

HANDBOOK OF GOOD PRACTICE

dissemination of information on the developed solutions concerning the innovative model of cooperation in spatial planning within the Rzeszów Functional Area

The project is implemented under Priority Axis IV Social Innovation and Transnational Cooperation, Measure 4.1 Social Innovation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020 (PO WER) with funding from the European Social Fund.



Abbreviations of names used in the Handbook:

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
Handbook	Handbook of Good Practice
Project	Project entitled 'Integrated and Socialised Model of Spatial Planning through the Development of a Spatial Strategy for the Rzeszów Functional Area'.
Leader	Podkarpackie Voivodeship - Marshall's Office of Podkarpackie Voivodeship
Partners	Project Partners: Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area and 13 municipalities of the ROF
ROF	Rzeszów Functional Area
MOF	Urban Functional Area
Model	Innovative solutions developed and tested as part of the Project
SP ROF	Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area
SC	Steering Committee
PMT	Project Management Team
ET	Experts Team
IPI	Innovative Internet Platform
SDA	Strategic Development Areas
SUiKZP	Study of conditions and directions of spatial development
MPZP	Local spatial development plan
WZ	Planning permission
ZIT	Integrated Territorial Investments
Report	Final Report. ROF Spatial Strategy, World Bank, December 2022
WB	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank
RAP	Analytical framework of the project
KSRR	National Regional Development Strategy 2030
IZ PO WER	Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development
EFS	European Social Fund
PO WER	Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development
CuR	Project Catching-up Regions
JST	Local government units
NGO	NGOs
IDI	Individual In-depth Interview
FGI	Focus Group Interview
PE	Panel of Experts

Symbols used in the Handbook:

	Quotes from participants and project experts based on transcripts from IDIs and FGIs
	Recommendations for the MOF, resulting from the implementation of the Project
	Conclusions and information relevant to the implementation of the Project
	Diagnoses based on the analysis of existing sources
	Case study

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Introduction

"The Good Practice Handbook" we present to you has been developed as part of the project entitled **"Integrated and Socialised Model of Spatial Planning through the Development of a Spatial Strategy for the Rzeszów Functional Area"**. It is a guide to integrated and socialised spatial planning and socialised spatial planning, intended for urban functional areas (MOFs). It has a dissemination character and contains mainly:

- conclusions resulting from the implementation of the innovative Project;
- description of the spatial planning model developed and tested within the Project;
- qualitative evaluation of the innovative solutions developed within the Project, based on the results of social research - individual in-depth interviews with Project participants and focus group interviews with experts supporting the Project in terms of content, including the World Bank, lecturers of post-graduate studies carried out within the Project, etc.; and
- recommendations, regarding the application of the Model in the changing legal environment for spatial planning.

The authors of this Handbook wanted to: describe the integrated spatial planning solutions developed within the Project (hereinafter referred to as the Model) and present the opinions of Project participants and external experts on the most important elements of the Model and the possibilities of its implementation in other MOFs. The aim of the research analysis was to confirm (or exclude) the thesis that the Model meets expectations in such aspects as:

✓ **innovation of the developed solutions:**

Definitions of innovation will most often include the terms 'novelty' or 'change'. For example, according to the definition of the Polish Development Fund, "innovation" is: implementation of a new or significantly improved product (product or service) or process, a new marketing method or a new organisational method in business practice, workplace organisation or relations with the environment. The minimum requirement for an innovation to occur is that the product, process, marketing method or organisational method is new (or significantly improved).¹ Another approach to innovation is to define innovation from the perspective of the effects it implies. In this context, innovations are "changes that result in an increase in the usefulness of products/services, technological processes and management systems, improvements in economic rationality, the protection and improvement of the natural environment, improved human communication and ultimately an improvement in the quality of society's professional as well as private life".²

According to the European Commission's Guidelines, social innovation means an action which, in terms of both its aims and means, has a social character; in particular, any action relating to the development and implementation of new ideas for products, services, practices and models which simultaneously address social needs and create new social relationships or cooperation between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and increasing its capacity to act.³

The aim of innovative projects, according to the ESF Guidelines, is to seek new, better, more effective ways of solving problems that fall within the scope of ESF support. They are not so much aimed at solving problems of specific groups, as at solving problems resulting from the lack of appropriate instruments. Innovation is also determined by the forms of support, which should:

- assume new, hitherto unknown ways of action;
- serve to develop new instruments or improve the existing, existing methods, correct them in order to apply them more effectively and fully to the problems;
- include testing the developed solutions with the participation of target groups (empowerment).⁴

✓ **practicality and applicability to other MOFs:**

One of the most important issues that affect the assessment of the practical effects of the project and the possibility of integrating the developed solutions into policy and practice is the changing legal regulations of the in the field of spatial planning. During the period of developing the concept of the Project and the vast majority of its implementation period (from January 2020 to September 2023), the Act of 23 March 2003 on spatial planning and development. On 24 September 2023, the provisions of the Act on Amending the Act on Planning and Spatial Development and Certain Other Acts came into force. Undoubtedly, the amended Act has a direct impact on whether, when analysing the solutions developed

¹ Source: <https://pfr.pl/slownik/slownik-innowacja.html>

² L. Białoń, Zarządzanie działalnością innowacyjną, Warszawa 2010.

³ Source: <https://innowacjespoleczne.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EksperymentySpoleczne>.

⁴ Source: https://www.power.gov.pl/media/93014/wytyczne_innowacyjnosc_pokl_28082012.pdf

today, we are still dealing with an innovation or already with a pilot implementation of the Model into the mainstream of integrated and socialised spatial planning. A new issue, which has an important connection to the Model, is the replacement of the study of conditions and directions for spatial development of the municipality with a study of conditions and directions for spatial development of the municipality and directions for spatial development of the municipality by a master plan. Unlike the study, it will be an act of local law and its findings will provide the basis for adopting local plans and issuing decisions on development conditions. It will have to define planning zones and municipal urban planning standards. In the opinion of the Project's experts, ways and means of developing common unified standards have been proposed in the Model. It will be important for the implementation of functional planning in MOFs and metropolitan areas (and their linkage to aid programmes, including above all European measures) to base functional planning on a supra-local development strategy. In this aspect, it is necessary to:

- ensuring binding relations between the supralocal development strategy and municipal development strategies (through a system of obligatory arrangements and recommendations for shaping and conducting spatial policy),
- linking the supralocal strategy with fund programmes (especially with the implementation of integrated territorial investments under regional operational programmes),
- establishment of supralocal urban planning and architectural commissions. Recognition of the supralocal development strategy as an obligatory document enabling application for funds for the implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments (IIT) within regional operational programmes and the requirement to prepare the supralocal development strategy with arrangements and recommendations in the sphere of spatial policy should apply to all associations and local government partnerships implementing integrated territorial investments.⁵

There are many such issues, opening the discussion as to whether the solutions presented in the following Handbook constitute a "universal recipe" for the implementation of the amended Act at the MOF level. However, the aim of this publication is not to provide ready-made solutions but, above all, to inspire cooperation in integrated spatial planning within the MOF and to develop their own cooperation solutions. Instead, the experience of the Project and the project "now-how" may contribute to saving time or avoiding or reducing problems related to, for example, the socialisation of the spatial planning process.

✓ dissemination and mainstreaming of new policy solutions:

The main task of innovative projects is to promote and integrate innovative undertakings into national policies through the exchange of information, experiences, results and good practices, and to develop complementary approaches and coordinated or joint undertakings.

Therefore, the Handbook is primarily aimed at: MOFs and mayors and mayors, councillors, officials of territorial self-government units - spatial planning practitioners. Pursuant to Article 3. 1. shaping and conducting spatial policy in the territory of the municipality, including the adoption of municipal spatial planning acts, is one of the municipality's own tasks⁶. However, pursuant to paragraph 2a. the shaping of and conducting spatial policy on the area of the metropolitan association (metropolitan area) is the task of the metropolitan association, if it has been established. Thus, the recommended recipients of the Handbook are MOFs and non-governmental organisations that coordinate and run MOF Offices (such as the Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area). To a lesser extent, the publication is intended for the inhabitants of municipalities, as they will not be direct users of the Model, but rather its beneficiaries and stakeholders. It is obvious that spatial planning directly affects many spheres of local communities' functioning, for example: environment, real estate market, housing, accessibility to services, accessibility for people with disabilities, investments, etc., i.e. the broadly understood quality of life.

The intention of the Handbook is to present spatial planning as "a competence in its own right and at the same time a shared competence", because municipalities do not operate in isolation both territorially and functional. Functional links between municipalities often do not correspond to established administrative boundaries. Therefore, many tasks and investments can not only be, but have to be planned and implemented on a and implemented on the broader scale of functional and metropolitan areas. Municipalities, especially neighbouring municipalities, are interrelated in many aspects, e.g. public transport, access to investment areas, housing development, labour market, access to social and health

⁵ Analysis of the IRMiR Urban Policy Observatory and the Institute for Urban and Regional Development.

Source: <https://obserwatorium.miasta.pl/aktualizacja-kpm-wyzwania-i-rozwiazania/ksztaltowanie-przestrzeni-wyzwania-i-rozwiazania/>

⁶ Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development

services, environmental protection, recreational areas, etc. These common interdependencies mean that spatial planning has increasingly become a collaborative and integrated activity. If we also take into account the aspect of sustainable development of the functional area (taking into account both the competitive potential and the need to reduce development barriers of each municipality), integrated spatial planning becomes not only an opportunity for development and competitive advantage but a necessity.

Particularly as the traditional division between urban and rural areas is increasingly blurred. Areas outside urban boundaries are increasingly taking on an urbanised character, as lower land prices contribute to the development of suburban housing. A natural consequence is the location of complex developments in these areas, serving the quality of life of the residents.

In the opinion of the implementers and participants of the Project, as well as experts supporting the implementation of the Project, the developed solutions for integrating spatial planning are: innovative, practical and possible to disseminate and mainstream.

It is obvious that spatial planning directly affects many spheres of functioning of local communities, for example: the natural environment, real estate market, housing, access to services, accessibility for people with disabilities, investments, etc., i.e. broadly understood quality of life.

The central authorities have noticed that the sustainable development of the country requires improvements also in the area of spatial planning. The Strategy for Responsible Development stated, among other things: "Intensive transformations of space related to ongoing suburbanization, especially around large cities, have revealed the lack of proper development management in functional areas, beyond the administrative boundaries of individual local government units, significantly impeding the efficient functioning of these areas. The lack of coordination between development activities and the lack of direct reference to space translates into ineffectiveness of public intervention and problems in the protection of the public interest"⁷. It is large, dynamic urban areas that most need well-thought-out spatial planning tools and derive the most benefits from them. They attract many new housing estates and investments, they also have significant needs in terms of new public infrastructure.⁸

The "Development Strategy of the Voivodeship - Podkarpackie 2030" (SRWP 2030) indicates that the above-mentioned urbanization and suburbanization processes are often an uncontrolled phenomenon, which is reflected in the disorganization of spatial order, which translates directly into the loss of tourist and investment attractiveness of given areas, difficulties communication, restrictions in access to public services and an increase in the costs of ensuring public order and security by local governments of territorial units. In order to effectively implement rational spatial management, which is a key element of socio-economic integration, spatial planning and revitalization activities should be coordinated between the city and the communes of the functional area. Due to the above, SRWP 2030 includes, among others, actions

in terms of:

- sustainable spatial and architectural development of the city of Rzeszów and ROF thanks to the coordination of planning documents of individual local government units in order to effectively use space;
- reducing spatial conflicts regarding the functions and purpose of areas and buildings;
- revitalization of degraded areas in order to restore or give them new social, economic, spatial, technical or environmental functions;
- including in the city's architectural and urban planning concepts aeration wedges influencing the movements of air masses and preventing smog;
- expansion of urban ecological systems and connections with open areas through a system of green rings.⁹

An important issue, which is also indicated by SRWP 2030, is strengthening the development opportunities of areas at risk of permanent marginalization in the voivodeship. The region's policy strives to implement the principles of sustainable development, which obliges us to direct actions to provide residents with a full package of development opportunities regardless of their place of residence. The actions undertaken are intended to identify and strengthen development factors for areas with weaker development prospects (resulting from the socio-economic structure, peripheral location or loss of previous functions). The expected goals in this regard include, among others:

- increasing infrastructure resources in strategic sectors;
- dynamising socio-economic development based on local potentials;

⁷ Strategy for Responsible Growth (2017, p.228)

⁸ Report „W kierunku lepszego planowania przestrzennego w województwach podkarpackim i świętokrzyskim”, 2018.r.

⁹ Podkarpackie Development Strategy 2030,p.127

- development of entrepreneurship and innovation;
- improving access to basic public services;
- eliminating transport exclusion.

These areas were identified at the poviats level, based on an indicator taking into account their level of socio-economic development¹⁰.

As noted in the World Bank Report "Towards better spatial planning in the Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships" spatial planning system in Poland, in its current form, it does not fulfill its intended tasks¹¹. The authors of the Report stated that in the current legal environment and in the face of practices used in planning socio-economic development, the spatial planning system:

- it is dysfunctional because socio-economic development programming is not effectively linked to spatial planning procedures (lack of integrated planning);
- does not take into account new phenomena such as MOF, because planning practices are limited to the boundaries of administrative units and their purpose is only to prepare a plan, and not to seek agreement in defining common problems and ways of solving them;
- the prerogatives and competences of local and provincial governments make it difficult to take action to solve problems that go beyond the administrative boundaries of a given unit ("penumbra" areas under the jurisdiction of more than one local government);
- the culture of cooperation between local government units is poorly developed;
- we are dealing with a weak position of the local government towards developers and investors ("planning for developers");
- The "pathological urbanization" of the past period, associated with forced industrialization, has been replaced by new pathologies: urban sprawl and irrational use of social, economic and spatial assets and resources.

Due to the lack of spatial development plans and the wide application of administrative decisions to the location of functions and facilities, we are faced with negative phenomena such as:

- spatial chaos - spontaneous administrative decisions do not take into account the broader spatial context or plans for the future (which is the essence of spatial planning);
- unpredictability - it is not known for sure what will be built, in what location, and with what results (investors are discouraged by uncertainty, the level of which can be unacceptable);
- inefficiency - numerous spatial values (location, nature, natural resources, infrastructure, etc.) are not used in a rational way; as a result, further development is inhibited or even blocked;
- threats - without proper diagnosis and knowledge of the conditions and land development plans, it may turn out that new investments occupy flood areas or other areas that should be closed to development;
- conflicts - locating investments without a clear spatial development framework causes conflicts at the interface of various development functions, which may translate into a lower standard of living or business activity;
- collusion - decisions may be made arbitrarily, without clear guidelines, which may create an atmosphere conducive to collusion and corruption¹².

Map No. 1 below shows existing and proposed spatial plans in the ROF. They seem to function in complete isolation and detachment from each other. Fragmented spatial planning ignores the whole picture of appropriate and resident-friendly development patterns. Although partial local development plans must take into account the provisions of the municipal study, in practice this does not always happen. Moreover, the study is often a rather general and outdated document¹³.

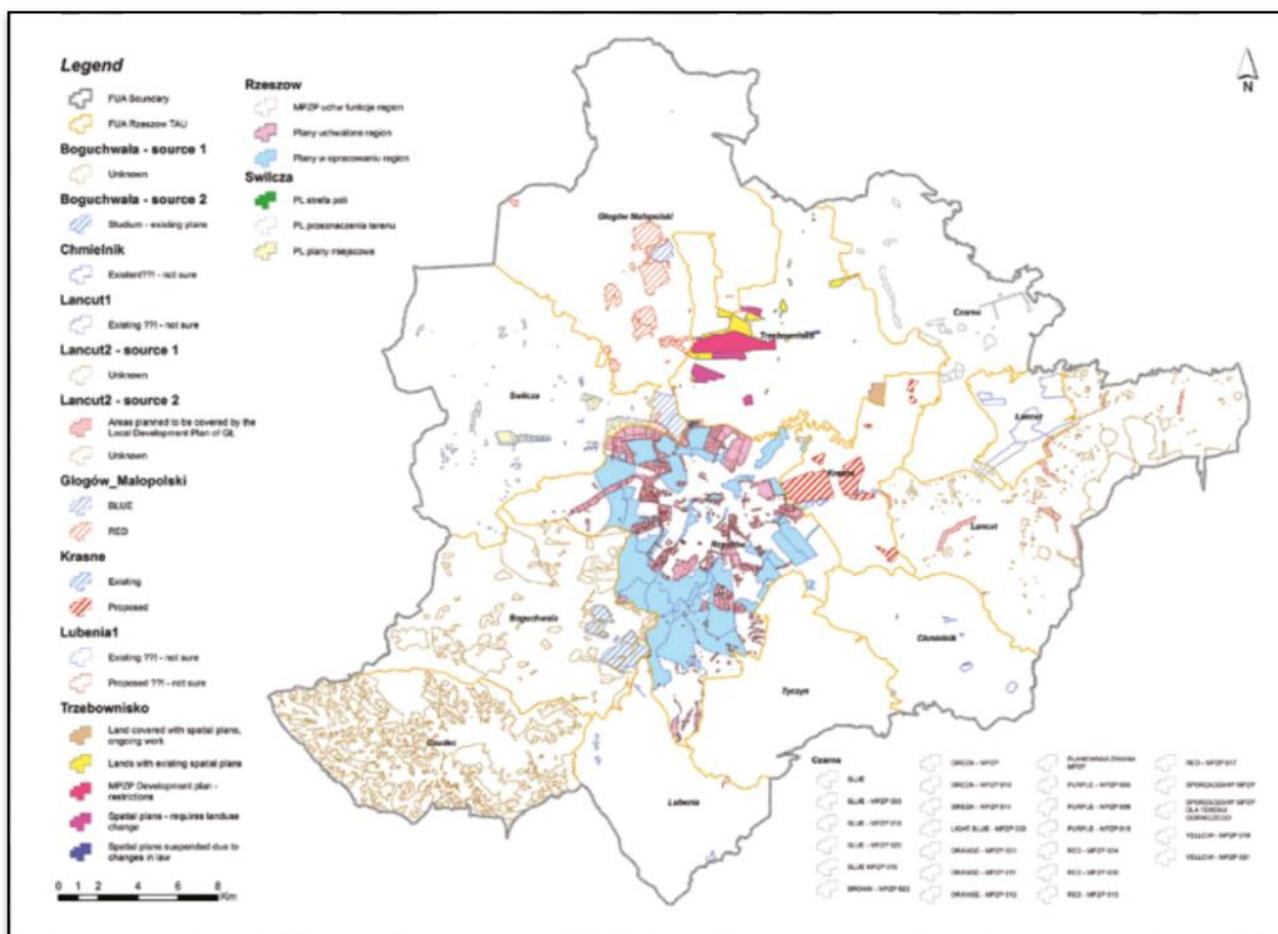
¹⁰ Podkarpackie Development Strategy 2030, p.128

¹¹ Report „W kierunku lepszego planowania przestrzennego w województwach podkarpackim i świętokrzyskim”, 2018.r., p. 73-74

¹² Ibid, p.74

¹³ Ibid, p.38

Map 1. Existing and proposed spatial development plans in the ROF area



Source: Report „W kierunku lepszego planowania przestrzennego w województwach podkarpackim i świętokrzyskim”, 2018.r., p.38

Solid spatial planning tools also play an important role in increasing the attractiveness and accessibility of an area to investors. Taking into account that the Rural Development Fund is the main economic engine of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, it is necessary to ensure that it works properly, and wise spatial planning can increase its competitiveness and attractiveness¹⁴.

That is why it is so important to harmonize the development processes of MOFs through sustainable and rational spatial and architectural development of the city and ROF areas, thanks to the coordination of planning documents of individual local government units in order to effectively use space, and to reduce spatial conflicts, including those regarding the functions and purpose of areas and types of buildings. . This will allow, among other things, for better management of assets (especially field reserves) and making these resources available for new investments. New investments mean more jobs and opportunities for the region's inhabitants and a larger stream of public sector revenues, enabling further local government activities in the future. In the ROF, most of the new investment areas are located outside the administrative borders of the Rzeszów Commune, and some of them cover the territory administered by three communes. Without proper coordination, it will be difficult to transform these investment areas into active production zones.¹⁵

In the opinion of the implementers and participants of the Project, as well as experts supporting the implementation of the Project, the developed solutions for integrating spatial planning are: innovative, practical and possible to disseminate and mainstream.

¹⁴ Ibid,p.82

¹⁵ Ibid,p.25

In this Handbook we will present the most representative opinions and recommendations on the possibility of implementing the Model in other MOFs.

1. Summary of the Handbook

1.1. Working on the Handbook.

The manual was developed in July-October 2023 by the BARIS Market and Social Analysis Office. The company has been providing training and consultancy services since 2006, mainly in the field of implementation and reporting and evaluation of projects financed by EU funds, mainly the European Social Fund, and training in strategic planning and public participation.

An editorial team was appointed to prepare this publication, consisting of:

- **Dr Hubert Kotarski** - Head of the research team: sociologist, Pro-Dean of the College of Social Sciences, Department of Organisational Sociology and Regional Development, University of Rzeszów, author of numerous studies, e.g. the cyclical "Rzeszów Social Diagnosis" (which also takes into account issues of spatial planning), "Urban policy and quality of life of residents";

- **mgr inż. arch. Marta Jakowska** - architect, urban planner. Deputy Director of the Infrastructure Department of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Office, President of the Society of Polish Town Planners Branch in Rzeszów. Member of the Provincial Urban Planning and Architectural Commission at the Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, Member of the Polish-Ukrainian Spatial Planning Commission at the Territorial Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy;

- **Dr Joanna Dziedzic-Bukowska** - lawyer with several years' experience as an adjudicator in the Voivodship Administrative Court in Warsaw in cases involving real estate law, the investment and construction process, spatial planning, etc;

- **mgr Piotr Buczek** – sociologist, expert on monitoring and evaluation in projects co-financed by the European Union, including innovative projects, author of several municipal development strategies and strategies for solving social problems, trainer and consultant in the field of planning documents and social participation, Chairman of the Theme Team on Quality of Life (Smart City) at the Urban Lab Rzeszów Centre for Urban Innovation.

The authors of the Handbook would like to thank the people whose competence, expertise, experience and kindness made it possible to obtain source data, analyses, opinions, etc. These include:

Łukasz Mikuła, Ph.D., and Rajmund Ryś, M.Sc., M.Sc. - World Bank experts, consultants supporting the project implementers and participating municipalities and co-authors of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, Dr. Arch. Małgorzata Denis, M.Sc. arch. Robert Kuźmiczuk - academics at the Department of Spatial Management of the Warsaw University of Technology, lecturers at post-graduate studies attended by project participants, Ms Barbara Pujdak - Director of the Rzeszów City Development Bureau, the late M.Sc. arch. Jan Burtan - specialist of City Development Bureau in Rzeszów, vice-president of Society of Polish Town Planners Branch in Rzeszów, Ms. Justyna Placha-Adamska - President of the Management Board of the Rzeszów Functional Area Association, Deputy Mayor of the City of Boguchwała, Mr. Damian Kosiarski - Director of the ROF Association Office, Ms. Joanna Wdowik-Mika - specialist in the implementation of infrastructure projects at the ROF Association, Ms. Renata Stefaniak - expert of the Regional Social Policy Centres in Rzeszów, Kraków, Katowice and Łódź in the field of social participation and public consultations and social consultation, Dr Paweł Wais - Director of the Regional Development Department at the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship (UMWP), Ms Agnieszka Wojdyło - Deputy Director of the DRR, Mr Marcin Niemczyk - Legal Advisor of the Organisational and Legal Department of the UMWP.

Special thanks go to Ms. Anna Opalińska and Mr. Witold Kowalski and Mr. Marek Fietko - the Department of Regional Development of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Podkarpackie Region for their on-going support, providing source data, organisational assistance in reaching Project participants and experts, and for consulting the Manual.

We would also like to thank the Project participants - employees of the Rzeszów City Office, Boguchwała Commune, Chmielnik Commune, Czarna Commune, Czudec Commune, Głogów Młp. Commune, Krasne Commune, Lubenia Commune, Łańcut Commune, Łańcut City, Świlcza Commune, Trzebownik Commune and Tyczyn Commune, for participating in the IDI, sharing their opinions and giving their opinions on the content of the Manual.

The development of the Handbook at the first stage required the acquisition and analysis of sources and data found based on project documentation using the 'desk research' method. Source data analysed included versions of the application for project co-financing, subsequent applications for payment, participant monitoring data, minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee, Project Team, Experts Team, attendance lists from project forms of support, correspondence with the MA, etc. As a result, a

description of the activities undertaken as part of the project implementation was prepared, with particular focus on innovative solutions to be applied as good practice in integrating and socialising the spatial planning process. A summary data set necessary for the evaluation of the project results and products of the project (detailed description in section 2.6.).

Quantitative analysis, especially in the case of the implementation of innovative projects, does not give a full picture of its effects, above all in terms of assessing the practicality of the solutions developed.

Therefore, the next stage of obtaining materials for the Handbook was **qualitative analysis**, which required gathering opinions of project participants, the Project Leader and Partners, and external experts, which would confirm (or not) whether the solutions developed under the project in the field of integrated spatial planning:

- are they a universal model, i.e. applicable to other MOFs;
- whether or not they need to be supplemented with some component/element in order to constitute a comprehensive standardised model;
- how it can be promoted and disseminated as a good practice, i.e. how to ultimately include validated product into mainstream policy or practice (so-called mainstreaming).

Qualitative methods are effective for obtaining research material in the above-mentioned scope, within the framework of which, for the purposes of Project evaluation and development of the Manual, the following were carried out:

1/ individual in-depth interviews (IDI - Individual In-depth Interview), whose respondents were Project participants (employees of municipalities from the ROF), Project applicants and partners and external experts. The IDI research was conducted in the period VII-VIII 2023 on a group of 18 participants (a more detailed description of the methodology of IDI results is presented in point 2.7);

2/ a focus group interview (FGI), the purpose of which was to specify the most valuable solutions and good practices and to develop recommendations. The proposed FGI method went beyond the minimum (required in the Detailed Description of the Subject of the Contract) methodological scope in terms of developing the Handbook. But the authors of the Handbook considered that a moderated expert discussion would be a good opportunity to confront the opinions of external experts with those of the administrators (Marshal's Office and ROF) and users of the developed spatial planning solutions. The FGI, named for the research purposes as Panel of Experts, also worked well for the reason that in terms of time it did not significantly absorb the participants, who are people who are very busy professionally and involved in various projects. FGI research also has the advantage of being able to observe the dynamics of the interview participants' positions and the interaction between them, as well as the synergy resulting from allowing the best experts to exchange their opinions in the same place and at the same time. The practical form of implementation of the focus group research was the Expert Panel, which was carried out on 12 October 2023 with 14 participants and 2 moderators. Relevant conclusions and recommendations from the expert discussions are presented in Chapter 9.

2. A synthetic description of the Model developed within the project

The Handbook consists of eight chapters, the first of which is evaluative, while the subsequent chapters are analytical and recommendatory. The Model itself is described in detail in Chapter 4, while in this part of the Handbook we will present a synthetic summary of the spatial planning cooperation solutions tested within the Project.

2.1. Innovative assumptions of the Model:

The need to develop and implement new solutions was mainly driven by the following premises (current at the stage of the Project concept development):

➔ The World Bank (WB) diagnosis entitled: '**Better spatial planning in Poland**' (April 2018) shows that in order to ensure proper, sustainable development of the whole area, including land for investment, adequate infrastructure, etc., spatial planning needs to be undertaken on the whole MOF. The spatial planning system does not take into account new phenomena such as urban functional areas, as planning practices are limited to the boundaries of TSUs. It sees the drawing up of a plan as their objective, rather than seeking agreement on how to solve common development problems and challenges. The WB also cites as one of the main problems the prerogatives and competences of local and provincial government and provincial governments, which make it difficult to take action to solve problems that go beyond the administrative boundaries of a given unit. Lack of joint, stakeholder-consulted spatial planning may result

in spatial chaos, consequently perceived by residents, who, for example due to lack of effective transport links, spend too much time commuting to work, school, etc. or have limited access to public services, the retail and service network, recreational places, etc. The lack of coordination of spatial planning in the MOF may also result in the lack of spatial order, i.e. such a spatial arrangement which "creates a harmonious whole and takes into account in ordered relations all functional, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, as well as compositional and aesthetic conditions and requirements".¹⁶

→ The WB reports show that the spatial planning process should be driven from the bottom up, by and for local stakeholders, including, above all, local residents. This requires a new approach to social dialogue on spatial planning to be led by local governments. This requires having competent staff who are not only knowledgeable about spatial planning, but also have the skills to communicate with the public and mediating often conflicting interests.¹⁷

→ The WB recommends that the inhabitants (the social factor) should be involved in the spatial planning process from the beginning and should be able to have a real influence on the shape of the planning documents in the area. The analysis carried out by the WB shows that the solutions adopted so far in the Act (in force at the stage of the draft's) with regard to public participation in the spatial planning process are not sufficient.

The diagnosed problems/challenges and the solutions proposed in the draft are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Intervention Logic of the Project

Problem	Solution
<p>- Lack of coordination of local spatial policies in urban regions - especially in the case of metropolitan areas and functional areas of large cities, characterised by the dynamics of suburbanisation processes. Intense transformation of space associated with suburbanisation, revealed the lack of spatial planning management in MOFs, which may consequently limit their development potential (this is one of the important conclusions contained in the Strategy for Responsible Development);</p> <p>- the primacy of the administrative approach over functional planning in spatial policy. In comparison, the functional approach has become one of the most important determinants of regional policy (e.g. the introduction of supra-local development strategies into the Polish legal order, the use of the Integrated Territorial Investments mechanism, etc.). An administrative approach dominates, in which proximity to other municipalities is often treated as a competitive threat. An approach based on the interests of individual municipalities can determine conflicts and hinders the use of supra-local resources;</p> <p>- there is a lack of formal tools enabling and stimulating cooperation of municipalities within the MOF in the sphere of spatial planning integration;</p> <p>- the current process of public consultations on spatial planning indicates that it currently relies on the reaction of the inhabitants (through the submission of negative comments by some stakeholders dissatisfied with the proposed</p>	<p>+ implementation of supra-local functional planning on the scale of the MOF, beyond the administrative borders of individual municipalities. Functional planning makes it possible to more accurately define specific development potentials and comprehensively resolve conflicts arising in a given area. The development of a spatial development strategy for the metropolitan area was indicated as obligatory. In turn, with regard to the MOF, the development of a spatial planning strategy was recommended as a recommendation;</p> <p>+ An innovative approach to spatial planning is the development of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF (SP ROF). It contains the common arrangements of the JSTs regarding the space of the area, which will be respected at the level of the municipalities in their spatial planning work. This will reduce conflicts at the interface of municipal boundaries and introduce a mechanism for spatial planning stability. The ROF SP will make it possible to indicate the functions of the undeveloped areas in the ROF municipalities, taking into account the needs of the inhabitants and the development needs of the area;</p> <p>+ establishment of supra-local urban planning and architectural commissions in the organisational structure of local government partnerships. The commission (in the case of the present project it is an Expert Team) should be equipped with the competences of giving opinions and agreeing the compliance of the municipalities' planning documents with the SP of the ROF (especially the</p>

¹⁶ Article 2(1) of the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development, consolidated text Dz.U. of 2016, item 778

¹⁷ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final report, December 2022, p. 285

<p>solutions) rather than on the initiation of a real dialogue;</p>	<p>model of the functional and spatial structure, spatial objectives and arrangements and recommendations for shaping and conducting the spatial policy and conducting spatial policy in ROF);</p> <p>+ an innovative solution tested as part of the development of the ROF SP is the active participation of residents in planning work - competent officials (prepared to moderate the dialogue with the community) conduct public consultations</p> <p>using traditional methods, but also innovative ones, i.e. applications and programmes in the field of e-services, which will enable residents to express their opinions electronically.</p>
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Source: own study

Taking into account the above summary, the most important target effects of the Model's implementation include:

- reduction of the scale of uncontrolled urban spatial sprawl;
- improvement of cohesion and rationality of spatial development in the MOF;
- provision of an efficient transport system and public services (complementarity rather than competition);
- reducing investment pressures and the negative effects of unbalanced urbanisation;
- limiting the scale of occurrence of various spatial conflicts at the interface of municipalities.

It should be stressed, however, that the above-mentioned effects are achievable in the long term and require long-term concerted cooperation of municipalities and coordination of their local spatial policies from the MOF level.

2.2. Key Components of the Model

The components of the Model are listed in order not because of their hierarchy of importance (they are all equally important and complementary and coherent with each other), but because of the chronology of implementation according to the grant application and the intervention logic - "from the preparation of human resources for the development of the Model to the implementation of innovative solutions in spatial planning practice in the MOF". The elements of the Model in order of implementation are:

1 Ensuring consistency in partnership capacity:

Within the Project, this meant aligning professional competencies in key participants in the integrated spatial planning process in the ROF, including members of the Expert Team.

In the Project, this took the form of training support in terms of:

- **postgraduate studies:** on 1 March 2021, an agreement was signed with the Warsaw University of Technology to organise and conduct two-semester postgraduate studies in planning and spatial management for 16 project participants. Due to the epidemic threat posed by the covid-19 pandemic studies were conducted remotely. A total of 274 hours of lectures, exercises, group work, etc. were completed.

The study culminated in individual thesis consultations, an examination session and thesis defence.

Project participant's opinion of postgraduate study (source IDI):

„ If someone works in a position like me and deals with urban planning and local plans, such studies were very much needed. (...). Despite the fact that the preparation of plans is outsourced to planning offices, administratively you have to take care of it, and having an urban planning licence after these studies you definitely have a broader view of the issues you need to pay attention to. You can definitely communicate more easily with the plan contractor." (IDI 5);

- **training in the use of specialised GIS software:** the objective was for the 16 trainees to acquire the skills to work in a QGIS environment, to analyse spatial data, to use it in practice, to visualise data in the form of maps, charts, diagrams, cartodiagrams, as well as to create planning documents entirely in QGIS. A total of 40 hours of classes, mostly practical exercises, were completed.

Training delivered in an online format from 23-29 September 2022. Participants were provided with materials (described in detail in the SOPZ), the most important criteria of which were: clarity as far as possible (presentation of specialised technical issues in a way that even people without a technical

background can understand) and practicality, i.e. the possibility to refer to the materials in case of need, as a practical instruction and a way/procedure to proceed.

📖 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"For me, the classes with IT professionals on GIS programmes were of great value. They taught me a lot and helped me a lot, now on a daily basis at work. For example, to handle applications for local plans and studies.

But it has to be said that using this in would not have been possible without retrofitting my workstation with a more powerful computer." (IDI 12);

- **training on effective and skilful moderation of public discussion using mediation and negotiation during public consultations of planning documents.** The training was in the nature of so-called "soft" training, concerning competences and practical skills rather than expertise. However, taking into account the very important rank given to public participation by the Act on amending the Act on spatial planning and development and its 'preventive' role (limiting potential protests by residents e.g. when submitting the Study - the example of the city of Rzeszów), it had tangible benefits. Practical skills from this training were used, inter alia, during public consultations of the Study of Conditions and Directions for Spatial Development of the City of Rzeszów, in which pre-training employees of the City Development Office had direct contact with residents (a large part of whom were negative towards the Study) during meetings in housing estates, on duty at Consultation Points, during public hearings, etc.

