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**Financial assistance for local government entities
under Special Accession Programme for
Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD)
in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship**

Introductory remarks

In Poland, SAPARD enjoyed – especially in the final period – substantial interest among the beneficiaries, such as *gmina* (communes) associations and *powiat* (counties). Due to the adopted contracting and accounting rules, the programme imposed high requirements on the aforementioned self-government entities and the institutions participating in its implementation. In this way, it fulfilled important educational tasks. The support granted as part of the programme to territorial self-government entities contributed to infrastructural improvement in rural areas. This EU pre-accession aid mechanism offered an opportunity – particularly for the Warmia and Mazury region – to encourage positive changes in villages and small towns, foster economic upturn and to halt the profound crisis affecting the region. This paper analysed the essence and scope of SAPARD subsidy allocation in the Warmia and Mazury region for the benefit of local self-government entities. The analysis relied on data sourced from the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA).

Unfortunately, since the modest scope of this article does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject, the present work is contributory in nature. The main questions the present study strives to answer are: What were the main purposes of the SAPARD programme? How did the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture implement SAPARD in Poland?

What is the evaluation of the implementation of SAPARD in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship?

It is significant that the SAPARD Programme is examined in a variety of contexts in the subject related European literature: political, legal, economic, financial, ecological, agri-environmental, and social¹. Stanislav Buchta presents regional aspects of the SAPARD Programme in the Slovak Republic. He is of the opinion that the implementation of the SAPARD, on the one hand, helped to reduce regional disparities “in the vertical spatial approach by the diversion of the bulk of funding to the economically less favoured Southern areas of Slovakia”. But on the other hand, it increased the regional disparities due to the fact that most of the funding was spent in developed regions of Western Slovakia. However, the Programme fulfilled its objectives: it “prepared the business public for the new system of support policy within EU”². Helena Hudečková and Michal Loštak discuss preparation and implementation of the SAPARD Programme in the case of the Czech Republic³. Teréz Kovács examines development of the SAPARD Programme in Hungary⁴. It should be taken into consideration that the EU candidate countries countries have applied a variety of measures in this regard. Therefore, some national regulations determined legal instruments to be taken to achieve the intended objectives.

In the field of Polish science, e.g. Józef Kania⁵, Janusz Rowiński⁶, Paweł Bryła⁷, Zenon Ślusarczyk⁸, or Barbara Wieliczko⁹ did research on the regional

¹ S. Buchta, *Regional aspects of the SAPARD programme implementation in the Slovak Republic*, „Agricultural Economics (Czech Republic)” 2005, Vol. 51, pp. 539–546; H. Hudečková, M. Loštak, *Preparation and implementation of the Programme SAPARD: who might be winners and losers*, „Agricultural Economics (Czech Republic)” 2003, Vol. 49, pp. 547–555; T. Kovács, *The Hungarian SAPARD programme. Background and structure*, „European Spatial Research and Policy” 2002, Vol. 9(1), pp. 53–76; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Managing Authority for SAPARD Programme (2011), *Final report on SAPARD Programme implementation in Romania*, pp. 1–307, http://old.madr.ro/pages/dezvoltare_rurala/sapard/final-report-sapard-en.pdf (accessed: 10.06.2023).

² S. Buchta, op. cit., p. 539.

³ H. Hudečková, M. Loštak, op. cit., pp. 547–555.

⁴ T. Kovács, op. cit., pp. 53–76.

⁵ J. Kania, *Wkład programu SAPARD w rozwój gospodarstw rolnych w Polsce*, „Roczniki Naukowe Stowarzyszenia Ekonomistów Rolnictwa i Agrobiznesu” 2009, Vol. 9(5), pp. 112–118.

⁶ J. Rowiński, *SAPARD – programowanie i realizacja*, Warsaw 2005.

⁷ P. Bryła, *Zarządzanie rozwojem obszarów wiejskich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem programu SAPARD*, „*Studia i Materiały Wydziału Zarządzania Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*” 2006, Vol. 2, pp. 52–64; idem, *Analiza celów i regionalnego zróżnicowania absorpcji działań programu SAPARD adresowanych do polskich rolników i przedsiębiorców*, „*Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*” 2007, Vol. 3, pp. 127–147.

