

Financing Regional Development in the Area of Environmental Policy and Ecological Security - a Case Study of Lubuskie Region in Poland

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Abstract

In 1989 Poland initiated system transformations, which included a political, economic and social sphere. The country found itself in search for developing own conceptions of state security. Aspiring for the sustainable socio-economic development took Poland over two decades, in which backwardness of the former system was and still is caught.

On the way to the coherent development, Polish environmental policy changed its character after 1989 – from passive into active, and regularly elaborated priorities of the environmental policy since the beginning of 1991 have become the basis for improving the state of ecological security since 2003.

The implemented policy in the analyzed area is conducted at the national level (the priorities included in strategic documents of the state) and at the regional and local level (priorities included in strategic documents of the Lubuskie Province).

The aim of the research in the paper was to identify the instruments for regional development in the area of environment protection policy and ecological security and the scope of use of resources in the Lubuskie Region. The authors made the analysis of statistical data and the analysis of strategic documents. Moreover, the query of the subject literature was also carried out.

As a result of the conducted research the authors identified the instruments for financial support of the region in the studied areas and recognized which of them were implemented in the Lubuskie Province.

Key words: financing regional development, environmental policy, ecological security

JEL Classification: Q56 Environment and Development

1 Introduction

In the communist era Poland was, next to the Soviet Union and East Germany, the country with the largest environmental contamination. The industrialization and urbanization of the country took place without regard to the principles of the environment protection and nature conservation. It was due to the fact that: the law was “facade”, social or economic issues overweighed environmental ones, inspection services were poorly equipped with control and measuring equipment, domestic production of facilities to reduce the environmental contamination almost did not exist, purchase of equipment to reduce the environment pollution abroad was not possible due to the lack of convertible currency.

The investment expenditure in the environment protection sector was at the level of 0,3-0,5% of national income, while the loss of property as the society had to incur as the result of the environment pollution was estimated at the level of 5-10% of national income. The existing system of socialist economy in Poland, based on the state ownership of the means of

production and centrally controlled mechanism of allocation of scarce resources, turned out to be – despite the very numerous attempts to modify it, including the construction of a model called market socialism (the 80s) – inefficient in terms of: ensuring the long-term, sustainable economic growth; the ability to ensure Poland with a sustainable competitive position in the international division of labour and trade; counteracting the progressive degradation of the natural environment, taking the scale of the ecological disaster in particular regions.

In 1989 Poland began political changes that included political, economic and social spheres. The authorities had to not only solve the growing problems of political, economic, but also environmental nature.

The situation in Poland changed radically, by taking such measures as: the establishment of a more restrictive law; the implementation of a uniform system of monitoring compliance with the law; the release of the first "National Environmental Policy"; the establishment of a system environmental funds, which collected funds from fees for emissions of pollutants into the environment, supporting financially investments of particular importance.

2 Environmental Policy and Ecological Security in Poland in the Light of Strategic Documents

After the initiation of the systemic changes in Poland in 1989, a document entitled National Environmental Policy was created. It was adopted by the Parliament in 1991 and became the basis for the creation of environmental policy in the next decade.

As the primary objective stated in the paper was the promotion of health, or *to achieve such a state of the environment, which will ensure the healthy development of young generation and minimizing or even eliminating human disease based on the state of the environment*. The main aim was the practical implementation of sustainable development, i.e. *subordination of the needs and aspirations of the society and the state to the opportunities offered by the environment*¹.

The National Environmental Policy clearly states that the obligation to protect the environment is part of good management and is required by law. The law applies to all entities using the environment without the use of exceptions and must be strictly adhered to. In Poland of the 90s of the twentieth century such an approach to the issue of using the environment and its protection was very progressive. This policy was in effect and stimulated to pro-environmental actions at all levels of state management, improved the well-being of society and led to the increase in management efficiency. However, compared with other developed countries, Poland had still much worse indicators of the consumption of natural resources and the environment in relation to population, national income and the area at risk². In August 2001, Polish Parliament passed the National Environmental Policy II. It covers the period from 2000 to 2025. The imperative goal of *National Environmental Policy II* is to ensure the environmental safety of the Polish society and to lay the foundations for the development and implementation of the strategy for sustainable development of the country³.