📖 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"This training has certainly highlighted how to talk to residents, because that is probably the biggest problem. Now, of course, it was the case that at these public discussions in our municipality we didn't exactly have a large number of people, like for example in Rzeszow when they put out the study. But here in the municipality we rather didn't have such problems before. Well, now they will probably start after the amendment of the Act". (IDI 1).

The experts participating in the Expert Panel emphasised the innovative and pioneering role of the studies and training. In their opinion, the above-mentioned activities not only leveled the level of knowledge and competence of employees of municipalities participating in the Project. They also had an added value (synergy) effect, which is the establishment of relationships that have a direct, positive impact on the quality of cooperation (good team is an integrated team).

📖 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"Comparing other functional areas, (...) the most innovative and pioneering element of the whole project, understood precisely as a whole, was the component of joint training of municipalities from the functional area. While various spatial concepts or analyses on a different scale have been carried out somewhere, whether in Poznań, Wrocław, Krakow and the Krakow metropolitan area, or the Upper Silesian metropolis, and of course also Gdańsk, (...) I don't remember anywhere this component of just common training, which has the element of not only raising individual competencies but also creating a group bond. Yes, officials in the municipalities know each other, but most often it is only a direct neighbour. If it is someone, I would say, diagonally across the metropolis from the main one, they are already anonymous. Here, on the other hand, this cycle of learning together actually forms a group. Of course, there is always the question of how stable it will be, well, because it would also be nice for all these people to enter metropolitan planning. And this is certainly one recommendation for other MOFs to do just that." (Expert 11).

☑ **The recommendation** for the MOF is to: 1/ to carry out a diagnosis of the needs in terms of qualifications and competencies of the staff responsible for spatial planning, 2/ to carry out educational activities, serving to raise and equalise the substantive potential of the key people for spatial planning. The need for such action stems from the fact that ensuring consistency in qualifications is a necessary condition for the implementation of subsequent elements of the Model.

The broader educational component may optionally be extended to include other groups of stakeholders in the planning process, i.e. local authority boards, councillors, mayors, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), municipal Thematic Teams and Working Groups, municipal leaders, representatives of groups at risk of exclusion, for example people with disabilities, investors, media representatives, etc.

The project support has also ensured **consistency in technical capacity**. This is very important in terms of equipping the Project Leader and Partners with computer equipment to enable the exchange of data between and among municipalities, the development of planning documents (e.g. maps), public consultations with residents, etc. In order to optimise cooperation, it was envisaged to purchase uniform software that will enable joint spatial planning in the MOF. As a result, there is an integrated spatial planning system in the ROF, based on the same components, hardware with the same parameters

and systems. It will also enable residents or potential investors in different municipalities of the ROF to obtain information with the same level of detail. Ensuring technical coherence also involved equipping in each of the municipalities in the ROF area, in the Office of the Association of the ROF and in the Marshal's Office of the WP with workstations for spatial management, coordination of spatial planning within the ROF and ensuring the participation of inhabitants in public consultations.

The purchased equipment and software is also used to carry out digitisation of spatial planning resources currently not available digitally or electronically.

 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"The retrofitting of the office from the project was needed, especially the plotter, because we use it a lot. Previously, we had to outsource it because there was a possibility to print up to A3 format. That was the maximum format we could just do. Now we don't have technical limitations and this has also improved the work of the whole office (...). I think it has improved our work efficiency.' (IDI 6).

Detailed information on studies and training is provided in subsection 2.3.

 **The recommendation** for the MOF is to retrofit spatial planning implementers with technical equipment: 1/ high-powered computers, 2/ appropriate "standardised" software for data analysis, storage and presentation, 3/ plotters with the ability to print large formats e.g. detailed maps for analysis and public consultation.

 **Appointment of the Expert Team (ZE):** is a key element of both the Model itself and the and a guarantor of sustainability of the Project and its results (a prerequisite for implementation of the Spatial Strategy of ROF. ZE is composed of representatives of: the Project Leader and the Partners - 13 municipalities forming ROF and the Association of ROF. The Team may also include external experts, for example from the fields of spatial planning, urban planning, architecture, communication, history of art and environmental protection, public participation, opinion polls, etc.

The scope of the ZE's activities is defined in the grant application and the Rules of Procedure for the functioning of the ZE, which is an annex to the Resolution on the establishment of the ZE.

 **The practical tasks of the ZE are:**

- giving opinions on documents of ROF Association Municipalities concerning spatial development,
- consulting on the development of ROF SP,
- coordinating spatial planning in the ROF area,
- expressing a position, opinion on draft suikamzap and mpzp for compliance with the provisions of the SP ROF,
- performing advisory functions to the ROF Communes,
- preparing an annual report on the activities of the ZE,
- carrying out mid-term reviews and updates of the ROF SP,
- promoting and incorporating the model into spatial planning practice during the project implementation and sustainability period,
- cooperation with the Project Management Team (ZZP).
- giving its opinion on documents of the Municipalities belonging to the Association of ROF, concerning spatial development,
- consulting on the development of ROF SP,
- coordinating spatial planning in the ROF area,
- expressing position, opinion on draft suikamzap and mpzp for compliance with provisions of the SP ROF,
- performing advisory functions for the ROF Communes,
- preparing an annual report on the activities of the ZE,
- carrying out mid-term reviews and updates of the ROF SP,
- promoting and incorporating the model into spatial planning practice during the project implementation and sustainability period,
- cooperation with the Project Management Team (ZZP).

The model assumes that the ZE is established for an indefinite period of time, i.e. that it will continue its activities also after the end of the Project. One of the most important functions of the ZE, apart from consulting, agreeing and approving SUIKZP and/or MPZP in accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, is to "standardise" the quality of local strategic spatial planning documents.

This aspect of developing and adopting a uniform methodology e.g. for the designation of functions and the quality of integrated documents was pointed out by the participants of the Expert Panel.

 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"It would be worthwhile to develop one scope, one catalogue, one working methodology within the Expert Team, e.g. the designation of given sites, functions, etc. This would, on the one hand, make the work easier. On the other hand, from the point of view of the recipient, i.e. the resident as well, because he would see once and know that e.g. in other municipalities a given function means the same thing. These are maybe some minor details, but really they are, as they say, the devil is in the detail. So, in general, even simple things like that, if they could be defined, employees would probably work better, because everyone around them would have the same thing, and the public would also find it easier to figure it all out. And also the supervisory authorities would definitely have an easier time with all these plans. (Expert 11).

Detailed information on the Team is provided in subsection 4.4.

The recommendation for the MOF is the establishment of an Expert Team (or a team with a different name). It should be an inter-municipal, interdisciplinary team with the participation of external experts. This is an essential element of the Model, without which integrated spatial planning in the MOF is not possible.

3 development of the Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area (SP ROF): this is a document of a strategic nature, creating spatial planning policy in the ROF and taking into account the proposals of the inhabitants, consulted with representatives of the participating JSTs.

The SP of the ROF was developed between May 2021 and December 2022 by an international team of 15 WB experts, including Marcel Ionescu-Heroiu, Andreea China, and among the experts from Poland - Łukasz Mikoła, Ph.D. and Rajmund Ryś, M.Sc., arch. Piotr Kamiński and Grzegorz Wolszczak.

It consists of: diagnostic part and analytical part and recommended directions of spatial policy with reference to separated areas. The findings contained in the SP of the ROF constitute the basis for the development of SUIKZP and MPZP integrated with the Strategy and for the identification of Strategic Development Areas (SOR). The SP ROF was adopted by Resolution No. 463/9600/23 of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Board on 20 February 2023.

In the current legal state, the ROF SP is an unregulated document, has a "soft" character and its enforcement boils down to verification of compliance of the Project Partners' actions with the application for funding under the "ministerial" project.¹⁸

This is described in subchapter 3.8 Formal and legal nature of the document entitled Spatial Strategy of the ROF.

➔ Innovative features of the SP ROF:

Above all, it is an unprecedented regional, MOF (possibly also national) database for integrated spatial planning. The WB experts have carried out very detailed spatial analyses based on this data. These analyses cover the entire ROF and have not been available to date (to such a large extent). The WB experts not only obtained data on a scale not previously available at the regional level, but above all proposed practical recommendations based on this data for the municipalities and the entire ROF.

The scope of this data is very detailed and includes, among other things: demographic data (including projections), air quality, functions of built-up areas, elements of green infrastructure, functions of built-up areas, social indicators, economic situation, transport, municipal and social infrastructure, planning coverage and pressure on land, suburbanisation processes, legal status of properties, etc.

The key conditions for achieving the expected results in terms of timeliness, detail and quality of spatial planning data in the ROF SP are:

- collection of several spatial data layers in the ROF:

Unlike socio-economic data, spatial data is rarely collected in common data repositories and requires the collection of data from different sources. In Poland, the central repository for many spatial data is the Central Geodetic and Cartographic Documentation Centre (CODGiK).

Geodetic and Cartographic Documentation (CODGiK). There are also a number of nationwide data repositories that house the relevant data layers, such as the Central Office of Geodesy and Cartography (GUGiK), the Land and Building Register (EGiB), and the Central Office of Geodesy and Cartography; and Buildings Register (EGiB), Land Surveying Infrastructure Register (K-GESUT), Database of General Geographical Objects (BDOO), State Register of Boundaries (PRG), etc.

- collecting data on proposed investments in the ROF:

There are a number of strategies and plans developed at regional, county and local level with investment proposals in the medium and long term. Particular attention was paid to: strategies, programmes and

¹⁸ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final report, December 2022, p. 178

development plans for the region, MOF and municipalities, ROPs and other national operational programmes and state budget investment programmes, studies of spatial development conditions and directions and mpzp for municipalities included in the MOF,

- collection of data by all Project Partners:

The WB team collected most of the international and national aforementioned datasets, while UMWP obtained cadastral data from the county offices to which the ROF municipalities belong. The municipalities and the ROF Association also coordinated the data collection.

Measurable products of expert data acquisition and analysis activities:

- methodology used by the WB experts to carry out the analyses, which will constitute a "qualitative standard" for the municipalities (but also for other MOFs) and enable comparability of the data obtained (harmonisation of the methodology);
- updating the GIS database for the MOF;
- carrying out analyses relevant to strategic spatial planning in MOF
- Better understanding of the carbon footprint reduction potential of the MOF related to urban structure and provision of public services;
- identification of Strategic Development Areas (SORs);
- estimation of investment needs for a shortlist of identified SORs;
- carry out public consultations related to the Spatial Strategy of the ROF;
- designing a system for management, implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the ROF SP;
- provide knowledge on the adopted approach to integrated spatial planning at MOF level and disseminate this experience at national level.

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"External experts have done a titanic job in compiling the data for the strategy. The biggest advantage of this data is that it can be used in practice. The municipalities in the ROF, perhaps apart from Rzeszów, have not had material of such detail before, and this has a direct impact on the quality of their planning documents, reducing the cost and time of their development" (Expert 3).

 **The recommendation** for the MOF is to use the financial outlay (which is associated with the development of the Spatial Strategy) to acquire, aggregate and analyse the widest possible range of spatial planning data. It is most beneficial to outsource this activity to external entities that have: 1/ substantive and organisational potential to guarantee the comprehensiveness and quality of the data, 2/ experience, which is a necessary condition for analysing the data and proposing solutions that will be accepted and implemented by the users of the Strategy.

 An innovative element of the ROF SP is the designation of **Strategic Development Areas (SORs)**, i.e. areas whose development is considered important for the whole ROF and not only for individual municipalities.

The SORs are to be reflected in the planning documents of the ROF municipalities and become development priorities from the point of view of the agglomeration. The SORs proposed by the municipalities were verified, in terms of their compatibility with the ROF SP, in several stages through individual meetings, group meetings and through an exchange of WB experts' opinions with the municipalities.

In the first stage, the municipalities submitted their proposals according to their own development vision. At this stage, an i.e. long list of SOR v.1 was created. The list was then cross-referenced with the results of spatial analyses (e.g. potential for development areas, development constraints) and verified during subsequent discussions with Project Partners. During further individual and group discussions, the municipalities clarified their indications and defined the function or designation of the previously indicated areas - i.e. the long list SOR v.2. Then, through further consultations, it was narrowed down to a short list SOR, which was considered to be of strategic importance for the entire agglomeration. It takes into account the characteristics of the proposed SORs: their formal and legal status, size, function, location, identified development constraints, sustainability guidelines and territorial cohesion issues.

 **Characteristics of the SOR shortlist developed for the ROF:**

- the short list of SORs is almost twice as short as the long list of SORs v.2 and contains 61 SORs, compared to the previous 118 proposals;
- it includes all proposed sites with a conservation/green function, a large proportion of recreational sites, and all centre-oriented sites;
- some of the sites for the recreational function were excluded because they tended towards dispersed residential development and had limited access to technical infrastructure;

- large areas for the production and services function were also selected as SORs, which have very good access to transport infrastructure and have the potential to be significant job generators (in ROF they are concentrated along the A4 motorway belt);
- smaller areas with a production and services function (mainly in the southern municipalities, where there are not many companies), which are expected to contribute to the territorial cohesion of ROF, were also included in the SOR list;
- all notified areas with a public function were included in the SOR;
- areas with a residential function were largely excluded from the list of strategic areas of ROF and mixed function areas, which tended to disperse development and exacerbate suburbanisation processes, were excluded from the list of strategic areas in ROF.¹⁹

📄 statement by Mr Gregory Wolszczak - WB urban development specialist:

"We believe that this strategy will increase the competitiveness of the ROF as an entire agglomeration (...) Well-planned space will create a better quality of life, services closer to residents, less traffic jams and better access to green areas. Good spatial planning creates spatial order that attracts people, people in turn attract investment and this drives economic growth. This is important for all municipalities across the ROF, and this is the basis of all thinking about metropolitan projects."²⁰

☑ **It is recommended** to select (based on objective reasons and data) and agree on areas whose support is (or will be) of strategic importance for the integration of the MOF. Consultation and mediation by external experts with a high degree of authority and credibility plays an important role in the identification and acceptance of SORs, as there may be contentious positions in the selection of a shortlist of SORs, which may be a ground for conflicts and lack of acceptance of the identified development priorities.

④ **development and implementation of an IT tool (Innovative Web Platform):**

is an integrated innovative IT tool for the public to consult on planning documents. It reduces the time it takes to obtain information from residents and by residents from the administration. It serves to make public consultations more accessible and increases their reach. The IPI is also intended to perform tasks "inward" to the ROF, i.e. to facilitate the exchange of spatial management information and data resources between Project participants.

In the assumptions of the Detailed Description of the Subject of the Order (SOPZ), the scope of the IPI-related service included:

- development, delivery and implementation of application and database software for administrators (server, administrative and analytical applications).
- development, supply and implementation of application software for project partners, enabling operation and provision of implemented e-services along with migration and supply of databases;
- digitalization of local spatial development plans and studies of spatial development conditions and directions (drawing of directions), archival local spatial development plans in force in the municipalities;
- creation of the Central Spatial Database (CBDP);
- launching of individual municipal map portals and a common integrated geoportal;
- provision of training and instruction in the use of the Platform, in particular the tool and application software for project participants (administrators).

According to the SOPZ, IPI was to be a GIS-class tool software, available as a desktop GIS application or equivalent.²¹

The tender process for the development and implementation of the IPI itself presented some difficulties. The creation of the SOPZ required expertise in both IT and spatial planning. In addition, due to the specifics of the IT services market, there was a risk that the contractor would deliver a tool that it already had at its disposal (or after its slight modification) rather than a tool that had been created taking into account the individual needs of the Employer and that told the SOPZ. Such a situation, in the opinion of the Task Acceptance Committee (TOC) and the Contract Engineer (CI), occurred in the Project. The Contractor responsible for the execution and implementation of the IPI (in the opinion of the KOZ and the CI) did not perform the assignment according to the SOPZ. The procedure of the renewed KOZ and the delay of the Contractor's activities in implementing the changes caused a serious project risk (failure to achieve the indicator: Number of spatial information exchange systems established between municipalities). Therefore, with the approval of the MA, the ZZP

¹⁹ Source: Spatial Strategy of the ROF, Final Report, p. 163-164

²⁰ Source: <https://podkarpackie.pl/index.php/sam-terytorialny/aktualnosci/dyskusje-na-temat-rof>

²¹ Source: <https://www.portalzp.pl/przetargi/wykonanie-i-wdrozenie-platformy-internetowej>

decided to break the contract with the Contractor. At the same time, the Project Leader proposed to the MA a solution to this crisis situation.

The solution was based on the following reasonable assumptions:

- Re-tendering the IPI and the execution of the Platform according to SOPZ by another Contractor was not possible due to the completion date of the Project;
- IPI is a key product of the Project and it is not possible to resign from this activity (failure to implement an important indicator results in application of the proportionality rule);
- IPI should be made and implemented with parameters and functionalities that differ from the original SOPZ. Above all, it is to be a tool that includes a module for public consultation and has functions for commenting on the planning documents under preparation. The ZZP carried out the above remedial actions and the IPI was implemented within the scope agreed with the MA. Even though this tool has a smaller scope of functionality than IPI (in accordance with SOPZ), it meets the objectives of the Project, and its implementation led to the proper implementation of the Project and the achievement of the assumed indicators. Including important product indicator No. 4. Number of entities using information and communication technologies.

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"The platform should primarily have a public participation function, making it easier for residents to access draft studies or local development plans. If, for technical or financial reasons, it is not possible to implement other functionalities (...) it is still worthwhile to have such a tool, because for the local government units and for the functional area as a whole it gives practical benefits of time and resources." (Expert 8).

 **The recommendation** for the MOF stem from the fact that the IPI is a complex tool due to its many functionalities and technically difficult to implement. Therefore, it is worth taking into account that: 1/ both IT and spatial planning specialists should be involved in the development of the SOPZ - focusing only on technical parameters in isolation from practical functions may lead to a lack of agreement between the contracting authority and the contractor, 2/ IT companies may, as part of the service delivery, provide technological solutions at their disposal (or after their slight modification) - these tools may not meet the requirements specified in the SOPZ, therefore in the case of disputes it is worth having the opinion of an independent expert, for example, the Contract Engineer (CI), 3/ the market for IT services is competitive - due to the desire to reduce the costs of the service companies may offer "boxed" solutions, therefore the support of the CI seems to be necessary.

Modules, constituting the tools and functionalities of the Innovative Internet Platform (described in detail in subchapter 7.1 Technical solutions developed within the Project.

5 Public participation in the spatial planning process:

→ The WB's diagnosis "Better spatial planning in Poland" indicates that the planning process from the very beginning should involve the inhabitants (a social factor), who should have a real impact on the shape of planning documents in a given area. It should be emphasised that the analysis carried out by the WB shows that the solutions adopted so far in the current law regarding public participation in the process of adopting LSDPs are not sufficient;

→ The WB reports show that the spatial planning process should be driven from the bottom up, by and for local stakeholders, including above all local residents. This requires a new approach to community dialogue on spatial planning. It requires that local governments have competent staff who are not only knowledgeable about spatial planning, but also have the ability to communicate with the public and mediate positions (often conflicting interests);

→ The WB also points out as a shortcoming of the current public consultation process for spatial planning that it currently consists of a 'late' response to negative comments, often made publicly by some stakeholders dissatisfied with the proposed solutions. It tends to be more of a crisis response than an initiation of dialogue.

An innovative solution adopted in the Model and tested in the project is the active participation of residents from the beginning of the spatial planning procedure. Competent officials will conduct dialogue with the local community at the stage of project consultations, using traditional methods and innovative methods (e.g. through the IPI), which will facilitate the residents' comments electronically. In the course of the dialogue with residents, they will also be presented with the consequences of spatial decisions (the educational role of public participation);

It should be noted that the assumption of the Model is to change the approach to consultations: from compulsory (obligatory for territorial self-government units under the Act as an element of the procedure) to participatory.

Ultimately, residents are supposed to have a sense of real influence on the spatial planning process and on the final decisions that affect e.g. their property, their immediate neighbourhood (taking into account the development of the entire area);

The benefits for JSTs, especially decision-makers in spatial planning, are the probability of avoiding serious conflicts with residents or avoiding wrong decisions (related, for example, to excessive social costs).

Within the Project, public consultations were carried out at two levels:

- SP ROF consultations - at the Project level with Partners and external stakeholders;
- consultations of SUIKZP, MPZP and SORs proposed by individual communes (conducted mainly at the level of local communities).

In both of these cases, public consultations were conducted using the IPI.

In accordance with the assumptions of the Project, the SP ROF was subject to public consultations. Due to the innovative nature of this document, it does not constitute a document within the meaning of the Act on the Principles of Conducting Development Policy (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1057) or the Act on Spatial Planning and Development (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2022), item 503), which gives rise to legal implications.

This means that the process and mode of public consultation of this document were developed in the union with the implementation of the Project. Therefore, based on the partnership agreement, an individual public consultation procedure was prepared. This procedure assumed the leading role of the Leader in consultations but in close cooperation with Partners and the use of ZE support, which is aimed at, among others: preparing an opinion on the comments collected during the consultations. Social participation of SP ROF has adopted the classic one i.e. a paper form of consultation and an innovative one via an online tool.²²

A representative case study of public participation in spatial planning, due to its consistency with the Model, is the consultation of the draft SUIKZP for the city of Rzeszów. The public consultation of the draft study in Rzeszów was conducted in parallel with the development and consultation of the ROF SP. Therefore, the two processes had a strong influence on each other to the benefit of both parties. The Rzeszów City Development Bureau (BRMR) used the opportunities that resulted from its participation in the Project (e.g. benefited from the support of external experts and the functionality of the IPI). The Project Leader and Partners, on the other hand, benefited from the experience and competence of BRMR's staff, who carried out consultations on the draft SUIKZP.

And it should be emphasised that despite the openness of the Office and the use of various forms of public participation, consultations with Rzeszów residents were difficult and required great mediation skills. Issues concerning the socialisation of the spatial planning process (including a case study of consultations in Rzeszów) in Chapter 6.

 Project participant's feedback on the socialisation of the spatial planning process (source IDI):

"I hope that when we lecture these documents and when we do discussions with the residents and when we present what has been achieved in this project (...) then simply the residents will manage to get involved in the planning. They will take a personal interest in the fact that, however, these areas, for example services, etc., would be good to locate in a different place than the one designed, but in general look at where they are, i.e. also try to shape the space around them." (IDI 12)

 **The recommendation** for the MOF: 1/ the importance of the educational function of public consultations should be emphasized - primarily in order to increase the basic level of residents' knowledge, for example about the purpose and purposes of planning documents, competences of individual parties to the spatial planning process (including local government units), the effects of adopting SUIKZP and MPZP, etc.

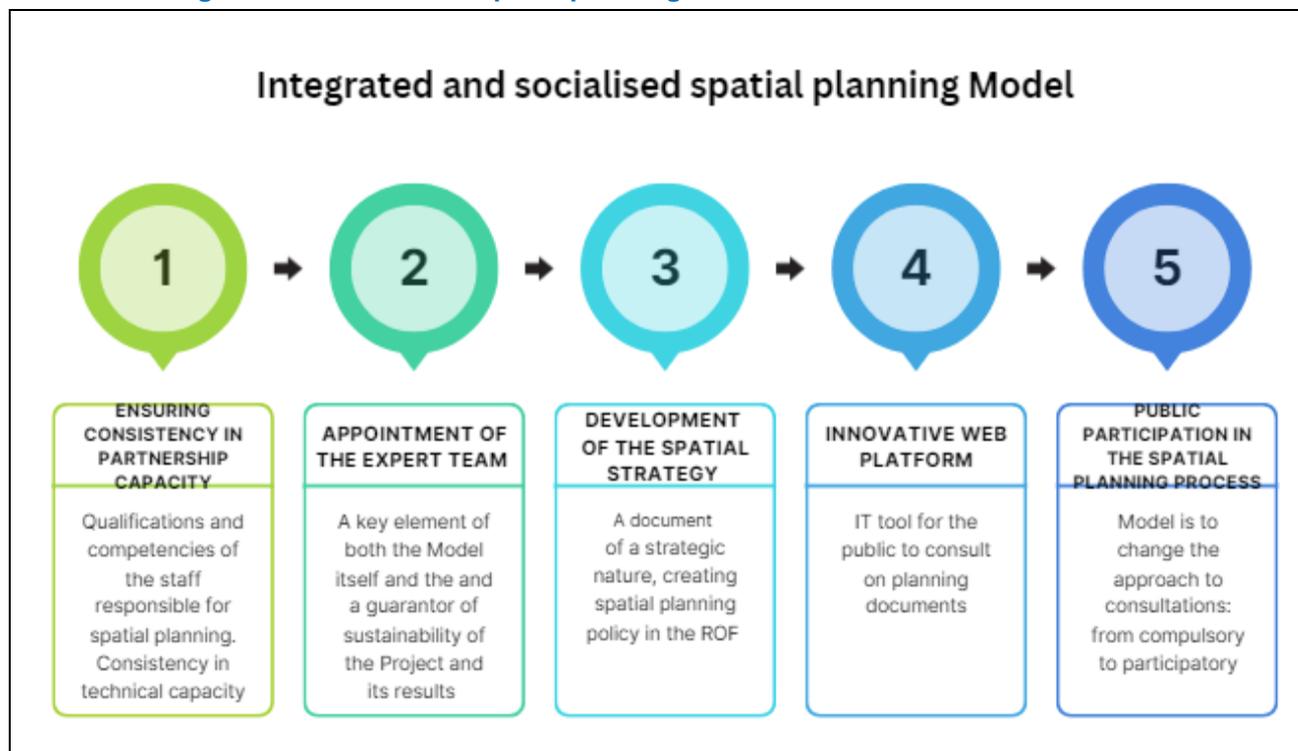
Summary of the synthetic description of the Model elements

The model is complementary and coherent because its components have a cause and effect relationship. For example: it is difficult to expect the effectiveness of energy management without ensuring its substantive coherence and technical. The lack of ZE would make it impossible to develop a good Spatial Strategy of the ROF (especially in the context of identifying and selecting SORs). The spatial planning priorities adopted in the SP ROF and local planning documents will not be accepted by residents without actual public consultations. The use of an IT tool increases the availability and

²² Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area - assumptions of spatial policy of the ROF, p. 8

effectiveness of public participation, which means it has a positive impact on the quality of planning documents and increases the chances of residents' support at the implementation stage. These are therefore "connecting vessels" from which the removal of any of the elements causes integration problems and socialization of spatial planning. A holistic approach to the spatial planning process in the Model concept is presented in diagram 1.

Scheme 1. Integrated and socialised spatial planning Model



Source: own study

3. Project implementation

3.1. Chronological background and Project concept

The project is a continuation of the European Union initiative called 'Catching-up Regions'. In Poland, the initiative was implemented by the European Commission (EC), the World Bank and the Ministry of Development. This project, launched in 2016 by the EC, aimed to identify factors limiting growth in less developed regions of the European Union and provide support for their development potential. Poland and Romania participated in the pilot phase of this initiative, and the first edition in Poland involved the Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships. The second edition of this initiative also involved the Małopolskie, Śląskie and Lubelskie voivodeships, and the thematic areas supported included spatial planning. The EC, together with the Ministry of Development and the WB identified spatial planning as one of the very important areas whose integration will positively contribute to the sustainable development of the regions. The low coverage of spatial planning (during the Catching-up Regions analysis period at 28% of the national area) hinders the long-term and sustainable development of municipalities and MOFs and slows down investment processes. In a strategic context, spatial plans help to guide a long-term and coherent development policy. At the operational level, they contribute to streamlining the investment process, e.g. by speeding up the building permit process.²³

Therefore, one of the important components of the implementation of the CuR initiative was the integration and improvement of spatial planning in the following three aspects:

- planning for an urban functional area (MOF): within the pilot, the support focused on the ROF, with the assumption that the results of the recommendations could be implemented to other MOFs;

²³ <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/o-funduszach/zasady-dzialania-funduszy/inicjatywa-na-rzecz-regionow-rozwijajacych-sie/planowanie-przestrzenne-wojewodztwo-podkarpackie-i-swietokrzyskie/>

- planning in a small town: activities in the municipality of Staszów (Świętokrzyskie voivodeship. The vast majority of settlements in Poland are small rural municipalities with modest planning challenges and opportunities, but they too need spatial planning.

In the case of Podkarpacie, the aim of the project was to develop a common vision of spatial development for the ROF, which was to coordinate future planning work, i.e. the development of studies and spatial development plans for the individual 13 municipalities that make up the ROF.

The WB analyses and reports clearly indicated that further sustainable development of the ROF requires coherent integrated programming of spatial planning processes (planning of business infrastructure, transport, housing, recreation, protected areas, etc.)²⁴.

The practical results of the "Catching-up Regions" project (apart from the extremely important and basic effect of establishing cooperation between the Marshal's Office of the ND, the Association of the ROF and the municipalities in the area of the ROF in the field of spatial planning) were, in particular:

- development of a set of "Terms of Reference" to be used in the commissioning of the so-called Masterplan, i.e. the Spatial Strategy for the Rzeszów Functional Area;

- development of an innovative project concept as the next 'milestone' for the implementation of integrated spatial planning. As the piloting, evaluation and dissemination of the Integrated Spatial Planning Model were not included in the scope within the Catching-up Regions2 project, a consistent action of its implementers and stakeholders was to obtain a source of funding for the continuation of support in this area. To this end, a dialogue (coordinated by the Ministry of Investment and Development) was organised between the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and the MA of the OP WER 2014-2020. The result of these consultations was the development of an application for funding and obtaining, in a non-competitive mode, a grant under Priority Axis IV. Social innovations and transnational cooperation. Measure 4.1 Social innovations.²⁵

Thus, a 'roadmap' for the practical implementation of integrated and socialised spatial planning in the MOF was drawn up and funding was provided for this purpose.

The concept of this Project resulted firstly from the recommendations of the WB experts (included in the report "Towards Better Spatial Planning in the Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeships"), secondly, from the specific objective of the OP WER for Measure 4.1 Social Innovation, which was to increase the use of social innovation to improve the effectiveness of selected aspects of public policies in the area of influence of the ESF. At the same time, it had to fit into the types of innovative projects, i.e. develop, test, disseminate and (if possible) incorporate into policy and practice a new Model of integrated spatial planning.

3.2. Applicant and Project Partners

The following is relevant information about the Project, its beneficiaries and stakeholders, the area in which it is being implemented (including a brief characterisation of the ROF).

➡ **The contract for the implementation of the Project** entitled 'Integrated and socialised spatial planning model through the development of a Spatial Strategy for the Rzeszów Functional Area' (project number POWR.04.01.00-00-ROF1/19) was signed on 29 October 2019.

 nazwa beneficjenta WOJEWÓDZTWO PODKARPACKIE	 program Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój
 wartość projektu 9 134 661,74 zł	 działanie 4.1. Innowacje społeczne
dofinansowanie z UE 8 613 072,55 zł	 fundusz Europejski Fundusz Społeczny

➡ **The project implementers**, according to the partnership agreement, are:

Lead Leader - Podkarpackie Voivodeship - Implementing entities: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office Rzeszów and Podkarpackie Office of Spatial Planning (liquidated by Resolution of the WP Sejmik No. XLIII/729/21 of 28 December 2021)²⁶

²⁴ Report pt. „W kierunku lepszego planowania przestrzennego w województwach podkarpackim i świętokrzyskim”, 2018.r.

²⁵ Source: <https://www.power.gov.pl/strony/wiadomosci/przemyslanc-planowanie-przestrzenne-kluczem-do-rozwoju/>

²⁶ Source: <https://bip.podkarpackie.pl/index.php/uchwaly-sejmiku/5792-xml-iii-sesja-sejmiku-województwa-podkarpackiego-vi-kadencja-z-dnia-28-grudnia-2021-r>

On 1 April 2019. (contract number RR - V.760.11.17.2019) a partnership agreement was signed between **the Leader and 14 partners:**

Partner 1 - Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area;

Partner 2 - Boguchwała Municipality, Partner 3 - Czarna Municipality, Partner 4 - Chmielnik Commune, Partner 5 - Czudec Municipality, Partner 6 - Głogów Małopolski Commune, Partner 7 - Krasne Commune,

Partner 8 - Lubenia Gmina, Partner 9 - Łańcut Commune, Partner 10 - Łańcut Municipality, Partner 11 - Municipality of the City of Rzeszów, Partner 12 - Świlcza Commune, Partner 13 - Trzebownisko Commune, and Partner 14 - Tyczyn Commune.

In November 2021, additional municipalities joined the ROF: Błażowa and Hyżne. However, they are not beneficiaries of the project and have not been included in the support, including the analyses under the ROF SP and the Handbook.

Map 2. Municipalities included in the Rzeszów Functional Area (as of the submission of the Project)



<https://rof.org.pl/strategia-przestrzenna-rzeszowskiego-obszaru-funkcjonalnego>

3.3 Project area

The Project is implemented within the Rzeszów Functional Area:

➡ **basic information about ROF:** The Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship adopted on 08.09.2015. Resolution No. 90/2067/15 on the designation of the area for the implementation of the Integrated Territorial Investments (ZIT) instrument on the territory of the provincial city of Rzeszów and the area functionally related to it within the Regional Operational Programme of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship 2014-2020). By decision of the Delegates' Meeting of the Rzeszów Functional Area Association of 17 November 2021, the Błażowa Municipality and the Hyżne Municipality, located in the southern part of the ROF, joined the Association. The first steps to establish cooperation within the ZIT functional area were taken in 2012, in which the Municipality of Rzeszów proposed joint implementation of investments in the new financial perspective 2014-2020 to the municipalities of Boguchwała, Chmielnik, Głogów Małopolski, Krasne, Świlcza, Trzebownisko and Tyczyn. During subsequent consultations it was agreed that the area of the ROF would include a total of eleven municipalities (additionally also the municipalities of Czarna, Łańcut and the city of Łańcut). The process of creating the ROF ended with the signing of an Agreement in January 2014. Agreement on the definition of the principles of cooperation in the implementation of tasks envisaged for the ZIT Union. As of 18 June 2015. (date of registration in the National Court

Register) the implementation of the ZIT is handled by the ROF Association, whose members are all the Municipalities forming the ROF;

➔ **Characteristics of ROF** (as at the time of writing the application for funding):

ROF includes 2 urban municipalities - Rzeszów (which is also a city with county rights) and the city of Łańcut, 3 urban-urban gminas - Boguchwała, Głogów Małopolski, Tyczyn and 8 rural gminas - Chmielnik, Czarna, Czudec, Krasne, Lubenia, Łańcut, Świlcza and Trzebownisko. It covers a total area of 1,047 square kilometres, with the largest share of: Głogów Małopolski Municipality (145 km sq. i.e. 13.85% of the total), the Municipality of the City of Rzeszów (120 km sq. - 11.4%), the Municipality of Świlcza (108 km sq.) - 10.3%) and Łańcut Municipality (107 sq. km - 10.2%). The City of Łańcut has the smallest area in the ROF (19 sq. km - 1.8 %). ROF has a population of 374,000, of which the largest share is in the city of Rzeszów (over 52%). Municipalities located in the northern part of ROF (and of course Rzeszów) are areas with a significant degree of industrialisation, e.g. Trzebownisko Municipality, where part of the Special Economic Zone EURO-PARK, Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park "AEROPOLIS", etc., is located. In the area of the City of Łańcut there is also the EURO-PAR Mielec Industrial Zone (Łańcut Subzone). On the other hand, the municipalities in the south, mainly due to the lie of the land, are predominantly agricultural areas, with dispersed buildings and a much smaller population (e.g. Lubenia - 6.4 thousand, Chmielnik - 6.9 thousand inhabitants).

