

**EXPERT EVALUATION NETWORK
DELIVERING POLICY ANALYSIS ON THE
PERFORMANCE OF COHESION POLICY 2007–2013**

YEAR 1 – 2011

**TASK 2: COUNTRY REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENTS OF
COHESION POLICY**

POLAND

VERSION: FINAL

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**A report to the European Commission
Directorate–General Regional Policy**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CBC Cross-Border Cooperation
- CC Coordination Committee
- CF Cohesion Fund
- EEN Expert Evaluation Network
- ERDF European Regional Development Fund
- ESF European Social Fund
- MRD Ministry For Regional Development
- NSRF National Strategic Reference Framework
- OP Operational Programme
- OP-DEP Operational Programme for Development of Eastern Poland
- PARP Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości (Polish Agency for Enterprise Support)
- ROP Regional Operational Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There were no major changes in the spatial and settlement structure in Poland during last years, since these are processes which proceed slowly.

Since Poland was spared from an open recession and in the years 2009–2010 achieved positive growth of GDP, the financial crisis of 2008–2010 has not influenced these patterns.

In comparison with the previous period for which the previous country report was prepared, the policy of regional development was implemented with no significant changes, except for greater intensity. The principles of Polish regional policy are shaped by the doctrine of “concentration and diffusion”. Intervention – financed mostly from the EU funds – is being concentrated on major infrastructure, of which transport networks are of special importance. Also support for enterprises is being delivered, as well as other priorities, according to the structure of the operational programmes. To some extent, the recent changes in the regional policy aiming at simplifying spending of the EU funds through more effective public procurement procedures were stemming from the assumption that the funding provided through the Cohesion policy would further reduce the scale of slow-down of the Polish economy caused by financial and economic crisis (mostly imported from the outside).

It has to be stressed that the available information is mostly related to basis data – number of projects, number of contracts signed, funds spent. Information on physical progress is much scarcer, and information on effects is almost no-existing. Moreover, in most documents and reports there are various indicators used for depicting financial data and progress, and additionally these vary in time. Especially, the recent changes make the last reports incomparable with the previous ones. Therefore any deeper insight into real effects and results is not possible, and this report has had to remain on the level of providing basic data.

Except for ETC programmes and most complex and large Infrastructure and Environment OP, where fund utilisation is low, most other programmes more than doubled the disbursement levels and reached from 12 to 20% of allocation. Taking into account high number of contracts signed, with few exceptions of the least advanced activities (e.g. innovation policy, cross-border co-operation), there is no risk of overall under-utilisation of funds. According to implementation reports (MRD), implementation is in line with expectations and plans accelerated in 2010. The only significant problem with disbursement refers to railway transport priority, where absorption capacity for reasons explained later seems to be too small.

Progress in implementation of programmes and projects co-financed by the EU has had a positive influence on other spheres of public intervention where EU funds are not necessarily involved. So the impact is wider, and this is one of the most important examples where we can speak about “value added” of EU intervention in this country.

Simplification of procedures has led to an improved process of application selection and approval, and – of special significance for the general public and for the authorities – to acceleration in money spending.

The implementation of the EU-financed projects is proceeding in Poland without major changes in comparison to the previous year, and the learning process is proceeding. No doubt, Poland's membership in the EU has been very beneficial for the country, its economy and society, since the opening of markets allowed for marinating high exports which to a great extent allowed Poland to avoid recession, and inflow of the EU funds has had a positive effect on internal demand – another important factor saving the national economy from recession.

1. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

There were no – which is obvious – major changes in the spatial and settlement structure in Poland during last years. Since economic data (GDP in regional breakdowns) are available with a 2-year lag, only the spatial patterns of this variable for 2008 are available. According to this data there were the following regional processes observed (see Annex C):

- growth of metropolitan regions, however in several cases composed of depopulation in the central city and rapid growth of the number of population of its surrounding areas – mainly due to suburbanisation. In few cases (Wrocław, Gdańsk, Łódź) this pattern was also repeated in economic indicators. All metropolitan cores noted lower rates of GDP growth than their surrounding areas;
- growth of several industrial regions that were not burdened by heavy (Silesia) or light (Łódź) industries and which had undergone through successful industrial restructuring, supported in most cases by foreign capital (like Kalisz–Ostrów and Rzeszów regions);
- parallel processes of growth and decline in traditional industrial regions undergoing depopulation (Upper Silesia and Łódź) which at the one hand benefit from their metropolitan functions, but on the other hand are blocked by their industrial (economic, technical and social) heritage;
- stagnation in peripheral regions on eastern and western borders – in the former cases the ones demonstrating obsolete socio-economic structures with high shares of agriculture, the latter still unable to overcome the heritage of collapse of state farms and low level of industrialisation.

The financial crisis of 2008–2010 has not influenced these patterns. Since Poland was spared from an open recession and in the years 2009–2010 achieved positive growth of GDP (1.6 and 3.8% respectively), no regional patterns could be seen. This also hold true for forecasts for 2011 which indicate the growth rate should reach 3.8% (lowered from 4%) and 3.7% in 2012. Although Poland ceases to be the best European performer, still the regional patterns of the “crisis” cannot be indicated in the light of absence of such a phenomenon.

The crisis had not bypassed Poland entirely. It manifested itself in tensions in public finance. Polish budgetary deficit grew from 3.8% in 2009 to 7.9% in 2010 and prospected 5.5% in 2011 (the recent depreciation of the Polish zloty may increase this figure). The state budget prepared for 2012 assumes a reduction of the deficit to 2.9%. Unemployment grew, but is far from reaching its peak value from some 8–10 years ago and is still around the EU average. However, as in several other countries, unemployment of university graduates becomes to be a social problem (reaching some 25%). Those who after accession left the country for work do not seem to come back in great numbers in spite of economic difficulties in the host countries (where living through difficult times seems to be still easier than in the home – much poorer – country).

The deficit as such is not a threat – more important is the fact that according to Polish constitution the gross public debt should not grow above 55% of GDP (this first level imposing that the deficit in the next year cannot be greater than the last one) or 60% (imposing a balanced budget in the next year). Due to several restrictions and cuts in spending the deficit for 2010 almost reached the first threshold (52.8% according to Polish methodology, and 54.9% to the way in which the public debt is calculated in the EU¹) and will not be much smaller in 2011². This situation has led to reducing public spending on several infrastructural projects, as well as a (controversial) reform of the pension system (reduction by more than half the premium directed to private pension funds and directing this money to the state system to reduce its deficit). However, some increase in spending for science and education (still low in comparison to other EU countries) was made in 2010, and will be continued, which may improve the chances for the future growth of Polish economy. No regional patterns can be indicated in this respect.

One has also to remember that 2011 is the election year which – paralleled with the need of avoiding crossing the 55% threshold of public debt/GDP ratio – has led to an officially declared strategy of the government according to which no major reforms are going to be undertaken in order to save the Polish citizens from social costs. As a result, short-sighted perspective dominates, and more far-reaching projects (if any) may be undertaken in 2012 under the rule of the new (old) government.

General implementation of major infrastructural projects, financed from both the EU funds and national resources (great part of them re-named as projects related to the football European championship due in June 2012 that will be organised in 4 Polish and 4 Ukrainian cities) proceeds, however with several spectacular delays caused by several reasons: cuts in spending, inefficient procedures and erroneous administration, problems of contractors etc.³

Overall, the economic, social and political situation in the country is favourable, in spite of (mostly imported) inflation and several shortcomings of infrastructure and administration. Relatively good current economic performance was no doubt one of reasons that, unlike in most other UE countries, in Poland the so called Performance Reserve did not use the socio-economic situation in regions as a procedural criterion. The qualitative criterion of disbursement progress (level) was the only one used. (CC 2010; Jahns 2010).

¹ According to some estimates (which accuse Polish Ministry of Finance of “creative accounting”) in 2010 this ratio reached 55.4%.

² There are some indications that the budgetary deficit in 2011 will be much smaller than planned – by the end of August the deficit reached two thirds of the planned figure for this moment.

³ According to Polish unfortunate public procurement practice the contracts are usually awarded to the bidder offering the lowest price. Since this price may be below real costs, claims for increases in payments are almost always being made, or – if denied – the contractor breaks the contract, as is currently happening with the Chinese consortium withdrawing from building a part of East–West motorway between Łódź and Warsaw.

2. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED, THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO THIS AND POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PERIOD

In comparison with the previous period for which the previous country report was prepared, the policy of regional development was implemented with no significant changes, except for greater intensity.

In general, last year of Polish regional development policy was characterised by the following major activities:

- A. Further implementation of regional development programs co-financed by Cohesion policy of the European Union.
- B. Attempts to simplify the procedures and ensure smooth absorption.
- C. Advancing preparation of integrated system of strategic development documents on national level through ensuring territorial dimension as part of the horizontal and sectoral strategies.
- D. However, problems with inter-programme and inter-project coordination remained largely unsolved.

The principles of Polish regional policy are shaped by the doctrine of “concentration (sometimes the term ‘polarisation’ is used) and diffusion”. This doctrine seems rational, since the regional policy should not make obstacles to natural (in Poland, as well as in other CEE countries) processes of concentration, and its efforts should be directed towards distributing positive impulses to the less developed regions (as difficult as it may be). The major cities (metropolises) are considered to be the main drivers of national and regional growth, and the efforts are being undertaken to spread this growth to the more remote localities, for which the sub-regional centres are conceived as the main focal units. However, since the peripheral regions (mostly eastern, but also mid-northern) are too far from the growth centres and cannot benefit from the impulses coming from the main cities of national importance, special assistance is being provided (the Operational Programme Development of Eastern Poland is the main instrument for this).

Intervention – financed mostly from the EU funds – is being concentrated on major infrastructure, of which transport networks are of special importance. Also support for enterprises is being delivered, as well as other priorities, according to the structure of the operational programmes.

The cross-border cooperation is being developed with a number of priorities. They cover support to SMEs, tourism and culture development, strengthening ties between urban and rural areas, natural and cultural heredity protection, access to networks (transport, ITC), resources and waste management, infrastructure development, social integration and cooperation of public administration.

To some extent, the recent changes in the regional policy aiming at simplifying spending of the EU funds through more effective public procurement procedures were stemming from the assumption that the funding provided through the Cohesion policy would further reduce the scale of slow-down of the Polish economy caused by financial and economic crisis (mostly imported from the outside). The demand-effects of these funds had been highlighted, and attempts to simplify procedures of their spending were undertaken. In addition, it was expected that the Cohesion policy would help to create foundations for sustainable growth in the years to come. It has to be said, however that the aforementioned economic slow-down has not influenced significantly neither the needs reported or the priorities, nor the activities undertaken within individual programmes. It has undoubtedly led to an increase of social and political pressure on speedy and successful spending of resources available. Up to date there were no shifts between policy areas, though the government is seeking approval of the Commission to move unspent money (PLN 5 billion, that is around EUR 1.15 billion) from railway transport development to road building and modernisation. While institutions in charge of implementation of railway projects face serious problems with expenditure, there is a strong demand for financing still seriously underdeveloped road system in Poland (in particular strategic expressways and motorways).

For more information about various aspects of Cohesion policy in Poland please see Annex B.

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED

All 16 Polish regions are Convergence regions. Despite the fact that according to the regulations of Lisbon strategy (LS), the earmarking is not obligatory, on average around 40% at all resources available in the regional operational programmes are meant for LS purposes (on the level of national programmes, including Human Capital OP financed by the ESF, it reaches the level of 64%).

The main priorities of development policies in the regions relate in most cases to transport, since the underdevelopment of infrastructure in this sector is considered to be the main barrier to development, and to enterprise support (direct and indirect). In some regions (Kujawsko-pomorskie) transport infrastructure is shown as a part of technical infrastructure development.

Other priorities depend on the specific regional needs, as they are conceived by regional and local stakeholders. In many instance it is "territorial development" (often widely understood), i.e. intervention in urban areas, culture, tourism development, health etc. The fourth important priority is environment (seen as still an important, but quite often underestimated problem in most regions⁴) and energy – issue which soon may turn out to be serious development barrier for the entire country and its regions due to technical de-capitalisation of both energy producing plants and the transmission systems.

⁴ In particular solid waste management and recycling is a problem.

