



Erasmus+

KA220-HED - Cooperation partnerships

in higher education

(KA220-HED)

PROJECT NUMBER: 2023-1-EL01-KA220-HED-000164728

Deliverable Report

Project acronym: **DEMo4PPL**

Project full title: **Digital Education Modules 4 Participatory Planning**

Deliverable	No.	O.9	Title	Polish report on Participatory Planning (PPL) approaches and practice
Workpackage	No.	WP2	Title	Needs assessment and gap analysis
Activity	No.	A2.2	Title	Overview of Participatory Planning practice at national level
Date of preparation of this version:			25/04/2024	
Authors:			Marta Nalej, Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierała, Tomasz Napierała, Tomasz Mikołajczyk, Tadeusz Pupar, University of Lodz	
Status (D: draft; RD: revised draft; F: final):			F	
File Name:			DEMo4PPL-O.9-v4.doc	
Version:			4	



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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Revision History

Version No.	Date	Comment (if needed)
1	03.04.2024	
2	11.04.2024	
3	20.04.2024	
4	25.04.2024	

Reviewers list

Name	Institution	Date
Giancarlo Cotella	Politecnico di Torino	17.04.2024
Nikolaos Gavanas	University of Thessaly	13.04.2024

List of abbreviations

PPL: participatory planning

PB: Participatory budget

LAGs: local action groups

NGOs: Non-governmental organisations

1. Introduction

The activity A2.2: “Overview of Participatory Planning (PPL) practice at national level” is part of WP2: “Needs assessment and gap analysis” and aims:

- To gain an increased and comprehensive understanding of PPL practices, tools, policies, and approaches at national level
- To identify good practices in participating countries.

The overall purpose is to use all acquired information to identify specific needs, gaps and goals in each country, as well as to identify common needs and set common objectives. The report focuses on the fields of “Rural Development and Planning”, which is the field of interest of the University of Lodz for WP2. The study analyses the importance of participation in the context of spatial planning in Poland. The report consists of three parts. The first part refers to the conditions of participatory planning in Poland in relation to each field of interest: “Urban Mobility”, “Land Use Planning”, “Rural Development and Planning” and “Tourism management and Planning”. The third part presents selected examples of good practices in the field of PPL. The focus of this part is on rural development and planning - the particular field of interest of the team of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Lodz. The information from external sources, as well as from in-depth interviews with professionals was used.

The main input for the report is the desktop research and the on-line surveys with the participation of experts in each specific fields. The questionnaires of the on-line survey are presented in Annex. A total of 24 responses were collected for four fields of interest from respondents representing various types of organization/professional position (Table 1). The second part discusses participatory processes in practice, based on information obtained in survey, In-depth interviews with professionals in the field of rural development and planning.

Table 1. Number and type of organisations/professional position of survey participants.

Fields of interest	Land Use Planning	Rural Development and Planning	Tourism management and Planning	Urban Mobility
Number of Respondents	6	5	7	6
Type of organisations/professional position of survey participants in each field of interest				
Academics	1	1	3	2
Consultants	0	0	0	2
Educators	0	0	1	0
Government Institutions	1	2	0	0
Local Authority	2	1	0	1
Local Development Agency	0	0	3	0
Private sector	0	1	0	0
Research Institutes	2	0	0	1

Source: surveys

Legal mandates, such as the *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (2023), clearly establish the need for public involvement in planning processes. However, the effectiveness of these mandates depends on their actual implementation, which requires active interaction between authorities and society. The legal changes have linked spatial planning in Poland with the idea of social participation, which is the foundation of modern local democracy. Social participation is no longer limited to passively observing decision-making processes but becomes active involvement of citizens in shaping the future of their communities.

The development of social participation in Poland is closely related to the democratic reforms after 1989 and the transposition of the European Union law. Since these breakthrough changes, spatial planning has moved from a unilateral act of management to a process of consultation and negotiation. Participatory processes in Poland include institutional involvement resulting from legal conditions, as well as non-institutional initiatives, such as grassroots activities, local initiatives, or PB. All of these activities are aimed at strengthening the position of residents in the decision-making process and shaping the living environment.

An important stage in the spatial planning process is the integration of the results of public consultations with the planning documents. However, to be effective, it is necessary to include feedback from stakeholders and transparent decision-making processes. Success factors in PPL include a clear institutional framework, effective communication channels, up-to-date participation tools, and flexibility to adapt plans based on community input. However, there are also obstacles such as limited awareness, unequal access to information and resources, and resource constraints that pose challenges to effective participation. Understanding and taking these factors into account is essential to increase the effectiveness of PPL processes in Poland. This requires joint efforts from government institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities.

2. Methodology

The Activity is structured according to the following steps:

Step 1. Identification of scientific fields of interest

This is a separate step implemented for both Activities 2.2 and 2.3. The produced work documents were uploaded in the shared workspace of the project. Based on an open-ended questionnaire, for each department/branch/institute involved in the project, the partners are asked to briefly describe:

- the subject of studies,
- the general objectives of the study programme,
- the current research interest,
- and, finally, to indicate the scientific field(s) that they consider focusing on for the DEMo4PPL education modules. As for the latter, the UNESCO ISCED-F 2013 may be used (available [here](#)).

Step 2. Survey

The survey's goal is to collect data and comprehensive knowledge about PPL practice at the national level in each participating country. The survey results after the required consent of respondents will supplement the literature review required to produce the country's report. Step 2 consists of three parts:

Part A. Planning fields and participation

An open-ended questionnaire is addressed to 20 participants per country which are considered experts in the identified scientific fields (5 experts / field / country, 20 experts in total / country). This part of the survey targets practitioners, decision makers and local authorities. It is proposed that the participants complete the questionnaire on paper, either in person or by email ('self-administered paper questionnaires'). Each participant is asked to respond to the following questions regarding his/her own scientific field of expertise:

1. How much important or/and urgent is this field in terms of spatial planning?
2. Which is the spatial level of this planning field (e.g. national, regional, local)?
3. Is there any institutional obligation for mandatory participation and consultation processes concerning planning processes?
4. Apart from the possible institutional obligations for mandatory participation and consultation processes in the field, are there any non-institutional / informal participation processes?
5. Are there any mechanisms to ensure the integration of the participation outcomes in the final planning product?
6. What are the main success factors and impediments as regards participation processes in the field in your country?
7. Please list up to three good practices of public participation in your field.

Part B. Participatory processes in practice

Part B of the survey focuses on the scientific field of interest that was identified by each partner at Step 1 (5 experts / field) and aims to shed light on more detailed aspects of PPL in each country examined, both on institutional and planning practice level. It is suggested that each partner administers the questionnaire in person ('face-to-face interviews'), as this is a mode that allows for a high degree of control over the survey environment and can result in higher response rates. Each participant on the survey is asked to respond to the following questions regarding the specific scientific field of expertise:

1. What are the participation objectives in terms of aspiration/motivation (e.g. democratization, advising) and targeted output (e.g. mapping out diversity, reaching consensus)?
2. What (e.g. costs, equipment, staff) and how many (in case that relevant data are available) resources are allocated for accomplishing participatory processes? Are these resources separate or additional to the resources allocated for planning processes?

3. Which is/are the stage(s) of the planning process, where participatory endeavors are embedded (e.g. problem and goal definition, analysis of the current situation and its dynamics, developing/evaluating/selecting scenarios/solutions, formulating policy framework/measures)?
4. Which is/are the type(s) (e.g. stakeholders, experts, decision-makers) and planning jurisdiction of the coordinator(s) involved?
5. Which is/are the type(s) (e.g. public, stakeholders, experts, decision-makers) and spatial level (e.g. national, regional, local) of the participants involved?
6. What is the level of participants' engagement (e.g. manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, citizen control)? What is the impact of participation regarding decision-making?
7. Which are the specific (obligatory/optional) participation methods (e.g. Focus Groups, World Café, Charrette;), techniques (e.g. Brainstorming, Crowdsourcing, Mind Mapping) and means of information/communication (e.g. Fact Sheets, Tree Diagrams, Geographic Information Systems) used in physical (face-to-face), digital or hybrid participatory processes?

Part C. Good practices

Part C corresponds to a practice-based approach that will support the completion of the reports. It is based on the review of a selection of representative cases related to the identified scientific fields of interest (at least 5 cases per partner). A template has been prepared by SEMPXPA to help systematize all information needed to comprehend the characteristics of the case study and its value as regards PPL.

3. Planning fields and participation

3.1. Overview

This chapter provides general information about the integration of public participation in the planning and development in Poland.

3.1.1. Importance/Urgency in terms of spatial planning

Social participation is currently treated as the foundation of modern democracy and, in a broad and universal sense, means the voluntary participation of citizens in the management of public affairs of the community of which they are members. In practice, social participation of residents means their formal participation in the process of creating planning documents, making key local decisions, and solving local problems. In the context of spatial planning, relevant legal provisions, such as the *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023)*, ensure public participation in the creation of individual planning documents. This is achieved primarily by mandating authorities to subject these documents to public consultation. However, the effectiveness of the legally mandated obligation to conduct consultations, including their prescribed forms and extent, is based on their proper execution. Within the broader investment process, social participation during the preparation of a local study or plan presents a significant opportunity for direct interaction between local government authorities and the public (Dobosz-Mucha et al., 2018, Leśniewska-Napieręta & Napieręta 2020, Leśniewska-Napieręta et al., 2022).