¹ National Ecological Policy, 1991, MOŚiZN, Monitor Polski, no. 18, item 118.

² K. Górka, B. Poskrobko, W. Radecki, *Ochrona środowiska*, PWE, Warszawa 2001, p. 97, *II Polityka ekologiczna państwa*, Council of Ministers, Warszawa 2000.

³ *II Polityka ekologiczna państwa*, Council of Ministers, Warszawa 2000; G. Grabowska, *Europejskie prawo środowiskowe*, Wydawnictwo Prawnicze PWN, p.115, 181-182; M. Sobiecki, *Kierunki zmian polityki*

The main objective is the control and regulation of use of the environment in such a way as to prevent the risk of quality and sustainability of the resources of the environment. In 2008 *National Environmental Policy for 2009-2012 with perspective to the year 2016* was adopted. This document outlines seven system measures (e.g. taking into account the principles of environmental protection in sector strategies; dissemination of environmental management systems in enterprises) and specific measures relating to every aspect of the environment. The national environmental policy is not an act of universally binding law, and only a political document⁴.

The concept of ecological security began to take root in the international awareness at the beginning of the 60s of last century, with the activation of the environmental movement and international organizations concerned about the state of the environment. Linking the treats of nature to security released the first report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, so-called Brundtland Report of 1987, which recognized two serious threats to humanity: nuclear proliferation and environmental destruction on a mass scale⁵.

On the basis of Polish circumstances, the concept of ecological security is reflected in the scientific and practical sense, i.e. in definitions and the inclusion of this condition in the documents of a strategic nature. M. Pietraś defines environmental security *as such a state of social relations, including the content, forms and ways of international relations, which not only reduces or eliminates environmental hazards, but also promotes positive action, allowing the realization of significant value for the existence and development of nations and states*⁶. In terms of a program, the issues of environmental safety can be found in the documents of a strategic nature, both at the state level - National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland, National Environmental Policy for 2009-2012 with a view to 2016 - and at the level of a region, i.e. Environment Protection Programme for Lubuskie Province for 2012-2015 with a view to 2019. **National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland from 2007** in chapter titled *The concept of national security. Objectives and tasks of the sector* characterizes the aspirations and actions of the state for environmental safety⁷. According to the document, providing citizens with the conditions for a better life in a healthy environment will require the implementation of European standards in the field of environmental policy, in relation to the regulation, monitoring and control, and the implementation of educational activities by non-governmental projects to protect the environment. **White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland** of 2013 refers to the issues of environmental protection (environmental safety) in Chapter titled *Strategic tasks of subsystems supporting national security. Economic subsystems*, where are presented two areas in the field of ecological safety of the state: improving the quality of the environment and prevention⁸. In their framework the Republic of Poland should focus on a number of measures to ensure security in the area of the environment.

ekologicznej państwa, in: *Nowoczesne metody i techniki zarządzania trwałym i zrównoważonym rozwojem gminy*, R. Miłaszewski (ed.), Białystok 2001, p.109.

⁴ J. Jendrośka, M. Bar, *Prawo ochrony środowiska*. Centrum Prawa Ekologicznego, Wrocław 2005, p. 569.

⁵ K. Pronińska, *Nowe problemy bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego: bezpieczeństwo energetyczne i ekologiczne*, in: *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe*, R. Kuźniar et al., Warszawa 2012, p. 317.

⁶ M. Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo ekologiczne w Europie*, Lublin 1996, p. 47-90.

⁷ National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, Warszawa 2007, www.bbn.gov.pl.

⁸ White Paper on National Security of the Republic of Poland, National Security Bureau, Warszawa 2013, www.bbn.gov.pl.

In the Lubuskie Region, environmental safety issues are in the numerous documents of the Environment Programme for Lubuskie Province for 2012-2015 with the perspective to 2019, for instance: Development Strategy of the Lubuskie Province *Update with horizon to 2020*, Lubuski Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, Waste Management Plan Update for Lubuskie Province for the years 2009 to 2012 with a perspective for the years 2013-2020 (VWMP), Priorities for international cooperation of the Lubuskie Province⁹.