It is characteristic of the ROF that the rate of land consumption has been ten times greater than the rate of population growth. During this period, the population grew by 14 % (from 324,000 to currently 375,000 inhabitants) while the built-up area (calculated as space covered by buildings, roads, etc.) increased by 150 %. Even if some of the growth of the built-up area is positive and needed to increase the development potential of the region (e.g. the construction of the A4 motorway, which increased the transport capacity of the ROF), the overall development dynamics of the built-up areas is unsustainable in the long term. These processes are taking place in the context of an ageing population. In the period 1990-2020, the younger part of the population (age 0-34) in ROF has decreased by 17%.²⁷

The second characteristic of ROF is the intensive process of suburbanisation - not only of Rzeszów, but also of other towns and villages. This process is particularly visible along the main roads leading to Rzeszów. Spillover of development causes a number of side effects for ROF, and its continuous progress will bring negative consequences for ROF and its inhabitants' quality of life (as a result of e.g. chaotic development, loss of green areas, reduced accessibility to public services, higher greenhouse gas emissions. In the context of spatial planning, this situation is a result of the lack of a clear spatial vision for municipalities and ROF. The municipalities' planning documents are often around 20 years old and have not provided a guide for the chaotic development processes taking place.²⁸

An innovative element at the MOF scale is the designation of Strategic Development Areas (SORs). Each municipality, in the process of submitting and reviewing the SORs, identified their proposed function: residential, services, mixed use, manufacturing/services, green/protected, tourism/leisure, and central and public.

3.4. Aims and objectives of the Project application.

➔ **The main objective of the Project** is to develop and test an innovative model of cooperation in the field of spatial planning within a functional area. The project assumes a change in the approach of territorial self-government units to spatial policy in their area through a close cooperation between territorial self-government units belonging to functional areas.

The implementation of the above-mentioned main objective contributes to the implementation of the specific objective of the OP WER, under which the project was implemented, i.e. increasing the use of social innovation for improving the effectiveness of selected aspects of public policies in the area of influence of the ESF.

The project fits into the area of social innovation by developing new solutions to improve the process of exchanging information between stakeholders and municipalities and creating a mechanism for cooperation between local governments and institutions, as well as exchange of experience as a result of combining practical knowledge and experience of JST in the area of spatial planning.

²⁷ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final report, December 2022, p. 18

²⁸ Ibid, p. 19

➡ **Target group:** persons identified by individual Partners (a total of 16 persons) who participated in individual forms of support, including: postgraduate studies, GIS training and a training course on public participation in consultations on planning documents related to spatial planning in the ROF area. In addition, thanks to the innovative formula implemented within the project and the broadly understood public participation, the beneficiaries of the project were also the inhabitants of the functional area.

The project participants were mainly delegated by the municipalities in the ROF, from among the employees responsible for spatial planning in the municipality. In smaller municipalities, these are people who are also in charge of other tasks, e.g. real estate management, environmental and nature protection and water management, etc.

In larger municipalities, they are employees of departments/units dealing specifically with spatial planning tasks - for example, the Rzeszów City Development Office.

With a view to an innovative approach to spatial policy, a key assumption was to equalise the differences in the level of competence and qualifications of the project participants. Therefore, one of the forms of support was participation in postgraduate studies, which brought practitioners up to date with the latest approach to spatial planning.

Project participants improved their spatial planning competencies and skills to implement the innovative Spatial Planning Model with direct involvement of ROF residents.

The Project respected the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, at every stage of its implementation, i.e. from recruitment and enrolment to selection and use of the support path. The Project involved 11 women and 5 men. Such a proportion proves that despite the functioning of stereotypes, concerning e.g. a greater share of men in professions requiring specialist qualifications and competences

(such as urban planning) in the project, the most important criterion was the merit and current and target tasks of the employee in the municipality, rather than gender, age or possible disability.

➡ **Project implementation period:** 1.01.2020 to 31.12.2023.²⁹

➡ **The tasks identified in the funding application are:**

1. Ensuring consistency in partnership capacity;
2. Implementation of an innovative cooperation model within the ROF;
3. Testing the developed integrated spatial planning model³⁰;
4. Integration into practice and dissemination of developed solutions.

3.5. Justification for the Project (as at the time of its conception)

The following is a description of the problems/barriers of the factors that were the starting point of the diagnosis on which the Project design and the application for funding submitted to the MA were based.

Baseline situation at 'system' level:

➔ the principle adopted by cohesion policy of taking the territorial dimension into account implies that socio-economic processes transcend administrative boundaries, making it necessary to integrate actions

Beneficjent: Województwo Podkarpackie

Partnerzy: Stowarzyszenie Rzeszowskiego Obszaru Funkcjonalnego, Gmina Boguchwała, Gmina Czarna, Gmina Chmielnik, Gmina Czudec, Gmina Głogów Małopolski, Gmina Krasne, Gmina Lubenia, Gmina Łańcut, Gmina Miasto Łańcut, Gmina Miasto Rzeszów, Gmina Świlcza, Gmina Trzebownisko, Gmina Tyczyn

realizuje projekt dofinansowany z Funduszy Europejskich

Zintegrowany i uspołeczniony model planowania przestrzennego poprzez opracowanie Strategii Przestrzennej Rzeszowskiego Obszaru Funkcjonalnego

Celem projektu jest opracowanie i przetestowanie innowacyjnego modelu współpracy w zakresie planowania przestrzennego w ramach obszaru funkcjonalnego.

Dofinansowanie projektu z UE: 8 613 072,55 zł



www.mapadotacji.gov.pl

²⁹ In the first version of the grant application submitted to the MA, the project was to be completed by 31.06.2021..

³⁰ Task No. 3 added to the grant application as a key project amendment (approval of the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, ESF Department, dated 6 October 2020).)

within several administrative units and take action to solve common problems. This is what the concept of functional areas, which are supposed to foster a balance in the level of land use, was designed to do. However, MOFs are not taken into account in spatial planning practice, as planning practices are limited to the boundaries of TSUs. Their aim is considered to be to draw up a plan within the individual municipality, rather than to seek joint spatial planning arrangements in an area beyond the territory of the municipality;

→ the primacy of the administrative approach over functional planning in spatial policy. In comparison, the functional approach has become one of the most important determinants of regional policy (e.g. the introduction of supra-local development strategies into the Polish legal order, the use of the Integrated Territorial Investments mechanism, etc.). Spatial planning is dominated by an administrative approach in which proximity to other municipalities is often treated as a competitive threat. An approach based on the "interests" of individual municipalities may determine conflicts and hinder the use of supralocal resources;

→ Lack of coordination of local spatial policies in urban regions - especially in the case of metropolitan areas and functional areas of large cities, characterised by the dynamics of suburbanisation processes. Intensive transformation of space related to suburbanisation, revealed the lack of spatial planning management in MOFs, which consequently limits their development potential;

→ The ZIT formula will increasingly force the issue of joint spatial planning for the entire area. Solving problems on the scale of a functional area requires cooperation (also in terms of spatial planning) from the local governments which are part of it. Until now, municipalities may or may not have taken into account the opinions of neighbouring municipalities in the planning process. This was often the reason for the clash of spatial functions at the interface between the administrative borders of the municipalities;

→ spatial planning procedures are not effectively linked to socio-economic development programming. Where local plans are drawn up, they generally cover a small area and establish spatial interventions often ignoring the overall development dynamics. The competences of local and provincial government make it difficult to take action to solve problems that go beyond the administrative boundaries of the territorial unit concerned. The practice of cooperation "at the interface between municipalities" is underdeveloped. This results in a number of negative phenomena, e.g. spatial chaos;

Baseline situation at 'local government' level:

→ in the spatial planning process, municipalities may or may not have taken into account the opinions of neighbouring municipalities. This was the reason for the collision of spatial functions at the junction of administrative borders of municipalities. This had negative consequences for residents, as it introduced a state of uncertainty about the use of land in their immediate neighbourhood (on the other side of the administrative border of the municipality);

→ Lack of formal coordination of cooperation between municipalities to integrate spatial planning, also at the level of handling cooperation between municipalities within the MOF (e.g. by setting up a non-governmental organisation) and giving the cooperation an organisational formula (e.g. setting up a MOF Office);

→ the ineffective process of public consultation in spatial planning, which currently often relies on the reaction of residents (through negative comments from some stakeholders who are dissatisfied with the proposed solutions) rather than on initiating real dialogue;

→ widely varying levels of qualifications, competencies and experience of spatial planning staff in the individual municipalities - some employees have specialist training and are prepared to work as part of a team to prepare planning documents (or at least to expertly supervise the execution of orders in this regard by external entities), others with little or no experience. Such a wide variation is a serious barrier to cooperation, as its effectiveness is contingent on the Partners achieving a 'baseline' in terms of spatial planning, operation of GIS software, participation, etc.

→ lack of a platform for the ongoing exchange of information by municipalities in the field of spatial planning - the in the form of an inter-municipal team of practitioners and experts. The team would enable ongoing consultation on plans and contribute to synergies resulting from the exchange of knowledge and competencies (more experienced staff support those less familiar with spatial planning issues);

→ Lack of an aggregated data base necessary to integrate spatial planning.

Each territorial self-government unit has its own (better or worse quality) data, but: firstly they are not unified/standardised (i.e. obtained and elaborated according to the same methodology, so that they could be helpful for others and comparable), secondly they are often not available for other territorial self-governments, even those directly neighbouring and influencing each other.

According to the intervention logic, the concept of the Project should directly result from the diagnosis. This rule was followed by the authors of the application for co-financing. Therefore, the following innovative solutions were a response to the problem situations described above:

1/ ensuring consistency in terms of cooperation potential in two areas:

- human resources potential - means the most effective possible alignment of professional qualifications and competencies in key participants of the integrated spatial planning process in ROF, including members of the Expert Team (training component of the project);
- technical potential - equipping the territorial self-government units with computer hardware and software which will enable the exchange of data, preparation of documents (e.g. maps), optimisation of cooperation, qualitative standardisation of data, effective provision of information to the public, etc;

2/ establishment of an Expert Team - a supra-local urban-architectural commission in the organisational structure of local government partnerships. The team should be equipped with the competences of giving opinions

and agreeing the conformity of planning documents of ROF municipalities (especially the functional and spatial structure model, spatial objectives and recommendations for spatial policy in ROF);

3/ Development of the Spatial Strategy of ROF. It is supposed to contain the common findings of the JSTs concerning the space of the area, which will be respected at the level of the municipalities in their spatial planning work. This will reduce conflicts at the interface of municipal boundaries and introduce a mechanism for spatial planning stability. The ROF SP will allow to indicate the functions of the undeveloped areas in the ROF municipalities, taking into account the needs of the inhabitants and the development needs of the area;

4/ participatory participation of inhabitants in the planning process using traditional methods and innovative methods, i.e. applications and e-services programmes that will enable residents to have their say electronically.

 ROF Spatial Strategy. Opening Report, World Bank, August 2021 , p. 16:

"Under the current legal framework - there will be a much greater role for 'soft' relationships and agreements rather than formalised and administrative mechanisms. In this process, the exact course of which is difficult to predict at this stage, it is worth making established assumptions and principles that will be accepted by all Project Partners. Key among these are: (I) open and constructive dialogue, (II) transparency, (III) data-driven decisions, (IV) education, (V) foresight, (VI) cooperation and compromise."

3.6. Tasks specified in the funding application

The implementation of the Project comprised four tasks, which for various reasons (primarily the covid-19 pandemic) evaluated and were repeatedly agreed with the MA.

Task 1. Ensuring consistency in capacity.

It included a training and technical component. The first was the training of staff of the JST, Leader and the ROF Association in postgraduate studies, on-line training in the use of specialised GIS software to support spatial planning processes using the QGIS platform, and training and workshops on conducting public consultations, mediation and negotiations

in the participatory process of planning documents. The activity on upgrading and levelling qualifications and competences was described above, but let us recall that these were:

- postgraduate studies in spatial planning:

On 1 March 2021, a contract was signed with the Warsaw University of Technology to organise and conduct a two-semester postgraduate course in spatial planning and management for 16 project participants. A total of 274 hours of lectures, exercises, group work, etc. were realised. The framework programme of the postgraduate studies included, among other things: the conditions of the current legal state of spatial planning and procedures, urban processes at the urban-rural interface; problems of planning and management of rural areas, tools for stakeholder participation in the spatial planning process, practical skills in drafting voivodeship spatial development plans, SUIKZP, MPZP, as well as the decision establishing the WZ, computer systems and software supporting spatial planning.

The lecturers were primarily academics from the Warsaw University of Technology's Department of Spatial Management and Environmental Sciences, including Prof. Alina Maciejwska, Ph. Małgorzata Denis, M.Sc. Robert Kuźmiczuk, as well as specialists/practitioners/IT specialists, etc. conducting practical classes in, for example: operating specialised GIS software supporting spatial planning processes using the QGIS platform;

It should be emphasised that, due to the covid-19 epidemic threat, the study took place in practical

remote mode using distance learning methods and techniques. Due to the restrictions introduced in 2020 in the education system, there was no other way to implement this activity. According to the majority of their participants, this did not have a negative impact on the quality of education and brought some tangible benefits, including reduced costs and commuting time, high attendance, increased accessibility, etc. The study was concluded with individual thesis consultations, an examination session and the defence of the theses by all 16 participants;

📖 Project participant's feedback on postgraduate studies (source IDI):

"If one works in a position like me and deals with urban planning and local plans, such studies were very much needed. (...). Even though the preparation of plans is outsourced to planning offices, administratively you have to keep an eye on it, and having an urban planning qualification after these studies you definitely have a broader view of the issues you need to pay attention to. It's definitely easier to communicate with a planner." (IDI 5).

- training in the use of GIS software:

These were completed by 16 project participants, who acquired practical skills for working in the QGIS environment. Due to epidemic restrictions, 40 hours of classes were held in an online format from 23-29 September 2022. The framework programme of training in the use of GIS software included, among other things: introduction to the GIS programme, preparation for creating a plan in QGIS, creating SUIKZP, MPZP, spatial analyses useful in issuing decisions.³¹

📖 Feedback from a participant in a GIS software training course (source IDI):

"Despite the remote form of delivery, this training still had a workshop character. It would not have been possible if it were not for the trainers, who are practitioners and prepared very practical and necessary materials for our work . (IDI 12)

- training in effective and skilful moderation of social discussion using mediation and negotiations during public consultations on planning documents. It was carried out in contact on April 27-28, 2022. The classes were conducted by Ms. Renata Stefaniak - an expert and trainer of training in the field of social consultations. and social participation. the training is in the nature of so-called 'soft' training, concerning competences and practical skills rather than expertise. But, taking into account the very important rank given to public participation by the Act on amending the Act on planning and spatial development and its "preventive" role (limiting potential protests by residents e.g. when the Study was submitted - the example of the city of Rzeszów), it had tangible benefits. Framework programme for training in effective and skilful moderation of public discussion.

According to the SOPZ, the scope of the 16-hour training included, among others, the following issues: organisation of public consultations - methods and techniques, interpersonal communication with stakeholders, negotiations and mediation in public consultations. The classes were also in the form of workshops on mediation and negotiation.

📖 Feedback from a participant in a training course on participation and public consultation (source IDI):

"Planning is translated into these people's lives. (...).The biggest problem is always that they are restricted in what they would like to do on their own property (...). And that's the reason why the training on mediation and negotiation was useful. We had the second amendment of the study in the municipality and really the reactions were mixed and it was nerve-wracking. And I can see how a skilful approach to moderating discussions has a big role in this planning process. Moderating the discussion, not generating aggression, not getting into conflicts, trying to defuse the dispute, defuse the tense atmosphere. That was also an important thing and it was also conducted with a person who deals with this topic on a daily basis. (IDI 12)

- Ensuring technical coherence of the Leader and Partners: included the retrofitting of computer equipment with specialised software and plotters and printers. The Project purchased:

- computer sets, equipped with software enabling the development of SUIKZP and MPZP;
- plotters ensuring high quality of document scanning;
- A3 multifunctional devices ensuring high quality of printing, scanning and copying;

Within the framework of this task at each Project Partner, workstations were designated, responsible for the implementation of activities in the field of spatial management, coordination of spatial planning within the ROF and ensuring public participation in public consultations.

📖 Project participant feedback (IDI source):

³¹ Source: <https://bip.podkarpackie.pl/index.php/zamowienia-publiczne/ponizej-30-tys-euro/5569-organizacja-oraz-przeprowadzenie-szkolenia-w-formie-on-line-w-zakresie-obsługi-specjalistycznego-oprogramowania-gis-wspomagajacego-procesy-planowania-przestrzennego-za-pomoca-platformy-qgis>

"The spatial data we have now, however, weighs a bit. If we want to do any analysis in a reasonable timeframe (...) then working on a 15-inch monitor, which you can't split, was just a nightmare. Similarly, working on a computer with an i3 processor on this data, well that's also something really difficult (...).

Now the new fast computer is already there and the wide monitor". (IDI 12)

Task 2. Implementation of an innovative Model of cooperation within the ROF.

Within the framework of this task, two key activities for the implementation of the Model were carried out, i.e. the establishment of the Expert Team and the development of the ROF SP.

Both activities are described in more detail in Chapter 6.

Task 3. Testing the developed model of integrated spatial planning.

The task consisted in testing the developed Model through joint verification of the existing planning documents with the adopted SP of the ROF and development of studies of conditions / local spatial development plans in the municipalities of the ROF.

The SP of the ROF, adopted in accordance with the competences of the individual levels of municipalities, set directions and defined principles for planning documents to ensure their complementarity in the ROF area. This action was the first of its kind on a national scale.

The project assumed that the provisions of the ROF SP will be taken into account when developing or updating the SUIKZG for the area of the municipality or the MPZP. ZE is responsible for reviewing the planning documents in the ROF municipalities in terms of their compliance with the provisions of the ROF SP. On the basis of the review, the ZE issues an opinion, which is also a recommendation to the municipality. The provisions in the grant application assumed the development of new or updating of existing planning documents by a minimum of 12 municipalities in the ROF area. The indicator was achieved in 13 municipalities. The development of planning documents was carried out by external contractors or in-house (as in the case of the city of Rzeszów). ZE developed a standard of entries in the ToRs for the purpose of selecting SUIKZP or MPZP contractors, which was very important for the unification of and integration of these documents and generally to improve their quality. In accordance with the Model, local communities were involved during the work on the above-mentioned documents, also using an Internet tool.

Task 4. Incorporation into practice and dissemination of the developed solutions.

The final stage of the Project is the process of disseminating information on the developed solutions. One of the activities planned in the Project was to develop this Handbook. The second important activity within this task will be the organisation of a conference at the end of the Project, planned for December 2023. During the sustainability period, the promotion and dissemination of the Model will also be one of the tasks of the ZE.

3.7 Significant changes to the Project

Very important issues, having direct impact on tasks, indicators, results, etc., were changes in the application for co-financing. Below, we describe the key changes that defined the final character of the Project and through whose prism its effects should be assessed.

Firstly, it should be emphasised that the covid-19 pandemic had a fundamental impact on the Project.

Less than 4 months after the start of the Project, the Law of 2 March 2020 on specific solutions related to the prevention, prevention and control of covid-19, other infectious diseases and emergencies caused by them came into force. The consequences of this were serious because:

- the restrictions put in place (but also the actual state of the epidemic emergency at the time) made it virtually impossible to hold ongoing face-to-face meetings;
- the coronavirus epidemic had a direct impact on the reduction of the ZZP's staff capacity (at least twice due to sick leave, quarantines, etc.) and on the implementers of key tasks in the Project (among other things, it resulted in a significant extension of the procedure for signing the contract with the WB);
- due to the nature and specificity of the Project, it has become very difficult to carry out its current implementation with the introduced limitations for security reasons, e.g. the recommended social distance, or limitations in the activity of universities (in the case of postgraduate studies);

In order to minimise the problem that occurred and to allow the Project to be implemented at all in an epidemiological emergency, corrective measures were taken by having the employees perform their duties in a remote working environment;

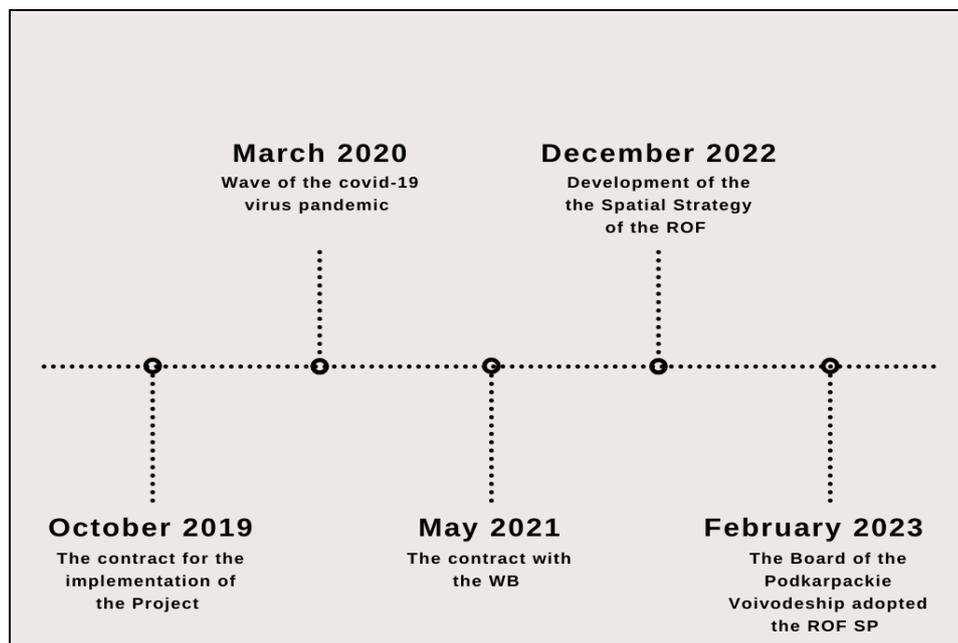
Therefore, on 30 March 2020. The Steering Committee decided to request the MA of OP WER 2014-2020 to suspend the Project due to the pandemic threat. Based on the MA decision of 27 May 2020, the

Project implementation was suspended for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2020). The suspension of the Project posed serious risks, primarily in the context of failure to achieve the anticipated output and outcome results. Nevertheless, an ambitious effort was made to reconstruct the project by extending it with Task 3. Testing the developed model (planned according to the project fiche under Phase II). The process of making these key changes to the Project required the Leader and Partners to re-examine the project logic. On 23 September 2020. The SC adopted a resolution to approve the changes to the Project application. In the course of the ongoing arrangements, the final outcome was a proposal to introduce an additional Task 3 to the Project.

The MA agreed to the proposed changes to the Project and the grant application in a letter dated 15.10.2020. The Project in its first version was to end on 30 June 2021. This was the date by which the implementation of all contracts signed by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship under the Project had to be completed. Such a short implementation period resulted in a real assessment by the Leader that it could not initiate public procurement procedures (thus incurring liabilities and signing contracts for the implementation of individual tasks) because they would go beyond the original Project implementation deadline.

The MA's agreement to extend the Project implementation period allowed the Leader to sign a contract with the WB for the development of the ROF SP, the procedure of which was significantly prolonged due to the covid-19 pandemic. Thus, despite the period of the epidemic threat, the key activity of the Project, which was the development of the ROF SP and its adoption by the Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, was implemented. The decision of the MA was therefore of fundamental importance for the Project and without its obtaining from the MA its continuation (according to the scope of tasks defined in the application for co-financing, at the assumed level of indicators, etc.) would not have been possible. Therefore, we believe that the "milestones" in the Project (decisive for its further implementation) were: signing the contract with the WB for development of the ROF SP, handing over the ROF SP and its acceptance by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Board.

Scheme 2. Milestones in the implementation of the Project



Source: own study

Significant activities in the Project (chronologically) are primarily:

- Signing of the contract with the WB on 28 May 2021. That is, practically from Q3 2021, the WB's work on the 'ROF Spatial Strategy Opening Report' and the draft 'Project Analytical Framework' began;
- In Q4 2021, another wave of the covid-19 virus pandemic triggered high sickness absenteeism and the need to send many members of the ZZP into enforced quarantine and isolation at both the Leader and project partners, as well as contractors for individual project services (at a time when many tasks were already in the final stages of completion). Strict

security procedures, which made the circulation of correspondence difficult and prolonged decision-making;

- in Q4 2021, the implementation of postgraduate studies was completed. **Thus, the result indicator was pulled: Number of people trained in spatial planning - 16.**

- in Q2 2022 implementation of Task 3 started. ROF communes carried out the procedure of estimating costs of development of planning documents, prepare resolutions on accession to preparation of Study amendment/ preparation of local plan;

- in Q3 2022 the majority of municipalities started to develop SUIKZP and/or MPZP. The work consisted in developing the concept of the planning document, conducting public consultations and providing opinions with various institutions (RDOŚ, UW, BOSG, WUOZ, PWIS, ZWP, ABW) and ZE;

- A public consultation of the draft ROF SP took place in Q4 2022. They were mainly conducted through the IPI online tool;

- 15 December 2022. The WB sent the Final Report containing a summary of the work carried out during the development of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF to the Leader, which was approved by the Leader on 20 December 2022.

- 20 February 2023. The Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship adopted the ROF SP by Resolution No. 463/9600/23. **Thus, the indicator was realised: Number of developed strategic documents (Spatial Strategy of ROF);**

- in Q1 and Q2 2023. ZE gave an opinion on 13 planning documents in the context of compliance with the ROF SP (all received a positive opinion from ZE). Also 2 SUIKZP in force were reviewed (the city of Rzeszów and Łańcut municipality) in terms of their compliance with the provisions of the SP of the ROF and a positive opinion was issued;

- in Q2 2023, further municipalities adopted a resolution on the adoption of the ROF SP, **thus the result indicator was realised: Number of municipalities that adopted the Spatial Strategy of the ROF in the form of a resolution of the Municipal Council;**

- in April 2023 due to the lack of acceptance by the Task Acceptance Committee of the IPI web tool . Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship adopted a resolution to withdraw from the Contractor.

In order to minimise the adverse impact of this situation on the Project, with the approval of the MA, the procurement of the new IT tool was carried out;

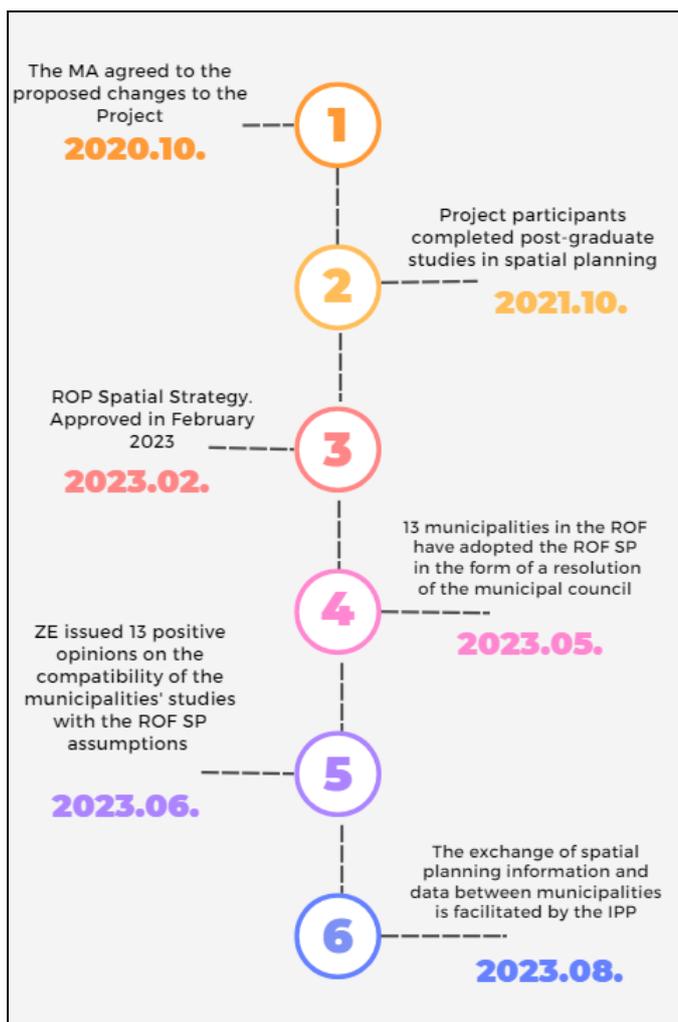
- in Q3 2023. ZE issued 13 positive opinions as to the compliance of the municipalities' studies with the provisions of the ROF SP - **thus the indicator: Number of verified studies of conditions and directions of spatial development of municipalities with the assumptions of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF has been achieved;**

- On 21 August 2023, a meeting of the Task Acceptance Committee was held, during which the "Participation" Web Application was accepted and a positive opinion was issued regarding its compliance with the SOPZ. **Indicator achieved: Number of spatial information exchange systems created between municipalities.**

Only the most important activities implemented under the Project, which directly relate to the output and result indicators, have been presented above. However, it is important to be aware that the achievement of the Project 'milestones' required the execution of many sub-activities. Ongoing activity in the Project included primarily: cyclical ZE meetings (39 were held by the end of September 2023), work in municipalities on planning documents under Task 3, expert consultations in municipalities, numerous public consultation meetings and events, etc.

The diagram below shows the key activities in chronological order.

Scheme 3. Chronology of key Project activities



Source: own study

The covid-19 pandemic and the resulting problems encountered during Project implementation created significant risks that were difficult to foresee at the grant application stage. Difficulties were reported to the MA, described in subsequent applications for

payment applications, and the MA and SC proposed remedial actions on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Project could proceed. Of course, this was not a situation pertaining only to the present Project, as during the pandemic period (the most restrictive restrictions and lockdowns) the implementation of most projects was at risk. In the case of the Project, the situation was quite special, as the basis of all tasks (the boundary condition) was the cooperation with WB experts, which for a long period could hardly be implemented. The Project concept also assumed direct participation, consultations in the municipalities, meetings of the ZE, etc., the implementation of which, due to the epidemic threat, was very difficult and in some periods even impossible. Despite this, the tasks were carried out in accordance with the grant application, and the vast majority of the results were achieved at the expected level.

A detailed description of the evaluation of the achievement of output and result indicators is presented in subchapter 2.8.

3.8 Coordination and management of the Project

A key role in the Project management structure is played by:

➔ Steering Committee (SC):

It was established by Resolution No. 98/2316/19 of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Board of 19 November 2019. According to the guidelines, the Steering Committee is responsible for supervising the proper implementation of the project in terms of its content and in terms of its compliance with the adopted schedule, budget and action plan, as well as the provisions of the project co-financing agreement under the OP WER 2014-2020.

The tasks of the Steering Committee include in particular:

- supervise the fulfilment of the quality requirements and the achievement of the Project objectives,
- creation of a forum for exchange of information and opinions between the Parties involved in the Project implementation,
- Periodic evaluation and control of Project progress,
- Approve changes in the Project.

The SC work is led by the Chairman with the assistance of the Deputy Chairmen. The technical and organisational support as well as the management of the SC Secretariat will be provided by the Department of Regional Development of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland.³²

The SC is completed by 15 representatives of the Partners, including:

³² Source: https://bip.podkarpackie.pl/attachments/article/4858/Uchwa%C5%82a%20Nr%2098_2316_19.pdf

- President of the Management Board and Vice President of the Management Board of the ROF Association, - President of the City of Rzeszów, Mayor of Boguchwała, Head of Chmielnik Commune, Head of Czarna Commune, Head of Czudec Commune, Mayor of Głogów Młp., Deputy Head of Krasne Commune, Head of Lubenia Commune, Mayor of Łańcut, Deputy Head of Łańcut Commune, Head of Świlcza Commune, Head of Trzebownisko Commune, Mayor of Tyczyn Commune.

➤ **Project Management Team (PMT):**

Established by Resolution No. 98/2317/19 of the Management Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodship of 19 November 2019.

The tasks of the PMT include in particular:

- implementation of the Project in accordance with the request for co-financing (WoD) and the agreement concluded with the MA,
- implementation of the budget in accordance with the Project,
- detailing the schedule of tasks,
- on-going coordination of project tasks,
- Current monitoring of tasks,
- ensuring communication within the Project,
- Analysis of information and reports,
- management of risks and changes in the Project,
- Project management in cooperation with the SC,
- cooperation with ZE.

The work of the IPP is managed by the Chairman, who in the Project is the Director of the Regional Development Department. On the Project Leader's side, the ZPP was complemented by representatives of the Regional Development Department and the Podkarpackie Spatial Planning Office (before its liquidation).

Scheme 4. Governance structure of the Project



Source: own study

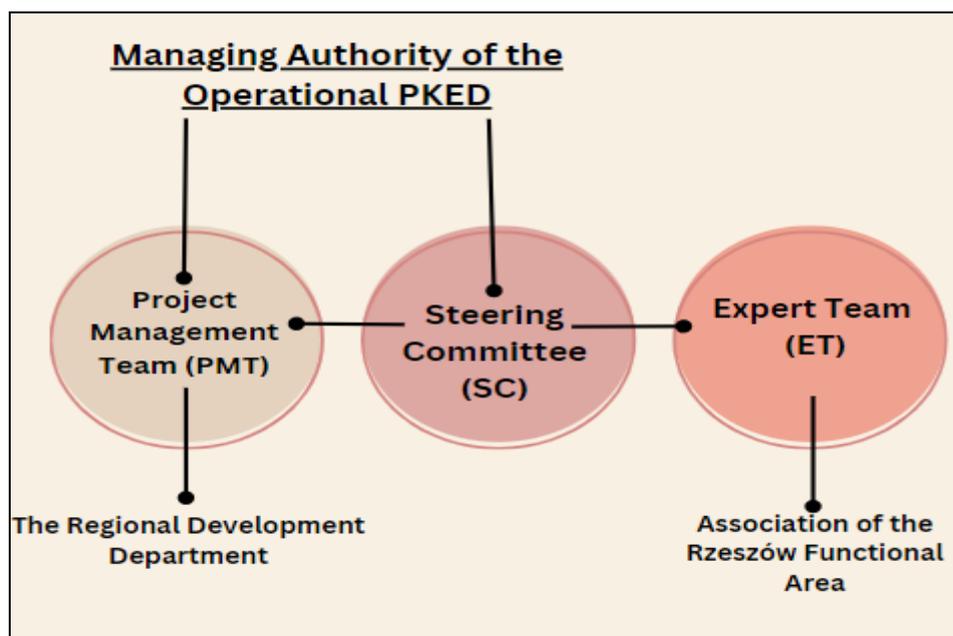
Partners in the ZPP were represented by 20 persons, including 2 persons from the ROF Association Office and 18 representatives of municipalities forming the ROF.

Technical and organisational support for the ZPP is provided (for the duration of the Project) by the Regional Development Department of the Podkarpackie Voivodship Office.

Such a large number of PCAs is not typical, as usually project coordination teams are composed of several people (Manager, coordinators, monitoring and reporting assistants, etc.). However, it should be taken into account that in the case of the present Project, many key activities were implemented by 14 Partners and across 13 municipalities. This scope and area of implementation required representation of all implementers at municipality level in the composition of the ZPP.

A description of the third team that also influences decision-making in the Project (albeit not directly responsible for management), i.e. the ZE, can be found in subchapter 5.