Social participation is conditioned by the following: 1) the existence of a liberal democratic state system; 2) decentralisation of public administration (social participation takes place mainly at the local government level); 3) political maturity of local communities (civil society is the highest level of social development currently known, based on the idea of co-governance and co-responsibility). Social participation developed in Poland as the result of three fundamental processes, namely: 1) political, social and economic transitions after 1989 and the adoption of good practices from western countries; 2) transposition of EU law into national law; 3) development of civil society (Olejniczak 2015). Therefore, spatial planning has become a sequence of consultations and social negotiations and not an act of spatial management as before (Kikosicka 2014).

Due to the *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023)*, ensuring social participation involves: 1) enabling the participation of stakeholders in spatial planning and development, hereinafter referred to as "stakeholders", in the preparation of spatial planning acts, including expressing opinions, submitting applications, or participating in public consultations; 2) understanding the needs, collecting the positions and ideas of stakeholders regarding spatial policy; 3) conducting educational and information activities about the essence, goals, and principles of spatial planning and development; 4) initiating, enabling, and supporting activities aimed at developing dialogue between stakeholders as a part of shaping and conducting spatial policy and increasing the participation of stakeholders in shaping and conducting spatial policy.

Land use planning

The survey participants indicated that participation is crucial in the context of spatial planning. Due to the Act amending the Act on Spatial Planning and Development and certain other acts (2023), this is a mandatory process. The answers indicated that space cannot be planned without discussing changes with its future users, and participation helps avoid situations in which planning decisions are contrary to the expectations of residents. It also allows for taking into account various needs, integrating urban policy, reducing spatial conflicts, and assigning appropriate functions to areas, which contributes to effective and sustainable development.

Rural development and planning

With regard to rural development and planning, respondents indicated that participation is very important. It allows you to give opinions on documents and projects, e.g. routes of roads, highways, investment locations, etc. for effective local planning and development. Participation supports spatial planning in rural areas, which is increasingly difficult and requires making many decisions, which are often the cause of disputes between residents and local authorities and also generate additional costs. It is particularly important in suburban areas, where the introduction of non-agricultural buildings in the vicinity of agricultural buildings generates spatial conflicts.

Tourism management and planning

In the context of tourism management and planning, the survey participants indicated that participation is important in areas with tourism as the dominant branch of the economy and influences, among others, the way tourist traffic is managed in areas with high tourist attractiveness. It allows the needs of tourism to be taken into account when planning infrastructure, which is crucial for the development of the area as an attractive tourist destination. Participation plays an important role in tourism planning and management, especially considering the complex nature of this activity and its impact on the local community. Tourist activities, although dispersed both economically and spatially, are also characterized by clustering and spatial concentration around specific resources. As a spatial and economic function, it is quite aggressive in relation to other functions through the phenomena of tourism and gentrification.

Urban mobility

Participation is important in shaping urban mobility because, according to respondents, decisions made in the field of spatial planning have an impact on urban mobility. It has been described as extremely important, both from the point of view of residents and the spatial planning process in the context of infrastructure, resources and transport offer.

3.1.2. Spatial level of reference in policy development and implementation / planning

Public consultations are sanctioned by law and can be distinguished between those that are obligatory and those that are optional. Mandatory consultations are organised in the event of changes to the boundaries of the municipalities, granting the municipality the status of a city, determining and changing the names of municipalities and the seats of their authorities. The legislator also obliges local authorities to conduct consultations when developing a spatial document and in connection with investments that have a significant impact on the environment (Michalska-Żyła 2017).

Due to the *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023)*, the social participation at the local level is carried out:

1. in a way that enables active participation of stakeholders, including people with special needs,
2. respecting the transparency and efficiency of proceedings regarding the preparation of spatial planning acts,
3. using information on the prepared spatial planning acts prepared in a non-specialised language, in particular explaining the consequences of the prepared spatial planning acts.

As social practice proves, public consultations do not attract much interest from citizens in Poland. The experience shows that only a few people participate in each process. It should be noted that the level of participation in consultations relating to matters important to the local community varies. The highest participation of residents was recorded in the case of obligatory consultation of the local development plan and in the case of controversial issues, e.g. the location of burdensome investments.

Land use planning

Spatial planning is carried out primarily at the local level, which is reflected in master or general plans. The Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023) obliges local authorities to ensure public participation in this process. In the case of planning at the regional level, establishing a spatial development plan for voivodeships, proposals for the draft plan are also collected. After preparing the draft plan, opinions and agreements on the project are collected, but from selected competent authorities and institutions.

Rural development and planning

Respondents indicated that spatial planning and participation takes place at the local level, i.e., at the municipal level, and includes the creation of master plans. Communes, as the basic units of local government, that have the greatest influence on shaping rural space by establishing the principles of development,, land development and investment location.

Tourism management and planning

Only in the case of Tourism management and planning was indicated that spatial planning and participation take place at three spatial levels. At the national level, general directions for tourism policy and tourism development strategies are indicated. At the regional level, tourism development strategies are created taking into account the specific natural, historical, and cultural values of a given region. At the local level, local tourism development strategies are created, including: development of tourist areas, development of tourist infrastructure, and promotion of local attractions and events.

Urban mobility

Survey participants indicated that in the case of urban mobility, planning and participation take place mainly at the local level because municipalities and cities are responsible for organizing traffic and mobility within their territory. At the regional level, public transport development strategies, transport plans and investment programs are created that take into account the specific needs and conditions of a given area.

3.1.3. Institutional obligation for mandatory participation and consultation processes

In Polish law, provisions relating to social participation are included in *the Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (Dz.U. 2023 poz. 1688). The amendment to the act introduced a whole separate chapter of legal provisions devoted to social participation in spatial planning. These procedures concern the preparation of a draft study of the conditions and directions for the development of the commune and the local spatial development plan (Table 1).

Table 2. Procedures and tools used in Poland during social participation.

Act	Law procedures	Public participation tools
Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts	Spatial planning at the local level is related to the creation and enforcement of provisions of documents such as the general plan of the commune (by 2023, a study of the conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune) and the local spatial development plan.	1) collecting comments (obligatory); 2) open meetings, expert panels or workshops, preceded by the presentation of the draft spatial planning act; 3) outdoor meetings or study walks organized in the area covered by the spatial planning act; 4) surveys or geosurveys; 5) interviews, running a consultation point or designer's duties.

Act	Law procedures	Public participation tools
Act on revitalization	<p>The procedure for drawing up a revitalisation plan is the same as the procedure for drawing up a local spatial development plan.</p> <p>Any activities undertaken by local government units should result in statements from all stakeholders. The opinion of the inhabitants and business entities operating in the area covered by a revitalisation programme is particularly important.</p>	<p>1) collecting comments in paper or electronic form (obligatory),</p> <p>2) meetings, debates, workshops, study walks, questionnaires, interviews, the use of representative groups or collecting oral comments (obligatory min. 2 different forms).</p>
Act on the village fund	<p>The village fund is a form of PB. The village fund is financial resources allocated in the commune budget, which are guaranteed to village councils to carry out projects aimed at improving their living conditions.</p>	<p>This is a village meeting - i.e. residents of a given village decide what the above-mentioned funds are to be used for. financial resources. Therefore, it is the residents themselves who want the funds to be spent correctly and effectively.</p>
LEADER method	<p>Approach supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, EAFRD community-led local development.</p>	<p>1) involvement of local community members in LAGs,</p> <p>2) cooperation within the partnership,</p> <p>3) cooperation of LAGs with other local actors in the area of development.</p>

Source: own elaboration based on *Act amending the act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (Dz.U. 2023 poz. 1688), *Act on revitalization* (Dz. U. 2015, poz. 1777), *Act on the village fund* (Dz. U. poz. 301 z późn. zm.), *Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Of The European Parliament and of The Council .of 17 December 2013*, *Zajda et al., 2017*.

As outlined in the *Act on Revitalisation* (Dz. U. 2015, poz. 1777), the revitalisation procedure must prioritise the interests of residents, businesses, NGOs, and informal groups within the designated area. As defined by the Act, social participation includes the participation of stakeholders in the planning, execution, and evaluation phases of the revitalisation process. This involvement is to be guaranteed through social consultations and active participation in the Revitalisation Committee.

The engagement process, encompassing both consultation and co-decision approaches, can be implemented through diverse techniques and formats. One such method is a study walk, an outdoor gathering involving stakeholders following a preplanned scenario. This allows for the identification of specific locations and elements that may require intervention, as well as an exploration of the sentiments and needs of participants regarding different aspects of the space. The primary objective of employing this technique is to allow users and stakeholders of a potential project to evaluate the space or gather ideas for innovative solutions in spatial development. Conducting a walk facilitates the inclusion of users and provides an opportunity to assess various spatial solutions in the real context of their utilisation. Community institutions can use the recommendations resulting from these consultations to design new or improve existing solutions for urban space development.

