

# Institutional determinants of **innovations** in regional governance in Poland



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Aldona Wiktorska-Święcka · Małgorzata Michalewska-Pawlak · Monika Klimowicz

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Warsaw-Wroclaw 2017

The publication proceeds from the research completed under a project financed by the National Science Centre.

**Reviewer:** dr hab. Leszek Kwieciński, prof. UW

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ISBN 978-83-7545-765-0

**Cover illustration:** [hurca.com](http://hurca.com)/Fotolia

**Publishers:**



Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA  
03-982 Warsaw, 8/44 Dedala St.  
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## Introduction

Regional governance is undoubtedly one of the most interesting research areas in management studies, political science, economics or studies focusing on public policies. Governance as a concept supporting the socio-economic development of regions is firmly rooted in the literature on the subject. It is also one of the main trends in institutional practice in regional development.

Key areas of regional governance, such as information management, relationship management, creating scenarios for the future, selection of the procedural path and rational strategy implementation, require innovative solutions which take into account the phenomenon of the existing division. Consequently, decision-making processes become increasingly a result of integration of concepts generated by various regional actors. There are two groups of factors influencing the process. The first is associated with growing aspirations of the actors involved and crystallisation of their interests, the second with the public authorities' decreasing ability to effectively manage development processes.

In the regional governance concept, the role of local and regional authorities is linked to their functioning within the framework of many different self-organising networks involved in mutual interactions. As

a concept which emphasizes the crucial role of intersectoral cooperation and its bearing on regional development, regional governance emerges as an area in which new solutions are generated and implemented. Based on cooperation, these solutions contribute to positive changes in regions. This stems from the fact that cooperation involving representatives of various sectors who, after all, operate under different organisational conditions, will engage all of them in a joint search for new ways of solving development problems of each region. In practical terms, it means that different views on the problems to be resolved, and different approaches to potential solutions must lead to an identification of a new, joint solution.

The subject of the analysis presented in the monograph are new, innovative solutions supporting regional development in all their complexity. The monograph presents the results of studies conducted as part of a research project with the view to defining and understanding innovative solutions that have been put in practise in regional governance in Poland; and also to follow the pursuit of strategic objectives of regional development as well as to define the institutional determinants of the application of innovative solutions in regional governance. The studies carried out within the framework of the research project “Innovations in regional governance in Poland” were financed by the National Science Centre as part of its research grant no. UMO-2013/09/B/HS5/04522.

The Polish administrative reform of 1999 vested regional governments with powers related to implementation of regional development policy. As much as the Act of 5 June 1998 on Regional Government became the legal basis for managing the development of regions in Poland, more practical implementation of managerial powers, and the results thereof were arising from specific decisions and actions taken by competent authorities. Poland’s accession to the European Union came as another important step in the process of empowering self-governing regions.

Eventually, the accession not only obliged the government to introduce legal and institutional changes into the functioning of regional authorities, but also caused a transfer of European norms and standards in the management of regional government on the country’s regional level. The process is referred to as Europeanisation. The inclusion of Polish regions into the

European Union regional policy has strengthened a number of principles, including those of subsidiarity, partnership, participation and additionality, which have laid down the basis for the development of new relations in regional governance, different from those that used to function in the past. One of the theses formulated in this project is that the process of Europeanisation has become a source of innovation in regional governance.

What requires an in-depth analysis, however, is the degree to which regional authorities use their powers to act and thus, to create innovations in regional governance. The fact that formally and legally, authorities of all Polish regions have all equal status, does not prejudice the quality of public policies they implement. That is why innovative solutions applied by regional authorities vary in terms their level and scope, and, ultimately, produce different developmental effects.

The project examined the sources of innovation in governance in Polish regions as well as the role of different stakeholders, decision-making processes and political effects. Due to scarcity of scholarly studies of innovation in regional governance, the research conducted under the project was done on a pilot basis. The authors sought to broaden the knowledge about governance in Polish regions, which automatically led to the creation of new sources of knowledge.

Bearing in mind the research objectives mentioned above, the researchers formulated the following hypotheses:

1. Europeanisation is the one of the sources of innovation in regional governance. Europeanisation introduces innovations into regional governance in its practise, but it is political culture and regional authorities that ultimately determine their effects. Europeanisation provides for interaction mechanisms, institutions and the *acquis* as well as other European standards and values, functioning within other jurisdictions (e.g. Börzel, Panke, 2010). The research presented in the monograph addresses the impact exerted on regional governance by the authorities in charge of it. For this reason, the authors adopted a broad definition of Europeanisation which includes various types of flow patterns and various institutions, not only regulatory but also organisational ones, and likewise, different ideas and values. Moreover, Europeanisation creates new power relations at the supranational

level, national level, and regional level. It affects the political community (for the purpose of this monograph we will equate it with the regional community), party politics, which also determines regional governance processes, and public policies implemented on the regional level. Its impact is both formal and informal in nature, and causes changes in the standards adopted, for example, in the behaviour of civil servants. Innovations in regional governance include both soft instruments for improving the implementation of selected policies, and hard instruments in the form of legal and financial instruments of the European Union cohesion policy.

2. Multilevel governance occurring in the management of regional development in clusters and interactive networks fosters innovative solutions through the processes of knowledge and learning diffusion, and through the synergy of different actors, including regional authorities. Non-hierarchical governance practices are different from the traditional prescriptive management instruments, mainly in terms of ways and means motivating and encouraging cooperation. They contribute to greater openness and transparency of the regional administration and a better flow of information between the regional authorities and the regional community at large.
3. Innovations in regional governance in Poland are more adaptive than pioneering in nature. These solutions are a result of imitation, and are implemented in a gradual and collective way. The source of innovation is a collective decision-making process. Regional authorities adopt organisational and institutional solutions that have worked in other cases. They gain access to them through widespread collaboration with various actors at the regional level. New management methods are also borrowed from the private sector through cooperation with business and implemented in regional governance. Adaptations are made possible due to the empowerment of Polish regions, thanks to their participation in international and interregional cooperation, and networks disseminating good practices in effective governance.

In view of the fact that research into innovation is multi- and interdisciplinary in nature, the authors' research process was based on a methodology which embraced many research methods, including the institutional

method and case studies. The set of tools applied by the authors for the qualitative analysis encompassed various elements of the analytical model developed by them.

The research process was inductive and its most important element, in addition to the analysis of the literature, EU documents, governmental documents and other legal instruments was qualitative studies carried out on the regional level. They were complemented by research conducted on the national level.

The main objective of the review of literature was to identify innovation in regional governance described in the existing scholarly publications. The methodology used for the purpose of literature review made it possible to identify ideas and concepts associated with innovation in regional governance as they were published by scholars and researchers.

The authors used print and electronic materials such as academic papers from scholarly journals, scholarly monographs, chapters from academic publications, empirical studies, conference papers and reports, both theoretical and empirical. All these types of sources examined by the authors came from the following libraries: University of Wrocław Library, Wrocław University of Economics Library, Wrocław University of Science and Technology Library, University of Barcelona Library, University of Vienna Library, Free University of Berlin Library, LM University Library in Munich, Technical University in Dortmund Library.

Electronic sources were searched for by means of databases like Science Direct, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Journal Citation Reports, JSTOR and SCOPUS.

The material collected as a result of the authors' analysis of the sources was used to assess the state of research into innovation in regional governance. At the same time, the material collected by the authors made it possible to conceptualise terms essential to the research process, the terms like governance or innovation. The study performed by the authors led to the formulation of theoretical foundations for their analysis of the generation and implementation of innovation in regional governance in Poland.

The material was also used to build a model for researching innovation in regional development. The model was then tested as part of the authors' qualitative studies.

Drawing on statistical data, the authors selected four Polish regions (voivodeships or provinces) which underwent qualitative analyses. The criteria for selecting the regions were dictated by changes in the average GDP per capita growth rate in the regions in 2007–2010 and the relation between GDP per capita and the national average.

The factor that guarantees success in empirical studies is the right choice of a sample. The authors' choice of the sample for analysing innovation in regional governance was determined by the nature of entities involved in decision-making affecting regional development in Poland. Under the regional governance concept, powers to make decisions and take action in the region are given not only to the regional and national authorities, but also to entities like community organisations, groups of interests, trade unions, entrepreneurs, the media and others. In the context of potential participation of various categories of entities it was thus necessary to select a target group representing the broadest possible category of entities participating in decision-making process and implementation of solutions in regional development in Poland.

Given the specificity of the regional policy in Poland, when selecting respondents for analyses on the national level, the authors focused on representatives of the Ministry of Development (MD), whose specific tasks within the government administration focus among others. on regional development. The authors selected three MD representatives responsible for various areas of managing regional development.

The selection of respondents for semi-structured interviews was targeted and encompassed representatives of sectors involved in regional governance in the four regions in question. The final decision concerning respondent selection is presented in the table below (Table 1).

The technique used by the authors was based on direct interpersonal contact. The casual nature of the conversations made it possible to obtain in-depth information. The qualitative research was conducted between January 2016 and February 2017. In their qualitative research, the authors used the following research tools: individual in-depth interview (IDI), semi-structured in-depth interview (SSI), focused group interview (FGI) and dyadic interview.

Table 1. Sampling for empirical analyses

Region/ sector	Województwo dolnośląskie (Lower Silesian Province)	Województwo łódzkie (Łódzkie Province)	Województwo pomorskie (Pomeranian Province)	Województwo śląskie (Silesian Province)
Local government administration	Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province (Director responsible for the relevant thematic area: cities, rural areas, enterprise and human capital)	Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province (Director responsible for the relevant thematic area: innovation, cities, rural areas)	Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Province (Director responsible for the relevant thematic area: innovation, cities, rural areas)	Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province (Director responsible for the relevant thematic area: innovation, cities, rural areas)
	N=3	N=3	N=2	N=2
	Director of the ITI integrated area of key importance to the region or other representative entity operating on behalf of municipalities/districts	Director of the ITI integrated area of key importance to the region or other representative entity operating on behalf of municipalities/districts	Director of the ITI integrated area of key importance to the region or other representative entity operating on behalf of municipalities/districts	Director of the ITI integrated area of key importance to the region or other representative entity operating on behalf of municipalities/districts
	N=3	N=1	N=1	N=1
Private, quasi-private, quasi-public	Representatives of entities representing key areas: cities, rural areas, enterprise and human capital	Representatives of entities representing key areas: cities, rural areas, enterprise and human capital	Representatives of entities representing key areas: cities, rural areas, enterprise and human capital	Representatives of entities representing key areas: cities, rural areas, enterprise and human capital
	N=2	N=3	N=1	N=1

Source: Authors' own analysis.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the government administration, especially heads of the Ministry of Development departments which are crucial to the implementation and promotion of innovation or regional development. The three interviews were used to explore those areas of Poland's regional policy in which innovative solutions were implemented. They were also a valuable source of information about the significance of Europeanisation processes and multilevel governance to the generation and implementation of innovation in regional governance in Poland.

The authors conducted over 23 semi-structured interviews with representatives of the regional government administration, private sector and non-governmental sector. The objective was to collect information about the ways in which systemic regulations of regional governance influence the implementation of innovations in regional governance. The main part of the research focused on gathering information about political and organisational consequences of Europeanisation, and decentralisation for the generation and implementation of innovation in regional governance in Poland, in areas like governance of cities and rural areas as well as support for enterprises and development of human capital.

A focused group interview was conducted in the Lower Silesian region. The focus group comprised experts in the management of regional development. The objective was to obtain information about perceived significance of innovation in regional governance. The interview was complemented by dyadic interviews (homo- and heterogeneous) during which the authors elaborated on and confronted the significance of innovations to regional development, and possibilities of their generation and implementation under the regional governance concept.

The present monograph comprises four chapters. In Chapter One, the authors discuss the theoretical aspects of research into innovation in regional governance. The chapter presents the state of research and introduces a conceptualisation of terms essential to the analysis of innovation in regional governance. An important element of the chapter is exploration of Europeanisation and the concept of multilevel governance in research into innovation processes in regional governance. Chapter Two is devoted to issues concerning the institutional context of regional

governance in Poland. The authors present in it the institutional determinants of the regional governance model to be found in Polish regions. In Chapter Three, they discuss definitions and models of innovation in regional governance. The most important part of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of a model for researching innovation in regional governance that provides the basis for verification of the various types of innovation. In Chapter Four, the authors present five case studies of the implementation of innovation in regional governance in Polish institutional practice. The chapter summarizes the research conducted within the framework of the project. The book ends with a conclusion in which the authors present the most important factors facilitating and hampering the generation and implementation of innovation in regional governance in Poland.



## CHAPTER 1

# **Theoretical aspects of research into innovation in regional governance**

### **1.1. State of research into innovation in regional governance**

International competition, open borders, new forms of communication, decreasing costs of the movement of goods and people have all made it necessary to redefine the paradigm of public governance, especially in its territorial dimension. A breakthrough in this respect came in the mid-1990s in connection with, among others, the emergence of new spatial set-ups under the impact of global changes. The objective of the modifications introduced into development management systems at the time was to achieve not just effectiveness, but public value, defined as reaching the targets by using public resources in the most effective manner. Such an objective contributed to a change in the status of the public sector; it could no longer maintain its privileged position and the very choice of a sector or organisation to provide a public service became decidedly pragmatic. At the same institutional practice determined the shape of reflection on the specific features of contemporary governance. The new approach necessitated the emergence of a hybrid and multilevel system of relations between various levels of authority (e.g., regional, national, supranational), to which access was obtained by local and

regional non-governmental organisations as well as entrepreneurs. The consequences of these processes included delimitation, in the literature on the subject, of specific approaches to territorial governance, e.g. in rural governance, urban governance and metropolitan governance, as well as regional governance.

Worthy of note is the fact that regional governance is a concept that has generally become part of the mainstream scholarly discourse and institutional practice. The demand for this specialist approach has developed to a different degree in, correspondingly, different societies and different stages. Globalisation, new development priorities (e.g. sustainable and smart development), new political set-ups (e.g. associated with unionisation, democratisation, including decentralisation and devolution of power) and new technologies have shaped tasks on the regional level. Globalisation combined with information and communication technologies sped up development towards knowledge and service society. For the regions this meant that institutions, irrespective of the sector of in which they operated, began to look for factors other than the standard ones, because they enabled them to increase their competitiveness. This generated innovative solutions in regional governance and was directly correlated with the specificity of a new paradigm of administration, i.e. public governance. While the traditional bureaucracy concentrated on hierarchical accountability inside the civil service and then higher up with regard to political leaders, New Public Management focused on the dual, mutually supporting accountability with regard to economic effectiveness and to the client; public governance presented a comprehensive form of accountability in which there were many stakeholders, both among the decision makers and addressees of their decisions. Public governance was applied primarily in normative analyses. It denoted an ideological approach to a modern and innovative formula of regional policy in which issues that began to be of key importance were those associated with civic participation. In this concept, a space for cooperation opened up between the public authority and civil society entities, such questions as transparent processes, accountability and participation of citizens in decision-making processes being seriously examined. The concept emphasised cooperation as a key form of engagement, referring to it as partnership.

It also called for new forms of cooperation, new competences and new leadership, requiring both political independence, and social responsibility, awareness, openness and sensibilities of all stakeholders involved in governance (Wiktorska-Świąćka, 2016).

The scholarly debate about governance, including public governance, has begun to develop systematically since the late 1990s. It was launched by and acquired an international dimension in the works of, among others, B. Jessop, B. G. Peters, G. Stoker, R. Rhodes, G. Marks, L. Hooghe and R. Mayntz. In Poland, the topic was popularised a few years ago by J. Hausner, H. Izdebski, B. Kozuch, S. Mazur, J. Ruskowski and J. Supernat.

It should be noted here that the discussion about public governance as such has also highlighted issues associated with regional governance. This special dimension has been tackled for more than a decade by authors like G. Goertz, A. Benz, D. Fürst, K. Zimmermann, and among Polish scholars – T. G. Grosse, G. Gorzelak, P. Swianiewicz and M. Lackowska. In the current literature on the subject, the term *regional governance* is generally defined as a set of various characteristics that added together make up a new form of regional policy capable of supporting sustainable development on the regional level (Benz et al., 2000; Benz, Fürst, 2003). In addition, the term points to the scholarly and political demands concerning the way in which regional policy should be efficiently and effectively shaped and implemented. Regional governance is also understood as a kind of panacea to the challenges contemporary states are confronted with. The concept is seen as means to resolve the main issues connected with, among others, globalisation, democratic deficit or migrations (Fürst, 2004, p. 46).

Scholars researching the subject (mainly American, Canadian, Australian, and in Europe British, German and Scandinavian), in formulating their concepts of regional governance, take as a point of departure the changing shape of institutions. It is generally accepted that local governance denotes a flexible decision-making model based on loose horizontal networks of public and private actors (Barnes, Foster, 2012). As featured in the general approach to public governance, also in the context of regional governance what is emphasised is the change in the traditional model of self-government based on hierarchic, formal procedures and institutions. Local governance is not only about direct decision-making by

virtue of executive powers, but also about creating a climate for cooperation between various actors to achieve common objectives (Benz, 2004). We are dealing here with alternative forms of participation, delegation of responsibility for decision-making and provision of services to various stakeholders (not necessarily elected). Networks and relations between actors formulating and implementing regional policies are open to participants other than just representatives of the public sector. Such networks often lack formal hierarchy, which means that building trust between the actors is of key importance to the effectiveness of the functioning of local set-ups (Blatter, 2004). A key element in regional governance, apart from the geographical perspective, is a territorially unique form of self-direction which does not have a formal framework and is not limited to traditional partial systems (politics/administration, economy, society). It appears wherever solutions of specific problems require cooperation of public and private actors as well as private and social economy actors (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Features of regional governance

Key elements of regional governance	
Increased significance of regions as spaces of self-direction and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ non-centralised coordination of tasks</li> <li>■ principle of voluntariness</li> <li>■ use of endogenous potentials</li> </ul>
Focus on functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ region as a space of social relations</li> <li>■ of key importance is the region's function and not geographical or administrative delimitation</li> </ul>
Intersectoral cooperation through regional networks and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ intersectoral networks and cooperation between private and public entities</li> <li>■ joint visions and concepts for regional development</li> </ul>
System of incentives supporting management by means of various instruments and forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ competition as a tool for identifying and supporting best practices</li> <li>■ financial incentives</li> <li>■ increased importance of evaluation</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration after Böcher, 2005.

Thus, of key importance to regional governance are:

- cooperation between actors guided by different logics;
- cross-sectoral competences;
- self-organisation of networks;
- horizontal forms of interaction, without applying forms of power and coercion;
- associated with independently selected (negotiated) regulation systems, which formally facilitate interactions, lower transaction costs and increase the certainty associated with expectation fulfilment;
- high degree of reflectiveness, with a crucial role played by learning and evaluation processes (Knieling, 2004, p. 78).

Authors of the literature on the subject note that on the regional level, the impact of the institutional framework is markedly weaker than that on the local or national level. In addition, the concept points to the nature of the region as being closely linked to local as well as national and European policies. As in the local level, engagement and trust among the actors guarantees development and maintenance of networks and cooperation. Unlike on the state and local level, there is a *raison d'être* for managing networks as well as strengthening institutional effectiveness as an important condition of the functioning of multilevel governance (Wik-torska-Święcka, 2014). A key assumption here is stabilisation of political decentralisation, measured by, according to Hooghe et al. (2010):

- policy scope indicating the regions' power over sectoral policies, e.g. with regard to culture, education, social welfare, security, economy and control over local governments;
- representation indicating the way in which regional authorities (legislative and executive) obtain power (through elections, appointment);
- ways of law-making indicating the scale of the impact of regional legislation on the national level, from a lack of representation to the right to veto national legislation by a majority of regions;
- constitutional reform measuring the degree to which a majority of regions (independent of the national parliament) can change the national constitution.

Observation of current practices makes it possible to point out two basic types of regional governance: referring to the territory and referring

to the function. Politicians, who, as a rule, refer to the territory, focus on corporate territorial units, determined by the powers they have. Enterprises operate on the basis of functionality: they cooperate with those who offer them benefits to be derived from cooperation, irrespective of the region to which they belong. Spatial aspect plays an important role here as it is associated with transaction costs (Fürst, 1997, pp. 187–204). In addition, regional governance stresses the need to control processes in the context of the entire region. However, practice shows that weak institutionalised forms of regional governance operate largely functionally, i.e. in response to a specific problem, and are based on projects and actions, and therefore do not immediately and directly impact the entire regional system. What emerges as a key feature in this approach are the questions concerning decentralisation, both of public services (their (co) production and technical aspects of their provision) and of decisions, including participation of individuals and groups in the civil society, which influence decision making and implementation in the regional dimension (Wiktorska-Święcka, 2014).

This means that the essence of regional governance is not to strive to bring about a market revolution in the public sector. Being a reform concept, it tends to focus more on the improvement in the functioning of the institutional system and legislative processes, but also on the improvement of standards based on which policies are implemented. At the moment it is considered to be the equivalent of improvement and – if necessary – modification of management methods in all aspects, including those going beyond the questions of administrative potential. Understanding the essence of regional governance in the context of public governance enables us to realize that the former is inherently innovative, for regional governance denotes innovative solutions in the management of contents, procedures, styles as well as organisations and people. In this approach, administration focuses on the processes, their effects, on the objectives and mission, and not on regulations. What is needed to meet this challenge are non-standard and previously unheard of solutions.

Yet an overview of the current literature devoted to innovation in regional governance leads to a surprising conclusion that the question,

tackled mainly in Western European discourse for more than a decade, is still limited. This may be caused by the fact that the subject itself has not been unequivocally defined yet (Michalewska-Pawlak et al., 2016). Researchers tend to involve themselves mainly in the innovation discourse in the context of increasing competitiveness, and when the discourse does concern management, it is more in the context of public governance as such. In their reflections, they mainly reflect on what kind of changes in the public sector can be regarded as innovative; they study structures and processes that strengthen or limit innovation, they observe how many innovations there are in the public sector and whether they are sufficient in a fast changing society (Hartley, 2006; Osborne, Brown, 2005; Landau, 1993; Koch, Hauknes, 2005; Moore, 2005). It should be noted in this context that some scholars focus on innovations as a key element in improving the quality of service provision, while others see them as potentially strengthening the legitimacy of the activities of public administration as an institution that generates public value by adapting services to the needs and aspirations of their users (Mulgan, Albury, 2003). Analysing detailed aspects of public governance, R. M. Walker et al. (2002) formulate the concept of *ancillary innovations*, defining them as ones that encompass the innovation environment. G. Mulgan and D. Albury (2003) speak of *systemic innovations* the basis (or effect) of which are new technologies and/or new organisational forms essential to the functioning and management of new systems. J. Hartley, on the other hand, considers (2005) innovations in public governance to be part of the dimensions of innovation as such. In general, scholars studying the problem believe that innovations of this type lead to changes of systems that go beyond the boundaries between various sectors and the organisations operating within them. They positively increase the range of resources made available to stakeholders, which may improve system performance. At the same time, they change the configuration of decision-making powers with regard to ways of using private and public resources, and contribute to a new division of burdens and privileges (Moore, Hartley, 2008).

On few occasions only is the question of innovation in public governance as such combined with analyses of specific practices in the regional dimension. Yet, even if the academic debate about innovation in

regional governance is still very limited, it can be described as focusing largely on the following issues:

- in the context of the socio-political approach, which entails increased significance of the region as a level of political coordination, D. Fürst (2004, p. 48) stresses that regional governance strengthens a sense of accountability of the region as a level of political coordination and decision making, and brings with it an enhanced capability to self-direct regional development. What is essential here, however, is political accountability for important decisions concerning regional development to be left to regional entities, which collaborate in this respect voluntarily, without formal institutionalisation and without intersectoral divisions. This determines innovative solutions while affording an opportunity to minimise the limitations of traditional bureaucracy and to concentrate on a common goal instead of formal institutional framework.
- the replacement of the principle of territoriality with the principle of functionality: political accountability of regions is not defined solely by a multitude of administrative levels; in this approach the region should remain an open and dynamically evolving space of cooperation of regional entities seeking to achieve a common goal (Böcher, 2003). This necessitates innovative thinking and operation, which often go beyond the region's geographical and administrative borders.
- with regard to intersectoral cooperation through regional networks and partnerships: the potential of networks and cooperation between regional entities is of key importance (Benz, 1996; Benz, 2004; Fürst, Zimmermann, 2005), and should include horizontal cooperation as well as vertical cooperation with higher and lower political levels; such an approach makes it necessary to establish and consolidate collective institutional arrangements, which should in each case be founded on specific "tailor-made", previously unseen premises (e.g. with regard to stimulating sectoral policies, like housing, cf. Metze, Levelt, 2011);
- with regard to the traditional system of managing regional development by means of various instruments and forms, A. Benz points to a hierarchical system for managing incentives (2000, p. 153) stimulating regional governance, a system that refers to the state's potential for

initiating cooperation on the regional level. The incentives may take innovative forms that have never been used before.

This means that that innovations in regional governance must take into account various entities working as agents of change, processes and mechanisms as well as systems of values and norms, technology and available resources. Critical in this respect is the motivation of people involved in problem solving, as well as leadership (Bland et al., 2010).

It is worth stressing that in each of the areas referred to above, innovative solutions are generated, supporting regional governance objectives. Examples of innovation in the socio-political dimension include solutions stimulating self-aid, reciprocity and active involvement of stakeholders, mainly people living in the region, which all of them appear in the governance of political processes (Benz et al., 2007; Knieling, 2004). Organisational and process innovations generated in this respect strengthen the perception of regional governance as a political context in which mobilisation of joint efforts and democratic self-organisation presents itself as a key value, the most desired and the most effective element of it. Such an approach to innovation in regional governance is even more apparent, wherever the principle of territoriality is replaced by the principle of functionality, where dynamic space of cooperation guarantees accomplishment of various tasks in which regional entities make key decisions regarding themselves, their powers and actions, and set goals for their joint efforts. They also take independent decisions about the scale of their operations. Authors of the literature on the subject have dealt most extensively with innovations in regional governance with regard to intersectoral cooperation through regional networks and partnerships, stressing that the *sine qua non* condition of innovation in this respect is the existence of trust and consensus as well as shared visions for the main regional political objectives among the participants in the networks and partnerships (Böcher, 2005). In general, intersectoral cooperation in its regional dimension is not undertaken mainly to strengthen democracy, but is associated with expectations of greater effectiveness and innovativeness in pursuit of public objectives (Brouwer et al., 2007).

In addition, the current discussions about innovation in regional governance demonstrates that special attention has been devoted to

reflections on knowledge transfer in activities linked to regional development processes, including tools and methods of using and adapting innovation in governance. It should be noted that the centre of gravity of such an approach lies in reflections on the shift to the knowledge-based economy model providing for a clear change in the understanding of innovation and innovation policy. In this approach, the debate focuses more on innovations as key elements in increasing the region's competitiveness in the context of knowledge generation rather than on the diffusion of technologies and on networks involving SMEs operating in the region (Cappellin, Wink, 2009). Sometimes the terms *innovations in regional governance* and *regional innovation governance* are used interchangeably in reflections on the European Union's innovation policy (Dodescu, Chirila, 2012), especially *regional innovations strategies*.

Scholars tackling the question of innovation in regional governance, seen as a special dimension of public governance, tend to point to the positive effects of innovation on regional development. They acknowledge, for example, that its application makes it possible to avoid conflicts and to promote inclusion. As W. R. Barnes and K. A. Foster stress (2012, p. 13), innovation is associated with asymmetrical dissemination of information, which increases inequalities and distance between the potential "winners" and "losers". Innovation in regional governance is to facilitate conflict resolution and inclusion of those involved in innovation as well as those who, as stakeholders or beneficiaries of innovation, do not take direct part in it. In addition, the use of innovations in regional governance supports relation building, specialisation and integration of individuals and entities who otherwise would frequently be alienated. It also makes it possible to transfer the so-called tacit knowledge, crucial to the reduction of transaction costs. In addition, it reduces potential threats, strengthens trust, supports legitimisation of actions and maximisation of short-term benefits, and provides for multiple interactions between entities, thus becoming a basis for cooperation in the future (*ibid.*). Scholars also point to the fact that innovations in regional governance are to remove barriers and conflicts of interest, reduce transaction costs and minimise challenges associated with the existing institutional limitations (Kickert et al., 1997; Goldsmith, Eggers, 2004). Finally, by having a positive impact on the

maximum effectiveness in the use of resources, innovations in regional governance boost the potential for creating public value and promote the culture of participation in governance, which improves *good governance* as such (Gustavsen et al., 2007). Some scholars also note that an important advantage of creating and implementing innovations in regional governance is that they can motivate people (increasing civil servants' sense of pride) and may also have broader psychological connotations (may encourage continuous improvement). Thus, innovations can have an inspirational potential, which creates a sense of empowerment among public officials (Swan, Scarbrough, 2005; van Tatenhove, 2009). Even if innovations constitute limited interventions in regional governance (e.g. projects, campaigns or initiatives on the micro level), they have a knock-on effect: a successful innovation in one sector may prove to be a precursor of (potentially effective) innovations in another sector. Innovations perceived in this manner may lead to the establishment of new institutions and change relations between authorities of various levels. That is why, as much as they themselves constitute only an element leading towards a systemic change, they can potentially launch a broader and more profound transformation in the region (Hartley, 2005).

The literature on the subject presents reflections on a number of innovative and effective solutions in regional governance. Their analysis makes it possible to distinguish key elements that can be described as the best practices in innovation relating to institutions, services, processes, organisations and concepts. They include first of all:

- integrated services: the public sector – by offering an increasing number of services – pays attention primarily to how they are provided (emphasis on better quality), and not to the type of services they are (abandoning the subject of actions in favour of their effect). Of key importance in this respect is not so much the provision of services, but rather more effective coordination associated with the process and better adaptation to the citizens' needs (Goldsmith, Eggers, 2004);
- decentralisation of service provision: provision of services from a higher to a lower level (for example, from the national to regional level) should be combined with a guarantee of a higher level of response and adaptation to the needs, and thus increase the satisfaction. Moreover,

decentralisation of public service provision makes it possible to increase the citizens' feedback on the quality of services, and thus to make them better suited to regional needs (Schaap et al., 2010);

- partnership as a highly useful solution: public-private partnerships as well as public-social partnerships, public-public partnerships or multisector partnerships, emerge as an increasingly practicable solution, common in regional governance, with a high innovation potential. They make it possible to better utilise the resources available, and to increase the effectiveness of service provision, but on each occasion they require an innovative approach, given the absence of precedents that would be available in the past (Bland et al., 2010; Metze, Levelt, 2011);
- engagement of citizens: especially at the stage of formulating public policies, their subsequent implementation and monitoring or evaluation; this proves to be an innovation which so far has not been widely used in regional governance and which has a positive impact on public value (Brouwer et al., 2007);
- use of information and communication technologies: mainly with regard to broader access to services, increased effectiveness and promptness of service provision, provision of services more oriented towards citizens as recipients of the services, as well as their greater effectiveness, appropriateness and their better quality. Information and communication technologies are also means to deepen and consolidate transparency as well as democratisation of public administration practice. Their application in activities associated with regional governance enables decision makers and public officials to better cooperate with society (Goldsmith, Eggers, 2004; Alberti, Bertucci, 2006).