The priorities of the Regional Operational Programmes (RPO) should be seen in the context of national (horizontal de facto) operational programmes, which offer support indiscriminatively to all regions. This explains why the ROPs do not support explicitly R&D and innovativeness (which quite often is hidden under the label “regional competitiveness”), as this is the main priority of the OP Innovative Economy. Infrastructure and Environment OP plays extremely important role in the regional development plans and – except for railway transport – is being increasingly quickly absorbed. The problem of absorption in the railway sector is seen as a result of deep restructuring and fragmentation of the state owned PKP (Polish State Railway) enterprise, which today consists of 18 loosely connected companies unable to cooperate effectively. Railway infrastructure is for instance dispersed between 4 companies responsible for: information, tracks, energy and telecom infrastructure⁵. Evaluation studies and report prepared in 2011 by MRR stress low level of complexity of projects, low absorption capacity of railway companies, preference given by them to few large projects instead of bottlenecks solving (Wolanski 2011; MRD 2011 d). Evaluations done under EU 2004–2006 ex post evaluation show additional light on problems with large projects in Poland: surprisingly their cost is significantly higher than EU average (synthesis report 2010)

Eastern Poland Development OP plays specific role in the system, as it covers 4 least developed Eastern regions and one central region. The programme was conceived to deliver support for supra-regional problems that can not be satisfactorily addressed under the regional programmes. In reality, in many cases it duplicates the regional programmes and its strategic functions are dissolved in numerous relatively small-scale undertakings that have been adopted on the “pork-barrel” principle by local and regional political elites – although some structural success can also be noted, like the fact that the major broadband investments are prepared in OP DEP, while the ROPs changed in orientation towards complementary IT services. With the time passing by the coordination between OP DEP and ROPs is improving, but in certain areas still remains an issue (for instance competition between R&D and education for funds).

Certain differences can be spotted between particular CBC programmes. In case of PL–Brandenburg programme there is little demand from the German side for typical infrastructural projects (except for environmental) and “soft” projects like human resources development, innovation, etc). On the PL–Slovakia border on both sides a high demand for infrastructure development and socio-economic development projects is obvious. In the South Baltic CBC tourist attractiveness and economic competitiveness are the only key priorities. It should be noted that the CBC programmes are definitely least advanced in implementation in comparison with other programmes.

In all cases support is given in the form of grants (with, as shown in the previous country report, exception of few regions that joined the specific non-grant schemes).

⁵ PKP website, www.pkp.pl/bip/strukturaorganizacyjna/ (10.10.2011)

In general, as it was mentioned, there were no major shifts in priorities of 2010 and of 2011 in comparison to previous years.

There is a widespread opinion that until now the successful coping with the aftermath of euro-zone crisis to a large extent has to be credited to EU funds, particularly the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Main points from last year's country report:

- In 2009 significant progress could have been noted in absorption of the EU funds (contracts signed) both on national and regional levels, while real expenditure was increasing.
- At that time relatively little information was available on physical effects of intervention.
- The overall picture in policy implementation was positive, as it was in line with expectations and plans.
- Visible differences in advancement of different programme could be noticed (the least advanced were the European Transborder Cooperation). While cross-border cooperation on the Polish Western and Southern borders develops dynamically, the CBC programmes financed under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership scheme (Poland–Russia–Lithuania, Poland–Belarus–Ukraine) did not progress significantly. The latter has approved projects which (till the end of 2010 represented) about 10% of UE budget allocation. Poland–Russia–Lithuania programme did not approve any projects (except for technical assistance).

In 2010, in line with plans, there was a clear increase in terms of not only commitments made, but also of expenditure done. According to the financial monitoring data there is no risk of not spending resources available.

According to the evaluation study (PBS, 2011) carried out in December 2010:

In the OP I&E there are significant differences in the commitments made – from measures where all the funds have already been committed to those where under 20% have been contracted.

In transport and energy the present rate of commitment is not sufficient to spend all the allocation and perhaps only half will be contracted. Accordingly, it is necessary to speed up the process of approving applications. However in these areas, a small number of large contracts, and the Warsaw underground as an only project may resolve that problem. In case of the 8 Measures no contract for funding has been signed yet (5 of those Measures refers to the power industry).

At the same time, in the case of cultural activities, higher education and – to the lesser extent – healthcare, there is only a small possibility to manage the intervention in order to enable attainment of indicators planned in the programming documents. In case of energy and the environment, there is a significant chance of adjusting expenditure in the future in order to attain the targets set.

In transport, the highest commitment rate is for investment in roads, though there is only a limited amount of funds for this purpose.

In the case of railways, where there are serious deficiencies in the present network, the potential recipients lack the capacity to use the funds available.

In the case of the environment, there is a serious risk that the funds earmarked for to waste-management projects will not be allocated because of the lengthy time it takes to carry out projects.”

Problems with large projects stem from several reasons: inefficient procedures (appropriation of land, physical planning); public procurement (usually the cheapest – and not the best – offer is selected which increases the risk of failure; protests of the losers may halt and delay the entire procedure); environmental protests (sometimes the protesting “ecological” NGOs withdraw their opposition after being contracted for some services); mistakes and errors of administration which open the room for protests and delays; lack of clear targets and of complementarity; often chaotic intervention subordinated to the easiest and not the most needed investments (like building the motorways with relatively smaller traffic in the open space instead of beginning with the metropolitan areas where the traffic is the densest). Also evaluations confirm the propensity to select “easier” to do projects (Wolanski 2011 d).

Table A – Progress in implementation (2009 and 2010)

Operational programmes	EU financial contribution, EUR billion	Number of concluded/issued project co-financing contracts/decisions (EU co-financing)		Amounts requested (claimed) from the Commission in EUR million		Amounts requested (claimed) as a% of EU contribution to operational programmes	
		2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Infrastructure and Environment	27.9	496	–	323.4	800.5	1.2	2.9
Innovative Economy	8.3	2,387	–	842.1	1,746.7	10.2	21.2
Human Capital	9.7	14,575	–	751.3	1,287.1	7.8	13.3
Development of Eastern Poland	2.3	77	–	108.2	262.3	4.8	11.6
European Territorial Cooperation	7.8	88	–	3.0	20.1	0.0	0.3
16 Regional OPs	16.6	8,980	2,027	1,219.5	3,186.8	7.4	19.2
TOTAL	66.8*	21,184	–	3,306.8	7,379.5	5.0	11.1

Note: * Technical Assistance OP excluded (EUR 0.5 billion). Source: MRD 2010 f and 2011 c, (2009 and 2010 reports on the implementation of ...,), own calculations. “–”: not applicable

In most documents and reports there are various indicators used for depicting financial data and progress. Table A uses not only raw data on number of projects accepted with contracts signed, amounts requested (as an indicator of expenditure) and financial progress defined as the relation of value of claims to EU budget allocated to individual programmes (group of programmes). This measure of advancement may differ from other presented in this report. However, it is to show the state of affairs and dynamics in 2010 as compared to 2009.

Except for ETC programmes and most complex and large Infrastructure and Environment OP, where fund utilisation is low, most other programmes more than doubled the disbursement levels and reached 12 to 20% of allocation (what is rather conservative). Taking into account high number of contracts signed, with few exceptions of the least advanced activities⁶, there is no risk of overall underutilisation of funds.

In case of certain priorities any forecast of progress made up to date is difficult in not impossible at all. For instance: Infrastructure and Environment OP, environment friendly transport priority consumed in 2010 only 0.42% of resources – one can assume that an acceleration may come in the next years – or, on the contrary, this low level indicates that thus priority has been left aside, and will be abandoned also in the future. Similar remark can be made also in relation to Natural resources management and environment catastrophes prevention priority which used only 0.49% of funds allocated to this task. Eastern Poland Development OP: priority Regional growth poles – 0% (relatively sophisticated projects are expected, what needs relatively experienced institutions and takes time to develop. On the other hand MA was preoccupied with proceeding numerous small local projects submitted by municipalities). Among the Regional Operational Programmes similar problems are seen in few cases only: Dolnoslaskie ROP (energy sector 0%), Podkarpackie and Podlaskie ROPs (information society priority 0%), Zachodniopomorskie ROP (information society 0%). Two remarks should be made here: firstly, on average, absorption of the RPOs is higher than of the nationally managed OPs.⁷ Secondly, there is general propensity on the operational level to give priority to local and regional infrastructural projects at the expense of more sophisticated priorities, like information society.

According to implementation reports (MRD), implementation is in line with expectations and plans accelerated in 2010. On the one hand it was due to fulfilment of commitments signed in the previous period, on the other visible simplification of procedures and changes introduced in certain regulations which have had potential influence on implementation (public procurement act in particular). It should be added, that in 2011 a further wave of simplifications relating for instance to new business registration was introduced.

There are various reasons for delays in implementing projects. For instance, in the case of those relating to development of the information society, they were a result of relatively limited demand as it was not seen locally as a burning issue. Moreover, potential recipients of funding discovered that in future they would be responsible for meeting maintenance costs, which in the context of budgetary pressures led to an even lower demand. In the case of energy, delays were related to the lack of any clear strategy in this regard. Energy in Poland is based on coal and recent debates about reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% (more

⁶ Such as CBC programme with Belarus, or certain measures relating to information society, railway etc. De facto only problems with railway projects may result in significant amounts of resources being not spent on time

⁷ 2007 – 2013 period resources used (disbursed) in June 2011: IE OP: 19.8%, Infrastructure & Environment OP: 14.8%, Eastern Poland Dev. POP: 23.0%, ETC programmes: 13.4%, all 16 RPOs: 33.4% (best level: Opolskie 50.7%, Lubuskie 47.4%). Average for national programmes, including ESF financed: 20.0%. (MRD 2011: table 3). Much to regret monthly reports contain no information what so ever on physical progress.

general: 3x20% pack) led to a temporary slow-down in decisions relating to the modernisation of existing power-stations and infrastructure as it needs some time to move towards development and better utilization of renewable energy sources, nuclear energy⁸ and adequate adjustments in power grid (see MRD 2011 d).

It seems evident that building and land-use regulations need reform to facilitate implementation of EU-funded projects and to make the system more efficient (PSDB 2011).

In general, it should be said that acceleration in the rate of implementation is a consistently top priority for the Ministry of Regional Development, since EU funding is regarded as one of the main means of stimulating economic recovery. This, however, as evaluations indicate, is not only a case of expanding internal demand but also demand in other more highly developed Member States, especially Germany, the largest market for Polish exports (IBS 2010). At the same time, in public statement, Ministers have constantly highlighted the need to spend funds efficient and to monitor the long-term effects of the interventions concerned.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMMES SO FAR

The main outcomes up to the end of 2009 (as presented in the 2010 country report) were as follows:

- on average only 5% of projects at most had been completed,
- most progress had been made on projects for improving the quality of life rather than strengthening economic development,
- the number of contracts agreed and – accordingly – the amount of expenditure made was on the increase,
- the data available related more to financial rather than physical progress.

Before going examining the achievements in 2010, it is worth making a general remark.

It needs to be emphasised that one of the major difficulties of analysing data on the implementation of EU funding is a lack of a clear and coherent set of definitions coupled with a changing structure of reports which makes any year-to-year comparison more than difficult. A basic problem stems from the definition of "disbursement". It is not clear whether this relates to the value of projects accepted or the value of resources certified and/or claimed from the EU or possibly reimbursement by the Commission. In almost every report on progress, different definitions are used, including even in different reports in the same country. It should be stressed, however, that despite deficiencies, the general quality of AIRs improved, though still the quality differs from one OP to OP (comparability of data is still a problem).

Another problem relates to the use of term "outputs" which in different reports may mean products and/or result. In many cases it is easier to get information on products (number of projects) than on results. In addition, the structure of data presented in the reports changes

⁸ Poland is among few countries with no nuclear power station.

from one year to the next. For these reasons certain data are not comparable or impossible to identify and analyse and is next to impossible to compare data with those presented in the 2009 AIRs.

The major achievements in 2010 are described below.

It needs to be reaffirmed, first of all, that all the improvements made (in terms of public intervention management, project preparation and implementation, strategic planning and evaluation) in activities co-financed by the EU have an influence on other spheres of public intervention where EU funds are not necessarily involved. So the impact of Cohesion policy is wider than the programmes supported as such.

Simplification of procedures has led to an improved process of selection and approval among applications and – of special significance for the general public and for the authorities – to an acceleration in spending the funding⁹. Unfortunately, the implementation procedures of large strategic public infrastructure (motorways, dual carriageways, railways, broadband and so on) seem to lag behind the initial plans, despite significant improvements in legal regulations. The problems seem to have more causes than just the implementing rules (a user unfriendly institutional and legal system, quality of human resources involved, and lack of business experience in monopoly-type institutions involved). The way in which public procurement hampers implementation of several project is widely known, but the system has not been improved – there are several incidents of low quality output being produced (or even no output at all) when the cheapest offer has to be selected, no matter how experience of the bidder is and how realistic the estimate of costs¹⁰. Surprisingly, recent evaluations do not try to tackle this problem.

