



What lessons can be drawn from Poland's experience in building an efficient system for management and implementation of EU funds?

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Ministry
of Digital Transformation
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MINISTRY FOR
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STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

1 The role of regional policy in the political transformation and socio-economic modernisation

2 The Polish system of utilisation of cohesion policy funds

3 Key success factors

WHAT REGIONAL POLICY IS FOR? THE ROLE OF REGIONAL POLICY IN TRANSFORMATION

Regional policy based on EU standards (and money) seen since 1989 as an important modernisation tool for:

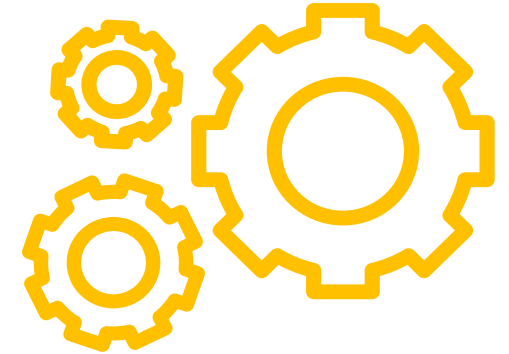
- tackling ineffectiveness of market economy in delivery of goods and services especially for poorer people and regions;
- improvement of efficiency of the state through involvement and mobilisation of local actors;
- spreading and rooting democracy;
- preparing for EU membership – know-how and improving standards for implementing public policies



REGIONAL POLICY AND DECENTRALISATION OF THE STATE

Regional policy and decentralisation are two sides of the coin:

- **Decentralisation** needed for tackling effectively needs of various territories;
- **Regional policy** needed for strengthening capacity and supporting ability of self-governments to deal with socio-economic problems and using territorial potentials



Hot issue of regionalisation:

Number of regions (voivodeships), role of the central government *vis a vis* self-government, responsibilities of self-government, financing.

STRATEGIC GOALS OF REGIONAL POLICY



COMPETITIVENESS

Supporting positive structural changes in regions to contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the country)



COHESION

(central issue from 2017 onwards)
Addressing social and economic problems of the most affected areas and using their unique territorial potentials



EFFICIENCY

Increasing capacity of national administration, self-governments and all partners to deliver goods and services

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF EU FUNDS

*The institutional system for EU cohesion policy **is rooted in three parallel processes** (policy fields):*

National vision of coordination and decentralisation of regional policy

Gradual implementation of the governmental vision for national decentralised regional policy system;

System of pre-accession funds

Establishment of institutional system for pre-accession funds and later on adaptation to requirements of cohesion policy;

Requirements of cohesion policy

Establishment of the legal and institutional system to assure smooth implementation of cohesion policy funds

NATIONAL VISION OF COORDINATION AND DECENTRALISATION OF NATIONAL REGIONAL POLICY

National vision elaborated within special Task Force for Regional Policy (1994-1996) and Task Force for Structural Policy (1995-97):

A strong national level institution:

- coordinate national policies with an impact on territories, while curbing sectoral silo type approaches within the Government,
- represent the government vis-à-vis regional level institution to discuss interregional policies and activities of national importance;

*Regional policy Minister since 1998. Currently **Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy***

Strong regional institutions:

- plan and implement policies in their respective territories using own resources and legal responsibilities, while also contributing to interregional policies;

*Established in 1999 16 regional governments with **decisive role of Marshals** in programming and implementation of regional policy (and subsequently from 2007 onwards - EU funds)*

SYSTEM OF PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS

Practicing EU procedures in various fields at national and regional level through the usage of pre-accession funds (PHARE, STRUDER, ISPA)

The **important role of Twinnings** – acquiring know how from EU Member States through direct support of experts coming from national and regional administrations.

Creation of a complex system of implementing institutions outside public administration:

- some of them abolished after 2004 (Polish Agency for Regional Development);
- others transformed as a specialised implementing institutions under cohesion policy (RDAs, Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development);

At the beginning, **implementation of EU funds** strongly linked with the European Integration Process (Funds allocation based on a National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA)).