In its examination of limitations arising in case of innovations in regional governance, the literature referred to above invokes, first of all, doubts concerning their definition. Of key importance here is the question which of the solutions implemented in institutional practice can be regarded as innovative. Clear criteria should be introduced in this respect, which may prove to be helpful in defining whether a given regulation, instrument or procedure applied by a public authority in regional governance can be regarded as innovative. Another challenge is to establish

the correlation between innovations in regional governance and the GDP growth dynamics, though we need to bear in mind that to point to a direct link between these variables may simply prove impossible. Authors of the literature on the subject also stress that innovation in regional governance is not an end in itself, but a means the public administration has in actions aimed at improving the quality of the citizens' life (Metze, Levelt, 2011). In addition, innovations should be seen as complementing the mechanisms of strengthening democratic governance, and not as replacing the existing institutions. Moreover, each organisation in the public sector should decide on its own how to balance its stability and continuity on the one hand, and an innovative change on the other. It has also been emphasised that innovations in governance are not dedicated to regions in countries with less developed administrative systems in place (Hartley, 2005). Finally, it has been noted that innovations in regional governance are currently a must for those public administrations and governments that want to deal effectively with the challenges of the present (Kettl, 2002).

At the end, it should be noted that in the Polish literature on the subject, the question of innovation in regional governance is only beginning to enter the mainstream debate. Its basis has been laid down by the reflections on innovation policies pursued by regional authorities with regard to the functioning of regional innovation systems. A characteristic approach in the Polish academic discourse dealing with the problem in question is the one expressed by N. Gust-Bardon (2011) whereby the notion of innovativeness of a region is usually treated as tantamount to innovativeness of the economy. Authors of the Polish literature on the subject reflect primarily on the use of the innovative potential of regions as well as innovativeness of entities based in these regions (Popławski, Polak, 2011). This also relates to the concept of *smart specialisation in regional governance*. Recently, studies have begun to emerge concerning, for example, links between the quality of governance and the innovativeness of regions (Miłaszewicz, Jabłońska, 2016). Other questions tackled by scholars include innovation in management as such, with analyses being devoted in this respect to various types of organisations, mainly business entities. When it comes to public governance, Polish scholars discuss

primarily models of development of Polish regions in the context of the Polish economic reality and its impact on socio-political development (Michalewska-Pawlak et al., 2016). A pioneer in the popularisation of the topic of innovation in public governance is B. Koźuch (2015). The regional dimension of innovation in the context of governance is still being marginalised. The above notwithstanding, when considering the future of the scholarly debate about innovation in the public sector, taking particular account of the question of regional governance, it could be argued that with the transformations in the public sector, challenges of dynamic changes as well as growing importance of subnational levels in development processes, its role will continue to increase.

## **1.2. Conceptualisation of institutions and their significance in the creation and implementation of innovation in regional governance**

When undertaking their research into the impact of institutional determinants on the growth of innovation in regional governance in Poland, the authors of the present study adopted a thesis, discussed in social sciences for several centuries, according to which institutions influenced the social and economic development of states (Smith, 1954; Veblen, 1971; North, 1990; Olson, Kähkönen, 2000). This is explored in institutionalism in economic geography, a strand of research indicating that socio-political processes are determined by the institutional set-up in a given area, and that the institutions that make it up emerge as a result of long evolutionary processes that are social, political, economic or cultural in nature (Bukowski, 2011, p. 34).

Institutionalism as a theoretical strand is varied and presents a conglomerate of views on the relations between the individual and society, relations that evolve on the basis of cultural, political, economic and social norms and principles (Dzikowski, Tomaszewski, 2013, p. 336). Different researchers exploring institutionalism have different approaches as to how to define concepts, research problems and methods used in the

research process, while their common denominator is the conviction that institutions play a key role in the collective life of societies (Sadowski, 2014, p. 90).

There are various ways of defining institutions in the literature on the subject; the definition adopted for the purposes of the present study is a definition that stems from sociological institutionalism. Its premises suggest that “institutions are formal and informal principles and procedures, operational practices as well as systems of symbols, cognitive scripts and moral models all of which provide a cognitive and interpretative framework for social actors. They are seen as rules and structures validated by social norms and values. They form sets of interlinked principles and routines defining relevant actions in terms of relations between a role and a situation. Their essence is to structure the context in which actions of individuals are interpreted and given a sense” (Mazur, 2013, p. 35). One, therefore, claim that institutions influence social preferences and actions of individuals, groups, power structures as well as their mutual relations. Although they in themselves are a product of actions undertaken by individuals and societies, and though they evolve in a longer time perspective, they are relatively constant elements that determine the functioning of the public sphere and its actors.

In the context of regional governance, institutions influence a range of attitudes and behaviours of individual and collective entities, such as mutual trust among regional actors, readiness to cooperate inside and across sectors, openness to new ideas and solutions, willingness and ability to learn, as well as readiness to implement changes on the part of the various actors in the management processes. As will be presented in Chapter Three, the elements listed above have an impact on the level of innovation demonstrated by public governance actors, also in their regional dimension (Bason, 2010, pp. 87–98). Institutions are the elements that can both inspire and restrict the actions of people and structures. Thus, it is the institutions that create a context of innovative processes in the management of regional development. The contextual nature of institutions means that their impact on the quality and results of the management of regional development can be either positive or negative (Kraft, Furlong, 2013, pp. 81–82). A territory, with its specific socio-cultural

characteristics that are part of the institutional order, is a point of reference in analyses of the impact of institutions on innovation in regional governance (Nowakowska et al., 2011, p. 88). In this context, political, social or economic specificity of the region is determined by the institutional set-up shaped by specific processes, including historical processes. In his study, I. Pietrzyk, (2004, pp. 12–13) stresses that the region is a space in which knowledge and skills are accumulated together with its institutions and relationships between the actors of social and economic life. In itself the region is a space that is geographical, relational and institutional.

The regional institutional context determines collective processes of the creation, diffusion and acquisition of knowledge, processes that constitute the foundation of all innovative processes. Learning denotes a process of “continuous improvement, modernisation of the functioning” (Kweciński, 2015, p. 51) of an entity to make it operate more effectively in a manner more suited to the expectations of the environment in which it functions. Learning processes generate changes that are positive from the perspective of the entity concerned, changes that occur thanks to the “acquisition and generation of knowledge, its storing and distribution [...] as well as application” (Olejniczak et al., 2010, p. 12). When it comes to regional governance of particular importance is the so-called tacit knowledge, in addition to formal knowledge. It encompasses informal and non-codified knowledge that is an element of tradition, culture, collective consciousness expressed in tales, legends or collective beliefs. Although its nature is not scientific in the sense of empirical verification, it is based on experiences, interactions and collective memory of the community in which it has been generated and reproduced, and has a positive impact of the region’s ability to adapt to the changing environment (Nowakowska et al., 2011, p. 96). Institutions play a key role in learning processes, but are also a generator and carrier of this tacit knowledge.

In their analyses, authors of the literature on the subject have pointed to the territorial context of innovation processes. One of them is the concept of *learning regions* proposed by R. Florida, who stresses the role of regional institutional set-ups – encompassing economic, social and political

actors – in learning and growth of regional competitiveness (Florida, 1995, p. 527–536). According to this author, the ability to generate, acquire and use knowledge has an impact on the innovative capacity of economic entities as well as other structures based in the region.

In an era of information society it is hard to overestimate the role of knowledge in the management of regional development. As the results of empirical studies presented in the following chapters show, limited knowledge and limited access to information can still constitute a significant barrier to innovation, not only in the regional economy, but also in regional governance. In this context institutions – be it social, political, economic or cultural – will have an impact on the ability to learn, i.e. to acquire, analyse and use knowledge and information in regional governance processes.

The authors note that innovations are always tend to emerge in a specific social context created by institutions, and not in isolation. To this refers another concept, formulated by A. Amin and N. Thrift, who demonstrate how institutions contribute to the economic success of the region. According to the concept of *institutional density*, the existence of many different entities within a particular area, entities like enterprises, social organisations, churches and religious associations, government agencies, as well as their inclination to maintain mutual contacts, cooperation and information exchange leads to the emergence of community norms and rules of operation. These in turn, lead to the emergence of collective solidarity and integration as well as institutions of common good (Bukowski, 2011, p. 41). This institutional density is also a result of the production and dissemination of tacit knowledge.

An analysis of specific cases of innovation in the management of regional development in Poland, such as Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Subregion of Silesia, *Direction Silesia 3.0* strategic initiative, National and Regional Networks of Rural Development, their evaluation in terms of a process innovation occurring in the management of regional development, entrepreneurial discovery will make it possible to indicate what specific institutional determinants facilitate or hamper the generation and implementation of innovation in regional management processes. Scholars point to the fact that in specific conditions institutions may

constitute barriers to changes and economic development (Sokołowicz, 2015, p. 86).

In the light of our research objectives, our interest focuses on both formal institutions and cultural norms referring to trust, social values or ideas. The latter, like in the case of formal institutions, can have a twofold – integrating and disintegrating – impact on the innovativeness of regional governance processes (Mazur, 2013, p. 36). Our analysis of specific case studies based on empirical methods (interviews, focus groups, dyadic interviews), participant observation as well as existing source materials and literature on the subject, will provide the basis for conclusions about the impact of institutions on innovations in regional governance in Poland.

### **1.3. Europeanisation as a research category explaining the origins and course of innovation processes in regional governance**

The concept of Europeanization has been selected as a research concept applied for the sake of verification of the hypothesis about the impact of European integration processes on the generation and implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance in Poland. When it comes to the definition of the concept, there are many studies referring to this category in the literature on the subject, within disciplines like political science, law, economics or international studies. The term has many meanings, which is why the present book will feature those definition elements that correspond to the subject of the research presented in it.

One of the reasons why scholars often tackle Europeanisation is the close link between the ongoing European integration processes and the development of theoretical reflection on their causes, course and effects in the functioning of European states and societies. Europeanisation as a research concept explains the processes of institutional and procedural changes which occurred in the past and which also occur today under the influence of EU institutions, and also refers to the study of impact created by member states on the decision-making processes, policies and functioning of the entire system of the EU. As researchers studying

European integration indicate, in the case of Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, Europeanisation processes denoted changes that drove transformation and, in some dimensions, also modernisation (Riedel, 2015; Grosse, 2011; Modrzejewska, 2011). As a result of Europeanisation processes, the political and economic systems in those states underwent significant changes which often meant the creation of new organisational and procedural foundations for the implementation of selected policies, including regional development policy.

The most recent Europeanisation concepts point to the multidirectional and multilevel nature of these processes unfolding from the EU level towards the member states and regions (*top-down*), and from the national level to the supranational level (*bottom-up*). Scholars also point to a new dimension of Europeanisation process which is described as *ad-extra* and which refers to the impact of the EU on the solutions, policies and governance models of states that are outside the integration structures (Ruszkowski, 2010, p. 365). Usually, this type of Europeanisation processes refers to states aspiring to membership in the community or to countries with which the EU cooperates closely in many political and thematic areas. Europeanisation processes can also bypass the national level (Ruszkowski, 2013, pp. 52–53), or may involve horizontal Europeanisation (Wiktorska-Święcka, 2015), for example, through direct cooperation, thus allowing the supranational and regional levels to liaise, or promoting direct mutual interactions of actors representing regional and local levels in various member states, for example, e.g. by means of territorial cooperation. In this context, an important role will be played by the learning and diffusion of innovative solutions through the adoption of good practices that have been verified thanks to their prior implementation elsewhere, on the same or different level of governance.

Taking into account the subject of the present monograph, the authors focus on an impact analysis of the European Union regulatory system on the generation and implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance in Poland. Top-down Europeanisation processes lead to the implementation of institutional, organisational and substantive solutions from the EU level to the national, regional and local levels where development policies are managed (Grosse, 2013, p. 79). The impact of

Europeanisation on regional governance processes has a subjective and objective dimension, and encompasses legal norms, decision-making structures and processes, objectives and instruments of public policies, as well as changing the attitudes, interests and actions of regional development actors.

A well-known theorist and researcher studying Europeanisation processes, C. Radaelli, points out that entities subjected to Europeanization pressure of Europeanisation may vary in their reactions: from accommodation i.e. internalisation of new solutions; through transformation i.e. adaptation to changes which are a challenge to their addressees; inertia, which signifies lack of political will to implement changes; or reduction, which denotes opposition to these processes (Riedel, 2015, p. 58). Depending on the political culture in a territorial entity, the level of its socio-economic development, degree of compatibility between its institutional-legal solutions and those of the EU, Europeanisation processes may contribute to the emergence of changes, judged differently by different actors subjected to their influence. It is, therefore, worth stressing that Europeanisation does not signify homogenisation: on the contrary, it has varied effects produced in response to the unfolding changes.

In Poland's case, the country's integration with the European Union was associated with the building of new systems of managing public policies, including regional development policy. In many aspects, governance standards applied on the EU level served as a point of reference for the national and regional systems of development management (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015, p. 29). In the context of the impact of Europeanisation on the regional governance system in Poland, worth posing is the question which solutions and to what degree influenced the development of innovative approaches to regional governance.

Measurement of the impact of Europeanisation processes on the quality of regional governance in Poland may be either founded on quantitative or qualitative methodology. The research the results of which are presented in this monograph focuses on the qualitative approach to the assessment of the impact that European integration processes had on innovations in regional governance in Poland. Given that innovations are territorial and contextual, their perception also depends on the interests

as well as the norms, values, knowledge and experience of the various actors involved in the process of regional governance. Moreover, an analysis of specific solutions in regional governance which stem from Europeanisation processes, may produce an effect in the form of assessment of innovativeness displayed by various entities participating in regional governance processes.

In their impact analysis, the authors of the monograph focus mainly on the opinions of the respondents in individual interviews – officials on the national, regional and local levels responsible for regional governance in Poland, as well as opinions of experts expressed in a focused interview devoted to innovation in regional governance in Poland. Drawing on the information and opinions from these officials and experts, the authors have verified the hypothesis concerning the impact of Europeanisation on the generation and implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance, types of innovation implemented thanks to Europeanisation, as well as indicate the potential represented by hard and soft instruments there, and also real changes caused by Europeanisation processes in innovation in regional governance.

With regard to Europeanisation instruments, it should be noted that they can be both hard and soft. The former are mostly legal norms and regulations, which, owing to their binding nature, force individual actors subjected to Europeanisation pressure to perform specific actions. Soft instruments concern mainly beliefs, informal rules, norms and values which are expressed in the EU policy making process, and are then reflected in the contents of national policies and governance systems (*ibid.* p. 26). When analysing Europeanisation-related context of the implementation of innovations in regional governance in Poland, the authors paid attention not only to the formal mechanisms of Europeanisation as contributing to the generation of innovative solutions in management processes, but also to informal elements of Europeanisation and their impact on governance processes.

#### **1.4. The explanatory potential of the multilevel governance concept displayed in the study of innovations in regional governance**

Another hypothesis formulated by the authors of the monograph during their study of innovations in regional governance concerns the positive impact that multilevel governance processes may have for the generation of managerial innovations on the regional level in Poland. In order to verify the hypothesis, the authors had to apply the concept of multilevel governance (MLG) in their research processes. The sources of MLG as a concept explaining the management of development processes can be traced back to the European integration project. In the 1990s, political scientists began to describe new forms of distributing and exercising power on the EU level, going beyond the traditional patterns of the functioning of a nation state (Bache, 2008; Knodt, 2005).

One of the first authors to create a theoretical basis for the concept of multilevel governance was G. Marks. He described the creation and implementation of the European Communities' structural policy as the most prominent example of the implementation of this concept. The scholar noted that the reform of the structural funds carried out in the late 1980s had led to the changes in power relations between member states, the European Commission and regional authorities. As a result of this reform the states lost their control over the European Commission in the sphere of fund management and the Commission not only became the main decision maker in matters associated with the financing of regional development from the Community budget, but also began to actively co-operate in this sphere with regions in order to effectively implement management solutions (Marks, 1992, p. 221).

The MLG concept in its networked variant stems from the New Public Governance model which is described in the first part of the chapter, and which E. Sørensen and J. Tørfing (2012) regard as conducive to innovations in public governance processes. Multilevel governance refers to the interactions between political actors on various levels of governance. These interactions differ also in terms of the degree of their complexity. They can be hierarchical, for instance between the government and its

territorial agencies, or horizontal, especially in the context of the participation of non-state actors in multilevel governance.

The concept of multilevel governance points to the ongoing process of reallocation of decision-making among various levels of the territorial power system, the process accompanied by decline of monopoly of a nation state in territorial governance. The process of shifting the centre of power both up and down the territorial system of state organisation is referred to as rescaling, and shows how contemporary governance processes occur on the levels of community-generated relations (scale) that may go beyond the traditionally defined levels of governance (Brenner, 2004). Evolution also affects the links between the various actors, shifting from vertical to networked, thanks to which these actors may operate directly, bypassing various administrative decision-making levels (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2016, p. 139).

That is why multilevel governance may feature new forms of cooperation between its participants, also on the peer level, e.g. territorial cooperation of regions, local communities, urban centres, community organisations, but also between the various levels of a territorial organisation, e.g. the European Commission and the regional authorities. When it comes to the regional level of governance, the impact of the actors on decision-making process varies, depending, for example, on the territorial structure of the state, and on the position and role of the regional level in the territorial organisation of the state, as well as socio-cultural factors like trust and culture of intersectoral cooperation. A characteristic feature of multilevel governance on the regional level – apart from its territorial perspective – is its self-directing nature based on voluntariness. Cooperation of various actors does not always have a formal framework and is not limited only to the traditional systems (policies/administration, economy, society). It occurs wherever an exchange of resources and cooperation are required to solve specific problems (Michalewska-Pawlak et al., 2016, p. 15).

The analysis of multilevel governance refers not only to the subjective dimension, but also to the direction, coordination and control of a given public policy. Thus, it denotes a qualitative change in the forms and means of policy implementation, with a growing tendency to its

decentralisation as well as greater flexibility in the application of legal and regulatory solutions (Duda, 2013, p. 50). Modern regional governance becomes a conglomerate of traditional forms of public-administrative governance involving public authorities of the regional, national and supranational levels as well as network-based cooperation with broad involvement of local organisations, entrepreneurs, academic centres and other public actors (Michalewska-Pawlak et al., p. 17).

In the context of the functioning of multilevel governance, a there problem emerges of coordinating actions in the subjective and objective dimensions. Subjective coordination encompasses the functioning and relations of public administration entities on the government and self-government levels, both internal and external. The objective dimension of coordination in the multilevel governance concept concerns processes essential from the perspective of effectiveness and efficiency of governance (Kwieciński, 2015, p. 46). The use of non-hierarchical governance methods which are not legal in nature but are based on motivational activities encouraging voluntary cooperation makes it possible to better tap the potential and resources available to all actors participating in regional governance processes. Such methods include voluntary agreements, governance through information, benchmarking, imitation, competition or informal agreements (Kolarska-Bobińska, 2009, p. 8).

An expansion of the catalogue of entities involved in regional governance to include private and community entities, and coordination of their actions by means of non-hierarchical methods may generate new solutions in the sphere in question. In this configuration, reconciliation of the interests of actors participating in regional governance as well as active and creative resolution of spatial conflicts through partnerships are conducive to the formulation of innovative solutions, enabling the development of new formulas and ways of providing public services and pursuing development goals. Thanks to the research project whose results are presented in this monograph the authors have been able to verify whether the above assumption about the positive impact of a multilevel regional governance system on the generation of innovative solutions can work also in Poland.

## CHAPTER 2

# **Regional governance in Poland in the context of institutional practice**

### **2.1. The region as a unit in territorial division of Poland**

The region as an administrative unit located below the central level of administration was created with the adoption of the Act of 5 June 1998 on Regional Government. This regulation introduced a regional self-governing community made up by citizens living within a specific area and described in the Polish legislation as voivodeship (province). With the entry into force of the reform introducing a three-tier territorial division of the country, there emerged, alongside existing municipalities, self-governing poviats (districts) and sixteen self-governing regions, voivodeships (provinces) (Śługocki, 2001, p. 4). Although regions as such had existed before the political transformation in Poland, they were completely subordinated to the central administration. Management of regional development during the transformation period until 1998 was primarily reduced to solving social and economic problems of various regions by the central authorities where the regions' governors remained fully dependent on these authorities.

The emergence of self-governing regions was preceded by a public debate about the relevance and sense of creating self-government on

the regional level in a unitary state, as Poland was back then and still continues to be, and about the models that inspired this level of territorial organisation in Poland (Hirnle, 2013, pp. 147–148). In view of the absence of domestic traditions of a strong regional level in development management as well as considerable internal differences between European states, each of whom has its own unique territorial system, the choice was made in favour of a self-governing region with a legal status the same for all sixteen newly created regions. Although the Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantees decentralisation of power and stresses the role of self-government in Poland, its provisions refer only to self-government on the municipal level (Długosz, 2007, p. 4).

Europeanisation processes played a significant role in the establishment of self-governing regions. Even before its accession to the European Union, Poland began to prepare its own national system towards implementing the European Union's regional policy. Although under the so-called institutional autonomy, the EU cannot impose on member states any specific solutions concerning their territorial organisation, efficient management of a system supporting regional development required an appropriate institutional order to be in place for structural funds' absorption. The accession negotiations as well as expectations formulated by the European Commission with regard to the consolidation of democratic system through decentralisation of power in Poland contributed to the implementation of the administrative reform in the country and the creation of sixteen regions with powers to pursue their development policy on the intraregional level (Ladrech, 2010, p. 109).

What proved to be significant in the process of empowering the regions in managing their territorial development was the fact that the regions were granted powers to formulate and manage regional operational programmes (ROPs) (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2010, p. 274). The programmes provided the self-governing regions with financial base for pursuit of their strategic, regional development goals, based on availability of structural funds for the purpose. Poland's integration with the European Union had a positive impact on the strengthening of political, legal and financial subjectivity of Polish regions, also through a change of the way they perceived development processes. A proactive regional policy

pursued on the EU level made the national policy-makers aware of the correlation between territorial cohesion, competitiveness of regional economies and economic growth in its national dimension.

In Poland's territorial set-up, the region is, on the one hand, a self-governing community of citizens, and on the other an administrative structure with its own agencies and powers, enabling it to accomplish public tasks. The most important area of self-governing activity of a region is regional development and provision of public services that are regional in nature and scope.

## **2.2. The objectives of regional governance in Poland**

Management of regional development is a set of deliberate and purposeful actions undertaken by public authorities on the government and self-government level aimed at bringing about positive quantitative and qualitative changes in each social-economic-spatial set-up. In general, the changes relate to improving the quality of life of people living in the region as well as increase of the region's competitiveness in the global dimension (Richert-Kazimierska, 2013, p. 124). Management of regional development also entails the influence that public authorities exert on entities operating in the region, and their motivation by means of a system of legal, financial and informational instruments, to achieve specific behaviours, beneficial from the perspective of regional development.

Unlike in the classical, bureaucratic model of the management of regional development by the public authorities, regional governance provides for a slightly different role of the public authorities in generating development processes. The idea of regional governance assumes that public authorities, especially on the regional level, serve as a kind of coordinator and partner in the generation and implementation of management processes. As A. Wiktorska-Świecka points out, the relations between various regional actors, including public authorities, are based on voluntary cooperation, potentially also informal, which focuses on specific tasks and specific problems (Wiktorska-Świecka, 2014, p. 162). Both

in the classic, bureaucratic management model and in regional governance, the objectives of regional development may be defined in the same manner; what stands out as a marked difference, however, are the means and ways of accomplishing them, which ultimately impacts the results achieved.

Any analysis of regional development should be preceded by an assertion that Poland is a country in which the intensity of regional development processes is by no means uniform. This is confirmed not only by the differences in GDP levels in the various regions, with the Lublin Region reaching barely 68.6% and Mazovia 159.4% of the national GDP average (Central Statistical Office, 2016, p. 1) but also by the differences in the development potential of urban and peripheral areas within the regions. The key dilemma which persists in management of regional development concerns is whether to focus actions on improving the regions' competitiveness, as opposed to striving for cohesion between well-developed and peripheral regions. The National Regional Development Strategy 2010–2020: Regions, cities, rural areas does not give an unequivocal answer to these dilemmas, highlighting both objectives in the implementation of regional policy in Poland. On the one hand the document provides for the necessity to invest in urban areas as drivers of economic growth and enterprise development, and on the other it provides for support for the least developed rural areas, where citizens have limited access to basic goods and services (Ministry of Regional Development 2010, pp. 89–91, 123). These two diverging visions of regional policy focused either on competitiveness or on cohesion clashed during the 2nd Lower Silesian Self-Government Congress held in Wrocław on 25 March 2016. The subject was discussed by representatives of local and regional governments, experts, scholars, entrepreneurs and representatives of community organisations, who presented their views on the allocation of public funds, including European funds, to be used to boost development of cities and peripheral areas, on the ways of financing more and less developed Polish regions, on the financial solidarity among them, as well as tools for its implementation and effective ways of supporting enterprise on the regional level.

Under the Act of 5 June 1998 on Regional Government, regional authorities are obliged to pursue a development policy for each region, a policy that encompasses the following objectives: economic

development, improving the level of the citizens' education, rational management of natural resources, shaping natural environment in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, supporting the development of science and collaboration between science and business, supporting technological progress and innovation, supporting development of culture, taking care of cultural heritage and its rational management, social inclusion and counteracting social exclusion.

Detailed objectives on the regional level are formulated in various regions' development strategies which must conform to the tenets of The National Regional Development Strategy: Regions, cities and rural areas, and must comply also with other strategies that all underpin strategic development management in Poland. What is usually set as a priority is improvement of the quality of life of citizens and competitiveness of the regional economy though specific priorities and ways of pursuing these objectives may differ in each case. Worthy of note is the fact that the financial basis of the regions' development policies involves the European Structural and Investment Funds, which finance mainly the priorities defined in the Europe 2020 strategy, which is why the main objectives defined on the regional level include smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010).

### **2.3. Selected instruments of regional governance in Poland**

The list of instruments of regional development implemented on the national and regional level is long (Stand, 2010), which is why the present analysis will be limited to those that are crucial to the emergence of a multilevel system of regional governance in Poland.

The most important group of instruments regulating regional governance processes relate to laws adopted on the national as well as the EU and regional level. This is a manifestation of a multilevel system of regional governance, which functions in Poland and which will be examined in the following subchapter. The national regulations that should be mentioned in this context include the Act of 6 December 2006 on

the Principles of Development Policy Implementation. The document defines the subjective and objective framework of the policy, including the functioning of the system for managing the development of the country and its regions. The Act was amended several times, for example in response to new EU regulations associated with the implementation of the Community's regional policy in 2014–2020 or territorial contracts as a new instrument for financing development of regions. Another legislative instrument referring to regional governance is the Act of 11 July 2014 on the Principles of Implementing Cohesion Policy Programmes Financed in the 2014–2020 Financial Perspective. It defines the institutional system for managing operational programmes, including the 16 ROPs of Poland's regions. The Act imposes on the regional authority's obligations associated with the implementation of ROPs and creates a system for selecting, implementing and settling projects carried out within the framework of the operational programmes.

As we analyse the legal instruments applicable, it is impossible not to mention laws made on the EU level, which constitute the basis for governance processes on the regional level in Poland. The most important among them include a package of regulations concerning the programming and implementation of the European structural funds and investment funds in 2014–2020. They regulate the management of disbursement and settlement of funds, including the financing of the ROPs (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2016, pp. 145–146). They also contain a description of the procedure for developing ROPs and of the framework structure of ROPs (European Parliament and Council, 2013). Moreover, they constitute the legal basis for the Partnership Agreement signed between the Polish government and the European Commission on disbursement of funds on the national and regional level (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015, p. 94).

In addition to legal instruments, another instrument determining the way in which regional development is managed is strategic programming. A reformed system of strategic programming was established in 2009 through the introduction of a hierarchy of strategic documents on which the development of the country and the regions is to be based: horizontal long-term strategies of development and spatial development of the country, horizontal mid-term strategies as well as other

development strategies (Sulmicka, 2012, p. 267). Among the documents that nowadays constitute the basis for strategic regional programming, those that should be mentioned are: Poland 2030. Third Wave of Modernity long-term strategy for the development of the country, Poland 2020 Development Strategy, 9 integrated strategies, and National Spatial Development Concept 2030 (Noworól, 2014, pp. 5–6). In this system, key role is played from the perspective of regional management by The National Regional Development Strategy: Regions, cities, rural areas, which is a mid-term document outlining the directions of Poland's development in its regional dimension. It is a governmental document the contents of which were consulted with self-governing regions. Regional authorities are responsible for the formulation of development strategies for the regions, which indicate priority directions in the development of a given territorial unit. However, these documents must comply with the long- and mid-term strategies mentioned above. Poland's regions can also formulate macro-regional strategies. Worthy of note is the fact that there is a close link between strategic programming instruments on the national and regional levels, and the European Union's strategic development priorities. Since a considerable part of the national and regional strategies is financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds, these documents must comply with the EU Europe 2020 strategy.

The smart specialization strategy constitutes a special type of the strategies formulated by regional authorities on the regional level. Member states and regions wishing to obtain structural and investment funds to finance digital development, research and innovation must prepare strategies specifying the areas and sectors of regional economy determining the region's competitive advantage, and then allocate public support to initiatives and projects that fit in with these areas (Godlewska, 2013, p. 89). Thus, the implementation of the strategies is to be based on the endogenous potential of the regions, made up not only of modern technologies but also traditional sectors, like processing industry or shoe industry, but utilising knowledge and innovation. It is worth noting, however, that in order to implement it effectively, Polish regional authorities must involve private enterprises, higher education institutions, research and development centres in its drafting and implementation.

The instruments used in the management of regional development, equally operational and coordinating in nature include, first of all, the territorial contract. It has been used since 2014 and is a contract concluded between the authorities of a region and the minister responsible for development, based on which the government transfers funds to be used to pursue regional development goals in the region. The contract contains strategic development priorities of the region as well as a list of the region's key investments that the government has endorsed as important to the development of the entire country. Thus, it is a tool to coordinate management of regional development, because it stems from an agreement between the government and the regional authorities on actions to be taken to support regional development (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015, p. 103). The idea of the territorial contract was described by our interlocutor from the Ministry of Development's Department of Regional Operational Programmes as an innovative instrument for managing regional development in Poland. This is mainly because it makes it possible – through a negotiation process – to identify and pursue common development goals on both sides: the government and regional government, and as such it has a positive impact on the effectiveness of public funds management. As the interviewed official noted, practice showed, however, that when financial resources available to Polish regions were limited, the negotiations were not entirely successful: they consisted mainly in formulating expectations on the part of regional authority's vis-a-vis the government. As a result, the contracts encompassed approximately 900 projects proposed by Polish regions, not all of which, according to the official, would be implemented. The mere fact of a project being included in the contract does not guarantee at all that it will be carried out. This undermines the principle of focusing on strategic development investments in the regions. Although in the future, the idea of the territorial contract should, in our respondent's view, be better formulated, agreements between partners make it possible to optimize management processes and enable regional authorities to influence the implementation of the regional development policy on the central level.