The PB plays a special role in Poland. It became an innovative policymaking mechanism, in rural areas as well, for its involvement of inhabitants directly in the decision-making process. During the PB the residents decide to allocate a specific portion of the funds from their unit's general budget. Citizens can help and propose creative solutions to the local government (Kębtowski, 2013; Wampler, 2000). Contemporary politics is based on transparency, accessibility and consultation approaches, so PB became a tool of enhancing the quality of democracy (Bernaciak, Rzeńca, and Sobol, 2017). A special form of PB is the Village Fund which was established in rural and urban-rural communes in 2014 as an instrument to help engage local communities in rural areas in decision-making processes. The Act on the village fund introduced a standardized system of supporting local initiatives, which enables the implementation of socially important projects in the village area. Thanks to the Act on the Village Fund, there was a significant increase in social activity and civic initiatives in rural areas (Feltynowski 2019).

In rural areas, the implementation of the LEADER method aimed at involving members of the local community in the activities of the LAGs, increasing the level of social activity and participation of individuals in the public sphere, and developing cooperation between LAGs and other local actors. In Poland, this type of partnership was perceived as superficial, dominated by the public sector, or simply copying local political, administrative and social systems. The interest in this form of participation in rural areas was in many cases temporary, especially since the new solution turned out to be difficult to implement and required both commitment and compliance with the restrictive principles of the LEADER method (Zajda et al., 2017). The approach is described in more detail in document 2.1 Overview of PPL approach in EU policy.

Land use planning

In the case of land use planning in Poland, there is an institutional obligation to participate and consult in planning processes, especially in the field of activities such as the development of master plans. In this context, great emphasis is placed on public consultations. As part of spatial planning at the commune level, public participation is taken into account through the possibility of submitting applications to the draft plan and participating in public consultations. At the stage of making the master plan available for

public inspection, the public has the opportunity to submit comments and suggestions to the draft document.

Rural development and planning

The responses of the participating experts indicate that the Act amending the act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023) contains provisions that oblige the municipal authorities to organize the participation of residents in the spatial planning process. The need to implement participation processes was also mentioned in the case of the LIDER program.

Tourism management and planning

The majority of the respondents indicated that in Poland there is no mandatory obligation to organize participation processes in issues related to tourism management and planning. Cases are indicated where work on tourism planning takes place at the level of a consulting team, although there is no formal obligation, the practice of cooperation with stakeholders, including NGOs, may lead to consultations in the planning process.

Urban mobility

The survey participants indicated that there are different approaches and requirements for participation and consultation in urban mobility planning processes. In some cases, consultation may be required when creating transport/urban mobility plans. There is a requirement for public consultations in the case of feasibility studies and in the field of spatial planning, e.g., master plans.

3.1.4. Non-institutional / informal participation processes

In addition to the classic form of participation, bottom-up initiatives (spontaneous) are increasingly appearing in Poland, within which residents can not only participate in the planning process, but also initiate certain changes and, most importantly, take part in shaping space on a micro-scale.

In 2010, as part of the amendment to the *Act on public benefit activities and volunteering and certain other acts* (2010), a new form of social participation was introduced in Poland, the local initiative. The purpose of its introduction was to activate local communities and strengthen the role of informal groups in making decisions at the local level and implementing joint projects that are particularly important for the community of a given unit. Importantly, a local initiative should not be equated with entrusting a public task to residents or with the local government covering the costs of the task undertaken by them. The local initiative is considered the highest form of social participation, in which residents commit to implement a public task on an equal footing with the local government (Grzyś 2021). A local initiative is the highest form of social participation involving cooperation between residents and local government authorities, under which both parties are involved in implementing a project for the benefit of the local community. This form is still used to a small extent.

Land use planning

In addition to institutional obligations to consult and participate in land use planning in Poland, there are also noninstitutional or informal obligations regarding participation processes. Examples of such activities can be found in public consultations, especially in larger cities. In practice, it is possible to organize additional meetings or consultations that go beyond the requirements of statutory provisions. These may include additional consultations conducted by municipalities, meetings with people interested in city plans for a specific place or area covered by the draft plan, or internal opinions on draft local plans by various office units.

Rural development and planning

The respondents indicated that in Poland, in the field of rural development and planning, there is no requirement to conduct participation processes beyond institutional obligations. However, there are examples of good practice that involve expanding the possible forms of consultation and conducting additional forms of participation. This happens at the level of local communities, especially in cases of objectionable investments.

Tourism management and planning

Experts indicated that there are some forms of informal networks of experts and tourism organizations that play an advisory or management role in tourism management and planning. These organizations can be an important part of participation processes, although their activities may be limited or not well known in some regions. Examples of cooperation between industry associations or associations that may lead to participation in consultations with an advisory voice.

Urban mobility

Apart from institutional obligations to conduct consultations and participation in the field of urban mobility in Poland, experts did not indicate the existence of formal noninstitutional obligations in this area. However, there are some informal practices that can be interpreted as commitments to participatory processes. For example, seeking the opinion of local experts such as residents of different age groups, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

3.1.5. Integration of outcomes in the planning product

According to *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts (2023)*, an integration of results into the planning product is included in the process of adopting planning documents. The first phase of the procedure involves the municipal council deciding to start work on the planning document, its announcement by the mayor or city president, and informing residents of the form, place, and deadline for submitting requests for inclusion in the planning document. After collecting the requests, the mayor or city president reviews them and prepares a draft document. During this process, consultations are held, and opinions are gathered from relevant authorities and

institutions. After reaching agreements and obtaining opinions, the draught is modified and then subjected to further consultations and review.

Before starting public consultations, a list of proposals is prepared for the spatial planning document, along with a justification for their consideration. The next stage is the announcement of the draught for public inspection, during which residents of the municipality can submit their comments. A public discussion on the proposed solutions in the draught is also organised, providing residents with the opportunity to express their opinions. The form of discussion is open and advisory in nature.

After considering the comments submitted, the mayor may make any necessary changes. Before presenting the spatial planning document to the municipal council, a report summarising the course of public consultations is prepared. It includes a list of submitted comments along with proposals for their consideration and justification, a list of disregarded comments, and protocols from the consultation activities. Requests and comments related to the same issue but submitted by different stakeholders, may be considered together as one proposal. Subsequently, the municipal council decides on how to address these comments. Incorporating the provided opinions is not an obligation, but rather a right. They may be taken into account if they are deemed valuable for the substantive content of the document or its social acceptance. The proposal for addressing requests for the spatial planning document and comments submitted during public consultations is not subject to appeal to the administrative court. However, stakeholders have the opportunity to lodge a complaint against the resolution of the municipal council regarding the determinations of the planning product or the procedure for its preparation (Hajduk, 2021).

Due to the *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (2023), the general plan will replace the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the municipality. It will be an act of local law and its findings will provide the basis for adopting local masterplans. It will need to define planning zones and municipal urban planning standards. The general plans will have to be prepared by the end of 2025. An entire chapter of the act was devoted to social participation. Access to it is simplified. Comments may be submitted during the consultation, including digital tools. Moreover, the methods, places and dates of public consultations will have to be determined so that as many interested parties as possible can participate in them, for example: after working hours or in places adapted to the needs of people with special needs.

Land use planning

The survey participants' responses indicate that there are mechanisms ensuring the integration of the results of public participation in the final planning product in the field of land use planning in Poland. Integration of the participation results may take place through analysis and consideration of the comments and proposals in the planning process. If comments are considered valid, they are taken into account in the planning project. All applications and comments submitted officially are considered, and their acceptance can result in changes to the planning document. If a comment is rejected, it is necessary to explain why it was not taken into account. Discussions are also held with the interested

communities in order to obtain a more complete picture of the needs and expectations of the local community. A good practice is to use tools such as geosurveys and GIS tools to analyze the collected data and take them into account in the planning process.

Rural development and planning

According to experts, there are mechanisms that ensure the integration of the results of public participation in the final planning product in rural development and planning in Poland. In the case of master plans, according to applicable regulations on public participation, a report is prepared from the consultation that contains a reference to the comments submitted, including how they were taken into account in the final version of the planning document. Special applications created for local governments are used, which can be used to analyze the results of public participation and their use in making planning decisions.

Tourism management and planning

The survey results revealed that there are no commonly used mechanisms that ensure the integration of public participation in the final planning product in the field of tourism management and planning in Poland. The results of public consultations may be considered, but the decision to include them in the final planning material depends on the decisions of officials/authorities. Respondents indicate a lack of knowledge of such mechanisms, which suggests that they are not commonly used or sufficiently known as a mechanism for integrating the results of participation.

Urban mobility

Experts' responses show that there are certain legal provisions (example: Act on the principles of implementing tasks financed from European funds in the financial perspective 2021-2027, Dz.U. 2022 poz. 1079) and local initiatives supporting the integration of public participation in urban mobility planning processes. However, in practice, there are no common mechanisms to ensure full integration of participation results into the final planning product. Information during participation processes can be analyzed by experts and used to formulate target directions of changes and guidelines, there are no commonly used mechanisms to guarantee that this information will be fully integrated in the final planning product.

3.1.6. Success factors and impediments

Success factors and impediments in the participation process in Poland can be influenced by e.g., the local context, the level of institutional support, and the engagement of stakeholders. Understanding and addressing both success factors and impediments can help improve the success of the participation process in Poland. This requires concerted efforts from government institutions, civil society organizations, and communities to overcome challenges and build trust in collaborative decision-making (Hajduk, 2021).