Before going into analysis of progress in financial and physical terms, it should be stressed that managing authorities of the programmes (and funds) in question present generally their own particular interests, and give priority to successful commitment and – most importantly – disbursement of funds. In the 2009 Report, it was stressed that information on physical progress was very limited. In 2010 the situation is better thanks to the introduction of standardised tables and structured information provided on indicators. However, still over 90% of the sections in the AIRs devoted to progress made in 2010 relate to financial progress analysed by priority and measure, type of beneficiary, territorial pattern, the extent to which they relate to the Lisbon strategy, the problems encountered, the activities of the

⁹ Key information on the front page of the Ministry website is the counter showing current level of expenditures of the Cohesion Policy funds (EU and Polish).

¹⁰ The withdrawal of the Chinese firm COVEC from motorway construction (the crucial east-west A2 which is further delayed) was the most spectacular recent example of this phenomenon. The COVEC bid was half the price the investor estimated (and much lower than other offers), but afterwards they were not able to pay their subcontractors.

managing authorities (the number of the meetings they had) and so on.¹¹ There is, in general, still very little on physical progress, and even less – if anything at all – on durable socio-economic effects of the activities undertaken. The reasons for this seem to be twofold.

First, as already mentioned, the emphasis is put on spending money – the key criterion in evaluating the managing authorities and their managing staff (recently reinforced by the election campaign). Secondly, there is a large number of projects which have been started but not yet finished. At the national level there is a good reason for this, as in many instances they projects concerned are large ones, taking years to complete – and this will remain the case up until 2015. The situation is much easier when a programme involves smaller projects (of a local or regional nature), as in the case of regional operational programmes (some accounting for over 50% of spending). And it is still easier to understand and report on financial progress than physical. Therefore, we have still to wait for anything close to a comprehensive picture of what we get for the money spent.

The MRD – probably in order to have better recognition of impact of the European funds on Poland's economy – commissioned analysis from three autonomous consultancies.¹² According to their constantly revised and updated reports, over the last 2 years the European funds have had a positive impact in the form of increasing GDP growth by 0.4 – 0.9 of a percentage point and employment growth by 0.3 – 0.7 of a point (MRD 2011)

General information on progress in national OPs is presented in Table B, which is based wholly on data available from the AIRs and despite all the remarks that can be made on the quality of the data they give some indication of progress.

¹¹ for instance: Infrastructure & Environment 2010 AIR: out of 137 pages devoted to progress presentation, less than 5 pages refers to physical progress. In sub-chapter on priority 1 its 9 lines on page 92. On page 93 there is general information on 4 completed projects out of 170 being currently implemented.

¹² IBnGR, IBS, WARR, using the following macroeconomic models: MaMor3, EUImpactMod III, Hermin.

Table B – Progress in implementing National ERDF and CF co-funded OPs in 2010

Operational programme	Financial progress: disbursement in %	Physical progress: jobs created in 2010	Information on applications and contracts
Innovative Economy (total EUR 9.7 billion)	13.6	915 (research jobs)	Data available for Mazowieckie & Małopolskie only
Infrastructure and Environment (total budget EUR 37 billion)	8.4	36	Difficult to assess
Eastern Poland Development (total budget EUR 2.7 billion)	16.3	0	Available for 5 least developed regions

Source: based on AIRs, 2010, Warsaw. Note: no definitions available. Data may differ from Table A due to different definitions of expenditure.

The Innovative Economy OP, with a cumulative rate of disbursement of 13.6%, contributed to the creation of 915 research jobs in 2010. The most active regional beneficiaries were those in the most developed metropolitan areas (Krakow and Warszawa). In case of Infrastructure and Environment, given the low rate of disbursement at the end of 2010, the slow pace of development can be attributed to the difficult process of preparation and implementation of very large projects and the limited ability to carry out investment on the part of the state railway companies. The Eastern Poland Development OP attained a rate of disbursement 16.3% with no new jobs created. Finally, it should be noted, that there are for the time being no indicators that enable comparisons to be made between totally different programmes.

As far as new jobs created are concerned, out of 74.2 thousand planned jobs 14.7 thousand were created (leaving aside the Human Capital OP). The length of new and modernized roads covered by the agreements signed amounted to 8,385 kms 86.6% of the target, of which 3,124 kms were actually completed. The length of newly constructed or modernized water pipelines covered by agreements signed is 4,221 kms (356% of the target), of which 1,323 kms have been completed. Figures for sewage pipelines are 17,862 kms approved (151% of the target) and 6,468 kms completed. On the basis of agreements signed, 394 sewage-treatment plants are due to be constructed; of which 39 have been completed. 887 laboratories in research centres have been constructed or modernized (according to agreements signed) of which 85 are in operation. 4,649 enterprises are due to receive investment support on the basis of agreements signed, and 2,174 have carried out the investment concerned. 17 680 kms of broadband networks have been approved and 247 kms constructed (CC 2011: 2).

Given the size and complexity of national programmes (Infrastructure and Environment is by far the largest and most complex European programme ever seen), trying to identify the main outcomes when a programme has 16 priorities of totally different kinds, when projects are still being implemented and few are complete, is next to impossible. The information available information is presented in Table C.

Table C – Outputs as presented in AIRs by OP, selected indicators (2010)

Field/Programme	Innovative Economy	Infrastructure & Environment	Eastern Poland Development
Enterprise Support incl. RTDI:			
Research Jobs created	915	–	0
Projects in the RTD	40	–	0
No of projects to businesses (direct)	77	–	0
No of information society projects	234	–	0
People getting access to wideband	100	–	0
Human Resource Development (ERDF):			
Education projects	13	13	0
Transport & telecommunication:			
No of transport project	–	80	0
No of telecommunication projects in 2010	–	–	–
Environmental & energy:			
No of renewable energy projects	–	20	–
No of environmental projects	–	86	0
Territorial development:			
Urban projects	–	0	0
Tourism, culture	0	–	0
Health projects	–	166	–
Local development projects	–	–	–

Source: based on AIRs 2010; “–”: not applicable

While in 2010 significant progress was made in terms of disbursement due to cumulation of payments in a growing number of projects being implemented and completed, Table C shows that progress understood as outputs and results of projects completed in 2010 was limited. It has to be stressed that this is not to say that there was no progress. On the contrary, more jobs were created, and more transport, urban, R&D, energy, territorial development and environmental projects were undertaken in 2010. However, only finished projects are taken as a source of information on “progress”. So despite the already mentioned increase in expenditure and high levels of commitments in 2010 (and confirmed in 2011), the physical outcome reported is modest or mostly not visible in the case of some big national programmes.

Keeping in mind the very high commitment level which is a fundamental precondition for physical change, and given the increase in implementation in the first half of 2011, the data in Table C represent a warning. Although there are still 5 years to go (2011 – 2015) to complete activities, the relatively low level of spending of available funds in the mid–point of the Programme's implementation suggests that it may be too late to complete all the projects contracted by 2015 (PSDB 2011). This tend to leads to propensity¹³ to reallocate

¹³ Supported also by experts and evaluations, like in the case of environment friendly transport (mostly railway).

funds to activities where demand is high, instead of to those which if undertaken could solve some major problems. For example it has been proposed to reduce the amounts for railway modernisation (measure 7.1) and allocate them to roads (measure 6.1), and urban transport (measure 7.3). It is indicated that this proposal also stems from the very limited capacity of those in the rail sector to use the funds available. If such proposals are accepted, this would ease the financial pressure and risks.

Most other cases of reallocation within operational programmes (of both sums and their potential impacts) are of little significance.

Almost all the remarks above relate to national programmes financed by ERDF&CF. The situation seems to be different for regional programmes (RDPs). There are 16 of these and their structure in each case is a result of, on the one hand, the perception of regional needs and, on the other, the way they are coordinated with and distinguished from national programmes so as to avoid any overlap of activities.

Table D – Effects of the regional Operational Programmes as understood and presented by AIRs, 2010

	DłnSł	Kuj-Pom	Lubel	Lubus	Lodzkie	Malop	Mazow	Opols	Pdkrp	Podlas	Pomor	Święto	Slaskie	Warm-Maz	Wlkpol	Zach-pomor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<i>Enterprise Support incl. RTDI:</i>																
Research Jobs created	0	0	1	0	55	10	0	3	0	0	–	0	901	0	0	0
No of projects RTD	0	0	4	1	0	16	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
No of projects to business (directly)	0	651	323	221	78	334	165	296	161	170	167	137	–	283	629	85
No of information society projects	0	0	17	2	0	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	22	5	0	0
No of people getting access to Broadband	0	0	564	0	0	0	0	0		0	–	0	0	0	0	0
<i>HRD (ERDF):</i>																
No of education projects	0	1	10	11	18	2	0	20	22	12	1	20	–	34	4	4
<i>Transport & telecommunication:</i>																
No of transport projects (No telecommunication projects)	0	101	71	23	6	9	40	40	86	38	26	52	35	30	38	10
<i>Environmental & energy:</i>																
No of renewable energy projects	0	–	0	3	0	–	0	0	2	0	–	–	2	1	0	0
No of environmental projects	0	7	1	2	5	0	0	3	15	4	0	0	2	0	0	0
<i>Territorial development:</i>																
Urban projects	1	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	–	0	4	5	6	0	0
Tourism, culture	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	36	0	6+2	3	21	–	16	6	1+1
Health projects	0	9	19	8	0	0	3	24	4	1	2	3	–	16	41	2
<i>Jobs created</i>	376	552	502	241	302	489	647	1,012	604	509*	452	622	122*	1,180	1,145	247

Source: based on AIRs 2010. * full-time equivalent job

Data on progress in the **implementation of ROPs** in 2010 show a great variety of both indicators used (in most cases the number is less than 40 output and result indicators, but in Podlaskie and Zachodniopomorskie there are well over 110) and their assumed importance in various fields of intervention (Table D). As a result, these give an indication, if limited, of physical progress. With few exceptions, in 2010 the highest number of projects finalised were in transport (maximum: 86 projects in Podkarpackie, minimum: 0 in Dolnośląskie which in general had completed few projects in 2010). As most indicators relate to number of projects, we may only guess that this difference is partly to do with the size and complexity of projects prepared, and not necessarily with a lack of projects.

Businesses support (mostly for SMEs, to some extent also for start-ups) was largest in Wielkopolskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie and smallest in Dolnośląskie and Łódzkie.

RTD and information society do not seem to have been of major importance for most regions in 2010, along with renewable energy and environmental projects. On the other hand, tourist and healthcare projects were frequently carried out. In terms of job creation, regions differ from 241 being created in Lubuskie (final target: 1,000) to over 1,000 jobs being created in Opolskie (final target: 3,080), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (final target 4,150) and Wielkopolskie (final target: 4,200).

It looks as if in 2010 (probably not only then) that regions concentrated their activities in areas which were “close to people” – transport, tourism, healthcare, business support – very visible, regarded by most people as important and intended to improve the quality of life. Measures relating to development (innovation, R&D, information society etc.) are not only less advanced but are not an important part of RPOs.

A final conclusion might take the form of an hypothesis: the more the number of small projects, the faster the implementation rate (see: Opolskie, which for spending 50% of its RPO budget was rewarded with a Performance Reserve, assigned by the MRD to the region which made the greatest progress in spending its funds within the ROP).

European Transborder Cooperation Programmes deserve additional comment. For reasons explained before, the complex management structures and specific features of cross-culture border cooperation, the rate of advancement in implementing them is relatively low, but significantly higher than in 2009. There are real problems of carrying out the ETC cooperation programmes on the external (eastern) EU borders.

In general, the outcomes reported are in line with the policy objectives, though some areas – as seen in tables – are more advanced than others.

As for evidence of intended effects in different policy areas, it is difficult to formulate precise answers. The data available, as it was said before, refer mostly to financial progress and less to physical and very seldom (if at all) to socio-economic (durable) effects. It therefore still remains to be assessed what impact they will have on overall development which is the best test of appropriateness of projects implemented.

The only major area where obvious delays were noted is railways. While in the AIR the stress is put on the poor financial situation of state owned companies in the sector (which is true), the main reason lies much deeper and relates to the poor reform introduced a few years ago as well as to poor quality management. This reform, based on a false understanding of “competition”, dismantled Polskie Koleje Państwowe (Polish State Railways) and created several separate companies that were responsible for particular segments of the market (several passenger carriers, cargo carrier) and infrastructure (track, power etc.). The results are chaos and inefficiency, a decline in the quality of service and an inability to take action which would improve the situation. The employees and more especially the managers of the companies involved have not paid a price for these difficulties but rather the passengers who suffer because of the inefficiency of the service.

Up to now, most of support to enterprises has been in the form of grants. However, with the increasing number of micro-loans, guarantees and other financial funds created in the regions, more and more European funds are being released in the form of repayable instruments. Some regions (Małopolskie, for instance) have introduced a policy of a steady reduction in funds available to businesses in the form of grants.

This section was meant to offer qualitative information and to show quantitative evidence to verify what the programmes are stated to have achieved. The structure and quality of data available made it possible to present only an outline of the state of affairs. Hopefully (maybe also thanks to this report) next year's report will be able to present clearer evidence.