Poland's participation in the EU's regional policy has created the legal and financial basis for the implementation of instruments like the ROPs. Regional programmes, as the name itself suggests, are implemented on the

level of regions and are managed by the authorities of the various regions. They finance various projects which contribute to the achievement of strategic development priorities of each region. In the current programming period, the structural funds still available to Polish regions can be disbursed on the basis of two territorially focused instruments: Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). Further in the book, the ITI of the Central Subregion of Silesia will be presented as a case study of innovation in regional governance in Poland; here it is worth noting that it is a solution involving various local and regional actors in development processes. The Community-Led Local Development is a mechanism implementing territorial approach in management on the level of local communities, including rural communities. Its functioning is based on the rules of the LEADER method, although it can be used equally by local rural communities, and by people living in urban areas interested in direct participation in the management of the local community development. Unfortunately, despite appeals made by rural communities, so far only two regions in Poland: Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Podlaskie, have decided to use this instrument in regional governance processes (Association of Rural Municipalities of the Republic of Poland, 2014).

When analysing the objectives and instruments applied in practice of regional governance in Poland, it is fair to say that to a large extent they are territorially oriented. Regional development strategies, including smart specialisation strategies, regional operational programmes, ITIs or CLLD based on territorial partnerships enable regions to pursue their own visions of development based on their indigenous potentials. It is, therefore, worth reflecting on the role played by the multilevel nature of a system in territorially oriented regional governance processes.

## **2.4. Multilevel nature of regional governance practice in Poland**

The multilevel and network-based nature of the regional governance system in Poland has been guaranteed by law. The Act of 6 December 2006 on the Principles of Development Policy Implementation indicates that

the main institution in charge of managing Poland's development, also in its regional dimension, shall be the minister responsible for development. The minister has special powers making his or her position and role exceptionally strong in the system and enabling the incumbent to effectively influence the implementation of intraregional policies by regional authorities. According to the representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Regional Operational Programmes, the minister not only coordinates the management of regional development in Poland, but also "represents regional interests during discussions with other ministers on the government level". Our interviewee said that the development of various regions remains in the remit of self-governing provinces, whereas regional development in general is in the hands of the minister responsible for development. This suggests that there are different entities with different approaches to management of regional development.

Another respondent, working at the Ministry of Development's Department of Innovation and Development Support Programmes, said that "the relations between regional authorities and the Minister of Development with regard to the management of development in Poland fall outside the traditional typology of management models, which is why describing them as hierarchical, partnership- or network-based does not convey their true nature". On the one hand, we have an act of parliament guaranteeing the regions a possibility of expressing their opinion, for example, through the Joint Government and Territorial Self-Government Commission; there are also procedures guaranteeing the citizens' participation in consultations about key documents relating to the management of regional development. Formal aspects of the influence exerted by regional authorities on development are guaranteed as well. On the other hand, outside the formal sphere there are also informal contacts, with their bearing on the regions' abilities to shape this policy. "One region's voice may be hardly heard by the minister, but the voice of sixteen regions, for example, in the form of the Convention of Marshals, is much more sonorous and much more respected. Everything depends on a certain practice and on the existence of political will as well as personal will, to be displayed by various individuals coming to an agreement. Good cooperation between policy-makers translates into good working contacts."

This statement suggests that the functionality of the regional governance system in Poland depends both on legal regulations and on the culture of interinstitutional cooperation.

Apart from the minister in question, there are also self-governments of all levels – from the regional to the local – with the most important role being played here by the regional government, which negotiates and formulates the final version of the territorial contract and the ROP with the minister responsible for development (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015, p. 95). It should be noted that the three levels of territorial self-government – municipalities, districts and regions – are independent of each other, both horizontally and vertically (Chrisidu-Budnik, Korczak, 2013, p. 402). On the one hand, this gives them a lot of freedom in terms of ways and directions of the management of development processes on the lower levels of the country's territorial organisation, and on the other, it constitutes a challenge, when it comes to coordinating development actions between the various levels of self-government.

A forum for cooperation and reconciliation of interests of the government and self-governments exists in the form of the Joint Government and Territorial Self-Government Commission, while the governors, territorially positioned on the level of the self-governing regions, are to defend the interests of the government on the regional level. Although the governors' powers do not overlap with those of regional authorities, governors' activity and their participation in key decision-making processes on infrastructural investments, or their power to verify decisions of taken by regional authorities with regard to compliance with the law make the governors important actors in regional governance processes. Unfortunately, as Polish practice shows, cooperation between the governors and the regional authorities, especially when the two sides come from opposing political backgrounds, is not often harmonious (Jęczmionka, 2017; Widera, 2015).

An important role in the multilevel system of regional governance is played by the Convention of the Marshals of the Provinces of the Republic of Poland. It is a forum for an exchange of views and cooperation of marshals of all Polish regions thanks to which representatives of the regions can discuss the current problems associated with the management

of regional development and formulate joint positions that are a result of compromise, and then present them to central-level institutions and authorities (Internet Information Service of the Union of the Voivodeships of the Republic of Poland, 2017). As the official from the Ministry of Development's Department of Innovation and Development Support Programmes indicated, when speaking to the government, the regions "try to speak with one voice, e.g. when presenting their remarks on the contents of strategic documents. During various meetings, some ministers say that if the self-governments can define and articulate a joint position to the ministry, it is treated as a serious argument in favour of taking such opinions into account." The Convention of the Marshals is an entity capable of successfully negotiating the interests of the regions with the central governments, provided that it "speaks with one voice". When there is no unanimity among the regions, their negotiating position in dealing with the government administration is much weaker. Our interviewee also indicated that negotiations between the government and the regional governments were political, and if the former wanted to weaken the Marshals' negotiating position, "it is enough to convince one of them, who is from a political party close to the government, to refuse to support a stance that is different from the government's". As an example, the official from the Ministry of Development cited the negotiations over the Responsible Development Strategy. There were many critical remarks about it, but since they were submitted individually, the regional governments had a weaker impact on any possible changes that were to be introduced.

Self-governing regions engage in multilateral cooperation in the form of macro-regional strategies. Examples include the Strategy for Western Poland signed by five regions from western Poland: Lower Silesia, Lubuskie, Opolskie and Wielkopolskie. Similar strategies have been formulated for Eastern Poland, Southern Poland and Central Poland. The problem is, however, that, except for the Strategy for the Development of Eastern Poland, there is no separate budget allocated for the implementation of its provisions (Wyrwa, 2014). Regional governments also have a statutory obligation to involve local authorities, self-regulatory organisations and professional organisations as well as higher education

institutions in the drafting of regional strategies (Act of 5 June 1998 on Regional Government).

On 28 October 2015, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development (now Ministry of Infrastructure) published its Guidelines on the implementation of the partnership principle for 2014–2020. The publication of the document is a result of Europeanisation, the process which forces national public authorities to include social and economic entities in their decision-making concerning implementation of the EU's cohesion policy. Partnerships operate on all stages of implementation of this policy, from programming, through implementation to evaluation, but the authorities are also obliged to support their partners interested in participating in regional governance processes. As it has already been mentioned, the regional development policy system in Poland is closely linked to EU solutions on account of being financed by structural and investment funds. That is why regional authorities are obliged to implement a multi-stakeholder and multilevel system of regional governance as an obligatory solution resulting, as it were, from the pressure of Europeanisation. A good example of the implementation of the partnership principle in regional governance is the Monitoring Committee as an institution set up to review the implementation of the Regional Operational Programme. When analysing its structure and composition, it is worth noting that it represents all important actors on the regional level: employers, employees, community organisations, higher education institutions, local government units, key trade organisations, national authorities and institutions as well as the European Commission (website of the Regional Operational Programme for the Podkarpackie Province).

Thus, on the regional level we have, in addition to public authorities of various levels, community organisations and enterprises, higher education institutions, business community institutions, regional development agencies, clusters and territorial partnerships, all of which, using various instruments, are actively involved in regional governance processes. The participation of the social and non-governmental sectors in development processes on the regional level is also strengthened by two instruments of governance mentioned earlier, namely ITIs and CLLD. Because of the involvement of non-public stakeholders, regional governance processes

become increasingly territorial in their focus, because of which the region begins to be seen, and thus managed, not only as an administrative unit, but, above all, as a functional area with spatial and economic relations. Another mechanism used in order to involve the private and social sectors in management processes is public-private partnership, but, as practice shows, its implementation comes up against serious cultural and systemic problems (Hausner et al., 2013, pp. 45–49).

According to A. Noworol, the current legal regulations do not really encourage citizens to become involved in regional governance processes. In the light of the existing legislation, their participation is to be limited mainly to being informed and consulted by the public authorities, a process that is strictly formalised. The biggest opportunity for involving citizens in the decision-making process on the regional level presents itself in environmental protection and cooperation between the public sector and non-governmental organisations (Noworól, 2014, p. 23). Such possibilities have been also envisaging in the process of drafting strategic and operational documents on the regional level, though it should be noted that the fact that actors other than public authorities can express their opinion does not have any real impact on the very process and content of decision-making. There are no guarantees that such opinions will be considered in the drafting of the documents, which can discourage stakeholders from participating in the process. It is also worth noting that the fact that other regional actors are not involved in development processes leads to a low level of legitimacy for the actions undertaken by regional authorities, weak regional identity, low quality of regional social capital and low level of innovation in management processes.

The crucial role to be played by economic stakeholders in the management of regional development has been pointed out by the Marshal of the Lubuskie Province, A. Polak, for whom regional development without enterprises is impossible. She has also stressed the need for closer cooperation between the public and the private sector, who often do not understand each other owing to different logics of their functioning. In order to improve the quality of cooperation, in mid-2016 the regional authorities in the Lubuskie Province established the Lubuskie Development Academy as an initiative aimed at disseminating knowledge of the regional

strategy and conducting consulting and training workshops in regional policy for entrepreneurs and local governments (Lubuskie Development Academy). Similar initiatives are designed to support the creation of regional cooperation networks. Another type of network with a considerable impact on the management of rural development in Polish regions is the National and Regional Rural Networks. Such networks will be presented in Chapter Four as examples of an innovative solution in regional governance in Poland.

In addition to legal instruments for coordinating cooperation between entities responsible for regional governance, there are also mechanisms for conducting negotiations and consultations and reaching agreements, mechanisms that, according to the interviewed Ministry of Development officials, facilitate decision making and implementation in regional governance. Efficient cooperation between the central government and regional authorities is a prerequisite for effective processes in the management of regional development, especially when actions and powers of various institutions overlap.

The regional governance model in Poland is multilevel in nature, but we can see that network-based cooperation of many public, social and private entities exists alongside hierarchical relations. Legal regulations, political practice and opinions of national and regional officials suggest that the most key role in the regional governance system is assigned to central institutions. This stems not only from the scope of the powers entrusted to them, but also from the ways actions are coordinated.

The Polish model of regional governance can be described as dynamic and changing over time. This is determined by several factors, primarily the fact that the regions' legal and political subjectivity is guaranteed only by an ordinary act of parliament and not by a higher-level instrument, e.g. constitution. In practice, this means that a parliamentary majority can change the regional self-government system and even can do away with provinces as units in the territorial division of the country. It is hard to imagine such a situation in a democratic country where rule of law is respected; nevertheless, when it comes to political practice, there are changing legal and political relations between the central government and self-governing regions, reflected, for example, in the efforts to

centralise or decentralise some tasks to be performed as part of the implementation of public policies on the national and regional level. For instance, the regional authorities no longer oversee agricultural vocational centres, which until 20 August 2016 were organisational units of the regional governments and are now supervised by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (PAP, 2016). Similarly, regional authorities have been deprived of their supervisory powers over regional environmental protection funds (PAP, 2016a). There are plans to recentralise, as of 2018, the functioning of the 16 regional and over 340 district employment centres, which are to be supervised by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, and to launch changes leading to centralization in healthcare, education, or management of regional audit chambers. Although experts indicate that in the last case, centralisation may also have its advantages, for example, increased effectiveness in the functioning of employment centres and better coordination of the government's social policy (Rzemek, 2017) – there are also opinions that, in fact, it stems from a specific vision of state promoted by the ruling party as well as an attempt to take control over funds that are at the disposal of various institutions. During the conference The Regional Operational Programme for Lower Silesia – Broadening the Perspective held in Wrocław on 16 December 2016, the Marshals of Lower Silesia, Lubuskie Province and Opolskie Province said that depriving self-governments of their powers and recentralisation of the state by the government made it impossible for the regional authorities to perform their tasks (ROP Conference, 2016). According to the Marshal of the Opolskie Province, policies implemented in this manner would have no links to the needs and expectations of the people living in the regions.

Diverging visions on management of Poland's development and that of its regions among various political forces in Poland can be expected to have a considerable impact on the practice of regional governance in the nearest future. Another challenge is the fact that regions do not have sufficient own resources to finance regional development. The problem may become particularly acute after 2020, when the structural and investment funds for financing of the Polish regions' development goals will expire.

## CHAPTER 3

# **Innovations in regional governance. A definition-based and model-based approach**

### **3.1. Defining innovations in regional governance**

Research into the application of innovative solutions in regional governance in Poland requires a precise explanation of the concept of innovation as an analytical category, and a research model that would serve analysing the creation and implementation of innovative solutions.

Interest in the question of innovation in public governance has its sources in the rising challenges and problems associated with the effectiveness of the public sector functioning, as well as in the attempts taken to overcome those challenges by creating and implementing new management solutions. The notion of innovation has been traditionally linked to the market and the business sector, for whom innovations are a source of competitive advantage which makes a business entity distinguish itself amongst others competing with it. Thus, it is considered to be a success factor in business.

The notion of innovation itself denotes introduction of novelties into the existing reality, novelties that will lead to specific changes (Janasz, Koziół, 2012, p. 11). The term 'innovation' was used for the first time by J. Schumpeter in the 1930s. It encompassed novel technical aspects in the

functioning of an enterprise in the economy, stressing at the same time the utilitarian aspect of its application as well as positive outcome in the form of economic profit that could be achieved thanks to the implementation of innovation (Schumpeter, 1960, p. 104). The problem of defining innovation in economics and marketing was later tackled by scholars like P. Kotler, P. Drucker or M. Porter, who contributed significantly to the explaining of the concept itself as well as its significance to enterprise development (Drucker, 2000; Kotler, 1999; Porter, 1992).

Chronologically, the application of the concept of innovation to analyses of public governance proceeded gradually; today, it is widely used in programming, implementation and evaluation of the functioning of public policies and programmes, including those on the regional level. This does not mean that there is one clear definition pointing to what innovations in public governance are. H. Anheier and S. Korreck defined innovations in governance "... as novel rules, regulations, and approaches that, compared to the current state of affairs, seek to address a public problem in more efficacious and effective ways, to achieve better policy outcomes, and, ultimately, to enhance legitimacy" (Anheier, Korreck, 2013, p. 83). A similar definition of innovation in public governance is proposed by A. Attiroiko et al. (Attiroiko et al., 2011, p. 3), in whose view it is a mechanism or institutional arrangement that makes it possible to solve problems associated with management or achieve better outcomes in management processes. The above definition stresses positive effects that should accompany the implementation of innovations in public governance.

E. Van de Ven and H. Angle (2000, p. 3) indicate that "innovation requires more than the creative capacities to invent new ideas; it requires managerial skills and talents to transform new ideas into practice". This means that qualities like inventiveness and creativity, which are a source of innovative solutions, must be complemented by skills making it possible to transform these ideas and concepts into practical solutions in public governance.

What makes innovations in economic management different from innovations in governance is, first of all, the objective of their implementation as well as the range of stakeholders to benefit from the

implementation of innovations. In the case of innovations in regional governance, these are changes geared towards satisfying the needs and interests of the regional community, and, unlike innovations in the enterprise sector, their implementation is beneficial to all parties involved. Thus, the strategy of cooperation for generating and promoting innovations in regional governance is better suited to satisfy for the interests of actors participating in governance processes than it would be in individual innovative actions, which are usually focused on achieving individual goals and goods.

The concept of innovation is widely discussed in the literature on the subject, viewed from economic, technical, psychological as well as social sciences perspectives, and is a broad analytical category (Anheier, Fliegau, 2013, p. 138). That is why this chapter will explore definitions of the concept of innovation in public governance, especially regional governance. In our analysis, we will point to those constitutive features of regional governance that were applied in the selection and description of specific case studies of innovation in regional governance in Poland presented in this monograph.

Before we proceed to point out the constitutive features of innovation in regional governance, it is important to consider what mobilises the public sector to be active in working out innovative solutions. The first reason relates to the nature of democratic political system, in which elected politicians holding power put pressure on management processes in order to rationalise and improve them in exchange for political support from the citizens in the next election. The emergence of a new leader offering an alternative vision of actions – often an outsider – has a positive impact on the generation of innovations. Another reason seen and felt by the society first hand, is crisis, a clear symptom of necessity to introduce changes and corrections into the management process. Less visible to civil society are the potential problems inside the public sector which necessitate a search for new, alternative solutions in its functioning. This was how one of contemporary management models, i.e. New Public Management, was born. Finally, yet another reason listed among those that lead to the implementation of innovations in the public sector is technological progress and advanced technologies (Borins, 2000, pp. 55–56).

Of particular importance have been technological changes relating to the empowerment of the regional civil society, which, thanks to technology, acquires alternative possibilities of participating in the management of regional development. The use of new technologies as e-governance tools not only facilitates mutual communication and cooperation of representatives of various sectors, but also improves access to information, necessary in the decision-making process, and makes it possible to directly involve the citizens in the decision-making process without them having to leave their homes (Reddick, 2011). This is particularly important when the size of a region and its population constitute barriers in terms of transport, time or logistics, barriers preventing citizens from participating broadly in regional management. New technologies, including social media, instant messaging or e-voting applications as well as other e-tools, have facilitated broader participation in management processes.

Innovation should be seen as a broadly defined change that can occur in the thinking, organisation, action or products. Irrespective of where innovations are created and implemented, they are always conscious and intentional. That is why innovations in the regional development management should be considered from a teleological perspective, i.e. focus on the objective. An analysis of the objectives of regional governance in Poland is presented in the previous chapter of the monograph, but it is worth adding here that innovations should contribute to an improvement in the quality of life of the community in which they are implemented. Sustainable development and smart growth depend not only on the competitiveness of economic entities, but also on the innovativeness and effectiveness of public governance, including regional governance. Thus, innovation is meant to achieve specific public benefits thanks to the maximisation of the use of available resources in the management process (Alberti, Bertucci, 2006, p. 2). Innovations seen in this way are to contribute to an increase in the effectiveness of management and achievement of better effects of public interventions.

The implementation of innovations in public governance is to contribute to the elimination or at least reduction of development barriers on the regional level (Freise, Paulsen, Walter, 2015, p. 279). In the Polish

model of regional governance, development challenges refer in particular to three thematic areas, namely:

- sustainable development of cities and their functional areas;
- stimulation of economic growth in rural areas; and
- support of entrepreneurship as a territorial development factor;

and stem from statutory regulations on the basis of which self-governing regions have relevant powers and are responsible for carrying out tasks in these areas.

The positive change that occurs as a result of the implementation of innovations should be felt by the ones to whom actions and managerial decisions are addressed. Innovations in regional governance should thus exert their impact in the form of specific outcomes which next to producing changes in social awareness, affect attitudes and behaviours of citizens in the public sphere (Glor, 2015, p. 4). It can, therefore, be said that positive outcomes can refer both to public goods and public values.

Some authors of the literature on the subject note that generation of managerial innovations in the non-profit sector is facilitated by multisectoral cooperation and partnerships (Koppenjan, Klijn, 2004; Sørensen, Torfing, 2012). The essence of both networks and partnerships is cooperation and exchange of resources, including knowledge and experiences, as well as joint actions making it possible to achieve the desired objectives more effectively. In the public sector, i.e. also in regional governance, creation of partnerships, joint projects, exchange of knowledge and experiences, sharing of knowledge, including tacit knowledge, make it possible to look more effectively for innovative methods to achieve the objectives of regional governance. Assuming that regional governance entities represent all sectors and levels of territorial organisation – from the local to supranational – it is worth noting that only their cooperation based on non-hierarchical relations improves processes associated with the programming and implementation of public policies as well as the quality of the public services. Collaborative multisectoral cooperation on the regional level is conducive to the sharing of knowledge and experiences, which through diffusion are transferred as a resource to be used by other partners. The creation and implementation of innovations on the regional level requires involvement of various actors, not only those participating

in the formulation of innovative solutions to existing problems, but also those that effectively articulate their existence (e.g. organisations representing groups of citizens, public opinion research centres, territorial observatories etc.) and then verify the usefulness of new solutions. Varied constellations of political, social and private actors create more possibilities for developing innovative solutions in regional governance than in the traditional bureaucratic model and in the market model, predominantly founded on the use of internal resources that organisations and economic entities possess. In this context, it is worth referring to the capabilities, skills and mentality of the entities participating in governance processes as well as powers to launch cooperation and innovative initiatives (Freise, Paulsen, Walter, 2015, p. 380). The condition of human, social and intellectual capital influences the capacity to generate innovations in management processes.

The creation and implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance leads to a change in the traditional roles played by the public sector and civil society, which is usually the addressee of actions undertaken by the administration resulting from political decisions. Innovative governance brings with it the empowerment of regional community, the role of which has been expanded to include an active aspect i.e. participation in decision-making processes as well as executive processes.

In addition to opportunities created by multisectoral regional partnerships and networks in terms of generating innovations in regional governance, there are also certain limitations associated with the involvement of non-public actors in governance processes. First, the entities in question have varied interests and expectations. The private sector, in line with the logic of its functioning, seeks to maximise individual benefits and goods. The non-governmental sector does seek to achieve common objectives, but, depending on the organisation in question, their definition of the common good would vary. Civil society is not an ideological monolith and the organisations representing it express different, often diverging expectations and interests. For example, organisations representing local communities demand investments projects improving traffic safety, while for environmental organisations the overriding objective is the protection of the environment, especially if such investment projects,

even if they improve safety, can threaten ecological balance. That is why the innovative capacity of multisectoral regional governance partnerships depends on the ability to cooperate and coordinate joint actions, effectively share information and effectively eliminate or resolve conflicts.

This was confirmed by the representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Innovation and Development Support during an individual interview, in which, when describing consultations over the contents of the operational programmes, he pointed to practical problems connected with the involvement of the private sector in these consultations. Those problems included that of entrepreneurs being guided by their particular interests without taking into account a broader perspective of the whole business spectrum, as well as limited knowledge of procedures for the preparation and adoption of operational programmes among some representatives of the private sector, and non-representative nature of the entities taking part in consultations for who cannot speak for the entire business sector.

Collaborative multisectoral cooperation is the only but preliminary condition of implementation of an innovative approach to the management of regional development. For determination of changes to take place in regional governance, it is prerequisite that all the above conditions should be met at the same time.

Moreover, innovations should be treated as a process and not a state, for their formulation and implementation are a multi-stage sequence of actions within a specific period. Bland et al. list the following stages in the innovation process:

- generation in which the problem or need is recognised, followed by information gathering, evaluation and interpretation, and then attitude formation;
- acceptance during which feasibility studies are designed, preliminary ideas are modified, objectives are set, coalitions are built, persuasion takes place, as does decision making; and
- implementation encompassing collection and mobilisation of resources, development of structures and processes as well as monitoring and evaluation of the innovations that have been introduced (Bland et al., 2010, p. 4).

As we define innovations in regional governance, there is no escaping the question about which of the positive changes occurring in collaborative multisectoral regional governance can be ultimately defined as innovations, and which continue to be ordinary changes occurring when public policies are designed and implemented.

The practice of regional governance processes shows that defining innovations is strongly contextual and territorial in nature, and that the way innovations are understood depends on the current economic, social, political and cultural status of a locality and its environment, in which innovations are created and implemented (Tura, Harmaakorpi, 2005). A special role here is played by two types of capital: human and social, determining the generation, course and outcomes of innovative processes. Many theories emphasize the importance of a locality as a significant factor for the generation of innovations, also in the management of regional development. The specific features of the locality, including the existing relations between various sectors, influence its innovative potential (Zajda, 2015, pp. 7–19).

Given the contextual and territorial nature of innovations in regional governance, the authors selected the cases studies presented in the next chapter on the basis of opinions of people involved in various dimensions and aspects of the management of regional development in Poland, from the national to the regional and local level, representing the public, social and private sectors, with whom individual interviews were conducted. When selecting the case studies to be examined, the authors also took into account opinions of experts expressed during the focused interview. That is why the present analysis explores those solutions in regional governance in Poland that were described by them as innovative.

The contextual-territorial perspective for defining innovations means that the solutions in regional governance in Poland described in this monograph as innovative may, in a broader perspective, be regarded as traditional in public governance. That is why, given the multiplicity of solutions in regional governance in Europe, the following subchapter is devoted to a presentation of various types of innovation in this area.

### 3.2. Types of innovation in regional governance

In analyses of innovations the authors of the literature on the subject list types that refer to the operation of enterprises. Nevertheless, the existing typologies can be referred to public governance as well. The typology proposed in the Oslo Manual divides innovations into the following types: (Oslo Manual, 2005, pp. 16–17): product innovations consisting in the creation and offering of new products or services or a marked improvement of the existing ones. This type of innovations can also be applied to regional governance, where new products can denote e.g. strategies, public programmes or other instruments of public policy implementation, instruments that improve the effectiveness of policies as well as satisfaction of the citizens as their addressees.

The next type, process innovations, refers to new ways of producing goods and providing services. Thus, process innovations introduce significant changes into production methods and ways of providing goods and services. In the case of regional governance, they may involve changes in the decision-making process with regard to decisions that have a positive impact both on the speed of their implementation and on the higher level of conformity with the citizens' preferences and interests. An example of process innovation can be involvement in the decision-making process of new groups and organisations representing regional stakeholders. Such innovations can encompass new ways of communication and cooperation between various sectors in decision-making processes.

Organisational innovations are newly implemented organisational methods, which, in terms of the regional development management, may signify changes in the organisational structures of public institutions responsible for the management of regional development. They can also involve the creation of new structures participating in the management of regional development. Examples of organisational innovations in regional governance include Regional Territorial Observatories (Salański, 2012) set up in 2013. Their significance will be examined further in the monograph in the context of their involvement in the evaluation of intraregional policies pursued by regional authorities in Poland.

Marketing innovations in regional governance concern novel methods of creating the image of and promoting the regions to increase their attractiveness as places to live, work and invest. In view of the fact that many European regions have been suffering from negative demographic tendencies associated with the ageing of societies, attracting new residents is becoming a major challenge. This applies particularly to peripheral regions as well as those in which the agglomeration effect, high population concentration or urbanisation processes do not occur or are limited. Population ageing means that public authorities of all levels, including the regional level, as well as communities and the economy sector will have to look for innovative solutions making it possible to effectively deal with the human capital deficit on the labour market, or the growth of the silver economy in response to the growing demand for care and health services as well as leisure or educational services on the part of the elderly (Klimczuk, 2014, pp. 150–151).

Applying the novelty criterion, innovations can be divided into pioneering and imitative. The former refer to the creation of products, services or solutions that appear for the first time and are novel globally.

Imitative innovations are results of the adaptation of pioneering innovations that have been created, implemented and verified elsewhere by other entities. As U. Diedrichs rightly notes (2009, p. 24), “it is by no means easy to find cases of decision-making methods that have not been previously used”. Imitative innovations are still innovations, especially in the context of regional governance and qualitative changes in management that can be achieved thanks to their implementation. As it has been presented in the previous chapter, the specificity of a territory and its endogenous characteristics as well as a different implementation context mean that in a given region the novelty effect of a public governance solution may be sustained even in a longer term. Representing different levels of socio-economic development, regions also have different experiences with the implementation of the regional governance model. That is why for some territorial units in which the public governance model is implemented in a short term perspective multisectoral partnerships and networks can be regarded as innovative management solutions. In such a situation, we are dealing with the implementation of

a model that has been developed and implemented in some European regions for more than a decade, while for others it still constitutes an imitative innovation, i.e. a process of implementing public governance solutions which have worked and brought positive effects elsewhere. Thus, imitative innovations stem from the diffusion and adaptation of pioneering innovations, although they do not signify simple copy-paste solutions that have worked in a different place and in different circumstances. Effective implementation of imitative innovations, i.e. one that successfully brings about a positive change, depends on the ability to learn displayed by regional actors involved in regional governance. The use of the existing knowledge and innovative solutions requires their skilful application as well as adaptation to the specificity and context of a given region. Imitative innovations also require a proinnovative institutional context.

As we analyse innovations in regional governance through the prism of changes generated by their implementation, we can distinguish among them incremental innovations which imply an improvement in products, services, modes of operation of various structures previously designed and implemented in a regional reality albeit in a different place or context. They result from the copying of good practices and models that have already been tested and positively verified (Geißel, 2013, p. 9). Innovations of this type change reality on 'a step by step' basis and are not most original solutions, though have the advantage of minimising the risk of failure. Since incremental innovations have been tested in another place and context, in which they have brought expected and measurable positive effects, by the same token the risk of uncertain final outcome of their implementation is limited. We need to bear in mind, however, that simple and thoughtless copying of tried and tested solutions from another territorial and cultural area does not always bring positive effects. If the specificity of the regional and local context is not taken into account, and solutions being copied are not adapted to the capacity, expectations and condition of the existing structures, good practices that have worked in one place may prove to be completely useless and generate conflicts in another place.

Unlike with incremental innovations, radical innovations are associated with a radical change and, therefore, generate a high level of uncertainty

and risk. The launch of completely new structural, procedural or product-related solutions increases the unpredictability of the final effect of the implementation of such solutions and can, therefore, provoke resistance or conflicts with specific structures or milieus. Radical innovations are also connected with the destruction of “old” structures, processes, ways of thinking or operating (Anheier, Fliegau, 2013, p. 142). They can cause misunderstandings, resistance and fear in the sense that they constitute a challenge in the regional governance process. Usually, radical innovations are implemented following a crisis, significant political, social or economic changes, and in conditions of high uncertainty. When analysing this type of innovations, we see that their implementation in regional governance is to some extent limited, if only owing to the fact that the public sector has its own logic based on the permanence of administrative structures, which operate on the basis of formal rules guaranteeing the stability, cyclical nature and predictability of political and administrative processes. Yet this does not mean that innovations of this type do not occur. An opportunity for implementing them in the Polish model of the management of regional development presented itself together with Poland’s integration with the EU, when regional policy structures were created from scratch, as it were (Sulmicka, 2012). Whether good use has been made of this opportunity will be verified by an analysis of case studies of concrete innovations in regional governance in Poland. Radical innovations occur much more often in the sphere of business and enterprise, who are quicker to embrace the change as ultimately, it is flexibility and capability of quick adaptation that determines their survival.

Taking into account the number and nature of entities taking part in the generation of innovative solutions, we can distinguish individual and collaborative innovations. Individual innovations are solutions that are created and implemented by one entity, be it public or private, while collaborative innovations emerge as a result of a voluntary, networked cooperation of multiple entities, beneficial to all parties involved. As T. Metze and M. Levelt point out, collaboration takes place above the existing administrative or sectoral boundaries (Metze, Levelt, 2012, p. 3), and innovations are effects of joint participation in governance

processes. Given the partnership- and network-based nature of the relations between these entities, collaborative innovations are sometimes also described as networked (Bland et al., 2010, p. 6). Such innovations are inclusive because the positive effects generated through their implementation are felt by a broad range of individual and collective entities, even if they are not included in regional governance processes. Such positive effects can be more direct or indirect; irrespective of their nature they have positive impact on the level and quality of life of the regional community.