⁸ Z. Ślusarczyk, *Samorząd terytorialny beneficjentem programów SAPARD*, „*Zarządzanie Innowacyjne w Gospodarce i Biznesie*” 2017, Vol. 1(24), pp. 55–66; idem, *Wykorzystanie przez Polskę wsparcia finansowego SAPARD do 2006 roku*, „*Zarządzanie Innowacyjne w Gospodarce i Biznesie*” 2017, Vol. 1(24), pp. 13–22.

⁹ B. Wieliczko, *Przedakcesyjny Program SAPARD – dotychczasowe doświadczenia krajów kandydujących*, Warsaw 2002; idem, *Absorbca unijnego wsparcia przedakcesyjnego na przykładzie programu SAPARD w wybranych krajach*, Warsaw 2004.

and national aspects of the SAPARD Programme implementation. Arkadiusz Żukowski and Marcin Chełminiak present Warmia and Mazury region in the context of European Union enlargement and some new challenges concerning the peripheral regions¹⁰. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that there is lack of professional legal studies in Polish literature that discuss the matter of regional SAPARD implementation. For this reason, undertaking research in this area should be considered necessary and reasonable.

The paper consists of four parts. At first, the origins of the Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) are presented. The second part of the article is devoted to the financial rules within SAPARD. Then, Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture as the institution implementing SAPARD in Poland is taken into closer consideration. At the end, the implementation of SAPARD in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship is evaluated. It should be pointed out that in this particular study, classical methods and techniques developed within the framework of legal science were applied to approach the raised questions and to formulate conclusions. Therefore, the basic method of the research was the formal dogmatic method, in particular, legal linguistic interpretation, in order to analyze and assess the subject related Polish and European legislation. To some extent, the legal comparative method has been also applied to approach to the European Union's solutions. The theoretical legal method has been treated as an auxiliary measure to determine the significance of SAPARD procedures. In the article, there are also presented some statistical data acquired through access to public information from the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture.

SAPARD Programme

The Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) was designed for EU candidate countries, including Poland and nine other states in Central and Eastern Europe. Implementation of SAPARD was an important stage as the institutions and beneficiaries in the involved states prepared for the prospective use of Structural Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy following accession to the European Union¹¹. Although

¹⁰ A. Żukowski, M. Chełminiak, *European Union enlargement and the new peripheral regions: political, economic and social, and related issues – a case of Warmia and Mazury region*, „Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government” 2010, Vol. 8(4), pp. 353–367.

¹¹ Detailed information concerning the implementation of SAPARD programme in European states, see SAPARD Programme, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/sapard_en (accessed: 10.08.2023). See also J. Kania, op. cit., p. 112; H. Skórnicki, *Fundusze przedakcesyjne SAPARD*, Warsaw 2000, *passim*; Z. Ślusarczyk, *Wykorzystywanie przez Polskę...*, pp. 13–14; idem, *Samorząd terytorialny...*, pp. 55–56; P. Bryła, *Zarządzanie rozwojem...*, p. 55.

the Programme ended in 2006, some practical conclusions might be drawn from that experience.

The rules underlying the programme were laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No. 1268/1999 of 21 June 1999 on Community support for pre-accession measures for agriculture and rural development in the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the pre-accession period¹². Published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, it entered into force on 29 June 1999¹³. The funds from the Programme were intended to foster the development of rural areas, facilitate the process of integration of the agricultural sector of the candidate countries with the European Union through adjustment to the standards and requirements of the EU, as well as promote smooth inclusion of these countries into the system of the Common Agricultural Policy and the EU structural programmes¹⁴. EU funds granted to Poland within the framework of the SAPARD were primarily designated for subsidies (i.e. non-returnable aid).

Pursuant to Regulation 1268/99 and after analysing the situation in rural areas in Poland, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development developed the SAPARD Operational Programme [Program Operacyjny SAPARD]¹⁵, which was subsequently approved by the European Commission on 18 October 2000. As a result, a number of measures were selected for Poland, which were included in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 May 2002 on the detailed scope, direction of measures and modes of accomplishing tasks by the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture with respect to the management of means from the European Union funds¹⁶.

¹² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9b7e2414-ecf0-4047-aef4-ba70b421603c/language-en> (accessed: 12.07.2023). Cf. A. Jurcewicz, B. Kozłowska, E. Tomkiewicz, *Wspólna Polityka Rolna. Zagadnienia prawne*, Warsaw 2004, p. 195.