3. EFFECTS OF INTERVENTION

There is very limited information available on the most recent effects of intervention. While financial monitoring is fairly advanced and offers regular (also monthly) access to data, monitoring of outputs is distinctly underdeveloped and the results are published mostly once a year in the form of an annual report on the influence of the European funds on the Polish national economy and regions and their convergence with other EU countries and regions.

The basic data on progress are intended to be presented in minutes from the regular meetings of the National Co-ordination Committee of the National Strategic Reference Framework (CC) headed by the Minister of Regional Development. According to information provided by the secretariat of CC, the last meeting of the CC took place in February 2011 and was devoted mostly to the division of the Performance Reserve and technical re-allocations of funding. Information on the progress of implementation (as at 31.10.2011) was rather brief.

In order to understand progress made in 2010 it may be useful to compare previously presented data (2009–2010, Table A) with the data for first four months of 2011. In April

30, 2011, among 5 centrally managed operational programmes¹⁴ the most advanced in terms of resources use was the Human Capital programme (31.6%; ESF funded), Eastern Poland Development (19.9%), and Innovative Economy (17.0%). The least advanced were the Infrastructure and Environment (with huge projects under Cohesion Fund –13.1%) and European cross-border co-operation programmes (10.4%).

Among 16 regional operational programs, the most advanced are Lubuskie (45.8%), Opolskie (46.9%), Świętokrzyskie (38.6%), Pomorskie (38.1%). The first three are among the smallest Polish regions with no large city as a capital. The least advanced are Warminsko-Mazurskie (25.2%), Zachodniopomorskie (25.7%), Śląskie (25.8%) and Dolnoslaskie (29.6%) (MRR 2011: 4). Warminsko-Mazurskie also lacks big city which could in principle generate high demand for resources. There is no clear set of factors determining the situation of different regions in terms of disbursement. It is probably due to a mix of project structure (large project take more time) and human capital (implementation staff and/or beneficiaries).

Although the output and results data are limited and are not related closely to overall objectives, in particular in the case of R&D, it has to be noted that a generally positive trend in terms of increasing implementation is visible. It might suggest that programmes next year will benefit from the progress made in 2010, even if the number of projects completed and results achieved are modest.

4. EVALUATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION

An important part of improvements in implementation, seen from the more strategic perspective, is a change in the evaluation practice. Both more sophisticated methods are increasingly in use and interest in more strategic questions is being presented. However, there are still many (too many) evaluation studies which have been conducted only because of formal requirements, and their usefulness is very limited (which is not necessarily a disappointment for the authority commissioning the evaluation study).

Despite the traditional pre-occupation of evaluation studies (almost exclusively) with the Cohesion policy programmes, and obvious concentration on the on-going, implementation related functions (technical, operational), at the expense of strategic and reflection functions (Olejniczak 2010), there is slow, but visible trend to introduce more complex studies with more general questions in mind. It includes also slow but steady process of proliferation of evaluation studies into other spheres of activities of public administration. Improved quality of evaluation is also worth mentioning. But even today, majority of almost a hundred of evaluation studies commissioned yearly by numerous institutions are extremely technical and often devoted to problems of secondary importance.

¹⁴ Except for Technical Assistance program, which is utilized in 32.5%).

In spite of the above-mentioned reservations, evaluation of programmes and projects undertaken within the Cohesion policy has been strongly developed in Poland. Practically, in 2011 the stream of evaluations of the programming period 2004–2006 has ended, and a set of ex-ante evaluations of the programming period 2007–2013 has been filled in with a series of more or less (rather less) useful ex-ante and mid-term evaluations.

Poland is considered the most advanced country as far as evaluation of public interventions use is concerned. Up to now more than 400 evaluation studies commissioned by numerous¹⁵ institutions have been published. Analysis of the structure of these studies leads to a conclusion that ex-ante and ex-post evaluations form a margin. Most studies are of the on-going type. Visible is also general domination of operational studies. Those more strategic are minority. Quality of numerous evaluation studies and their usefulness for the needs of managing and implementing institutions are considered low, in particular in the period 2004–2006 (Olejniczak 2010:55; see also Bienias et al 2010:163). The attitudes towards many completed evaluations are – in general – rather negative, especially in relation to ex-ante evaluations. On paper all proposed undertakings look excellent, and thus ex-ante evaluations in general are optimistic and positive. However, as future practice reveals, the final results may be far from this pink picture.

An instructive example of such an ex-ante evaluation is the study on complementarity of the Development of Eastern Poland, undertaken in 2006 for the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD). According to its conclusion, the programme is internally coherent, and particular tasks support and reinforce each other. As it has been found out, in reality this programme was more disintegrated than integrated, particular actions in many cases were undertaken without sufficient coherence.

Last year, probably as a result of preparation of 14 ex-post analyses (plus meta-evaluation) of 2004–2006 Cohesion policy implementation, has brought a number of higher quality and more strategic oriented studies. It should be born in mind that Poland belongs to the few Member States which decided to do their own, independent ex-post evaluation of that period.

As mentioned before, recently most advanced in terms of complexity of the problem analysed and methodology applied are those evaluation studies which refer to econometric analyses of the Cohesion Policy impact (prepared by three independent think-tanks – Institute for Market Economy Research in Gdansk, Institute for Structural Research in Warsaw and Wroclaw Agency for Regional Development), ex-post evaluation study of the National Development Program 2004–2006.

As an example of good practice in evaluation, most complex and new in terms of subject is the continuation of the previous Ministerstwa Uczące Się, MUS (Learning Ministries, 2009) project, devoted to issue of how central public administration is learning (absorbing new

¹⁵ In 2009 there were ca 40 institutions commissioning evaluation studies (Olejniczak 2010: 49).

approaches, attitudes, methods and instruments used in particular in Cohesion policy system) (MUS 2010). The current MUS 2010 project is co-financed by the ESF and carried out by EUROREG, the Department of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw and the Economic University of Kraków. It has an operational aim (understanding of factors influencing knowledge about CP) and more theoretical one (how the learning process is proceeding and what factors have an impact on it). To some extent, on its highest level, it refers to innovation absorption and proliferation. In May 2011 the project is at the end of its diagnostic stage. On the basis of extensive survey (over 1,700 civil servants from 4 Polish ministries) interviews with 80 senior management and extensive review of literature and secondary data, researchers identified mechanisms of organizational learning in 4 ministries and their 60 departments. The raw data collected are subject to scientific debates (internal and external). At the moment research team interprets data and involve civil servants in the discussion on the factors that determine learning mechanism in each department. First results are made available this summer at the project web page (www.mus.edu.pl). On the basis of the final results, the MUS team will develop and test solutions for the improvement of organizational learning.

It can be seen as one of the most innovative and complex undergoing projects of importance not only for central administration organizational learning capabilities but also for future implementation of European policies in Poland.

One interesting evaluation, devoted to the processes of decision making during implementation of the 2004–2006 programme, has been performed for the MRD by a team from the University of Warsaw¹⁶. The main findings of this project conducted with the use of sociological methods and network analysis in few selected Polish regions were the following: Polish regions achieved rather “shallow education” (i.e. devoted mostly to technical issues and not deepening the understating of strategic planning and long-range activities) of implementing Cohesion policy. They do not change their strategies in a serious way, and try to compose it as general enough to accommodate any projects that would be feasible under this policy and with EU funding. The strategies are not good enough to be sustained by next regional governments – they are usually changed by the newcomers after each local election. “Absorption” is the main target, more important than the real effects which would be brought by spending the EU funds.

This is also the main criterion for evaluation the achievement of local, regional and state administration¹⁷. This situation would be improved if absorption is replaced by choosing programmes and projects stemming from the long-ranging strategies based on firm and realistic visions of the development of the regions.

¹⁶ P.Swianiewicz and team, Non-strategic managing development: mechanism of managing the Integrated Regional Operational Programme and the efficacy of meeting the development goals, MRD 2010.

¹⁷ A special prize was awarded by the MRD from their performance reserve for the regions which had spent the EU money in the greatest degree.

When the procedures of project selection were examined, it appeared that local political coalitions and networks of personal interrelationships were more important than "objective" criteria. Also, local affiliations of decision-makers were reflected in the selection of the projects. Therefore the localities from which the most important regional politicians were elected or in which there were living, as well as those that were represented in the steering committees had greater chances for obtaining funding than those which were absent in these bodies or which had not provided local politicians. Moreover, this practice appeared to be generally accepted.

These findings were based on implementation of the 2004–2006 programme. Some improvements must have been made since then – but a general observation does not mean that such practices have been totally eliminated – they do exist on all levels, and "spending" still remains the main target.

One of the most solid evaluations was presented by the consultancy PSDB for MRR in 2011. It was devoted to on-going evaluation of the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme with the aim to assess the progress of the absorption of the Programme's funds as well as the attainment of the indicators' target values referring to the respective priorities defined in the Programme. This comprehensive study was conducted with the use of several methods (document analysis, data analysis, interviews) in December 2010 and grasped the situation of October–November of that year. Since it was already quoted in this report there is no need to repeat its main findings. An important part was also devoted to a critical analysis of indicators used with positive recommendations of their reformulation.

A similar – and most recent study published on 12 September 2011 (already quoted in this report) prepared by PAG Uniconsult for the MRD¹⁸ examines the mid-term implementation of few measures Priority Axes 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Operating Programme Innovative Economy, 2007–2013. This solid report states – which may be an overstatement – that the support provided in analysed Priority Axes of the Programme improves innovativeness of Polish companies. It also optimistically estimates the chances for full use of the funds available. As the most important obstacle in process of project implementation the study indicated the administrative burdens and information obligations (e.g. reporting) which are still considered as high, and complex and time consuming.

Several evaluation studies have been conducted to assess the usefulness of particular measures and projects (there are 422 positions in the database of evaluation studies conducted in Poland since 2006). They demonstrate several common deficiencies:

- no control group investigated – it is impossible to assess the "net" impact of intervention (i.e. business support for SMEs) if we do not know the difference in

¹⁸ Ocena stanu realizacji 3, 4, 5 i 6 priorytetu PO IG w połowie okresu programowania.

performance (if any) between the project beneficiaries and those who had not been embraced by this intervention¹⁹;

- limiting the study to document analysis only, without any reflection on implementation and without any information coming from the institutions or persons active in this process;
- limiting evaluation very narrow, specific issues, not typical for other projects of programmes;
- many (too many?) ex-ante evaluations and their limited impact on programme implementation and to scarce references to these results in on-going evaluations.

Having said this, one should praise several evaluation projects as comprehensive and conducted according to high methodological standards, with broad references to theory in a given field and well specified conclusions and recommendations. Three of them are indicated in the tables below.

Table E –Evaluation grid for examples of good practice in evaluation

Case 1. BASIC INFORMATION		
Country: Poland		
Policy area: Governance		
Title of evaluation and full reference: Polish Ministries as learning organisations http://www.mrr.gov.pl/aktualnosci/fundusze_europejskie_2007_2013/Documents/MUS_4_ministerstwa_FIN.pdfv		
Intervention period covered general		
Timing of the evaluation (when it was carried out): July – November 2009		
Budget (if known): EUR 28,000 (120,000 PLN)		
Evaluator External evaluator: team of academic University of Warsaw experts led by Karol Olejniczak		
Method (counterfactual analysis, process analysis, case study, econometric model, analysis of indicators, etc.): mixed-method approach		
Main objectives and main findings (Main objective: address the question of how Polish ministries learn. What is the condition of learning process in Polish institutions and what are their determinants. Main findings 1) Learning is limited to operational issues 2) Knowledge is strongly fragmented within the departments, constant changes of structures narrow down the learning perspective and causes repetition of mistakes. 3) The interactions and reflection mechanisms are defective. There are 5 possible causes identified (currently tested in a follow-up study).		
Appraisal (Why you consider the evaluation an example of good practice: – 2–3 lines) It looks not at one narrow line of financing (one intervention) but at the mechanisms and processes that are triggered by EU funds in Poland. Please note that this study was exploratory in nature, thus it does not put the list of ready-to-use recommendations		
CHECK LIST	YES	NO
UTILITY		
Report Clarity and Balance		
Are the objectives, methods and findings of the evaluation clearly described?	x	

¹⁹ There are, however, very few exceptions with counterfactual approach, like the study aiming to establish and assess the true effects of support (the so-called net effect) granted within in 2009 on implementation of Measures 2.1 and 2.3 of the Sectoral Operational Programme Improvement of the Competitiveness of Enterprises, 2004–2006, where the group of unsuccessful applicants was also investigated. The net effect of intervention was found to be clearly positive.