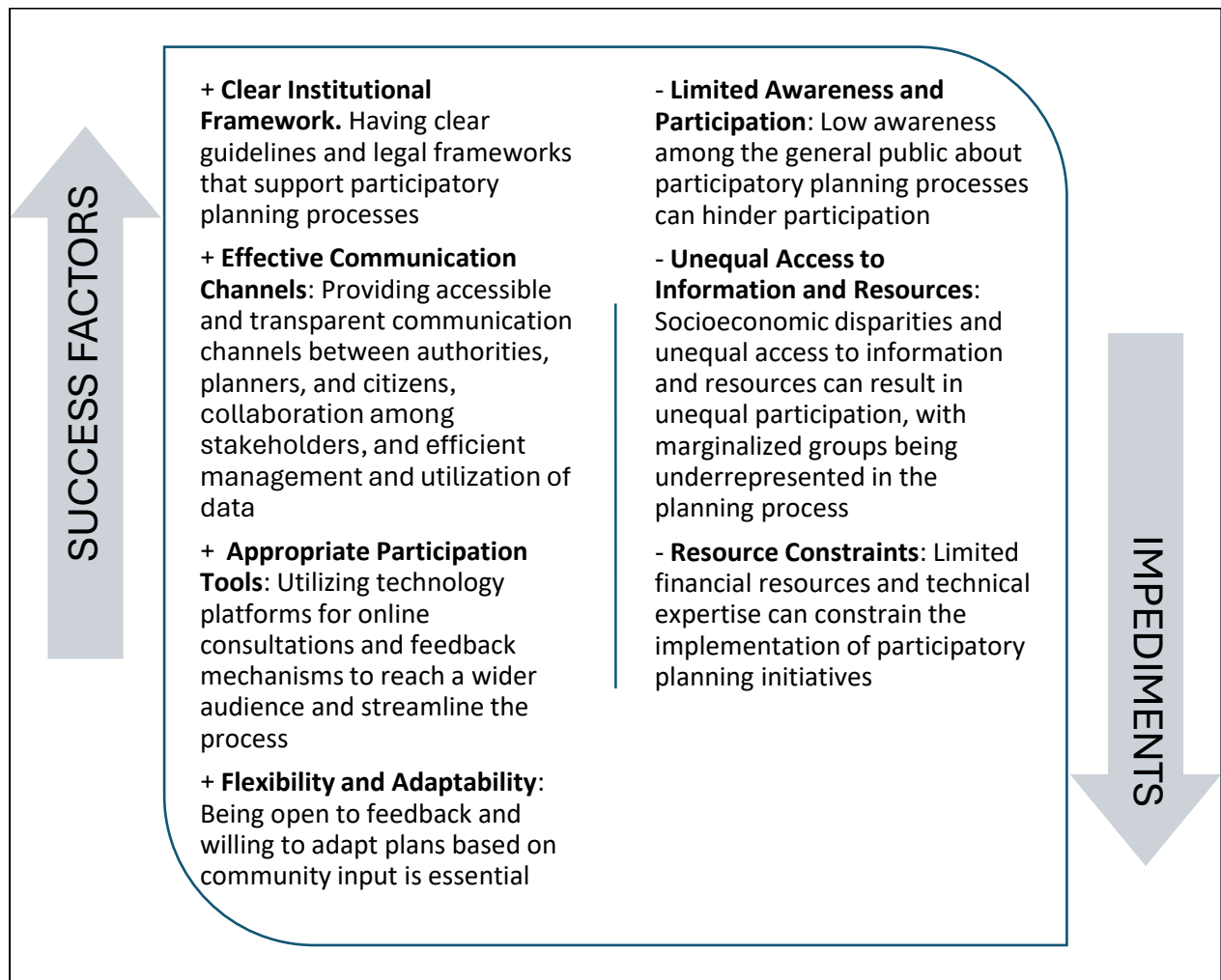


Figure 1. Success factors and impediments for implementing PPL in the field of land use planning in Poland.

Source: surveys



Figure 2. Success factors and impediments for implementing PPL in the field of rural development and planning in Poland.

Source: surveys

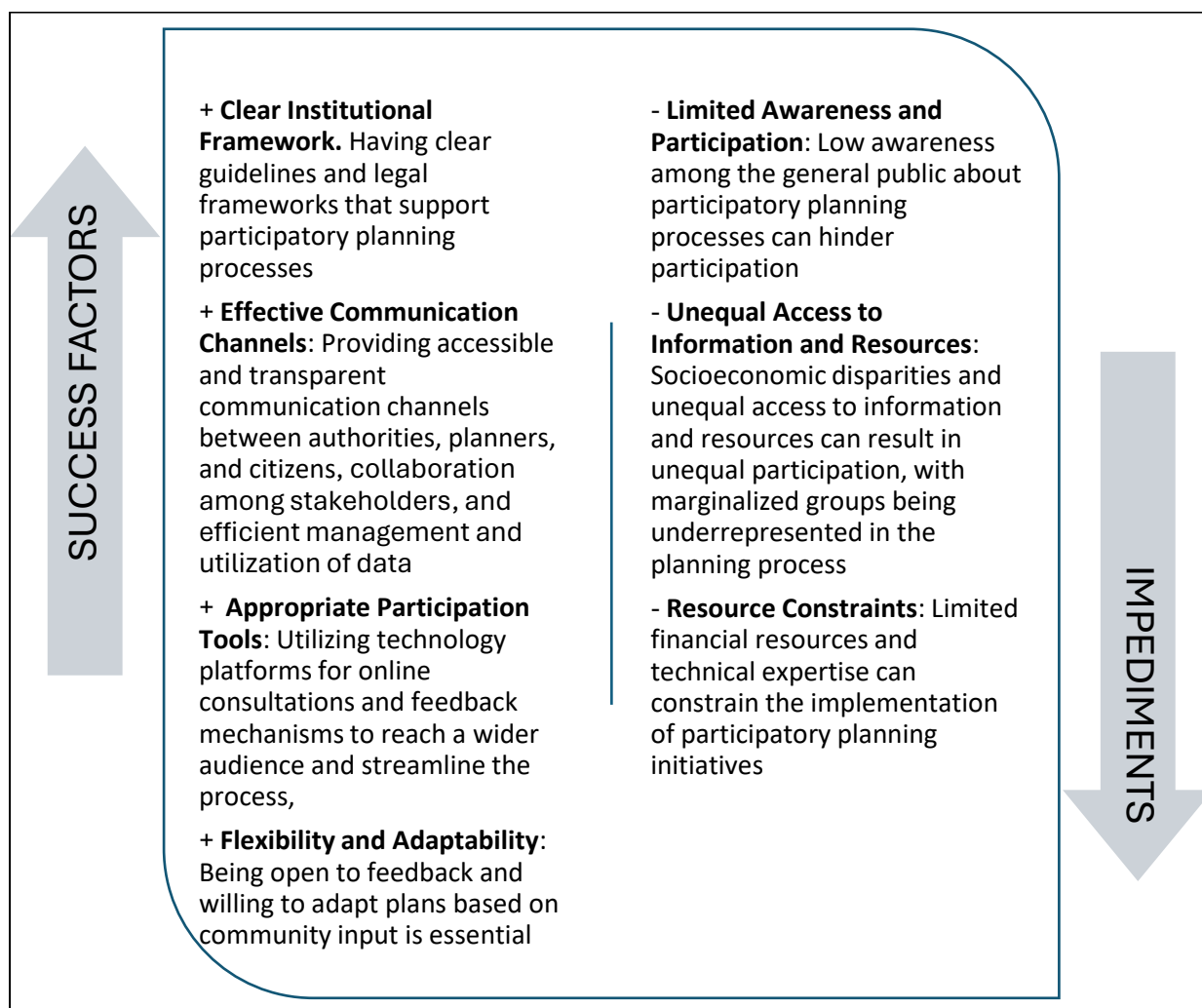


Figure 3. Success factors and impediments for implementing PPL in the field tourism management and planning in Poland.