Top-down innovations are generally created by public authorities on higher levels of regional development management. They can take various forms: from multiannual public strategies and programmes to new ways of mobilising civil society. This type of innovation is associated with the formulation of development objectives and strategies resulting from the pursuit of specific policies by policy-makers on the central level. Lower levels, including the regional level – if we are examining the problem from the regional perspective – are involved in the innovation process once the management-level solutions have been adopted.

Bottom-up innovations, on the other hand, are created on the grass-root level by local and regional civil society and their goal is to solve everyday problems experienced by these communities in their daily functioning. Bottom-up innovations can be just as well an effect of civil society's creativity and a result of low effectiveness of the public authorities in the provision of goods and public services (Kowalewski, 2014, pp. 92–93). The fact that civil society is territorially rooted – which is manifested in the form of community movements and organisations – enables it to more quickly and more effectively recognise the problems and needs of a given locality and its residents, and this knowledge can be effectively used to develop solutions aimed at limiting or eliminating the problems in question.

### 3.3. Model for studying innovations in regional governance

Regional governance can be regarded as one of the public administration's most complex challenges: it is a kind of balancing act not only between competing priorities and needs of various stakeholders, but also between often diverging visions of the role of public administration and public governance as such. It is a concept which does not fit in with the traditional patterns of thinking about the public sector and its activities; especially bearing in mind current challenges regions have to face, as well as resources they have at their disposal. In addition, nowadays equally "regions" and their "governance" must be approached from the perspective of integrating these variables, both in the systemic-institutional approach (indicating practice as it is with regard to regions and their management) and normative approach (indicating the desired, i.e. the right, practice in this respect). In order to fulfil this expectation, we need to constantly look for and implement non-standard management solutions.

In order to determine to what extent institutional practice can be regarded as innovative, we need to adopt a model that will help us to verify it in this respect. The definition of innovation in regional governance adopted for the purpose of the present analysis led to the formulation of the following preliminary assumptions:

- independent variables (territory and quality of regional governance) must be linked;
- the region should be treated as a subject in line with the so-called "new regionalism" paradigm determining the growth of the competitiveness of regions and improvement in the quality of life of their residents in the face of the so-called "globe-regionalisation", i.e. strengthening the significance of regions in the macro-, meso- and micro- scale as well as the links between them;
- a normative approach should be applied in line with the premises of "good regional governance";
- a systemic approach should be taken into account, i.e. an approach that presupposes a holistic way of investigating the links between the

existing elements, processes occurring within the framework of regional governance and their effects; and

- aspects associated with the “smart region” should be included.

Globalisation has confronted us with the necessity of looking for innovative solutions, including those that should go beyond the traditional political-administrative structures, especially beyond that of a state. The sense of mismatch between territorial units and research into new socio-political processes, often unconnected to specific spaces, prompted scholars to formulate a new conceptualisation of these processes: there emerged the concept of “scale”, which took into account the creation of new institutions (supranational, supralocal, sublocal). This led to a shift of power (i.e. change of scale) and made it necessary to redefine the position the authorities have in the new, multilevel constellations (Gualini, 2006, p. 885). The scale – as a specific relation generated by the stakeholders in the regional dimension – cuts across many traditionally defined levels of territorial organisation and, at the same time, is present in the discourse about democracy and civil society as well as norms and quality in public governance.

The model used in the study of innovations in regional governance largely tends to rely on a new regionalism paradigm, which draws on the idea of a dynamically changing space on the micro-regional level in pursuit of best solutions; it comes as a response to global transformations which occur in pursuit of highest possible public value to be derived from actions within a specific area. Regions functioning in accordance with this approach implement specialised and innovative solutions whose effects improve the quality of life of citizens. At the same time, these innovations do not necessarily result from the creation of an innovative solution in a region concerned but can be “downloaded” from a larger entity (meso- and macro-region) to which a given region belongs. Generally, new regionalism takes into account the culture of stakeholder participation in governance processes as well as a set of values and norms that make up the idea of good regional governance.

The basic principles of this idea are founded on perceived necessity of adapting public policies to the needs and requirements of their addressees as well as the need for policy-makers’ accountability. Adaptation to the needs can occur only in a participatory approach and only provided that

the principles of transparency and consensus building have been duly taken into account. On the other hand, accountability is associated with the rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency and integrity. Good regional governance should thus encompass democratic and effective management, effective public institutions, appropriate quality of public services, as well as ability to adapt to new social needs. A translation of this concept into practice requires the observance of high ethical standards, respect for the law, the principle of openness and solidarity with citizens. An effective implementation of good regional governance is key from the point of view of strengthening the state's potential on each level of governance. It is worth noting at this point that the European Union has formulated its own original concept of good governance (European Governance, 2001). Its core is not a strictly defined organisation or institution, but a system and rules of a team work. In this approach, the key values of governance are: democratic political culture, which makes flexible management possible; structural participation of citizens and observance of the principles of openness, participation, effectiveness, accountability and coherence (*ibid.*, p. 428) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Criteria of good governance in the European Union approach

Criterion	Feature	Indicators
openness	administrative institutions should be as transparent as possible to the citizens and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ transparency of contracts;</li> <li>■ ease of filing complaints and appeals by citizens;</li> <li>■ transparency of public finances</li> </ul>
participation	broad participation of the society in administrative work on all levels of public authorities and at all main stages of pursuit of public policies (i.e. programming, implementation and monitoring). The Commission has emphasised the participation of grassroots and non-governmental organisations in the work of the administration (the so-called civil dialogue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ groups of citizens involved in the decision-making process;</li> <li>■ funds allocated to citizens' initiatives;</li> <li>■ methods and quality of cooperation with regional non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>■ cooperation with minority groups;</li> <li>■ cooperation with business organisations</li> </ul>

Criterium	Feature	Indicators
effectiveness	concerns improvement of the administrative potential in terms of effective and timely (i.e. without undue delay) delivery of public policy objectives; it encompasses two additional principles: principle of proportionality (whereby instruments for delivering public services and policies will be proportionate to the objectives, that is delivered in an optimal and economical manner) and the principle of subsidiarity (whereby actions of a higher administrative level are only subsidiary to the actions taken on lower levels, i.e. they do not replace them)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ main sources of financing;</li> <li>■ predictability of budgets;</li> <li>■ open and available standards of public services;</li> <li>■ determination of user satisfaction;</li> <li>■ precise definition of the vision, followed by formulation of the action plan and its implementation;</li> <li>■ evaluation of actions that are underway and those that have been completed through the prism of the vision</li> </ul>
accountability	denotes precise definition of the scope of responsibility of the various institutions, especially separation of power between the legislative and the executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ guaranteed protection of innovation and its consolidation on higher levels of public administration (state);</li> <li>■ codes of conduct for policy-makers and higher level officials;</li> <li>■ anti-corruption codes;</li> <li>■ independent audits;</li> <li>■ norms, values and standards in the building of relations between sectors and in relations with the media and citizens</li> </ul>
coherence	integration of the management of various public policies, both European and national, as well as integration of various levels of public authorities within a multilevel governance system, and integration of sectoral and territorial policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ link to development strategies;</li> <li>■ integration of sectoral policies</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on: *European Governance*, 2001.

Research into innovation in regional governance also requires a systemic approach in which of key importance is the determination of factors that should be regarded as regional innovation drivers. The concept denotes a system which can generate, promote and boost innovations in a region as well as institutional practices associated with them. Thanks to these practices, regions would play an important role in facilitating information flow and disseminating knowledge among policy-makers and other stakeholders, including citizens. A typical system of regional innovation drivers encompasses people, relations, values, procedures, tools, and broadly defined infrastructure: physical, technological and financial, as well as intangible resources (e.g. social, cultural and intellectual capital). This means that if run a systematic analysis of institutional practice with regard to regional governance, we should pay particular attention to the fact that regions do not operate in a vacuum but in a specific environment, in which individuals share some beliefs and values, compete to achieve their objectives, but also form groups, and differ in terms of their ideas about power, and power wielding. It is authorities who formulate the principles according to which societies function, but such principles also stem from overt or covert agreements concerning what is admissible and desirable. Thus, a region cannot be separated from culture, and its regional governance cannot be considered without a reference to a specific cultural context. When trying to understand what a given regional community considers to be “good governance”, we should agree on what is considered “good”. That is why it seems essential to distinguish a set of ideas contained in cultures, ideas through which the society and its most ethically-minded milieus look at its institutions and power structures. This set of ideas is by no means stable and closed. Cultures are dynamic and change over time in response to impacts, and are mutually dependent within a society. Therefore, as D. Martin noted (1991), studying the regional governance system, we should take into account the cultural dimension. It turns out to be fundamental for further analyses of processes and effects, which is why the following questions first merit our attention first:

- What do people consider to be “good”?
- How “good” is the law?

- What are the most effective and the most representative types of grass-roots organisations?
- How should those who seek the optimum forms of governance deal with distrust of state authorities?  
and
- What should be the basis of local ideas of accountability?

What is needed, therefore, is an in-depth analysis of the involvement of various stakeholder groups willing to actively shape and take part in regional development processes. This requires a multidimensional approach and a perspective of the region as integrated and horizontal, since affording an open formula brings people and their authentic inventiveness and commitment together and makes it possible to maximise key regional assets. Moreover, of key importance are processes associated with control, coordination networks, and participation of stakeholders, partnership, strategic alliances, networked economy, networked society and civil society featuring various groups of stakeholders representing various sectors:

- public: governmental and self-governmental (central government, local and regional governments, self-government corporations, central government agencies operating locally, state entities providing public services);
- private (international, national, regional, local);
- non-governmental organisations (international, national, regional, local; formal civil society organisations e.g. trade unions, churches and other religious associations, political parties; informal organisations like citizens' initiatives, project groups); and
- individuals (residents, consumers, voters, citizens) as addressees of actions.

The model used in the present analysis of regional governance takes into account network- and partnership-based system of relations as well as division of roles and obligations among stakeholders and the stakeholders' impact on the decisions taken.

The implementation of innovations in regional governance should generate various types of innovative solutions, e.g.

- institutional innovations, which focus on changing the profile of the existing institutions and / or establishing new ones;

- organisational innovations, which are associated with the introduction of new management procedures and techniques;
- process innovations, which focus on improving the quality of the public services provided; or
- conceptual innovations, which focus on introducing new forms of management.

The authors of the research model applied for the present study made it possible to determine both the substantive scope and the subjectivity of the stakeholders participating in the process. To this end, they formulated preliminary questions that proved essential in examining the causes of innovation in regional governance:

- Why should innovative solutions be developed? (what is the reason; what purpose should they serve; what do we want to achieve as a result)
- In what area are innovations a priority?
- How many innovations are necessary to achieve the desired effect?

In addition, they asked questions about the elements of the generation and implementation of innovations in regional governance:

- How can the effectiveness of innovation be increased?
- Who to cooperate with in the generation and implementation of innovations?
- What leadership supports innovation in regional governance?

Other questions that proved important were as follows:

- Why? (do the various entities have such and not other competences; are such and not other solutions developed; are such and not other problems tackled);
- To what extent? (can the various partners decide; can a problem be solved; can a solution be implemented);
- How many? (competences the various stakeholders have; innovations will support the desired effect);
- Who? (takes part in the generation and implementation of innovations in regional governance);
- With whom? (are key decisions taken and key actions carried out);
- How? (are roles, responsibilities, prestige divided; decisions implemented, effects consumed).

Finally, the model for studying innovations in regional governance should take into account:

- political control: strategic management by political and administrative leaders; clear rules of financing; flexible organisational structure; decentralisation, greater autonomy of the public administration, cooperation between formal units;
- processes: concentration on outcomes, evaluation and assessment of actions (completed and still under way);
- professionalism and organisational development: expanding the leadership's competences and responsibilities, improving qualifications and competences; career and professional development planning;
- relations with stakeholders: improving relations with citizens through marketing and improvement in the quality of governance; concentration on service users, their needs and expectations; focus on promoting competition among service providers, and on transferring control to communities in the region; on decentralising power and introducing participatory governance.

Such an approach is associated with the pursuit of excellence in governance and stresses organisational development, culture, change process management and public value. This model of researching innovation makes it possible to gain the fullest understanding of the normative dimension of the regional governance concept. Answers to detailed questions should reflect its key premises:

- How much administration? The minimum: government and regional administration should act as initiators, coordinators, organisers, mediators, intermediaries;
- What administration? Open to cooperation: local and regional governments should stimulate it and enable various entities to become involved in it on various levels;
- How to govern? Professionally, in a coherent manner, effectively, efficiently, taking into account the categories of usefulness and permanence.

Such a model of researching innovations in regional governance differs from standard innovations in organisations, products, services or

processes for at least two reasons: on the one hand they are generated and implemented above the organisational level of one entity (concern a network of organisations) and on the other they focus not only on concrete changes, but also on desirable values.

A key element in the authors' model of researching smartness in regional governance is taking into account aspects that draw on the concept of smart region, aspects which, for the purposes of the present reflections, go beyond the framework of the smart specialisation approach. Our understanding of smart region emphasises the integration of the technological, organisational and political dimensions by including the innovation component in them:

- technological innovations: a mechanism of changing and updating technological tools to improve services and create conditions in which the tools can be better utilised;
- organisational innovations: a mechanism of creating potential in organisation and management to use the technological tools effectively;
- political innovations: a mechanism of solving institutional and non-technical problems of the region and creating conditions for the emergence of a smart region.

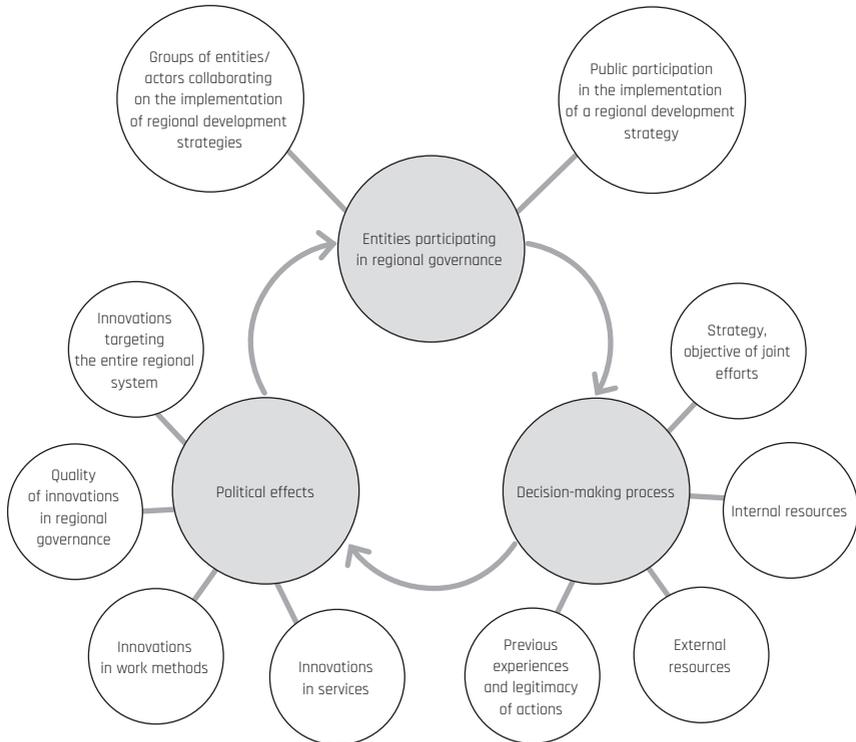
Thus, in our model we abandon the predominance of technocratic visions of smart regions: its basic variety, 1.0, concerns only the provision of the ICT infrastructure by the private sector. The second-generation region (smart region 2.0), too, is too narrow an approach: it limits the involvement of regional authorities to the reflection on the role of information and communication technologies for the future in order to improve the region's functioning (especially with regard to energy management and sustainable transport). Instead, we are interested in a region that is "mature enough" to be "smart" (smart region 3.0), and appreciates the role of active citizens and their social capital. Thus, its development should be driven by governance, development of social engagement, civil and responsible behaviour of individuals and groups, as well as public participation of stakeholders and users. The category of the region's "maturity" entails the enhancement of its competitiveness through governance in various areas which determine its economics and its functional spheres. It also points to strategies that should be

adopted and implemented in order to achieve the highest possible level of “maturity”:

- sustainable and open set of task-oriented systems of the region’s functioning;
- actions adapted to the various areas of the region’s functioning;
- region-wide set of integrated systems supported by innovations and enhancing the region’s competitiveness.

The model in question can be described by means of the following diagram (Diagram 1).

**Diagram 1.** Model for studying innovations in regional governance



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

The model is characterised by a number of detailed indicators and possible solutions (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Characteristics of the model for studying innovations in regional governance

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals/units and organisations collaborating on the implementation of regional development strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: deciding who and how takes part in decision-making bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clusters, networks, laboratories</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leadership roles: Identification of leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leadership styles, decision-making bodies</li> <li>■ Formal and informal leaders</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mutual obligations of entities/actors: motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Formal regulations</li> <li>■ Informal and non-formal sets of norms and values</li> </ul>	
	Public participation in the implementation of regional development strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> <li>■ openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of regional development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participation tools: meetings, debates, roundtables, brainstorming, e-participation (online forums, blogs), deliberation panels, charette, open space, future games, “Planning for Real”, “Word Café”</li> <li>■ Grassroots movements, citizens’ initiatives, non-governmental organisations</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Decision-making process	Strategy: objectives of joint efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shaping the strategy: formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Scope, methods and participating entities</li> <li>■ Results of consultations</li> <li>■ Degree of taking stakeholders' opinions into account</li> <li>■ Other forms of dialogue</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support for and threats to strategy implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Evaluations, including ex-ante, SWOT</li> <li>■ Political majority</li> <li>■ taking minorities' opinion into account</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding of strategic development objectives: assessment of the stakeholders' familiarity with the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives, evolutive component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives)</li> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consensus</li> <li>■ Trade-off</li> <li>■ Conflict</li> </ul>
	Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Budget</li> <li>■ Regional and local public-private partnerships, public-social-private partnerships, public-social partnerships</li> <li>■ Delegation of tasks</li> <li>■ Types of investments</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Information and expertise: acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Expert analyses</li> <li>■ Research (quantitative and qualitative)</li> <li>■ Expert panels</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Power and legitimacy: assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Committees, councils, bodies and their impact</li> <li>■ Legislative process</li> <li>■ Scope of formal competence</li> <li>■ Methods for implementing tasks</li> <li>■ Varied local partnership methods</li> <li>■ Coordination mechanism</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Legal, political and cultural environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Other resources making participation in the decision-making process possible, e.g. cultural competence, support and political authority...</li> </ul>
	<p><b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Top-down Europeanisation</li> <li>■ Bottom-up Europeanisation</li> <li>■ Supraregional lobbying</li> <li>■ Horizontal Europeanisation</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Impact of the national level: ensuring support from the national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Top-down impact of the national level on the region</li> <li>■ Impact of the region on the national level</li> <li>■ Horizontal cooperation of Polish regions</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Projects implemented in partnership</li> <li>■ Legislative changes favouring decentralisation of the management of regional development</li> <li>■ Competence changes in the management of regional development</li> <li>■ Changes in rules of financing regional development</li> <li>■ Permanence of partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Political effects</b>	<p><b>Innovations targeting the entire regional system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Joint strategies, programmes, projects (e.g.: macro-regional strategies)</li> <li>■ Implementation monitoring</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Innovations in services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Services for enterprises from rural areas</li> <li>■ New environmental protection solutions</li> <li>■ Systems of service assurance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Innovations in products</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Co-production</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Quality of innovations in regional governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ “Good governance”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Civil subjectivity</li> <li>■ Smart development</li> <li>■ Sustainable development</li> <li>■ Increased effectiveness of actions</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration.



## CHAPTER 4

# **Implementation of innovations in regional governance in practice. An analysis of selected case studies**

### **4.1. Criteria for selecting the case studies of innovations in regional governance in Poland**

Chapter four is devoted to the analysis of selected case studies of innovation in regional governance in Poland. The examples of innovative solutions in regional governance presented in this monograph were selected in a process comprising several stages.

First, the authors studied the available source materials and scholarly literature on the management of regional development in Poland. Based on the data and information they collected, they singled out key thematic areas in the management of regional development, including sustainable development of cities and rural areas, which determined the intra- and interregional territorial cohesion of Polish regions, and entrepreneurship. The development of regional enterprise, cities and rural areas is among the Polish regions' development priorities, as they were defined in the National Regional Development Strategy: Regions, cities, rural areas (Ministry of Regional Development, 2010).

Next, drawing on the selected thematic areas, the authors compiled a list of institutions and their representatives dealing with the above-mentioned

thematic aspects of regional governance, both on the national and regional levels, and then conducted empirical interviews with them. The empirical part of the diagnosis of innovations in regional governance in Poland as well as the analysis of determinants of their creation and development also encompassed a focused interview with an expert. Drawing on the material collected and information obtained during the empirical interviews and focused interview, the authors selected examples of innovative solutions in the management of regional development; the examples which, on the one hand, satisfied both theoretical and model criteria defined in Chapter Three of the monograph, and on the other hand, were described as innovative by practitioners and experts in the management of regional development.

Another preliminary assumption applied in the selection of case studies of innovations in regional governance was the intention to present a broad spectrum of innovations that could be observed in the practice of regional governance in Poland. That is why in addition to product and process innovations, the authors also selected cases with features of pioneering and adaptive innovations, top-down and bottom-up innovations as well as incremental innovations.

These criteria for selecting case studies of innovations in regional governance in Poland served the authors select the following cases: Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia, National and Regional Rural Networks and entrepreneurial discovery process in the Łódzkie Province.

Two other innovation case studies – evaluation and *Direction Silesia 3.0* presented in this chapter – were not classified under any of the thematic areas of regional governance listed above. Evaluation is horizontal, i.e. it targets the quality of the governance of regional development obtained thanks to the use of knowledge, information, research results and other resources available to regional stakeholders. Another benchmark of innovation is evaluation of regional governance through the prism of the actions boosting development of enterprise as well as development of cities and rural areas that have been undertaken. The ultimate argument in favour of including this particular case study in the monograph emerged from the opinions of the representatives of the public sector and experts collected during interviews. Our interviewees were unanimous in

describing evaluation as an innovative solution making it possible to increase the effectiveness of regional governance processes.

The choice of the last case study, *Direction Silesia 3.0*, was dictated by the desire to present the Silesian Province's strategic programme as an example of pioneering innovation. As our analyses demonstrate, most innovations in regional governance in Poland have their sources in Europeanisation processes, thus it seems more valuable for us to present an initiative that represents a new and original idea for managing regional development based on the region's endogenous resources.

#### **4.2. Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia: innovation in innovation in governing the Silesian Province**

The Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) can be seen as an innovation in territorial governance both on the level of the European Union, and that of the local and regional governments. They reflect a new dimension in pursuit of the main objective of the European Union policy 2014–2020, which stresses the creation and support of partnerships and cooperation networks for social, economic and territorial development on the supralocal level. Their task is to put in place a flexible mechanism for formulating integrated responses to various territorial needs, without losing sight of the themes through which cohesion policy is linked to the *Europe 2020* strategy (*Europe 2020*, 2010, p. 2). The assumption is that the ITIs will contribute to an increase in the effectiveness of interventions through the implementation of projects responding in a comprehensive manner to the needs and problems of cities and areas functionally linked to them. They are particularly important wherever development strategies require an approach encompassing investments within the framework of more than one priority axis of one or several operational programmes. Programmes implemented within the framework of the ITIs do not have to include actions spanning entire administrative units. They can concern distinct entities with similar characteristics within a region:

from city boroughs with various problems to metropolitan areas, rural-urban areas, sub-regional areas or interregional areas (*Guidelines for Member States* 2014, p. 8). This is the essence of the European Union novel approach to the programming of regional development policy: local and regional governments should themselves select solutions they consider to be “tailor-made”, through collaboration on various levels. According to the EU regulations, in its partnership agreement, each member state sets the rules for selecting areas in which integrated actions for their sustainable development are to be implemented, and provides an estimate of the allocation of funds for these actions on the national level (Article 7(3) of the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) 1301/2013). An additional assumption is that some tasks associated with the implementation of the various parts of the programmes will have to be delegated to the sub-regional level and – in specific conditions – to the local level to ensure participation in the governance of a functional area (*Scenarios for Integrated Territorial Investments*, 2015, p. 19).

The ITI instrument was implemented into the Polish legislation by the *Act on the principles of implementing programmes relating to the cohesion policy financed in the 2014–2020 financial perspective*. It became the basis for the establishment of 24 functional areas, with 17 on the level of capital cities of provinces (including an ITI for Bydgoszcz and Toruń owing to the existence of strong links between the two cities) and 7 in the functional areas of sub-regional/regional cities in four provinces: Śląskie (Silesia) (Częstochowa, Rybnik, Bielsko-Biała), Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia) (Jelenia Góra, Wałbrzych), Wielkopolskie (Kalisz-Ostrów) and Zachodniopomorskie (Koszalin-Kołobrzeg-Białogard).

In the case of the Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia (ITI CSS), it is worth considering to what extent a model constructed in a top-down manner as a result of the above quoted act of parliament can be regarded as an innovative solution. Our analysis of the case has demonstrated, however, the presence of precisely those pioneering and novel features in the actions undertaken, that we expected: first of all, the ITI CSS was not the beginning of supra-local cooperation aimed at strengthening the development of this part of the region, but a continuation of earlier actions. It strengthened the existing

relations between key actors (local governments, mainly municipalities), with an important role being played in the processes by the regional authorities. A representative of the regional authorities noted the following: “Here comes this Silesian innovation: from the first strategy in 2000, we had been consistently taking note of the sub-regional level, when we defined four sub-regions. They do not overlap with the European NTS3 sub-regions: in the case of three of them, it’s the same (...), but the central sub-region means five sub-regions [in this classification]. (...) The regional government has been consistently throughout the 2007–2013 perspective, and then throughout the 2014–2020, providing for a degree of empowerment in the management of funds on the sub-regional level and the process is still being development [today]”.

Secondly, an Association of Municipalities and Districts of the Central Sub-region of the Silesia (AMD CSS) was established. The fact is worth highlighting, because only 7 out of the 17 regional ITI associations and only 2 of the 7 sub-regional ITI associations decided to opt for the association formula. The association formula is different from the agreement-based formula, because it requires a partnership-focused approach of all entities involved in it, greater awareness of the quality of relations based on trust, as well as the will to contribute to the building of common values on a level higher than just the local level; and thus, it requires responsibility. An essential element of the innovation described here is the scale of intervention: the area of the central sub-region constitutes approximately 45% of the total area of the Silesian Province and is inhabited by over 2,700 thousand people, i.e. over 60% of the total population of the region. One of the tasks of the association is to serve as an ITI association with regard to the Integrated Territorial Investments implemented within the framework of the Regional Operational Programme for the Silesian Province for 2014–2020. By 2020, more than 793 million euros will have been spent here, which means it will represent the biggest amount allocated to an ITI in Poland. Another element that could be regarded as non-standard in comparison to other ITIs in the analysed regions is the internal organization of work connected with ITI implementation within the AMD CSS. It encompasses some non-standard solutions, e.g. strengthening of the internal structure for communication

and information sharing through the appointment of ITI CSS coordinators in the various sub-regions, openness to cooperation with stakeholders based on the Advisory Board formula, use of social communication elements to reach the end users of designed solutions, i.e. people living in the region, or creation of a dedicated system for the training of key individuals. It focuses not only on narrowly defined project management within the framework of the ITI, but also on a broad approach to the changes triggered off by projects in the local community (e.g. local community organisation workshop). Thus, the Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia meet our standard of innovation in regional governance (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia as an innovation in regional governance in Silesia – model approach