Are the conclusions and recommendations clearly supported by the analysis?	x	
Are the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention being evaluated fairly assessed and reported?		x
Is the outcome of the intervention clearly reported?		x
RELIABILITY OF FINDINGS		
Evaluation design		
Is the approach adopted by the evaluation and method used clearly set out?	X	
Is the approach and methods suitable given the objectives of the valuation and the intervention being assessed?	X	
Are the details of the operation of the intervention clearly described?	N/A	
Are the mechanisms through which the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives clearly identified?	X	
Context		
Is the socio-economic and policy context clearly set out?	X	
Are the effects of the economic and/or policy context on the outcome of the intervention clearly described?	X	
Information Sources		
Are the quantitative and/or qualitative data used suitable for the purpose for which they are used?	X	
Is the reliability of the data fairly assessed and described?	X	
Analysis		
Are appropriate procedures/techniques used to analyse the data and/or qualitative information?	X	
Are suitable procedures used to check the validity of findings?	X	
Is the validity of the findings reached clearly demonstrated?	X	
Do the policy recommendations follow clearly from the findings of the analysis?	X	

Table Ea – Evaluation grid for examples of good practice in evaluation

Case 2. BASIC INFORMATION		
Country Poland		
Policy area Governance, regional development		
Title of evaluation and full reference Nie-strategiczne zarządzanie rozwojem? Mechanizmy zarządzania środkami ZPORR na poziomie regionalnym a skuteczność realizacji celów rozwojowych http://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/pswianiewicz_zporr.pdf		
Intervention period covered 2004–2006		
Timing of the evaluation (when it was carried out) 2008–2009		
Budget (if known):		
Evaluator External evaluator: team of academic University of Warsaw experts led by paweł Swianiewicz		
Method process analysis, case studies, interviews, document analysis, network analysis		
Main objectives and main findings (very short description – 3–4 lines) To assess the mechanisms of formulating goals in the Integrated programme for regional development on the regional level, to indicate if the real development goals were pursued or rather particular interests of regional and local elites safeguarded (which appeared to be the case due to relatively weak social capital in the country)		
Appraisal (Why you consider the evaluation an example of good practice: – 2–3 lines) Honest and critical, addressing basic issue of formulating and implementing programmes on the regional level. Touching upon very important issues of the role of development strategies versus particular interest of the elites. Sound methodologically and well rooted in theories (the research team was composed of scientists from the University).		
CHECK LIST	YES	NO
UTILITY		

Report Clarity and Balance		
Are the objectives, methods and findings of the evaluation clearly described?	x	
Are the conclusions and recommendations clearly supported by the analysis?	x	
Are the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention being evaluated fairly assessed and reported?	x	
Is the outcome of the intervention clearly reported? (it was not the goal of the study)		
RELIABILITY OF FINDINGS		
Evaluation design		
Is the approach adopted by the evaluation and method used clearly set out?	x	
Is the approach and methods suitable given the objectives of the valuation and the intervention being assessed?	x	
Are the details of the operation of the intervention clearly described? (it was not the goal of the study)		
Are the mechanisms through which the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives clearly identified?	x	
Context		
Is the socio-economic and policy context clearly set out?	x	
Are the effects of the economic and/or policy context on the outcome of the intervention clearly described? (it was not the goal of the study)		
Information Sources		
Are the quantitative and/or qualitative data used suitable for the purpose for which they are used?	x	
Is the reliability of the data fairly assessed and described?	x	
Analysis		
Are appropriate procedures/techniques used to analyse the data and/or qualitative information?	x	
Are suitable procedures used to check the validity of findings?	x	
Is the validity of the findings reached clearly demonstrated?	x	
Do the policy recommendations follow clearly from the findings of the analysis?	x	

Table Eb –Evaluation grid for examples of good practice in evaluation

Case 3. BASIC INFORMATION		
Country Poland		
Policy area Infrastructure and Environment		
Title of evaluation and full reference Analiza postępów wdrażania Programu Operacyjnego Infrastruktura i Środowisko 2007–2013 w kontekście identyfikacji niezbędnych zmian zapisów Programu z uwzględnieniem krajowej rezerwy wykonania http://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/4_041.pdf		
Intervention period 2007–2010		
Timing of the evaluation October–December 2010		
Budget (if known):		
Evaluator (External evaluator)		
Method (analysis of documents, process analysis, interviews, analysis of indicators, etc.)		
Main objectives and main findings (very short description – 3–4 lines) To assess the progress in implementation of the biggest programme in Poland (and the whole of the EU) in midterm implementation, with reference to feasibility of achieving its goals and critical analysis of indicators used.		
Appraisal (Why you consider the evaluation an example of good practice: – 2–3 lines) Comprehensive and at the same time detailed, covering the whole field of the programme, based on useful sources of data (documents and in-depth interviews), objective, formulating clear recommendations and suggestions for future improvements		
CHECK LIST	YES	NO

UTILITY		
Report Clarity and Balance		
Are the objectives, methods and findings of the evaluation clearly described?	x	
Are the conclusions and recommendations clearly supported by the analysis?	x	
Are the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention being evaluated fairly assessed and reported?	x	
Is the outcome of the intervention clearly reported?	x	
RELIABILITY OF FINDINGS		
Evaluation design		
Is the approach adopted by the evaluation and method used clearly set out?	x	
Is the approach and methods suitable given the objectives of the valuation and the intervention being assessed?	x	
Are the details of the operation of the intervention clearly described?	x	
Are the mechanisms through which the intervention is intended to achieve its objectives clearly identified?	x	
Context		
Is the socio-economic and policy context clearly set out?		x
Are the effects of the economic and/or policy context on the outcome of the intervention clearly described? (comment: too early for effects, moreover – this was not the aim of the study)		x
Information Sources		
Are the quantitative and/or qualitative data used suitable for the purpose for which they are used?	x	
Is the reliability of the data fairly assessed and described?		x
Analysis		
Are appropriate procedures/techniques used to analyse the data and/or qualitative information?	x	
Are suitable procedures used to check the validity of findings?	?	
Is the validity of the findings reached clearly demonstrated?	x	
Do the policy recommendations follow clearly from the findings of the analysis?	x	

Two of the three evaluation studies, presented briefly above, are devoted to governance. In our opinion this is the crucial issue for effectiveness of Cohesion policy in a country like Poland – with relatively poor social capital, still weak institutions and shallow democratic social values. Such approaches are of a wider relevance, and should be strongly supported in other Member states of the EU – especially those which demonstrate similar features to the mentioned above.

As already stated, there is another issue which should be investigated in relation to implementation of the Cohesion policy – the complementarity of projects and programmes. Some evaluation studies tackle those issues in relation to the programme and project formulation phase, and come to varied conclusions (some deliver a more positive picture, some other a negative assessment of lack of proper complementarity). There is, however, not a single study (that we would know about) which investigates this topic in “direct action”, i.e. during on-spot implementation. As reported, preliminary observations lead to a hypothesis that in this phase complementarity is even shallower than during programming.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS – FUTURE CHALLENGES

In general, the economic situation of Poland is relatively favourable. As is the case with other new Member states, the low propensity for innovations, poor technological advancement and low shares of high-tech industries is the main obstacle for harmonious future development, jeopardising the possibility of assuming “high road” of development, and keeping the national economy of the “low track” on which competing with the cost of production is the main driving force, instead of offering to the global markets innovative products and services. This general situation strongly affects regional patterns, since the innovation potential is clearly differentiated in the country, with great advantage of Warsaw and other metropolitan cores and acute shortages of R&D potential in peripheral regions. Moreover, if more resources will be directed to this sphere, these will be coming to the centres with already existing potential which will further reduce the chances of the backward regions to attain higher competitiveness and productivity.

However, worries about the future are still here, since Poland, as a medium-sized economy with obsolete technological structures is dependent on the global processes and the situation within the EU (with Germany as the most important business partner). Since the future is strongly uncertain, the Polish society should be prepared for possible tensions and upheavals. This is also the tune of reasoning voiced by the government.

The implementation of the EU-financed projects is proceeding in Poland without major changes in comparison to the previous year, and the learning process is proceeding. No doubt, Poland's membership in the EU has been very beneficial for the country, its economy and society, since the opening of markets allowed for marinating high exports which to a great extent allowed Poland to avoid recession, and inflow of the EU funds has had a positive effect on internal demand – another important factor saving the national economy from recession.

As indicated at the beginning of this draft report, at this moment there is much more data available on financial progress than on physical one, and almost no information on effects of actions and activities. However, information on physical progress leads to the conclusion that the only significant problem with disbursement refers to railway transport priority, where absorption capacity for reasons explained earlier seems to be too small.

Thus, this report was devoted to a large extent to procedures and problems (including also problems with coherent presentation of data on financial and physical progress of Cohesion policy implementation). Coordination of activities conducted within particular sectoral and regional operational programmes appeared to be one of major issues, and the hypothesis that this coordination was not sufficient has been confirmed on all interrogated levels: governmental, regional and in the national agency implementing major programmes (see Annex).

All bodies interviewed supported the idea of a need of conducting a complex evaluation of joint effects of several interventions of the EU in a given territory that would overcome the barriers stemming from institutional divisions both in the country and in the European Commission.

Also, deeper decentralisation of implementation of the EU-financed programmes can be seen as a possibility of assuring better coordination, since the regional governments may be expected to demonstrate more responsibility in proper designing and implementing projects for the benefit of their regional and their electorate – while this responsibility among the ministries is more diluted and indirect.

Appreciating more standardised and better than this was the case in the last year's AIRs data, it should be recommended to take more into consideration the quality of projects. After long period of preoccupation of managing authorities with commitments and disbursement, it is a high time to monitor and analyse more closely the relationship between outputs and results and policy objectives.

It can be also suggested that “linear” systems, like transportation of water and sewage should be coordinated on the highest level appropriate, to assure their coherence and complexity.

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INTERVIEWS

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TABLES

See Excel file for Tables 1–4:

Table 1 – Regional disparities and trends

Table 2 – Macro-economic developments

Table 3 – Financial allocation by main policy area

Table 3 CBC – Financial allocation by main policy area

Table 4 – Commitments by main policy area (by end-2010)

Table 4 CBC – Commitments by main policy area (by end-2010)

ANNEX

Annex A –Evaluation Studies of Cohesion Policy programmes and projects co-financed by ERDF and Cohesion Funds conducted on Poland since 2010

No	Evaluation study	Type	Subject	Time of completion	Period covered
1	Ocena wpływu realizacji polityki spójności perspektywy 2004–2006 na zwiększenie możliwości rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego regionów Polski wschodniej. Evaluation of impact of 2004–2006 Cohesion Policy on development potential of Eastern Poland	Ex post	regional and territorial development	2010	2004–2006
2	Badanie ewaluacyjne ex-post efektów transgranicznej współpracy polskich regionów w okresie 2004–2006 Evaluation study of ex-post effect of transborder cooperation of Polish regions	Ex post	regional and territorial development	2010	2004–2006
3	Ocena jakości projektów i ich wpływu na skuteczną i efektywną realizację celów Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Opolskiego 2007–2013 wraz ze wskazaniem obszarów wymagających dalszego wsparcia. Evaluation of the quality of projects and their impact on effective implementation of the ROP Of Opolskie voivodship, with indication of territories requiring further assistance	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
4	Ocena skuteczności systemu wdrażania Funduszu Małych Projektów i Projektów Sieciowych w Programie Operacyjnym Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska (Województwo Lubuskie) – Brandenburgia 2007–2013, w ramach Europejskiej Współpracy Terytorialnej Evaluation of the effectiveness of implementation of the Fund of Small Network Project within the OP Transborder Cooperation Poland (Lubuskie voivodship) – Brandenburg 2007–2013 within the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
5	Ocena wpływu polityki spójności na rozwój miast polskich (w ramach ewaluacji ex post NPR 2004–2006) Evaluation of the impact of Cohesion policy on the development of Polish towns (within then Framework of ex-post evaluation of the NDP 2004–2006)	Ex post	regional and territorial development	2010	2004–2006

6	Ocena wybranych wskaźników przygotowanych przez IZ dla monitorowania Wielkopolskiego Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego na lata 2007–2013 Evaluation of selected indicators prepared by the MA for the monitoring of the Wielkopolska Regional Operational Programme for 2007–2013	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
7	Ocena realizacji założonych celów komponentu regionalnego PO KL w Wielkopolsce w kontekście aktualnej sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej oraz jej prognozy Evaluation of the level of goal implementation of the regional component of OP HC in Greater Poland in the context of current socio-economic situation and its perspective	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
8	Ocena wpływu projektów dofinansowanych w ramach RPO WK–P na realizację celów Strategii Lizbońskiej The impact assessment of projects financed under ROP WK–Q for the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy goals	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
9	Ewaluacja ścieżek komplementarności i systemu monitorowania realizacji zasady komplementarności w Polsce Wschodniej Evaluating complementary paths and a system for monitoring implementation of the principle of complementarity in Eastern Poland	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
10	Badanie ewaluacyjne dotyczące wskaźników Programu Operacyjnego Rozwój Polski Wschodniej Evaluation study on indicators for OP Development of Eastern Poland	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
11	Określenie zasadności finansowania projektów w zakresie poprawy efektywności energetycznej i odnawialnych źródeł energii na terenie województwa zachodniopomorskiego w ramach finansowania zwrotnego Determining the merits of funding projects to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in the Zachodniopomorskie voivodship, within the framework of fund return	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
12	Ocena skuteczności systemu wdrażania Programu Współpracy Transgranicznej Rzeczpospolita Polska – Republika Słowacka 2007–2013 (PL–SK) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the system implementation CBC Programme Poland – Slovak Republic 2007–2013 (PL–SK)	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013

