



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIE, POLAND

The regional MAP of Zachodniopomorskie is located in northwestern Poland on the Baltic Sea. The group consists of representatives from society, policy and science.

The governance situation in the Zachodniopomorski region consists of a systematic approach from the local government to encourage collaboration among stakeholders. Citizens may participate in self-government bodies, which includes the right of citizens to attend council sessions of the commune, powiat or voivodeship and meetings of its committees. Citizens can also participate in the Youth Council and Commune Councils of Seniors. Public consultations and participatory budgeting are important forms of community involvement.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Provide financial support to NGOs engaged in public participation and community engagement.
- Increase funding for consultation, field research and cultural/educational projects in rural areas.
- Support local leaders and influencers to sustain social activity and knowledge/information exchange.
- Enable resource distribution on Community-Led Local Development (CLLD).
- Provide personalised social and civic education for specific groups on public participation.

Future rural research

- Identify the potential and opportunities of rural development to create a competitive advantage of the region on the basis of these potentials.
- Provide civic, social and economic education in rural areas.
- Identify problems that limit local community involvement in rural governance.
- Conduct specific research in communities to diagnose social opportunities, levels of trust, sense of identity and NGO activities. Plan individual programmes for each community to address deficiencies in engagement and develop appropriate tools.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Effective revitalization programs combining inclusion and deliberation, and involving the rural community at all stages: from idea, through design, to implementation and evaluation.
- Village funds responding to the most pressing needs of rural residents are discussed and accepted at village meetings, allowing local authorities to implement self-government and reaching citizens at a level impossible for other local government units.
- Local leaders are the driving force behind the participation process in rural areas.
- Agricultural self-government organisations shape and implement agricultural and social policy with the involvement of their members.

KEY NEEDS

- Greater involvement of different community groups and "broader" information on the possibility of collaborating/submitting their ideas to different NGOs.
- Dissemination of good practices through study tours, meetings, discussion forums, etc.
- Raising awareness and educating the local community on how they can effectively influence decision-making, beyond participation in municipal elections.
- Increased support from leaders.
- More activities to promote the creation of cooperation networks of self-government organizations at the local and regional level.
- Change the attitudes of human capital in local offices and reduce administrative burden.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Science for the Environment Foundation - Koszalin

The Science for the Environment Foundation has implemented 100+ projects worth more than PLN 200 million, and supported 500+ local social initiatives worth nearly PLN 50 million. A model of cooperation was developed with the local community through the Revitalization Program in Rural Areas of the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship, involving social consultations and active residents in grassroots initiatives at the local level.