Scheme 5. Governance structure of the Project



Source: own study

3.9. Project indicators (planned and achieved)

Evaluation of indicators, indicates that at the current level of project implementation (as at 30 September 2023) achieving the indicators at the level assumed in the application for co-financing will not be a problem, because:

- 6 out of 7 of the product indicators are currently at the target level, while indicator No. 7 should be measured after the end of the Project i.e.,
- 3 out of 3 result indicators are also achieved, but their target value will be shown in the final payment claim.

This is positive information in the context of significant difficulties in Project implementation, not resulting from. This is positive information in the context of significant difficulties in Project implementation, not resulting from actions (or inaction and improper diligence) on the part of the Project Leader and Partners, but due to the occurrence of the so-called "force majeure", i.e. circumstances beyond the control of the parties that could not have been foreseen at the time of concluding the agreement. This refers to the state of pandemonium, which constituted an 'interruption' in the implementation of many projects. It should also be emphasised that the Project Leader and Partners, while undertaking Task No. 3 (this was a voluntary measure proposed by the Leader and Partners to the MA), additionally defined a new indicator: Number of verified studies of conditions and directions of spatial development of municipalities with the assumptions of the Spatial Strategy of ROF. They declared its achievement at a very high level of all 13 municipalities from ROF, adding a new value to the Project in the context of the change.

The level of achievement of output and result indicators is presented in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2. Summary of the level of achievement of output indicators (as at 30.10.2023)

Name of the PRODUCT indicator	Target value	Achieved value	Comments
1. number of municipalities that have submitted planning documents developed or updated in the project to municipal councils for adoption	12	1	The application for co-financing, should be measured after the end of Project implementation, i.e. in December 2023

2. number of innovations accepted for funding on a macro scale	1	1	The social innovation is the Model of integrated and socialised spatial planning developed developed and tested as part of the project
3. number of strategic documents produced	1	1	ROP Spatial Strategy. Approved in February 2023.
4. number of entities using ICT	15	0/15	The leader (the Department of Regional Development and the Association of ROF and 13 municipalities of ROF use the online tool. The change of the indicator from 16 to 15 is due to the liquidation of the Podkarpackie Spatial Planning Office The application for co-financing, should be measured after the end of Project implementation
5. number of parties/residents/entities participating in the consultation process of planning documents using an innovative internet tool in the ROF area	200	253	Number of parties involved of the ROF SP consultation via the online tool
6. number of spatial information exchange systems established between municipalities	1	1	The exchange of spatial planning information and data between municipalities is facilitated by the IPP
7. number of verified studies on conditions and directions of spatial development of communes with the assumptions of the Spatial Strategy of ROF	13	13	ZE issued 13 positive opinions on the compatibility of the municipalities' studies with the ROF SP assumptions

Source: own study based on data from payment application No. 15

Analysing the above summary, it should be emphasised that some of the above product indicators, according to the provisions of the application for co-financing, should be measured after the end of Project implementation, i.e. in December 2023. This concerns the indicators: 4. the number of entities using information and communication technologies and 7. the number of verified studies of conditions and directions of spatial development of communes with the assumptions of the Spatial Strategy of ROF.

Table 3. Summary of the level of achievement of result indicators (as at 30.10.2023)

Name of the RESULT indicator	Target value	Achieved value	Comments
1. number of municipalities that have adopted the Spatial Strategy of the ROF in the form of resolutions of their municipal councils	13	13	13 municipalities in the ROF have adopted the ROF SP in the form of a resolution of the municipal council
2. number of people trained in spatial planning	16	16	16 Project participants completed post-graduate studies in spatial planning
3. number of tested social innovations on a macro scale of a strategic nature	1	0	The model of integrated and socialised spatial planning is still undergoing testing until the end

			of the Project period.
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Source: own elaboration based on data from payment application No. 15

The value of achieving result indicator no. 3, according to the provisions of the application for co-financing, should also be measured after the end of the Project. However, taking into account the status of Task 3 implementation (concerning testing of developed solutions), it can be concluded that this indicator is already achieved.

Analysing the above statements, it should also be emphasised that the quantitative evaluation does not fully reflect the effects of the Project of innovative character, as in this case, many so-called added values appeared. Synergy results from, among other things: the establishment of cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience, teamwork, etc. Also, the increase in qualifications and competences achieved as a result of participation in postgraduate studies allows for more confident, informed decision-making in the field of spatial planning. Identification of these (equally important from the point of view of Project evaluation) results was served by IDI and FGI surveys, the summary results of which are presented in subchapters 2.9 and 8.1.

3.10. Qualitative evaluation of the Project on the basis of individual in-depth interviews (IDI)

The analysis of the level of achievement of results is an important element of each project, stemming from the methodology of preparing grant applications. Project implementers must identify evaluation methods, plan its implementation and, based on its results, assess whether the project's objective has been achieved and whether the assumed indicators have been achieved. Obviously, the Project also indicated the way, source and moment of their measurement, the analysis of which made it possible to prepare the above list. However, due to the specific nature of innovative projects, qualitative evaluation is also very important. Thanks to it, not only do we know that changes occurred as a result of the Project, but we receive material for the analysis of what effects they cause (expected or appearing as added value). In this context, it is worth describing the results of the qualitative evaluation in this Handbook, especially in the context of the evaluation of the developed solutions. As part of the qualitative study, 20 IDIs were carried out, the participants of which were 15 employees of municipal offices participating in the project and 2 representatives of the ROF Association and 3 WB experts. The research was conducted in the period July-September 2023. Due to the subject matter covered in the IDIs, the interviews were primarily attended by Project participants. In the case of two municipalities, in addition to the study participant, the IDI was also attended by the person responsible for the financial handling of the Project in the municipality. In one municipality, the IDI was in the form of a triad, with three interviewees involved in the Project from the side of the municipality office. In the case of the municipality of Rzeszów, the IDI was conducted with Ms. Director of the Rzeszów City Development Office. Below is a summary of the IDI research report, which in its full version was submitted to the Department of Regional Development as part of the Project evaluation. Opinions are presented only on issues relevant to the Model, i.e. opinions on its elements, level of innovation and possibility of implementation in other MOFs.

3.10.1. IDI participants' opinion on the innovativeness of the Model

The respondents agreed that the key elements of the Model, i.e. the establishment of an inter-municipal ZE, the joint review of the existing planning documents - SUIKZG and MPZP, the development of a joint Spatial Strategy of the ROF, the participation of inhabitants at the stage of work on municipal planning documents and the SP of the ROF, are necessary to talk about innovation.

➡ Conclusions of the IDI survey, regarding the evaluation of the Model's innovativeness:

1/ The development and implementation of the Model has an important role in an innovative approach to the spatial planning process. The Model can have practical applications in integrating spatial planning.

📄 Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"The idea behind the project was that when a neighbouring municipality is doing something, they should consult with each other. When two neighbouring communes are planning something on their land, but it is directly adjacent to ours, it is to maintain a certain consistency. The aim of this project is to jointly work out a model of communication between communes and jointly come to some agreement or draw attention to some elements which may have an impact on our side or the other side, and to lead to the development of a communication model and coherent operation of communes". (IDI 4)

2/ A very important element of the Model was the establishment of the ZE. In the opinion of the respondents, the ZE performs primarily the role of a forum for discussion, exchange of opinions and views. It also fulfils an important role of a platform for communication and exchange of information, it also

has an educational and cognitive value, as it allows to learn about the intentions and activities related to spatial planning in the entire MOF, and not only in the case of neighbouring municipalities. The ZE is also a support group that provides advice on spatial planning. This is particularly important and relevant for small rural municipalities that do not have extensive planning and spatial management units. The use of larger municipalities, especially urban ones, is therefore of considerable value.

Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"The administrative procedure for spatial planning, for amending the study, is that the municipality has to send a notification and documents to the neighbouring municipality, but there is no conversation in this case. We get such a document, we get acquainted with it and if we do not make any comments then this change is adopted. And here we talk among ourselves on these expert teams, we discuss various issues, we vote, among other things, on various documents, where some opinion has to be expressed beforehand, so there is a dialogue, there is a conversation." (IDI 7)

"I think that these meetings, the fact that we can exchange information among ourselves, whether we know what is going on or ask. It's definitely important that we can talk. If someone needs counselling, I think it is." (IDI 10)

3/ The involvement of the representatives of the municipalities in the joint planning document of the ROF SP indicated a deficit of such initiatives. The respondents have knowledge concerning the municipalities directly neighbouring them, but lack a broader view, which is of great importance in the context of the area's development policy.

Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"Previously, we only focused on the contact points of the municipalities, i.e. those problem areas, and that was of interest to us. This approach that has been developed as part of this strategy, which is a general approach, allows us to see where someone in their municipality is locating or intends to locate areas of economic activity, a production function, a service function. We know where to develop infrastructure, where we can use our opportunities in cooperation with these municipalities. It allows better placement of capital, better shaping of buildings and social services (IDI 12)

4/ The respondents emphasised the real benefits of the Project for the inhabitants of ROF. They resulted, inter alia, from the investment in human capital - employees of municipal offices dealing with spatial planning. The municipalities gained qualified and highly educated employees, while the inhabitants gained professional and high quality services. The municipality's spatial planning staff are a source of knowledge for residents about the use of the land they own. Thanks to the acquisition of new competencies through participation in the Project, the scope of support for residents is much wider.

Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"If the municipality has educated people among its employees, who have planning and urban planning knowledge gained thanks to this project, then the resident has such comfort that he can initially discern the possibilities for a given area, for his plot, information on how to carry out administrative proceedings. He can certainly get more information than before about the potential possibilities for the plot of land. And let's not hide the fact that residents come to ask what they can do on a given plot of land: whether they can build something here, whether they have compact buildings, etc. Certainly the employees of the offices are now trained very well in this matter. (IDI 5)

5/ The involvement of WB experts was, in the general opinion of interviewees, a very good move, enabling them to benefit from an external perspective on the problems of spatial planning in the geographically as well as functionally diverse geographically as well as functionally diverse ROF municipalities. Respondents emphasised the very high level of data and analyses prepared by WB experts and dedicated to each municipality. These studies filled a clear gap in this type of studies held by municipalities. Respondents emphasised that the data will be used in the current work of the office or for the preparation of other strategic documents in the municipality. Respondents also appreciated the possibility to use external experts within the four thematic areas for the preparation of municipal planning documents. The positive assessment is not altered by the fact that this possibility was used mainly by urban municipalities (mainly Rzeszów).

Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

For me, too, this project brought up a lot at the stage of these data collected by the World Bank. You know, in a municipality that is typically rural, where there is no need, there would seem to be no need for economic corridors and zones of movement or aeration. So it is not relevant. But we will look at the villages located in the basins and the buildings functioning in them, however, if we look at it from the perspective of an urban planner who deals with this subject, the buildings of these villages are also not quite correct and also affect the comfort of life of these inhabitants, because they are improperly designed. (IDI 12)

6/ The respondents did not indicate in their statements that the participatory - socialised spatial planning process may cause any negative effects, risks for the local community. On the contrary, they emphasised that the inclusion of residents in this process is of great importance, which will be further strengthened by changes to the legislation in this area. Participation also has an educational and informational value, as on the one hand it creates new channels of communication between the municipality office and the resident, and on the other hand it educates residents on the planning documents that are in place in the municipality. As emphasised by the respondents, the residents' knowledge in this area is poor.

📖 Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"I hope that as a result of this project, while still bearing in mind the amendment of the Town and Country Planning Act, which will also create more restrictions for people once it is introduced, because it will no longer be possible to issue a WZ in accordance with the general plan, contrary to the general plan. This will open people's eyes and (...) they will get involved, but also not looking through the prism of their own interest, but through the prism of the interest of the local community as a whole." (IDI 12)

7/ according to the respondents, the solutions developed within the Project can be implemented in other MOFs in other voivodeships, paying attention to the possible specificity of MOFs in other regions of Poland.

📖 Feedback from a participant in the individual in-depth interviews (source IDI):

"I think this project is quite innovative. For sure when we finalize this project and learn from it the Model will be fully innovative for sure." (IDI 1)

"I think that the Project is probably some good basis. And that other provinces can be inspired and maybe improve the model as well." (IDI 5)

3.10.2. Findings from the IDI study

The analysis of the opinions of the participants in the qualitative research, some of which are presented above, confirms that:

- the project is an example of social innovation. The qualities of the project in the opinion of the respondents were its strong emphasis on dialogue, discussion, education and transparent cooperation. The pattern of activities developed as part of the project, which can safely be called the Spatial Planning Model, is an interesting example of thinking about development based on so-called evidence-based policy;
- using the knowledge and scientific-analytical input of WB experts and discussing proposed solutions based on "hard" data is undoubtedly a good practice worth disseminating;
- a very important value of the Project is its educational character. The assumed project activities have made a clear investment in the human capital of the municipalities' offices and, what is important, the beneficiaries of these activities are, to a large extent, the inhabitants, who have gained access in their municipality to officials with knowledge, competencies and tools to provide services at a much higher level;
- An interesting suggestion is to place a slightly different time emphasis on individual project activities in future with this type of Project. Above all, it is worth considering reserving a larger time period for the development of planning documents - local plans or studies of land use conditions and directions. It should also be pointed out that effective participation often requires very early involvement of residents in the whole process and long-term development of solutions.

4. Legal conditions for integrated spatial planning, taking into account the MOF

The chapter describes both the current state of the law and outlines the previous regulations in force at the time of preparation of the ROF Spatial Development Strategy. In particular, it considers two significant changes to the spatial planning system. The first of these, introduced by the Act of 15 July 2020 on Amendments to the Act on the Principles of Development Policy and Certain Other Acts, represented a significant step towards the integration of spatial and socio-economic planning. The second one, resulting from the provisions of the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and some other acts, changed the catalogue of spatial planning documents and strengthened the role of the municipal development strategy as the basic document for creating spatial policy. Therefore, when discussing the spatial planning system based on the repeatedly amended Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development, account was taken of its progressive integration with socio-economic planning by presenting the strategic documents in force, the main legal framework of which is the Act of 6 December 2006 on the principles of development policy.

The spatial planning system in Poland is based on the concept of three basic levels of spatial planning - national, voivodeship and communal. This division is maintained in the following sections of the chapter.

4.1 Spatial planning at the national level

The basis for conducting spatial policy at the national level until 2020 was adopted by Resolution No. 239 of the Council of Ministers of 13 December 2011. Concept of the Spatial Management of the Country 2030. The document took into account the conditions, objectives and directions of sustainable development of the country and indicated the actions necessary to achieve it. The Act of 15 July 2020 amending the Act on the principles of development policy and certain other acts repealed the existing NAPE 2030, while introducing the **Concept of National Development** in its place. The scope and nature of this document was defined in the amended Act on the Principles of Development Policy, where, inter alia, a new chapter 1a dedicated to it was added. The Concept of National Development is a visionary document defining the country's development challenges in social, economic and spatial terms for a period of up to 30 years. This means, that it combines the spheres of spatial and socio-economic planning.

The Concept of National Development has not yet been developed. However, the representatives of the Committee for Spatial Management of the Country of the Polish Academy of Sciences (KPZK PAN), in the prepared analysis "Spatial Management of the Country - a long-term perspective", indicate that currently the greatest threat to conducting coherent spatial management in the country is the lack of a document defining the spatial organisation of the state, which was the KPZK 2030. According to the authors, the national spatial organisation document is a natural platform for reconciling climate and environmental protection objectives with economic development objectives, and its absence means that social and natural conflicts are increasing, thus limiting the country's future development opportunities.

In the opinion of the authors, it is particularly important for Poland to have a strategic document organising spatial development at the national level again as soon as possible. It should be stressed that the NCR in the shape currently defined by the Act, as a visionary document, does not meet the above postulates.

4.2. Spatial planning at voivodeship level

Pursuant to Art. 3. par. 3. of the Act on spatial planning and development, shaping and conducting spatial policy in the voivodeship, including adoption of the voivodeship spatial development plan and landscape audit, is the task of the voivodeship self-government and implementation of spatial policy in the voivodeship, including adoption of the voivodeship spatial development plan and the landscape audit, is the responsibility of the voivodeship self-government.

Pursuant to Article 14 (1) of the Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodeship, it performs, inter alia, spatial development tasks. **Spatial planning in the voivodeship** is defined in Chapter 3 of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development.

The basic instrument for conducting spatial policy at the voivodeship level is the voivodeship spatial development plan. Pursuant to Art. 39³³, its regulations cover the entire area of the voivodeship and are enclosed within its administrative borders. The voivodeship plan takes into account the findings of the voivodeship strategy and the recommendations and conclusions of the landscape audit, and determines in particular:

- basic elements of the settlement network of the voivodeship and their communication and infrastructure links, including the directions of cross-border links;
- system of protected areas, including protection of the environment, nature and cultural landscape, spas, spa protection areas, cultural heritage and monuments, and contemporary cultural assets;
- distribution of public purpose investments of supra-local importance;
- special flood risk areas;
- boundaries of the closed areas and their protection zones;
- areas of documented mineral deposits and documented underground carbon storage complexes.

The voivodeship plan defines conditions, principles and directions of shaping the spatial structure of the voivodeship, so as to create favourable conditions for economic development, growth of the level of

³³ Act of March 27, 2003 on spatial planning and development

and quality of life and the competitiveness of the region, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. In accordance with the provisions of the Act on Regional Self-Government, the draft plan of the voivodeship is prepared by the board of the voivodeship and then adopted by the voivodeship parliament. The voivodeship plan is not an act of local law, but an act of internal management. This does not follow from the statutory provisions, but from the commonly formed view in the case law of the administrative courts. Despite the lack of an editorial form proper for legal regulations, the findings of the provincial plan - to the extent indicated by the legislator - are binding.

Spatial planning at the voivodeship level is largely conceptual and characterised by a high degree of generalisation. The provincial plan is therefore general in nature and contains findings of a diverse nature - both conceptual and relating to specific planning solutions.

Prior to the entry into force of the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts, the findings of the voivodeship spatial development plan were obligatorily taken into account in the study of conditions and directions for spatial development of the municipality and in local spatial development plans. This obligation now applies to the general plan and local spatial development plans.

Pursuant to Article 39(6) of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, a spatial development plan may be drawn up for a city which is the seat of the authority of a voivodeship self-government or a voivode and an area functionally connected to it as part of the voivodeship spatial development plan.

In the case of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Spatial Development Plan - Perspective 2030, its integral part is the Spatial Development Plan for the Rzeszów Functional Area. The ROF Plan contains the leading directions of development of the area and indicates policies for their implementation.

When preparing for changes to the spatial planning system and linking it to socio-economic planning in 2020, it was assumed that the voivodeship development strategy would be strengthened by giving it a spatial dimension and that the voivodeship spatial development plan would be abolished at the same time. In the end, when implementing the system changes through the Act of 15 July 2020 amending the Act on the principles of development policy, the latter step was not decided upon, assuming the repeal of the voivodeship plans at a later date.

Pursuant to Article 38a of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, a landscape audit shall be drawn up for the area of the voivodeship at least once every 20 years. The **landscape audit** is drafted by the voivodeship board and adopted by the voivodeship parliament.

The landscape audit defines in particular the landscapes occurring in the area of the voivodeship and location of priority landscapes, indicates the location and boundaries of: landscape parks, national parks, nature reserves, protected landscape areas and objects on the UNESCO World Heritage lists, areas of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Network (MaB) or areas and objects proposed for inclusion on the and sites proposed for inclusion in these lists. In addition, the landscape audit identifies: threats to the possibility of preserving the value of landscapes, recommendations and proposals for landscape design and protection, and local forms of archival development within priority landscapes.

The landscape audit directly influences other spatial planning acts listed in the Act on spatial planning and development, such as:

- the provincial spatial development plan, which takes into account the recommendations and conclusions contained in the landscape audit;
- the study of spatial development conditions and directions of the municipality, which should take into account the conditions resulting from the recommendations and conclusions contained in the landscape audit or from the definition by the landscape audit of the boundaries of priority landscapes and the directions of changes in the spatial structure of the municipality, as well as in the land use resulting from the landscape audit, taking into account the balance of land earmarked for development;
- a general plan of the municipality, which takes into account the recommendations and conclusions contained in the landscape audit and the priority landscapes;
- a local spatial development plan, which mandatorily defines the boundaries and development of the priority landscapes identified in the landscape audit.

The landscape audit also impacts on protected areas through provisions in the Nature Conservation Act. In addition, the landscape audit influences the advertising resolution by provisions contained in the Act on the protection and care of historical monuments, indicating that the resolution setting out the terms and conditions for the location of small architectural objects, billboards and advertising devices and fences takes into account, in particular, the conclusions and recommendations of landscape audits and landscape park protection plans.

4.3. Municipal spatial planning

According to Article 3(1) of the Law on Spatial Planning and Development, the shaping and conducting of spatial policy within the territory of the municipality is one of its own tasks. According to the above article, in the wording before the system changes of 2023, the tools of the municipality's spatial policy are:

- study of the conditions and directions of the municipality,
- local spatial development plan.

☛ **Study of the conditions and directions for development of the municipality**, is not an act of local law, but as a "planning act" and an act of internal management, it defines the spatial policy of the municipality and binds the municipal authorities when drawing up a local plan. It is drawn up within the administrative boundaries of the municipality. The study is prepared in the form of a document containing a textual and a graphic part. The study document consists of two main parts. The first is "diagnostic" in nature, covering a number of conditions indicated in the now repealed Article 10 (1) of the Act on Planning and Spatial Development, in particular The first part is of a "diagnostic" nature and covers a number of conditions indicated in the now repealed Article 10 (1) of the Act on Planning and Spatial Development, in particular the current designation, development and development of the land, the state of spatial order, environment, cultural heritage and monuments, communication and technical infrastructure systems, as well as the conditions and quality of life of the inhabitants and the needs and opportunities for the development of the municipality, and possibilities for development of the municipality.

The second part contains directions for the municipality's spatial development. It indicates, e.g. the directions of changes in the municipality's spatial structure and land use, as well as directions and indicators for the development and use of land, including areas intended for development and areas excluded from development. It also defines, inter alia, the principles of protection of the environment and its resources, protection of nature and landscape, areas and principles of protection of cultural heritage and monuments as well as contemporary culture, directions of development of communication and technical infrastructure systems, areas where public purpose investments of local or supra-local importance will be located, as well as areas of special flood hazard and areas of landslides.

The Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts removed the study from the system of spatial planning acts. The role of the study of conditions and directions for development of the municipality was taken over by the **municipality's development strategy** as a document defining the spatial policy of the municipality and the **municipality's general plan** in terms of determining the zones predisposed to the distribution of land with a specific use in local plans. The studies remain in force until the date of entry into force of the general plan of the municipality in a given municipality, but no longer than until 31 December 2025.

In accordance with Article 10e (3) of the Municipal Self-Government Act, the strategy will, within the framework of the functional and spatial structure model, define the structure of the settlement network, the natural connections and the main corridors and elements of the transport networks. Furthermore, the strategy will include findings. In addition, the strategy will include findings and recommendations on the development and implementation of spatial policy in the municipality, including the direction of changes in the municipal land use structure, principles of environmental, nature and heritage protection, development of technical and transport infrastructure and other aspects that will affect future strategic and spatial decisions. Such a solution means the actual integration of the spatial and socio-economic planning system at the local level. According to art.13a, a general plan shall be compulsorily drawn up for the entire area of the municipality, with the exclusion of closed areas other than those established by the minister in charge of transport, which are excluded from the planning authority of the municipality. It constitutes an act of local law.

The municipality's general plan will set out the planning zones in which the land uses indicated in the implementing regulation are possible, as well as the determination of the impassable conditions for the realisation of investments in terms of the urban development parameters and indicators set out in the municipality's urban development standards. The general plan will be able to set out the boundaries of the development supplement areas - i.e. the areas where decisions on development conditions will be permitted and the areas of inner-city development, for which additional rules on the shaping of development and land use will be introduced. An optional element of the municipal urban planning standards will be standards concerning the accessibility of social infrastructure facilities. The master plan will be equally binding for the findings of the local plans and decisions on development conditions, while delimiting the areas for development conditions, at the same time delimiting the areas where the issuance of such decisions will be allowed at all. Thanks to this solution, municipalities will have a

greater influence on where development can take place and the nature of the development. This solution is intended to counteract uncontrolled sprawl.

In contrast, the master plan will not be directly binding when issuing decisions other than zoning and land use decisions, in particular the decision constituting consent to the commencement of the development, i.e. a building permit. In the same way, compliance with the general plan will not be examined in proceedings relating to construction notifications.

The master plan will be in digital form. The digital version will allow any enlargement of the map, so it will be much more accurate than traditionally produced planning documents.

➤ **A local spatial development plan** is a normative act with universally binding force. Pursuant to Article 15 of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, a draft plan is drawn up by the head of the commune, mayor or town mayor. The local plan consists of a textual and a graphic part. The graphic part, i.e. the drawing of the plan, should be a graphic reflection of the planning arrangements. The nomenclature and designations adopted therein must enable an unambiguous connection between the plan drawing and its text.

The local plan takes into account the spatial policy of the municipality as set out in the municipality's development strategy or supra-local development strategy. Prior to the changes to the regulations introduced in 2023, the local plan had to be consistent with the findings of the spatial planning study. It must now be consistent with the findings of the master plan.

The obligatory scope of the local plan is set out in Article 15. paragraph 2 of the aforementioned Act. It includes:

- 1) designation of areas and lines demarcating areas with different designation or development principles;
- 2) principles of protection and development of spatial order;
- 3) principles of protection of the environment, nature and landscape
- 3) principles of protection of the environment, nature and landscape;
- 3a) principles of landscape development
- 4) principles of protection of cultural heritage and historical monuments, including cultural landscapes, as well as contemporary cultural heritage;
- 5) requirements resulting from the needs of shaping public spaces;
- 6) principles of development and land development indicators, maximum and minimum overground development intensity, minimum share of biologically active area, maximum share of development area, maximum height of development, minimum number and manner of development of parking spaces, including spaces designated for parking vehicles with a parking card, as well as development lines and overall dimensions of the facilities;
- 7) boundaries and ways of development of areas or objects subject to protection under separate regulations, mining areas, as well as areas of special flood hazard, areas of landslides, priority landscapes specified in the landscape audit and in the voivodeship spatial development plans;
- 8) detailed principles and conditions of merging and dividing the properties included in the local plan;
- 9) special conditions of land development and restrictions on their use, including a ban on development;
- 10) principles of modernisation, development and construction of communication and technical infrastructure systems;
- 11) manner and time limit for temporary development, arrangement and use of the land;
- 12) percentage rates based on which the land may be developed;
- 12) Percentage rates on the basis of which the so-called planning fee is established (Article 36(4)).

Other elements of the plan, resulting from the specificity of the area covered by it, are determined as required. They are indicated in Article 15(3) of the Act.

Pursuant to Article 37f of the Spatial Planning and Development Act, a municipality with a developed.

➤ **The Municipal Revitalisation Programme** may develop a local revitalisation plan. Issues relating to the issue of revitalisation are regulated in detail by the Act of 9 October 2015 on revitalisation. According to the statutory definition (art.2 paragraph 1. of the above Act), revitalisation is a process of leading out of the crisis state of degraded areas, conducted in a comprehensive manner, through integrated actions for the benefit of the local community, space and economy, territorially concentrated, carried out by revitalisation stakeholders on the basis of a municipal revitalisation program. Conducting revitalisation activities is a non-obligatory own task of the commune.

Local revitalisation plan is a special form of local plan drawn up for the revitalisation area. In the local revitalisation plan, in addition to the elements listed in art. 15 par. 2 and 3 of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development, it specifies, inter alia: the principles of the spatial composition of new developments and harmonisation of the planned developments with the existing ones, arrangements concerning the characteristic features of the facades of the buildings, detailed arrangements concerning the

development and equipment of the areas of public spaces, including the arrangement and location of greenery.

4.4. Spatial planning in the MOF

It should be emphasised that, at present, spatial planning at the MOF level remains undefined and suspended between the relatively stable, although recently subject to significant attempts of modification, voivodship and municipal planning levels.³⁴

In the Polish spatial planning system, development planning issues in urban functional areas first appeared with the entry into force of the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development. It introduced the concept of a "metropolitan area" and the provisions stipulating the necessity of its designation in the national spatial development concept spatial development concept and the voivodeship spatial development plan, as well as to draw up a plan for it.³⁵ This plan was to be developed as an integral part of the voivodeship plan, so it was not a de facto "independent" planning entity and, importantly, the subject of this plan was not formally local government units (communes and districts), because the plan was developed by the voivodeship government. Significantly, in the early years of the 2003 Act, the planning of functional areas of cities was formally limited only to the functional areas of cities that were the capitals of 16 voivodeships, which cities were considered "metropolises" and the surrounding areas subject to the influence of the regional capital were considered "metropolitan areas". In 2014, changes were made to the Spatial Planning and Development Act. They resulted from the reflection that, in addition to metropolises and metropolitan areas (of which there were in fact no metropolises in Poland, and their existence was rather postulatory, i.e. a goal of development policy), there are functional areas around cities, especially those that are provincial capitals, as well as other types of functional areas than urban areas. The term 'metropolitan areas' was removed from the Act, and the term 'functional areas' and a specific type (subcategory) of them were defined: "urban functional areas of voivodeship centres". In the provisions on the development of the voivodeship spatial development plan, a provision appeared stating the need to determine: "boundaries and principles of development of functional areas of supra-regional importance and, as appropriate, boundaries and principles of development of functional areas of regional importance" (Article 39, paragraph 3, point 4). The plans for metropolitan areas were replaced by a document under the new name: "for an urban functional area of a provincial centre, a spatial development plan for an urban functional area of a provincial centre shall be adopted as part of the voivodeship spatial development plan. The spatial development plan for the urban functional area of the voivodeship centre may also include areas lying outside the boundaries of the urban functional area of the voivodeship centre" (Article 39, paragraphs 6 and 7). This document was still not a 'stand-alone' planning entity, and the entity developing this plan was the provincial government, not the local units of local government (municipalities and districts) included in the functional area. As of 2014, functional areas of various types were therefore a characteristic element of the Act (their catalogue was contained in Chapter 4a [Art. 49a-49f]. Among these, an important role was assigned to so-called 'functional areas of supra-regional importance', which included the 'urban functional area of a provincial centre' (Article 49 b). Further amendments to the Spatial Planning and Development Act concerning planning in urban functional areas were introduced at the turn of 2015/2016. At that time, a new chapter 2a entitled Spatial planning in a metropolitan area was added. From its contents, it stated that: "the metropolitan association (if established) shall draw up a framework study of the conditions and directions for spatial development of the metropolitan association, for the entire metropolitan area, hereinafter referred to as the 'metropolitan study', taking into account the findings of the spatial development plan of the province". At the same time, all the provisions referred to above, i.e. those concerning spatial development planning for an urban functional area of a provincial centre, were left in force. This was probably due to the fact that the establishment of metropolitan associations in each voivodeship was not envisaged (and thus the preparation of 'metropolitan studies' for them). As a result, in those voivodeships where metropolitan unions were not established, plans were drawn up for the functional areas of voivodeship cities.

A further change to the regulation of planning issues in urban functional areas took place in November 2020. The terms were removed from the Act: "functional area" and "urban functional area of a provincial centre", as well as the entire chapter on spatial planning in a metropolitan area. The provision on the

³⁴ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final Report, p. 60

³⁵ A spatial development plan for the metropolitan area shall be adopted for the metropolitan area as part of the voivodeship spatial development plan" [Planning Act..., art. 39, para. 6].

necessity/possibility of designating functional areas (supra-regional and regional), their boundaries and development principles in this plan was removed from the provisions on the content of the voivodeship spatial development plan. The obligation to develop a "spatial development plan of an urban functional area of a voivodeship centre" (as an integral part of the voivodeship plan) was repealed. It has been replaced by an optional possibility for the regional government to make a spatial development plan for the city - the capital of the region - and its functional area (MOF).³⁶ To no extent does the Act specify the substantive nature of such a plan. The provisions on indicating/designating in the national spatial development concept the urban functional areas of voivodeship centres were also removed, as the obligation to prepare such a document was abolished.

A more concrete instrument for shaping territorial spatial order between the regional and local scale can be the. It is introduced into the Act of 8 March 1990 on municipal self-government through the Act of 15 July 2020 amending the Act on the principles of development policy and certain other acts. The possibility to develop such a document is available to neighbouring and functionally related municipalities. Since urban functional areas are, as it were, by definition created by functional links between the local units constituting them, the instrument of a supralocal development strategy will be applicable at such a territorial level. The supralocal development strategy has to be elaborated with the participation of the county, if it covers all the municipalities from its territory, and in case it concerns only some municipalities of the county concerned, its participation is optional.

The scope of the supra-local strategy in its spatial dimension includes such elements as:

1. functional and spatial structure model;
2. arrangements and recommendations for shaping and conducting spatial policy;
3. areas of strategic intervention together with the scope of planned activities;

The object scope of the strategy formulated in this way is a step towards integrated planning, breaking down the division into separate strategic and spatial planning subsystems.

The supra-local development strategy remains a relatively new instrument in the Polish legal order. It therefore remains an open question how the rather laconic provisions of the Act describing the substantive content of the strategy can be filled with real content in planning practice. At the same time, the amended Article 9(2) of the Act on spatial planning and development directly orders the head of the commune, mayor or town mayor to take into account the findings of the supra-local development strategy when drawing up the study.

The Spatial Strategy of the ROF will not be a supralocal development strategy in the statutory sense. Only the target transfer of the findings of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF to the supra-local development strategy will result in a direct legal basis for its implementation.³⁷

Potential transfer of the ROF SP findings to the supralocal development strategy will be a key action to ensure long-lasting impact of the ROF SP on local planning, i.e. also in the time perspective after the end of the Project's lifetime (after 2025). At the same time, the assumption that the findings of the SP ROF will be smoothly incorporated into the supra-local development strategy guarantees a potentially long period of validity of the amended acts for the municipalities that adapt their planning documents to the SP ROF.

4.5. Location of public purpose projects and establishment of development conditions

In the absence of a local plan, investments are located by means of a **decision to establish the location of a public purpose investment or a decision on development conditions**. Administrative decisions were intended to be a supplementary instrument in relation to local plans, enabling the location of investments in the absence of a plan. From the perspective of the dozen or so years that the regulations of the Act on spatial planning and development have been in force, it can be stated that they have become in many municipalities the basic tool for determining the possibilities of land development.

The wide scope of application of decisions on land development conditions is influenced, inter alia, by the lack of a statutory obligation to draw up a local plan for the entire municipality. The result of the large number of decisions issued is, among other things, scattered development, depletion of green areas, high transport costs and landscape degradation.

³⁶ Provision of the Planning Act... [Art. 39, section 6] stipulated that: "a spatial development plan may be prepared for a city which is the seat of a voivodeship or voivode's government and an area functionally related to it as part of the voivodeship spatial development plan"

³⁷ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final Report, p. 61

➤ **Integrated investment plan** A special form of a local plan is also the integrated investment plan, introduced in 2023 by an amendment to the Law on Planning and Spatial Development, regulated in Article 37ea-eg. The plan is adopted at the request of the investor. It is a tool that gives municipalities a great deal of freedom in locating and implementing investments, while maintaining compliance with the general plan and with greater public participation. This instrument will supplement and, from 2026, replace the resolution on determining the location of a residential development project, adopted on the basis of the so-called housing speculative law. Prior to the changes to the spatial planning system introduced in 2023, in the absence of a local plan in force in a given area of a municipality, investments were located by means of a decision on the location of a public purpose investment or a decision on development conditions.