13	Ocena wsparcia projektów środkami LRPO w ramach Priorytetu II „Stymulowanie wzrostu inwestycji w przedsiębiorstwach i wzmocnienie potencjału innowacyjnego”: Działanie 2.1 „Mikroprzedsiębiorstwa” oraz Działanie 2.2 „Poprawa konkurencyjności małych i średni Rating LRPO funds support projects under Priority II "Stimulating investment growth in enterprises and strengthening the innovative capacity": Measure 2.1 "Micro" and Measure 2.2 "Improving the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises"	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
14	Komplementarność działań realizowanych w ramach Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Śląskiego na lata 2007 – 2013 Complementarity between activities under the Regional Operational Programme of Silesia in years 2007 – 2013	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
15	Pozakonkursowe ścieżki wyboru projektów w ramach RPO WSL: Indykatory Wykaz Projektów Kluczowych oraz Programy Rozwoju Subregionów. Path of non-competitive selection of projects within the RPO WSL: Indicative List of Key Projects and Development Programmes subregions.	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
16	Wpływ inwestycji w sprzęt medyczny w ramach RPO WSL na poprawę jakości i zwiększenie dostępności świadczeń zdrowotnych na terenie województwa śląskiego. The impact of investments in medical equipment in the ROP WSL on improving the quality and accessibility of health services in the Śląskie voivodship	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
17	Analiza wpływu inwestycji w infrastrukturę kultury i turystyki dofinansowanych z funduszy strukturalnych na rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy poszczególnych gmin/powiatów województwa śląskiego Analysis of the impact of investment in culture and tourism infrastructure financed from structural funds for socio-economic development of individual municipalities / counties in the Śląskie voivodship	Ex post	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
18	Optymalizacja systemu wskaźników oraz kryteriów wyboru projektów w kontekście realizacji celów RPO Województwa Mazowieckiego 2007–2013 Optimizing the system of indicators and criteria for project selection in the context of the objectives of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship 2007–2013 RPO	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013

19	Analiza wniosków złożonych w ramach dwóch konkursów do Działania 1.5 „Rozwój przedsiębiorczości” Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Mazowieckiego 2007 – 2013 Analysis of applications under the two competitions for Measure 1.5 "Development of Entrepreneurship" ROP Mazowiecki 2007–2013	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
20	Ocena stopnia realizacji celu głównego Priorytetu II Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Mazowieckiego 2007 – 2013 poprzez realizację celów zawartych w Strategii e-Rozwoju Województwa Mazowieckiego na lata 2007 – 2013 Evaluation of the implementation of the main objective of the Priority II ROP Mazowiecki 2007 – 2013 through the implementation of the objectives of the Strategy for the Development of e-Mazowieckie Voivodship for the years 2007 – 2013	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
21	Oszacowanie wartości wskaźników odzwierciedlających cele Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Mazowieckiego 2007–2013 przy użyciu modelu makroekonomicznego HERMIN Estimating the value of indicators reflecting the objectives of the ROP 2007–2013 Mazowiecki using macroeconomic model HERMIN	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
22	Identyfikacja barier realizacji projektów w ramach działań 1.6, 1.8, 4.2 Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Mazowieckiego na lata 2007–2013 Identification of barriers for implementation of projects under Action 1.6, 1.8, 4.2 ROP 2007–2013 Mazowieckie	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2011	2007–2013
23	Aktywność beneficjentów w ubieganiu się o dofinansowanie projektów w ramach Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Podkarpackiego na lata 2007–2013 Activity of the beneficiaries in applying for funding projects under the ROP for Podkarpackie Voivodship for the years 2007–2013	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2011	2007–2013
24	Ewaluacja Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Łódzkiego Evaluation of the ROP of Lodz voivodship	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013
25	Ocena wpływu środków pomocowych (w tym RPO Wł) na rozwój turystyki, sportu, rekreacji i kultury w regionie łódzkim Assessment of the impact of aid (including ROP) for the development of tourism, sport, recreation and culture in the region of Lodz	Ongoing	regional and territorial development	2010	2007–2013

26	Badanie odbioru kampanii i świadomości Programu Operacyjnego Innowacyjna Gospodarka 2007–2013 – II badanie The study on social reception and awareness of the campaign on Innovative Economy Operational Programme 2007–2013 – Second test	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
27	Ocena wpływu polityki spójności na wzrost konkurencyjności i innowacyjności polskich przedsiębiorstw i gospodarki Assessment of the impact of Cohesion policy on the growth of competitiveness and innovativeness of Polish enterprises and the economy	Ex post	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2004–2006
28	Ocena realizacji PO IG w kontekście krajowych dokumentów strategicznych Evaluation of implementation of OP IE in the context of national strategic documents	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
29	Ocena realizacji celu 6 PO IG Wzrost wykorzystania technologii informacyjnych i komunikacyjnych w gospodarce w połowie okresu programowania Assessment of implementation of objective 6 OP IE "Increase of the use of ICTs in the economy" in the mid-term	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
30	Ewaluacja Regionalnych Instytucji Finansujących Evaluation of Regional Financing Institutions	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
31	Ewaluacja Działania 8.2 Programu Operacyjnego Innowacyjna Gospodarka (PO IG) pn. „Wpływ systemów B2B na wzrost wydajności i efektywności współpracy przedsiębiorstw”. Evaluation of the Measure 8.2 of the OP IE: "The impact of B2B systems on increase of efficiency and effectiveness of enterprise cooperation"	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
32	Inicjowanie działalności innowacyjnej – ocena efektywności i skuteczności Działania 3.1 PO IG. Initiating innovative activities – evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of Measure 3.1 OP IE	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
33	Ocena stopnia zapełnienia najbardziej perspektywicznych nisz na rynku e-usług w Polsce, przez projekty realizowane w ramach Działania 8.1 PO IG The assessment of the level of fulfillment of the most promising niches on the e-service market in Poland, through projects implemented within Measure 8.1 OP IE	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013

34	Ocena rezultatów działania 2.1 SPO WKP po 18 miesiącach (12 rund ewaluacji on-going) Evaluation of results of the SOP ICE 2.1 after 18 months (12 rounds of on-going evaluation)	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2004–2006
35	Ocena rezultatów działania 2.3 SPO WKP po 18 miesiącach (12 rund ewaluacji on-going) Evaluation of results of the measure 2.3 SOP ICE after 18 months (12 rounds of on-going evaluation)	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2004–2006
36	Ewaluacja Działania 5.2 POIG – Wsparcie instytucji otoczenia biznesu świadczących usługi proinnowacyjne oraz ich sieci o znaczeniu ponadregionalnym Evaluation of the OP IE Evaluation Measure 5.2 – Support for business environment institutions providing pro-innovation services and their supra-regional networks	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
37	Ocena skuteczności i efektywności Programu Bon na Innowacje Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Innovation Voucher Program	Ongoing	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2008–2010
38	Ocena efektów wspierania środkami ZPORR (działania 2.5, 3.4) i SPO WKP (działania 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.1, 2.2.1, 2.3) sektora MŚP Evaluation of the effects support means IROP (Actions 2.5, 3.4) and SPO WKP (Actions 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.1, 2.2.1, 2.3) of the SME sector	Ex post	innovativeness of the economy	2010	2007–2013
39	Badanie punktów informacyjnych tworzących System Informacji o Funduszach Europejskich oraz działających w ramach Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki Study of the information centres creating Information System of the European Funds and acting in the Human Capital Operational Programme	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
40	Ocena stanu realizacji Programu Operacyjnego Pomoc Techniczna 2007–2013 w 2009 r. Evaluation of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007–2013 in 2009	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
41	Badanie opinii uczestników szkoleń realizowanych na zlecenie IZ POPT w 2009 r. Survey of participants of training activities financed by IZPOPT in 2009	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
42	Ewaluacja funkcjonowania systemu oceny i wyboru projektów w ramach PO IG – etap II – po rozpoczęciu rund aplikacyjnych Evaluation of the evaluation and selection system of projects under OP IE – Phase II – after the start of application rounds	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013

43	Ewaluacja systemu oceny i wyboru projektów w ramach Programu Operacyjnego Infrastruktura i Środowisko 2007–2013 Evaluation system of assessment and selection of projects under the OP I&E 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
44	Komplementarność i synergia interwencji realizowanych w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego i Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju Regionalnego w perspektywie finansowej 2004–2006 Complementarity and synergy of interventions implemented under the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund in the financial perspective 2004–2006	Ex post	good governance	2010	2004–2006
45	Badanie beneficjentów Programu Operacyjnego Infrastruktura i Środowisko 2007–2013: stopień poinformowania nt. zasad i procedur realizacji projektów. Examination of the beneficiaries of the OP I&E 2007–2013: level of information about the rules and procedures for project implementation	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
46	Analiza skuteczności, jakości oraz użyteczności działań informacyjnych i promocyjnych RPOWŚ (w tym Kampanii Promocyjnej) w kontekście zweryfikowania trafności zapisów w Planie Komunikacji RPOWŚ 2007–2013 Analysis of efficacy, quality and usefulness of information and publicity RPOWŚ (in this Promotion Campaign) in the context of verification of the accuracy RPOWŚ Communications Plan 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
47	Ocena realizacji projektów partnerskich realizowanych w ramach krajowych i regionalnych programów operacyjnych w okresie perspektywy finansowej 2007–2013 Evaluation of the implementation of partnership projects implemented under the national and regional operational programs during the 2007–2013 financial perspective	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
48	Badanie osiągniętych wartości wskaźników rezultatu komponentu regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki ETAP I The test results obtained values of indicators of the regional component of the OP HC, phase I	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
49	Ocena systemu zarządzania i wdrażania Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki 2007–2013 Assessment of the management and implementation of the OP HC 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
50	Ocena systemu monitorowania i wartości wskaźników PO KL 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–

	Evaluaiton of the monitoring and evaluation sustyem of indicator value within the OP HC 2007–2013=				2013
51	Identyfikacja barier w dostępie do środków finansowych z PO KL dot. projektów konkursowych w ramach priorytetów VI–IX – województwo świętokrzyskie. Identifying barriers in access to financial resources of OP HC regarding the competitive projects within the priorities VI–IX – Świętokrzyskie voivodship	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
52	Raport nt. postępów realizacji celów Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego dla Województwa Pomorskiego na lata 2007–2013 (wg stanu na 31.12.2009 r.) Report on the progress of objective implementation of the ROP for Pomorskie 2007–2013 (as of 31.12.2009)	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
53	Badanie skuteczności, jakości i użyteczności wybranych narzędzi informacji i promocji Wielkopolskiego Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego na lata 2007 – 2013 dla beneficjentów i potencjalnych beneficjentów The study of effectiveness, quality and usefulness of the selected tools of information and promotion of the ROP for Wielkopolskie voivodship for the years 2007 – 2013 for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
54	Ewaluacja funkcjonowania systemu oceny i wyboru projektów w ramach PO IG – etap II – po rozpoczęciu rund aplikacyjnych Evaluation of the system of evaluation and selection of projects under OP IE – Phase II – after the start of application rounds	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
55	Badanie ad-hoc przesunięcia alokacji środków pomiędzy poddziałaniami 5.1.5 oraz 5.1.6 w ramach V osi priorytetowej Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Warmia i Mazury na lata 2007–2013 The study ad-hoc shift of allocation of funds between 5.1.5 and 5.1.6 activities under priority axis V of the ROP for Warmińsko–mazurskie vovodship, 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
56	Ocena systemu zarządzania i wdrażania RPO WiM Assessment of the management and implementation of ROP Warmińsko–mazurskie vovodship	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
57	Ocena działań informacyjnych i promocyjnych podejmowanych w ramach RPO WSL na lata 2007–2013 w latach 2007–2010	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013