Source: surveys

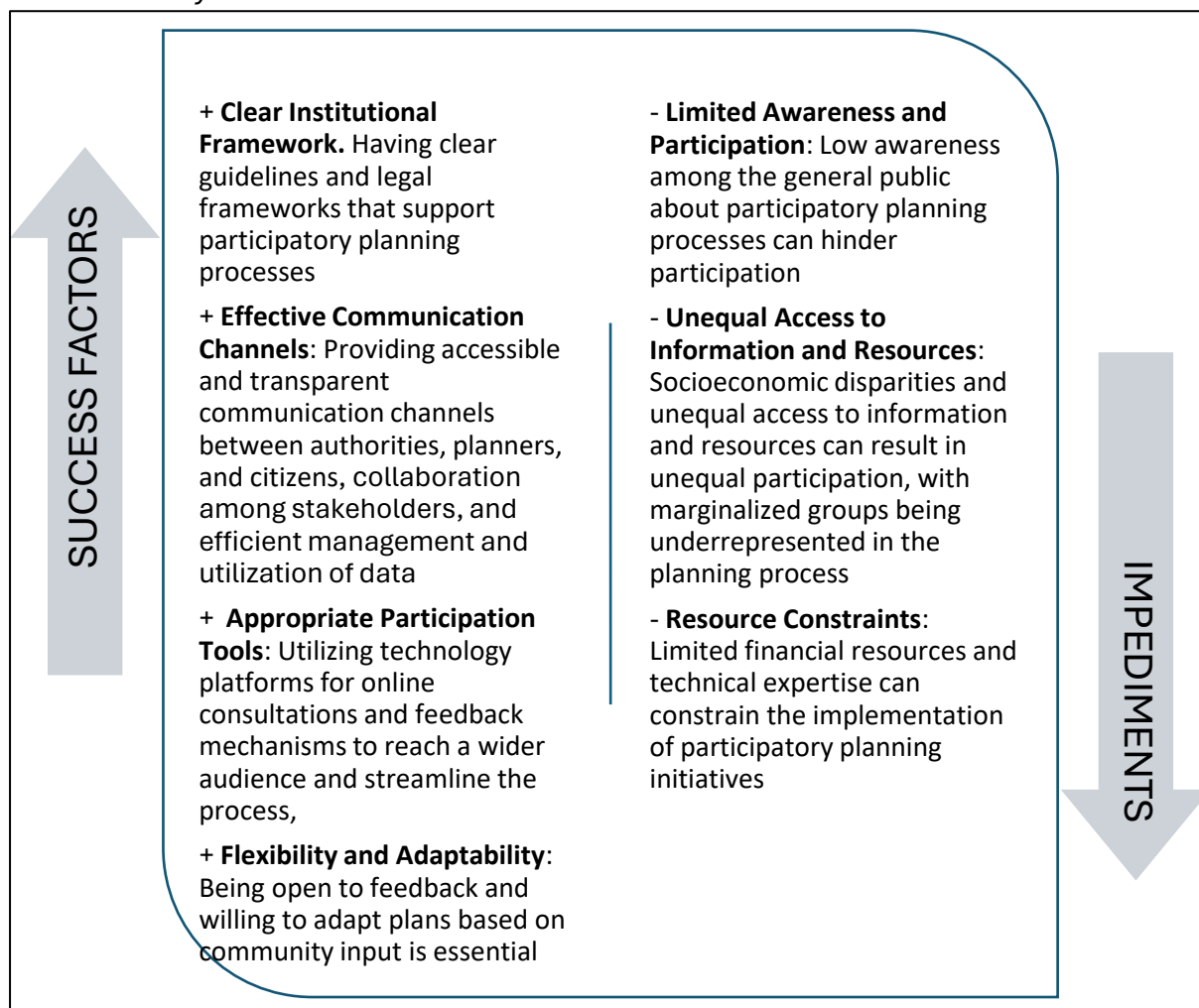


Figure 4. Success factors and impediments for implementing PPL in the field of urban mobility in Poland.

Source: surveys

3.2. Detailed analysis of field of interest (Poland): Rural development and planning

This section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the issue of public participation in planning for **Rural development and planning** and to correlate the current practice with the implementation of the theory on PPL

3.2.1. Participatory processes in practice

PPL practices at the national level were described based on materials collected through surveys. Responses were obtained from practitioners, decision-makers, and local authorities, including the participation of respondents representing fields of interest: land use planning, rural development and planning, urban mobility, tourism management, and planning. To obtain more detailed knowledge about various aspects of PPL in Poland, interviews with experts dealing with rural development and planning were conducted. Participants were asked to provide their observations on PPL in rural areas, considering both institutional frameworks and planning practices. The material collected allowed for the capture of motivations and participation goals in which various stakeholder groups are involved, from citizens to local authorities and scientific units, as well as the coordination of resources and entities aimed at ensuring inclusion in decision-making processes.

3.2.2. Participation objectives

Participation objectives are motivated by various factors, mainly rooted in an interest in local issues, the defence of personal interests, and the opportunity to influence decision making. These objectives can vary depending on the stakeholder group. For citizens, the objective of participation may include representing their own interests and influencing decisions, particularly in cases directly affecting daily life or the local environment. Interest in local affairs encourages engagement in issues concerning one's own municipality or region, fuelled by a sense of community identification and a desire for current knowledge about local events and decisions. Residents seek opportunities to meet tangible and intangible needs, associated, for example, with local issues such as street renovations, conflicts over tree cutting conflicts, or school closures. Additionally, their objective may involve defending their own interests and counteracting undesirable changes ultimately beneficial, but often evoking anxiety and concerns.

Engagement in participatory processes also involves the scientific sector, motivated by a desire to delve into a specific research topic or simply expand their knowledge on a given subject. NGOs play a significant role in participatory processes. Their objectives include representing the interests of specific social groups, minorities, or individuals with limited participation opportunities in decision-making processes, as well as mobilising local communities to participate in participatory processes. The objective of NGOs in participatory processes also involves mediating between different social groups and institutions, as well as enriching participatory processes with specialised knowledge and experience in specific thematic areas.

For local authorities, the objective of participation primarily includes fulfilling the legally established obligation to organise a participatory process as defined in regulations, but also democratising the decision-making process and enabling citizens to make decisions regarding their surroundings. The objective of authorities also involves achieving social consensus and considering the opinions and interests of their potential constituents.

3.2.3. Resources

The resources allocated for participatory initiatives include a combination of financial, human, and infrastructural and technological factors tailored to the specific needs and goals of each project. Financial resources dedicated to participation processes include budgetary allocations within the annual budget of the institutions and municipal offices, that carry out such activities to cover the associated costs. Mostly, participation processes are included as standard activities. Additionally, it is possible to supplement these measures, when necessary, for example, during significant participatory processes covering large spatial areas or a significant number of stakeholders.

The staff of institutions organizing the participation process is directly responsible for supervising the participation processes or is delegated to cooperate with the implementers of the participation processes. Their involvement usually takes place outside normal working hours and is often compensated in the form of overtime. External experts are also involved in participation processes. Their specialized knowledge plays an important role in these processes and contributes to increasing the effectiveness and quality of participation initiatives.

To conduct participation processes, it is necessary to provide conference rooms where stakeholder meetings can be held. These meetings are often held in buildings owned by municipalities, such as schools, libraries, or community centers. Appropriate equipment such as computers, audio systems, and projectors are necessary to conduct meetings and discussions. It is also necessary to organize communication channels. Printing posters or promotional materials can involve additional costs, although much of these activities have moved to online platforms. Communication with stakeholders takes place primarily through websites and portals, as well as social media profiles and online meetings. These platforms have become crucial for consultation and facilitating dialogue.

3.2.4. Theme(s)

Participation can be used in various areas to effectively involve the community in decision-making processes and local development. First, it concerns planning and spatial development. The *Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (Dz.U. 2023 poz. 1688) provides stakeholders with the opportunity to actively participate in the preparation of spatial planning acts, including expressing opinions, submitting applications, or participating in social consultations.

Participation is used at various stages of the planning and implementation of local activities. At the initial planning stage, it is important to engage all interested parties and obtain opinions, which allows for a better understanding of the community needs and identification of problems, and priorities related to the development of infrastructure,

such as roads, water supply, sewage networks, and municipal services. Community participation in monitoring the effects of implemented projects allows us to understand their impact and receive feedback that can lead to corrections and further actions. Under the *Municipal Self-Government Act of 1990* (Dz.U. 1990 nr 16 poz. 95) in Poland, municipalities are empowered to formulate their own development strategies. Consultations on strategic documents covering the entire commune are being implemented in order to develop a common vision of development. This legislative provision enables the delineation of a functional-spatial structure model, setting forth recommendations for spatial policy, principles of environmental protection and cultural heritage preservation, identifying zones for strategic investments, among other critical aspects. Residents can participate in the development and implementation of rural development programs, public policy at the local level, protection of local traditions, and cultural heritage. These activities aim to improve living conditions and economic development in rural areas, e.g., by promoting ecological practices and support for agriculture, protection of natural areas, tourism and local entrepreneurship.

For rural areas, a particularly important form of participation is the village fund. It was established by the *Act on the village fund* and is an important element of the PB, providing financial resources to improve living conditions in rural areas. Residents at village meetings make decisions about the use of funds. It is a support system for local initiatives that contribute to a significant increase in social activity in rural areas. The decision to create the fund remains the responsibility of municipal councils, and its implementation covers a full cycle lasting 3 years, including planning, implementation, and reimbursement of part of the expenses.

Participation is also used in revitalization processes and includes public consultations, which can take place both at the initial stage and in parallel to the design process. Meetings with residents are informative and seek opinions on various issues. In the revitalization process, residents have the opportunity to express their opinion at least twice, first at the stage of preparing the delimitation resolution, indicating which areas in their opinion should be covered by revitalization works, and later by consulting the provisions regarding specific assumptions and projects. The conclusions of the consultations and the dialogue with residents influence the shape of the final decisions, although sometimes to a small extent.

In general, public participation is a key element of the planning process that aims to increase transparency, social acceptance, and adapt activities to the needs of the local community. Participation can be a tool for building community, strengthening social bonds and integrating various social groups in rural areas, which can support the building of a community based on cooperation and solidarity.

3.2.5. Coordinator(s)

The coordination of participation processes is distributed among various institutions and people. Participation processes are monitored and coordinated by municipal authorities at various levels. The municipal office or mayor plays the most important role in deciding on participation processes, announcing information on the methods, places, and dates of

conducting public consultations. Departments are responsible for providing substantive support and preparing decision makers for participatory processes. Their employees have expert knowledge of the processes taking place in a given area within the scope of the consulted project (e.g., spatial planning, implementation of infrastructural investments, greenery management, environmental protection). Experts from various fields also take part in the participation process, playing an advisory role and helping in the analysis and development of solutions. These are specialists in fields such as urban planning, architecture, environmental protection, and cultural heritage. Their knowledge and experience are important for the spatial planning and decision-making process. Experts also represent various institutions: research and development sector, professional chambers and NGOs.