By assumption, administrative decisions were only supposed to be a supplementary instrument with respect to local plans, enabling the location of investments in the absence of a plan.

From the perspective of a dozen or so years of the Act on spatial planning and development being in force, it can be stated that in many municipalities they have become the basic tool for determining the possibilities of land development.

The wide use of decisions on development conditions has been influenced, inter alia, by the lack of a statutory obligation to draw up a local plan for the entire municipality, as well as the lack of binding the decisions with the findings of the municipality's spatial development conditions and directions study. The result of the large number of decisions issued is, among other things, dispersed development, depletion of green areas, high communication costs and landscape degradation. Amendments to the regulations introduced by the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on planning and spatial development and some other and Spatial Planning and Development and some other acts limit the possibility of issuing decisions on development conditions. They will only apply within the development addition boundaries designated in the general plan. The findings of the general plan will be binding for the decision (Article 13a (4) and (5) of the amended Act on Planning and Spatial Development).

4.6. Documents of a strategic nature.

As mentioned above, a close interconnection between spatial and socio-economic planning is taking place, inter alia due to the regulatory changes introduced in 2020 and 2023. This is reflected, inter alia, by the introduction of a spatial component into strategic documents.

The basis for strategic planning is the Act of 6 December 2006 on the principles of development policy. Pursuant to Article 1(1), it sets out the principles for conducting development policy, the entities conducting this policy and the mode of cooperation between them.

The development policy shall be understood as a set of interrelated actions undertaken and implemented in order to ensure sustainable and balanced development of the country, socio-economic, regional and spatial cohesion, increasing the competitiveness of the economy and creating new jobs on a national, regional or local scale (Article 2.). Development policy is carried out on the basis of development strategies, programmes and programming documents and public policies (art. 4 para. 1.).

The basic system of strategic documents has a three-tier character covering the national, regional and local levels. It is complemented by strategic documents developed on an optional basis of supra-regional or supra-local character.

At the national level, the basic long-term document is to be the aforementioned **National Development Concept** introduced by the Act of 15 July 2020 amending the Act on the principles of development policy and certain other acts. The Concept of National Development is not a strategy, but a visionary document setting out the country's development assumptions in the social, economic and spatial dimension for a period of up to 30 years.

The document is currently under development. Its purpose is to identify key global and national trends shaping the future in the social, economic, environmental and spatial spheres, indicating the most important development challenges that Poland faces and will face, spatial sphere, indicating the most important development challenges that Poland is facing and will face. The concept is to formulate possible development scenarios, as well as to recommend strategic choices within the framework of public policies in the 2050 perspective.

The aforementioned amendment to the Act on the Principles of Development also repealed the previously discussed Concept for Spatial Management of the Country 2030, as well as the long-term national development strategy, removing this document from the system of strategic documents. Currently, the medium-term national development strategy is the basic national strategic document. It defines the basic conditions, objectives and directions of the country's development in the social,

economic and spatial dimension, for a period of 10-15 years, and indicates detailed actions for a period of 4 years.

Currently, the role of the country's medium-term development strategy is fulfilled by **the Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020** (with an outlook until 2030). The main objective of the SOR is to "create conditions for an increase in the income of the Polish population with a simultaneous increase in cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and territorial dimensions".

The strategy is based on three specific objectives.

These are:

- sustainable economic growth based increasingly on knowledge, data and organisational excellence;
- socially responsive and territorially sustainable development;
- an effective state and institutions for growth and social and economic inclusion.

The SOR envisages the construction of an integrated socio-economic and spatial planning system.

Moreover, it envisages, among other things, an increased concentration of regional policy on problem areas and territorial potentials of urban and rural areas. The strategy defines the main types of territories constituting the areas of strategic intervention (OSI) of the state. These are: areas at risk of marginalisation, medium-sized cities losing socio-economic functions, as well as the macro-region of Eastern Poland.

The definition of **areas of strategic intervention** is contained in Article 5(5b) of the Act on the principles of development. It is an area defined in the development strategy with identified or potential functional links or with specific social, economic or spatial conditions, determining the existence of barriers to development or permanent, activable development potentials, to which public intervention is directed, combining investments, in particular economic, infrastructural or in human resources, financed from various sources, or regulatory solutions. medium-term development strategy. Among the documents currently in force, the so-called integrated development strategies should be indicated. They constitute a more detailed specification of the SOR in priority development areas. These include:

- National Strategy for Regional Development 2030,
- National Ecological Policy 2030,
- Energy Policy of Poland until 2040,
- Social Capital Development Strategy (Cooperation, Culture, Creativity) 2030,
- Human Capital Development Strategy 2030,
- Strategy for Sustainable Transport Development 2030,
- Strategy for Sustainable Rural, Agricultural and Fisheries Development 2030.

Of particular importance from the point of view of regional development programming is the **National Strategy for Regional Development**. The document presents the objectives of the regional policy as well as activities and tasks to be undertaken by the government, voivodeship, powiat and gmina self-governments and other entities participating in the implementation of this policy in the perspective of 2030. The strategy emphasises the sustainable development of the whole country through reducing disproportions in the level of social and economic development of different areas, mainly urban and rural. The main objective of the regional policy was formulated as: "effective use of endogenous potentials of territories and their specialisations for the achievement of sustainable development of the country, which will create conditions for an increase in the income of Polish residents while achieving cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and spatial dimensions. Its implementation is to be served by 3 specific objectives. They are:

1. increase the coherence of national development in the social, economic, environmental and spatial dimension.
2. Strengthening regional competitive advantages.
3. improving the quality of management and implementation of place-based policies.

Based on the provisions of the SOR, the document identifies areas of strategic intervention (OSI) to receive particular support. These are: areas threatened by permanent marginalisation, medium-sized cities losing socio-economic functions, Silesia and Eastern Poland.

Trans-regional strategies are documents of optional nature. Such a strategy is developed jointly by the self-governments of the voivodeships whose area is covered by the strategy, and then adopted by the sejmik of these voivodeships. At the joint request of the self-governments of the voivodeships, the draft supra-regional strategy developed and accepted by the sejmiks may be submitted to the minister responsible for regional development for his opinion and forwarded to the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers adopts a supra-regional strategy if such a request is submitted by the voivodeships preparing it. Such a solution is applied in the case of the necessity to prepare a supra-regional strategy defining a strategic framework for programmes constituting the basis for applying for EU funds.

At the regional level, the key document for development policy programming is the **voivodeship development strategy** defined in Article 11(1) of the Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodeship. In accordance with it, the following objectives are included in the strategy:

1. nurturing Polishness and developing and shaping national, civic, cultural awareness of the inhabitants, as well as developing and nurturing local identity.
2. stimulating economic activity.
3. increasing the level of competitiveness and innovation of the voivodeship economy.
4. preservation of the cultural and natural environment, taking into account the needs of future generations.
5. shaping and maintaining spatial order.

Preparation of the voivodeship development strategy is the responsibility of the voivodeship board. The document is adopted by the Sejmik of the voivodeship by way of a resolution. The voivodeship development strategy is prepared in text and graphic form.

Pursuant to Article 1. paragraph 1 c, of the Act on the Self-Government of the Voivodeship, the voivodeship development strategy contains conclusions from the diagnosis of the social, economic and spatial situation prepared for the purposes of this strategy, taking into account functional areas, including urban functional areas, and specifies in particular:

- 1) strategic objectives in the social, economic and spatial dimension;
- 2) directions of actions taken to achieve the strategic objectives;
- 3) expected results of the planned actions, including in the spatial dimension, and indicators of their achievement;
- 4) model of functional and spatial structure of the voivodeship;
- 5) findings and recommendations on the development and implementation of spatial policy in the voivodeship;
- 6) areas of strategic intervention specified in the medium-term national development strategy, together with the scope of planned activities;
- 7) areas of strategic intervention crucial for the voivodeship, if such have been identified, together with the scope of the planned measures;
- 8) the strategy implementation system, including guidelines for the preparation of implementation documents;
- 9) financial framework and sources of funding.

It should be emphasised that the scope of the voivodeship development strategy defined above clearly indicates its spatial character. In the case of Podkarpackie voivodeship, the applicable strategy is **Podkarpackie Development Strategy 2030** adopted by Resolution No. XXVII/458/20 of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Assembly of 28 September 2020. The strategy distinguishes four thematic areas. These are: economy and science, human and social capital, infrastructure for sustainable development and environment, accessibility of services. Priorities have been identified for each thematic area, as well as action lines and activities to implement them. In the fourth thematic area of SRWP 2030, one of the priorities indicating issues important for the development of the voivodeship is priority 4.2 Spatial planning supporting the activation of communities and the activation of degraded areas.

The aim of this priority is to improve space management and counteract the exclusion of people and areas due to economic or infrastructural limitations.³⁸

One of the directions of action of the above-mentioned priority is to improve spatial order and the quality of space management. The provisions of SRWP 2030, referring to this course of action, indicate that:

“Spatial order and cohesion determine the sustainable development of the region, because the rationalization of spatial management determines the stimulation of economic processes, shaping appropriate living conditions for residents, strengthening social and cultural functions and preserving natural and landscape resources. Improving the quality of space and caring for spatial order should take into account the specific potential of a given territory and development barriers. Therefore, a key issue are space management plans, the development of which is the responsibility of local government units. The plans enable effective shaping and implementation of spatial policy in the commune. The development of planning competences and increased coordination in this area will enable the reduction of spatial conflicts and will support the strengthening of socio-economic development processes.

To achieve the above objectives, the following activities were planned:

³⁸ Podkarpackie Development Strategy 2030, p.67

- supporting activities in the field of spatial planning in local government units, taking into account their complementarity with neighboring local government units;
- strengthening the space management system by increasing the share of area covered by local spatial development plans;
- integration of spatial planning in functional areas;
- improving access to spatial data;
- the use of spatial planning instruments to protect space resources and landscape and rational space management.³⁹

The SRWP 2030 also indicates the territorial dimension of the strategy aimed at adapting support to the regional context and functional characteristics. In addition to the national DSOs stemming from the National Strategy for Regional Development, it identifies the following regional DSOs: Rzeszów and ROF, sub-regional growth poles - urban functional areas, counties and small towns, rural areas, areas at risk of permanent marginalisation in the voivodeship, the area covered by the Strategic Development Programme Bieszczady and the area covered by the Strategic Programme "Blue San".

The supra-local development strategy is listed in the catalogue of strategic documents contained in Article 9 of the Act on the Principles of Development Policy. Its preparation is optional. It may be drawn up, inter alia, for functional areas, including urban functional areas. Pursuant to Article 10g of the Act on Municipal Self-Government, neighbouring municipalities functionally linked to each other may elaborate a supra-local development strategy which is a joint development strategy for these municipalities within their territory. The supra-local development strategy is elaborated with the participation of the county self-government if all municipalities from the territory of the county participate in its elaboration. The strategy may be elaborated with the participation of the county government if at least one municipality, which is the subject of the strategy, is located on its territory.

The supra-local development strategy must be compatible with the voivodeship development strategy. Its scope is analogous to the commune development strategy. In order to prepare and implement the supra-local development strategy, local government units may establish, in particular, an inter-municipal association, a district-municipal association or an association or conclude an inter-municipal agreement. Pursuant to Article 10e(1a) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government, which, by virtue of the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts, will enter into force on 1.01.2026, a municipality may not prepare a municipal development strategy if the area of the municipality is covered by a supra-local development strategy. Thus, the supra-local development strategy from the above-mentioned date may constitute the basic document for the municipality defining the spatial policy and thus, inter alia, constitute the framework for the preparation of the general plan and, subsequently, local spatial development plans.

The so-called **ZIT (Integrated Territorial Investment)** strategies should be distinguished from the supralocal development strategy. They do not constitute a supralocal development strategy within the meaning of the above mentioned regulations. However, they constitute the basis for implementation of the ZIT instrument, and thus for applying for financial resources for this purpose by urban functional areas.

In the case of the Rzeszów Functional Area, the **ZIT Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area** adopted in 2016 was in force at the time of preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy of the ROF. ZIT Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Currently (as of 10.2023), work on a new document is underway. The new ZIT ROF strategy is to be oriented towards the implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments in the ROF area, and at the same time constitute a supra-local development strategy for the area.

The **Spatial Strategy of the ROF** does not constitute a strategic document within the meaning of the Act on the Principles of Development Policy, which will be discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

The **municipal development strategy**, in accordance with Article 10e (1) of the Law on Municipal Self-Government, remains a non-mandatory document until 1.01.2026. From that date, in accordance with the new wording of the above provision resulting from the Law of July 7, 2023 amending the Law on Spatial Planning and Development and certain other laws, the development of the strategy becomes mandatory for the municipality.

³⁹ Podkarpackie Development Strategy 2030, p.110

The detailed scope of the strategy is set forth in Article 10e (3) of the Law on Municipal Self-Government. According to it, the strategy contains the conclusions of the diagnosis made in the social, economic and spatial dimensions. It indicates the strategic objectives of development and the directions of activities for their implementation, as well as the expected results in the social, economic and spatial dimensions.

The strategy contains a model of the functional-spatial structure understood as the target layout of the components of space, as well as arrangements and recommendations for the formation and conduct of spatial policy in the municipality within the scope specified by the above-mentioned provision. In addition, it takes into account the areas of strategic intervention (OSI) specified in the provincial development strategy, along with the scope of planned activities. In addition, it may indicate areas of strategic intervention crucial for the municipality, if such have been identified. The strategy also contains provisions defining the system of its implementation, as well as the financial framework and sources of financing.

The municipal development strategy is drawn up in text and graphic form. The strategy should be consistent with the development strategy of the province and the supra-local development strategy, if it has been developed. The draft document is prepared by the mayor, mayor or city president, respectively. It is adopted by the municipal council by resolution.

4.7. New spatial planning tools

The amendment to the Law on Spatial Planning and Development was published in the Official Gazette of August 24, 2023, item 1688. It will come into force in stages. Part of the regulations became effective on September 24, 2023, and part on January 1, 2025 and January 1, 2026.

The amendment to the Law on Spatial Planning and Development implements the reform of planning and land use planning enshrined in the National Plan for Reconstruction and Increasing Resilience. The law's entry into force implements the reform milestone "A.1.3 Planning and Zoning Reform." The milestone is described as follows:

"Following public consultation, the entry into force of a new law on urban planning that:

- 1) will require all municipalities to prepare and adopt a long-term strategy related to land use in the municipality;
- 2) will make it mandatory for all municipalities to prepare and adopt general land use plans, which are transformed into local acts, which should set forth general rules for development in the municipal area and be based on a long-term strategy for municipal development;
- 3) will introduce a requirement that will oblige investors to carry out additional projects for the benefit of the municipality when building new development projects, with the aim of, among other things, limiting residential development without sufficient provision of infrastructure;
- 4) will define the process by which stakeholders can participate in the development of strategies and master plans in municipalities."

Point 1 is implemented through an amendment to the Law on Municipal Self-Government (Article 6, point 1 of the Law) to introduce the obligation to draft a municipal development strategy and add provisions detailing the scope of the model for the functional and spatial structure of the municipality, as well as findings and recommendations for shaping and conducting spatial policy. Point 2 is implemented through the introduction of municipal general plans (Article 1, point 11 of the Law). Point 3 is implemented through the introduction of provisions on integrated investment plan (Article 1, point 38 of the Law), in particular Article 37ed of the upzp. Point 4 is implemented by introducing a chapter on public participation (Article 1, point 9 of the Law) into the upzp, where the rights of stakeholders to be informed about the process of preparing planning acts and the opportunities to participate in these processes are defined. The changes are aimed at simplifying, unifying and speeding up planning procedures. According to the data, almost 1/3 of local plans are being processed for more than 3 years. In provincial cities, where the largest number of local plans are being prepared, this rate is more than 50%. Along with the changes in procedure, it has been proposed to separate the provisions on public participation as a separate chapter. This is intended to raise the standards for conducting discussions with residents, to organize, expand and open up the catalog of possible participation tools to new techniques, including those related to digitization, and to modernize the vocabulary used in accordance with the development of this field of knowledge. In drafting the provisions of the newly introduced chapter, a considerable amount of support was drawn from the highly-regarded regulations of the chapter on public participation found in the in the Act of October 9, 2015 on revitalization. The effect of the changes is expected to be to facilitate the development of compromises in spatial management that are accepted by at least the majority of stakeholders in the process. It will also increase investment certainty, as conflicting positions and interests will be revealed in an open and transparent consultation procedure, and not only at the stage of proceeding with investment.

Another part of the amendments relates to the introduction of the municipality's general plan as a mandatory planning document with municipal-wide coverage. The general plan will be an act of local law that will replace the study of the conditions and directions of spatial development of the municipality, as a document, with which the compatibility of local plans, but also of zoning decisions, will be examined. Decisions on zoning will be able to be issued only in areas designated in the general plan. The general plan will contain arrangements for the functions of the areas permitted to be designated in lower-level documents, as well as framework arrangements for the formation of development and land use, with which these documents will have to maintain compliance. In addition, in the general plan general plan it will be possible to designate areas of downtown development, for which special development rules may be formulated concerning, among other things, the minimum biologically active area or distances between buildings, as specified in regulations issued under the Construction Law. The master plan will also be able to include regulations on accessibility standards for social infrastructure. Importantly, the master plan will be in digital form, which will solve the current problems in that in traditional paper versions of studies and development plans, the lines drawn in them, such as lines marking boundaries between zones, are not so precise that they can be interpreted down to the square meter on the ground. The digital version will allow for any magnification of the map, so it will be much more accurate.

4.8. Formal and legal nature of the document entitled "Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area"

The developed document entitled "Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area" (hereinafter also referred to as the "Spatial Strategy of the ROF") is one of the tangible results of the implementation of the partnership agreement dated April 1, 2019, no. RR - V.760.11.17.2019, concluded between the Podkarpackie Province and the Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area and thirteen municipalities forming the Rzeszów Functional Area. This agreement constituted a partnership for the joint implementation of the project entitled "Integrated and socialized model of spatial planning through the development of the Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area".

Determination of the formal-legal nature of the document, which is the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, must take into account both the purpose of the project assumed by the project leader and partners, as well as normative conditions relating to spatial planning. At the outset, it should be noted that the development and practical verification of an innovative model of cooperation relating to spatial planning issues within the geographic framework of the Rzeszów Functional Area (hereinafter also referred to as "ROF") was identified as the primary objective of the project. Its essence was an attempt to change the approach of local government units to the principles and rules governing spatial policy, in particular by tightening cooperation between entities responsible for spatial planning in the ROF. One of the key instruments to serve this change is to be a document of a strategic nature creating a framework for integrated planning of ROF space. To the extent possible, this document is to take into account the expectations and proposals for changes made by the entities directly concerned, i.e. residents and local government units, which were then to adopt the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, by the individual bodies of the entities implementing the partnership agreement, which are competent in this regard. The legal nature of the Spatial Strategy of ROF is therefore largely due to its innovative character. This is because the project assumes that an innovative approach to spatial planning issues will result from the adoption of the Spatial Strategy of ROF and the implementation and successive deepening of a model of cooperation between municipalities associated within the Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area. One of the pillars of this model is a prominent, active and effective participation of citizens living in the ROF area in the spatial planning process. Such a mechanism is also expected to bring positive effects in terms of improving the quality and accessibility of public services offered by local government units. This is because the solutions proposed within the project assume coordination of spatial planning objectives and priorities pursued by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship self-government and individual municipalities in ROF, while taking into account the needs of residents. As a result, the space of ROF is to become an area where the expectations, needs and individual and collective interests of residents can be realised in a more comprehensive manner than before. This is to be achieved primarily through increased participation of residents in the process of shaping the content of planning documents. This approach, by design, is intended to enable the identification and indication of new directions within the spatial planning policies implemented by the territorial self-government units.

Local government units, both at commune and voivodeship level, are self-governing communities that independently and essentially autonomously undertake activities in the area of public affairs of local (commune) or regional (voivodeship) importance. They therefore constitute an important link in the shaping of socio-economic life in relation to their areas of jurisdiction. Transferring the above to the solutions in force in the Polish legal order, which statute the constitutional position of local government

units and their role in ensuring spatial order, the following should be noted. Pursuant to Article 163 as well as Articles 164 and 166 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 (Journal of Laws No. 78, item 483, as amended) in conjunction with Article 6(1) of the Act of 8 March 1990 on communal self-government (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 40, as amended), a commune, as a unit of territorial self-government, is a unit of territorial self-government. as amended), the municipality, as a local government unit, has the general competence to perform all tasks in the public domain which, under separate regulations, have not been reserved for other local government units. The catalogue of such matters includes issues concerning spatial order (Article 7(1)(1) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government). Similarly, this matter, pursuant to art. 163 and art. 166 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland in conjunction with art. 14 par. 1 pt. 7 of the Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodeship (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2094 as amended), constitutes an immanent part of the tasks of the self-government of the voivodeship. Therefore, there is no doubt that the implementation of a partnership for the joint implementation of the project entitled 'Integrated and Socialised Model of Spatial Planning through the Development of a Spatial Strategy for the Rzeszów Functional Area' falls within the tasks assigned to local self-government units as defined by the applicable legislation.

However, the question of the legal character of the document prepared within the framework of the project entitled 'Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area' remains open. The use of the term "strategy" to describe the subject matter of this document requires that, in order to establish the legal nature of the document, first of all linguistic interpretation and the related directives of colloquial language, legal language and legal language be applied. According to the dictionary understanding of the term, a "strategy" is a well-thought-out plan of action in a certain area, in this case with regard to land-use planning issues. On the other hand, a normatively defined catalogue of types of strategies, which constitute one of the ways of implementing the principles of development policy, can be found in the Act of 6 December 2006 on the principles of development policy (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2023, item 1259, as amended) - hereinafter also referred to as the "Act on z.p.p.r.". This Act, in Article 2, provides a legal definition of development policy stating that it is a set of interrelated activities undertaken and implemented in order to ensure a permanent

and sustainable development of the country, social-economic, regional and spatial cohesion, increasing the competitiveness of the economy and creating new jobs on a national, regional or local scale. In turn, Article 3 of the same Act stipulates that the development policy is carried out, inter alia, by: the voivodeship self-government (point 2) and the communal self-government (point 3). The types of planning acts and documents in the area of development policy are specified in Article 4 of the Act on z.p.p.r., indicating that development policy is conducted on the basis of development strategies, programmes and programme documents and public policies. The types of development strategies were enumerated by the legislator in Article 9 of the Act on z.p.p.r.. These are: medium-term national development strategy (item 2), other development strategies (item 3), voivodeship development strategy (item 4), commune development strategy (item 5) and supra-local development strategy (item 6).

For obvious reasons, after all *clara non sunt interpretanda* (Latin for not interpreting what is clear), the Spatial Strategy of the ROF is not a medium-term national development strategy. It is also not another development strategy within the meaning of Article 9(3) of the Act on z.p.p.r., as these are documents defining basic conditions, objectives and directions of development, relating to sectors, areas, regions or spatial development and adopted, pursuant to Article 14(5) of the Act on z.p.p.r., by the Council of Ministers by way of a resolution. A development strategy within the meaning of Article 9(3) of the Act on z.p.p.r. relating to a region is also a supra-regional strategy (Article 14a(1)(2)) and is jointly prepared by the self-governments of the voivodeships and adopted by the sejmiks of the relevant voivodeships by resolution (Article 14a(5)) or by the Council of Ministers by resolution. 5) or by the Council of Ministers (art. 14a par. 8) in the event that, upon a joint request of the self-governments of the voivodeships, a draft supra-regional strategy is developed and accepted by the self-governments of these voivodeships, it is forwarded to the minister in charge of regional development for his/her opinion and forwarded to the Council of Ministers.

The Spatial Strategy of ROF is not a strategy of voivodeship development, let alone a strategy of municipal development in the meaning in which these documents are defined in Article 11(1) of the Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodeship and in Article 10e(1) of the Act of 8 March 1990 on the self-government of communes, respectively. Nor can it be referred to as the supra-local development strategy referred to in Article 9(6) of the Act on z.p.p.r., as it is the document referred to in Article 10g(1) of the Act of 8 March 1990 on municipal self-government and Article 12a(1) of the Act of 9 March 2017 on the metropolitan association in the Silesian Voivodeship (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2578). Indeed, the supra-local development strategy referred to in Article 10g(1) of the Act of 8 March 1990 on municipal self-government is a document prepared by neighbouring municipalities functionally

linked to each other with optional or obligatory participation of the county (Article 10g(1) and (2)). Therefore, none of these subject-matter prerequisites is fulfilled in the case of a document such as the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, just as it does not fulfil the subject-matter prerequisites constituting *essentialia negotii* (from Latin: essential elements) of the development strategy referred to in Article 10e(3) of the Act of 8 March 1990 on Municipal Self-Government, and relating to the supra-local development strategy under Article 10g(3) of that Act.

It should also be stated that the Spatial Strategy of the ROF is also not a development programme within the meaning of Article 15(1) and (4)(2) of the Act on z.p.p.r. Programmes (operational, development) are understood as documents of an operational and implementation nature, established for the purpose of implementing the development strategy, specifying the activities to be carried out in accordance with the established programme implementation system and financial plan, constituting an element of the programme. Pursuant to Article 15(4)(2), a development programme is a document that implements the objectives contained in the development strategies referred to in Article 9(3) to (6) of this Act, as well as the multi-annual programmes referred to in the provisions on public finance. They are therefore implementing instruments in relation to the strategy and are of a detailing nature. Leaving aside other formal considerations relating to development programmes, such a character cannot be attributed to the ROF SP.

Taking into account the above, the determination of the formal and legal character of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF must be made using inference *a contrario* (Latin: from the opposite) with the simultaneous assumption that in the Polish legal order the catalogue of documents relating to spatial planning issues is of a closed nature (Latin: *numerus clausus*).

On the basis of the above-mentioned provisions of generally applicable law, it is therefore not possible to assign the SP of the ROF to any of the documents referred to above. It remains to consider the SP of the ROF as an unnamed manifestation of the activity of local government units in the fulfilment of their statutory and regulatory spatial planning tasks. The above is due to the innovativeness of the document in question, which gives rise to the aforementioned legal implications. It also means that the public consultations of this document correctly took place on the basis of the procedure developed in connection with the implementation of the project entitled "Integrated and socialized model of spatial planning through the development of the Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area". The unknown, from the point of view of legal language, nature of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF in no way constitutes a dysfunctional character of this document. In view of the conciliatory way in which the Spatial Strategy of the ROF was developed, and thus its potential direct or indirect impact on other documents related to the preservation of spatial order and regional development, it should be considered a document of significant regional importance. Despite, as stated above, the non-legal nature of this document, its value may be strengthened if the good practices obtained during its development are implemented in other regions of the country.

5. Integrated management of spatial planning processes in the MOF

5.1. Specifics of integrated development planning

The need for integrated development planning, involving the integration of spatial planning and socio-economic planning is crucial for shaping and maintaining spatial order at different levels of spatial management. In the praxeological approach to planning processes and management processes in the public sector, the integrated approach is becoming increasingly widespread. Public development planning is based on the paradigm of an interconnected balanced relationship between the economic, social and environmental subsystems. The greatest integration of decision-making processes is characterised by spatial planning. Spatial planning and policy are somehow predestined to introduce an integrated approach to development planning on its basis. This is because the spatial policy pursued at the municipal level is strongly linked to the public interest, infringement of third-party interests, urban design, composition and architectural design.

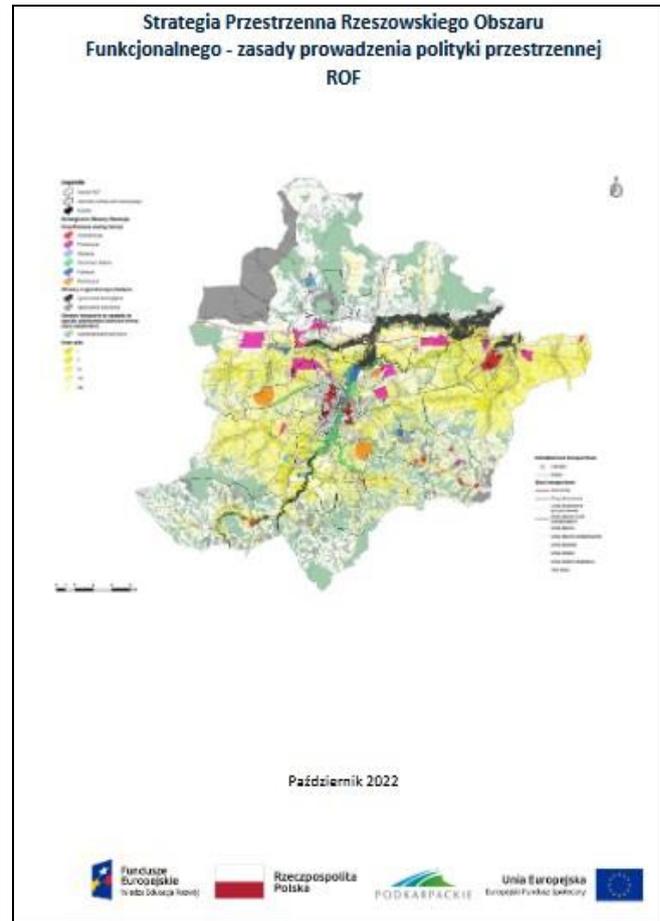
5.2. Integrated management of spatial planning processes in the MOF, including the Spatial Strategy of the ROF as a tool for integrated spatial planning.

Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area - Principles of Spatial Policy of ROF was adopted by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Board by way of Resolution No. 463/9600/23 on 20 February 2023.

Spatial Strategy of ROF is a document which aims to create a common vision of spatial development for municipalities forming ROF.

The guiding principle behind the ROF SP is that a well-planned agglomeration space translates into a higher quality of life for residents, which contributes to attracting capable people and investment. Good planning brings many benefits, such as better access to public services (education, health, public transportation), reduces the cost of operating municipalities (lower costs of building and maintaining rationally planned infrastructure), improves the quality of life (better environmental quality, shorter commuting times, easier access to recreational areas). A high quality of life helps retain creative and highly educated people in the agglomeration area and attract people who are free to choose between locations that offer "basic" goods, i.e. jobs, basic infrastructure, housing. These are usually people with high education, potential and income, i.e. those who bring in the most revenue for the municipalities and who are important for attracting quality investments. ROF municipalities see sustainable spatial management as a way to build their competitive advantage over other centres of similar scale.

The ROF SP offers guidelines and guidance to the municipalities of the agglomeration, which can help local governments develop space in a more sustainable and coordinated manner.



The data and analytical material contained in this document represents the most extensive and accurate collection of spatial data on the ROF area. It was created to be used as an input to municipal planning documents, as well as a resource for stakeholders to determine the directions of development of the ROF and individual municipalities, and to stimulate discourse about space in the agglomeration. The ROF SP is a non-statutory document, which allows for flexible shaping of its content and focusing on aspects that unite ROF municipalities, thanks to which cooperation in the spatial aspect will be strengthened in the medium and long term. Creating a common vision of spatial development for the entire agglomeration is a pioneering approach on a Polish scale. The Leader and Partners, with the support of WB experts, made the first attempts to jointly define the space in the agglomeration and decided to provide the cooperation with a solid foundation based on the ROF SP.

➡ **SP ROF consists of four main parts:**

- 1/ diagnosis of selected elements affecting spatial planning and development in the agglomeration, including: ecophysiological conditions, selected socio-economic indicators, development of built-up areas, real estate market, state of infrastructure development;
- 2/ analysis of the applicable planning documents of the municipalities constituting the ROF. Based on this analysis, the ROF SP presents conclusions for the main types of land functions in the ROF;
- 3/ indication of directions of activities aimed at sustainable spatial development, which include: recommendations regarding Strategic Development Areas (SOR), i.e. areas recognized as key to the development of the agglomeration;
- 4/ recommendations regarding the ROF SP implementation system and its monitoring and evaluation.

➡ As part of the work on the ROF SP, World Bank experts developed the Project Analytical Framework (RAP), which defined the directions of analytical work and the "path" for developing a long and short list of SOR. RAP is a standard of multi-factor analysis developed as part of the Project, which allows in a synthetic way to determine the development potential of individual plots. This potential is analyzed through the prism of the functions that individual plots can assume, e.g. residential/mixed, production and logistics, commercial, etc.

This analysis uses a specified number of factors (usually no more than ten), including:

- access to the communication network;
- distance from the station and railway stop; distance from the bus stop;
- size and shape index of the plot;

- distance from the education facility;
- accessibility to public facilities (education, health care);
- access to utilities (electricity, water, sewage, gas);
- proximity to areas with high concentration of economic activity;
- proximity to blue-green corridors;
- proximity to large protected areas;
- proximity to key transport, sports and business hubs (airport, main railway and bus stations, large stadiums);
- various factors limiting e.g. flood risk; areas of landslides or steep slopes;
- high quality of agricultural land.⁴⁰

The main assumption of using the criteria is to direct the ROF onto a path of more sustainable development. Therefore, it is necessary to link the analysis in this area with an additional factor.

☞ It was assumed that the decisive factor should be: the availability of the analyzed property to stable, reliable and independent public transport, and not relying on individualized transport (cars). Currently, the fulfillment of such conditions in the ROF is only ensured by the availability of rail transport within the network of the Podkarpacka Agglomeration Railway (existing and planned, including the planned railway connection with the Central Port Communication). This is because public transport largely takes place by bus on roads used by passenger cars (except for some lines on in the city of Rzeszów, the so-called bus lanes). This causes traffic problems, especially during rush hours, which affects both passenger cars and buses and reduces the incentive to choose public road transport.

Generally, the criteria for analyzing the potential of plots for development, described in the RAP, aim to:

- concentrating residential development around urbanization centers in the ROF and promoting the location with good access to public transport and public services;
- exclusion from the possibility of development of plots with high-quality soil (classes I-III) - taking into account agricultural needs of the country and society.

☞ The types of development for which land suitability analysis was performed included:

1. Industrial, logistic and warehousing activities;
2. Commercial and service areas;
3. Office buildings and office activities;
4. Residential / mixed development.

The analysis of the plots' potential covered a wide range of activities that could be broadly divided into three separate stages:

1. Calculate each parameter and determine the result associated with it;
2. Calculation of the final result (suitability) based on weights and determination of suitability classes;
3. Exclusion from the analysis of plots that are unsuitable due to the current use of the area:
 - areas with a purpose that is not the subject of the analysis - basically, these are water, land built-up buildings (residential, industrial, service), infrastructure elements, roads and lines railway;
 - areas requiring protection - a category that includes: protected areas, forests, green areas, parks and recreational areas.

☞ Three key recommendations for more sustainable spatial development of the ROF are:

1. Design and implementation of the blue-green corridor concept along the Wisłok River,
2. Including identified SORs in municipal planning documents and taking action actions to implement them,
3. Further strengthening of cooperation in the context of spatial planning of the Regional Development Fund.

An innovative element of SP ROF is the designation of Strategic Development Areas (SOR), i.e. areas whose development is considered important for the entire ROF and not only for individual communes. For SORs to become development priorities from the agglomeration's point of view, they must be reflected in the planning and strategic documents of ROF communes.

Data from municipalities regarding the proposed strategic areas were obtained and then verified in several stages through individual and group meetings and through exchange of correspondence.

Multivariate analyzes were carried out for the entire ROF at the plot level based on computer processing of large amounts of data in GIS software. This helped to determine the development potential of

⁴⁰ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area - assumptions of spatial policy of the ROF, p.14

individual plots, which resulted in the proposal of individual functions. The above functions of the areas include:

1. Production and service activities.
2. Residential and mixed development.
3. Commercial, service and office development.

