

SWOT-analyses, Seagull WP 4, May 2003, The Province of Pomerania

A characteristic feature of agriculture in the Province of Pomerania is a relatively favorable farm size structure compared to that in the remaining part of the country as well as relatively high soil and labor productivity.

However, in view of the competition requirements of the European Union, it is necessary to increase the size of the farms. Large areas of land belonging to the State Treasury offer a chance of that.

Due to an ongoing slump and lack of system solutions in Polish agriculture, even large, well-equipped and efficient farms have difficulties selling grain, beet, rape and pigs. As a result, the economic condition of many farms and agro-food processing plants is endangered and unstable.

The majority of small and middle-size agro-food processing plants are of local importance; they are an important and desirable element of the economy.

In suburban and tourist-attracting areas, the budgets of rural families are aided with income from extra agricultural sources. In some rural areas, the levels of citizens' activity and entrepreneurship are too low.

Diversification and disproportion in the development of rural areas become more and more intense. The situation in rural areas, inhabited by over 31% of the province's population and occupying 94% of its area, is a consequence of the internal diversification of the region. Coastal areas and those in the direct vicinity of the Tri-City are in a relatively good position. On the other hand, over 75% of the province's area is, practically speaking, outside the reach of beneficial economic influence of the Tri-City agglomeration.

Relatively small towns are developing much slower and, in many cases, they themselves are suffering from economic recession. In this situation, they cannot act as local driving forces of development. As from the beginning of the 1980's, a 'jobless growth' has been observed in the region, consisting in the lack of a reaction of the unemployment level to a relative improvement of the economic situation.

More than 55% of rural inhabitants are not involved in agriculture but are employed in services and industry.

Spatial diversity is also reflected in the provision of technical infrastructure (including telecommunications and computer network) in rural municipalities. The percentage of households provided with water mains in those municipalities is 81.9%, those with drainage 17.8%. The number of telephone subscribers is 100.4 per 1000 rural inhabitants, with the average in the province being 298.5.

Unemployment is tending to become permanent, economic slump, social pathology and frustration in areas are particularly dangerous.

Special concentration of problems - areas previously belonging to state-owned farms

Areas at which former state-owned farms played a dominant economic and social role cover more than 50% of the province's area.

The fall of state-owned farms which was due to the consequences of a change of the system in Poland resulted in the hand-over of land to the Agricultural Property State Treasury Agency which is responsible for the privatization and utilization of assets and land of former state-owned farms and to some extent for the maintenance of municipal infrastructure (apartments, water mains, drainage etc.).

The winding up of state-owned farms which used to be one of the biggest employers in the majority of rural municipalities in the province resulted not only in the rural population having lost their jobs but also in the loss of the entire package of social performances which were a significant addition to income from work.

For the municipalities, the winding up of state-owned farms meant the loss of income from taxes, growing expenditure on social aid, the need to cover the costs of maintenance of municipal infrastructure and the like.

In order to comprehend the implications of the winding up process of state-owned farms, one should consider the following issues:

- the post-state-owned farm housing estate was not a traditional village with its own identity and settlement continuity. Rather, such a housing estate was a 'bedroom' for farm employees who came from various regions of Poland. Hence, the term 'post-state-owned farm housing estate' should be used rather than the term 'village.'
- the state-owned farm, by way of a system of performances which were social in nature (free crèche, playgroup, transport, food, organization of free time and the like) regulated the entire life of its employees thus depriving them of responsibility and resourcefulness. Professional qualifications of farm workers were poor and so was their education. What made the situation worse was poor work ethos and social approval.
- as a consequence of the fall of state-owned farms the majority of the workers became unemployed and, subsequently, they joined a group of municipal social aid beneficiaries.
- remote location and a diminishing public transport network aggravate existing problems;
- the process of 'poverty inheriting' is observable;
- the situation of local communities in post-state-owned farm housing estates is more like that in areas struck with the consequences of winding up and reconstruction of industry.