TACKLING REQUIREMENTS OF COHESION POLICY

The system of implementation of cohesion policy has been built having in mind **two major goals**:

Full absorption

- Usage of all available money (political interest)

Achievement of policy goals

- Contribution to achievement of competitiveness, cohesion and efficiency goals (socio-economic interest)



NATIONAL LEGAL SYSTEM

- Act of 6 December 2006 on **the Principles of Conducting Development Policy**.

The Act defines the principles of conducting development policy, the system of programming documents, entities conducting this policy and the mode of cooperation between them.

- Implementation acts on **the principles of implementation of programmes and tasks financed from European funds** in the financial perspectives 2014-2020 and 2021-2027.

These laws define the institutional system for the management and implementation of programmes and actions co-financed by the EU, the rights and obligations of beneficiaries and, and the rules for including social partners.

- The Minister for Regional Policy **can issue guidelines** on various aspects of programming, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of European measures.
- Arrangements for the audit, control and financing of EU funds in **the Public Finance Act**.

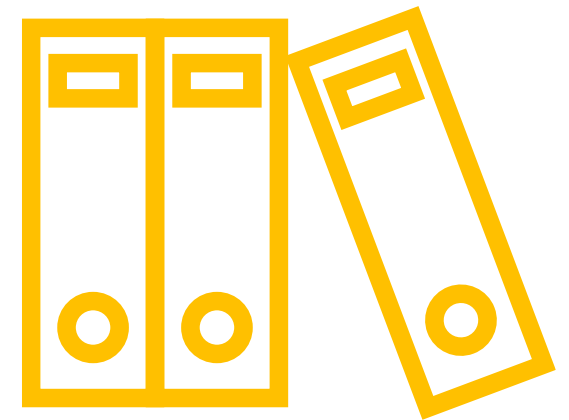


PROGRAMMING SYSTEM

EU programming documents are elements of the national system of programming since 2006

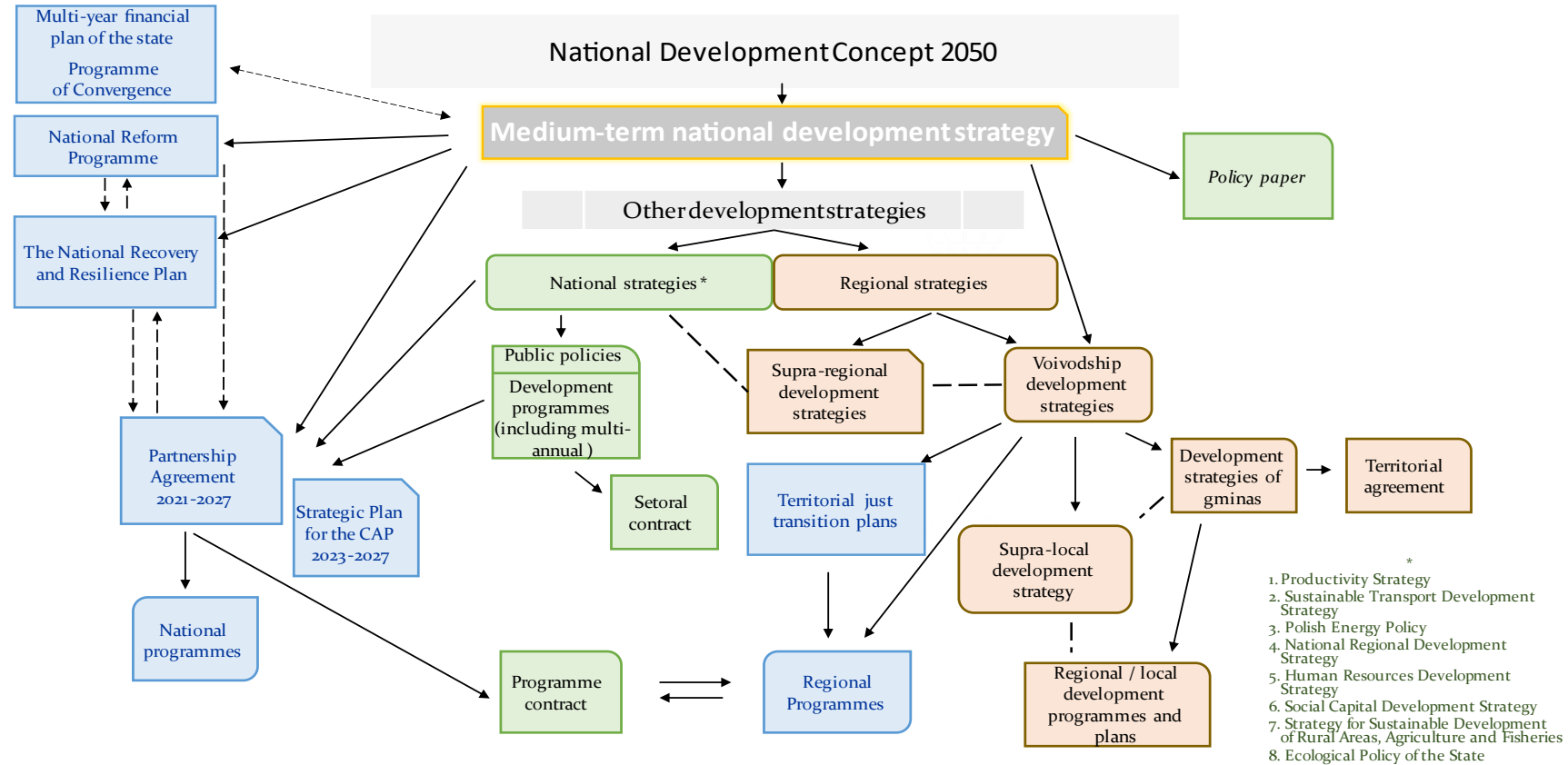
In 2009 was introduced a major reform of the programming system of national policies through:

- abandoning around **230 strategies and programmes**,
- **simplifying the system** by introducing limited number of national socio-economic strategies, regional and sectoral (initially only 6) medium-term strategies
- **placing the Minister** for regional policy crucial role in the system of programming of national policies and documents prepared for programming of EU funds
- **supporting role of contracts** between the Government, regional self-governments and other stakeholders.



PROGRAMMING SYSTEM IN POLAND

System of strategic planning in Poland in 2022.



INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. COORDINATION, POLICY DESIGN AND OVERALL RESPONSABILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

Since 2005 crucial role in of the **Minister for Regional Policy (administrative structure = Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy)** in four fields:

- **strategic and medium term socio-economic and spatial policy;**
- **national regional policy;**
- **EU Cohesion Policy and other external funds** (managing of all national level programmes);
- **relations with regional self-governments** and other partners.

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. COORDINATION, PROGRAMMING AND MANAGEMENT AT REGIONAL LEVEL

Operating since 1999 but strengthened substantially from 2007 a crucial role has been played **by regional governments (administrative structure = Marshall offices).**

Responsible for e.g.:

- **preparation and implementation of regional strategies;**
- **preparation and management of regional cohesion policy programmes** (44% of funds in 2021-2027 programming period);
- **coordination and cooperation with local self governments and other stakeholders** when realising regional development projects;
- **delivery of sub-regional services and goods;**

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. IMPLEMENTATION

Currently **144 institutions** implement various parts of cohesion and regional policy programmes.

Examples:

- **Polish Agency for Enterprise Development** - the largest agency responsible for implementing components of EU programmes that support enterprises under three national programmes.
- **The Centre for EU Transport Projects** - supporting the preparation of major transport infrastructure projects in European Union programmes. It focuses on areas such as road, rail, air, urban, maritime, inland waterway, intermodal, and road safety transport.
- **National Centre for Research and Development**, supporting Polish scientific units and enterprises in enhancing their ability to innovate and create solutions based on the results of scientific research.
- **National Development Fund** - State Treasury Company with the primary objective of supporting the economic development of Poland and its export potential in accordance with the provisions of the Strategy for Responsible Development.
- **Regional development agencies and business support institutions**