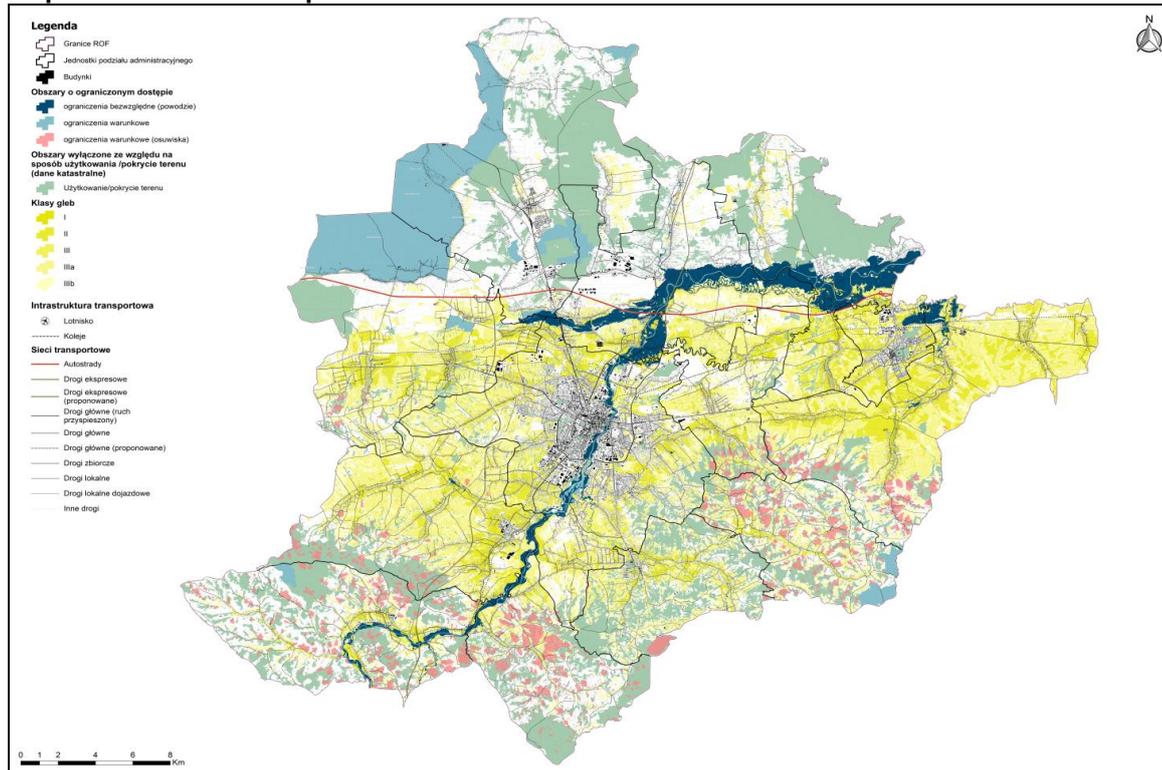
For the **production and service function**, access to road and technical infrastructure, as well as the size of the plot, have become key factors. The distance from the center of the urban center and the airport was also important. Following the demands of the ROF communes, consideration was also given to including a criterion related to the accessibility of the area to the railway infrastructure. However, due to difficulties with its construction, the raised criterion was not taken into account. The production and service function was analyzed in terms of use on large plots of regular shape, near main roads, with good access to technical infrastructure and close to larger population centers. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the plots with the highest potential are scattered in different parts of the ROF and there are not many of them. Plots with high potential are adjacent to main roads, which is due to the promotion of areas with good transport and access to technical infrastructure. Their significant concentration is visible around the city of Łańcut and in the Łańcut commune, as well as along the railway line in Świlcza and the road connecting Rzeszów, Krasne and the city of Łańcut. Tyczyn and Boguchwała also stand out in the analysis results. After taking into account the quality of the soil, in the analysis of the production and service function, urban areas and areas north of the A4 motorway stand out.

For **residential and mixed functions**, the exclusion of the soil quality criterion means that all plots in almost the entire ROF located near roads achieve high values. However, taking into account the conditions resulting from the high-quality soil, it turns out that most of the plots south of the A4 motorway and north of the more mountainous areas belonging to the Czudec and Lubenia communes are excluded from development. Another version of the criterion related to the exclusion of soil quality in the vicinity of railway stations shows the possibility of locating buildings in areas within a radius of 1000 m from existing and planned railway stations and stops. The greatest beneficiaries of this approach would be the communes of Boguchwała, Czudec, Trzebownisko, Głogów Małopolski, Świlcza, Krasne and Łańcut. This variant emphasizes the importance of railway infrastructure, including the Agglomeration Suburban Railway as low-emission public transport.

Separate analyzes were carried out for the **trade and service function**, which took various parameters into account. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the areas for commercial and commercial functions are correlated with public transport, larger urbanization centers and road infrastructure. Proximity to the station and railway or bus stops as well as the central location ensure large flows of people, and therefore potential customers for commercial services. The office function is focused on proximity to the urban center, communication accessibility and density of business activities. The nearest center is defined as 2 km from the central point. Transport accessibility is defined by proximity to various types of roads, airport, railway stations and bus stops. The density of business activities was calculated on the basis of a specially created polygon grid for the entire ROF with a field area of 100 ha. High density is defined as more than 100 companies within such a field. The size of the plot and the proximity to main public transport stations were also included in the analysis of functions. The commercial function, without taking soil into account, prioritizes plots along roads throughout the ROF. However, taking into account the soil class quality criterion, it is noted that potential development is concentrated around five ROF cities and areas in the north and south of the ROF, where the soil quality is lower.

The forms of development restrictions in the ROF divided into groups are presented on the map below.

Map 3. Forms of development restrictions in the ROF

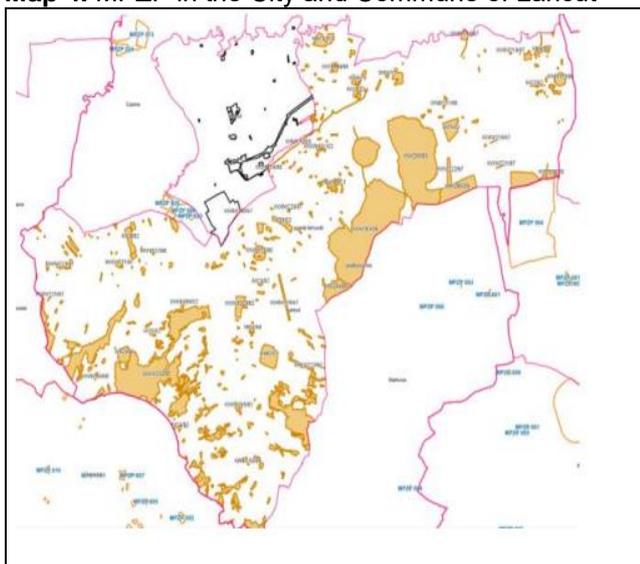
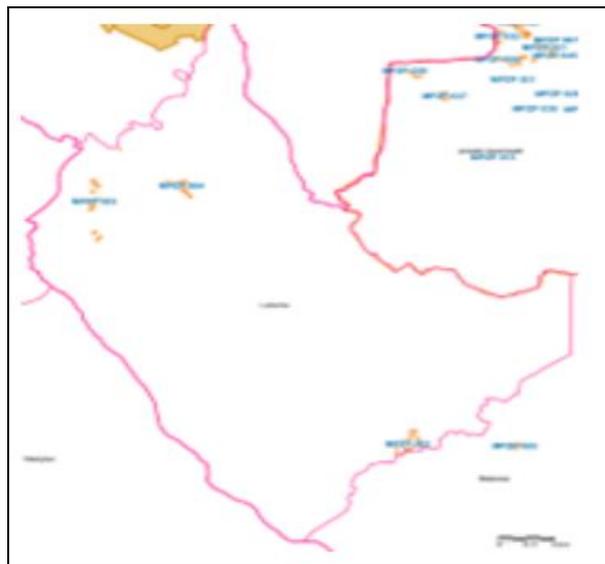


Source: *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area*, p. 40

SP ROF contains an up-to-date analysis of the planning situation in ROF communes. It varies, although generally local development plans cover a small part of the ROF. There are a total of 707 of them for the entire ROF, with a total area of 8,570 ha. There are 112 local development plans in the projects, including 63 of them that have been developed for more than 3 years.⁴¹ The total area of the MPZP projects is 6,512 ha. The average plan coverage for ROF is 8%.

The commune of Łańcut has the most MPZPs - 219 and the City of Rzeszów - 212. In the case of Rzeszów, MPZPs cover over 20% of the area, and the average size of the plan is 10 ha. The next municipalities in terms of the number of applicable local development plans have much fewer of them. For example, Świlcza – 85, Tyczyn – 41, Głogów Młp. - 36, Trzebownisko - 28. The fewest municipalities have MZPZ: Lubenia - 4, Chmielnik - 7 and Krasne – 10. Seven ROF communes have plans covering less than 5% of their area.

⁴¹ *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area*, p.90

Map 4. MPZP in the City and Commune of Łańcut**Map 5. MPZP in the Lubenia Commune**

Source: *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area*, p. 91-92

The dynamics of changes in the area covered by new plans in the commune is very low. In most communes, changes in this area over the last decade have not exceeded 3%. Only the Łańcut commune increased its area coverage by an additional 8%. In the entire ROF, over 11 years, new plans covered an additional 3% of the area (almost 3,500 ha). At this rate of adopting new local plans, it would take approximately 135 years to cover half of the ROF area with plans.⁴²

The lack of current SUIKZP and low local development plan coverage favor unbalanced spatial development based on decisions on development conditions (DWZ). Investments made on the basis of the DWZ do not have to be consistent with the study, and therefore may violate the commune's spatial policy expressed in this planning document. Such situations occur frequently and are a typical phenomenon in Poland, causing spatial chaos. The issue of issued DWZs may be one of the determinants of investment pressure on land. On the ROF scale, an average of 2.7 thousand have been issued in the last decade. DWZ per year, of which 70-80% these are decisions for single-family houses. In total, Rzeszów accounts for almost every third of these DWZs (average approx. 800 per year). The rest of the municipalities spend on average between 100 and 350 DWZ. The number of issued DWZs in the case of ROF communes is quite stable, despite annual fluctuations, which may suggest that the investment pressure on the ROF scale does not change radically.

This is, among other things, because not every issued DWZ must result in the implementation of an investment. In fact, the ratio of the number of newly completed apartments to the issued DWZ for single-family houses is around 50% annually. Some plot owners apply for a DWZ in order to increase the value of the plot for potential sale and have no intention of implementing such an investment.⁴³

The analysis of the applicable SUIKZP and Local Development Plans in the ROF communes did not reveal significant spatial conflicts (functions) in the border areas of individual communes (at the junction of communes).

The first area in which, depending on the intensity or type of development related The city of Łańcut meets with economic activation which may potentially lead to conflict situations with the Czarna commune in the area of national road No. 94, where residential development areas are planned on the city side, and production and service areas on the commune side, with no buffer zone in the immediate vicinity. In order to reduce the effects of a possible functional and spatial conflict, it is suggested that in

⁴² *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area*, p.90

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.93

the case of preparing new local plans for these areas, both the city and the commune should plan a service function or a greenery function, which will constitute a buffer or isolation zone.



Case study of the Blue-Green Corridor (based on ROF SP)

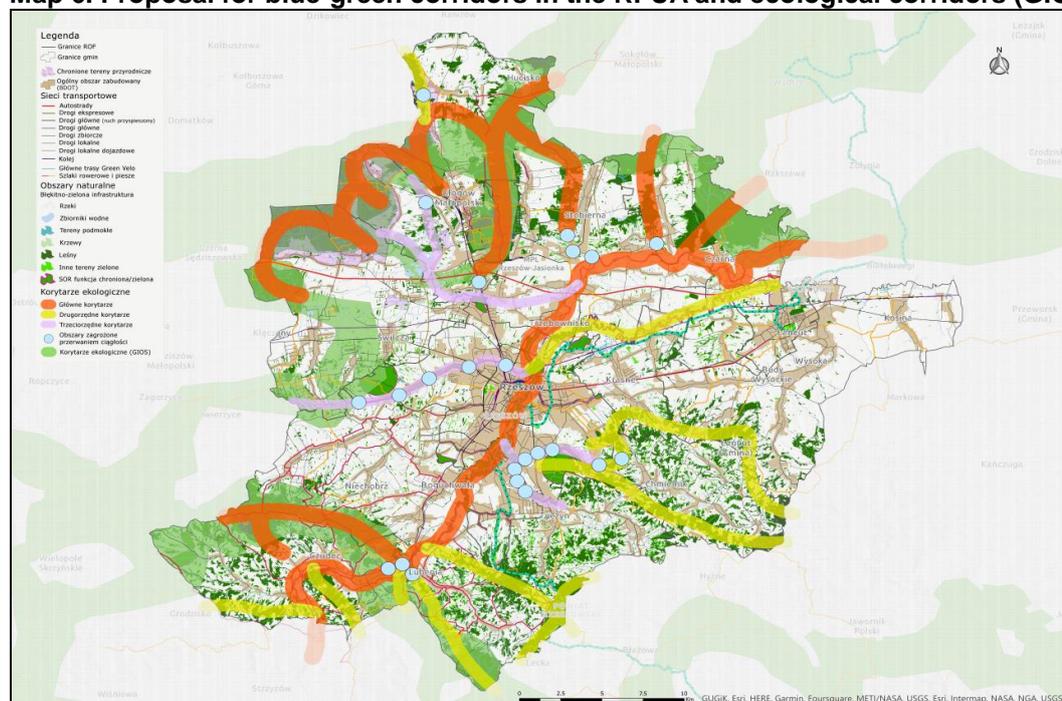
SP ROF considers the Blue-Green Corridor concept to be one of its priorities. It is a continuous strip of green areas located on both banks of the Wisłok River. The concept combines protective, recreational and transport functions (bicycle and pedestrian route). It can also act as an ecological corridor, providing important ecosystem services for the agglomeration.

It is a response to the recently criticized tendency to "concrete" the Wisłok valley.

This is clearly visible in Rzeszów, and it is there that a plan was born to actively protect riverside areas against development by adopting protection plans.

The concept of the Blue-Green Corridor along the Wisłok River is, based on the recommendations contained in the SP ROF, extended to other areas recognized as SORs with a protected/green function. These are in particular areas that create conditions for the protection and development of green areas along rivers and streams and in existing forest complexes. In the case of green areas, this also applies to large, dense forest complexes in the northern and southern parts of the ROF. The analysis of the existing state shows great potential for creating such a network of blue-green corridors, especially in combination with the SOR with a green (protected) and recreational function. Wisłok and large forest complexes form the core of the network of blue-green corridors in the ROF. Map 6 below shows the proposed blue-green corridors.

Map 6. Proposal for blue-green corridors in the RFUA and ecological corridors (GIOS)



Source: *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area*, p. 112

A further step in the use of blue-green corridors will be the designation of pedestrian and bicycle connections. Thanks to them, it will be possible to implement a recreational function. However, equally the issues of nature conservation and recreation require detailed analysis. However, in such a dense network of blue-green corridors, the number of north-south connections is still very limited and is limited only to the Wisłok Valley. Increasing ecological connections in this direction may be a further direction of cooperation between municipalities within the ROF.

5.3. Linking the ROF SP with higher-level strategic and planning documents

The substantive basis of the ROF SP aimed at directing the spatial development of the agglomeration in accordance with the principles of sustainable development can be considered:

1/ Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020 (with an outlook until 2030), which.

recognizes as one of the directions of intervention: "Creating conditions for further development of a competitive economy in Eastern Poland and other economically weaker areas." This provision indicates and unambiguous confirmation of support for further development of the ROF. At the same time, the diagnosis of this document recognizes suburbanization and the associated uncontrolled spread of development as one of the significant problems of the MOF.

 "Intense transformation of space associated with progressive suburbanization, especially around large cities, has revealed the lack of proper development management in functional areas (beyond the administrative boundaries of individual TSUs), significantly hampering the efficient functioning of these areas. The lack of coordination and direct reference of them to space translates into inefficiency of public intervention and problems in protecting the public interest."⁴⁴

The above Strategy recognizes as one of its priority goals "creating conditions for sustainable development of urban centres, developing mechanisms for cooperation in their functional areas, strengthening their capacity to create jobs and improving the quality of life of their residents."

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to improve the MOF's ability to promote sustainable development, among other things. By countering the negative phenomena of suburbanization. In the above context, there is great consistency between the Strategy for Responsible Development and the ROF SP.

2/ The National Strategy for Regional Development 2030 (NSRD), which also identifies as a challenge for regional policy the need to counteract uncontrolled suburbanisation in the context of both sustainable urban and rural development. Among its objectives, the CRSR assumes: "To limit suburbanisation and improve spatial order in areas with dispersed development and to counteract the deconcentration of settlements burdening municipal budgets with the need to incur ever higher expenses for the operation of roads, sewerage, water supply and the provision of other public services".

The NSS therefore calls for specific measures to structure development in peri-urban zones and in this sense is complementary to the ROF SP.⁴⁵

In the field of regional policy, the SOR is made more detailed in the next edition of the NSRD, which also indicates as a challenge for regional policy the need to counteract uncontrolled suburbanization both in the context of sustainable development of cities and rural areas. In particular, the NSRD identifies a whole range of problems, from economic to social caused by this phenomenon. "The dispersion of development and the occupation of green fields [i.e. previously existing areas undeveloped / uninvested] excludes part of the land, including about 10-15% already developed, from use. There are major problems with access to public services, e.g. effective organization public transport and adapting it to the needs of residents in terms of such conditions such as: range, frequency of services, fees and ticket tariffs, organizational difficulties at the borders various local governments. They bear a large part of the costs of uncontrolled development development also residents, e.g. due to increased costs of living in monofunctional suburban districts, extension of travel time and routes, the need for use by individual households from more than one car. There is a decline in quality of life as a result of limited access to public services (e.g. education, health care, culture), as well as to ecosystem services, provided by ecosystems subjected to increasing pressure or deterioration of environmental quality e.g. through noise and air pollution.

3/ The National Urban Policy 2030 (NPM), which identifies as the two most important challenges, from the point of view of sustainable development, indicates: "Caring for spatial and aesthetic order" and "Bridging the processes of chaotic suburbanisation". The NPM therefore provides another 'anchor' for the ROF SP.

4/ Spatial Development Plan of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship - Perspective 2030 (SDPPV). The SDPPV assumes, among other things, that "the sprawl of buildings and uncontrolled suburbanization will be stopped, resulting in the degradation of the region's cultural landscape and urban chaos

and loss of naturally valuable areas. Actions aimed at restoring spatial order will be implemented. In this sense, SP ROF is an attempt - within the current legal framework - to translate the intentions of SDPPV - 2030 into more specific content, recommendations and recommendations.

The ROF SP consists of four main parts:

⁴⁴ Strategy for Responsible Growth to 2020 (2030), p. 229

⁴⁵ The National Strategy for Regional Development 2030, p.12

1/ diagnosis of selected elements influencing planning and spatial development in the agglomeration, including: ecophysiological conditions, selected socio-economic indicators, development of built-up areas, real estate market, state of infrastructure development;

2/ analysis of the existing planning documents of the municipalities forming the ROF. On the basis of this analysis, the ROF SP presents conclusions for the main types of land functions in the ROF;

3/ indication of directions of actions oriented towards sustainable spatial development, which include recommendations concerning the **Strategic Areas of Development (SOR)**, i.e. areas identified as key for the development of the agglomeration;

4/ recommendations, concerning the system of implementation of the ROF SP and its monitoring and evaluation.

As part of the work on the SP ROW, the WB experts, in consultation with the Project Leader and Partners, developed the **Project Analytical Framework (RAP)**, which defined the directions of the analytical work and the 'pathway' for the development of the long and shortlisted SORs. The RAP provides the standard of multi-factor analysis developed by the Project, which synthesises the development potential of individual plots. This potential is analysed through the prism of the functions that individual parcels can take on, e.g. residential/mixed-use, manufacturing/logistics, commercial, etc.

As part of this analysis, a certain number of factors (usually no more than ten) are used, including:

- access to the transport network;
- distance from station and train stop; distance from bus stop;
- size and shape index of the plot;
- distance to education facilities;
- accessibility to public facilities (education, health care);
- Access to utilities (electricity, water, sewage, gas);
- proximity to areas with a high concentration of economic activity;
- proximity to blue-green corridors;
- proximity to large protected areas;
- proximity to key transport, sports and business hubs (airport, main train and bus stations, major stadiums);
- various limiting factors e.g. flood risk; areas of landslides or steep slopes;
- high quality of agricultural land.⁴⁶
- the exclusion from development of plots with high quality soil (classes I-III) - taking into account the agricultural needs of the country and of society

The types of development for which the site suitability analysis was carried out included:

1. industrial, logistics and warehousing activities;
2. retail and service areas;
3. office buildings and office activities;
4. residential/mixed-use development.

The analysis of the potential of the plots involved a wide range of activities, which can be broadly divided into three

distinct stages:

1. Calculation of each parameter and determination of the associated score;
2. calculating the final score (suitability) based on the weights and determining the classes of suitability;
3. Exclusion from the analysis of plots that are unsuitable due to current land use:
 - Areas with non-subjective uses - generally water, built-up areas (residential, industrial, commercial, infrastructure, roads and lines built-up areas (residential, industrial, commercial), infrastructure, roads and railways; and railway lines;
 - Areas in need of protection - a category that includes protected areas, forests, green areas, parks and recreational areas.

The three key recommendations for a more sustainable spatial development of the ROF are:

1. Design and implement the concept of a blue-green corridor along the Wisłok River,
2. taking into account the identified SORs in municipal planning documents and undertaking actions to implement them,
3. further strengthening of cooperation in the context of spatial planning in ROF

An innovative element of the ROF SP has been the designation of Strategic Development Areas (SORs), i.e. areas whose development is considered important for the whole ROF and not only for individual

⁴⁶ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area, p. 14

municipalities. In order for SORs to become development priorities from the point of view of the agglomeration, they must be reflected in the planning and strategic documents of the ROF municipalities. Data from the municipalities on the proposed strategic areas was obtained and then verified in several stages through individual meetings, group meetings and through an exchange of correspondence. Multivariate analyses were also carried out for the entire ROF at parcel level based on computer processing of large amounts of data in GIS software. This helped to identify the development potential of individual parcels of land, which translated into proposing individual functions. The above site functions include:

1. manufacturing and service activities.
2. residential and mixed use development.
3. retail and service and office development.

For the production and service function, access to road and technical infrastructure as well as plot size became key factors. Also important was the distance from the centre of the urban centre and from the airport. Following the postulates of the ROF communes, a criterion related to the accessibility of the area to the railway infrastructure was also considered. However, due to difficulties in its construction, the criterion raised was not taken into account. The production and services function was analysed in terms of its use on large plots of regular shape, next to main roads, with good access to technical infrastructure and in the vicinity of larger population centres. As a result of the analysis, it was determined, that plots with the highest potential are scattered in different parts of the ROF and there are not many of them.

Plots with high potential are adjacent to main roads, which is due to the promotion of areas with good transport and access to technical infrastructure. Their significant concentration can be seen around the city of Łańcut and in the Łańcut municipality, as well as along the railway line in Świlcza and the road connecting Rzeszów, Krasne and the city of Łańcut. Tyczyn and Boguchwała also stand out in the analysis results. After taking into account the quality of the soils, the urban areas and the areas north of the A4 motorway stand out in the analysis of the production and service function.

For the residential and mixed functions, the exclusion of the soil quality criterion, results in all plots in almost the entire ROF lying next to roads, reaching high values. On the other hand, taking into account the conditions resulting from the high soil class, it turns out that the majority of plots south of the A4 motorway and north of the more mountainous areas belonging to the Czudec and Lubenia municipalities become excluded from development. Another version of the criterion, related to the exclusion of soil quality in the vicinity of railway stations, shows the possibility of locating development in areas with a radius of 1000m from existing and planned railway stations and stops. The biggest beneficiaries of this approach would be the municipalities of Boguchwała, Czudec, Trzebownisko, Głogów Małopolski, Świlcza, Krasne and Łańcut. The importance of rail infrastructure, including the Suburban Agglomeration Railway as low-emission public transport, is emphasised in this option.

Separate analyses were carried out for the commercial and service function, which took into account different parameters. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the areas for the commercial and retail function correlate with public transport, major urbanisation centres and road infrastructure. Proximity to stations and railway stations or bus stops and the central location provide high population flows and therefore potential customers for commercial services. The office function is oriented towards proximity to the urban centre, transport accessibility and business density. The nearest centre is defined as 2 km from the focal point. Transport accessibility is defined by proximity to various roads, the airport, train stations and bus stops. Business density was calculated based on a specially created polygon grid for the entire ROF with a field size of 100ha. High density is defined as more than 100 businesses in the area of such a field. Plot size and close proximity to major public transport stations were also included in the function analysis. The commercial function without considering soils prioritises plots along roads throughout the ROF. On the other hand, taking into account the soil class quality criterion, one notices a concentration of potential development around the five ROF cities and areas to the north and south of the ROF where soil quality is lower.

5.4. A model of spatial planning developed as part of the development of the ROF Spatial Strategy

As indicated in the previous chapter, the ROF Spatial Strategy is not a document within the meaning of the Act on the principles of development policy or the Act on spatial planning and development. Therefore, the ROF Spatial Strategy does not fit into the system of strategic documents indicated in Art. 9 of the Act on the principles of development policy. It also does not constitute an act of spatial planning, the closed catalog of which is specified in Art. 2 point 22 of the amended Act on spatial planning and

development. In order to implement the assumptions of the Spatial Strategy, it is necessary to transfer its provisions to strategic documents and spatial planning acts specified in the above legal acts.

As indicated by the authors of the SP ROF, the three key results of the process of its development are:

1. Developing a concept of more sustainable spatial development of the ROF based on data and spatial analyzes and development visions of municipalities,
2. Agreement on Strategic Development Areas for the agglomeration,
3. Strengthening cooperation within the ROF.

Taking into account the developed model of integrated spatial planning, point 2 regarding Strategic Development Areas deserves special attention.

Due to the supra-local nature of the Strategy, the focus was on SOR, i.e. those areas that are key from the point of view of the entire ROF. At the current level of cooperation, taking into account the various interests of municipalities, it would be extremely difficult to indicate such planning solutions for other areas of the ROF, or its entirety, that would be accepted by all partners and at the same time could be reflected in the planning documents of individual municipalities. Not only the final effect in the form of designated SORs, but also the process of identifying and selecting them should be considered an innovative solution worth repeating.

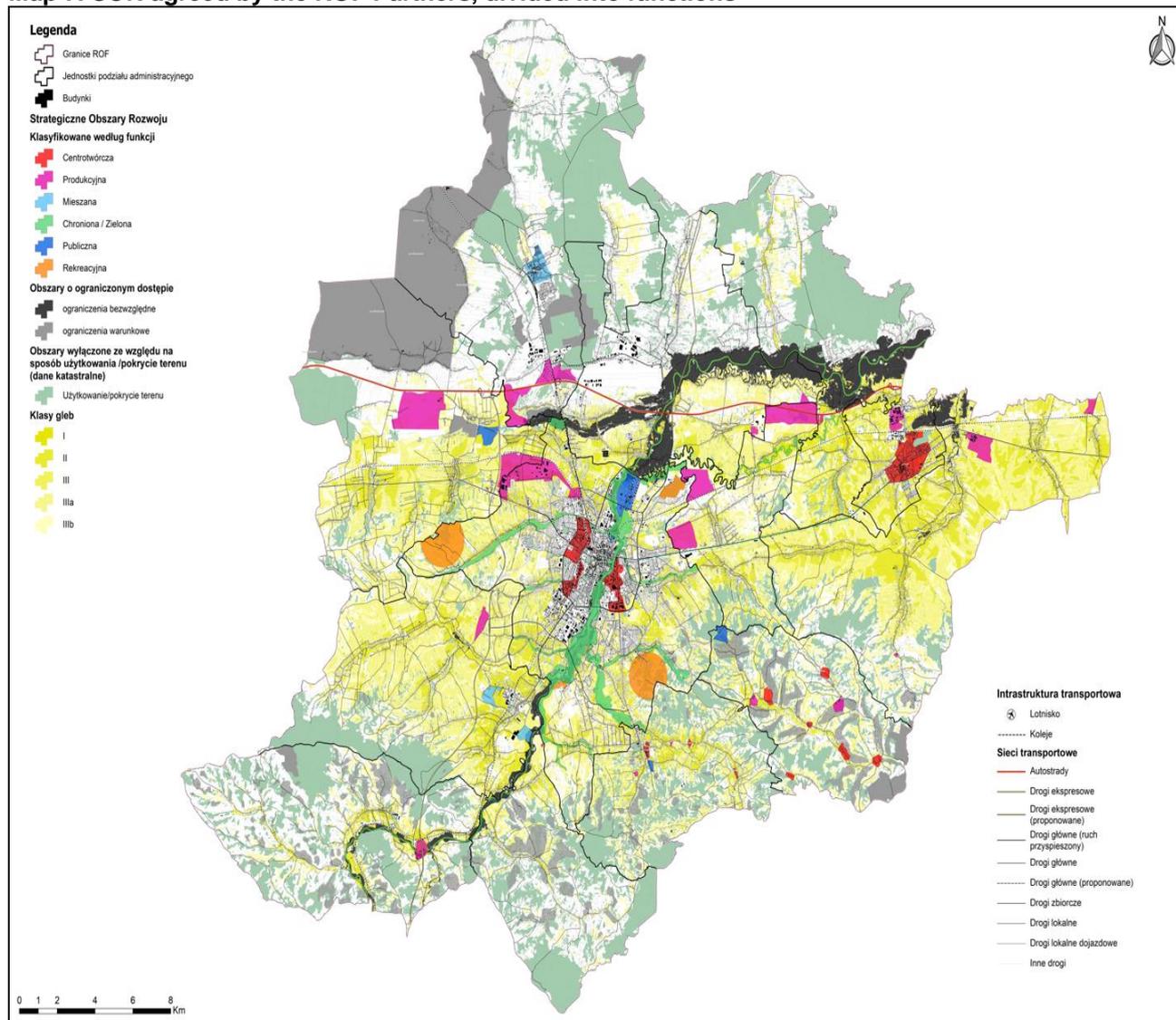
It is worth emphasizing that proposals for such areas were submitted by individual communes, and not by experts responsible for developing the Strategy document. The communes proposed a preliminary list of areas consistent with their knowledge and assumed development vision. Their further selection took the form of multiple group meetings, workshops and individual meetings moderated by a team of World Bank experts.

As part of their support, experts used the results of previous very detailed analyzes of the entire ROF area, including analyzes using GIS software carried out at the level of individual plots, which were aimed at determining their development potential. Thanks to this process, from the initial long list of SORs (118 areas), the ROF partners selected a half-shorter list of strategic areas and indicated their functions. Areas with the following functions have been identified:

- production and service,
- center-forming,
- protective/green,
- tourist (recreational),
- public
- mixed.

SOR divided into functions, along with excluded areas, agreed upon during the work of the Expert Team is presented in Map 7 below.

Map 7. SOR agreed by the ROF Partners, divided into functions



Source: *Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final Report, p. 163*

In the context of the above recommendations (points 1, 2), attention should be paid to the case of the city of Rzeszów. Work on the ROF Spatial Strategy coincided with the development of a new Study of the conditions and directions of spatial development of the city of Rzeszów by the Rzeszów City Development Office. Work on the Study has been carried out since May 2020. The document was adopted on September 26, 2023 by resolution No. LXXXV/1890/2023 of the Rzeszów City Council. The work carried out in parallel allowed for the inclusion in the project of the Study of the center-forming and protective/green functions proposed in the SOR Strategy in the form of the Wisłok River Valley. Proposals for these areas to be included in the Strategy at the stage of identification and selection of the SOR were submitted by the project team of the Rzeszów City Development Office working on the Study project.

The SOR with a center-forming function corresponds to the areas for transformation indicated in the Study, which, due to their location in the central part of the city, require changing the existing functions that negatively affect the image of the city and are burdensome for the environment, which are mainly represented by wholesalers, warehouses and production plants. Due to their location, these areas are characterized by large center-forming potential. They have conditions for creating an attractive investment offer - the location of various modern service functions: office, banking, cultural, IT, promotional, business-related, research, etc. Combined with the residential function, supplemented with high-quality public spaces (greenery, pedestrian routes, public squares), they are to constitute orderly, multifunctional development complexes of high urban and architectural quality.

In the Study, the Wisłok Valley is one of the areas of public spaces through which, in accordance with Art. 2 point 6 of the Act on Spatial Planning and Development should be understood as "an area of particular importance for meeting the needs of residents, improving the quality of their life and conducive to establishing social contacts due to its location and functional and spatial features." Pursuant to Art. 10 section 2 point 8 for public space areas there is an obligation to develop a local spatial development plan. Moreover, as part of the "Residents and social infrastructure" sectoral policy study included in the action direction "Shaping a network of high-quality public spaces", a number of activities related to the development of areas located on the Wisłok River, constituting the green axis of the city, were indicated. The Act of July 7, 2023 amending the Act on Spatial Planning and Development and certain other acts removed the study of conditions and directions of spatial development from the system of planning acts. After the changes, the basis for conducting spatial policy in the commune will be the commune's development strategy or the supra-local development strategy and the commune's general plan. The scope and nature of these documents allow for the implementation of the indicated SORs along with the conclusions formulated for them.

Particular attention should be paid to the possibility of treating SORs as areas of strategic intervention, optionally indicated in commune and supra-local development strategies. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Indication of new directions in the spatial planning policy of functional areas. Summary of SOR issues:

- 1) Both the selection process itself and the final effect in the form of selected strategic development areas constitute an important value of the project and a solution that can be replicated in other urban functional areas.
- 2) The described selection process itself allows you to compare the development priorities of various partners, confronting them with the development policy of neighbors as well as expert knowledge and experience.
- 3) SOR selection may be carried out in terms of carrying out specific planning work or developing a strategic document. It may also be an attempt to indicate development priorities on a supra-local scale, as a basis for formulating the scope of future cooperation.

The example of the Wisłok Valley as a key SOR for the entire agglomeration can be implemented in a similar way in other MOFs. The keystone of an area may be not only a river, but also another element of space, e.g. natural or infrastructural, common to a significant part or all of the functional area.

Common principles of spatial policy recommended by SP ROF

The recommendations and recommendations indicated by the World Bank seem to be important from the point of view of spatial planning and development. They are included in the following points.

1. Municipalities should follow the following approach when it comes to the sequence and substantive dimension of spatial planning activities:

- target coverage of all areas where development is possible with local plans ensuring the maintenance or development of spatial order as a result of their implementation,
- adopting, first of all, planning documents of the rank of local law (currently local development plans, in the future potentially general plans) of a protective nature (especially for green or agricultural areas) where the development of buildings is not desirable from the point of view of the principles of sustainable development,
- adopting local plans without undue delay in areas of expected or ongoing development,
- the adoption of local plans providing for development should be preceded by a thorough analysis of the development status and use of other areas of similar purpose within the settlement unit, as well as in the area of the entire ROF,
- as far as possible, concentrating new development along low-emission transport corridors,
- adopting local plans ensuring sustainable development of the area, including organizing the spatial structure (including by imposing the obligation to reparcel) where development has been chaotic, dispersed, devoid of necessary accompanying functions or not taking into account environmental conditions and needs,
- including in the adopted or updated planning acts content that will create conditions for an effective response to the challenges related to the climate crisis (climate change, striving for energy neutrality, environmental pollution, saving available resources), in particular:
 - determining urban parameters and indicators (biologically active area, development intensity, parking indicators) so that they support sustainable development and spatial order;
 - including solutions for sustainable mobility;
 - taking into account the needs of an active climate policy (including in the field of green and blue infrastructure, renewable energy, small and micro retention, heating and sewage disposal

systems, creating conditions for shading, correcting the spatial structure in terms of shaping a polycentric settlement system).