Region of Pomerania

Environment:			
S	W	O	T
Coastal location, at the outlet of the Vistula River to the Gdańsk Bay	Flood prevention and agriculture drainage infrastructure in Żuławy and Powiśle are in a very bad condition	Development of forestation and agro-environmental programs	Expansion of pollution industries
Great biological and landscape diversity	Considerable disparities in water supply, municipal sewage disposal and treatment systems and solid waste management systems in the rural areas.	Develop usage of renewable resources	Industrial farming (pigs farms)
Large acreage of woodland Renewable sources of energy Sufficient water and fish resources	Food and fishery industries		

Agriculture:			
S	W	O	T
Good geographical location, close to seaside resort markets	Differentiation of natural development conditions	Implementation of EU's Common Agriculture Policy	Lack of framework solutions in the national agricultural policy
Relative good structure of farms' size compared to the national average and relatively high productivity of soil and labor	Low quality of agricultural goods, bad presentation to the market	Participation in SAPARD and future EU programs	Growth of international competition while integrating into the EU market
Coastal belts with mixed settlement and recreation functions	Poor co-operation between producers and traders		
A great reserve of cheap manpower	Insufficient social and technical (environmental) infrastructure		
The rural areas have strong traditions of production and processing of agricultural products	Relatively low level of education and skills of farmers		
	Small amount of productive grounds in the lakelands		

Rural development			
S	W	O	T
Experiences of local authorities with project development, (technical and environmental infrastructure, mainly)	Lack of cooperation and coordination between all levels of self-governments	Implementation of EU's rural policy instruments	Problems with public finances and centralization of the power in Poland.
Coastal belts with mixed settlement and recreation functions	Lack of co-operation of public authorities, companies, NGO's and science sector	Participation in SAPARD program, Regional Village Renovation Program	Economic marginalization of the region.
Diversity of environmental resources	Low degree of the civic activity and entrepreneurship	Favorable possibilities of collaboration with Northern, Central and Eastern European regions	The regional strategies are focused on development of regional centers
Attention of municipalities to the development of businesses	Low educational and living standard of rural communities, especially in the areas of former state farms.		Migration of the capital to the neighboring regions
High rate of households connected to the water supply systems	Problems with funding at self-government level		
	The majority of business support institutions are located in the Tri-city and Słupsk		
	Disparities of environmental, IT and social infrastructure		

EDUCATION:			
S	W	O	T
Tricity, Słupsk – high-ranking academic centre	Shortage of specialists of high qualification	Study programs on the adult education	Lack of national life-long and life-wide learning policy
Well-developed network of secondary schools	Lack of qualified manpower in agriculture		
Original multicultural pattern of the regional community.	Lack of managerial skills and experience.		

TOURISM:			
S	W	O	T
Great landscape diversity. Original landscape patterns of the Słowiński National Park, Hel Peninsula, Vistula Lagoon and Pomeranian Lake District	Lack of regional marketing products	Participation in SAPARD program, Regional Village Renovation Program	Decrease of safety and privacy in rural areas due to an increase in the number of tourists
Cultural heritage	Non-developed infrastructure	Importance of tourism development in local and regional strategies	
Rural tourism is developing	Non-educated providers of potential agro-tourism services		
Small ports	The consulting institutions do not have specialists for consulting on non-traditional farming		
	Non developed systems of tourism information		

Employment:			
S	W	O	T
Young communities	Raising rate of unemployment. Unemployment structure includes high share of women and rural residents, extremely high in the areas of closed down state farms	Regional and local employment programs	Lack of funds for active methods of fight with unemployment
High rate of birth rate on rural areas (highest value throughout the country)	impoverished areas, which generate social pathologies (post-state farming syndrome)	SAPARD and other international programs, supporting additional sources of income for farmers	Lack of coordination between levels of vocational administration on regional, county's and municipal level
High surplus of young people in the regional labour market	Lack of co-operation of public authorities, companies, NGO's and science sector	Idea of Social Economy and "third sector" companies	Crisis in shipping and fishery sector
	Low educational and living standard of rural communities, especially in the areas of former state farms.		
	High surplus of young people in the regional labor market		