Representatives of local communities also play an important role and can act on behalf of a certain group of stakeholders because issues related to the consulted projects may directly affect their areas of operation. Professional social consultation moderators who have knowledge of tools that support participatory processes are invited to help plan and conduct public consultations. They enable increasing involvement of residents in decision-making processes and help in conducting discussions and collecting opinions. The cooperation of various entities that coordinate the participation process aims to take into account various perspectives and lead to informed and sustainable decisions regarding the development of a given area.

3.2.6. Participants

Residents are one of the main groups of participants in participation processes. Their engagement is important because they are directly affected by the decisions made within these processes. Their knowledge and opinions are treated as relevant to the decision-making process. Entrepreneurs and company owners operating in a given area are also taking part in the participation processes. Their economic activity translates into tax revenues and supplies the budgets of municipalities; their needs are also taken into account in the participation processes.

Another type of participant are organizations and associations, including NGOs. They represent groups and institutions operating in a given area, which may have different interests and contributions to participation processes. Their areas of interest are primarily issues related to environmental protection and cultural heritage. Their participation is intended to supervise and regulate the changes introduced.

People representing the science sector and specialists in various fields, e.g., urban planners and architects, also take part in the participation processes. They are responsible for implementing specific investments in a given area, but they also have knowledge and experience in the scope of consulted projects, allowing them to contribute valuable insights, expertise, and scientific analyses to decision-making processes.

In the case of regional or national projects, local authorities may also participate as municipal authorities and residents' representatives in the municipal council. They represent the interests of the local community and are responsible for decisions regarding the development of the area. Diversifying participants in participatory processes aims to

ensure that decisions are made taking into account the diverse perspectives and needs of the local community.

3.2.7. Level of engagement

The level of involvement in participation processes varies. However, most participants engage in participation processes only at a minimal level, e.g. by completing a questionnaire or attending a single meeting. There is a noticeable lack of long-term commitment in the participation process, resulting in low control over the implementation of submitted proposals and comments. This is often perceived as insufficient community involvement in decisions. Differences in the level of involvement occur depending on the purpose and specificity of the consulted project. Some projects, especially those related to development plans, infrastructure construction, investment location, parks or roads, and in rural areas, especially projects regarding support for agriculture, environmental protection, activities to improve air quality, or the promotion of renewable energy sources, may attract greater community interest than others. In such a case, the involvement of residents in the participation process is significant. This commitment is also visible on the part of the authorities of a given municipality. They give priority to meeting the needs of residents because they represent their electorate, thus ensuring their satisfaction. The authorities are entrusted with managing the municipality in a way that optimally serves the community. Additionally, local authorities are actively trying to attract new investors, which consequently translates into tax revenues, and reduce of unemployment. However, they must reconcile this desire with the awareness that certain actions may impose burdens on residents and arouse social opposition. Increased involvement in the participation process can also be observed when a large company operates in the municipality and has financial and legal resources that can enforce the consideration of the submitted comments and requests.

The key issue in increasing the level of participation of residents is reliable information and social education. The value of public participation can be increased by providing residents with access to up-to-date and reliable information and social education, which can encourage residents to actively participate in decision-making processes.

In the spatial aspect, engagement is focused on the local level. In rural and urban-rural areas, local involvement of residents definitely prevails. Regional and national projects do not attract much interest. The higher the spatial level, the lower the involvement, and the lower the attendance in the participation process. The exceptions are investments that directly interfere with the space occupied by a given community and lead to the occupation of this space for the needs of the implemented project, e.g., construction of a railway line or a national road (highway, expressway).

3.2.8. Methods and tools

The use of various methods and tools in the participation process allows a broad involvement of residents in the planning and local decision-making process, which contributes to more effective and sustainable solutions. There are various participation methods and tools that are used in the planning and consultation processes. The legal provisions (*Act amending the Act on spatial planning and development and certain other*

acts (Dz.U. 2023 poz. 1688)) oblige municipal authorities to use at least two different forms of public consultation. The most frequently used methods and tools are summarized in Table 2.

Table 3. Participatory methods and tools in practice.

Methods	Description
Information meetings and consultations	An introduction to formal proceedings, where residents can learn about the upcoming changes. They can take place both in the office and in other locations available to residents, such as schools or cultural institutions. The people responsible for the project provide information to interested parties during individual meetings, enabling personal contact and dispelling doubts. Consultation meetings can be held online or in a hybrid format that combines in-person and digital elements, allowing residents to participate both offline and online, without having to leave home. Such forms have become more popular, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Workshops	Allow for the preparation of an action plan, development of ideas for changes, and a common position, and are open to all residents
Tools	Description
Forms and surveys	Enable residents to submit their opinions and comments by completing forms or surveys
Geo-surveys	Allow residents to participate in consultations by adding comments on an interactive map using GIS Geographic Information Systems
Internet portals and platforms	The use of surveys enriched with additional descriptive materials and geo-surveys enables electronic receipt of applications and comments. Conducting participation processes in the form of e-services
Brainstorming and mind map	Techniques help generate ideas and visualize topics during discussions
Focus groups	Allow you to explore participants' opinions on a specific topic by conducting discussions in a focused group


Source: own elaboration.

3.3. Good practices

Based on the survey responses and desktop research, the following good practices were selected in the area of public participation and PPL in Poland.

3.3.1. PB of the Łódź Voivodeship „Łódzkie na Plus”

MAIN INFORMATION

COUNTRY	Poland	
CASE STUDY CODE	Poland_Good Practice_O.09_1	
MAIN INFORMATION		
Title	<input type="text" value="PB of the Łódź Voivodeship „Łódzkie na Plus"/>	
Location	<input type="text" value="Łódź Voivodeship"/>	
Responsible Authority	<input type="text" value="Łódź Voivodeship Marshal's Office"/>	
Link	<input type="text" value="https://bo.lodzkie.pl/"/>	
Keywords	<input type="text" value="PB, Citizen's voting, Łódź Voivodeship, Poland"/>	

IDENTIFICATION

Type	Case (plan, program, project etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stakeholders involved	Public institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Method / Tool	<input type="checkbox"/>		Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>		Civil society organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Legal framework	<input type="checkbox"/>		Knowledge institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		Public or grassroots movements	<input type="checkbox"/>

Policy field	Urban planning			Other	Citizens	X
	Mobility			Start date	2016	
	Tourism			End date	-	
	Rural areas and planning	X	X	On going		X
Spatial level	National			Completed		
	Regional		X	Limited		
	Local			Repeated overtime		X

CONTENT AND RESULTS

Purpose and context

PB is a separate part of the voivodship budget, the allocation of which is decided by residents through voting. The idea of the PB is to increase the residents' influence on public spending by involving them in the process of submitting projects for tasks that they consider important to implement and in the process of deciding what the voivodeship's budget funds will be spent on.

The following groups were identified as part of the "ŁÓDZKIE NA PLUS" PB: 1) a voivodeship group within which investment or renovation tasks may be submitted, 2)

24 county groups within which non-investment tasks can be submitted. A project submitted within the county group must concern a significant part of the project implemented in the area or for the inhabitants of the county in which it was submitted.

The team for the implementation of the PB supervises the determination of the voting results and establishes a list of projects that obtained the highest number of points in each group.

Problems and challenges

Lack of Knowledge and Information: Residents have a lack of the necessary information about budgetary processes and financial matters, which can hinder their ability to make decisions in different steps of the process.

Limited participation: engaging disadvantaged groups may require additional efforts.

Technical Challenges: Implementing different forms of voting e.g. digital platforms for PB introduces technological challenges.

Conflict Resolution: Differences of opinion among community members may arise during the decision-making process.

Impact: Evaluating the impact of PB can be challenging.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

Łódź Voivodeship Marshal's Office – different departments are responsible for implementation of winning projects, e.g. Department of Health Policy, Department of Sports and Education, Department of Culture, Regional Center for Social Policy, Department of Climate and Tourism.

The financial resources allocated for the implementation of the 8th edition will amount to 8 million PLN, of which 25% of the funds will be allocated to the voivodeship group and another 75% to the county funds.

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools used)

A project of a task within the voivodeship group may be submitted by a resident of the voivodeship. The project application form must be accompanied by a support list signed by at least 30 residents of the voivodeship.

A project for a task within the county group may be submitted by a resident of the county to which the project is submitted. The task project submission form must be accompanied by a support list signed by at least 30 residents of the county to which the task project was submitted.

The tasks to be implemented under the PB are selected by voting: 1) within the voivodeship group, residents of the voivodeship who are 18 years old or over on the day of voting; 2) within the county group, residents of the relevant county who are 18 years old or over on the day of voting.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

Increased Civic Engagement: in societies where citizens are actively engaged, there is a reduced risk of authoritarianism and the abuse of power.

Identification of Community Priorities: the local authorities can respond to the specific needs and concerns.

Strengthened Democratic Values: improvement trust in government.

Creativity: PB forces inhabitants to think about their needs connected with immediate surroundings.