¹³ The implementing provisions were expressed in Council Regulation (EC) No. 2759/1999 of 22 December 1999 on laying down rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1268/1999 of 21 June 1999 on Community support for pre-accession measures for agriculture and rural development in the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the pre-accession period, https://op.europa.eu/en/search-results?p_p_id=eu_europa_publications_portlet_search_executor_SearchExecutorPortlet_INSTANCE_q8EzsBteHybf&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&queryText=Council+Regulation%29EC%29+No.+2759%2F1999++of+22+December+1999&facetCollection=EULex%2CEUPub%2CEUDir%2CEUWebPage%2CEUSummariesOfLegislation&startRow=1&resultsPerPage=10&SEARCH_TYPE=SIMPLE (accessed: 10.09.2023).

¹⁴ G. Spychalski, S. Będzik, *Unia Europejska. Konsekwencje integracji europejskiej dla rolnictwa zachodniopomorskiego*, Szczecin 2001, p. 48.

¹⁵ <http://bip.minrol.gov.pl/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabOrgId=604&LangId=0> (accessed: 12.06.2023).

¹⁶ Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 14 maja 2002 r. w sprawie szczególnego zakresu i kierunków działań oraz sposobów realizacji zadań Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa w zakresie gospodarowania środkami pochodząymi z funduszy Unii Europejskiej (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland 2002, No. 222, pos. 1866 as amended).

Measure 1: Improving the Processing and Marketing of Agricultural and Fishery Products (the beneficiaries included entrepreneurs and groups of agricultural producers and their associations);

Measure 2: Investments in Agricultural Holdings (the beneficiaries included farmers);

Measure 3: Development and Improvement of Rural Infrastructure (the beneficiaries included gminas, associations of gminas and powiats);

Measure 4: Diversification of Economic Activities in Rural Areas (the beneficiaries included farmers, households, entrepreneurs, municipalities, inter-municipal associations and NGOs)¹⁷;

Measure 5: Agri-environmental Measure ups and Afforestation; in December 2003 the Team-SAPARD Monitoring Committee decided to withdraw from implementing Measure 5¹⁸. This decision was mainly due to the approaching date of Poland's accession to the European Union; the agri-environmental programmes would be implemented under the Rural Development Plan 2004–2006;

Measure 6: Vocational Training (training projects for potential Programme beneficiaries);

Measure 7: Technical Assistance (seminars and conferences for potential beneficiaries of the Programme).

The financial management system of the SAPARD complied with the bilateral Multi-annual Financing Agreement between the Republic of Poland and the European Community, Financial Regulation for the SAPARD¹⁹, Council Regulations (EC) No 1268/99 and 1266/99²⁰. Specifically, the system adhered to the accreditation criteria set by the European Commission²¹. The objective

¹⁷ J. Bartkowski et al., *Przewodnik dla ubiegających się o dofinansowanie inwestycji w gospodarstwach rolnych z Programu SAPARD*, Warsaw 2003, p. 7.

¹⁸ The Team-SAPARD Monitoring Committee was established by Prime Ministerial Order No. 27 of May 2, 2001. The Monitoring Committee was headed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

¹⁹ Council Regulation (EC) No. 2222/2000 of 7 June 2000 on laying down financial rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1268/1999 on Community support for pre-accession measures in the field of agriculture and rural development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe applying for membership of the European Union in the pre-accession period, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2000R2222:20060715:PL:PDF> (accessed: 10.05.2023).

²⁰ Cf. T. Moldawa, K. Wojtaszczyk, A. Szymański, *Wymiar społeczny członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej*, Warsaw 2003, p. 50.

²¹ For more about EU funds, see M. Lemonnier et al., *Prawno-ekonomiczne aspekty funkcjonowania funduszy unijnych. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Olsztyn 2010, *passim*. About different European programs concerning the development of rural regions, see e.g. P. Błażejczyk, M. Kazimierczuk, *Wymagania dotyczące posiadania nieruchomości rolnych w wybranych działaniach Programu Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich na lata 2014–2020, „Studia Prawnoustrojowe”* 2018, Vol. 39, *passim*; M. Kazimierczuk, *Wsparcie warsztatu pracy producenta rolnego, zapobiegające zniszczeniu potencjału produkcji w ramach Programu Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich na lata 2014–2020, „Studia Prawnoustrojowe”* 2021, Vol. 54, pp. 187–203; M. Kazimierczuk, E. Sokalska, *European*

scope of the SAPARD resulted from a compromise between the Polish side (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and the European Commission. The Programme was financed under Annual Financing Agreements concluded by the Polish government with the European Commission. Compliance with the Polish Public Finance Law was also ensured. The financial services of the European Commission would transfer appropriate amounts in euros to the account of the National Fund in the National Bank of Poland, to be expended in subsequent settlement periods.