	Assessment of information and publicity measures undertaken within the ROP for śląskie voivodship, 2007–2010				
58	Ekspertyza na temat zasadności wyznaczenia obszaru o szczególnie niekorzystnej sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej w ramach RPO WZ i jego wpływu na aktywność beneficjentów w aplikowaniu o wsparcie z funduszy unijnych Study on the merits of the designation of a particularly socio-economically disadvantaged area in the ROP for Zachodniopomorskie voivodship and its impact on the activity of the beneficiaries in applying for support from EU funds	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
59	Ocena zdolności beneficjentów do realizacji projektów wpisanych na Indykatywną Listę Projektów Indywidualnych dla Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Zachodniopomorskiego na lata 2007–2013 (tak zwana lista IPI) Evaluation of the ability of beneficiaries to implement projects included on the Indicative List of Individual Projects for the ROP for Zachodniopomorskie voivodship 2007–2013 (the so-called list IPI)	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
60	Ocena funkcjonowania Instytucji Zarządzającej Regionalnym Programem Operacyjnym Województwa Podlaskiego oraz bariery w pozyskiwaniu środków w ramach Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Podlaskiego na lata 2007–2013 Evaluation of the functioning of the Managing Authority of the ROP for Podlaskie voivodship and barriers in obtaining funds under the ROP for Podlaskie voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
61	Badanie efektów działań informacyjnych i promocyjnych na temat Funduszy Europejskich dla społeczeństwa oraz analiza społecznego odbioru tych działań – 2010 Study on the effects of information and publicity about the European Funds for the society and the analysis of public perception of these activities – 2010	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
60	Analiza systemu zarządzania, wdrażania i kontroli LRPO na lata 2007–2013 Analysis of system management, implementation and control LRPO for 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
62	Ocena systemu wskaźników w ramach Lubuskiego Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego na lata 2007–2013 Evaluation of the system of indicators in the ROP for Lubuskie voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
63	Ocena systemu wskaźników Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Warmia i Mazury na lata 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–

	Evaluation of the the system of indicators in the ROP for Warmińsko–mazurskie voivodship 2007–2013				2013
64	Ocena efektywności i skuteczności wdrażania Pomocy Technicznej w ramach RPO WZ na lata 2007–2013 i poziomu kosztów administracyjnych zarządzania i wdrażania RPO WZ 2007–2013 Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of Technical Assistance in the ROP for Warmińsko–mazurskie voivodship 2007–2013 and of the level of administrative costs of managing and implementing the ROP Warmińsko–mazurskie voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
65	Analiza efektów komplementarności wsparcia pomiędzy projektami dofinansowanymi w ramach programów z perspektywy 2007–2013 w Województwie Kujawsko–Pomorskim na przykładzie wybranych powiatów i gmin Analysis of of complementarity effects between projects co-financed for the support programs of the perspective of 2007–2013 in Kujawsko–Pomorskie voivodship, on the example of selected districts and communes	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
66	Bariery i problemy w realizacji projektów finansowanych z EFS w województwie opolskim Barriers and problems in implementing projects financed by the ESF in Opolskie voivodship	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
67	Badanie ewaluacyjne kwestionariuszy do monitorowania PO RPW Evaluation of a survey questionnaires to monitor OP DEP	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
68	Ocena systemu instytucjonalnego oraz systemu zarządzania i kontroli Programu Operacyjnego Infrastruktura i Środowisko 2007–2013: możliwości optymalizacji funkcjonowania Assessment of the institutional system and management and control system of the OP I&E 2007–2013: opportunities to optimize its functioning	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
69	Weryfikacja założeń Prognozy Oddziaływania na Środowisko Programu Operacyjnego Infrastruktura i Środowisko Verification of assumptions of Environmental Impact Assessment of the OP I&E	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
70	Badanie beneficjentów POLiŚ: wskaźniki dla Planu Komunikacji: stopień poinformowania nt. zasad i procedur realizacji projektów A study of the beneficiaries OP I&E: indicators for the Communication Plan: the level of information about the rules and procedures for project implementation	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013

71	Identyfikacja najlepszych praktyk w zakresie projektów dotyczących ochrony przyrody (uszczegółowiony tytuł w raporcie końcowym: Ocena modelu finansowania ochrony przyrody w ramach POIiŚ oraz identyfikacja najlepszych praktyk w tym zakresie) Identifying best practices for nature conservation projects (specified title in the final report: Evaluation model of financing of nature protection within the OP I&E and identification of best practices in this field)	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
72	Metaewaluacja badań dotyczących oceny kryteriów wyboru projektów w programach operacyjnych współfinansowanych z funduszy europejskich w Polsce w perspektywie 2007–2013 Metaevaluation of studies on the evaluation criteria for project selection in the Operational Programmes co-financed by the European funds in Poland in the 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
73	Analiza stanu realizacji celów project pipeline Analysis of the objectives of project pipeline	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
74	Nie-strategiczne zarządzanie rozwojem? Mechanizmy zarządzania środkami ZPORR na poziomie regionalnym a skuteczność realizacji celów rozwojowych Non-strategic management of development? Mechanisms for management of funds at the regional level IRDOP and the effectiveness of development objectives	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2004–2006
75	Ewaluacja Realizacji Planu Komunikacji dla Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Łódzkiego na lata 2007–2013 Evaluation of the Implementation of the Communication Plan for the ROP for Lodz voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2010	2007–2013
76	Analiza systemu wskaźników monitorowania w ramach Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Świętokrzyskiego na lata 2007–2013 Analysis of the system of monitoring indicators in the ROP for Świętokrzyskie voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	good governance	2011	2007–2013
77	Ocena wpływu inwestycji infrastruktury transportowej realizowanych w ramach polityki spójności na wzrost konkurencyjności regionów Impact assessment of transport infrastructure investments implemented under the Cohesion Policy to increase the competitiveness of regions	Ex post	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2004–2006

78	Wpływ interwencji finansowanych w ramach Priorytetu XII OP I&E na osiągnięcie celów szczegółowych ww. Priorytetu Effects of interventions funded under Priority XII OP I&E to achieve specific objectives of this priority	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
79	Ocena potencjału innowacyjnego w Polsce Wschodniej w związku z realizacją Działania I.3 PO RPW – Wspieranie Innowacji Programu Operacyjnego Rozwój Polski Wschodniej 2007–2013 Evaluation of innovative potential in Eastern Poland in connection with the activities of the OP DEP I.3 – Promoting Innovation OP DEP 2007–2013	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
80	Ustalenie sytuacji wyjściowej dla działania IV.1 PO RPW – Infrastruktura drogowa (pierwszy etap ewaluacji IV osi priorytetowej PO RPW) Establishing the baseline for the activity IV.1 OP DEP – Road infrastructure (the first stage of evaluation of the priority axis IV OP DEP)	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2004–2006
81	Ewaluacja barier oraz analiza zagrożeń dla realizacji projektów w kontekście wykorzystania dobrych praktyk projektowych realizowanych przez Beneficjentów Działania 13.1 OP I&E Infrastruktura szkolnictwa wyższego Evaluation of barriers and risk analysis for projects in the context of the use of good practices of project activities implemented by the Beneficiaries 13.1 OP I&E infrastructure of higher education	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
82	Analiza postępów wdrażania POIiŚ 2007–2013 w kontekście identyfikacji niezbędnych zmian Programu z uwzględnieniem krajowej rezerwy wykonania Analysis of the progress of implementation of OP I&E 2007–2013 in the context of the identify necessary changes in the Programme with regard to national performance reserve	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2011	2007–2013
83	Społeczne, gospodarcze i środowiskowe efekty projektów realizowanych w ramach IV osi priorytetowej OP I&E Social, economic and environmental effects of projects implemented under the Priority Axis IV OP I&E	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
84	Identyfikacja najistotniejszych problemów i barier, które mogą wystąpić na etapie realizacji projektów w ramach V osi POIiŚ Identification of the most important problems and obstacles that may arise during the implementation phase of projects under the V-axis OP I&E 2007–2013	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013

85	Stan przygotowania i analiza najważniejszych problemów w realizacji projektów transportu miejskiego w obszarach metropolitalnych przewidzianych do finansowania w ramach POIiŚ State of preparation and analysis of the major problems in urban transport projects in metropolitan areas to be funded under the OP I&E	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
86	Weryfikacja wskaźników oraz ich wartości docelowych dla VI, VII i VIII priorytetu POIiŚ Verification of indicators and their target values for VI, VII and VIII priority OP I&E	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
87	Ocena możliwości zapewnienia porównywalności projektów dotyczących wykorzystania poszczególnych źródeł energii odnawialnej na przykładzie działania 9.4 OP I&E Assessment of possibilities to ensure comparability of the projects concerning the use of various renewable energy sources, based on the example of activity 9.4 of the OP I&E	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
88	Ocena wpływu inwestycji w ramach działań 9.1, 9.2 i 9.3 na realizację zobowiązań związanych z oszczędzaniem energii The impact assessment of investments in activities 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 for the implementation of commitments relating to energy saving	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
89	Ocena bieżącej realizacji projektów realizowanych w ramach XI Priorytetu w kontekście identyfikacji występujących barier i problemów. Assessment of the current implementation of projects under Priority XI in the context of identifying existing barriers and problems	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
90	Śródkokresowa ocena realizacji celów szczegółowych założonych w XIII Priorytecie OP I&E jako odpowiedź na potrzeby rozwojowe szkolnictwa wyższego, zapotrzebowanie rynku pracy na absolwentów kierunków priorytetowych oraz realizacji celów Strategii Lizbońskiej Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of specific objectives established in the thirteenth Priority of the OP I&E in response to the developmental needs of higher education, labour market demand for graduates in priority disciplines and the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy goals	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2011	2007–2013

91	Analiza potrzeb potencjalnych beneficjentów XI Priorytetu POIŚ w zakresie działań przewidzianych do realizacji w ramach Priorytetu z uwzględnieniem stanu infrastruktury społecznej w sektorze kultury Analysis of the needs of potential beneficiaries within the XI Priority of the OP I&E in the scope of activities designed to be implemented under this priority, taking into account the state of social infrastructure in the culture sector	Ongoing	infrastructure development and modernisation	2010	2007–2013
92	Ocena efektów inwestycji środowiskowych finansowanych w ramach NPR 2004–2006 Evaluation of the effects of environmental investments financed under the NDP 2004–2006	Ex post	environment	2010	2004–2006
93	Prognoza oddziaływania na środowisko projektu "Krajowej Strategii Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010–2020: regiony, miasta, obszary wiejskie. Strategic Environmental Impact assessment of the draft of the "National Strategy for Regional Development 2010–2020: regions, cities, rural areas"	Ex ante	environment	2010	2010–2020
94	Analiza wartości wskaźnika oddziaływania pn. "Liczba ludności zabezpieczonej przed powodzią" w ramach Działania 1.2 ZPORR Infrastruktura ochrony środowiska Analysis of the impact of the indicator "The number of people protected against floods" within the framework of Activity 1.2 Environmental protection infrastructure of the IOPRD	Ongoing	environment	2010	2007–2013

95	Wstępna ocena oddziaływania POIG na środowisko – założenia strategiczne, a realizacja projektów – streszczenie raportu końcowego Preliminary assessment of the environmental impact of the OP I&E – strategic objectives, and implementation of projects – Summary of the Final Report	Ongoing	environment	2010	2007–2013
96	Wstępna ocena oddziaływania PO IG na środowisko Preliminary assessment of the environmental impact of OP IE	Ongoing	environment	2010	2007–2013
97	Analiza i ocena znaczącego wpływu realizacji RPO Wł. na lata 2007–2013 na środowisko Analysis and assessment of the significant environmental impact of implementation of the ROP of Lodz voivodship 2007–2013	Ongoing	environment	2010	2007–2013
98	Ocena korzyści uzyskiwanych przez Państwa UE-15 w wyniku realizacji polityki spójności w Polsce – Aktualizacja 2010 Assessing the benefits gained by the EU-15 Member States as a result of the implementation of Cohesion policy in Poland – an update 2010	Ex post	impact of NDP/NSRF	2010	2004–2006 2007–2013
99	Ocena systemu realizacji polityki spójności w Polsce w ramach perspektywy 2004–2006 Evaluation of the implementation system of Cohesion policy in Poland in the perspective 2004–2006	Ex post	impact of NDP/NSRF	2010	2004–2006

Source: http://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Strony/Wyniki_badan.aspx

Annex B –Organisational challenges for smooth implementation of EU co-financed programmes

As in the past, for most of the public, beneficiaries, representatives of the implementing institutions and other stakeholders, the adequacy and quality of public regional (Cohesion) intervention were considered as issues of secondary interest in comparison to the speed of spending the funds. One of the major explanations may be the fact that the structure of it was already discussed and agreed upon before 2007 and it seems still to meet most of expectations. Again one should take into account that Polish society undergoes simultaneously at least three fundamental processes (final stages of post-1989 transformation; globalisation and European integration; transition from industrial to post-industrial era). Dynamism and complexity of these changes result in relatively slow progress in adopting new development paradigms. As long as Cohesion policy in Poland, in line with industrial era paradigm, concentrates majority of funds on technical infrastructure, it is easily understood and accepted by majority. Therefore current period of implementation of regional policy (*de facto* seen as identical with Cohesion policy) does not bring any serious debates about structural and more complex underpinnings of intervention.