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals and organisations collaborating on the implementation of the regional development strategy	Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: Deciding who takes part in decision-making bodies and how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The main entities are local governments and their organisations. However, depending on the priorities, the presence of partners from other sectors is also taken into account: “Our ITI strategies define this context, to what extent partners from sectors other than the public sector take part in competitions and successfully apply for funds. However, there are areas, like regeneration, where municipalities do not have sufficient resources to be able to pursue social policy objectives on their own. Thus, they are open to partners, though</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>cooperation is not facilitated by the limitations of Polish regulations. In the end, at least with regard to ‘soft’ projects, it is a new, sometimes difficult field of cooperation for our local governments.” (Representative of the regional authorities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “At this stage there are few [non-governmental] organisations actively involved in the implementation of projects (...), even if there is room for them in many competitions (e.g. actions close to citizens, in specific neighbourhoods). Well, these organisations are not strong enough to prepare a good project, nor do they have people to implement it well later on” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> <li>■ “At best we are able to build a partnership, i.e. when an organisation is interested in a competition, it builds a partnership with a given municipality (...). This happens in the case of large cities – like Gliwice, Katowice – and it is hard work” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>
		Leadership roles: Identification of leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Marshal of the Province continues to refuse to assume the role of a leader: “We are aware of the fact that in this process the tool</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>that integrates cities in the central sub-region is the Association [AMD CSS]. That is why we do not impose anything, we stand aside a little bit, we do not want to impose obligations, because we realise that we have strong cities which do not want the marshal to decide for them. (...) We have city mayors with a vast knowledge and political experience, which is why the marshal treats cities like partners. He takes more care of the cities' interests on the national level, taking Silesia's specificity into account. (...) In addition, there is no obvious leader [among the cities themselves]: the role is played by neither the region's capital nor by another city which is just as strong, e.g. Gliwice, Sosnowiec" (Representative of the regional authorities);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "In this process [of writing sub-regional strategies for the needs of the ITI] the leaders were not us but the sub-regions, which shaped their own solutions, consulting them with us (Representative of the regional authorities);</li> <li>■ "Municipal authorities, i.e. our mayors, heads of rural municipalities and heads of districts select projects to be financed together" (Śpiewok, 2016c);</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “In the case of such a vast region, including cities with district status, one located next to another, each of those mayors is equal” (Representative of the ITI CSS);</li> <li>■ “Several members of local governments pointed to the Mayor of Gliwice, Zygmunt Frankiewicz, as a model in local governance. We have several leaders, but here’s someone who has considerable experience and significant impact on the form of this cooperation [within the AMDCSS], as a one who is highly regarded” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>
		<p>Mutual obligations of entities/actors: Motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</p>	<p>“This approach has been consistently used by all regional authorities from the very beginning, from the moment the decision was taken, and this is this element of innovation in the management of regional development: not only do we discuss things with the local governments, but we also notice some phenomena in their sub-regional dimension. This is a Silesian specificity, consistently pursued over years” (Representative of the regional authorities)</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Public participation in the implementation of the regional development strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> <li>■ Openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of the regional development strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “In the case of working on strategic documents this has a practical dimension: we always seek agreements, we have sub-regional conferences, and when we generate data, this sub-regional element always comes up” (Representative of the regional authorities);</li> <li>■ “The formula has changed, we have a competition in the region, the call for proposals is open. But we try to make the support balanced, to agree on who will apply for what funds, what projects will be submitted. This was prepared much earlier and now we are sticking to these arrangements. Because the point is not to allow these large units to “kidnap” the allocations for the development of the entire region. And we make sure they don’t” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decision-making process</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy: objectives of joint efforts</b></p>	<p>Shaping the strategy: Formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities</p>	<p>“For our sub-regions it was much simpler, because when we knew we would not be pursuing the model in the recommended, simple version – regional capital plus the functional area – we knew straight away that we didn’t need an action plan but a much broader document. Thus, our sub-regions knew that we would confront our approach</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>to the management of regional development [with top-down requirements] and that they would have to prepare themselves for writing sub-regional strategies (...). These are living documents, updated on an ongoing basis. Their drafting is still under way and has not been closed. They are still being adapted to the needs. It's like a lab in which local governments are trying to adapt to each other and in which a sub-regional vision is shaped in practice. And here EU funds are among the catalysts: the local governments are aware that by cooperating they generate a better 'sieve' for projects. (...) This conceptual work aimed at capturing a common direction, is still being crystallised (Representative of the regional authorities)</p>
		<p>Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support and threats to strategy implementation</p>	<p>The ITI formula provides for "empowerment of local governments to decide about projects that will be granted support. The choice will be made by the regional government. And by mayors, heads of rural municipalities, heads of districts – representatives of 81 municipalities and districts from the centre of our region who decided</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding strategic development objectives: Assessment of the stakeholders' knowledge of the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives, evaluative component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives)</li> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	<p>to establish the AMD CSS. This is an entity whose role is, first of all, to ensure smooth coordination of actions in selecting projects, in the case of which the amount of co-financing will exceed over 3 billion zloty” (Śpiewok, 2016a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Each successive regional government was aware of the diversity [of the various sub-regions]. That is why of extreme importance have always been openness and inclusion of the territorial dimension: with such a high number of different municipalities it was impossible not to notice the sub-regional level (Representative of the regional authorities);</li> <li>■ “For each assembly we prepare a list of all projects that have been selected, from which municipality, with information about project value and <i>per capita</i> support in a given municipality. All such information is open. We are really working hard on this and as soon as we see that a municipality wants to get more funds than has been previously agreed on, we watch this closely and the regional government works on this” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “In addition to tangible effects of investing money, there are also less measurable effects associated with the ability to cooperate within the framework of a very large body. These things cannot be overestimated” (Frankiewicz, 2016);</li> <li>■ “There are situations when small municipalities say they are unable to e.g. implement lighting projects, because they cannot afford to do so, and then the funds are applied for by larger cities” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>
		<p>Information and expert knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learning from one's experiences: “Already at that time we saw positive consequences and we looked at some organisational solutions. For example, for three sub-regions cooperation was ‘soft’ (agreement) and one sub-region – western – set up an association already in 2002. So it was not the case of it being created for the needs of the 2007–2013 period, as it had operated before. When we analysed how agreements functioned in the non-competition mode, this model seemed the most effective. Since in ‘soft’ agreements the role of the leader and of the relations is important, we may have to deal with a conflict</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>of interests. In addition, the formula itself hampers quick formal action, decision-making, organisation of meetings, there is no body for managing the funds. [Whereas in the case of the association] our reflection was that it was more partnership-like, that it pursued the interests of more than one municipality (...)" (Representative of the regional authorities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "In the past we carried out regeneration projects for urban areas, but regeneration was understood more as regeneration of infrastructure elements, i.e. renovation, modernisation, alteration, sometimes decommissioning. Today our approach is different: we start from an idea for a new purpose for these areas. We start with a full diagnosis of the needs, search for ideas for making residents active in urban areas requiring regeneration" (Śpiewok, 2016b)</li> <li>■ The approach of those managing governance in the AMD CSS takes into account "benchmarking, i.e. experience sharing, search for the best solutions, sharing them and cooperation open not to failures but</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>to successes, and know-how in approaching tasks and innovation issues in local governments. For innovations usually start with a trial, with a search, and innovative actions are often implemented in different places, especially by local governments, which bear consequences, suffer losses that are not necessary, if we learn from the mistakes of others” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</p>
		<p>Power and legitimacy: Assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “This pragmatic thinking and operating is also evident in political decisions: even if coalitions governing the region changed, this did not change the previous arrangements or culture, and did not threaten the policy of thinking in terms of sub-regions. They are not challenged by anyone and are not the subject of a regional political debate. The discussion focuses more on the question of dividing the funds among the sub-regions” (Representative of the regional authorities)</li> <li>■ “The way I see it, the ITIs currently implemented by the CSS association are an undertaking that cannot be overestimated. This is because the local governments from a large area, the central sub-region</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>of Silesia decide what in their opinion is the most important for the area to develop intensively and effectively” (Frankiewicz, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Each of the sub-regions [of the central sub-region within the framework of the AMD CSS] must give its consent to a decision, which in practice means that each of these five sub-regions delegates three representatives to the Governing Board of the Association (...). For the decision to be binding, it must have 13 votes in favour” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>
		<p>Legal, political and cultural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Members of local governments in Silesia do cooperate, and this happens through four different organisations (...). Even if a local government member is not in one of these, he or she belongs to another” (Representative of the regional authorities)</li> <li>■ “Each sub-region knows its specificity, knows its strengths and we [the regional authorities], respecting this specificity, try to safeguard it in the regional programme” (Representative of the regional authorities)</li> <li>■ “Worthy of note is the fact that the ITI association is based in Gliwice to appreciate the role of cities</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>other than the capital in the process. This creates a good climate. It is a culture of pragmatic thinking, abandoning individual interests, and a culture of mutual trust. Silesian culture is one of its elements. It is a key variable facilitating the process. Another is the specificity of Silesia as the most urbanised region in Poland, where boundaries of municipalities overlap: one side of a street is often in one municipality, the other is in another municipality. That is why it would be impossible to carry out projects without cooperation. Given the fact that the area is so densely built-up, this would even be unnatural, at least in the central part of the region. And this even before we began thinking about cooperation in the functional area above administrative divisions. It emerged itself, e.g. through actions within the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union or intermunicipal transport system” (Representative of one of the urban local governments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “The central sub-region is further divided into five strong sub-regions: Bytom, Gliwice, Katowice, Tychy and Sosnowiec. Each could</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>be an ITI on its own and, generally, each is bigger than many ITIs in Poland.</p> <p>These are strong units” (Representative of the regional authorities)</p>
	<p><b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b></p>	<p>Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level</p>	<p>Significant but not direct impact – the ITI CSS was created in this one, and not in other area, because of previous cooperation between local governments there as a consequence of arrangements between the regional authorities and local governments</p>
		<p>Impact of the national level: Ensuring support from the national level</p>	<p>“The arrangements that had an impact on our decisions concerning the ITIs emerged in a participatory mode, up and down (...). For the regional authorities the most important in this respect were partner relations with the Ministry of Development. They respect the decisions taken on the government level and these in turn are decisions impacting regional policies. On the other hand, they take into account the specificity of Poland: it is not a small country and its diversity makes us predestined to build project-based solutions in a relation with local governments” (Representative of the regional authorities)</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>“We were ready to take on the challenge of integrated territorial investments, because we had already tested the model, although owing to our previous experience with programmes supporting the development of sub-regions we had a slightly different implementation idea, different from the model proposed in Poland: not the region’s capital with the functional area, but four sub-regions, including the central sub-region with the region’s capital. (...) So this cooperation had existed before the ITIs; it was subordinated to a specific task” (Representative of the regional authorities)</p>
<p><b>Political effects</b></p>	<p><b>Innovations taking into account the entire regional system</b></p>	<p>Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The actions of the AMD CSS are comprehensive and integrated: “This is all about using those EU funds. We are really keen on that, because it is an element of building the region’s potential. But we also want to use them in a sustainable manner” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> <li>■ “We have already selected projects [for implementation] worth over 800 million (...) and the sum flows also towards municipalities which so far have not applied for funds or have rarely applied for funds” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<b>Innovations in services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	<p>Mikolów: Social Service Centre – an integrated approach to the inclusion of people at risk of social exclusion; creation of a base for cooperation between the local government and various groups in need of support; safeguarding a base for non-governmental organisations supporting the municipality’s policy aimed at activating final beneficiaries (Handel, 2016).</p>
	<b>Innovations in products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<p>A system for the strengthening of competences, expanding the knowledge and allowing key people to acquire qualifications in the process through workshops, seminars and sharing of good practices offered by the AMD CSS:</p> <p>“The first part is a theoretical approach: showing a model example, solutions used in Western Europe, and then we move on to projects that are under way in our area. Or are being designed or have already been completed. These meetings are very effective, because we have an opportunity to talk about costs, losses [associated with the implementation of these innovative solutions] in order for the following ones to be more effective. Or in order not to carry out a particular type of projects” (Representative of the ITI CSS)</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Quality of innovations in regional governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ “Good” governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ruda Śląska: regeneration of the Orzegów neighbourhood: “The regeneration involves local residents. They came up with various parts of the regenerations project, i.e. a change in the image of the neighbourhood and its residents. And they came up with this idea of a small market square. It will make it possible for people to meet. There will be an opportunity to organise events, which the residents like a lot and often organise. People will be able to eat some ice cream or drink good tea or coffee. We already have there the library building serving as the Social Initiatives Centre, which is very active in working for the local community” (Dziedzic, 2016)</li> <li>■ “Work carried out so far on the implementation of the ITI instrument and though it, on the functioning of the Central Sub-region Association confirms the key significance of good cooperation. Involving various groups in the decision-making process is our important success factor. We thus create a number of links facilitating information sharing and building of a knowledge base of the sub-region’s</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			needs. Such a model helps us to build trust, which, as we know, is the foundation of good cooperation. Without it we would not have been able to reach the current stage” (Frankiewicz, <i>Brochure</i> ).

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Actions connected with the Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia involve a network of entities (self-government units). There is no formal hierarchy, even if there are democratically elected authorities of the Association of Municipalities and Districts of the Central Sub-region of the Silesia: Assembly of the Association Members, the legislative body; Governing Board, which is in charge of the Association's activities; and supervisory body, i.e. Supervisory Committee. Trust between actors is of key importance to the effectiveness of the functioning of local arrangements. One of the elements in the strengthening of this trust has been the establishment of the Advisory Board, the members of which include representatives of stakeholders from sectors other than just the public sector (non-governmental organisations, business, science). This strengthens the aspect associated with the performance of tasks linked to ITI projects in the central subregion. In addition, the Association collaborates with the municipal and district ITI coordinators. The AMD CSS' statutory tasks include coordination of actions associated with the implementation of various development undertakings, initiation and support of cooperation between the Association members in the preparation and implementation of projects financed with external funds, including those within the framework of the Integrated Territorial Investments. A substantial role in the process is played by support for the Association members in competence building. To this end, the Association Office has started a cycle of expert meetings aimed at exchanging good practices and innovative solutions in the implementation of ITI projects.

In this case, governance has its own dynamics: as the models adopted constitute a response to problems that should be solved without the involvement of traditional institutions, there is greater willingness to apply them. Worthy of note is the fact that the decisions taken by the Association originate in the close-knit linkage between national policies and policies pursued on the European level as well as regional policies. Thus the governance model in question turns out to be a melting pot of traditional forms of administration and network-based cooperation with a broad participation of stakeholders, which constitutes an effective response to the challenge. A bottom-up approach takes into account the specificity of the central sub-region, effectively strengthens the coherence of decision-making, improves governance quality, contributes to the strengthening of social capital in local communities, and motivates people to use innovative development solutions in this part of Silesia.

Governance through ITI implementation in the central sub-region has been designed in partnership between the regional authorities and local governments. It was meant to seek both effectiveness and public value (improvement in the residents' living conditions, increased comfort, quality and sense of satisfaction). It is characterised by greater devolution of control from a higher level (regional authorities) to an intermediate level (sub-region), and then further to the local community (participation of final stakeholders), decentralisation of competence, and introduction of participatory management tools, especially when civic participation is of key import (e.g. actions relating to regeneration). Governance through ITI implementation in the central sub-region can be regarded as a process of creative destruction, because it leads to changes in the organisation and methods of managing social phenomena. It disrupts the established models of consumption and production. The implementation of jointly defined projects occurs through a newly established institutional structure with desirable techniques of governance being safeguarding democratic legitimacy by cooperation mechanisms, systemic involvement of social entities, taking into account other levels of governance in the public sector (mainly regional) as well as systemic and regular communication, information transfer,

and improvement of competence as the central function of governance. Governance through ITI implementation in the central sub-region takes into account key variables of regional policy in its economic-political dimension (including strategic planning, implementation of complex investment projects, support of economic development), socio-political dimension (including the development of social services, improvement of the residents' qualifications, cultural policy and development of culture, migration control), institutional-political dimension (including improvement of the quality of life, development of public participation, strengthening of democratic procedures, solving of sectoral problems, e.g. in health, public services, education, public security, coordination of development policies through cooperation and partnership), spatial-political dimension (e.g. management of the infrastructure and public facilities, development of public transport, development of investment areas, regeneration of cities and protection of cultural heritage, shaping of neighbourhood areas).

As a result of governance through ITI implementation in the central sub-region, the intended investments are approached in a comprehensive manner; isolated events are abandoned in favour of a complex of processes and phenomena which make up new models, goods, technologies in production and services. Innovative actions are taken both within a specific space and in within a system of interlinkages, i.e. an innovation system which comprises, among others, newly adopted organisational solutions. By rejecting the possibility of top-down constructivism, they enable development of solutions to real problems ("Marshals' Offices / the government / the European Union will tell us what we are supposed to do and what will be the best for us"). This approach is associated with the persuasion about the necessity of respecting democratic values and standards as guarantees of the social order, especially when pursuing such universal standards as partnership, cooperation, professionalism, political neutrality, honesty, avoidance of conflicts of interest. Moreover, the model of governance through ITI implementation in the central sub-region takes into account various dimensions, scopes, areas and levels of administration. Thus it can be a model and a point of reference according to which it should be organised and should function.

**Box 1.** Typology of the innovation *Integrated Territorial Investments of the Central Sub-region of Silesia*

**Process innovation:** since it concerns a solution that is being modified within a specific timeframe at each stage of its implementation;

**Pioneering innovation:** Silesia was the first region in Poland to have distinguished within its structure the sub-regional level, independent of the existing national and European guidelines;

**Incremental innovation:** improving the existing governance of the region, taking into account the region's diversity and specificity of the local communities;

**Collaborative innovation:** solution involving various entities from various sectors;

**Top-down innovation/Bottom-up innovation:** on the one hand, a solution initiated by the regional authorities and addressed to local entities, and on the other, local entities having an impact on the final shape of solutions subsequently implemented by the sub-regional and regional authorities.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### **4.3. The National and Regional Rural Networks as an example of innovation in regional governance in Poland**

The Regional Rural Networks (RRNs) emerged in the management of rural development as a direct consequence of Poland's accession to the European Union and its participation in the European Union system of Common Agricultural Policy. The RRNs are part of the National Rural Network (NRN), established in 2007 on the basis of Council Regulation No. 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks function within the framework of the European Network for Rural Development, which brings together national networks as well as organisations and structures dealing with rural development on the Community level. The initiative

is continued in the 2014–2020 period, mainly in order to improve the quality of the management of rural development programmes by increasing the involvement of entities to benefit from support provided by these programmes (European Parliament and Council, 2013a).

Poland has been implementing one Rural Development Programme, regardless of the diversity of rural areas in various regions and their different endogenous potential<sup>1</sup>, and also in spite of different developmental problems and needs, which should be addressed through operation of such programmes in the regions<sup>2</sup>. Although the current Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development has suggested that after 2020, there will be regional rural development programmes in place, the solution that has been proposed already raises some doubts, not least because of lack of guarantees that sufficient funds would be set aside for the implementation of the regional programmes<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The endogenous potential of an area is made up of resources which exist there and which should be used to boost the development of that area. In addition to traditional means of production like land, capital or labour, the endogenous potential also comprises elements like social capital, entrepreneurship or culture (Ray, 2000, p. 247).

<sup>2</sup> For more on the support for agriculture and rural areas available under the Rural Development Programme for 2014–2020, see Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> The information about the establishment of sixteen regional rural development programmes in the next financial perspective, i.e. after 2020, as announced by the Minister of Agriculture Krzysztof Jurgiel, came from an official from the Department of Rural Development Programme Implementation of the Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province. It is confirmed by a Polish Press Agency's release, published on [www.farmer.pl](http://www.farmer.pl), according which the minister has announced that by the end of 2018 regional rural development programmes will be prepared for implementation in 2020–2026. The programmes are to take into account the specificity of the various regions, including diversity of agricultural production, in order to support agriculture in a given region as effectively as possible. The idea of creating regional rural development programmes is justified from the perspective of the territorial approach to the management of development processes, although its implementation may be regarded as somewhat controversial. As the minister suggests, the work on the regional rural development programmes is to be coordinated by regional agricultural extension centres, which in practice means that the regional authorities will have no impact on the management of rural development within their territories.

The Regional Rural Networks as a governance solution are innovative in nature, because networking is a relatively new phenomenon in the management of rural development. Before 2007 rural development policy was managed primarily by the central level of public administration, i.e. the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development with agencies subordinated to the Minister and, to a lesser extent, by regional authorities (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2015). On the local level, there are active Local Action Groups (LAG) as territorial partnerships within the framework of the LEADER programme. Only in some Polish regions (Dolnośląskie, Opolskie, Pomorskie and Śląskie) are regional Rural Regeneration Programmes implemented as regional initiatives. The initiative itself was implemented for the first time in 1998 in the Opolskie Province, and its success inspired similar initiatives in other regions (Rydz, 2009, p. 267). As the representative of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province, has indicated, the implementation of the Lower Silesian Rural Regeneration Programme contributed to the building of social capital in rural areas and to pooling of expertise in driving development processes by citizens and their organisations in Lower Silesia. The expertise was then used by local communities to become involved in the creation, functioning and development of Regional Rural Networks on the regional level. A similar opinion was formulated by the representative of the Department of Rural Development Programmes of the Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Province.

It can be generally asserted that in the Polish practice of regional governance, there is a clear deficit of network-based initiatives that would bring together various entities active in rural areas and interested in participating in their development through cooperation, involvement and use of various resources, including public funds. How the involvement of local entities from outside the public sector influences the development and functioning of networks on the regional level will be shown later on in the monograph. At this point, it is worth exploring the difference between the Regional Rural Development Networks and Local Action Groups operating on the basis of the LEADER programme. Although both the networks and the LAGs can be regarded as innovative solutions in the management of rural development, there is a crucial difference in their functioning.

While the LAGs as territorial partnerships formulate and implement – through a project-based system – local development strategies, on the basis of three-sector cooperation, the Regional Rural Networks bring together all entities that take part in the implementation of the networks at various stages and can have a positive impact on the quality of management within this programme. That is why the functioning of the networks, equally on the national and the regional level, is financed by technical assistance funds at the disposal of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. In the case of the LAGs, the groups themselves determine the directions of development by formulating the contents of the local development strategies, and determine how the funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development are to be spent (European Parliament and Council, 2013 a). A model approach to the Regional Rural Networks as an innovation in regional governance is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Regional Rural Networks as an innovation in regional governance – model approach

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals/units and organisations collaborating on the implementation of the regional development strategy	Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: Deciding who and how takes part in decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Commission</li> <li>■ European Network for Rural Development</li> <li>■ Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development</li> <li>■ National Rural Network Secretariat</li> <li>■ Regional authorities</li> <li>■ Regional National Rural Network Secretariats</li> <li>■ Public, social and economic partners, e.g. municipalities, farmers, LAGs, education and research institutions, local associations, private entrepreneurs, individual residents.</li> </ul> <p>The legal framework for the operation of the</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>Regional Rural Networks is established on the EU level by the public administration. Innovations are implemented thanks to cooperation of partners and implementation of projects focused on rural development. The functioning of the networks includes local, regional, national and supranational cooperation projects.</p>
		<p>Leadership roles: Identification of leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Parliament and Council, which created the legal framework for the functioning of the National Rural Network</li> <li>■ Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development as a key entity determining the legal framework for the functioning of the National Rural Network as well as the creation and operation of the Regional Rural Networks</li> <li>■ Regional authorities serving as operators and coordinators of the networks on the regional level</li> <li>■ Local partners operating within the networks as local opinion leaders and sponsors of local and regional ideas and initiatives</li> </ul>
		<p>Mutual obligations of entities/actors: Motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for the implementation of the Rural Development Programme, including the functioning of the National Rural Network</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Responsibility of the regional government for the coordination of network actions on the regional level, including the functioning of a system for supervising the implementation of partners' own projects</li> <li>■ Partners: cooperation for rural development, sharing of knowledge, experiences and good practices in rural development, obtaining funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to finance development projects</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Public participation in the implementation of the regional development strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> <li>■ openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of the regional development strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participation of Regional Rural Network partners in the implementation of rural development initiatives financed with public funds</li> <li>■ Public authorities create the legal, financial and organisational framework for bottom-up initiatives of the public, social and private sectors</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Decision-making process	Strategy: objectives of joint efforts	Shaping the strategy: Formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities	Responsible entities are public authorities of the national and regional level. Strategic objectives and priorities for the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks are formulated within the National Rural Network Working Group featuring representatives of various sectors, also representing regional interests.
		Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support and threats to strategy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The National Rural Network and Regional Rural Network strategy is implemented on the basis of the existing legal and financial instruments.</li> <li>■ The final results depend on the mobilisation of partners operating within the networks, their inventiveness, creativity as well as institutional efficiency in managing projects financed with public funds.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding strategic development objectives: Assessment of the stakeholders' familiarity with the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Acceptance of the objectives of the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks by partners operating within the network and public administration of the regional level</li> <li>■ Visible regional differences in the assessment of mechanisms devised for achieving objectives and effects to be produced as a result of the functioning of partners within the network</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		evaluative component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	
	<b>Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development distributed as part of technical assistance within the framework of the 2014–2020 Rural Development Programme</li> <li>■ Regional authorities receive funds to finance the operation of the regional National Rural Network Secretariats</li> <li>■ Knowledge, ideas, activity, mobilisation, level of cooperation of Regional Rural Network partners</li> <li>■ Ability of Regional Rural Network partners to maintain financial liquidity during project implementation</li> </ul>
		Information and expert knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge is acquired through cooperation, sharing of good practices and experiences by partners in the European, national and regional rural networks</li> <li>■ Learning through promotion of good practices</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Databases and use of new ITC technologies for network building and operation</li> </ul>
		Power and legitimacy: Assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Legal legitimacy</li> <li>■ Social legitimacy</li> <li>■ Mobilisation of Regional Rural Network partners</li> <li>■ Bottom-up involvement of partners as a prerequisite of Regional Rural Network functioning</li> </ul>
		Legal, political and cultural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU, national, regional authorities</li> <li>■ Public, social and economic partners of regional and local level</li> </ul>
	<b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b>	Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level	Key aspect in the generation and implementation of innovations. Europeanisation processes unfold under the impact of EU legal and financial regulations
		Impact of the national level: Ensuring support from the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</li> <li>■ National Rural Network Secretariat</li> <li>■ National Rural Network working group and thematic groups</li> </ul>
	<b>Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drawing on EU legal and financial solutions</li> <li>■ Using experiences of the regional Rural Regeneration Programme implemented in selected Polish regions</li> <li>■ Cooperation initiatives in the form of joint projects depend on the activity of Regional Rural Network partners</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The specificity of projects implemented by partners depends on regional and local determinants, but must at the same time fit in with the action plan adopted on the national level</li> </ul>
Political effects	Innovations taking into account the entire regional system	Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial governance	Innovations leading to the inclusion of social, economic and public operators of the local and regional level in the system of managing rural development through activities within the National Rural Network and Regional Rural Networks
	Innovations in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	Not applicable
	Innovations in products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cooperation network as a product of partnerships between regional development actors</li> <li>■ Development projects for rural areas implemented by NRN partners and RRN partners</li> <li>■ Databases with information from partners operating within the NRN and the RRNs</li> </ul>
	Quality of innovations in regional governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ “Good” governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participation of partners in the National Rural Network Working Group</li> <li>■ Decentralisation of rural development management processes on the regional level</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Responsibility of Regional Rural Network partners for the legal, financial and organisational aspects of operations as a method improving the effectiveness of regional governance processes</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The innovative nature of the form of governance in the form of the Regional Rural Networks lies not only in the networking of cooperation of actors representing various sectors – like, for example, LAGs from a given region, grassroot organisations, foundations, agricultural chambers, individual residents of rural areas, entrepreneurs, local government units, schools, local museums, vineyards, higher education institutions, art workshops – but also in a gradual enhancement of empowerment of network partners in the decision-making and executive dimensions. In the current financial perspective, new rules have been established on the national level with regard to the disbursement of funds for partners within the Regional Rural Networks, these rules provide for more freedom, powers as well as scope of responsibility for the Regional Rural Network partners in the implementation of rural development projects (Rozporządzenie Ministra Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, 2017). The solution will be described later on in the subchapter; whereas at this point it is worth mentioning that the change manifests greater confidence on the part of the public authorities as to the entities operating within networks; it also highlights their partnership-based approach to actors from outside the national and regional public administration.

The functioning of the National Rural Network in Poland has a central and a regional dimension. On the central level, the institution managing the Rural Development Programme, from which the National Rural Network is financed, is to identify entities that can cooperate with

each other and create a National Rural Network, and to develop, in collaboration with partners, an action plan and two-year operational plans on which the functioning of the network is based. The Central Secretariat of the National Rural Network is managed by the Agricultural Programme Foundation and supervised by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Rozporządzenie Ministra Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, 2017).

Regional rural networks in Poland, unlike the National Rural Network, have been established by virtue of a decision of the national authorities. The EU regulations do not obligate Poland to create regional rural networks. On the regional level, responsibility for the functioning of the National Rural Network lies with the regional authorities, which set up Regional Secretariats responsible for the identification of partners on the regional level and coordination of their actions as well as the formulation of the action plan of the National Rural Network in its part concerning a given region (Czapiewska, 2015, p. 6). As people managing rural development in four provinces (Dolnośląskie, Łódzkie, Pomorskie, Śląskie) indicated in the interviews concerning the functioning of the Regional Rural Networks, regional authorities play an auxiliary role in the functioning of the networks; they organise meetings, training courses and seminars aimed at supporting network members in the application for funding and implementation of projects financed with the National Rural Network's funds. According to the representative of the Department of the Rural Development Fund of the Marshal's Office of the Łódź Province, especially in the first few years of the network on the regional level, regional authorities in a way motivated and educated partners about how to set up an association, obtain EU funding or take part in events promoting entities from rural areas. Building the network from scratch was initially a considerable challenge, not least due to limited trust of the local communities in the regional administration at the outset. Moreover, partners from outside the public sector were "led by the hand", as it were by officials, their formal obligations being symbolic. In the current financial perspective, partners are classic beneficiaries, who should be familiar with the procedures associated with the implementation of projects co-financed with public funds.

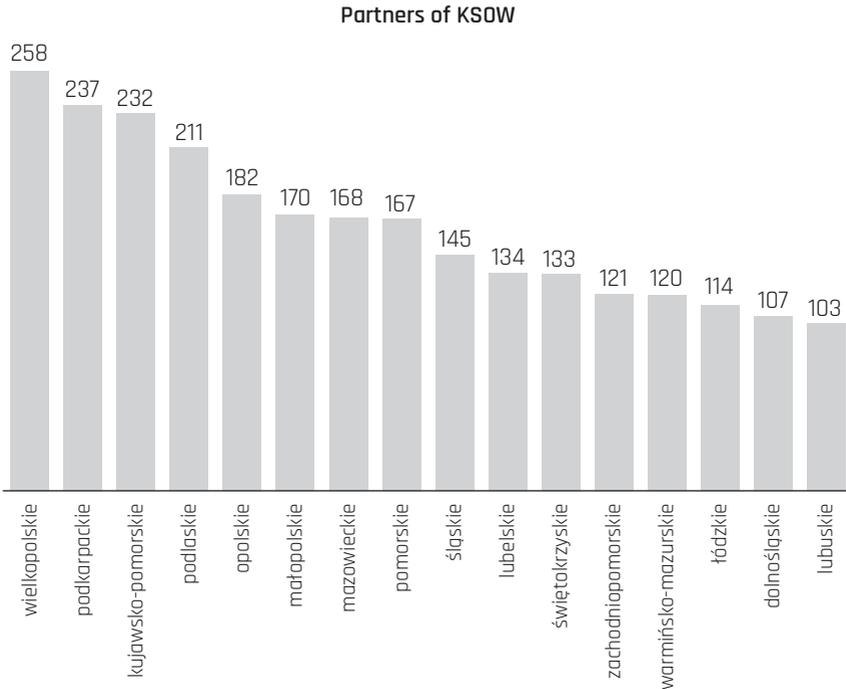
When it comes to the management of the functioning of the network, a key role is played by the National Rural Network Working Group, which monitors and provides its opinions about changes to the National Rural Network's action plan, as well as thematic subgroups. The Working Group and all thematic subgroups involve representatives of all partners making up the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks ([www.ksow.pl](http://www.ksow.pl)).

According to the data from the National Rural Network's report, in 2015 there were over 2600 different partners involved in the work of the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks, with their number differing substantially in the various regions. The biggest number of partners was recorded in the Wielkopolskie Province (258), the smallest number – in the Lubuskie Province (211). Worthy of note is the fact that the number of entities operating within various Regional Rural Networks depends not only of the culture of participation in a given region, but also on that region's area and size of its population<sup>4</sup>. The rural networks are an initiative that is becoming increasingly popular in rural areas, as is evidenced by the number of new entities operating within the networks, which in 2013–2015 attracted 400 new partners (National Rural Network, 2016, pp. 4–5).

The source of the growing popularity of the networks may lie in the previous successes of their undertakings and positive impact of their actions on rural development. This is confirmed by the representative of the Department of Rural Areas of the Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province as well as the representative of the Department of the Rural Development Fund of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province, who indicates that the biggest factor inspiring local communities to act and cooperate is the success of earlier initiatives they have seen on neighbouring farms, villages or municipalities.

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<sup>4</sup> By comparison, according to the Central Statistical Office the population of the Wielkopolskie Province was about 3.5 million people, while in the same period the Lubuskie Province was inhabited by just over 1 million people (Central Statistical Office, 2016).

**Diagram 2.** Number of partners operating within the National Rural Network by Regional Rural Network

Source: National Rural Network, 2016, p. 5.

The rules for the partners to implement projects have changed in the current perspective of the Regional Rural Networks' functioning. All tasks related to a given operation have been transferred to partners, giving them a greater say in the performance of specific tasks and choice of their operators. In the previous financial perspective, 2007–2013, responsibility for correct project implementation lay mainly with the regional administration, which was responsible for, e.g. public procurement procedures or for most of tasks within the framework of the projects submitted. According to the representatives of the departments responsible for the management of rural areas in the Marshal's Offices of the Dolnośląskie and Łódzkie Provinces, the change stems from the fact that at the moment the Regional

Rural Network partners are more experienced in managing development funds, which is why the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has decided to delegate this competence to project authors. However, opinions on this new solution differ. In Lower Silesia it is considered to be better than the previous one, because, as our interviewee believes, it will, in a way, force the local entities to cooperate, as they will have to pool an appropriate financial and organisational potential to act on their own. From the perspective of the representative of the Department of the Rural Development Fund of the Marshal's Office of the Łódź Province, the new solution will have inhibiting effect on smaller entities, which do not have sufficient financial resources to implement projects on the basis of the reimbursement mechanism. The new way of managing financial resources will oblige partners to have their own financial means to be used until the final project settlement. For partners like farmers' wives association or folk bands with a low level of institutionalisation and formalisation this can constitute an "insurmountable barrier". In the current financial perspective, the fact that partners will be entrusted with the organisational and substantive side of projects means that they will have to be more involved in the process. It is difficult to predict what effects will be brought about by devolution of management of the Regional Rural Network projects and whether the fears referred to above will be confirmed; however, it is worth noting that it changes the nature of the relations between regional network partners and the regional authorities, increasing the partners' empowerment.