The SAPARD programme was adopted at the Berlin Summit in 1999 as a pre-accession instrument enabling financial support for agriculture and rural areas of the EC candidate countries. According to the adopted financing rules, the contribution from the European Union could not exceed 75% of the total amount of public funds which constituted the source of subsidies²². All undertakings as part of the programme had to be financed entirely from the applicant's own resources. Only after an undertaking had been completed and formally accepted could the investor obtain a grant from the fund, which was a refund of a proportion of the incurred eligible costs. The period in which interested parties could apply for financial aid expired on 20 February 2004. In that period, all Regional Branches of the ARMA received a total of 31,098 applications spanning Measures 1, 2, 3 and 4 submitted by farmers, local government entities and entrepreneurs. In the contracting period, terminating on 30 September 2004, ARMA signed a total of 24,431 agreements with the beneficiaries of the aforementioned four measures²³.

The SAPARD budget, initially amounting to EUR 944 million (EUR 708.2 million from EU funds and EUR 235.8 million from the national budget), proved to be insufficient as farmers and entrepreneurs showed tremendous interest in taking advantage of the programme, particularly in the final phase of receiving applications²⁴. In an attempt to enable financing of all projects which met SAPARD, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development negotiated with the European Commission to reallocate the amount of EUR 140 million from the budget of the Rural Development Plan 2004–2006²⁵, of

Union support for Natura 2000 sites under the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020, „Journal of Modern Science” 2023, Vol. 51(2), pp. 328–351, DOI: 10.13166/jms/167443.

²² Cf. H. Godlewska, *Polskie rolnictwo wobec integracji z UE*, [in:] C. Sobków, M. Zarębski (eds.), *Obszary wiejskie w Polsce a integracja z Unią Europejską*, Toruń 2003, p. 48.

²³ *Ocena ex-post realizacji Programu SAPARD w Polsce w latach 2000–2006. Umowa nr BDGzp-2910B-8/07*, raport końcowy przygotowany przez Instytut Ekonomiki Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej na zamówienie Ministerstwa Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi z dnia 12 grudnia 2007 r., p. 21.

²⁴ M. Chećko, R. Grochowska, *Rolnictwo*, [w:] A. Bielska (ed.), *Trzy lata członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Bilans korzyści i kosztów społeczno-gospodarczych związanych z członkostwem w Unii Europejskiej – Polska na tle regionu, 1 maja 2004 – 1 maja 2007*, Warsaw 2007, p. 79.

²⁵ The Rural Development Plan 2004–2006 [Plan Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich (PROW)] was an operational document setting out the objectives, priorities, and principles for supporting

which EUR 119.4 million (PLN 467.7 million) was ultimately transferred to the beneficiaries. Thus, the implementation rate of the original budget of the programme reached 112.6%²⁶.

Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture as the institution implementing SAPARD in Poland

The Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) was established in 1994 in order to support the development of agriculture and rural areas. ARMA was appointed by the Government of the Republic of Poland to perform the role of an accredited paying agency²⁷. The implementation of SAPARD in Poland was entrusted to the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture, which had to obtain pertinent accreditation (July 2, 2022). The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development designated the ARMA to act as the SAPARD Agency, which operated through the Central Office located in Warsaw and Regional Branches located in 16 capital cities of the regions²⁸. One of the rules established by the European Union for the SAPARD beneficiary countries was decentralized implementation, whereby the projects would have to be managed directly at the regional rather than at the central level. ARMA was supervised by the minister in charge of agriculture and rural development in general and by the minister in charge of finance with respect to financial issues²⁹. The launch of SAPARD in particular EC candidate countries depended on the pace of preparations as each state had to introduce the necessary institutional solutions.

Apart from the organizational structuring of ARMA, a framework of implementation and payment procedures was required to combine the rules applicable in two distinct sections of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, i.e. the EAGGF Guarantee and Guidance sections, which provided for an instrument of financing the agricultural sector and rural

sustainable rural development 2004–2006. See E. Kiryluk-Dryjska, W. Pocztą, *Kwantyfikacja i ocena alokacji środków strukturalnych Unii Europejskiej przeznaczonych na rozwój rolnictwa w Polsce*, Poznań 2010, p. 32; S. Szumski, *Wspólna Polityka Rolna Unii Europejskiej*, Warsaw 2007, p. 180.