At least this is not a concern of the public. *Ex-post* evaluation of the 2004–2006 Cohesion policy in Poland, which was not dramatically different from just implemented 2007–2013, did not meet wider interest, though it had brought the conclusions that were and are of significance for contemporary activities. Among major conclusions that seem to remain valid also today are the following:

- Positive role of this policy for socio-economic macro development (GDP, employment, unemployment), proved (in various degrees, though) by all econometric models applied;
- Contribution to modernisation and competitiveness of businesses, human capital development, business environment, hard infrastructure, catalytic role in public administration systemic changes;
- However, not enough strategically and long-term oriented;
- Persisting need to make it more evidence- and place-based (MRR, Ewaluacja ex-post 2010: 77)
- In management system the stress was too much put on absorption function, and too little on both strategic and reflection function (EGO 2010).

Implementation

Implementation system to a large extent went through modernisation process at the end of 2004–2006 programming period. In general, the system, though criticised by some beneficiaries (see simplification) has had a structure which seems to be a reasonable compromise between the needs of transparency and efficiency. However, as the devil is hidden in details, the need for improvement and simplifications is obvious. Main general

issue which in our opinion deserves attention is the relationship between proposed Multi-Level Governance system and specific feature of the current implementation system – that is the observed propensity to centralise functions. Delegation of certain activities to second and third tiers of implementation (regional and local) institutions does not change the fact that responsibility for implementation and final decisions remain in the hands of Managing Authority (that is either MRD or Regional Executive Boards). It is visible both on the central level, where the Ministry of Regional Development since 2007 controls all the managerial functions except for auditing (still in the structures of the Ministry of Finance), and on the regional level, where almost all regional governments implement all measures by themselves or by established by them and fully dependent institutions (for instance large Mazowiecka Jednostka Wdrażania Programów Unijnych – Implementation Unit in Mazowieckie region). This striking (and to a large extent inconsistent with the discussed directions of restructuring of public administration structures and functions) propensity to control the whole process of implementation (reported previously), has to have much deeper foundations than just management principles. A hypothesis seems justified that this is a result of comparatively very low level of social capital in Poland, in which (among other) low trust to other people is one of the most important manifestations. It would be unusual if such attitudes did not influence also inter-institutional relations. Co-ordination quite often is being understood as direct control (execution of power) instead of delegation and devolution.

Further simplification of procedures

Activities oriented on simplification were nothing but continuation of the work done earlier. It had two interlinked motives: to ensure fast spending, and ensure constant flow of funding to the economy as one of the measures helping to deal with economic slow-down and – potentially – the crisis.

In 2010 and beginning of 2011 main source of recommendations on simplification to Managing Authorities were special Groups formed in order to analyse procedural implementation problems and to recommend changes. Groups consist of representatives of implementing authorities and of NGOs representing main types of beneficiaries (business organisations, for instance). With the time passing by (and improvements in procedures) decreasing number of contributions from individual beneficiaries has been reported. Topics analysed have differed according to the sector in question. As an example of activities may serve “Entrepreneurs’ Group” discussing issues on regular meetings of 10–40 people). There exist also two other groups: “Local administration – infrastructure Group” and “European Social Fund Group”. Together, these three groups that compose the national “System Simplification Team” headed by a member of top management of the Ministry of Regional Development, deal with the most typical procedural problems which meet with the greatest complains of the beneficiaries.

Discussions, conclusions and recommendations by the Groups together with the Ministry analyses of evaluation reports are the foundation for the meetings of the aforementioned ministerial “System Simplification Team”. This team discusses the information from Groups and other sources of information (evaluations, Monitoring Committees proceedings etc.) and proposes recommendations to appropriate Managing Authorities.

Example: activities of the Entrepreneurs Group

Over the last year the Group has discussed main problems reported by members and provided them with additional information (mostly legal) to help beneficiaries understand the requirements of the relevant EU and Polish laws. Important source of information on problems encountered and opinions expressed by stakeholders are the evaluation reports.

Main simplifications in the system introduced related to:

- Introduction of application collection by internet (not only in paper version),
- Resignation from time factor as a formal criterion in application selection (“quality first”),
- Possibility of enclosing information on already paid costs with the application (shortening of re-financing procedures),
- Reduction of differences in procedures applied in different regional operational programs (e.g. identical rules on financial threshold allowing to use simplified procedures).

Among important changes discussed and introduced there is acceptance of statements (on taxes and social security payments) instead of certificates from appropriate institutions (MRR 2010 a, MRR 2010 b). In 2011 it is planned not only to continue debates on simplifications needed in regional operational programs, but also on the recommendations relating to post-2013 programming period. Specific issue is a clear need to provide beneficiaries with advice on environment impact assessment and interpretation of public procurement law.

Integrated system of strategic development.

Building of the new set of strategic documents that would define more effective and efficient strategic development system is an activity which started around 2005. The planned structure of strategic planning may be described as consisting of the following acts:

- National long-term development strategy
- National medium-term development strategy and eight horizontal/sectoral development strategies:
- Regional
- Transport
- National security
- Energy and environment
- Social capital
- Human capital
- Innovation and efficiency of the economy
- Rural areas and agriculture
- Efficient state.

Important additional strategic document is the KPZK (National Spatial Development Concept), finalised in May 2011 and about to be adopted.

Not necessarily in line with planning good practice, first strategy finished and formally adopted was neither a long- or medium-term strategy of national development, but the National Regional Development Strategy (2010 d). It is, however, seen as an important conceptual input into other strategies, prepared in order to secure better territorial co-ordination of development activities.

Other documents are in different phases of preparation. It is too early to say to what extent the final system will contribute to co-ordination of the whole development activities and securing synergy. There is a good chance that for the first time after accession, strategic documents will be ready before operational programs are formulated, and will cover more activities than exclusively those which are to be co-financed by the EU.

As a part of preparation of this report, an attempt has been made to identify basic indicators that could be universally used for monitoring all strategies (operational programs). This attempt has not succeeded since the number and complexity of objectives and priorities within the current Polish Cohesion policy system made it impossible. Interestingly, Ministry for Regional Development started work on the same topic. Initial proposal is expected in mid-2012.

Problems with inter-programme and inter-project coordination

Cohesion policy is being implemented in Poland via 3 sectoral programmes, one regional programme managed by the national government, one programme for transnational territorial cooperation, technical assistance programme and 16 regional operational programmes. These programmes are funded by two EU structural funds (ERDF and ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. In addition, substantial financing is coming to rural areas via the Common Agricultural Policy (Rural Development Programme).

With the exception of activities financed from CAP (direct payments to farmers and development of rural areas managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) the Ministry of Regional Development is the managing authority for all other programmes. It implements these programmes through delegation to sectoral ministries (as a first level intermediary institutions), according to their competencies.

To make the story more complicated it has to be indicated that in some sectoral programmes (Human Capital OP) majority of measures are implemented by the regional governments and their agencies which, at the same time, bear responsibility for their own ROPs.

This system needs strong and effective coordination. However, the most important body which is responsible for undertaking these tasks on the highest level – the National Co-ordination Committee – meets rather infrequently (last time in February 2011). Its working group has a more operational character, but – as indicated in the interview conducted in one of the regions – its activities started too late to secure a sufficient horizontal coordination among several projects and tasks.

As a result, operational coordination between activities undertaken in particular programmes is low. This coordination is relatively better on the programming–strategic level, but once the programmes are written and projects drafted, their implementation is being performed practically independently by particular implementing authorities, often located in the same ministry in the same agency, and in the same regional government.

On the **governmental** level it was indicated that although the MRD is responsible for most of the EU interventions in Poland, the very fact that particular sectoral ministries are assuming the role of implementing authorities leads to insufficient coordination of actions and activities. It has been a long tradition in this country that the ministries consider themselves as mutually independent, and safeguard this independence strongly. Nevertheless the basic causes – the coordinating institutions on the national and regional levels, as well as in the inter–level perspective, seem to be too weak.

Moreover, the principle that most of the projects (with the exception of the “priority projects” of national importance) are awarded on an individual competitive basis has a strong negative impact on coordination and mutual coherence of activities undertaken in a given territory.

Also, the fact that there are only 16 ROPs funded via the ERDF, and not another 16 that would be funded via the EFS, has a negative bearing on coordination in the regional level. It should be either allowed to have multi–fund ROPs, or to have their number doubled.

The following comments come from one of the **agencies** subordinated directly to one of the ministries. It is indicated that the multilevel coordination is poor – the same tasks implemented by some state agencies and within the ROPs are implemented in fact independently, demarcations between “central” and “regional” tasks is often artificial and – if based on the value of financing – unfortunate. There are no relationships between training and future grants – for example entrepreneurs who had participated in training programmes do not have any priorities in obtaining investment grants over those who never had been trained. (“soft” and “hard” instruments are not mutually coherent). Also, training for entrepreneurs should not be devoted to successful applying for grants, but should be of substantive character. This has also been confirmed on the regional level (and such training profiles have led to emergence of several ‘agencies’ specialising in helping in preparing technical applications for grants and other financial support)...

Flow of information between the state agencies (operating on the national level) and the units implementing the ROPs in particular regions is weak. The blame is on the side of the regions (according to the opinion of the agency). Even if the regions are interested in joint projects, regulations and administrative barriers make it almost impossible.

On the regional level even evaluation activities are split by the source of financing (separate unit for the ROP and for the regional component of the Human Capital sectoral programme). Also, the institutional schemes for enterprise support are not coordinated, due to the fact that separate systems are built by the agency and the regions.

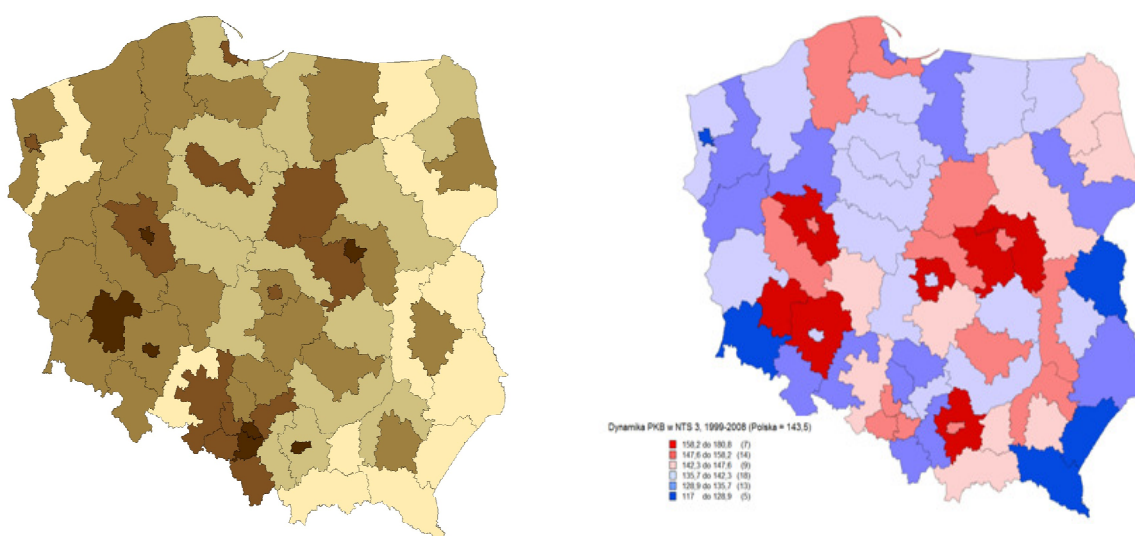
An interview in one of the **regions** indicated that poor coordination is due to the fact that “spending” is the most important criterion in evaluation of the units responsible for implementing the projects financed from the EU funds, which does not allow for more reflective designing of the projects in their mutual relationships. Also, poor access to information on activities undertaken in different projects and tasks is another barrier for proper coordination, in spite of existence of several ‘coordination committees’ on both national and regional levels.

Lack of sufficient coordination may be also noticed on the earlier stages – for example preparation of similar projects, but undertaken in different programmes (e.g. development of telecommunication infrastructure within the

RPO and the OPfDEP) was not properly coordinated which resulted in suboptimal implementation of particular pieces of this network.

There is also lack of proper coordination on the local level, As well, and it relates mostly to sewage and waste water treatments – existing and projected individual projects of household wastewater treatment units are often neglected when the municipal system is being designed and implemented.

Annex C – The regional differentiation and regional dynamics in Pola



GDP/inhabitant, 2008, NUTS3, Poland=100 GDP growth, 1999–2008, NUTS3, constant prices, Poland=100