The representative of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province said that the innovative nature of regional rural networks depends on the inventiveness of the entities operating locally, entities making up the network in a given region. The better and more interesting the rural development ideas coming from the network members, the more innovative the network itself. Significantly, the spectrum of thematic areas in which regional networks operate is very broad, though it continues to be restricted to thematic priorities adopted in the two-year action plans. Given their different endogenous potentials and territorial specificity, the regions implement various types of projects. This is confirmed by evaluations of the operation of the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks as well as by the

interviewed officials from the Marshal's Offices. Networking projects are popular in the Łódzkie Province and Pomorskie Province, while no such initiatives have been recorded in the Silesian Province in 2014–2020. When it comes to scholarly and/or popular publications presenting interesting initiatives in rural areas, the biggest number of such undertakings was recorded in the Opolskie Province (27) and the Mazowieckie Province (26), while no such publication was released in the Podlaskie Province. When it comes to projects involving study visits by Regional Rural Network members, two regions come to the fore: Lower Silesian Province and Podlaskie Province. In 2014–2015 13 study visits were organised in each of the two regions, while in the Podkarpackie Province only one such visit was organised in the same period. These were mainly study visits during which the participants had an opportunity to get to know examples of Polish regional, but also foreign projects, including innovative projects boosting rural development (National Rural Network, 2016, pp. 29–57). An analysis of the entities participating in such visits unveils a whole social and professional range of partners involved in rural development. They include secondary and high schools as well as their students, sheep breeders, owners of educational farms, representatives of villages, agricultural processors, farmers' wives associations and many others. This testifies to a truly territorial approach to the implementation of the National Rural Network. According to the representatives of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province, and the Department of Rural Areas of the Marshal's Office of the Silesian Province, what is of special importance to the functioning of regional communities are the projects dealing with the protection of the local and regional cultural heritage.

Employees of units responsible for the management of rural development in the Marshal's Offices in the four regions in which interviews about the Regional Rural Networks were conducted confirmed that the networks could be described as an innovative instrument for managing rural development. Each interviewee pointed to the potential of the network as a format of cooperation making it possible to obtain funds for the implementation of interesting local initiatives focused on rural development. According to the regional level representatives of rural governance in the four regions in question, the innovative dimension of this solution

lies in the possibilities of learning through information sharing or observation of good practices in the initiatives implemented by authors of the projects within the regional rural networks. According to the representative of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province, thanks to contacts between partners within regional, nation as well as European rural networks, local communities in Lower Silesia not only learn from their partners but also inspire other entities to undertake innovative actions.

Interestingly, none of the interviewees referred to the question of the impact of the National Rural Network and Regional Rural Networks on the quality of the Rural Development Programme management, focusing on the impact of the functioning networks on rural development in the regions.

There are several additional reasons why the functioning of the National Rural Network and Regional Rural Networks can be described as innovative. The functioning of the networks is based on the use of the Internet and new technologies ([www.ksow.pl](http://www.ksow.pl)). Each entity interested in operating within the network can apply to join it, filling in a form available of the National Rural Network website. Thus, the declaration of participation in the network does not require additional time effort from the interested party who does not need to travel to the capital of the region where the Regional Rural Network is based in order to register. This seems to be important, especially given the fact that most partners within the network come from small towns and villages, and the requirement to travel could become a factor limiting the expansion of the network. When registering in the database of the National Rural Network partners, entities seeking cooperation define priorities and topics they would like to pursue within the network. The database of National Rural Network and Regional Rural Network partners is open and public; each interested party, be it private or institutional, also from outside the network, can use it or join it. The internet is also broadly used to promote the network's activities as well as present good practices and examples of projects. Youtube features flagship initiatives of the Regional Rural Networks, which makes it possible to follow positive changes that unfold through network- and partnership-based actions in rural areas in Poland.

Another innovative solution applied in the building of the Regional Rural Networks is the appointment of regional coordinator of cooperation projects. Coordinators work in the regional RRN secretariats, providing support to stakeholders seeking contacts and cooperation with potential partners in Poland, EU member states as well as selected third countries. The NRN website features cooperation offers addressed to Polish partners by foreign entities operating in the sphere of rural development management ([www.ksow.pl](http://www.ksow.pl)).

At the end, it is worth to mention a new governance solution that has emerged in the 2014–2020 NRN. The solution in question is a network for innovation in agriculture and rural areas (SIR), the idea of which is presented in the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council No. 1305/2013. Thus, the new solution is also, like in the case of the NRN, a result of the implementation of an idea conceived on the supra-national level. The operation of the network is to focus on motivating potential partners to engage in innovation projects, expanding their expertise in the management of research and implementation projects and promoting the results of research and development activities. The actions of SIR are coordinated by the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, while the responsibility for the operation of the network on the regional level lies with the Regional Agricultural Advisory Centres (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2017). As has already been mentioned in Chapter Two of the monograph, last year the Regional Agricultural Advisory Centres, previously controlled by the regional authorities, were transferred to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, thus becoming central administration units. This means that the central administration is fully responsible for the establishment and functioning of the network. It is difficult to say at this point to what extent the new central management of the network will indeed increase the innovativeness of rural areas and agriculture. Such an assessment can be carried out only after a few years after the launch of the initiative and evaluation of its results. At the moment the network is in initial stage of development in Poland, with the first working groups and initiatives being established in rural areas.

An analysis of the information included on the network's website (Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów) suggests that the network tends to focus mainly on enhancing the innovativeness of agriculture and food

industry, and the suggested areas of operation for task forces include plant and animal production, organic farming and environmental protection, agri-business and, only at the very end, rural development. Worthy of note is the fact that in addition to the government, farmers, entrepreneurs and advisors, the emphasis is also on laid on securing membership of higher education institutions and state research institutes in the network. This should guarantee transfer of knowledge acquired by the research and development sector to the rural economy. In the near future, the functioning of the network will probably inspire further research into innovative solutions in territorial governance in Poland.

### **Box 2. Regional Rural Networks as an innovation in regional governance – typological approach**

**Product innovation:** the establishment and operation of the RRNs marks emergence of a new category of regional development actors whose activity is based on partnership and common interest in the form of rural development. The emergence and functioning of the network represents a product innovation changing the relations among entities and their role in regional governance

**Imitative innovation:** The NRN and RRNs have been established as a result of the implementation of the European Union common agricultural policy regulations in the management of rural development in Poland. Networks as innovative solutions are one of the instruments of implementing the Rural Development Programme in 2014–2020

**Incremental innovation:** regional networks operating on the basis of multisectoral partnerships as a governance solution do function in the practice of public governance in Western Europe. The implementation of this solution in the Polish practice of regional governance as an innovation has contributed to greater empowerment of social and economic partners as well as the regional public authorities in regional governance processes.

**Top-down innovation:** The NRN as an innovative governance instrument has been created on the EU level of regional governance and implemented into the domestic legal order. The national authorities decided to expand network-based structures on the regional level. The regional authorities have played a crucial role in the “preparation” of partners from outside the public sector for performing tasks on their own and bearing responsibility within the framework of regional governance

#### **4.4. The entrepreneurial discovery process: an innovative method of economic and social regional governance as seen in the Łódzkie Province**

Supporting regional development, including, in particular, supporting enterprise, human and social capital, requires much more a dynamic and flexible approach to strategic governance. The need for a new impetus in such solutions has led to the involvement in innovation processes of not only research institutions, companies and public authorities, but also the addressees, users of innovations. An example of an innovative decision-making process involving a broad stakeholder group is the entrepreneurial discovery process, which is becoming increasingly important in regional governance in Poland.

The entrepreneurial discovery process makes it possible to integrate various stakeholders in order to identify priorities in research, development and innovation on which private and public investments are concentrated. The EDP is designed as an inclusive and interactive bottom-up process in which stakeholders from different environments (policy, business, academia, non-profit organisations, etc.) discover and produce information about new activities, identify potential opportunities that emerge through interaction between them.

In 2014–2015, the World Bank on a commission from the Polish Ministry of the Economy, conducted a pilot project to formulate recommendations for ensuring active and lasting engagement of entrepreneurs in the creation of innovative policies of the state. The recommendations in question were prepared on the basis of 1000 interviews focused on assessing needs of enterprises with regard to increasing their innovativeness and growth potential (*Entrepreneurial discovery process*, 2017). The survey covered 500 companies in 10 selected smart specialisations identified by the Ministry of Economic Development. The sample covered mostly SMEs from four regions of Poland: Dolnośląskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Świętokrzyskie and Śląskie.

Poland is one of a few EU countries that have decided to develop entrepreneurial discovery processes both at national and regional level. It means that aside from the entrepreneurial discovery process

implemented at the national level, all 16 regions have also developed their own EDPs. As a result, there are now 20 national and 81 regional smart specialisations. As demonstrated in the World Bank report (2016), given such a large number of smart specialisations, their partly overlapping scope, and the diverse institutional set-up at the national and regional levels, robust cooperation between the regional and national levels will be essential, and will have to include thematic, institutional, and process cooperation (ibid.). The following table presents the entrepreneurial discovery process as an innovation in regional governance (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Entrepreneurial discovery process as an innovation in regional governance

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals and organisations collaborating on the implementation of the regional development strategy	Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: Deciding who and how takes part in decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ regional authorities, representatives of the business sector, representatives of business environment institutions, representatives of the R+D sector, experts.</li> </ul> <p>The implementation of innovation occurs through a participatory nature of the entrepreneurial discovery process, involving representatives of various groups from the regional level. The solutions are a result of the involvement of representatives of all entities to which strategies and solutions are addressed, in the process of creating, implementing and carrying out actions included, as well as their monitoring and control.</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<p>Leadership roles: Identification of leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ entrepreneurs who set objectives and directions for the local government administration concerning support for the development of various sectors of the economy</li> <li>■ regional authorities, which formulate sectoral policy programmes, act as coordinators</li> </ul>
		<p>Mutual obligations of entities/actors: Motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reaching out to entrepreneurs willing to be involved in the creation of new solutions</li> <li>■ assessment of cooperation potential</li> <li>■ possibility of contributing to the creation of strategic and operational documents as well as pilot projects</li> <li>■ possibility of testing new participatory solutions</li> <li>■ joint (“hand in hand”) work with stakeholders (“entrepreneurial discovery”)</li> <li>■ taking into account the applied dimension of the process, implementation-oriented approach (action plan with identified specific actions)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Public participation in the implementation of the regional development strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ empowerment: creation of ideas by entities other than only public administration of the regional level</li> <li>■ taking into account entrepreneurs’ contribution to the formulation of vision and objectives and decisions taken</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of regional development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ real participation of stakeholders and real impact on decision making.</li> </ul>
Decision-making process	Strategy: objectives of joint efforts	Shaping the strategy: Formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities	Vision, objectives and priorities formulated by stakeholders
		Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support and threats to strategy implementation	The quality of the entrepreneurial discovery process depends on stakeholder involvement, level of trust among the stakeholders and previous cooperation experience
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding strategic development objectives: Assessment of the stakeholders' familiarity with the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives, evaluative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ joint formulation of objectives is the basis for understanding and accepting actions</li> <li>■ strategic assumptions – encompassing the vision and strategic objects; entrepreneurs take part in their formulation</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	
	<b>Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	Internal resources are key to the entire process, which is to serve mainly to strengthen the endogenous potential of the region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ stakeholders' knowledge,</li> <li>■ funds to finance the process: European Structural and Investment Funds, state budget appropriations, regional government budget</li> </ul>
		Information and expert knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ synthesising and putting together dispersed and fragmented global and local knowledge (technological, economic, social) of the various stakeholders</li> <li>■ knowledge generated through stakeholders' cooperation</li> </ul>
		Power and legitimacy: Assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ pressure of the effectiveness and efficiency of actions supporting enterprise growth</li> <li>■ pressure of effective preparation and implementation of smart specialisations compliant with the EU and national assumptions</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		Legal, political and cultural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU regulations concerning the implementation of smart specialisations</li> <li>■ regional, national and EU authorities</li> <li>■ representatives of the regional economy</li> </ul>
	<b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b>	Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level	Of importance to the generation and implementation of innovations are Europeanisation processes unfolding under the influence of the new participatory approach to the management of regional development as well as new forms of implementing the European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund
		Impact of the national level: Ensuring support from the national level	The process reflects a new approach to the implementation of EU solutions in the support of enterprise and human capital implemented on the national and regional level
	<b>Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	The solutions generated are an effect of the synergy of knowledge of the needs, main problems and development barriers in various sectors

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Political effects	Innovations taking into account the entire regional system	Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ innovation improving the system of managing regional development in the context of support for the most important sectors of the regional economy</li> <li>■ intersectoral integration on the regional level</li> </ul>
	Innovations in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	<p>Participatory nature of actions which are meant to significantly contribute to the pursuit of strategic development directions, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ cooperation between higher education institutions and economic entities operating in the various sectors</li> <li>■ support to education of the future staff, both in terms of vocational and higher-level training</li> <li>■ implementation of joint investment projects and acquisition of funds for joint investment projects, research, development work and industrial research</li> <li>■ actions focused on the development of modern technologies</li> <li>■ creation and support of cooperation links between companies</li> </ul>
	Innovations in products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ strategic documents – sectoral policies, smart specialisation strategy</li> <li>■ new institutional solutions addressed to various key sectors</li> <li>■ new actions supporting the development of entrepreneurship and human capital</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	Quality of innovations in regional governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ “Good” governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ participatory nature of the entrepreneurial discovery process</li> <li>■ increased acceptance of jointly formulated objectives and directions of actions</li> <li>■ increased effectiveness and quality of governance in the development of enterprise and human capital</li> <li>■ implementation of a strategy that meets the expectations of stakeholders and aspirations of all groups</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

One of the main elements of the *Regional Innovation Strategy for the Łódzkie Province LORIS 2030*, adopted for implementation by the Regional Assembly, was the selection of key industries in the region. Within the framework of the strategy, the following key industries were selected: modern textile and fashion industry (including design), medicine, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, energy industry (including renewable energy sources), innovative agriculture and food processing, advanced construction materials, ICT industry.

In addition to industries, key technologies were defined as well: biotechnology, mechatronics, nanotechnology and functional materials, as well as information and communication technologies. The region's specialisations were designed so as to create a meeting platform for key industries and technologies (i.e. use of one of the key technologies in the activities within one of key industries). Specialisations are areas in which the Łódzkie Province can achieve a competitive advantage over other regions in Poland or in the European Union.

The Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province decided to carry out a project dedicated to the formulation of sectoral policies for the region. Sectoral policies expand the provisions

of the *Regional Innovation Strategy for the Łódzkie Province LORIS 2030*, referring strictly to the support for six industries of key importance to the regional economy. These are operational plans to improve the competitiveness and innovativeness of the various specialisations, plans that include a catalogue of objectives and actions with descriptions of how to implement and finance them.

The Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province commissioned PwC Polska to carry out a project aimed at formulating sectoral policies for the Łódzkie Province. The aim was to create development plans for the region's strategic industries and define conditions for effective implementation of actions, including creation of action plans. In this respect, the Łódzkie Province has become a leader in Poland in the creation of sectoral policies for all key industries in the region.

As the representatives of the Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province indicated, "the main objective of the formulation of sectoral policies was to provide support for the development of key industries in the region in response to real needs of the most important sectors of the region's economy". Long-term objectives of such policies are: to enhance the competitiveness of industries, both on the domestic and the international market, and to protect and create new jobs for people living in the region. According to the representatives of the Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province, the focus was primarily on entrepreneurs' needs and expectations, because entrepreneurs are the main drivers of competitiveness in the various sectors of the regional economy and the region as a whole.

Work on the sectoral policies, featuring the entrepreneurial discovery process, lasted from April till December 2015. As the representatives of the Enterprise Department noted, the sectoral policies were the first strategic documents of this type in the region in the formulation of which "entrepreneurial discovery" was applied on a very large scale. The officials even said that work on the process had started even before the entrepreneurial discovery process was recognised as the basis for defining smart specialisations in the region. The entrepreneurial discovery process in the creation of sectoral policies in the region was based on various forms of motivating stakeholders to obtain as much information as possible about

the potential support areas, about industries of key importance to the region. The entrepreneurial discovery process in the Łódzkie Province featured a broad range of tools to collect information:

- CATI internet surveys with a group of 300 entrepreneurs;
- in-depth interviews (IDI) with a group of about 40 entities (including at least 30 entrepreneurs);
- CAWI survey questionnaires concerning the National Smart Specialisations carried out among academic institutions and business environment institutions associated with four technologies;
- workshop-based seminars,
- expert panels;
- strategic workshops;
- analysis of potential projects integrating and developing key industries; and
- analysis of the functioning of national and foreign clusters to select good practices that could be implemented in the region.

Worthy of note is the innovative dimension of the work examining the tools that had earlier been applied in a fragmentary manner. The aggregation of tools to obtain information and their use within the framework of one process made it possible to verify the data obtained from many business entities. The representative of the Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province pointed to the number of entities involved in the entrepreneurial discovery process. Seminars, panels and workshops alone attracted about 400 experts from various sectors of the economy. In order to select good practices for the region, an analysis of 459 national and foreign clusters was conducted.

Documents drafted as a result of the process were submitted for public consultation in September and October 2015. The implementation of the entrepreneurial discovery process led to the creation of six documents implementing solutions in the region's key industries. In December 2015, the Regional Government of the Łódzkie Province adopted the following sectoral policies for six regional smart specialisations (*Polityki sektorowe województwa łódzkiego*, 2017):

- energy (including renewable energy sources);
- computer systems and telecommunications;

- innovative agriculture and food processing;
- medicine, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics;
- modern textile and fashion industry; and
- advanced construction materials.

The documents contain the vision, objectives as well as catalogue of actions that should be undertaken to strengthen the key industries. They also feature a list of the so-called specialisation niches i.e. preferred areas of intervention in terms of disbursement of EU funds within the framework of the Regional Operational Programme for the Łódzkie Province 2014–2020 (ROPLP 2014–2020). Projects implemented in the niches will get bonus points during assessment of projects under axis I and II of the ROPLP 2014–2020.

Worthy of note are novel provisions of the documents themselves. They indicate, for example, that the vision and the objectives of the various sectoral policies have been formulated by entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders (*Zaawansowane Materiały Budowlane. Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 11; *Energetyka (w tym Odnawialne Źródła Energii) Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 10; *Informatyka i Telekomunikacja Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 11; *Innowacyjne Rolnictwo i Przetwórstwo Rolno-Spożywcze. Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 11; *Medycyna, Farmacja, Kosmetyki. Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 11; *Nowoczesny Przemysł Włókienniczy i Mody (w tym Wzornictwo). Polityka Sektorowa*, 2015, p. 11).

As representatives of the Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Province claim, the assumptions of the sectoral policies stemmed from the Marshal's Office's previous experiences with cooperation with representatives of the business sector and pointed to the need to apply a new, more open approach to such cooperation. The representatives of the business sector pointed out that the biggest advantage of cooperation with the Enterprise Department of the Marshal's Office was openness of its staff and implementation of a participatory approach to the formulation and implementation of solutions supporting business development in the region.

At the same time, it is worth emphasising the fact that the implementation of the entrepreneurial discovery process as a permanent dialogue between participants involved in the programming and implementation

of regional development can be both a reason for and an effect of the new approach to building relations between various stakeholders. Considering the dynamics of regional development processes, especially changes unfolding in the sphere of socio-economic development as well as the resulting need for various kinds and forms of support in response to the needs of a given sector of the economy, the concept of entrepreneurial discovery fulfils the conditions of innovation in regional governance in Poland.

### Box 3. Entrepreneurial discovery process as an innovation in regional governance – typological approach

**Process innovation:** the entrepreneurial discovery process is a new approach, implemented in the 2014–2020 programming period, to the creation of solutions within the framework of smart specialisation implementation on the national and regional levels.

**Imitative innovation:** The entrepreneurial discovery process stems from a recommendation of the European Commission concerning the implementation of smart specialisations in regions. The course of the process is not defined in EU or national documents, and, therefore, its implementation can be treated as a pioneering innovation.

**Incremental innovation:** the entrepreneurial discovery process as an innovative solution was previously developed and implemented in public governance practice of EU countries, with the European Commission serving a coordinating role. The implementation of the entrepreneurial discovery process in the Polish practice of regional governance is a method, recommended by EU institutions, of formulating and implementing smart specialisations.

**Top-down innovation:** The entrepreneurial discovery process as an innovative method of motivating the business sector in regional governance was created on the EU level and implemented on the regional level together with the procedure for implementing European Structural and Investment Funds.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

#### 4.5. Evaluation as a process innovation in regional governance

It would be hard not to agree with B. Porębska-Maciołek, who writes that the “evaluation process itself is not new. It can even be said that it is nearly just as old as humanity. Since the dawn of time people have been assessing their work – consciously or not – in terms of its effectiveness and compare outlays to the effects achieved, drawing conclusions for the future” (2015, p. 119). On the other hand, evaluation as a stage in the management of development processes has been used in the Polish practice of implementing public policies for the last few years.

There are two main reasons why it is worth presenting evaluation as a process innovation in regional governance. First, during empirical studies carried out within the framework of the project *Innovations in regional governance in Poland* most respondents in individual interviews as well as experts during the focused interview pointed to evaluation processes as an innovative solution in regional governance in Poland. Our interviewees noted that evaluation had been introduced into the practice of regional governance as a result of the European integration processes, through Poland’s participation in the EU system of financing regional development policy by means of the structural funds. Some authors of the literature on evaluation as a tool for managing public policies point out that for the time being, Poland has not yet accumulated a long tradition of its implementation (Ledzion et al., 2014; Bachtler, 2012).

Although in the Polish administrative practice the instrument is treated as a standard in pursuit of public policies, the consequences of the evaluation of regional governance processes imply that it is still regarded as a new instrument. Its potential, as the opinions of experts we interviewed show, should be more widely used by actors participating in regional governance processes.

A model approach to the evaluation as an innovation in regional governance is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Evaluation as an innovation in regional governance – model approach

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals and organisations collaborating on the implementation of the regional development strategy	Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: Deciding who and how takes part in decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Commission</li> <li>■ National authorities, including the Ministry of Development</li> <li>■ Regional authorities</li> <li>■ Regional Territorial Observatories</li> <li>■ ROP Monitoring Committees</li> <li>■ Research institutions, private companies specialising in evaluation, associations conducting evaluations</li> <li>■ Beneficiaries implementing individual projects co-financed by EU funds</li> </ul> <p>The legal framework for evaluation processes is established on the EU, national and local levels by public administration of various levels. Innovations are implemented through evaluations conducted by a range of regional actors, with a special role being played by the Regional Territorial Observatories.</p>
		Leadership roles: Identification of leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Parliament and Council, which create the legal framework for the evaluation of programmes and projects co-financed by structural and investment funds</li> <li>■ Minister of Development as a key entity defining</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>the national institutional framework of evaluations of public interventions, also on the regional level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regional authorities, which formulate regional development strategies and programmes as well as rules and timeframes for evaluating these documents</li> </ul>
		<p>Mutual obligations of entities/actors: Motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Statutory and political responsibility of the regional authorities for the implementation of an effective regional development policy</li> <li>■ Terms of reference of the Regional Territorial Observatories concerning the collection, dissemination and exchange of data on regional development and public interventions</li> <li>■ ROP Monitoring Committee – improving the management of ROP implementation, influencing, through private and non-governmental actors, the disbursement of structural funds and investment funds on the regional level</li> <li>■ Other entities – development of evaluation culture, improvement of the effectiveness of regional governance processes, strengthening of learning processes as a result of evaluation</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Public participation in the implementation of the regional development strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> <li>■ openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of regional development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Entrusting tasks associated with the evaluation of regional governance to the Regional Territorial Observatories, private entities, grassroots organisations, experts and researchers</li> <li>■ Involvement of the private and non-governmental sectors in the work of the ROP Monitoring Committee. The voice of the private and social sectors is “less well heard” than the voice of the public sector.</li> <li>■ Dissemination of evaluation results by publishing reports, also those drafted by the Regional Territorial Observatories</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decision-making process</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy: objectives of joint efforts</b></p>	<p>Shaping the strategy: Formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities</p>	<p>Responsible entities are public authorities of the regional level. Evaluation objectives are focused on improving the quality and effectiveness of regional governance, and a justification to speak in favour of implementing a given model of developmental policy</p>
		<p>Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support and threats to strategy implementation</p>	<p>The quality of evaluation processes and their impact on regional development depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ knowledge and substantive preparation of entities conducting evaluation</li> <li>■ political will to take into account the</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding strategic development objectives: Assessment of the stakeholders' familiarity with the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives, evaluative component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives)</li> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	<p>recommendations formulated during evaluation and concerning changes in the pursuit of regional policy by public authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ state of evaluation culture in a given region/state</li> <li>■ Evaluation as an obligatory stage in the management of regional development</li> <li>■ Acceptance of evaluation as a tool to improve the quality of regional governance by the main regional development actors</li> <li>■ Evaluation as a condition of programme/project financing from the structural and investment funds</li> <li>■ The challenge is to take into account recommendations as evaluation outcomes in regional governance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Structural and Investment Funds</li> <li>■ State resources</li> <li>■ Regional government's budget</li> <li>■ Knowledge, databases and other information resources</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	
		Information and expert knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Expertise in evaluation methodology</li> <li>■ Access to information and databases</li> <li>■ Readiness to cooperate and involvement of entities from outside the administration sector</li> <li>■ Commercial orders transferred by the public sector to the private sector</li> </ul>
		Power and legitimacy: Assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Legal legitimacy</li> <li>■ Pressure of the effectiveness and efficiency of governance actions</li> </ul>
		Legal, political and cultural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EU, national, regional and local authorities</li> <li>■ Representatives of the regional community</li> </ul>
	<b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b>	Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level	Key aspect in the generation and implementation of innovations. Europeanisation processes unfold under the impact of interventions of structural and investment funds

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
		Impact of the national level: Ensuring support from the national level	Development strategy and development programme as well as its objectives reflect the priorities and actions of the national strategic papers
	Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	Drawing on good models and experiences from the level of the EU and EU member states
Political effects	Innovations targeting the entire regional system	Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial governance	Innovations improving the management of regional development on all levels of the territorial organisation of the country – from the EU to the local level.
	Innovations in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Research, analyses and dissemination conducted by the Regional Territorial Observatories</li> <li>■ Sharing of evaluation data and information with other regional, national and supranational entities, both public and non-public</li> </ul>
	Innovations in products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Evaluation reports meeting the criteria of methodological correctness, objectivity, usefulness of studies regarding improving regional governance processes</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Databases with information about regional development and state of implementation of public policies in the region</li> </ul>
	<b>Quality of innovations in regional governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ “Good” governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participation in decision-making bodies implementing the evaluation-based approach</li> <li>■ Public sector entrusting evaluation to private entities</li> <li>■ Increased effectiveness and quality of governance</li> <li>■ Implementation of the evidence-based policy model</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The implementation of evaluation is linked to Poland's participation in the EU's cohesion policy. It is an obligatory element at the beginning, during and at the settlement stage within the framework of the management of public programmes. Together with monitoring processes it is part of all stages of the management of regional policy implementation. Solutions concerning evaluation introduced in connection with the implementation of programmes financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds, have also been introduced in Poland into the practice of managing programmes financed from the state budget or regional budgets. Evaluation is regarded as an effective tool of managing development and has been introduced into Polish governance practice as an obligatory mechanism modelled on solutions adopted on the EU level.

The obligation to conduct evaluations of regional development strategies and ROPs by the regional authorities has led to the creation of new institutional structures in the form of regional territorial observatories. These are research units established on the regional level the objective of which to conduct research, analyses and evaluations for the purpose of an effective implementation of regional development policies. The regional

development observatories have been established in each of Poland's sixteen regions, based on the provisions of *The National Regional Development Strategy: Regions, cities, rural areas* (Ministry of Regional Development, 2010, pp. 142, 187–188). The national territorial observatory was set up in 2013 based on an ordinance of the Minister of Regional Development (Minister Rozwoju Regionalnego, 2013).

The activity of the Regional Territorial Observatories is very broad; when it comes to evaluation, it encompasses collection, dissemination and exchange of data on the development of a given region and on public interventions carried out on the regional level. Evaluations conducted by the Regional Territorial Observatories are to enhance territorial orientation within regional governance. Worthy of note in this context is the coordinating role of the Observatories in the management of regional development. It consists in maintaining a smooth information and data flow between the most important entities responsible for regional governance and institutions on the supranational level, e.g. OECD or Eurostat, as well as all institutions involved in research, education and information gathering and dissemination in development management. According to E. Pancer-Cybulska, the system of knowledge acquisition and dissemination creates conditions for the building of network- and partnership-based relations in regional governance (Pancer-Cybulska, 2013, p. 150). Evaluations produce regular reports drafted by the Regional Territorial Observatories, reflecting social, economic and spatial development of regions, as well as evaluations of progress made in the implementation of regional development strategies. The representative of the Regional Development Department of the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province said that an evaluation report drawn up by an observatory could be the basis for revising some provisions of the strategy, if they were to be judged as unrealistic or difficult to implement. It is also the basis for verifying to what extent Lower Silesia's strategic development objectives reflect the paradigm of the region's competitiveness growth in the national and European dimensions.

The representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Coordination of Regional Operational Programmes said during the interview that analyses and evaluations conducted by the regional and the

national territorial observatories form a key to formulating regional policy on the regional and national level. The regional authorities and the government take into account the data provided by the observatories to the regional and national levels of development policy management. In our interviewee's opinion, these data are part of the premises on which polarisation-diffusion model of the country's regional development was built, which is implemented in Poland. The results of analyses and evaluations conducted by the Regional Territorial Observatories and the National Territorial Observatories became the basis of a new strategic document dealing with the management of the development of the country and its regions – *The Responsible Development Strategy until 2020*, adopted by the Polish government on 14 February 2017. The document provides for a strengthening of strategic coordination and management of public policies through “the creation of a system of public policy evaluation on the basis of experiences with the evaluation of the EU's cohesion policy, and through the strengthening of staff potential in institutions on each level of governance”.

During the focused interview the experts said that in the initial stage of the implementation of EU funds in Poland, the obligation entailed to conduct evaluations, both of programmes and of projects, raised concerns associated with unfamiliarity of this mechanism in governance processes. This applied both to the public authorities – on the national, regional and local levels – and to non-governmental organisations and private entities carrying out EU-funded projects. Today, according to the experts the situation is gradually changing and evaluation is implemented in governance practice by various entities, even if they are not obliged by specific legal provisions and norms to apply this solution. Thus, we are dealing with a “spread of good practices” in the form of voluntary implementation of the solution by various actors. There is also an increased awareness of the benefits brought using evaluation practices in the assessment of public interventions. To use the terminology proposed by M. Kozak, evaluation as a method for assessing public interventions is slowly being internationalised in Poland (Kozak, 2015, p. 27).

According to all our interviewees, who classified evaluation as an innovative instrument of regional governance, today we are witnessing

a boom in the so-called “evaluation culture” in public governance. They interpret it as a universal persuasion about the need to verify the effectiveness of public interventions and to use in practice the knowledge and research results making it possible to optimise those processes from the perspective of effectiveness and efficiency in the pursuit of public objectives.