2. In order to ensure that the development of land will not have a negative impact on spatial order and sustainable development, municipalities should follow the following approach:

- ensure that development in the areas of applicable local plans will take place only after re-parcelling in order to adapt to the spatial structure planned in the local plan,
- in the case of areas of expected or developing intensive development, for which local plans ensuring development in accordance with the principles of spatial order have not yet been adopted, stop the development by possible means (suspending proceedings for the issuance of a decision on development conditions (wz), refusing or postponing the issuance of a decision on development conditions (wz), active and meticulous actions of public authorities (including municipalities) and municipal network and media administrators, including in making arrangements),
- conduct active real estate management supporting rational space management, including: create a resource of municipal real estate intended for development purposes, including housing construction,
- conduct a consistent investment policy consistent with the adopted spatial planning acts, especially in the field of municipal technical and social infrastructure, consisting in providing this infrastructure in areas where new development is desired and expected and refraining from implementing additional infrastructure in areas where development should be avoided (which may, for example, involve the municipality defining and announcing areas where only new infrastructure will be built),
- prevent investments that unjustifiably increase the extent of impervious surfaces or lead to irrational/unnecessary felling of trees.

In order to contribute to ensuring that the development of land does not have a negative impact on spatial order and sustainable development, when issuing building permits, counties should take a more rigorous approach to verifying the fulfillment of the conditions set out in the zoning decision (and first cooperate with municipalities to determine what kind of conditions may

and should be included in the wz decision to fully ensure the implementation of the SP ROF objectives).

It is desirable that investors undertaking investments in areas where detailed local plans ensuring the preservation, development or restoration of spatial order are not yet in force, refrain from investment activities that violate spatial order and the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, we should strive to influence their investment awareness using "soft" methods and through dialogue with the local community, local government officials and experts.

5.5. Expert Team as a key element of the Model

As we have highlighted several times in this publication, the Expert Team (ZE) is a fundamental, perhaps the most important, element of the Integrated Spatial Planning Model and of ensuring the sustainability of the project and its results as a prerequisite for the implementation of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF (SP ROF). An important value developed during the project is the strengthening of cooperation between municipalities. The development of contacts, exchange of experiences, and the possibility to discuss a given problem together is, in the opinion of project participants, one of its greatest values. The Expert Team, which has held more than 40 meetings since work on the project began, plays a special role in this respect.

➡ Composition of ZE:

The ZE consists of representatives of: the Project Leader and the Partners - 13 municipalities forming the ROF and the ROF Association itself. During the project implementation period, this is a total of 27 people.

The Team may additionally include experts e.g. in the field of spatial planning, urban planning, architecture, communication, history of art and environmental protection etc.

The scope of activities of the Team has been defined in the application for co-financing and in the Team Regulations.

The solution adopted in the project refers to analogous processes developed, inter alia, in the Poznań Metropolis Association.

➡ Practical tasks of the ZE:

- issuing opinions on documents of ROF Association Municipalities concerning spatial development,
- consulting on the development of ROF SP,
- coordinating spatial planning in the area of ROF,
- expressing a position, opinion on draft suiamzap and mpzp for compliance with the provisions of the SP ROF,

- performing advisory functions to the ROF Communes,
- preparing an annual report on the activities of the ZE,
- carrying out mid-term reviews and updates of the ROF SP,
- promoting and incorporating the model into spatial planning practice during the project implementation and sustainability period,
- cooperation with the Project Management Team (ZZP).

➤ **Membership of the Expert Team:**

- 1) Appointment by resolution of the Board of the ROF Association, from among the persons indicated by the Project Leader and Partners;
- 2) Dismissal of the ZE members takes place by amending the resolution of the Board of the ROF Association after an appropriate application is submitted by the entity that indicated the dismissed Member. Together with the request for dismissal, the submitting entity indicates a new candidate for the ZE member;
- 3) ZE members are appointed for an indefinite period of time. Membership of the ZE shall cease as a result of:
 - death;
 - written resignation of the ZE member, after dismissal by the Board of the Association ROF;
 - dismissal by the Board of the Association of the ROF;
- 4) From among the ZE members, the ROF Association Board appoints the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Team. The Team Chairman manages the Team's work, drafts its positions and opinions, represents the Team externally and signs its opinions and other documents. The Team Vice-Chairperson replaces the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence or incapacity;
- 5) the composition of the Team may be additionally (for a specified period of time) supplemented by external experts, e.g. from the fields of spatial planning, urban planning, architecture, communication, history of art and environmental protection, etc.

➤ **Meetings of the Team of Experts (ZE 1):**

- 1) Meetings of the Expert Group are convened by the Director of the Office of the Association of the ROF or the Chairman of the Group, at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting, at the same time transmitting to the members of the Expert Group, by electronic means, the materials to which the agenda of the meeting pertains;
- 2) The agenda for the Expert Team's meeting shall be determined by the Chairperson or his/her Deputy. Notification of the date and agenda of the Expert Panel meeting may be made in writing or by e-mail;
- 3) Meetings of the Team of Experts are held through meetings chaired and closed by the Chairman (46 meetings were planned in the project, i.e. an average of 1/month, and so many meetings were held, the vast majority of them remotely due to the epidemic situation in the country);
- 4) ZE meetings are not public. The proceedings of the meetings are confidential;
- 5) The minutes, positions and opinions of the Expert Panel are public and subject to public access under the rules on access to public information.
- 6) The Expert Panel shall express its opinion by open voting by a simple majority of the Expert Panel members present at the meeting. In the event of an equal number of votes, the Chairman's vote shall be decisive;
- 7) In the event that a member of the ZE is at the same time a member of the team of authors of the study under consideration, he/she shall be excluded from the part of the meeting concerning the study under consideration and shall not participate in the voting in this respect;

➤ **Decision-making procedure in the Expert Group:**

- 1) The Project Partner asks the ZE to give its opinion on the local draft planning act (suikzp or mpzp) in terms of its compliance with the provisions of the ROF SP. During the meeting the ZE discusses the assumptions of the draft planning act and the draft position or opinion of the ZE;
- 2) After the ZE agrees on the final content of the position or opinion, separate for each study, they are adopted by voting;
- 3) The members of the ZE expressing a different opinion may draw up their own comments, which shall be attached to the position or opinion of the Team;
- 4) Only members of the ZE who took part in the vote are entitled to express a dissenting opinion
- 5) Failure to present an opinion by the ZE is tantamount to acceptance of the draft planning act without comments and does not stop the procedure for its preparation;
- 6) In the case of the submission of planning studies that do not require a formal opinion by law (variant concepts), the discussion concerning them shall be summarised in the form of a written position of the ZE;

- 7) If a request is submitted to the ZE to take a position on the variant concepts of the local development plan:
- discusses at the meeting the variant solutions of the concepts of the draft local spatial development plan,
 - recommends the urban planning solutions presented in the variant concepts of the draft local spatial development plan, the recommendations in the form of the standpoint are adopted by the Team by voting;

➔ **The current and potential nature of ZE's involvement:**

The ZE currently functioning within the project focuses on agreeing and issuing opinions on the draft local plans and adopted studies of spatial development conditions and directions of the municipalities, as well as on their amendments, in the context of their compliance with the ROF SP.

Following the change of the planning system, it seems to be a natural consequence to extend the Team's activity not only to municipal general plans, but also to municipal development strategies as documents creating their spatial policy. At this point it is worth emphasising that the ROF Association is currently working on a new ZIT ROF Strategy, which is at the same time supposed to be a supra-local development strategy within the meaning of the Act on the Principles of Development Policy.

The scope of the supralocal development strategy is analogous to the scope of the municipal development strategy. In the case of both these documents, which currently integrate the sphere of spatial and socio-economic planning, the spatial component plays a very important role.

Intensifying the activities of the Team and broadening the scope of its activities may in time become an impulse for potential changes in the ZE formula. One possibility is to transform the functioning Expert Team into a Planning Commission, which is one of the institutional solutions proposed in the ROF SP.

Once the project is completed, at least two options for the continuation of ZE can be considered.

➔ **to continue operating in its current format** - based on the existing Rules of Procedure, with unchanged (or slightly changed) membership.

👉 Potential advantages and benefits: the ZE structure already exists, thanks to the project experience it is an implemented and tested solution, in the ZE there is full representation of all municipalities from the MOF, organisational and administrative support of the ZE is provided by a stable and proven entity. ZE is handled by an entity stable and proven in this role, ZE members had the opportunity to gradually gain experience;

👉 Potential drawbacks and risks: lack of funding may limit the frequency of the IRT meetings and/or reduce attendance, the operation of the IRT will be an organisational and financial burden on the ROF Association (without securing a source of funding for the costs), access to external experts will be limited (costs), the possibility that the IRT will be dominated by individual "strong" JSTs.⁴⁷

➔ **To become a permanent MOF Planning Commission**, with a balanced representation of municipal representatives (dominating the current composition of the ZE) and external experts.

👉 potential advantages and benefits: possibility to look at planning processes more objectively from the perspective of the whole MOF, greater independence from local conditions, transfer of knowledge and experience from outside the local administration;

👉 potential disadvantages and risks: incomplete representation of all municipalities from the MOF area in the composition of the Commission, expenses for fees for external experts, In order to streamline the work of the Planning Commission, one possible solution could be the establishment of Working Groups to give an opinion on a specific planning project.

For example:

- for a draft comprehensive amendment to the municipalities' study, the full composition of the PC (representatives of the municipalities + external experts) is appointed, excluding representatives of the municipality covered by the project, in order to eliminate conflicts of interest (they may attend the meeting but do not participate in the voting),

- for the fragmentary study amendment and mzp project, a preliminary assessment is made as to whether the study amendment or the mzp project may affect the implementation of the ROF SP. In the event of a positive response, the Chair of the PC refers the project to a working team with a membership appropriate to the complexity of the case.⁴⁸

In the case of transforming the ZE into the MOF Planning Commission, the World Bank experts in the ROF SP recommend adopting a broader scope of action, going beyond just spatial planning.

⁴⁷ Source: Spatial Strategy of the ROF, Final Report, p. 178

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 178-179

The possible introduction of institutional arrangements for the next two levels of cooperation would be possible to consider in case of positive experiences in the implementation of level one.

An issue related to a possible modification or reformulation of the ZE is its coordination and operation after the end of the project:

During the project sustainability period, the support and coordination of the ZE (including the coordination and/or implementation of local planning documents) can be carried out by:

→ ROF Association (as in the current formula) - it is then recommended to strengthen (also in terms of staff) and to define the principles of financing the increased (already non-project) tasks of the Office;

→ a new planning unit e.g. at the ROF Association - two options would be possible:

(a) service of all ROF municipalities by such a unit,

b) service of the municipalities agreeing to cooperate in this respect;

→ Rzeszów City Development Bureau - here, too, some doubts arise, e.g. the possibility of adopting an "urban-centric" view, the need for staff reinforcement and the definition of principles for co-financing activities by municipalities.⁴⁹

In considering the current or potentially transformed format of the Expert Team, the important issue of the role of the ZE in carrying out the monitoring and evaluation of the Spatial Strategy of the MOF should be taken into account.

➡ **Additional tasks for the Expert Team after project completion:**

- **MONITORING** of the implementation of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF - according to the recommendation of the World Bank experts, the ZE should perform the function of the entity responsible for carrying out monitoring as well as preparing and submitting a report containing its results to the ROF Association authorities. Monitoring is understood as the ongoing collection of data to track the progress of the strategy against the assumed indicators. Firstly, monitoring results from the need to have knowledge on the progress of the implementation of the ROF SP, and secondly it results from the necessity to adapt to the changing external conditions;

- **EVALUATION** - a comprehensive evaluation of the state of its implementation together with the identification of the corrective actions necessary to be taken in order to make the achievement of all the assumed objectives probable.

Two types of evaluation are recommended for the ROF SP: mid-term and ex-post (at the end of 2025).

Each evaluation must be based on an analysis of indicators (preferably relevant to the objectives, objective and enabling comparison of the baseline with the target situation).

In their Final Report, the World Bank experts propose some exemplary indicators concerning planning documents, output indicators and indicators concerning changes in land use in ROF and individual municipalities.

As the authors of the ROF SP emphasise, similar processes of gradually expanding the scope of inter-municipal cooperation have been the basis for the emergence of well-functioning functional areas. They point to Hanover and Manchester and the Barcelona agglomeration as their examples. The latter started with cooperation in spatial planning and gradually increased its thematic and institutional scope. Joint projects beyond the topic of spatial planning could be an interesting area of activity for the ZIT and raising funds for the common benefit of ROF municipalities.

Summary of Expert Team issues:

1) The pattern of cooperation developed within the project in the form of an Expert Team is possible to implement in other municipal areas of cooperation. The incentive to introduce such a solution may be both the need to prepare a supra-local strategy, the Integrated Urban Mobility Strategy or another document, e.g. a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), as well as the desire to exchange experience, information or attempts to coordinate planning works.

2) In the case of functioning of an inter-municipal association, the authorities of the association should be indicated as the initiator of the creation of the Expert Group, including the ZIT association, and the coordinator of the Group's works - an office or other entity dealing with its services.

5.5.1 Summary of Expert Team considerations

Taking into account the experience of the Project and the opinions of the experts, it can be concluded that:

➡ The established cooperation pattern in the form of the ZE is possible to implement in other MOFs. The incentive to introduce such a solution may be the need to prepare a supra-local strategy, the ZIT

⁴⁹ Spatial Strategy of the Rzeszów Functional Area. Final Report, p. 180

Strategy or another document, e.g. a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), as well as the desire to exchange experience, information or attempts to coordinate planning works;

➡ In the case of functioning of an inter-municipal union or association, the authorities of the union or association, including the ZIT association, should be indicated as the initiator of establishing the ZE, and the coordinator of the Team's works - the office or other entity dealing with its service.

The problem of possibilities of developing cooperation is presented in chapter 3. Indication of new directions in the spatial planning policy of functional areas are presented, in the part: Institutional solutions for integrated planning at the supralocal level

➡ The project assumes that the Expert Team will continue its work even after the completion of the project. The Team is expected to have an advisory role for the municipalities, as well as to review the strategy and update it if necessary.

In the Spatial Strategy of the ROF, in the chapter entitled. "Handbook of good practices and topics for further deepening cooperation in ROF, a number of potential institutional solutions have been identified.

These include:

1. opinion and monitoring of documents,
2. preparation of local planning documents (coordination or implementation),
3. support and coordination of launching investment areas (design, development, management, promotion).

The proposed institutional solutions both build on the current organisational units of local governments and the ROF and assume the possibility of creating new ones. The order of the above forms of cooperation seems not accidental. The first one is the simplest to implement. Whereas, the next are more advanced forms of cooperation.

An issue related to the change in the ZE formula is its coordination and operation after the end of the Project. During the Project sustainability period, ZE support and coordination (including coordination and/or implementation of local planning documents) can be carried out by:

- **ROF Association** (as in the current formula) - it is then recommended to strengthen (also in terms of staff) and to define the principles of financing the increased (already non-project) tasks of the Office;

- **a new planning unit** e.g. at the ROF Association - two options are possible:

(a) service of all ROF municipalities by such a unit,

b) service of the municipalities agreeing to cooperate in this respect;

- **Development Office of the City of Rzeszów** - here, too, some doubts arise, e.g. the possibility of adopting an 'urban-centric' view, the necessity of reinforcing the staff and defining the principles of co-financing the activity by municipalities.

In considering the current or potentially transformed formula of the ZE, the important issue of the role of the ZE in conducting monitoring and evaluation of the ROF SP should be taken into account.

As the authors of the ROF SP emphasise, similar processes of gradually expanding the scope of inter-municipal cooperation have been the basis for the emergence of well-functioning functional areas.

They point to Hanover and Manchester and the Barcelona agglomeration as their examples. The latter started with cooperation in spatial planning and gradually increased its thematic and institutional scope. Joint projects beyond the topic of spatial planning could be an interesting area of action for ZITs and fundraising for the mutual benefit of ROF municipalities.

6. Identification of new directions in the spatial planning policy of functional areas

The provisions of the Spatial Development Strategy for the ROF, as well as the experience of its preparation, may serve as a model and a source of inspiration in particular with regard to spatial policies pursued within other urban functional areas.

The solutions introduced by the legislator in 2020 and 2023 to create an integrated planning system covering the social, economic and spatial spheres refer mainly to the national, regional and local level. Integrated planning at the supralocal level, mainly in relation to urban functional areas, although extremely important for e.g. maintaining spatial order, limiting sprawl or the possibility of coordinating development processes, is still a novelty and is at the initial stage of implementation.

6.1 Integrated planning at supra-local level and national strategy documents

The issue of integrated planning at the supra-local level occupies an important place in the National **Strategy for Regional Development 2030** (NSRD 2030). This document, adopted by the Council of Ministers in September 2019, i.e. before the introduction of the above-mentioned legal solutions integrating the two planning systems, is the basic strategic document of the state's regional policy in the perspective until 2030. The document presents the objectives of regional policy and the actions and tasks

to be undertaken by the government, voivodeship, poviát and gmina self-governments and other entities participating in the implementation of this policy in the perspective of 2030.

One of the challenges presented in the document is to "increase the effectiveness of development management (including the financing of development activities) and cooperation between local governments and across sectors".

In line with the 2030 NSRF, the challenge for regional policy in this respect is the widespread use of the practice of cooperation between local governments in terms of, *inter alia*, preparing joint development strategies and implementation of joint investments - including in response to needs and challenges that go beyond the boundaries of a single territorial unit. It is also important to include spatial planning as an obligatory element of development management (including ordering of the spatial planning system). The ordering of space and its effective management requires that it be based on a comprehensive system of monitoring socio-economic processes, taking into account changes in space.

The document formulates principles defining the main rules for planning and implementation of measures for regional development. They are intended to serve the implementation of the NSRF, but, it should be emphasised, they also have their translation to the supra-local level. Among them are:

The principle of 1. Subsidiarity - assuming that each action of individual development policies, especially regional policy, is programmed and implemented at the lowest possible, but at the same time effective for a given issue, administrative level. As a practical application of this principle, the document identifies the supra-local development strategy as an example of setting objectives and prioritising development activities at the lowest possible level of local government.

Principle 2: An integrated territorial approach - this consists in tailoring interventions to the specificities of a given territory so that they accurately respond to the diverse development needs of that territory. This implies the need to take into account the territorial context in the programming, implementation and monitoring phases of interventions and to better coordinate actions and available financial resources.

Principle 3: Partnership and cooperation - involves building a culture of partnership and cooperation aimed at conscious and structured interaction between people, institutions and organisations and better coordination of their development activities. The principle is also about establishing lasting relationships based on trust, both vertically between national, provincial and local institutions and horizontally - between public administration and various stakeholders, including the private and social sectors.

Principle 4: Territorial and thematic concentration. Territorial concentration is understood as the targeting of regional policy interventions to support a limited number of territories. Each territory is characterised by specific challenges, barriers or potentials whose development is particularly important. These areas are distinguished by a set of characteristics (functional, socio-economic, spatial and other) that clearly distinguish them positively or negatively from their surroundings, allowing the boundaries of the area to be defined. Thematic concentration, on the other hand, is the concentration of resources, means and actions on a limited number of support areas, prioritised from the point of view of national and individual regional development. Territorial concentration of support in areas of strategic intervention (OSI) was indicated as an example of the application of this principle.

Within the framework of specific objective 3.2 Strengthening cooperation and an integrated approach to development at the local, regional and supra-regional level, KSRR 2030 assumes, *inter alia*, that neighbouring municipalities, forming a functionally linked area and declaring their willingness to cooperate with each other, may in partnership develop an integrated supra-local development strategy and jointly plan and implement undertakings aimed at the development and improvement of the competitiveness of the sub-region.

The important role of the issue of integrated planning at the supra-local level in relation to urban functional areas has also been highlighted in the provisions of the National Urban Policy 2030 (NPM 2030). Adopted on 14 June 2022 by a resolution of the Council of Ministers, the National Urban Policy is a document defining the planned activities of the government administration concerning urban policy in the 2030 perspective. The document diagnoses the most important development challenges of cities and their functional areas, and also formulates solutions and defines planned activities of the government administration in the legal, financial and organisational scope for the sustainable development of cities and urban functional areas. It identifies, *inter alia*, local government units (JST) as key partners in implementing the objectives of the national urban policy.

The document contains nine challenges. A catalogue of solutions is formulated for each of them. Challenge II included in the NPM 2030 is "levelling chaotic suburbanisation processes".

As part of the solutions presented for it, attention was paid to the introduction of a functional-spatial structure model, i.e. the spatial component of the socio-economic development strategy, into the development strategy (municipal and supra-local). The legal solutions introduced in 2020 provide an opportunity for neighbouring municipalities with functional links to develop a joint supralocal development

strategy. The supra-local development strategy is prepared with the participation of the county, if all municipalities from the territory of the county participate in its preparation. On the other hand, if at least one commune from the territory of the county is covered by the supra-local development strategy under development, the county may optionally be involved in its elaboration.

Among other things, the document emphasises the need to create incentives for cooperation, as a result of which one document would cover the entire territorially connected area.

Among the proposed solutions, it was also considered necessary to develop a relationship between the documents currently being prepared at the local level and a document common to the entire functional area.

6.2. The role of the municipal and supra-local development strategies

Following the changes to the spatial planning system resulting from the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts, the municipality's development strategy becomes the basic document defining the municipality's spatial policy. In this respect, the strategy replaces the study of conditions and directions for spatial development of the municipality. The spatial policy defined in the strategy will constitute the basis for both general and local municipal spatial development plans. In other words, it is the municipality's development strategy and not the master plan that will be the basis for the spatial policy pursued at the local level. Hence, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the municipal development strategy and, taking into account the issue of integrated planning in urban functional areas, the supralocal development strategy.

The basic norms concerning the preparation of the municipal development strategy as well as the supra-local development strategy are included in the amended Act on Municipal Self-Government.

The aforementioned Act of 7 July 2023 leaves the preparation of a municipal development strategy until 1.01.2026 as optional (Article 10e, paragraph 1 of the Act on Municipal Self-Government). From then on, the preparation of a municipal development strategy becomes an obligation of the municipal government. The scope of the municipal development strategy is defined in Article 10e(3) and (4) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government. According to it:

(3) The municipal development strategy shall contain the conclusions of the diagnosis referred to in Article 10a (1) of the Act of 6 December 2006 on the principles of development policy (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1057 and of 2022, items 1079 and 1846), prepared for the purposes of this strategy, and shall specify in particular:

- 1) strategic objectives of development in the social, economic and spatial dimension;
- 2) directions of actions taken to achieve the strategic objectives;
- 3) expected results of the planned actions, including in the spatial dimension, and indicators of their achievement;
- 4) model of the functional and spatial structure of the municipality, understood as the target layout of the components of space, including:
 - (a) the structure of the settlement network together with the role and hierarchy of settlement units,
 - b) system of natural connections,
 - c) main corridors and elements of transport networks, including pedestrian and bicycle networks,
 - d) main elements of technical and social infrastructure;
- 5) findings and recommendations in the scope of shaping and conducting spatial policy in the municipality concerning:
 - a) principles of protection of the environment and its resources, including protection of air, nature and landscape,
 - b) principles of protection of cultural heritage and monuments, as well as contemporary culture assets,
 - c) directions of changes in the structure of land development, including determination of specific needs as regards new residential development,
 - d) principles of location of large-format trade facilities within the meaning of the Act of 27 March 2003 on planning and spatial development (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 977, 1506, 1597 and 1688),
 - e) principles of locating key public purpose investments,
 - f) directions of development of communication, technical and social infrastructure systems,
 - g) principles of locating energy generation facilities with an installed capacity exceeding 500 kW,
 - h) principles of locating projects that may significantly affect the environment,
 - i) principles of shaping the agricultural and forest production space,
 - j) principles of shaping the spatial development in degraded areas and revitalisation areas, as well as areas in need of transformation, rehabilitation, reclamation or remediation (understood as activities aimed at removing or reducing the amount of contamination of the earth's surface introduced into it as a result of human activity);

- 6) areas of strategic intervention specified in the voivodeship development strategy referred to in Article 11(1) of the Act of 5 June 1998 on the self-government of the voivodeship (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 2094), together with the scope of planned activities;
- 7) areas of strategic intervention crucial for the municipality, if such have been identified, together with the scope of planned activities;
- 8) the strategy implementation system, including guidelines for the preparation of implementation documents;
- 9) financial framework and sources of financing.

(4) The municipal development strategy is drawn up in text and graphic form containing the depiction of the contents referred to in particular in points 4-7 presented above.

The scope of the municipal development strategy in the above wording results from the provisions of the Act of 7 July 2023 amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts. It clarifies the provisions concerning the model of the functional and spatial structure, as well as the findings

and recommendations concerning spatial policy. The scope of the latter, to a large extent convergent with the previous scope of the study of conditions and directions for spatial development of the municipality. It follows, as indicated above, that it is the strategy, in place of the study, that becomes the key document defining the municipality's planning policy.

Pursuant to Article 10g (1) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government, neighbouring communes that are functionally related to each other may develop a supra-local development strategy that is a joint strategy for the development of these communes within their territory. At the same time, pursuant to Article 10e, paragraph 1a also entering into force on 1.01.2026, a municipality may not prepare a municipal development strategy if the area of the municipality is covered by a supra-local development strategy.

The scope of a supra-local development strategy is analogous to a municipal development strategy, as follows from Article 10g(3) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government. As follows from Article 10e (1a) cited above, the supra-local development strategy may also be the basis for the municipality's spatial policy,

and thus also form the basis for the preparation of the municipality's general plan.

6.3. Urban functional areas versus strategic intervention areas

Integrated planning in functional areas including social, economic and spatial dimensions and spatial, from the perspective of the municipal government, will be implemented at two levels: municipal and supra-local level. In this context, attention should be drawn to points 6 and 7 of the aforementioned provisions of Article 10e(3) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government concerning the scope of the municipal development strategy and the supra-local development strategy.

The first of these (point 6) prescribes the inclusion in the strategy of areas of strategic intervention (OSI) defined in the voivodeship development strategy, together with the scope of planned activities. Such OSI are usually, inter alia, urban functional areas, including urban functional areas of a voivodeship centre.

This means de facto that the municipality's development strategy must include issues related to the functioning of the urban functional area of which it is a part. An analogous situation occurs in the case of preparing a supralocal development strategy. In the case of preparation of a supralocal development strategy e.g. for a powiat, part of which is an urban functional area which is at the same time an SMA indicated in the voivodeship development strategy, such a functional area should be included in the supralocal development strategy together with the scope of planned activities. However, in the case of preparing a supralocal development strategy for an urban functional area which is at the same time an SMA indicated in the voivodeship development strategy, the situation is obvious.

The second one (point 7) concerns the inclusion in the municipal or supralocal strategy of the areas of strategic intervention of key importance for the municipality, if such have been identified, together with the scope of the planned measures. In other words, the identification of such SPAs in development strategies is optional.

As written in the practical guide for the preparation of a municipal development strategy published in 2020 by the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy: "the possible need to designate OSIs at the local level, as well as their nature, will depend on the social, economic and spatial situation of the municipality and the adopted directions of its development. The possibility and desirability of identifying an SSA in a given municipality should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and the final decision in this respect belongs to the municipality's authorities".

It may be assumed that such areas of strategic intervention may be indicated e.g. in the supra-local development strategy prepared and, as a result, included in the municipality's development strategy. In this case, the Spatial Strategy of the ROF is worth noting. Although, as underlined, it is not a supralocal

development strategy and cannot be placed in the system of strategic documents or spatial planning acts, it indicates the so-called strategic areas of development (SOR), which may constitute a basis for treating them as local SIAs in the municipal development strategies and the supralocal development strategy.

At the same time, it should be stressed that, in accordance with the aforementioned provision, if the municipality development strategy (or the supra-local development strategy) includes the (local) key SIAs, it is also necessary to identify the planned measures relating to these areas.

The need to identify optional DSOs at the local level may result from the diagnosis carried out for the purposes of the strategy. When trying to identify local DSOs, it is also worth referring to other documents drawn up at the municipal level. For example:

- the study of spatial development conditions and directions of the commune may indicate e.g. areas in need of transformation, reclamation or remediation,
- Local / Municipality revitalisation programme will include designated degraded areas and revitalisation areas,
- The communal programme of care for historical monuments may indicate e.g. historical spatial systems or complexes of buildings requiring revalorisation or other actions.

The areas indicated above may constitute potential local SPAs requiring a specific set of measures, which may justify their inclusion in the municipality development strategy or supra-local development strategy.

Taking into account the experience related to the development of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF and the indication in it of the strategic areas of development relevant for the Rzeszów Functional Area, it should be stated that the strategic intervention areas of supralocal importance (of significance for the development of the entire functional area) should be indicated in the supralocal development strategies, and not necessarily those which will be important only for the development of individual municipalities.

The issue of including functional areas in the strategy is also indicated in Art. 10a. Paragraph 1 of the Act on the Principles of Development Policy. It concerns the preparation of the diagnosis. According to it, an entity preparing a draft development strategy, a draft public policy, a draft development programme or a draft programme for the implementation of a partnership agreement prepares a diagnosis of the social, economic and spatial situation, taking into account functional areas, including urban functional areas. When analysing the above provision, attention should be paid to the spatial aspect of the diagnosis articulated therein. The diagnosis itself is not an integral element of the developed strategy. Pursuant to Article 10e (3) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government cited above, the municipal development strategy contains conclusions from the diagnosis prepared for the purposes of the strategy.

6.4. Institutional arrangements for integrated planning at supra-local level

In the context of integrated planning carried out in urban functional areas, attention should be paid to the role of urban planning studios (spatial planning offices) existing mainly in larger urban centres, often also involved in the preparation of municipal strategic documents.

They can provide substantive support not only to the local government of the city which is usually the core of the functional area, but also to the local governments of other municipalities in the functional area, which usually do not have their own planning services and expert background.

In the aforementioned National Urban Policy 2030, within the framework of the proposed solutions for challenge II "levelling chaotic suburbanisation processes", it was stated that support in conducting a coherent and rational spatial policy in a functional area could be provided by establishing a planning office or employing a team that would continuously conduct works shaping the spatial order in the area. It was also considered advisable to strengthen the functions and strengthening the development potential of the existing planning and urban-architectural structures in the marshal offices in order to be able to coordinate development at the scale of the entire functional area.

As an alternative solution, the NPM 2030 indicates the creation of the possibility of establishing a "planning union" in Poland, which covers the urban functional area. The union would formalise the cooperation of local governments located in a given functional area in order to carry out coherent and coordinated planning and spatial development. Referring to the potential of a given functional area and its developmental conditions, it would define optimal directions for the development of individual TSUs, while also identifying possible forms of support.

In the current legal order, in accordance with Article 3(1) of the Act on Municipal Self-Government, the shaping and conducting of spatial policy on the territory of the municipality, including the enactment of municipal spatial planning acts, is part of the municipality's own tasks. At the same time, pursuant to Article 74, municipalities may conclude inter-municipal agreements on entrusting one of them with public tasks specified by them. The municipality performing the public tasks covered by the agreement shall

assume the rights and obligations of the other municipalities, related to the tasks entrusted to it, and these municipalities are obliged to participate in the costs of implementation of the entrusted task. In the case of the preparation of a supra-local development strategy, the county may also be a party to the agreement.

The content of the inter-municipal agreement may include, inter alia, the development of spatial planning acts. In the case of elaboration of a supra-local development strategy, attention should be paid to the provisions of Article 10g, paragraph 4. of the said Act, according to which, in order to prepare and implement a supra-local development strategy, territorial self-government units may, as indicated above, conclude an inter-municipal agreement, or create, in particular, an inter-municipal association, a county-municipal association or an association. The communes forming the Rzeszów Functional Area function under an association.

The basis for its functioning, according to the statute of the Association of the Rzeszów Functional Area, was cooperation in 'the implementation of the tasks envisaged for the ZIT Association'.

6.5. Integrated Territorial Investments as an element integrating spatial policy of municipalities

Integrated Territorial Investments (ITAs) may not only constitute the basis for cooperation between municipalities within a functional area. The inter-municipal character of such investments, their frequent significant impact on space, inclusion of such investments in development strategies, and the effect of their implementation in the form of strengthening functional links between municipalities included in functional areas, prove that ZIT may be an important factor integrating the spatial policy of municipalities. The document prepared by the Minister of Funds and Regional Policy entitled 'Principles of Territorial Instruments Implementation in Poland in the EU Financial Perspective 2021-2027' assumes that the instrument, such as ZIT, will be intended for MOFs of voivodeship centres, and will also include other MOFs designated by voivodeship self-governments, in particular medium-sized cities losing socio-economic functions, which are defined as OSIs of national importance in the National Strategy for Regional Development until 2030.

The essence of ZIT implementation will be the realisation of integrated projects contributing to solving common problems and meeting the needs of the area covered by ZIT in a coordinated manner. An integrated project is a project that fits into the development objectives of the functional area covered by the instrument and is aimed at solving common development problems. This means that the project affects more than 1 municipality in the MOF and its implementation is justified both in the diagnostic part and in the directional part of the strategy. An integrated project should fulfil at least one of the two conditions:

- (a) it is a partnership project within the meaning of Article 39 of the Implementation Act, i.e. the Act of 28 April 2022 on the rules for the implementation of tasks financed from European funds in the financial perspective 2021-2027;
- b) a joint effect, result or final product of the project is declared, i.e. joint use of the infrastructure created within the framework of the project in case of "hard" projects, or covering with support in case of "soft" projects, the inhabitants of at least 2 OF communes, which should be justified both in the diagnostic and directional part of the strategy.

It should be emphasised that the ZIT Strategy is not the same as the supra-local development strategy. In accordance with the above mentioned document, the ZIT association should select the strategic document on the basis of which the ZIT instrument will be implemented. The following possibilities of developing strategic documents allowing for implementation of ZIT were envisaged:

- 1) ZIT strategy,
- 2) supralocal development strategy acting as the ZIT strategy,
- 3) ZIT strategy and a supralocal development strategy coherent with it.

The ZIT projects resulting from the above-mentioned strategy should in particular fulfil one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) support economic development;
- b) strive for climate neutrality;
- c) improve accessibility to public services;
- d) translate into a real improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants;
- e) be based on smart governance.

7. Public consultation in the MOF with particular emphasis on public participation

7.1. Participation obligations after the amendment of the Planning and Development Act

Public (civic) participation is "the process by which representatives of the public gain influence, and indirectly control, over the decisions of public authorities when these decisions directly or indirectly affect their own interests."⁵⁰

The amendment to the Planning and Spatial Development Act introduced a new chapter 1a dedicated to **public participation**. This is intended to raise the standards of discussion with residents, to organise, expand and open up the catalogue of possible participation tools to new techniques, including those related to digitisation, as well as to modernise the vocabulary used in line with developments in this field of knowledge.