Bibliography

1. Resolution No. IV/56/19 of the Assembly of the Łódź Voivodeship on the pPB (26 February 2019).

2. List of tasks to be implemented under the PB "Łódzkie na Plus" in 2024.

3.3.2. Development of human resources to conduct public consultations in spatial planning in municipalities

COUNTRY	Poland
CASE STUDY CODE	Poland_Good Practice_O.09_2

MAIN INFORMATION

Title	Development of human resources to conduct public consultations on spatial planning in municipalities
Location	Selected communes in Poland
Responsible Authority	NGOs
Link	https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/nabory/219-usprawnienie-procesow-inwestycyjno-budowlanych-
Keywords	public consultations, spatial planning, NGOs, Poland

IDENTIFICATION

Type	Case (plan, program, project etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stakeholders involved	Public institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Method / Tool	<input type="checkbox"/>		Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>

Policy field	Organisation			Civil society organisations		X
	Legal framework			Knowledge institutions		X
	Other			Public or grassroots movements		
				Other	Citizens	X
	Urban planning					
	Mobility			Timeline	Start date	2018
	Tourism				End date	2021
	Rural areas and planning	X	X			
				On going		
				Completed		X
Spatial level	National					
	Regional			Limited		
	Local		X	Repeated overtime		

CONTENT AND RESULTS

Purpose and context

The purpose of the project is to enhance social participation in activities conducted by municipalities in the field of spatial planning. Municipalities, as participants in the project, receive grants to conduct additional social consultations during the creation of planning documents. Throughout the consultation process, municipal offices receive support from EU, based on the opinion of specialists in urban planning and social participation.

The project involves municipalities that aim to develop the competencies of their employees in the field of social participation. A prerequisite for joining the project is the initiation of planning document development, before specific solutions are developed. The project leader (NGOs) prepares a consultation plan by selecting appropriate techniques and tools, including GIS. Throughout the project, officials acquire knowledge on how to involve residents in the work of the project.

Problems and challenges

Lack of human resources: staffing problems, excess duties and inappropriate substantive knowledge are a challenge for offices when selecting employees responsible for the public consultation process.

Limited participation: the participation of residents in the proposed forms of participation was insufficient, which resulting from the lack of interest of residents in local issues or an ineffective information campaign.

Selection of methods and tools: each municipality has different local conditions. Before starting the project procedure, it is difficult to verify all possible problematic issues. Approaching the selection of tools is challenging.

Lack of interest in the research area: the selection of the area for which the draft development plan was prepared did not cause any spatial conflicts, and therefore, the selected tools could not be fully used.

Impact: verification of the implementation of participatory tools after the project is completed is a challenge.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

The project is organised by NGOs with the involvement of specialists in spatial planning. This initiative is implemented by various organisations in different municipalities. The funds allocated for this project come from the EU budget as part of the operational project 'Knowledge Education Development'.

The operation programme Knowledge Education Development for the implementation of the European Social Fund in Poland aims to contribute to addressing key challenges which Poland faces in the fields of, among others, social inclusion, education, and public administration.

The funds are distributed among NGOs in competitions. Organisations must have the experience specified in the competition regulations. In the years 2018-2020, 30 million PLN was allocated for this project. The average cost of one such task for 20 communes is approximately 2 million PLN.

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools used)

Municipalities interested in participating in the project declared their readiness during the recruitment process. Criteria were taken into account that allowed for the selection of projects with diversified spatial issues and thus the possibility of using various methods and techniques of social participation.

After selecting the communes, each commune received an individual consultation plan prepared by the partners who implemented the project. In this plan, the participation process was divided into four parts:

1. Pre-consultations consisting of presenting the local community with the research area and the purpose of participation,
2. Directional consultations involving the development of preliminary conclusions and recommendations before starting design work,
3. Working consultations involving the creation of a joint project based on variant concepts after incorporating recommendations from directional consultations,
4. Integrating consultations in which the level of consideration of the recommendations submitted during the consultations was verified.

The selection of tools and methods was designated to reach aimed the largest group of interested stakeholders. Contact with stakeholders was through online and face-to-face meetings. During the consultation process, numerous meetings and interviews with residents, focus groups, research walks, and focus groups were conducted. In addition, digital systems were utilised: GIS, 3D visualisations, and online portal for collecting submissions.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

Trained officials – employees will acquire knowledge on the use of tools and techniques of social participation and conflict resolution.

Higher quality of public consultations – example of public consultations using social participation methods and tools improves the effectiveness of work on the project and shows how to apply them in other planning procedures.

Civic education – participation in the public consultations process is associated with information and educational activities that increase residents' competences in the field of spatial planning and their influence on the decision-making process.

Canon of Good Practices – an additional application goal is to prepare a canon of good practices in conducting public consultations in spatial planning.

Bibliography

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3.3.3. Inspier Hub

COUNTRY

Poland

MAIN INFORMATION

Title	Inspire Hub
Location	Selected communes in Poland
Responsible Authority	Municipal offices GIAP company
Link	https://mapa.inspire-hub.pl/
Keywords	spatial planning, spatial data, public consultations, Poland



IDENTIFICATION

Type	Case (plan, program, project etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stakeholders involved	Public institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Method / Tool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Private sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>		Civil society organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Legal framework	<input type="checkbox"/>		Knowledge institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		Public or grassroots movements	<input type="checkbox"/>

Policy field	Urban planning			Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Mobility			Timeline	Start date	2017
	Tourism				End date	-
	Rural areas and planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On going		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spatial level	National		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Completed		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Regional		<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Repeated overtime		<input type="checkbox"/>

CONTENT AND RESULTS

Purpose and context

The Inspire Hub portal is a platform that enables municipalities to publish spatial data, including information on spatial planning. Vector data from local spatial development plans and WMS and WFS network services are available for municipalities that share their spatial data. Various modules of the portal offer various functionalities that municipalities can use according to their needs. The spatial planning module allows for the digitisation of planning documents and automatic generation of various documents. Moreover, the portal enables comprehensive management of master plans or general plans currently in the consultation phase. It allows to add procedures, consultation stages and attachments, such as resolutions and announcements, available to residents. Additionally, users can generate reports on the course of individual consultation stages. Stakeholders are informed of ongoing consultations and can monitor their progress through the portal. They also have the opportunity to submit requests or comments for a selected location by completing the information form. They are then continuously informed about the status of their submitted application or comment.

Problems and challenges

Lack of funds to finance the tool: In municipalities, especially small ones with limited budgets, finding funds to finance the tool may be a problem.

Lack of knowledge and information: Residents lack the necessary information on the principles of spatial development, which may make it difficult for them to formulate conclusions and comments.

Limited participation: Engaging marginalised groups, as well as convincing stakeholders to use the tool may require additional efforts.

Technical challenges: Implementing various forms of access to the participation tool, including from smartphones, tablets, or computers, poses technical challenges.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

The municipal office and the company offering the service are responsible for implementing the tool. The tools and the participation process are financed and supported by the municipal office. However, practice shows that the tools are often fully financed or co-financed thanks to funds obtained from various support programs for municipalities, e.g. Digital Municipality (<https://www.gov.pl/web/cppc/cyfrowa-gmina>)

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools used

Tasks of the Municipal offices:

1. management of local development plans or studies that are in the consultation phase;
2. adding procedures and stages of consultation;
3. adding attachments to resolutions and announcements for residents to view.

Opportunities for Citizens:

1. generating reports on the course of individual consultation stages.
2. viewing and reading information about ongoing consultations;
3. submitting requests or comments by automatically selecting the location and completing the information form;
4. ability to monitor the course of the consultation process;

information on the status of the submitted application or comment.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

Increase of the digital competences of municipal offices - the implementation of the tool involves training sessions where employees gain knowledge on its usage and potential for enhancing social participation.

Increase in the availability of spatial data - spatial data concerning local spatial planning issues facilitates the expansion of spatial data repositories and improves the accessibility to spatial

information at the communal level. Currently, 260 communes have published their data on the Inspire Hub portal.

Improvement of the quality of public consultations - an example of public consultations using social participation methods and tools improves the effectiveness of work on the project and shows how to apply them in other planning procedures.

Civic education - engagement in public consultation processes involves information and educational activities aimed at enhancing residents' competences in spatial planning and empowering them in the decision-making process. It can be measured by the number of applications and comments submitted using the tool, or by the number of visits to the municipal 's map portal

Identification of community priorities - local authorities can respond to specific needs and concerns expressed in the form of applications and comments.

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2. <https://mapa.inspire-hub.pl/partycypacja/>

3.3.4. Public consultations during creation of Zelów Municipality Development Strategy for 2021-2027

COUNTRY	Poland
CASE STUDY CODE	Poland_Good Practice_O.09_4
MAIN INFORMATION	
Title	Public consultations during creation of Zelów Municipality
Location	Zelów Municipal
Responsible Authority	Zelów Municipal Office
Link	http://zelow.pl/konsultacje-spoleczne/ http://zelow.pl/prace-nad-strategia-rozwoju-gminy-zelow-na-lata-2021-2027/?fbclid=IwAR3gRzi_3kR3INol625iK6_mPeTdfbNN5TKgRaMfQIbKPKKvnNPed41yfw0

Keywords

spatial planning, public consultations, Poland

IDENTIFICATION

Type

Case (plan, program, project etc.)