In the view of the representative of the Ministry of Development’s Department of Coordination of Regional Operational Programmes, “evaluation is a type of innovation that leads to positive change in a crawling manner” i.e. slowly and gradually. It constitutes the basis for the implementation of evidence-based public policies, though our interviewee thinks that such a way of implementing public policies in Poland still loses in confrontation with policy implementation based on “opinions and ideas”. “The advantage of evaluation lies in the fact that it is based on objective expert knowledge and research, that it makes it possible to identify the best practices in governance, to develop and implement them, and to identify the worst practices to be avoided.” Evaluation is an innovative process thanks to which it is possible to examine the effectiveness of public interventions, draw conclusions and improve regional governance processes.

According to another representative of the Ministry of Development, this time from the Department of Innovation and Development Support Programmes, the innovative nature of evaluation lies in the fact that it is based on the use of both expert knowledge and knowledge from other sources. In order to be objective and reliable, evaluation, in our interviewee’s opinion, should be carried out by independent entities and the same document – be it a strategy or a programme – should undergo evaluation conducted by various entities. Only a comparison of evaluation results and their verification can give us adequate and reliable guidance and recommendations to implement changes in governance.

According to our experts, despite its innovative nature the practice of implementing evaluation as a tool of regional governance requires some changes. This is caused by the fact that, on the one hand, for officials’ evaluations and analyses are a source of knowledge essential to

effective pursuit of regional development objectives, but on the other decisions taken often fail to take these data into account, as they are determined by a given political context. Observations of the representative of the Regional Development Department of the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province suggest that political consultations and need to seek compromise between the interests of various actors mean that some financial resources that are supposed to support regional development are allocated – despite recommendations from evaluation reports – to undertakings of doubtful effectiveness. The marshal must reconcile the interests of various parts of the region and take into account opinions and expectations of members of the regional assembly, which is why evaluation results pointing to the need for and effectiveness of interventions are not always taken into account in the decision-making process. The same mechanism, according to the official, can be observed not only on the regional level, but also on the central level, where political expectations and not objective data obtained from ex-ante evaluations determine the distribution of public resources and objectives of regional development policy.

As is suggested by the information from the representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Coordination of Regional Operational Programmes, Polish ministers, despite the formal obligation to conduct ex-ante evaluations when formulating the contents of programmes financed from the state budget, often request that evaluation be abandoned, as they believe it is unnecessary and prolongs the whole procedure of the programme preparation. What is at stake here is public procurement for conducting evaluations by external entities, which substantially prolongs the preparation of such a programme. Thus, organisational and cultural-political factors determine the degree to which evaluation results are taken into account in decision-making processes in regional development policy.

Although evaluation is a solution that has been imposed from above, as it were, as a result of European integration process, it undeniably has a positive impact on the improvement of the quality of regional governance. Even if its results are not always taken into account in regional governance processes in Poland, for example because of political

considerations mentioned by government and self-government officials, it the basis for a model of regional development policy as evidence-based policy.

According to an expert taking part in the focused interview, evaluations of not just programmes but also specific projects are a valuable source of information about how to improve regional governance process. Especially if these projects come from the public and private sectors. In his opinion, regional level officials should use project evaluation results and draw conclusions from them relating to governance, and not just check the level of output and result indicators achieved by the beneficiaries in operations carried out by them. The experts' experiences show that limiting evaluation only to its results presenting the degree to which the intended effects of a public intervention has been achieved raises specific concerns among the entities whose actions are evaluated, concerns about a negative opinion on their activities or need to repay the sums the use of which has not produced the intended outcomes. That is why evaluation should also be treated as a process of collecting data, analysing them regularly in the long term, and drawing conclusions on their basis, conclusions that are to improve governance processes in the future.

According to another expert, evaluation makes it possible to acquire and use knowledge and experiences accumulated in the region to create new governance solutions. As an innovative tool of regional governance, if it is correctly conducted and used, it can in itself constitute not only an innovative governance instrument, but also a source of further growth of innovation through the application of other mechanisms diagnosed as new and effective in regional governance in Poland.

Evaluation is also a process which enhances position of other actors in regional governance. Evaluation rules force public administration, in a way, to delegate evaluation of documents and actions to external entities, namely private companies, academics, specialised institutions or evaluation associations (Antosz et al., 2012, p. 11). These entities have the resources needed for such analyses, resources including, above all, knowledge and access to key data and information. Knowledge as a special resource is, on the one hand, essential to evaluation processes, and

on the other, emerges as a result of the evaluation process. In the first dimension knowledge is held by researchers, scholars, specialists, experts and officials who are able to conduct evaluations drawing on their knowledge of methodology and instruments of such analyses. On the other hand, the evaluation process is a source of information about the effects of regional governance and its results can indicate desirable directions of change in this area. The experts taking part in the focused interview said that evaluation was simultaneously a governance innovation and a source of other innovations in regional governance. The latter stem from the so-called “reflection on governance”, i.e. analysis by policy-makers of the results of implementing governance processes through the prism of their effectiveness in solving development problems on the regional level. Evaluation is also the basis for knowledge acquisition and learning among regional actors, enabling them to find out how to implement regional development policy in a more effective manner. Collection and interpretation of information are a prerequisite of effective change management and inclusion of stakeholders in decision making and implementation.

The use of the evaluation tool broadens access to information and increases citizens’ awareness of the quality and effects of public interventions conducted by regional governance actors. Drawing on objective data on the results of interventions, they can assess the quality of governance and put pressure on decision-makers to step up the effectiveness of governance processes on the regional level. Asked about a collective body whose actions would be founded on evaluation processes on the regional level in Poland, our experts pointed to the ROP Monitoring Committee for Lower Silesia. Some believe that thanks to this institution, which brings together representatives of the European Commission, the government, local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations and entrepreneurs, and uses available data gathered in the implementation of the ROP, it is possible to make changes to the management of the programme wherever necessary. The establishment of a new body responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the ROP is treated as an innovative solution enabling the involvement in evaluation processes of various groups representing

the regional community. On the other hand, one of the experts pointed out, as a former member of the Monitoring Committee, that the ideas and recommendations to improve the management of the ROP formulated by MC members from outside the public sector were not always treated with due respect by officials responsible for programme implementation.

The literature on regional governance does not lack critical analyses which would point to the low quality and limited usefulness of evaluations conducted on the regional level, not only in Poland but also in other EU member states (Kupiec, 2015, p. 66; 2014, p. 52; Olejniczak, 2009, pp. 32–34). However, this does not imply that the instrument itself is not an innovative solution in regional governance. In line with the assumption adopted in Chapter Three of the monograph, innovations in public governance are contextual, i.e. whether a solution is innovative is determined by the opinions of entities to which the solution directly applies. On the other hand, critical “evaluations of evaluations” should contribute to a systematic improvement of their quality and practical use of their results in regional governance practice.

Although the sources of evaluation in regional governance are external and it functions as a governance solution introduced from the EU cohesion policy level to the regional level, it is worth stressing the scope of positive changes it has triggered in innovative regional governance. It obligates the regional authorities to verify governance processes with regard to the achievement of objectives set in regional strategic and operational documents. Moreover, thanks to the publication of evaluation results by, for example, the Regional Territorial Observatories, the regional community – understood as constellation of actors like the regional government and local governments, non-governmental organisations, business entities, the media, educational and research institutions – gains more insight into regional governance processes (Malik, 2011, p. 56). In addition, evaluation as a governance tool has a positive impact on the strengthening of cultural orientation towards increasing the effectiveness of the management of public programmes, and facilitates the creation of new institutions which implement evaluation practices in regional governance.

#### Box 4. Evaluation as an innovation in regional governance – typological approach

**Process innovation:** evaluation is a basic part of the decision-making process and verification of the implementation of decisions in the practice of regional governance in Poland. It is based on knowledge which forms the foundation for formulating, implementing and assessing the implementation of the development strategy and programmes.

**Imitative innovation:** regional evaluation culture stems from the implementation of processes and practices of analysing the effectiveness of public policies pursued within the framework of the EU regional policy. It emerged in regional governance practice in Poland as a result of Europeanisation processes and was subsequently implemented in national and regional development programmes financed with national funds as a result of the “spread” of good practices.

**Incremental innovation:** evaluation as an innovative solution was previously developed and implemented in public governance practice of Western European countries. Its implementation in the Polish practice of regional governance has increased the effectiveness of regional development policy

**Top-down innovation:** Evaluation as an innovative governance instrument has been created on the EU level of regional governance and implemented into the domestic legal order.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

#### 4.6. Direction Silesia 3.0 as an example of a conceptual innovation in regional governance in the Silesian Province

The strategic initiative *Direction Silesia 3.0. Internal Development Programme for the Silesian Province until 2030* emerged as an expression of the need to respond to the current and dynamically changing trends impacting regional development. The title of the document and some of its assumptions draw on the government programme adopted in mid-2015. The objective of the national document was to support development alternatives in the Silesian Province in view of the crisis affecting the mining

industry. During an interview, a representative of the regional authorities said: “We had this dramatic moment in the region, when Prime Minister’s Ewa Kopacz government wanted to restructure quickly and efficiently, the local governments were invited and there emerged his document *Silesia 2.0*, which was to have been an expression of global thinking about helping the region, but, in the end, it was not quite what the region itself wanted. There was a sense of dissatisfaction, the feeling that only a selective discussion had been started, which is why the marshal decided to treat it as a basis for a more partnership-like discussion in the region, focused not just on the threats, but also on opportunities.”

Thus, unlike its precursor, the *Direction Silesia 3.0* initiative empowers those whom it affects directly – residents and other stakeholders who live and work in the region – to make decisions concerning regional development. The initiator of this approach, Silesia’s regional government, decided, on the one hand, not to deprive residents of having a direct impact on the vision of regional development, treating them as partners, and on the other – guided by the ideas of democracy and civil society – not to leave the power to determine Silesia’s future only to the national level and government administration. The overriding objective of the initiative *Direction Silesia 3.0* is to inform and educate citizens in the context of broadly defined self-governance, but at the same time to obtain from them some feedback about how they see the region and how they would like to be involved in decisions concerning its further development. The representative of the regional authorities observed: “It is an instrument of dialogue with people living in the region. The document does not come from our catalogue of strategic documents derived from the current legislation, nor from the solutions imposed from the outside. It functions them and is a discussion tool in the region. We have launched a mechanism of discussions with experts and residents. Their conclusions will help the regional government in the discussion about strategic directions the region should pursue, or in discussions about the development strategy or sectoral policies. Finally, it is a tool to inform the regional government about how large-scale actions, planned on the regional level, translate into local development and change people’s living conditions.” In line with its initial premises, the development of the Silesian Province should be integrated

and should take into account the following key thematic areas: entrepreneurial activity and innovations for a new economy; regeneration of urban space and post-industrial areas; transport infrastructure, green and new energy; professional competence, civic participation and social innovations; metropolitanisation in the Upper Silesian Agglomeration in connection with other agglomerations in the region (*Direction Silesia*, 2015). The document, presented to the public in December 2015, underwent participatory consultations with the framework of the campaign *Silesia. Here we talk*, conducted between August and October 2016. A special bus with a professional film studio visited a dozen or so localities, covering a total of 1700 km to reach people in places where they lived and worked, and to collect their opinions, experiences and suggestions about the future of the region. The material obtained as a result of the exercise was used in the next stage by experts representing academia, business, non-governmental organisations and local governments to draw up the final version of the document in question. It was presented at a conference in January 2017. The current version contains both elements connected with the setting of new objectives and a set of concrete projects the implementation of which will start in the next few months. *Direction Silesia 3.0* is an outcome of the regional authorities' vision and bottom-up suggestions submitted by local governments, business, academia and citizens active in the region: "*Direction Silesia 3.0* is a result of a dialogue between people from diverse backgrounds and sectors. It is an initiative that is to encourage discussion about the future of our region, discussion featuring experts from many areas and people living in the region. It is a new approach to the thinking about the region and planning its future, with people living here being able to actively shape it" (Saluga, 2017a). The Marshal of the Silesian Province stressed that "we need to keep up with the changes. (...) It is a document written in accordance with the formula 'the region for the region'. It is the people living in the region who are to write this document and we, as the regional authority, are just to create tools for this document to emerge. (...) *Direction Silesia* is a document that should never end, that should be constantly written anew, it is a document of a permanent discussion and reflection on changes, on the future of our region. It is also supposed to be the key to

linking the regional development strategy with sectoral programmes. It is supposed to be a document that will take active part in the whole planning process, i.e. will be a method for implementing and updating the strategy.” (ibid.) The concept of innovation in regional governance in Silesia entails an open process, and consists in creating an operational system that will respond in a flexible way to challenges and needs, and will provide adequate answers and solutions. According to J. J. Wygnański from the SHIPYARD Social Research and Innovation Laboratory, which was involved in the analysis of citizens’ opinions and in the drafting of the final version of the document, the “Silesian Province is the first region to opt for such an ambitious undertaking to treat citizens not as a problem but as part of the solution. It is a process that is innovative, hopefully also a model process. (...) In the past, a strategy may have been seen as a document to be written by experts, stamped and then implemented. [The system we have created] is much more valuable than someone with a brilliant mind writing some ‘miraculous panacea’ document for Silesia. And this open nature is very important. It is responsive in the sense that, unlike many consultations, there comes a moment when people formulate some opinions and the authorities must refer to them, because ultimately, they will have to perform difficult political tasks acknowledging that most likely, it will be impossible to make all dreams come true. It is this moment when politicians must show that politics is not just about making wishes come true but also about leadership and ability to choose” (Wygnański, 2017a). The document is to be monitored on an ongoing basis and regularly evaluated; every year progress in the pursuit of its objectives will be presented and it will be updated if necessary. The *Direction Silesia 3.0* initiative is the first action of this kind in Poland involving the development of a co-decision mechanism with regard to strategic directions and projects important from the perspective of all stakeholders operating in the region. As J. J. Wygnański notes, the whole process associated with its launch, implementation and development was designed by the regional authorities in a way that would strengthen real participation: this was achieved both by the formats adopted in the process (interactive workshops organised outside the capital city), and through a strong and clearly defined leadership: personal involvement of the Marshal of the Silesian Province and

key representatives of the regional administration (the role of the regional secretary was emphasised). What turned out to be the ignition point was people's positive energy, experiences of key policy-makers (e.g. their previous involvement in the work of the non-governmental sector) as well as genuine desire to build a new quality of cooperation culture in the region. Another important aspect thereof was the skilful combination of the local perspective ("bottom-up") and the regional perspective ("top-down"); the rhetoric used here was: "WE will do it, YOU will do it, we will do it TOGETHER". The solution that proved to be the most valuable one was the open operating system of the entire process, one which was flexible, capacious and productive. Its working name was "a washing machine mechanism", into which we put various elements, where they are then mixed, often in an uncontrollable manner, but eventually, at the end of the process, we see a tangible effect (Wygnański, 2017b). Thus, the solution meets our requirements for innovations in regional governance (Table 9).

**Table 9.** *Direction Silesia 3.0* as an innovation in regional governance in Silesia – model approach

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Entities participating in regional governance	Groups of entities/actors: individuals and organisations collaborating on the implementation of the regional development strategy	Constellation of groups of entities/actors and their role in regional governance: Deciding who and how takes part in decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regional authorities – experts – residents – media: the <i>Silesia. Here we talk</i> campaign</li> <li>■ Local elections (representatives of the authorities); invited experts (SHIPYARD, regional experts from various sectors: academia, business, local governments, non-governmental organisations);</li> <li>■ participation of stakeholders in meetings – open nature; during local festivities</li> </ul> <p>It is not about direct decision-making by virtue of executive</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>powers, but also about creating a climate for collaboration between various actors to achieve common objectives: “We organise meetings in sub-regions, inviting local leaders, local organisations as well as people who want to do something, have the spirit and mission to change the region” (Moczkowska, 2017b).</p>
		<p>Leadership roles: Identification of leaders</p>	<p>Marshal of the Province as a key leader: in the work on the document he argued that it was not about the document becoming a programme of the regional government, but a regional document, a kind of broad social contract pointing to bottom-up development objectives: “The situation in the world is changing, the authorities sometimes cannot keep up with the change, which is why we have to be in touch with the people all the time and ask them what they want to change around them. <i>Direction Silesia 3.0</i> is precisely such a lasting, as I hope, mechanism of ongoing discussion with people” (Saluga, 2017d)</p>
		<p>Mutual obligations of entities/actors: Motivation factors and reasons behind involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reaching groups already active in the public space as well as those that have remained passive so far</li> <li>■ Information campaign combined with an educational campaign: there was an education</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>zone created in a bus where information about the region could be obtained: “We go out to the people living in the region – but also to visitors – to find out from them how they imagine Silesia, what Silesia of their dreams looks like, how they see it in the future” (Gramatyka, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Self-government lessons in selected schools</li> <li>■ Taking into account the specific territorial context: sub-regional conferences – citizens’ suggestions and opinions submitted during such events were given to experts from various fields so that they could formulate specific implementation projects on their basis</li> <li>■ A sense of the meaningfulness of actions: of being heard and having an impact; several hundred people actually programmed, designed various ideas and solutions</li> <li>■ Since no stakeholder has enough resources to pursue objectives on his own, achievement of objectives requires collaboration, which is voluntary: “This is a novelty: we go to people and we asked them how they would like to change their immediate environment, but also [to think] more broadly, looking at the region. We</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Public participation in the implementation of the regional development strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public participation: no participation, semblance of participation, information, consultation, partnership, empowerment</li> <li>■ openness of regional authorities, inclusion/exclusion in/from work on the implementation of regional development strategies</li> </ul>	<p>listen to these people and want to implement such projects with them” (Safuga, 2017b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Empowerment: creation of ideas by entities other than only public administration of the regional level and taking into account what has been jointly agreed on in the decision-making process</li> <li>■ Starting dialogue, meeting stakeholders, systematic actions: “We are still working on how we will conduct these discussions in the region. It is a challenge for the region. For us, officials, it is certainly a big undertaking, but we hope that we are up to the task and that we will have an opportunity to show and create such conditions that anyone wanting to become an expert in the region and have their say will be able to do so” (Moczkowska, 2017a)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decision-making process</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy: objectives of joint efforts</b></p>	<p>Shaping the strategy: Formulating shared visions, objectives and priorities</p>	<p>“There should never be a strategy that would be defined in an assumption that nothing would have to be built [after its adoption]. In such dynamically changing times, strategies are formulated for increasingly shorter periods. We can only outline a vision for a decade or so, but</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>actions – this is for a period of a few, maximum five years, which is why the strategy should be updated (...). We change it, because we see that our needs are different” (Golębiowska, 2017)</p>
		<p>Assessment of implementation possibilities: assessment of support and threats to strategy implementation</p>	<p>Over 100 ideas were translated into 30 projects all of which have a chance of being implemented.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding strategic development objectives: Assessment of the stakeholders’ familiarity with the strategic objectives (cognitive component, i.e. knowledge of the objectives, evaluative component, i.e. acceptance of the strategic objectives)</li> <li>■ Acceptance of the strategic objectives and ways of achieving them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Many groups recognised the need for the Silesian Province, not the Marshal’s Office but the region, to have its own development programme drawn up not in Warsaw, but here, in the region” (Saługa, 2017c);</li> <li>■ “It is the first region so emancipated with regard to its own past: it is a story of how the previous government programmed what should be done here, but there has come a moment of mobilisation and it seems that we know [better] what should be done here” (Wygnański, 2017c)</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
	<p><b>Internal resources: capacity to satisfy needs with the region's own resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funds and related resources: shaping the regional development budget</li> <li>■ Non-financial resources used in the pursuit of strategic objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Internal resources are key to the entire initiative, i.e. to serve mainly to strengthen the endogenous potential of the region</li> <li>■ Awareness of the significance of the region's endogenous resources: "We a living at a time when the use of internal assets, values as well as intellectual potential is becoming increasingly important, which is why a truly participatory process, once it has been launched, should never end" (Gołębiowska, 2017)</li> <li>■ Aspect raised mainly in the context of intangible capitals: "We want to ask the people precisely because wonderful, creative people live here" (Makowski, 2017a)</li> <li>■ Important also in the context of the cultural heritage (language, customs, traditions)</li> </ul>
		<p>Information and expert knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge that will help with achieving success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "We are expanding dialogue. We want to create a platform, a space for absolutely every resident who has something to say on a subject to be able to say it. We want to have thematic quarters – discuss within various groups and create possibilities through the social media, of submitting solutions so that the projects to be implemented could be discussed with the entire community" (Saluga, 2017b)</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “Beginning with councillors, community activists and ending with experts and members of the local governments – we have to talk, talk and talk over and over again, because only those who talk come to some conclusions” (Saługa, 2017c)</li> <li>■ “All those meetings show that we absolutely need knowledge – to educate all those who want to create our region, who want to do ordinary and extraordinary things here. People need to meet those who are in possession of this knowledge, who have already put it into practice, to learn from each other” (Saługa, 2017d)</li> <li>■ “We want to extract this knowledge, these ideas, this creativity from those magnificent human minds. People dream, people tell various stories, but it is never recorded on paper and is not implemented in real life. We want to change that.” (Saługa, 2017g)</li> </ul>
		<p>Power and legitimacy: Assessment of the involvement of groups and their inclusion in the shaping of regional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “I’m in favour of open authorities that reach out to people and not those that are closed and just wait for people to come to them” (Makowski, 2017b)</li> <li>■ “It is not a political programme and it is not a party programme. It is to be a grassroots programme</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>written by all those who will want to write it” (Saługa, 2017c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “That the process is based on dialogue is great, and that is hasn’t been destroyed by politics. Our discussions were very lively and somehow they were fortunately about what people living in the region and not politicians wanted” (Wygnański, 2017b)</li> <li>■ “The protagonists of this campaign, our residents, are very important to us, we want to listen to them. We are an administration capable of listening, one that wants to listen and talk” (Moczkowska, 2017b)</li> </ul>
		<p>Legal, political and cultural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “In Silesia, we believe that exceptional places in which we want to live are created by people. That is why we have decided to launch this pioneering participatory project in which we ask people about the future of our region. We invite a broad range of experts and activists from various parts of the region as well as residents” (Saługa, 2017e)</li> <li>■ “The Silesian Province has to redefine itself. We see that the traditional industries on which the strength of the region was built are being side-lined.</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>We are looking for new ideas, a new steam engine that would drive the region forward and give it a new impetus for development. We are grappling with many remnants of the past, like polluted cities, degraded areas. We must deal with this, but also find new directions for the development of industry. What to build anew and where? This is what we want to ask the residents about” (ibid.)</p>
	<p><b>External resources: capacity to satisfy needs with resources acquired from outside the region</b></p>	<p>Impact of the supranational level: Ensuring support from the supranational level</p>	<p>This aspect was not raised, which is why it can be assumed that it was not key to innovation in regional governance from the stakeholders’ perspective</p>
		<p>Impact of the national level: Ensuring support from the national level</p>	<p>The programme as well as its objectives reflect the priorities and actions of the national strategic papers</p>
	<p><b>Previous experiences: capacity to act on the regional, sub-regional, national and European level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main objectives of regional activity: drawing on previous experiences</li> <li>■ Number and intensity of cooperation initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>“People say that what already have, for example the Silesian Park, the Eagle Nest Trail, the Beskid Mountains, is what we should use, regenerate, modernise, tell anew” (Saluga, 2017b)</p>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
Political effects	Innovations targeting the entire regional system	Integration: links between authorities operating on various levels of territorial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The analysed development model is based on the region's potentials and assets: "Business has noted how important it is and how important it will be in the future to create a good atmosphere, superior quality of life here in the region" (Kuśpik, 2017)</li> <li>■ 58 projects – including 28 experts' and 30 citizens' projects – have been formulated in a participatory approach</li> <li>■ "Everything is being done to make life in the region better (...). Everything is being done to make people want to live in the region, to stay here: we have to stop people from leaving the region" (Saluga, 2017c)</li> </ul>
	Innovations in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New services</li> <li>■ New way of providing existing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Design (Design and Enterprise Centre);</li> <li>■ creation of the Regeneration Fund and the Regeneration Academy offering support and advice to local governments interested in regenerating degraded areas;</li> <li>■ Launch of the Regional Public-Private Partnership Centre</li> </ul>
	Innovations in products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New products</li> <li>■ New way of delivering products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ One hour a month for each student in the region to have contact with culture</li> <li>■ Regeneration of the Eagle Nest Trail to turn it into a tourist product modelled on the Industrial Monuments Trail</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory budgeting for the entire region</li> <li>■ Products drawing on the region's cultural richness and diversity: Beskid Cultural Area, Festival of Silesian Cities, better signage for cultural facilities and a system for their identification</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Quality of innovations in regional governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participatory governance</li> <li>■ "Good" governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "We should not be afraid of dreaming, we should demand that our region be changed, that we have a say in co-creating our region" (Makowski, 2017a)</li> <li>■ "I hope we will reach out to people this way, that many residents will want to participate in the formulation of a programme for Silesia. So far programmes have been formulated in the privacy of administrative offices, at the "green table" as some say. We are learning this, because we see that this participation is growing; participatory budgets have been a success, although they are implemented with difficulty. People want to become involved and we want to involve those active individuals who have ideas, who would like to present them to politicians, to officials to implement them, we want to give them a platform where they will be able to have their say and</li> </ul>

Analytical dimension	Main features	Indicators	Solutions
			<p>present what they have ‘in their hearts’” (Saługa, 2017f)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ “It is a somewhat risky challenge, because we don’t know what will come out of it. We will see after some more meetings and consultations (...). Today people don’t want to just be governed well. They also want to have a real impact on what goes around them. The participation of the public at large in the project gives us a chance to determine what matters most to us today” (Wygnański, 2017d)</li> </ul>

Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

To sum up the above case study, we have to emphasise that it vividly brings into focus the current trends that change the existing ways of governing territorial self-government units. This is of key importance with regard to the constellation of entities participating in regional governance in Silesia, based on premises of the *Direction Silesia 3.0* initiative: what is evident in this case is a process of abandoning traditional, hierarchical relations between the state, its institutions and socio-economic entities in favour of more horizontal, co-dependent, networked structures. On the one hand, this should be linked to the growing citizen and consumer awareness, which boosts people’s demand for participation in governance on each territorial level, and on the other, the awareness among the authorities increases about the need to open up administration to citizens and have greater flexibility in public governance, in line with the participatory approach, which provides for active involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. Of key importance in this respect is the role of leadership. Its strategic role is to influence the territorial community by creating visions and disseminate values that should dominate

the thinking about development. Thus, in the context of local development policy the political leadership, in this case the Marshal of the Silesian Province, began by channelling their actions in an appropriate system of values, to focus on creating a vision for the future of the region. In the case of the *Direction Silesia 3.0* initiative, the mechanisms applied drew on collective decision making, i.e. discussions with citizens and their participation – in various institutional forms and to varying degrees – in the decision-making process on the regional level, with the scope of the participation concerning co-creation of the regional development strategy and the definition of ways to implement it.

In the innovation analysed, the decision-making process does not seek to bring about a revolution in the public sector. As a practical but also normative solution, it first of all asks questions about what the regional authorities should do and how they can do it better, yet without pointing to the need to introduce an institutional reform. It is based on a continuous, reflection-based consensus building between entities having different resources, and not on formal procedures. The complex system of links between various levels of authority and entities involved in the innovation process has demonstrated that even if all have different tasks to perform and roles to play, they all have common objectives. The system is focused on actions that are not necessarily formalised but provide for cooperation of actors seeking to achieve common benefits. What is stressed on each occasion is the significance of networking and dialogue as well as the key role of broad and creatively shaped participation, which involves a communal approach to space management. The decision-making process in the analysed innovation is also characterised by a broad range of products and services of the public and private sectors, transparency and rationality of the strategy in the context of development prospects for the region. In this respect, the analysed innovation meets the standard of a “smart” innovation, because the decision-making process is characterised by a governance style that takes into account public participation as well as conflict resolution thanks to dialogue, negotiation and consensus building. What is also important here is the creation of appropriate organisational structures ensuring horizontal coordination among stakeholders.

When it comes to political effects that have been achieved as well as those that have been programmed to be achieved through the implementation of innovation in regional governance in Silesia, it must be noted that the approach adopted in the *Direction Silesia 3.0* initiative takes into account the specificity of the region. This makes it possible to effectively strengthen the coherence of decision-making, improve the quality of governance and contribute to the strengthening of social capital in local communities, as well as motivate people to use innovative development solutions associated with further development of the region. Regional authorities do not have to rely on public authorities to provide services for them, but create a space for citizens and entrepreneurs to be active, entrusting a large share of their tasks to private partners and non-governmental organisations. They actively communicate with citizens and conduct consultations with them when defining development priorities and objectives of disbursing funds from their budget. This denotes a new system of the regional functioning in which regional authorities, in defining public tasks and choosing the form of their accomplishment, set the quality standards and outcomes of the services to be provided, and are interested not only in the continuity of services but also in their economic effectiveness.

The analysis of innovation in regional governance innovation shows that *Direction Silesia 3.0* as a novel initiative takes both approaches we have defined as desirable on board: in the systemic-institutional dimension it tackles efficiency seen through the prism of an objective assertion that shrinking resources that regional authorities have at their disposal make rational management thereof essentially important (which encompasses governance in the public sector, legal framework, economic liberalism and competence to make policies and provide services); in the normative dimension it touches upon principles and norms that should guide municipal authorities (transparency, accountability, social justice, human rights and democracy).

### Box 5. Typology of Direction Silesia 3.0 as an innovation

**Process innovation:** since it affects the way of formulating the development vision and mission with key strategic projects, something hitherto not practised in the region

**Pioneering innovation:** Silesian Province is the first region in Poland to implement participatory governance standards in a bottom-up manner

**Incremental innovation:** *Direction Silesia 3.0* is about improving a strategic document which was originally drawn up by the state authorities (as *Silesia 2.0*) and with which the local communities did not identify themselves

**Collaborative innovation:** solution involving various entities from various sectors

**Top-down innovation/Bottom-up innovation:** on the one hand a solution initiated by the regional authorities and addressed to local entities and on the other local entities having an impact on the final form of solutions subsequently implemented by the regional authorities

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

## 4.7. Conclusions from the cases studies

The analysis of the five case studies of innovations in regional governance in Poland perfumed by the authors makes it possible to verify the theses, presented at the beginning of the book, concerning the sources, types and determinants of their implementation in the Polish practice of public governance. In addition, the empirical material provides the basis for several interesting general conclusions about innovation in regional governance. Four out of five case studies of innovation in regional governance have their sources in the European integration processes, which confirms the hypothesis whereby Europeanisation has an impact of the creation of innovative solutions. The decisive role is played by Polish regions' participation in the system of the cohesion policy financed by means of the European Structural and Investment Funds, the disbursement of which requires the implementation of specific governance instruments in the

functioning of the regions. The ITIs, entrepreneurial learning process, national and regional rural networks or evaluations are precisely the solutions whose legal basis and programme basis were formulated on the Community level, but the quality of their functioning depends on the regional institutional set-up and potential. This confirms another hypothesis whereby most innovations are decidedly adaptive and not pioneering in nature. Their adaptiveness stems from the fact that the instruments implemented in the practice of regional governance were generated on the EU level of governance. This does not mean, however, that the solutions are simply copied on the national level. Openness to change on the level of the regional authorities, degree of partnership in intersectoral relations, or the activity of the stakeholders involved, impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of these innovative solutions.