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. IMPORTANT ELEMENTS

- National level **road map** for improving administrative capacity and annual reporting
- **System of capacity** building and trainings for all employees of implementing institutions
- Stable and competitive **conditions of employment**
- Capacity development **support programmes** for beneficiaries
- **Cooperation** with academia and professional institutions such as Main Statistical Office
- Strong **evaluation** capacity
- **Central IT system** for monitoring and management of all EU funds

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. NUMBER AND QUALITY OF EMPLOYEES AND BENEFICIARIES

Employment by type of units participating in the institutional system for the implementation of the programmes 2014-2020 in the field of cohesion policy

Type of institution	Number of Employees
Regional Self-government Offices	5 406
Voivodeship Labour Office	2 878
Ministries	1 742
Sectoral special Purpose Funds and institutions	1345
Audit Authority (Ministry of Finance + Chambers of Tax Administration)	366
Local Self-governments	135
Voivodeship Offices (governmental)	98
Implementing institutions	3 357
Razem	15 327

Source: Department for the Coordination of the Implementation of EU Funds, MfiPR

RESULTS

Poland has not lost any EURO from cohesion policy!

- **very positive macro-economic results** however in combination with positive influence of benefits of common EU market and pro-growth policies;
- **fast growth of GDP**, however **internal cohesion still remain a problem**;
- **development of transport infrastructure** (e.g., development of expressway network, public transport systems in cities, railway lines);
- **development of municipal infrastructure** (environmental infrastructure systems, social and culture infrastructure);
- **increasing skills of population**;
- **improvement of competitiveness of companies**;
- **improvement of capacity of administration to implement public policies**;
- **increasing interest in EU integration process**;
- and many others.