²⁶ *Ocena ex-post...*, p. 21. For more about financing rules within SAPARD, see the publication of J. Rowiński, op. cit., pp. 74–81.

²⁷ Act of 29 December 1993 on the establishment of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture [ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1993 r. o utworzeniu Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa] (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland 1993, No. 1, pos. 2).

²⁸ J. Heller, *Integracja Polski z Unią Europejską*, Bydgoszcz–Olsztyn 2003, p. 90.

²⁹ B. Wieliczko, *Przedakcesyjny Program SAPARD...*, p. 10.

development in the EU³⁰. The accredited SAPARD Agency (ARMA) was responsible for the implementation as well as financial, accounting and controlling aspects of the payments. The SAPARD Agency carried out its implementation function by pursuing the following specific tasks: announcing application opportunities as part of SAPARD; receiving comprehensive project documentation, which comprised completed application with all required attachments and written confirmation of submission; registering applications in the computer system; assessing formal and legal compliance of projects and documents in the light of terms, conditions and criteria of the adopted SAPARD programme; assessing the economic and technical feasibility of the projects³¹; submitting compliant projects for a ranking recommendation with the Regional Steering Committees and the National Committee (within their respective regional and domestic competence); signing contracts and project schedules with programme beneficiaries; carrying out necessary controls both before and after approval of the project; monitoring and control of contract performance as well as monitoring individual measures with respect to relevant indicators.

Upon obtaining accreditation to manage SAPARD, the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture became the first institution in Poland whose operation was governed by EU procedures. It may therefore be claimed that ARMA was a pioneer of institutional transformation in the process of integration with the European Union³².

SAPARD in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship

The task of supplying rural areas with technical infrastructure became one of the foremost issues in the course of Poland's integration with the European Union. Infrastructure has invariably been a crucial factor influencing both the satisfaction of human needs as well as the development of entrepreneurship, especially in non-agricultural domains³³. The availability and efficiency of

³⁰ The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) was established in 1964, under the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (1957). It is engaged in supporting the transformation of the structure of agriculture and assisting the development of rural areas. The EAGGF receives the largest share of the European Union budget. In addition, the Fund's resources come from levies imposed on agricultural products imported from outside the European Union. See more in R. Kisiel, K. Babuchowska, R. Marks-Bielska, *Wykorzystanie dopłat bezpośrednich przez rolników z województwa warmińsko-mazurskiego*, Olsztyn 2008, p. 66.

³¹ A. Babuchowski, *Procedury przygotowywania przedsięwzięć inwestycyjnych w ramach programu SAPARD*, [in:] J. Babiak (ed.), *Polska w obliczu integracji europejskiej – doświadczenia i perspektywy*, Warsaw–Kalisz–Poznań 2003, p. 63.

³² In order to compare development of the SAPARD Programme in other European countries, see more in the publication of Barbara Wieliczko (*Absorpcja unijnego wsparcia...*, pp. 1–35).

³³ C. Sobków, *Problem infrastruktury technicznej wsi i rolnictwa w okresie integracji z Unią Europejską*, [in:] C. Sobków, M. Zarębski (eds.), *Obszary wiejskie w Polsce a integracja z Unią Europejską*, Toruń 2003, p. 128.

such facilities as water supply systems, water treatment plants, sewage systems, sewage treatment plants and roads promotes production, improves the living standards of the rural communities and simultaneously directly impacts the economic development of a given region. Having well-developed infrastructure is a factor which clearly contributes to the emergence of numerous economic initiatives. Local communities naturally expect that their self-governance bodies will make efforts to improve and develop the infrastructure. The importance of the infrastructural issue was reflected by what the World Bank asserted at the time, i.e. that the degree of saturation with technical infrastructure was the key factor in the development of rural and agricultural areas.

Implementation of Measure 3, development and improvement of rural infrastructure

The implementation of Measure 3 of the SAPARD in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship involved aid granted to gminas, gmina associations and powiats, enabling them to finance infrastructure development in rural areas and towns with a population of up to 7,000 persons with regard to rural water supply and water treatment (Scheme 3.1), municipal wastewater collection and treatment (Scheme 3.2), municipal waste management, construction and modernization of municipal and county roads (Scheme 3.3), energy supply using renewable energy sources, particularly wind, water, geothermal water, sun and biomass fuels such as straw and waste timber³⁴. The extent of financial assistance under Measure 3 ranged from 25% to 75% of the eligible project costs (§ 19 of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 May 2002). In the case of investments in water supply for rural households, the subsidy could not exceed the amount of PLN 840,000. The highest co-financing was available for projects related to municipal wastewater collection and treatment, and the reimbursement limit was PLN 1,700,000. Very substantial aid could also be granted to applications related to municipal waste management, being capped at PLN 1,300,000. As for investments involving the construction of communal and district roads in rural areas, ARMA could provide support in the amount of PLN 630,000. The limit for financial aid under the scheme providing for renewable energy supply was set at PLN 420,000. However, none of the gminas