The case studies described in the chapter demonstrate that, in accordance with the hypothesis adopted at the beginning, innovations in regional governance are gradual and collaborative. The results of the research carried out by the authors confirm that in each case, innovations are an open process and encompass various stages, from their creation, through implementation to the assessment of their effect. The 'tangible' effects of the implementation of innovations include not only better quality of public governance but, above all, democratisation of governance processes as well as empowerment of regional communities and their representatives in the decision-making. Thus, innovative solutions contribute to the fulfilment of the "good governance" paradigm. The collaborative nature of the innovation process, confirmed in each case study, not only manifests itself through the fact that various stakeholders take part in regional decision-making and executive processes, but also through the use of resources at the disposal of the actors participating in regional governance. These include not merely the financial resources essential to the implementation of solutions, but also substantive knowledge, access to information as well as possibilities of mobilising people available in the public, social and private sectors.

Thus, we arrive at another hypothesis whereby the multilevel nature of regional governance processes in the networked and interactive variant facilitates implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance.

The analysed case studies demonstrate that the multilevel nature of governance is conducive to innovation as long as it conforms to the principle of subsidiarity. In practise, this means that the more decentralised the decision-making processes are, the easier it is to mobilise actors from outside the public sector to become involved. Thus, the multilevel system of governance can work when regional and local actors are able to benefit from specific forms of support (legal, financial and organisational), provided that in a given situation they need such support to function.

The diffusion of knowledge and learning among various entities as a condition for generating innovative solutions in regional governance – as has been indicated at the stage of the proposition of our hypothesis – have proved to be true in the sense that knowledge, especially knowledge based on experience and observation of good solutions which underpin learning processes, not only inspires actions but also determines the effectiveness of the implemented innovations. As the analysed case studies show, only to a limited extent the multilevel nature of governance processes is linked to the flow of this knowledge, while the diffusion of knowledge is most certainly facilitated by networking. It is particularly evident among entities, when relations among them are genuine partners-like relations. Regardless if these are relations between the regional and local authorities, community organisations and public entities, or between private entities and representatives of the public sector, and regardless of the form of cooperation, the needs and interests of each party must be duly respected.

The case studies presented above cover various types of innovation in regional governance. Some are product innovations, some process innovations, but all are incremental solutions. This means that they are implemented gradually, with attention being paid to the existing formal-legal and socio-cultural order. Innovations are part of governance culture and practice in each region. The creative implementation of the entrepreneurial learning process in the Łódzkie Province, the *Direction Silesia 3.0* programme or the Regional Rural Networks are all based on the harnessing of the regions' endogenous potential as well as social capital, the quality of which is manifested in previous cooperation experiences. In the regions with long-standing traditions of cooperation between the regional

authorities and other stakeholders, the implementation of governance instruments from the EU level is original and effective.

Worthy of note is also the significance of new information and communication technologies in innovative regional governance. New technologies facilitate quick, efficient and effective communication between stakeholders, and make it possible to considerably expand the group of entities participating in decision-making processes. It is especially evident in the creation of smart specialisation strategies, establishment of Regional Rural Networks or implementation of the *Direction Silesia 3.0* programme. The innovative nature of the solutions described here also stems from the fact that these instruments to a large extent reflect the interests and preferences of regional actors representing various social and professional groups.

The next, concluding chapter will be devoted to the presentation of institutional factors hampering or facilitating the creation and implementation of innovative solutions in regional governance.

## **In lieu of a conclusion: Drivers of and barriers to innovation in regional governance in Poland**

### **Drivers of innovation in regional governance**

The idea of governance increasingly tends to entail strategic management both in the decision-making process and in the implementation of the regional development concept as well as monitoring of the objectives of socio-economic regional development as they are pursued. Within the framework of regional governance emphasis is progressively placed on the search for and testing of new, innovative solutions that will contribute to making regional development more dynamic and strengthening intersectoral cooperation, seen as a prerequisite for the growth of innovation on the local, regional and even national level.

The analysis of origins of innovation can be presented in a twofold manner. First, there is a linear perspective – entities invest in what is a succession of research, development and implementation of new solutions. This perspective is linked to the classical theory of economics whereby innovation outlays are regarded as investments improving the productivity of enterprises (Drucker, 1992). It is useful in the analyses of barriers to the financing of various types of innovation in their various stages of the emergence and dissemination. The other way of describing

the phenomenon of innovation stresses its systemic and institutional-regulatory aspects. This approach is represented primarily by the concept of National Innovation Systems (see e.g. OECD 1997), which is useful in analyses of barriers hampering the creation and dissemination of innovation among companies or sectors of the economy. It should be noted at this point that the problem of drivers and barriers in the diffusion of innovation in regional governance has been not yet well diagnosed, especially with regard to governance in Poland, owing to a lack of empirical studies in this area.

Within the framework of the research project concerning innovation in the management of regional development in Poland, the research team seeking to diagnose innovation, was able to distinguish among facilitators and barriers some patterns, which have an impact on the emergence and implementation of innovative solutions. Many of these facilitators and barriers are not only formal, but, above all, cultural and social, and are also determined by the specific features of a given territory, i.e. region. The diagnosed facilitators provide a positive base for the implementation of innovative solutions, which are usually adaptive in nature. On the other hand, the facilitators represented an opportunity for the generation of pioneering solutions; moreover, they often lay down favourable conditions for the emergence of pioneering innovations in governance.

The analysis of barriers diagnosed performed by the authors has made it possible to determine the institutional context in which various phenomena and processes limit the possibilities of adapting and implementing innovative solutions. At the same time, they emerge as barriers which make generation of innovation impossible, having a negative impact on the creativity and inventiveness as well as scope and forms of participation of entities involved in regional governance in Poland.

The shift from the culture of rivalry and isolation to the culture of partnership-based cooperation represents a breakthrough among governance solutions applied on the regional level. Wherever the process has succeeded, experience confirms that cooperation is a key driver of innovation in regional governance. It leads to better exchange of information and better communication, higher level of knowledge and desire to improve, inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making process and more

effective translation of decisions into practice. In regions where municipalities continue to compete against each other, development is possible only on a microscale and in the short-term perspective.

Moreover, as the analysed cases of innovative solutions in regional governance illustrate, previous positive experience with cooperation is the basis for building mutual trust and willingness to cooperate. Networks of formal and informal contacts between the administration, private entities and grassroots organisations facilitate mutual learning, greater openness based on trust, and building of a culture of cooperation. Partners know their resources, strengths and weaknesses, which makes their actions predictable. As the representative of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of Lower Silesia, indicated, the functioning of the National Rural Network in Lower Silesia is efficient and effective because the network includes Local Action Groups, rural associations, entrepreneurs and citizens who had an opportunity to work together even before the establishment of a formal network of rural areas in the region. The cooperation had its roots in the Lower Silesian Rural Regeneration Programme, having a positive impact on the high quality and innovative nature of projects implemented by partners within the framework of the programme. A similar thesis emerged from the opinions of the interviewee representing the Department of Rural Development Programmes of the Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Province, which has been carrying out its regional Rural Regeneration Programme since 2001. Regional initiatives have improved the quality of cooperation between partners, who made up cooperation networks functioning as a governance instrument, as introduced by EU regulations. This is the case of the strategic initiative *Direction Silesia 3.0* as well.

Innovation in regional governance is also stimulated by regional stakeholders' realization of their own potential as well as determinants of regional development. It includes knowledge of the resources the region has at its disposal, resources that should be used in driving development processes. They concern both the physical dimension (the region' morphology: land, investments in property, infrastructure, ecological systems) and non-physical dimension (economic, social, political and legal structure, culture). Today regional governance denotes maximising regional assets.

In addition to traditional factors like location, financial situation, level of citizens' formal knowledge, advanced technical infrastructure, structure of the economy, or those stimulating economic growth (e.g. taxation level, situation on the labour market, municipal services, image of cities), of key importance among regional assets is also human capital, people who live in in the region. Innovations in regional governance denote a shift in traditional thinking: instead of development being based mainly on attracting investments through financial and tax incentives, emphasis should be placed on investments in infrastructure and development of human and social capital as the best way of utilising the resources available. The success of a region is jointly determined by the inventiveness and innovativeness of people who create it, i.e. live and work in it and co-govern it.

Aggregation of dispersed knowledge and its use in regional governance is becoming – at least in the case of innovations strengthening the socio-economic endogenous potential of regions – an important determinant of regional development. Innovative solutions implemented in Poland in this respect can, despite their adaptive nature, launch important changes in the evolution of social and cultural capital. The involvement of partners in the governance process, with the government administration playing a coordinating role, makes it possible to fully utilise various kinds of capital accumulated in the region.

On the other hand, concentration on precisely defined long-term objectives of regional development and thinking in terms of potential challenges of the future encourage actors to seek new solutions to cope with these challenges. People responsible for development policy on the regional and national levels indicate that a serious challenge to development of regions will be its financing after 2020, when the European Structural and Investment Funds available to Polish regions in the current financial perspective will expire. In view of the EU unstable political and economic situation, it is difficult to predict today whether Polish regions will continue to receive development aid, with regard to both its amount forms. That is why some regional authorities are already implementing revolving financial instruments dedicated to enterprise development, instruments that constitute an alternative to a system based on

non-repayable subsidies. According to the representatives of the Ministry of Development, this way marshals from some Polish regions – mainly from western Poland – build up financial capital for the future, capital that may soon become the main source of investments in innovation and enterprise in the regions. It is a process which the experts taking part in the focused interview described as strategic management in which a crucial role is played by planning, concentration on selected objectives and selection of instruments used in their pursuit.

A way to ensure social coordination or social order is to have institutions functioning with social legitimacy, effectively and responsibly, able to create a system of representation as well as intermediary structures focused on the pursuit of specific objectives. Thus, networks can be drivers in regional governance because they refer not only to structures wielding power but also to relations between entities and individuals, and take into account the interaction between the public and private sectors linked in cooperation to achieve common objectives. Networks as institutionalised regulation systems controlling collective actions are a combination of various systems (market, hierarchy, majority rules, negotiations). They provide for various models of interaction which arises from the framework imposed by institutions (coalitions, contracts and agreements, competition through cooperation). These are control and coordination processes which usually go beyond the boundaries of one organisation. Networks often lack formal hierarchy, which means that building trust between the actors is of key importance to the effectiveness of the functioning of local arrangements.

Thus, regional governance focused on the generation and implementation of innovation is not about direct decision-making by virtue of executive powers, but about creating a climate for cooperation between various actors to achieve common objectives. In this respect it is worth paying attention to the practical significance of the concept of “good regional governance” encompassing democratic and effective governance, effective public institutions, right quality of public services as well as ability to adapt to new social needs. The basic principles of “good governance” include in this respect adaptation to the users’ needs and requirements as well as accountability of decision-makers. Adaptation to the needs can

occur only in a participatory approach, provided that the principles of transparency and consensus building are taken into account. On the other hand, accountability is associated with the rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency and integrity. In the normative approach, effective generation and implementation of innovation in regional governance take into account more extensive hand-over of control to the local community, decentralisation of competence and introduction of participatory governance tools (e.g. through consultations or local initiatives). Consequently, they contribute to significant changes in regional governance, both in the governance process itself and in the effects achieved.

It is the prospect of positive changes that can occur thanks to the implementation of an innovative solution in regional governance that stands as a factor encouraging search for new ways of solving problems emerging in regions. Observations of our interviewees responsible for rural governance in the selected regions suggest that people living in rural areas are more willing to engage in initiatives that have previously been tested elsewhere and have been successful. On the local level, people like to participate in bottom-up initiatives which will have a positive impact on the quality of their life within a specific timeframe.

In the case of rural development, our interviewees pointed out that it was easier to persuade people to get involved by showing them examples of good practices that had had a positive impact of a given territorial entity.

No innovation, including one associated with regional governance, can exist without leadership, which should conform to the following: the starting point is understanding that democracy is safeguarded by participation, power is fragmentary and/or divided between consensus-based networks, and the local and regional authorities serve as moderators of regional governance processes. Leadership in generating innovation in regional governance assumes concentration on the potential and needs of the entire region. In this approach, the roles and obligations of each level of authority should be clearly defined in order to ensure coherence of policies and intersectoral integration. What should be also taken into account is the administrative fragmentation of structures. Thus, leadership is understood as coordination on the self-government level, including

institutions performing tasks with a functional or sectoral dimension. This has been demonstrated by activities associated with regional governance in Silesia.

The role of the leader – a person or institution coordinating innovative processes – is, nevertheless, essential. Strong leadership provides a mandate to take strategic decisions on the one hand, and on the other, is effective in mobilising groups headed by leaders. These are people or institutions capable of winning others over to their ideas, and at the same time, are able to effectively pursue their plans, an example of which is the fact that the ITI of the Central Subregion of Silesia is based in Gliwice.

In the case of innovation management in regional governance, the role can be taken over by a representative of any sector. Thus, the process of generating and implementing innovation does not have to be the domain of the public sector. The public sector plays an important role, having legal legitimacy to manage regional development. Nevertheless, when conducting their research, the authors noted that transferring the coordinating role to sectors other than the public sector raises the level of understanding as well as acceptance of objectives and actions to be taken within the framework of regional governance, and increases the involvement of various entities in the process. Moreover, it often drives the development of innovative, novel solutions resulting either from the implementation of methods known only to representatives of one sector, or generation of solutions resulting from a synergy of knowledge originating in various sectors. The “transfer” of leadership from the public sector to the private/non-governmental sector has been observed in some projects with a high innovation potential, e.g. in the development of the smart specialisation strategy through the process of entrepreneurial discovery, or the formulation of the *Direction Silesia 3.0* strategic initiative – triggered by the Secretary of the Province, who has vast experience in non-governmental activity.

What should be noted in this respect is the crucial role of learning processes as drivers of innovation in regional governance. As the research done by the authors shows, learning does not entail solely new abilities gained by actors cooperating on the regional level but, above all, provides a possibility of observing and acquiring knowledge of innovative

solutions in governance outside the region. Our interviewees pointed out that study visits to other countries and regions enabled them to observe solutions applied outside their region, and then use and implement them creatively in their own region. Our interviewees familiarized themselves with good practices in the management of rural development in Germany, France, Finland and Ireland. Inspiring examples of how management of support mechanism to enterprise was operated were derived from the local level system in Denmark. The public sector representatives had an opportunity to get to know innovative solutions applied in combating poverty and social exclusion in the United States, fight against unemployment and investment in human capital in declining industrial regions of France and the United Kingdom. Exchange of experiences and learning, which inspires innovation, occur not only during study visits but also through participation in conferences, interregional fora bringing together officials, uniformed services, social services, non-governmental organisations and entrepreneurs, who meet and are able to share their knowledge and experience. Learning is possible through analyses of examples of successful innovations as well as through drawing conclusions from mistakes and failures suffered by the others. As the representative of the Regional Development Department of the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province noted, in the case of Lower Silesia, a key role in the transfer of knowledge and good practices to regional governance processes was played by territorial cooperation with the Czech Republic and Saxony. Mutual visits and joint projects are conducive to the copying of governance solutions applied by our neighbours. Innovations implemented in such situations are imitative, but also creative, as implementation takes into account the social, cultural and governance specificity of Lower Silesia.

Successes achieved thanks to governance innovations in some regions cause "institutional envy" among regional development actors coming from other territorial units. This was pointed out by the experts who took part in the focused interview; they also stressed that today in public life on all governance levels – from the local to the European – we could see that "innovation was trendy". As a result, various types of organisations and institutions seek innovative solutions, treating these processes also as a matter of marketing and prestige.

According to one of the experts, not only knowledge but also education as a form of shaping the awareness of actors involved in regional development is of huge importance to the emergence of innovation in that area. Education helps us understand how a region functions, how specific decisions or, indeed, their absence, affect its development and why actors should display creative and innovative thinking, attitudes and actions.

Worthy of note is the fact that one of important factors supporting innovation in regional governance is an open and integrated system: solutions on the local and subregional level must form part of solutions programmed on higher levels of governance – from regional through national to supranational. Therefore, we should seek to generate a complex system of interlinkages between various levels of authority, each of whom has different tasks and roles to play, but all of them having similar objectives. The process unfolds not only vertically: from/to supranational organisations, spanning likewise local and regional governments and self-organising society. It should also unfold horizontally: unto various government and non-governmental agencies as well as independent structures of the global market. This should lead to the emergence of a system involving many entities, each of whom is responsible for the functioning of the public sphere in its area. Solutions should fit in with the civic, horizontal, pluralist and productive policy dimensions and should be flexible enough to take into account the local and regional specificity.

At the same time, expansion of the catalogue of entities who may influence governance processes opens up broader opportunities to harness their creativity and inventiveness. We should bear in mind that each actor has a role to play in the governance system. Decentralisation and subsidiarity generally facilitate a search for innovative solutions of social problems, because, as most of our interviewees indicated, they make it possible to better diagnose possible causes of problems and creatively look for solutions. However, as the representatives of the public sector noted – each entity in the regional governance system has to perform its specific tasks, e.g. tasks linked to development financing, laying down a regulatory framework for implementing regional development policy, monitoring the effects of the use of EU funds. That is why decentralisation and centralisation processes should take into account the principle of

subsidiarity as well as effectiveness of governance processes. The functioning of the regional governance system and its inclination to search for innovative solutions will depend not only on formal governance arrangements, but also on the social and cultural status of the regional environment. Innovations can be obtained as a result of intervention undertaken from a higher governance level among the entities operating on a lower level, or the other way round. They can also emerge from horizontal cooperation between actors operating on the same level of the decision-making process. As the analysis of case studies presented in Chapter Four shows, in the Polish regional governance system innovations are implemented by regions under the impact of the development aid system offered by the EU. This applies to the ITIs, LAGs and Regional Rural Networks or evaluation processes. Our interviewees – both those from the public sector and experts – indicated that formal transfer of responsibility for specific development-related tasks to entities other than the regional authorities had a positive impact on their involvement in the implementation of development policy; it was conducive to creativity and innovation. At the same time, people representing the public sector stress there should be legal regulations on the basis of which competence and responsibility for regional development tasks can be delegated to regional actors other than public administration. That is why, as the experts taking part in the dyadic interview pointed out, public administration continues to play the leading role in the creation and implementation of innovative solutions in the management of regional development.

Nor should we underestimate the significance of globalisation processes to the emergence of innovation in regional governance, especially urban governance (globalisation of the economy, area management). An important driver of innovation is wide-spread awareness of global changes, the effects of which are felt equally on the national as well as the regional and local levels. The new wave of globalisation involves a search for the best places where to carry out top-quality activities, ones that are specialised and focused on innovation; the places where companies are going to invest, provided that they get access to qualified staff, research and development, and provided that they are able to commercialise their

outcomes; the places where there are strong innovation networks and exceptional business infrastructure. What is also required is flexibility, and also a dynamic attitude towards ongoing processes, featuring likewise territorial and problem-based approach. Local decision-makers are aware of that. That is why in their actions they are increasingly open to cooperation on the supralocal level, having realized the fact that they do not have sufficient resources to meet investors' requirements on their own. In addition, with the opening of borders, globalisation has made people aware that regions should develop not only in order to support the economy but also to be able to meet citizens' aspirations to a better quality of life.

No less important are Europeanisation processes, as well as systemic and institutional solutions in regional governance associated with them. For example, according to the representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Regional Operational Programmes, new solutions implemented from the European to the national and regional levels can initially make the work more difficult for the officials involved. However, in the long term, they increase quality of governance and obtain better results from the policy implementation. These are both legal regulations as well as governance practice, which introduces a new perspective of thinking about carrying out public tasks, for example by introducing partnerships into urban or rural governance. They stem from the implementation of instruments like the ITIs or Local Action Groups developed on the EU level but implemented regionally or locally. Such innovations lead to real changes in the functioning of local and regional communities and their empowerment in regional governance processes. The European Structural and Investment Funds as instruments of Europeanisation serve to support the financing of innovative ideas, usually generated on the local level. As the representative of the Department of Rural Areas and Natural Resources, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province, indicated, the EU funds have made it possible to implement ideas, projects and initiatives that are products of the "local energy and involvement" of people. A similar opinion was expressed during the focused interview by the experts, who pointed out that availability of financial resources needed to translate an idea into practise had a positive impact on activities associated with the generation of new governance solutions. Thus, the

European integration process provides the financial basis for supporting innovation in regional governance. Examples of such an initiative based institutionally on EU solutions include a network of home museums located in the borderland area between Lower Silesia and the Czech Republic. The idea for setting up of such a network came from people living in the region and committed to the care for, protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of their region. The idea could be implemented thanks to EU funding within the framework of projects of the Lower Silesian Regional Rural Network.

According to the experts participating in the dyadic interview, innovative solutions stemming from Europeanisation processes, for example the Integrated Territorial Investments or strategic intervention areas, even if they are “not originally ours” and are adaptive, bring positive effects in the functioning of the region and communities, which successfully use these instruments in development processes.

## **Barriers limiting innovation in regional governance**

What should be regarded as the most important barrier in the generation and implementation of innovations in regional governance is the low level of socio-economic development of regions and considerable intraregional differences existing between the centres and peripheries of the regions. Although authors researching innovations claim that innovations come as a response to development problems, including that of public finance deficit (Freise, Paulsen, Walter, 2015), and mobilise governance actors to be more creative, i.e. more innovative in their approach to social problem solving, according to the representative of the Regional Development Department of the Marshal’s Office of the Lower Silesian Province developmental gap increases tension and leads to a conflict of interests, both territorial and sectoral. In a competition for the limited resources available, the main decision-makers are public authorities, which have these resources at their disposal and act as mediators between the conflicting interests of the parties. The problem can be seen in the context of relations

between the regional authorities and the local authorities, where the latter tend to focus more on satisfying the communities' basic needs, like road infrastructure or education, with the help of public funding, including that from the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Obviously, there are no unequivocal and clear rules defining which are the entities that should be involved in regional governance processes and thus, have an impact on the generation of innovation: do the various actors participate of their own will and on their own initiative, or have they been selected or appointed? If so, by whom? How is the governance process itself implied? Is it created bottom-up? Through co-opting? Or are collaborative actions initiated in a top-down manner? Moreover, a mere declaration of participation in a given governance network is important but not sufficient: entities must not only be interested in cooperation but also be substantively prepared for it. In such a case, it will be possible to develop mechanisms safeguarding that participation of well-prepared and committed partners will contribute to the development of a given area (will produce an innovative solution). Topics suggested by such committed entities undergo subjective selection: the entities select only those that match their skills and resources, and discuss issues that can be implemented. What still remains unresolved is the question of important topics, omitted or unnoticed, in the case of which the entities involved have neither the knowledge nor the resources, and which are key to innovation in regional governance.

Thus, lack of resources, including those of essential knowledge and substantive competence, on the part of the entities involved in governance processes and entitled to make decisions associated with the performance of public tasks, emerges as an important barrier in the generations and implementation of innovations. The problem was acknowledged by the representative of the Ministry of Development's Department of Innovation and Development Support Programmes, who pointed out that the inclusion of representatives of the private and social sectors in decision-making processes carries a risk associated with the low level of their substantive competence and lack of preparation for participation in decision-making processes. Our interviewee's observations suggest that entities from outside the public sector often focus on criticising solutions

presented by officials but have no alternative problem resolution methods to propose. Such a criticism is not constructive and only undermines proposals submitted by officials. Such cases are seen by ministerial level officials during consultations about key regional development documents. As a result of their lack of familiarity with legal regulations and procedures for implementing regional development policies, social and economic partners often assume a reactive rather than proactive attitude.

At the same time the lack of no innovative solutions stems from an aversion to change and avoidance of risk on the part of public administration, which prefers to select projects that guarantee the achievement of expected indicators; but also other groups may be culpable for it, e.g. rural entrepreneurs, residents, community organisations as well as other entities taking advantage of public funds. Officials are averse to risk, and failure to produce results brings with it a risk of penalisation. The regional governance experts reached similar conclusions in the focused interview. In their opinion, the implementation of innovative governance solutions is hampered by the concern of the actors involved about the final outcomes of these solutions, as innovations always carry a risk of failure. When public funds are at stake, actors focus mainly on achieving the targets, and not on looking for innovative ways of implementing initiatives which, on the one hand, could serve to generate higher added value and to achieve better results in governance processes, but on the other hand, they carry a risk of failure and thus, of financial losses and potential legal consequences to be borne.

This approach is often visible when the public sector is confronted with the business sector. It does not stem from the fact that the two sectors operate under entirely different conditions but from the fact that they see change and risk differently. Change and risk are, in a way, part of entrepreneurship and business. They constitute a challenge to entrepreneurs, for whom they are a driver in decision-making; they also serve the testing and implementation of new solutions in the management of companies. This applies particularly to entrepreneurs operating in innovative industries. They, too, become active actors in regional governance, for their knowledge, skills and competence generate changes needed to boost the potential of the entire region. In our interviews the representatives

of the business sector often stressed that cooperation with the public administration sector was hampered by its reluctance to undertake actions which would go beyond the existing operational solutions. The implementation of public policies is programmed and described in documents, which to a large extent limit flexibility and possibilities of taking action on an ad hoc basis.

The regional governance process involves representatives of science, for whom generation and testing of new solutions is often the basis of their research and development activities. Transfer of scientific knowledge to the business sector results from demand and desire to submit solutions developed in a lab to a test in real life. Thus, representatives of science are or should be generators of knowledge and new solutions. For them, change and risk are the factors influencing the results of the work underway, the factors that should be taken into account during the testing and implementation of a given solution and not as a barrier to the process.

At the same time, this stems from a formalisation of procedures, which can be described as a misaligned regulatory system. Compliance with legal norms and standard operating procedures in the provision of public services leads to a “stiffening” of structures and lack of openness to innovative solutions in the performance of tasks associated with regional governance.

Generation of innovations in regional governance is moreover inhibited by a common perception rooted among representatives of the administration that innovative solutions are unprecedented. It seems much easier to adapt innovative solutions that have worked elsewhere. As the so-called “good practices”, they create a sense of safety with regard to organisational, regulatory and financial matters. As one of the representatives of the Marshal’s Office of the Lower Silesian Province noted, what worked in other European regions could, after some slight changes, work also in Poland.

Another visible barrier in the generation and implementation of innovations in regional development is the emphasis on the part of the regional and local authorities on quick results of the implementation of public policies and programmes at the expense of legitimacy and inclusion of other entities in the management of development processes. The

representatives of the Ministry of Development interviewed by us point to a considerable time pressure felt in generation of innovations in regional governance in the programming and implementation of public policies. Consultations or inclusion of other entities in the decision-making process prolong decision-making and the expected effects not always lead to the development of new, better solutions of public problems. That is why the time pressure and expectation of quick results inhibit innovative initiatives, which carry with them a risk of failure to achieve the objectives.

Another important barrier to innovation in regional governance comes in the form of asymmetrical relations and lack of real partnership between regional actors. Often it is the public sector that emerges as a dominant actor in formal and actual terms in regional governance; it lays down a legal and financial framework for decision-making and for implementation processes. Given the fact that it has specific assets at its disposal: competence, empowerment, financial resources, expert knowledge and up-to-date information, the relations between the public sector and other regional development actors are in many situations asymmetrical. The asymmetrical nature of relations is also featured in the relationship between the government and the regional and local authorities. According to the representative of the Regional Development Department of the Lower Silesian Province, this results from an inappropriate system of dividing financial resources – regional authorities do not have sufficient resources to implement their own ideas. In the case of organisations representing entrepreneurs and citizens, the problem lies in the weakness of intrasectoral cooperation, conflict over public resources, and inability and reluctance to jointly define and represent their own interests in contacts with public authorities. The interviewee in question believes that the private and non-governmental sectors are conflict-ridden, as a result of which they cannot stand as real partners for public authorities on the regional level. Although there are examples of innovative solutions in regional governance submitted by these groups, the problem lies in formal barriers to the delegation of tasks outside the public sector. Our interviewee gave the example of the Employers' Confederation Lewiatan, which, as an association knowledgeable about the specificity of the group and representing its interests, declared its willingness to

conduct an information campaign on possibilities for financing initiatives with partial support from the European Structural and Investment Funds. Although regional authorities do have funds to carry out such tasks within the framework of the technical assistance priority, existing regulations make it mandatory for public authorities to apply the Public Procurement Law, i.e. launch tender procedures for promotional and informational campaigns. Legal regulations and competition from PR and consulting companies have led to a situation in which the employers' organization cannot hope for preferential treatment in undertaking such actions.

During the focused interview, one of the experts said that the regional administration was more willing to cooperate with established experts than with civil society organisations, because the latter might ask "inconvenient questions" from the perspective of the regional administration. According to another expert, from the perspective of non-governmental organisations the fact that the regional authorities are time-bound to their term in office leads to a lack of continuity in the cooperation with various organisations, which in turn translates into a low stability of these relations.

The twofold nature of Europeanisation processes was regarded by the interviewees as a factor facilitating and hampering the generation and implementation of innovations in regional governance at the same time. Europeanisation processes have a twofold impact on innovation. On the one hand, they offer a range of governance instruments developed on the Community level and implemented on the regional level, and on the other, they lead to a low level of innovation among actors involved in the regional governance process. In such a set-up, actors tend to be more willing to adapt already existing solutions, regarding them as effective and efficient. At the same time, they have no motivation to search for new solutions improving governance processes, because ready-made solutions, tried and tested elsewhere, seem easier to implement. Often these solutions are recommended by supranational institutions or national institutions, as a result of which on the regional level they are treated as obligatory or as having no real alternative.

In the view of our representative of the Regional Development Department of the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Province, the

framework of the implementation of the EU's regional policy does not always match regional specificity, but as a rule regional governance – in terms of setting objectives, selecting instruments and disbursing funds – takes place in accordance with the pattern imposed by the European Commission. One of the experts taking part in the focused interview made similar observations with regard to grassroots organisations which carry out projects co-financed by the EU funds. According to this expert, the level of detail of regulations concerning the methodology and procedures of project management, and the bureaucratisation of the process is so high that it practically leaves organisations carrying out projects no room for manoeuvre to implement a creative and innovative approach.

To summarise, despite numerous institutional barriers to the implementation of innovative initiatives in regional governance, barriers often anchored at the principles and logic of the functioning of the public sector, they are essential, as the case studies examined in the book demonstrate, to guarantee “good governance” standards. The numerous interviews with representatives of the public sector, private sector and experts suggest that regional governance entities are aware of the significance of innovations and their positive impact on effective and efficient pursuit of objectives of governance in the regional dimension. The above conclusion should inspire further research and analyses of the determinants of and factors facilitating the growth of innovation in regional governance in Poland.

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The publication offers an insight into innovative methods employed in public administration which are rolled out on the regional level. This area ranks nowadays among the most intensely explored areas in social and economic sciences, which dovetails with universal trends of good governance, open government or better regulation. Undoubtedly, this publication abounds in extensive empirical data which will be equally useful to researchers and to public administration staff. This part of the publication is, in the opinion of the author of this review, the greatest asset thereof. It will also come as an important voice in the ongoing discussion about the need to modernize the country's system at large. (...) it is with great pleasure that I commend the above volume to be published.

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ISBN 978-83-7545-765-0