Method / Tool

Organisation

Legal framework

Other

Strategy

X

Stakeholders involved

Public institutions

X

Private sector

Civil society organisations

Knowledge institutions

Public or grassroots movements

Other

Citizens

X

Policy field

Urban planning

Mobility

Tourism

Rural areas and planning

X

X

Timeline

Start date

2020

End date

2021

On going

Completed

X

Spatial level

National

Regional

Local

X

Limited

Repeated overtime

CONTENT AND RESULTS

Purpose and context

In 2020, Zelów municipality decided to develop a strategic document for years 2021-2027. Process of creating the strategy included engaging local community through a series of consultations. The aim was to collect feedback, suggestions, and opinions. The consultation process was intended to lead to creation of final version of the strategy.

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained during workshop and consultation meetings allowed for formulation of strategic goals. These elements define a character of development and ways to achieve assumed mission and vision of Zelów municipality.

Problems and challenges

Low attendance and engagement of residents. Residents may not be interested in participating in public consultations for various reasons, such as a lack of awareness, lack of interest, or a belief that their opinions will not influence the final decisions.

Communication barriers. A low level of digital competencies (in the case of online consultations) or simply a lack of access to information and public communication can hinder effective dialogue between authorities and residents.

Lack of funds. Organizing effective public consultations requires financial resources, which can be limited in the case of rural municipalities.

Lack of appropriate tools and methods. Choosing inappropriate consultation methods can not only reduce their effectiveness but also cause frustration among participants. An improperly chosen methodology can lead to incorrect conclusions.

Problems with representativeness. Difficulties in ensuring that all relevant stakeholders and social groups are represented in the consultation process, which can lead to the omission of important perspectives and needs.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

The entity responsible for adopting the strategy is Zelów municipality, which commissions other entities to assist in this task. In creating the strategy and consultations, external companies also provided assistance: ResPublic and the Space Culture Foundation.

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools used)

The public consultations were divided in the following way:

- A survey preceding the consultations (August 14, 2020). Aimed to obtain responses on which aspects of municipal development should be focused on by local authorities and to engage residents in the document creation process.
- The first meeting (September 3, 2020). It included workshops as part of activities in one of the 3 working sub-groups (social, infrastructure and environment, economy and promotion). During the meeting, a survey on a quality of life of residents in Zelów municipality was conducted. Efforts were also made to identify main problems faced by the municipality's residents.
- The second meeting (September 16, 2020). Workshops and presentations. The main goal was to formulate the vision, mission, objectives, and tasks of the development strategy.
- Public consultations on possible changes to the document (lasting throughout January 2021). Residents could participate by filling out an online form, which could be obtained via email, personally collecting the application at the municipal office, and filling out the form directly on Zelów municipal's website.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

The municipality's focus on participation allowed for:

- Conducting workshops. Aimed at engaging residents in participation process, workshops were held where residents described strengths of the municipality and its future (all notes taken were included as an annex to the final document).
- Compiling a report about quality of life in Zelów municipality. Residents responded to questions in survey studies.
- Identification of areas for enhancement. The residents have highlighted a necessity for advancements in road infrastructure, availability of employment opportunities, and provision of recreational facilities as critical components.
- Conducting online consultations. The initiative saw participation from 7 individuals, reflecting a modest engagement despite the extensive accessibility of the consultation forms. Notably, 2 participants submitted their surveys in person at the municipal office, while 5 opted for the online submission method.
- Implementation of amendments to the final document. The residents put forward a total of 19 proposals for consideration. Of these, 8 were fully accepted, 2 underwent modifications before acceptance, and 9 were rejected.

The final outcome:

- Identification of critical areas requiring enhancement.
- Determining strengths and weaknesses of the municipality.
- Formulation of Zelów Municipality Development Strategy for 2021-2027 through collaborative engagement with a local community and fostering resident participation in municipal affairs.

- Based on the 2021 Strategy Implementation Rationale Monitoring Report, several accomplishments were recorded in Zelów municipality: preparation of 8 recreational offerings, support for 130 cultural initiatives, backing of 13 local leadership programs, execution of 105 initiatives aimed at the social activation of residents, modernization of 62 kilometers of road infrastructure, and provision of employment intermediary information benefiting 860 individuals.

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3.3.5. Regional Forum of Participation Practitioners

COUNTRY	Poland
CASE STUDY CODE	Poland_Good Practice_O.09_5
MAIN INFORMATION	
Title	Regional Forum of Participation Practitioners
Location	Łódź, Łódź Voivodship
Responsible	OPUS Center for the Promotion and Development of Civic Initiatives Stocznia
Link	https://partycypacjaobywatelska.pl/fora-regionalne/lodz/

Keywords

Social participation, workshops, local authorities, Łódź Voivodeship

IDENTIFICATION

Type	Case (plan, program, project etc.)		Stakeholders involved	Public institutions	X	
	Method / Tool			Private sector		
	Organisation			Civil society organisations	X	
	Legal framework			Knowledge institutions	X	
	Other	Workshop		X	Public or grassroots movements	
					Other	
Policy field	Urban planning		Timeline	Start date	27.10.2022	
	Mobility			End date	27.10.2022	
	Tourism					
	Rural areas and planning			X		
Spatial level	National		On going			
	Regional	X	Completed			
	Local	X	Limited			
			Repeated overtime	X		

CONTENT AND RESULTS

Purpose and context

The aim of the project is to exchange experiences and present good practices in small local governments and communities, including rural areas.

The workshop aims to present what it means to monitor horizontal principles of the European Union, such as equality between women and men, non-discrimination, accessibility, and the principle of sustainable development in the Monitoring Committee of the regional program European Funds for Łódź Voivodship 2021-2027

Problems and challenges

PPL at the local level involves engaging community members in decision-making processes related to the development and management of their own neighbourhoods or communities. The challenges include:

- Representation and Inclusivity - Ensuring the inclusion of diverse voices and marginalized groups,
- Capacity and Resources - Communities have lack the necessary resources, both in terms of finances and expertise, to actively participate in the planning process,
- Engaging community members requires time,
- Understanding planning concepts and technical aspects of development projects may be challenging for some community members,

Collecting and analysing data from a diverse group of participants can be complex.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

The project is implemented with a subsidy from the Active Citizens - National Fund program financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under the EEA Funds.

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools used)

"Participation cafe" - discussion using the World Cafe method on engaging residents in activities and cooperation between local government and NGOs.

Local Microgrant Programs are an opportunity to increase the involvement of residents in joint activities for the local community. Thanks to microgrants, residents build neighbourly ties, organize

time for themselves and their neighbours, activate older people, develop squares, and create playgrounds.

Revitalization, or "bringing it back to life". One of the most popular processes in local governments is often limited in people's perception to the renovation of buildings and public spaces.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

Diverse perspectives enhance solutions - Participants bring unique experiences, knowledge, and ideas to the table, enriching the discussion and enhancing the quality of solutions.

Trust is the foundation for open communication and collaboration, enabling participants to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and concerns.

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4. Conclusions

The study shows that participatory processes are not only an important tool in spatial planning, but also a fundamental element in building liberal democratic societies. In the context of spatial planning, legal provisions require public consultations, emphasising the importance of citizen participation. Social participation in Poland has evolved through political changes and the influence of the EU, leading to the development of civil society. The Act amending the *Act on spatial planning and development and certain other acts* (2023) ensures the participation of interested parties in spatial planning. Mandatory consultation and procedural transparency are key elements of this legal framework. Spatial planning now emphasises consultation and negotiation, a move toward inclusive decision-making. The results of public consultations are incorporated into planning documents through a structured process involving resident feedback, expert input, and municipal decision-making. However, it is not obligatory to take into account the suggestions. Participation covers various areas, in addition to spatial planning and development, also strategic documents, infrastructure projects - rural development programs, PB.

Despite legal provisions, public consultations in Poland often lack broad public participation. Levels of involvement vary; some participants are minimally involved, and others are deeply involved, especially in projects that directly impact their communities. Some topics, such as spatial development plans and controversial issues, are more popular with residents. Participation takes place primarily at the local level; this is especially visible in rural and urban-rural areas, where involvement in discussions on local projects is much greater compared to regional or national projects. The participation goals in the participation process vary depending on the stakeholders. These range from representing citizens' personal interests to promoting specific social goals through NGOs. The participants are primarily residents, but also entrepreneurs, NGOs, scientific experts, and local authorities. Engaging diverse stakeholders enriches discussions and ensures that diverse perspectives are taken into account when making informed and sustainable decisions. Increasing involvement in participation processes requires reliable information and social education. A clear institutional framework, effective communication channels, modern participation tools understandable and easy to use by stakeholders, flexibility, and adaptability are factors influencing the success of the participation process. Legal regulations require the use of various forms of consultation, ensuring inclusive decision-making processes for as many stakeholders as possible. The most commonly used methods and tools include information meetings, workshops, surveys, and online platforms.

Challenges faced by PPL include limited stakeholder awareness, unequal access to resources, and limitations in funding and technical knowledge. Participatory initiatives require financial, human, and technological resources, providing meeting places, external experts, and communication channels. Most of the costs are covered by municipal budgets. Meeting challenges requires efforts to improve awareness, increase access to

information and resources, and overcome institutional constraints. By supporting engagement, Poland can move toward more participatory spatial planning processes.

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6. Annexes

6.1. Annex A: Questionnaire on-line forms