³⁴ Cf. § 3.1 of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 May 2002 on the detailed scope and direction of activities and ways to implement the tasks of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture in the field of management of funds derived from European Union funds [rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 14 maja 2002 r. w sprawie szczegółowego zakresu i kierunków działań oraz sposobów realizacji zadań Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa w zakresie gospodarowania środkami pochodząymi z funduszy Unii Europejskiej] (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland 2002, No. 222, pos. 1866 as amended).

in Warmia and Mazury took advantage of the latter. With respect to Measure 3, the following specific objectives within the SAPARD Operational Programme included:

- making rural areas more attractive to local and external investors;
- ensuring an adequate standard of living for the rural communities;
- ensuring conditions for the implementation of *acquis communautaire*³⁵.

The aid offered by the SAPARD framework for the development and improvement of rural infrastructure drew tremendous interest from territorial self-government, whose scale is shown in the number of submitted applications. Across the entire country, gminas and powiats submitted a total of 6,230 applications to secure funding for infrastructure investments as part of Measure 3. The material outcomes resulting from the implementation of projects under Measure 3 in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (classified by respective schemes) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Material effects of assistance under Measure 3 in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship

Type of projects	Projects adopted	Projects completed
Scheme 3.1: Water supply to rural households with water treatment		
Number of kilometres of the constructed water supply network	522,49	522,35
Number of completed water supply connections	2248	2248
Number of completed water treatment plants	11	11
Number of completed projects		56
Scheme 3.2: Disposal and treatment of commune wastewater and rainwater		
Number of kilometres of the constructed sewage network	220,33	219,91
Number of constructed sewers	1542	1542
Number of sewage treatment plants (collective)	9	9
Number of completed projects		44
Scheme 3.3: Communal and district roads in rural areas		
Number of kilometres of the constructed and modernized communal and district roads	99,36	99,38
Number of completed projects		54

Source: own research based on the data received from the Programming and Reporting Department of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture.

³⁵ At the time of accession to the European Communities, Poland was obliged to adopt the EU law. The SAPARD program was to prepare selected spheres of the economy for the application of European law.

Implementation of Measure 3, diversification of economic activities in rural areas

Along with technical and social infrastructure, an important role should be attributed to tourism infrastructure in rural areas³⁶. In addition to any natural and cultural assets in evidence, it is an element which contributes to the attractiveness of a region in the eyes of tourists. In order for such assets – which to a large extent determine whether tourists decide to visit and stay in a given location – to become a tourist product, a range of so-called complementary products is indispensable, including tourist infrastructure such as hotels and other accommodation facilities, restaurants, trails, tourist information points, sports equipment rental stations as well as local associations dedicated to tourist traffic. This particular branch of the regional economy is supported under Measure 4 of the SAPARD, which specifically concerns the diversification of economic activities in rural areas.

The following were eligible for financial assistance under Measure 4:

- farmers or members of their household, within the meaning of the provisions applicable to social insurance of farmers, for projects aimed at creating sources of additional income in agricultural holdings (Scheme 4.1)³⁷;
- entrepreneurs, for projects implemented to create jobs in rural areas (Scheme 4.2);
- municipalities, inter-municipal associations, registered associations, foundations (excluding foundations established by political parties or the State Treasury), chambers of agriculture, chambers of commerce, socio-professional organisations of farmers, trade unions and for projects implemented to develop public tourist infrastructure in rural areas (Scheme 4.3).

The subsidies under Measure 4 varied depending on the Scheme and amounted to a maximum of PLN 40,000 in Scheme 4.1, PLN 210,000 in Scheme 4.2, whereby the amount was contingent on the number of jobs created, with PLN 35,000 per workplace, and up to PLN 130,000 in Scheme 4.3 for projects aimed at increasing the tourist attractiveness of rural areas (§ 26c of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 May 2002).