The newly introduced Articles 8e-8m set out the principles for conducting participation, including indicating a broad, open circle of stakeholders, as well as defining a catalogue of forms of public consultation and the methods of conducting them.

According to Article 8i, the forms of public consultation are:

- 1) collection of comments;
- 2) open meetings, expert panels or workshops, preceded by a presentation of the draft spatial planning act;
- 3) open-air meetings or study walks, organised in the area covered by the spatial planning act;
- 4) surveys or geo-surveys;
- 5) interviews, holding a consultation point or designer on-call.

Consultations in the form of surveys or geo-questionnaires may be conducted on paper or electronically, including by means of electronic communication, in particular by e-mail. These consultations may be carried out in particular by means of forms made available by the authority drafting the spatial planning act in the Public Information Bulletin on the website of the authority serving it. The Act also allows consultations to be carried out in other forms than those mentioned above. At the same time, it introduces the requirement to use at least three of its forms in the consultation process. Consultations are to be carried out over a period of at least 28 days, with forms of consultation such as open meetings, expert panels, workshops, open-air meetings, study walks, not to be held either in the first or last week of consultation.

Among other things, the amended provisions of Chapter 1a. Public participation, which impose an obligation to increase the participation of stakeholders in the formation and implementation of spatial policy, have been tested in practice, inter alia, in the consultations of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF.

7.2. Public participation in the Integrated Spatial Planning Model

An innovative solution adopted in the Model and tested in the Project is the active participation of inhabitants in planning work. According to the Project's assumptions, competent officials of ROF communes are to hold a dialogue with the community on a different level, i.e. using traditional methods, as well as innovative ones (through the development and implementation of the Innovative Internet Platform), which will enable and facilitate residents' opinions on issues important to them electronically. In the course of the dialogue conducted with residents, they will also be presented with the consequences of spatial decisions (the educational role of public participation).

We reiterate that the assumption of the Project and the goal of the solutions developed as part of the Model is to change the approach to consultations - compulsory (in the meaning of the Act, obligatory for TSUs as an element of the procedure) to participatory. In order to ensure that the inhabitants do not have the feeling of lack of influence on the process and planning procedures and final planning decisions, but at the same time to have a sense of joint creation and real influence on decisions that are made, which concern e.g. their property, their immediate neighbourhood (taking into account the development of the whole area);

The benefits for JSTs (spatial planning decision-makers) are the high probability of avoiding conflicts with residents (or lowering the 'temperature' of these conflicts) or, e.g., avoiding decisions that are wrong (or involve too much social cost) in the opinion of the local community.

➤ Levels of public consultation in strategic planning:

⁵⁰ Source: D. Długosz, J.J. Wygnański, „Obywatele współdecydują. przewodnik po partycypacji społecznej”, Warszawa 2005, str.11

- ➔ social consultation is a process of dialogue between representatives of authorities (of every level from local to central)
 - from local to central) and the local community, with the aim of gathering the opinions of residents and, based on these, making optimal decisions on public matters;
 - ➔ are a way of soliciting opinions, positions, proposals, etc. from groups that will be affected in some way (directly or indirectly) by the administration's proposed actions;
 - ➔ they do not give residents a direct say in decisions (these are ultimately reserved for the authorities), but are more than just the authorities informing citizens about planned activities
 - they involve two-way communication and the establishment of a relationship between citizens and authorities;
 - ➔ information - it is a one-way relationship, as the municipality or institution presents a 'finished' plan/strategy and the opinion is virtually only formal;
 - ➔ consultation - the relationship is two-way, as the JST obtains feedback on the plan/strategy before handing it over. The process is staggered - first there is information about the proposed version, then the collection of recommendations and conclusions about them;
 - ➔ participation/co-determination - this is not only about getting feedback on the plan/strategy, but about jointly developing it with important stakeholders. Co-decision also means delegating part of the responsibility for implementing the plan/strategy.

🕒 **The role and functions of public consultation in strategic planning:**

- **informational:** residents know what the local authority intends, the local authority knows what the community has to say about it;
- **participatory:** participation of the widest possible range of stakeholders in making important decisions;
 - **creative:** as a result, new solutions may emerge, other approaches to a problem that were 'standardised' in the proposed version;
- **identifying:** groups interested in joint action are formed around solving identified problems;
- **organisational:** they serve to create partnerships, expert teams, working teams, cooperation, organisation of formal and informal cooperation (synergy);
- **educational:** both sides of the consultation share knowledge. In the case of spatial planning, it is very important to familiarise the inhabitants with the competences of the territorial self-government units in this scope (providing basic legal knowledge, the lack of which on the part of the stakeholders is a barrier or even makes it impossible to obtain opinions and develop positions). and development of positions);
- **preventive:** they can protect from coercion (in the meaning of the Act, obligatory for TSU as an element of the procedure).

🕒 **Mandatory consultations arising from the law:**

- In the realities of local authorities, the most frequent obligatory consultations are those resulting from the provisions of:
 - The Act on Spatial Planning and Development of 27.03.2003 (consultations of local spatial development plans MPZP and studies of spatial development conditions and directions),
 - the Act on the provision of information on the environment and its protection, participation of the public Environmental Impact Assessment Act of 3.10.2008. (consultations on investments having an impact on the environment)
 - Act of 7.07.2023 on amendments to the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (the aforementioned chapter 1a on public participation).

🕒 **Stages of public consultation:**

1. Definition of the objective: defining the objective of the consultation as precisely as possible is a fundamental condition for its effectiveness. Examples of objectives for consultations in spatial planning:
 - obtaining public acceptance of the investment
 - choice of location (if debatable)
 - choice of architectural concept
 - analysis of possible negative effects or social costs;
 - identification and prevention of risks (e.g. protests of certain groups)
 - assessment of the so-called social impact benefits
2. choice of method to reach the participants of the consultation: adequate to the audience and taking into account the principles of equal opportunities and accessibility for people with disabilities;
3. definition of method: traditional and new (e.g. Innovative Internet Platform);
4. monitoring the implementation of the consultation: quantitative analysis (e.g. number of participants in the consultation, number of comments and proposals made, etc.) and qualitative analysis (e.g. what are

the proposals, which stakeholder groups do they represent, are they possible to take into account, etc.); 5.

5. evaluation of the effects and implementation recommendations: whether the results of the consultation have achieved the intended purpose, if not, to what extent they have not had the expected effect, what are the reasons for this, what lessons can be learned for further consultation and spatial planning, etc.).

➤ Possible methods and techniques for public consultation:

- on-line consultations
- participatory planning workshops
- consultancy points
- expert teams, working groups;
- Citizens' Cafe
- public hearing
- citizens' panel
- expert panel
- exploratory walks
- geo-surveys
- geo-questionnaires
- mobile apps
- Oxford debates
- - open space (according to Harrison Owen's formula).

➤ Universal principles for effective public consultation:

Regardless of the method, the following principles are important:

- ➔ an understanding of the regulations (mainly legal) applicable in the field;
- ➔ an understanding of the 'organisational culture' and the way a local authority or institution works;
- ➔ combining formal and informal activities (professional qualifications and expertise, but also social competences);
- ➔ efficient mechanisms for communication with residents (tailored to the local community);
- ➔ responsiveness - everyone who submits an opinion/proposal is entitled to a substantive response, which does not exclude a critical response;
- ➔ openness to self-development - of both sides of the public participation process.⁵¹

7.3 Public consultations of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF

The public consultation of the ROF SP was announced in October 2022. They were conducted by the Marshal Office of the ND, which was supported by the municipalities and the ROF Association.

The public consultations of the ROF SP were also carried out using the online platform developed within the Project.

The general principles of stakeholder involvement derive from the assumptions of the Project as a whole and are a development in particular of the principles: "open and constructive dialogue", "transparency" and "cooperation and compromise". Accordingly, the Project's stakeholder engagement principles are:

- **transparency** - activities involving stakeholders will be carried out in an open and transparent manner and transparent, striving to make information as accessible as possible;
- **openness** - any stakeholder, even if not explicitly mentioned, can join the discussion about the Project. Every stakeholder can submit an opinion, a proposal, an opinion at any stage of the Project.
- **equality** - all social groups are treated on an equal basis, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged groups, e.g. the elderly, women, children, people with disabilities, national, ethnic and religious minorities;
- **focus on the purpose of the Project** - as stakeholders are likely to raise a number of issues that are relevant to them but outside the scope of the Project, the purpose and framework of the Project will be communicated at each stage of stakeholder engagement;
- **constructive dialogue based on facts and data** - the Project's outcome will be achieved by basing stakeholders' arguments on data and constructively proposing solutions. A dialogue conducted in this way offers a better chance of agreement among the parties involved.

➤ ROF SP consultation process:

The Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship adopted the draft ROF SP by Resolution No. 431/8736/22 on 18 October 2022 and sent it to public consultation.

⁵¹ Source: www.partycypacjaobywatelska.pl/strefa-wiedzy

Comments could be submitted from 2 November to 22 November 2022. A consultation conference organised on 14 November 2022, where a team of WB experts presented the results of the work of us SP ROF, was also part of this process.

Comments on the draft ROF SP could be submitted in the following forms:

- by email at: <https://sip.rof.org.pl>,
- by post to the address of the Marshal's Office of the WP and the ROF Association,
- in person at the offices of the Regional Development Department of the UMWP and the ROF Association.

In addition, the invitation to consultations, the draft ROF SP together with the comment form, were made available on the websites of the Leader and Partners, including the Public Information Bulletins of the 13 ROF municipalities.

➡ **Results of the ROF SP consultation:**

There were 283 comments and opinions on this document during the consultation, of which:

- 42 % of comments were received from individuals/physical persons,
- 21 % from ROF residents,
- 21 % from local government units,
- 16 % from other parties (not indicated).

The majority concerned editorial comments with 44 % and graphic comments with 19 %. Only less than one in three comments were substantive - 29 %. 8 % were opinions without indicating a concrete proposal to change the provisions in the ROF SP and giving their justification.

On 28 November 2022, a ZE meeting was held with representatives of the WB, where the comments were analysed for their relevance and possible inclusion in the final text of the ROF SP. The position of the ZE was forwarded to the Department of Regional Development. 224 comments (77 % of the total) were accepted by the ZE, which means that the postulated changes were introduced into the final version of the document. 60 comments (21 %) were rejected, i.e. considered negatively, inter alia due to their inadequate nature. 5 remarks will be introduced into the final version of the document in the part that was considered justified.⁵²

By Resolution No. 445/9223/22, the Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in Rzeszów on 20 December 2022 adopted a position on the consideration of the comments submitted during the public consultation process of the draft ROF SP. This position was posted on the website of the Marshal's Office and the notice board at the Marshal's Office. It was also sent to all Project Partners for posting on their websites. The above description of the public consultation of the draft ROF SP indicates the key role of the ZE in this procedure. It should be emphasised that the analysis of the comments was carried out by the ZE in cooperation with the WB experts, and not only the Department of Regional Development or more frankly the Marshal's Office. This shows in a model way the way the project approach to the cooperative and integrated opinion on the most important planning documents for the ROF.

7.4. Case study of public consultation on SUIKZP for the City of Rzeszów

The conclusions from the course and effects of these consultations of the draft Study can be valuable source material for other municipalities and MOFs in the context of implying new statutory requirements for public participation. For two reasons - firstly, consultations of the SUIKZP Rzeszów were conducted in parallel with and within the framework of the Project. As a result, the Rzeszów City Development Bureau benefited from Project support in participation, while the Leader and other Partners benefited from Rzeszów's experience. Secondly, the recommendations resulting from the implementation of the public consultation of the Study in Rzeszów are universal enough to be useful for other MOFs.

➡ The Study of Conditions and Directions for Spatial Development of the City of Rzeszów is a planning document which defines the spatial policy of the city. It was created on the basis of Resolution No. XXXII/641/2020 of the Rzeszów City Council of 26 May 2020, amended by Resolution No. XLII/872/2021 of the Rzeszów City Council of 26 January 2021.

➡ Background to the public consultation: the last 20 years have been a time of intensive spatial and territorial change for Rzeszów. The city's boundaries have included 10 socio-districts, so that the city has more than doubled in size. However, there has been no comprehensive study document which would

⁵² Report on the course and results of public consultations on the draft document entitled Spatial Strategy of the ROF - principles of spatial policy of the ROF,,

reflect a coherent vision of spatial development adopted by the Municipality of Rzeszów, integrating the city space within its current boundaries.

During this period, the city has consistently pursued a policy of placing intensive economic and spatial development as its main objective, which has brought tangible benefits in the form of numerous both commercial and public investments. Unfortunately, this was also accompanied by negative phenomena and changes in the city space, contributing to numerous spatial conflicts and, above all, to the dispersion of buildings.

The change in the legal situation and the dynamic spatial and economic changes that have taken place since 2000, i.e. since the previous Study was prepared, justify the need to update this document and to set out new development directions adjusted to the current social, economic and legal realities, ensuring harmonious shaping of space, responding to the current needs and challenges of the city.

➡ When starting to work on the new edition of the Study, decisions were made to involve residents as widely as possible in the development of the document. In the course of the work, "statutory" public participation was organised in a much broader way than is required by law. The purpose of public participation can be expressed in 3 points:

- informowanie (przekazywanie informacji dotyczącej realizowanych działań),
- konsultowanie (zbieranie opinii, uzyskiwanie informacji zwrotnej),
- współpraca (pozyskiwanie nowych pomysłów, wykorzystanie informacji i pomysłów wypracowanych z uczestnikami procesu partycypacyjnego).

➡ In carrying out the participatory process, a decision was made to conduct communication in a formal way (rules defined by law) and in an informal way (other than statutory activities aimed at cooperation with residents). In informing about the consultation activities, statutory tools were used such as announcements in the local press, notices on notice boards, in the BIP, use of social networks (Urban Lab and City of Rzeszów accounts), municipal website, mailing, telephone information, local media and posters.

➡ Information was also provided through city and housing estate councillors and parishes. At the project development stage, the newly established Office of the Mayor of the City of Rzeszów was involved in the promotion of participatory events. Information was also provided via the newly established website of the Rzeszów City Development Bureau - <https://brmr.erzeszow.pl/>. Information was provided by e-mail and telephone to city councillors, housing estate councillors, representatives of NGOs, councillors working with the mayor of the city, local activists, housing cooperatives

➡ Among other participatory activities, an information campaign '**Let's talk about the Study**' was carried out. As part of the campaign, 16 open meetings were held for residents, in various housing estates of the city, to increase accessibility. During these meetings, designers from the Rzeszów City Development Bureau talked about the scope of the Study and helped formulate proposals for the new edition of the Study. Meetings with residents were held at the Centre for Urban Innovation - Urban Lab Rzeszów.

Six consultation meetings were also held: 1/ presentation of the functional and spatial structure and assumptions of the Study, 2/ economic development of the city, 3/ development of social infrastructure, 4/ environment and climate change resilience + technical infrastructure and retention, 5/ transport and communication development and 6/ landscape and cultural heritage in the city.

3 thematic forums were also organised: Rzeszów green forum, Rzeszów quality of life forum, and Rzeszów mobility forum. The meetings were attended by Rzeszów residents, as well as representatives of urban movements, NGOs and public institutions.

➡ The draft Study was made available at the BRMR office - a total of **1244** residents took the opportunity to review the draft.

➤ A total of 3903 comments on the draft of the Study were submitted by all possible ways of consultation i.e. submitting comments at the registry office of the Municipal Office of the City of Rzeszów, at the seat of the City Development Bureau of the City of Rzeszów, electronically by e-mail, ePUAP);

➤ M Residents were also able to find out how their comments had been considered by telephone and by email. In the period XII 2022 - I 2023, several hundred telephone information were provided on the manner of considering comments. Documents related to the consideration of comments were downloaded more than **1,000 times** in this period from the BIP website of the Rzeszów City Hall;

➤ During a meeting on 13 December 2021. of the Mayor of the City of Rzeszów with mayors and heads of communes from the area of the ROF as well as representatives of the Leader and the Association of the ROF, the Study was presented in the context of cooperation within the ROF, compatibility of the draft Study with the assumptions of the P ROF.

➤ Following consideration of the comments submitted, the draft Study was re-submitted for public inspection. A total of **430** residents took the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the draft Study.



Source: <https://erzeszow.pl>



Summary of the case study:

➔ public consultations on the Study were used to disseminate knowledge on the principles of spatial development in the city. A large increase in interest in the city's planning documents - i.e. SUiKZP, MPZP and DWZ - was achieved. This has disseminated knowledge about the planning documents and the principles of their impact on urban space;

➔ many participatory tools were used and many channels were put in place to enable direct dialogue between designers and stakeholders. The 'statutory' consultation was extended, with around 50 participatory events (meetings with residents, designers' standby, conferences, etc.);

➔ the public participation of the Study in Rzeszów was closely linked to the implementation of the Project. BRMR practically implemented the solutions assumed in the Model, testing them in the practice of public consultation. In addition, in accordance with the Project's assumptions, the Rzeszów Study was reviewed by the Expert Team for compliance with the ROF SP. Other ROF municipalities used the experience of the City of Rzeszów in conducting participation in their planning documents, considering it a good practice.

📄 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI)

„Another project that would be worth writing to raise public awareness of spatial planning. It was also clear, as you put out the Study, that the public's knowledge of spatial planning is dramatically low.” (Expert 6).

☑ Recommendations for the MOF:

1/ it is justifiable, at the stage of public consultation, to carry out the broadest possible educational activities for the inhabitants and the wider circle of stakeholders (investors, NGOs, media, etc.). This need arises from the fact that there is very little knowledge of the basic issues: the objectives

and functions of spatial planning, planning powers of individual administrative bodies and local self-governments, basic concepts of SUIKZP and MPZP, etc., 2/ it is advisable to improve the competence and skills of TSU employees conducting public consultations, in the field of mediation, negotiations, conflict resolution, etc., 3/ it is effective to involve external experts, e.g. WB, to participate in consultations (e.g. during public meetings with inhabitants), whose opinion will strengthen the positions represented in the draft planning document, 4/ in spite of the real involvement of public participation and the carrying out of public consultations by various methods, social conflicts may occur, which in the vast majority result from the low level of knowledge in the field of spatial planning on the public side.

8. IT tool for spatial planning consultations

8.1. Technical solutions developed as part of the Project

The Innovative Internet Platform was intended as an integrated innovative IT tool for the public to consult planning documents, which was to reduce the time it takes for residents to obtain information about plans, ensure efficient delivery of public services and encourage (through increased accessibility) active public consultation. The IPI was also intended to fulfil an "inward" task for ROF, i.e. to facilitate the exchange of spatial management information and resources between project participants.

The functionalities that the IPI should provide are in the project assumptions:

- development, supply and implementation of application and database software for administrators (server, administration and analysis applications).
- development, delivery and implementation of application software for project partners, enabling the handling and provision of implemented e-services along with migration and feeding of databases;
- digitalization of the existing local spatial development plans and studies of spatial development conditions and directions (drawing of directions), archival local spatial development plans;
- creation of the Central Spatial Database (CBDP);
- launching individual municipal map portals and a common integrated geo-portal for all project Partners;
- provision of training and instruction in the use of the Platform, in particular the tool and application software for project participants (administrators).

The IPI is ultimately intended primarily for three groups of users:

1/ **Administrators:** these are those who manage and have full control over the platform, its configuration, data creation, access control and other tools responsible for its smooth and continuous operation and further improvement and development. A distinction is required between global and municipal (local) administrators with appropriate levels of access rights to data, functionalities and administrative tools;

2/ **Internal users:** these are the employees of the organisational units of JST from the area of ROF, the ROF Association and the Marshal's Office of the WP. Access of employees to the resources of the Platform was to be realised primarily through the Intranet. Internal users were to be the basic group of users who will have the greatest range of rights to access the Platform, especially in terms of the collected information resources, entering and editing spatial data;

3/ **External** (anonymous) users: this was ultimately to be the most numerous group of users i.e. residents of municipalities, representatives of the broader local community and stakeholders (e.g. potential investors, other business entities, developers, tourists, etc.). They were to be able to use the data and functionalities contained in the IPI through a public access interface, e.g. public records and registers and other information databases.

As we wrote in subsection 2.2. due to the failure to deliver a Platform compliant with the SOPZ in terms of its availability as a desktop GIS application or equivalent, the Task Acceptance Committee together with the Contract Engineer refused to accept the service on three occasions. This resulted in withdrawal from the contract with the Contractor. Due to the deadline for completion of the Project, it was not possible to conduct a new tender procedure for the Platform and, above all, due to the insufficient time for its implementation (according to the original assumptions of software configuration and parameterisation) by the new Contractor. Therefore, a tool of limited scope was implemented, which includes a module for public consultations, with functions for making comments on the prepared planning documents.

Description of the Online Platform available under the Project:

The platform primarily enables public participation in the planning process, that is:

1/ those responsible for the processes of adopting the MPZP, SUIKZP and SP of the ROF and their public consultations, it mainly provides the following functions:

- creation of a new consultation process,
- setting consultation parameters including: adding a name for the consultation process, adding start and end dates of the consultation process, adding text attachments in DOC and PDF formats, adding graphic attachments in PDF, JPG, TIF formats,
- adding the projected boundary of a new procedure by: selecting the cadastral parcels which concern the project, by selecting the cadastral precinct which is the border of the planned MPZP, SUIKZP and SP ROF or by selecting the municipality border in case when the border of the planned MPZP, SUIKZP and SP ROF is the area of the whole municipality,
- adding subsequent stages of the procedure of adopting the planning document in accordance with § 12. of the Regulation of the Minister of Infrastructure of 26 August 2003 on the required scope of the draft local spatial development plan,
- selecting the stage from the drop-down list, defining the exact name of the stage, description, period of validity of the stage and adding graphic and text attachments,
- the name of the stage, the description, the duration of the stage and the addition of graphic and text annexes,
- determining whether it is possible to submit proposals and/or comments and/or remarks at a given stage,
- determining the dates of the various procedures and stages by entering the date manually or selecting from the calendar,
- adding vector attachments with an assigned coordinate system with particular emphasis on: vector layers concerning the borders of plans, vector layers concerning the borders of land use of MPZP, SUIKZP and SP ROF,
- adding additional information in the form of surface/linear/point vector layers with particular emphasis on the object-oriented form of vector layers, i.e. directly connected geometric and tabular part of data,
- storage of vector layers as a database,
- addition of raster attachments with assigned georeference in GeoTIFF format with assigned PUWG 1992 coordinate system,
- generation of summary reports on the basis of applications, remarks, comments,
- generation of a report with information on, in particular: name of planning process, address data of applicants. content of applications, comments, comments.

2/ this enables participants in the consultation and interested parties to:

- submit comments, applications, remarks to MPZP, SUIKZP and SP ROF by filling in the form by the system and adding an active point on the map, being a point of application, remark, comment;
- add an active point on the map, being the point of the application, comment, remark directly related to the selected registered parcel,
- place a point of application, comment, remark anywhere on the map within the boundary of the plan procedure covered by the consultation process,
- automatic addition of the name of the consultation based on the geolocation of the indicated point on the map,
- completion of information concerning the date of the application, comment, remark and data of the person concerned,
- addition of a text or graphic attachment (map, photo, scan) to the application, comment or remark.

3/ the technical conditions of the IT tool are mainly to

- have a separate access level for external and internal users,
- provide an external user with a registration and log-in panel specifying personal data: name, surname, home address, e-mail address and telephone number;
- have user data security for planning procedures only,
- have a mechanism to protect the portal from virtual users (bots),
- have a land parcel search engine based on data entered manually by the user.

4/ The maps available on the Web Platform allow, among other things to:

- enter a layer with the outline of the parcels and their numbers,
- switch the view to the satellite view offered by any satellite view provider preserving the outline of the plots with their numbers,
- add markers to each plot of land with a description of the intended use of the plot in the SUIKZP and MPZP allow to display this information,

- presentation of a layer concerning e.g. areas at special risk of flooding, mining areas and territories, landslide areas, areas protected under the Nature Conservation Act, conservation protection areas, protective zones from wind power plants etc.
- load: state register of borders, outline of registered land plots and buildings (including plot and house numbers), land use, numerical land model, utility networks, public road network, special economic zones,
- measurement of distances and areas,
- make a printout with the current view of the map.

The Internet platform is available at: <https://sip.rof.org.pl/partycypacja/>



Source: <https://sip.rof.org.pl/partycypacja/>

9. Catalogue of good practices and recommendations for other MOFs based on experiences developed during Project implementation

9.1. Experts' opinions on good practices and innovativeness of the Model and possibilities of its implementation in other MOFs (conclusions from the report of the Expert Panel FGI)

The Expert Panel held on 12 October 2023 in Rzeszów was attended by:

Dr. Łukasz Mięka and Rajmund Ryś, M.Sc. - experts of the WB, M.Sc. arch. Anna Opalińska - specialist in the Spatial Policy Department of the Regional Development Department of the Municipality of Łódź, Mr Marcin Czarnota - co-author of the SUiKZP for the city of Rzeszów, Mr Marek Fietko, Mr Witold Kowalski and Mr Bartosz Niemczyk from the Regional Development Department of the Municipality of Łódź, and Mr Piotr Jasiński - specialist in spatial planning from the Chmielnik Municipality Office. The Expert Panel was moderated by Dr Hubert Kotarski and Mr Piotr Buczek.

The purpose of the discussion was to develop a catalogue of recommendations and good practices related to the implementation of the Project. Many valuable opinions of the supporting experts and beneficiaries of the Project on the Integrated and Participatory Spatial Planning Model developed within the Project have been presented in the FGI report. In this part of the Handbook we will present those that relate directly to the good practices recommended for other MOFs.

➡ According to the experts participating in the discussion, one of the most important conditions for achieving the results of the Project was to "equalise" the level of knowledge and competence of the beneficiaries in spatial planning. The respondents stressed that the employees of the offices of the

smaller municipalities participating in the Project often did not have sufficient knowledge of spatial planning.

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"At the time of creating the project fiche, and then at the stage of developing the grant application, it came out that the competences of individuals in the municipalities concerned were very different. It was very often the case that some people did not have a degree in urban planning or similar. So there was a colossal need to equalise this knowledge." (Expert 6)

"There is no denying that while in the city of Rzeszów there is a dedicated City Development Office, where there is a staff of people directly involved, educated in this direction, in other municipalities, especially the smaller ones, it is often the case that the person in charge of spatial planning has a number of other tasks. (...) Therefore, it seems to me that it was a very big support for these municipalities to educate these people in this direction". (Expert 1)

 experts are convinced of the key role of the ZE, as a kind of plane and a "tool" of dialogue of the municipalities forming ROF, as well as of the possibility of further cooperation of the municipalities within the ZE, including in the context of legal changes related to spatial planning. Respondents emphasised that ZE will be of key importance in the context of new legal regulations on spatial planning. ZE has helped to create a very strong foundation for the preparation of a new planning tool by the ROF municipalities - the master plan. This document must be consistent with the municipality's development strategy and supra-local development strategy. However, the experts stressed that the ROF, in developing the ROF SP, has to a large extent developed a supra-local development strategy, which will also be extremely helpful in developing local strategies. Municipalities creating local strategies will be able to use the provisions of higher level documents.

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"The task of the Expert Team should be to create a support base for municipalities, which suggests how to prepare local strategies, what should be there (...). The team could develop something like what has already been mentioned - defining urban planning standards for the master plan." (Expert 5)

"In my opinion, the Expert Team should address how we need to implement so that our strategy, is a strategy beyond local. And then de facto the municipalities have to be in line with this document as well. The key article that says that master plans must be in line with their strategies. And you here have already identified this stage

and in principle this should be in place in a moment. And the second extremely important task - let's create these common standards." (Expert 7)

 The level of competence of the employees of the municipalities of the ROF, achieved thanks to the Project support, enabled joint development of the Spatial Strategy of the ROF with the WB experts. An indication for other MOFs, resulting from the Project, is the possibility to use the resources of the European Social Fund for strategic planning and co-financing of large costs: expert support, acquisition and aggregation and analysis of as much spatial data as possible, development of municipal planning documents in line with the Spatial Strategy in other MOFs.

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"One tip for others shows how to use ESF funds, de facto for planning. In Poznan, for example, regional development funds have financed our urban planning studios. If we would like to do a little bit of planning outside the city, on the scale of the whole functional area, we don't so much need some big servers, plotters or something else. We need funds for personnel expenses, which are just easier to get through the ESF. But what we need to show is precisely this raising of competence. So this is also something to which it is worth drawing attention more widely, so that cities or metropolitan associations can see that it is also possible to take funds for planning from this shelf, and it would even be necessary to take funds from the more social shelf than the purely developmental, hard shelf. " (Expert 9)

 participants in the discussion emphasised that a good practice worth pointing out to other MOFs is the legal and organisational form of the ROF, functioning as an association. This way of formalising the operation proved to be very effective during the implementation of the Project..

 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"We are fortunate that there is the ROF Association, which in a way is such an umbrella. (...) And from the point of view of many MOFs, I don't think there is such an entity that somehow tries to coordinate this cooperation, also through project initiatives. In our case it was good that there was an association that simply coordinated the activities." (Expert 3)

"The association is also good from a purely technical and budgetary point of view. It seems that the association is good in terms of, for example, carrying out the procedure of the proceedings and so on. It seems that budget-wise it is crucial as we tried to do something, from a budgetary point of view and the rules of the local government units. The association eliminates some of the problems that, at first glance, are not passable." (Expert 6)

➡ According to the experts, a key element in building the Integrated Spatial Planning Model is dialogue. In discussions with WB experts who prepared in-depth analyses of the spatial development of municipalities, it was important to see that by differentiating municipalities, they can play a complementary role to each other without competing with each other.

📄 Feedback from an Expert Panel participant (source FGI):

"The hope for solving the problems with integrating planning lies in a dialogue that goes beyond just spatial strategy. Because if, to put it bluntly, Rzeszow wants fewer residents to move to neighbouring municipalities after all, because it loses this tax base through fewer residents, then it needs to talk to these municipalities. And services in the central city may have trouble serving the entire functional area. Here there is a method for such an in-depth dialogue that goes beyond just thinking about how to pass spatial planning acts. I want to point out how useful this is to others in other regions. In my opinion, some municipalities have completely different conditions for locating new buildings, new investments, than the rest. In a natural way, for example, the terrain conditions and not only cause that there is a certain imbalance. And this is what creates this need, this deeper dialogue. This does not mean that those who will have large factories and new settlements will automatically have better development conditions than those who are burdened by these different conditions. You have to look for mechanisms that will result in a balance, which is not necessarily that the same number of people will move out to all municipalities. It is important that there is no negative competition between us, but cooperation and the creation of such a permanent component. The central city, on the other hand, after all, has roads etc. being torn up and also incurs specific costs. It's not like it's just pulling together, because there are certain services that only need to be provided in the central city. So it's not competitiveness, but cooperation and joint development. (...) I hope to jointly agree on the specialisation of individual municipalities, which can be partly enforced, but partly can be sort of deepened by these very policies, including spatial policies, and directing various investment or purely soft social projects within the cycle. (...). So that is why there are three zones highlighted in this model for the MOF - competence, cooperation and dialogue. But it is also supposed to be a certain inspiration for thinking about how to distribute, what type of projects to focus metropolitan or MOF funds on, in order to strengthen this specialisation, so that everyone can benefit from their diversity, their unique position. (Expert 10)

Scheme 6. Good practices for MOF recommended by experts



Source: own study

9.2 Conclusions from the opinions of the Expert Panel participants

In the experts' opinion, the Project is an example of an innovative approach to supra-local spatial planning.

→ Undoubted advantages of the project, in the opinion of the experts, were the focus on levelling out the disproportions in the knowledge and competencies of the municipalities' spatial planning staff, as well as the dialogue and discussion on the vision of spatial development in ROF;

→ A key element of the possibility to continue cooperation in spatial planning between municipalities after the project is the preservation of the triad: ROF Association - Expert Team - Analytical tools. The association is, in the opinion of experts, the best legal and organisational form of cooperation between municipalities. It allows in the most effective way to take advantage of the possibility of raising funds, managing and accounting for them. It also fulfils a very important function of an organisational background in the form of the Office and its full-time staff.

→ Expert Team should play the role of a think tank, i.e. provide substantive support, it is a kind of intellectual and planning background. In practice, the procedure may boil down to the mechanism that the Expert Team sets a certain standard. The standard is imposed on the designer-planner, who works for a given municipality, but then there is a requirement that what he or she produces is in line with the standard, which applies to the entire functional area;

→ Analytical tools should form a common platform, combining a data bank and a hub where planning data is collected together with GIS systems and dedicated tools. The implementation of the triad model will certainly create a fully integrated and socialised spatial planning model.

10. Summary

Conclusions and recommendations from the Project and the implementation of the Model can be summarised as follows:

☞ Consistency in partnership capacity was ensured. 16 people (Leader and Partner staff) benefited from postgraduate studies in spatial planning. This allowed them to deepen their knowledge and improve their competences, relevant to their work. The joint studies were also an important factor in deepening interpersonal ties, which will have a positive impact on further cooperation;

☞ Close cooperation at different stages of the project has allowed good relationships to be established between the partners. Direct contact, frequent communication and a common goal have enabled positive relationships to be built, which translate into all activities in the ROF area;

☞ Expert Team is an important body when giving its opinion on planning documents. It is recommended that the role of the ZE be strengthened (perhaps formally empowered by a resolution of the WP Board). It has also been suggested that the ZE should be supplemented with members who are important in spatial planning, e.g. representatives of the Voivodship Governor's body. The aim of the ZE would be to constantly improve its qualifications so that it not only sets out certain ideas for the ROF area, but also initiates their further implementation;

☞ Process of developing and adopting the Spatial Strategy of the ROF has shown how important it is to identify the common spatial elements influencing the whole area and being the basis for its further integration. The identification of Strategic Areas of Development (SORs) can become the basis for further spatial integration of the area;

☞ Spatial Strategy of the ROF is an innovative solution on a national scale. The Spatial Strategy of ROF is a document that connects ROF municipalities and strengthens cooperation between them;

☞ Project Partners have developed (or are currently in the process of developing) a total of 25 planning documents, including 17 MPZPs and 8 study amendments that are consistent with the ROF SP. This constitutes a good prognosis for further planning work;

☞ Project partners identified the need to develop common quality standards for individual planning acts, including mpzp. A need emerged for all planning documents within the ROF to have the same designation and formulation of findings;

☞ ZE's opinion on individual planning acts has helped to deepen cooperation between the various local authorities;

☞ It was deemed important to implement the recommendations from the Spatial Strategy of the ROF into the Development Strategy of the ROF as a supra-local strategy, in such a way as not to block the development of individual municipalities. Although directions for development have been set, the provisions should be quite general and flexible;

- Importance of the new ROF Development Strategy under development as a supra-local development strategy was highlighted. The ROF ZIT Strategy includes components from the ROF SP;
- An innovative solution was the active participation of residents in planning work using information and communication technologies. Dialogue with residents was conducted at various levels, including through the implementation of a platform for public consultation. Public participation should be based on initiating a real dialogue between residents and the municipality;
- Development and implementation of an innovative IT tool for the public consultation of the ROF SP allowed for the familiarisation of a modern tool facilitating the consultation process for both residents and officials, which should be considered very important, inter alia, in the context of the introduction in 2023 of provisions on participation in the amended Planning and Spatial Development Act.

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