fighting for the environmental preservation. Ecologically conscious people will not make mistakes if they know their effects. The decision is right when we know its results and we make it again.

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