SAPARD became an opportunity, especially for the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, to prompt positive changes in the countryside and in small towns, foster economic upturn and mitigate the profound crisis, unemployment and apathy afflicting the region. As a result, projects whose value exceeded the original budget of the programme (thanks to the reallocation of funds from RDP 2004–2006) were successfully implemented in a relatively short period

³⁶ K. Palonka, *Stan i zróżnicowanie przestrzenne infrastruktury społecznej na wsi*, Warsaw 1992, *passim*.

³⁷ M. Leśniewski, W. Nikiciuk, N. Nikiciuk, *Poradnik dla ubiegających się o pomoc finansową w ramach Programu SAPARD*, Olsztyn 2002, p. 10.

of time. These matters should be mainly analysed on a micro-scale, examining the effects in particular gminas and powiats across the region of Warmia and Mazury. SAPARD, due to the relatively minor amounts that were made available under Measure 3 and Scheme 4.3, was able to have a targeted effect on the situation of immediate beneficiaries.

Table 2
Effects of assistance under Measure 4 in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship

Scheme 4.1: Creating sources of additional income on farms		
Type of projects	Projects adopted for implementation	Projects completed
Number of projects by scope of activity:		
1. Services for farms	11	8
2. Small-scale manufacturing, services to the public, crafts and handicrafts	4	0
3. Construction and installation works and services	0	0
4. Tourism services (including agritourism)	127	107
5. Transport services (transportation of people or goods)	9	8
6. Warehousing and storage of goods	1	1
7. Utility services	0	0
8. Accounting, consulting or IT services	1	1
Scheme 4.2: Creation of jobs in rural areas		
Type of projects	Projects adopted for implementation	Projects completed
Number of projects by scope of activity		
1. Services for farms	15	12
2. Small-scale manufacturing, services to the public, crafts and handicrafts	48	37
3. Construction and installation works and services	6	6
4. Tourism services	44	35
5. Transport services (transportation of people or goods)	18	16
6. Warehousing and storage of goods	2	2
7. Utility services	1	0
8. Accounting, consulting or IT services	1	1

Scheme 4.3: Public tourism infrastructure in rural areas		
Type of projects	Projects adopted for implementation	Projects completed
Number of projects by category		
1. Construction or renovation and modernization of elements of public tourist infrastructure	11	11
2. Organization and creation of local communication for tourism purposes	1	1
3. Creation of tourist information systems in municipalities or inter-municipal associations and promotion of municipal assets to increase their tourist attractiveness	3	3

Source: own research based on the data received from the Programming and Reporting.

Department of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture. According to the data of the Statistical Office in Olsztyn on communal infrastructure and housing management in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, in the period of 2002–2006, the length of the water supply network in rural areas of the voivodship, which were subject to SAPARD Programme support, in 2002 amounted to 8104 kilometres. As a result of financial assistance of the SAPARD Programme, municipalities in rural areas of Warmia and Mazury at the end of 2004 put into use 522 kilometres of new water supply systems, which was an increase of more than 6%. It should be also emphasized that the length of the sewage network in 2002 in the of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodship was 1,250 kilometres. Thanks to the SAPARD funds, the length of the communal sewage network at the end of 2004 of communal sewage systems in the region was 220 kilometres, which is a significant increase of almost 18%³⁸.

In the case of public roads (municipal and district roads), their length in 2002 in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodship was 2634 kilometres. As a result of financial assistance of the SAPARD programme in the rural areas of Warmia and Mazury at the end of 2004, there were almost 100 kilometres of new roads (an increase of almost 4%)³⁹.

Pre-accession funds, as well as other current EU aid measures intended for rural areas and agriculture, are most often perceived by the general public as financial support for countryside communities. However, the pursuit of the

³⁸ Urząd Statystyczny w Olsztynie, *Infrastruktura komunalna i gospodarka mieszkaniowa w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim w latach 2002–2006. Informacje i opracowania statystyczne*, Olsztyn 2007, pp. 32, 36–38.

³⁹ J. Bialek, A. Oleksiuk, *Ocena i analiza infrastruktury drogowej w Polsce w ujęciu regionalnym w świetle wykorzystania funduszy Unii Europejskiej, „Autobusy, Technika, Eksplotacja, Systemy Transportowe” 2011, Vol. 12, pp. 6–61.*

objectives described in this paper gives such aid a much broader subjective scope. The projects and investments co-financed under the SAPARD benefited extensive social groups, and their outcomes have been measured with respect to local and, not infrequently, the regional economy as well. For the villages, gminas, and local communities of the Warmia and Mazury region, SAPARD-funded projects concerned with the diversification of activities often proved a source of new jobs, prompted increased attractiveness of the local land and attracted domestic and foreign tourists as well as further investors⁴⁰.

