

Possibilities of Implementing Crowdsourcing Initiatives in Rural Development Programmes in Poland

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SUMMARY

Rural areas in Poland are inhabited by 39.8% of the country's population (GUS, 2018a). They face various challenges in the scope of development of efficient and competitive agriculture and forest economy, strengthening of area structures as an independent living and economic space, and preservation of cultural landscape and natural environment.

Measures aimed at the improvement of rural development instruments have been undertaken in Poland for many years. The Rural Development Programme for the years 2014-2020, specifying the framework of development of rural areas in Poland, draws attention to the need of activation of residents of rural areas, and use of endogenic potentials for the purposes of local development. The entire process of spatial planning in rural areas in Poland requires undertaking measures promoting creative attitudes among residents of rural areas and enabling their involvement in joint undertakings.

One of the tasks of ongoing rural development projects is to take social conditions into consideration. The research seeks potential activities to be undertaken by local self-governments interested in the development of local identity and sense of belonging.

The development and common use of the Internet and new digital tools come with a wide range of new possibilities, challenges, and perspectives in the scope of rural development. One of such tools is crowdsourcing. The survey applies this relatively new approach to knowledge acquisition, information diffusion, and exchange of thoughts and views among authorities, experts, and the crowd. It entails a combination of top-down, traditional, hierarchical process, and a bottom-up, open process engaging an online community. The analysis of trends observed in European policies reveals that the application of the idea of crowdsourcing for strengthening social participation is a

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very desirable and important issue.

The article presents the possibilities of implementation of the idea of crowdsourcing in rural development programmes in Poland, particularly in planning works related to the implementation of land consolidation. A dedicated application was created in the GIS environment especially for this purpose.

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