RESULTS

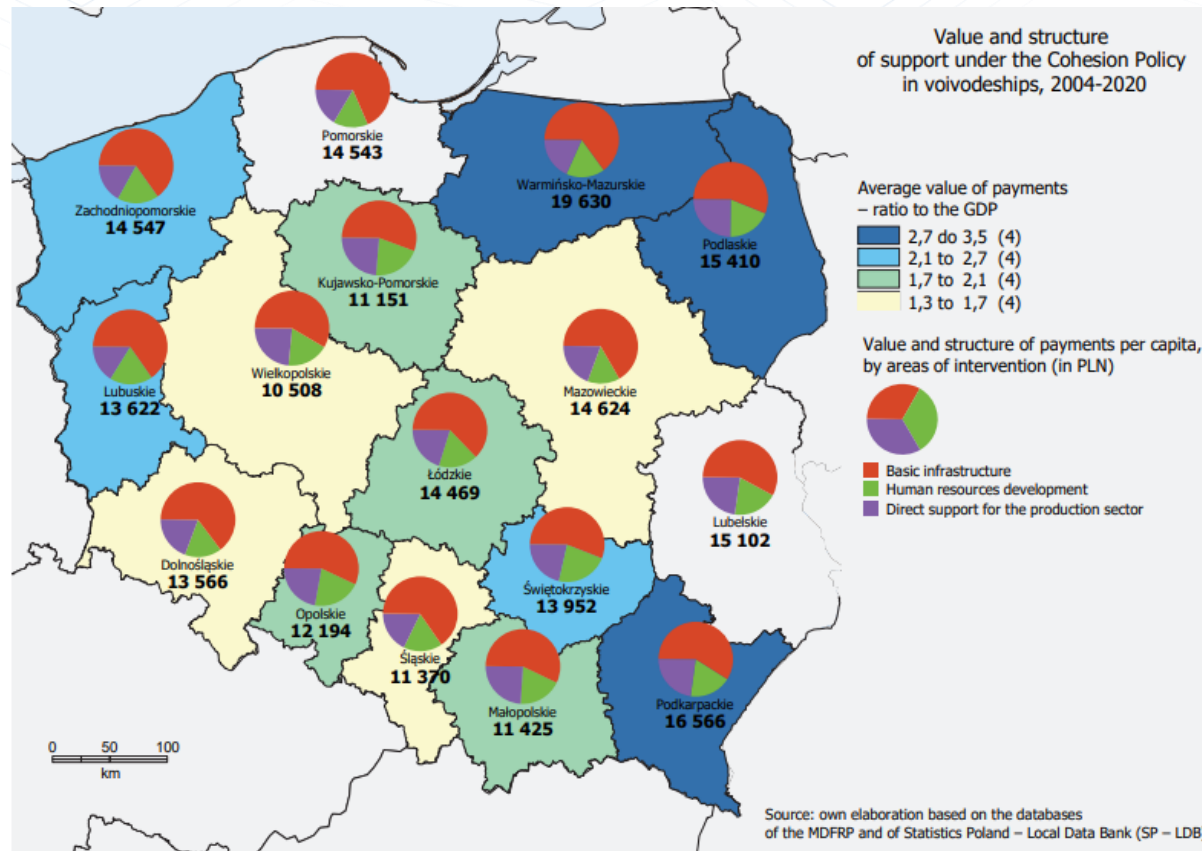
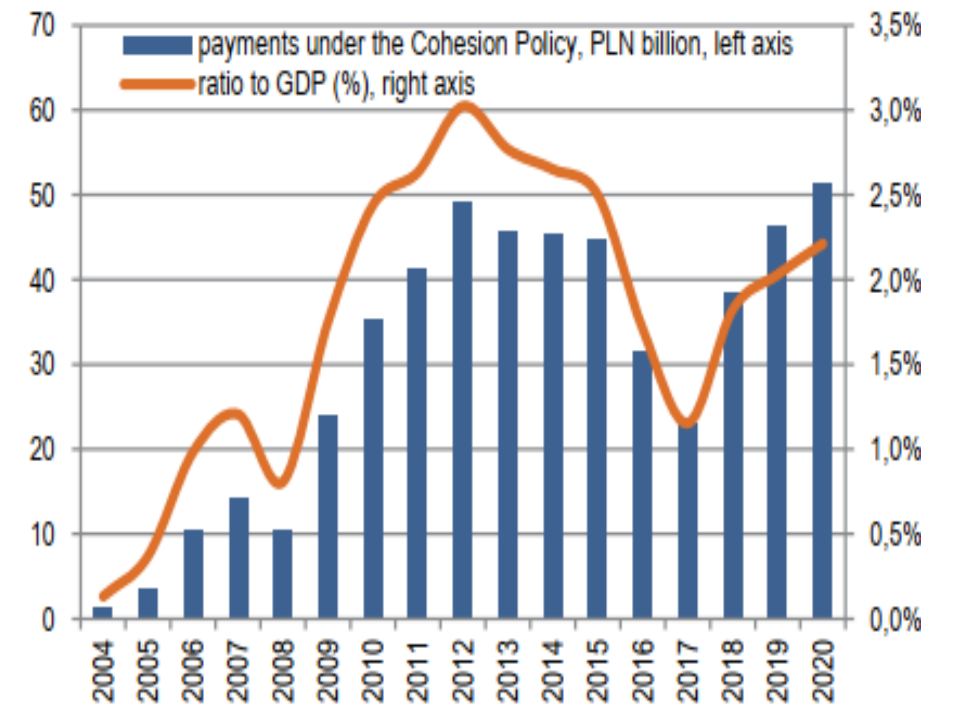


Figure 1. Support under the Cohesion Policy (the EU funds) in Poland, 2004-2020



SUMMARY: SUCCESS FACTORS

- **Agreement across political divides** on prioritising preparations for EU membership and building an effective system for the absorption of European funds.
- **Creation legal basis for a unified programming and monitoring system for development,** regional, and EU policies.
- **Establishment of a strong management centre,** led by the Minister in charge of regional policy,
- **Decentralization of management** with simultaneous implementation of robust mechanisms of partnership and strategic coordination between the government and provincial governments.
- **Devoting great attention to building and strengthening the competences of administrative staff** involved in programming and implementing EU programmes and projects.
- **In the initial period, influx of new highly motivated staff during the creation of new institutions.**
- **Stability of the staff in the created institutions,** despite political changes, including the units involved in the implementation of EU funds, including the management staff.



**Thank you for your
attention!**



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