Concluding remarks

It is significant that the SAPARD Programme became an opportunity for the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship to stimulate the impulse of positive transformations in the countryside and small towns, to stimulate economic prosperity, and curb the deep crisis, unemployment, and apathy plaguing the region. As a result, it was possible, in a relatively very short time, to implement projects for an amount exceeding the original allocation of the Programme (thanks to the reallocation of funds from RDP 2004–2006). These issues should be analysed mainly at the micro-scale of individual communes and districts of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship. The SAPARD Program, due to the relatively small funds made available under Measure 3 and Scheme 4.3, may have had a spotty effect on the situation of direct beneficiaries.

Pre-accession funds, and now also other EU funds aid for rural areas and agriculture, are most often perceived by the general public as financial support for rural residents. Meanwhile, through the implementation of the objectives indicated in this article, the aid funds have a much broader scope of subjects. Projects and investments co-financed under SAPARD benefited broad social groups⁴¹, and their effects were measured on the scale of the local and often regional economy. For the villages, municipalities, and local communities of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, the business diversification projects implemented under the SAPARD Programme were often a source of new jobs, influenced the increase of the attractiveness of the territory, attracted domestic and foreign tourists, as well as further investors.

⁴⁰ See also comparative statistic analysis concerning implementation of separate programme measures addressed to Polish agriculturists and entrepreneurs presented by Paweł Bryła, *Zarządzanie rozwojem..., pp. 127–147.*

⁴¹ M. Kazimierczuk, *Wykorzystanie pomocy finansowej w ramach przedakcesyjnego Programu SAPARD w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim*, [in:] P. Majer, M. Kowalczyk (eds.), *10 lat Polski w Unii Europejskiej*, Olsztyn 2015, pp. 45–57.

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Summary

Financial assistance for local government entities under Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship

Keywords: agricultural law, self-governmental units, EU structural programmes, pre-accession funds, agricultural policy, financial mechanisms.

Special Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) was designed for EU candidate countries, including Poland and nine other states in Central and Eastern Europe. Implementation of SAPARD was an important stage as the institutions and beneficiaries in the involved states prepared for the prospective use of Structural Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy following accession to the European Union. The aim of this paper is to outline the scope of utilization of financial aid granted as part of the SAPARD programme in the Warmia and Mazury region (Poland) for the benefit of local government entities, while relying on data sourced from the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture for analysis. The support obtained within this framework by local self-government entities contributed to the improvement of rural infrastructure. This pre-accession aid mechanism of the European Union became a major opportunity – especially for the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship – to nurture positive changes in villages and small towns, promote economic improvement, and contain the severe crisis affecting the region.

Streszczenie

Pomoc finansowa w ramach Specjalnego Przedakcesyjnego Programu na Rzecz Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich (SAPARD) na rzecz jednostek samorządu terytorialnego w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim

Słowa kluczowe: prawo rolne, jednostka samorządowa, programy strukturalne UE, fundusze przedakcesyjne, polityka rolna, mechanizmy finansowe.

Specjalny Przedakcesyjny Program na Rzecz Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich (SAPARD) został opracowany dla krajów kandydujących do Unii Europejskiej, w tym dla Polski i dziewięciu innych państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Wdrażanie SAPARD było ważnym etapem przygotowań instytucji i beneficjentów w zaangażowanych państwach do przyszłego wykorzystania

funduszy strukturalnych i wspólnej polityki rolnej po przystąpieniu do Unii Europejskiej. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie zakresu wykorzystania pomocy finansowej udzielonej w ramach programu SAPARD w woj. warmińsko-mazurskim na rzecz jednostek samorządu terytorialnego, przy wykorzystaniu do analizy danych pochodzących z Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa. Wsparcie uzyskane w tych ramach przez jednostki samorządu terytorialnego przyczyniło się do poprawy infrastruktury wiejskiej. Ten przedakcesyjny mechanizm pomocowy Unii Europejskiej stał się dużą szansą, szczególnie dla woj. warmińsko-mazurskiego, na pielęgnowanie pozytywnych zmian na wsi i w małych miastach, promowanie poprawy gospodarczej i powstrzymanie poważnego kryzysu, który dotknął ten region.