3 The Identification of Financial Instruments for the Development of Lubuskie Region in the Field of Environmental Policy and Ecological Security

The Environmental Protection Programme for Lubuskie Province for the years 2003-2010 as a document defining the strategy for environmental protection until 2010 for the principal purpose considered "sustainable development of the province in which the environment has a significant impact on the future character of the region and at the same time supports the economic and social development"¹⁰. The course of action and the objectives of the mid-term environmental and ecological security are formulated in such a way as to promote socio-economic development of the region. One of the ways to a harmonious development of the region and the reduction of disparities and delays between different regions of the Lubuskie Province are actions concerning environmental protection and its management. Implications of the actions do not limit themselves to the ecological sphere, but have the impact on the economic and social spheres, providing them with sustainable development (in accordance with the principle of sustainable development enshrined in the strategic documents at the state level and the region).

The sources of funding the actions for environmental protection and ecological safety at the regional level can be divided into domestic and foreign ones. The domestic sources include: budgets of cities and municipalities, environmental funds: the National Fund, WFOŚiGW, PFOŚiGW and GFOŚiGW, while the foreign sources include: funds of the European Union in the form of LRPO, POIiŚ (Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment).

Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management

In Poland, in the system of financing environmental protection and ecological safety an important role is played by environmental funds. They work by raising funds and supporting the most important activities in the field of environmental protection, from the point of view of a country, region, municipality. The principles of operation of the national, provincial, district and local funds for environmental protection and water management are determined by the Environmental Protection Law of 27 April 2001¹¹.

According to the amendment of the Environmental Protection Act from 2009 municipal and county funds for environmental protection and water management were eliminated¹².

⁹ Environment Protection Programme for Lubuskie Province for 2012-2015 with a view to 2019, Board of Lubuskie Province, Zielona Góra 2012, www.lubuskie.pl.

¹⁰ Environment Protection Programme for Lubuskie Province for 2003-2010, resolution no. XI/78/2003.

¹¹ Environmental Protection Law Art. 400-411a (Journal of Laws No. 62, item 627, as amended).

¹² The Act of 20 November 2009 amending the Act - Environmental Protection Law and other laws (Journal of Laws No. 215 item 1664).

Bank of Environmental Protection

In the system of financing environmental protection based on ecological funds in Poland an important role is played by Environmental Protection Bank S.A. (BOS).

BOS pursues an active policy of credit for environmental investments. When granting loans, BOS is working with the National Fund and the WFOŚiGW. The loans provided by the bank can be divided into ecological preferential loans, environmentally friendly commercial loans, loans from the foreign banks (e.g. European Investment Bank), the emissions of municipal bonds¹³.

Since Poland's entry into the EU, increasingly important in the financing of development activities including in the area of environmental protection have taken funds from the EU budget. In the studied period (2007-2013) by the authors in the Lubuskie Region environmental protection and ecological safety were funded through two programs: Lubuskie Regional Operational Programme and the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment.

Regional Operational Programmes in Poland operate separately for each province (16 ROPs) and are all co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. One of the 16 Regional Programmes is **Lubuskie Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013**. LRPO 2007-2013 includes five priorities, including priority III on the environment: Priority III. Protection and management of the natural environment. The main objective of the Lubuskie Regional Operational Programme for the years 2007 - 2013 is to create the conditions for increasing the competitiveness of the region through the use of endogenous regional potential and prevent the marginalization of vulnerable areas, including rural areas, the rational management of resources and effort to ensure greater coherence of the region. The second program, which funds activities in the environmental area is the **Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment for 2007-2013**. As the objective of the program is to improve the investment attractiveness of Poland and its regions through the development of technical infrastructure while protecting and improving the environment, health, preserving cultural identity and developing territorial cohesion. The program is funded by the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. The program realizes 15 priorities, 5 of which directly concern the protection of the environment¹⁴.

4 Capital Expenditures for Environmental Protection and Ecological Security in the Lubuskie Province in 2004-2012

Lubuskie Province is characterized by a medium level of urbanization and industrialization, the average conditions for the development of agriculture and high natural values and landscape. The cause of threats to the environment is mainly industry, public utilities and agriculture. After 1989 the Polish government policy in relation to the environment changed. Active measures to protect the environment were initiated. After the Polish accession to the European Union there was significant development of investments for the environmental protection because of the access to financial resources from the EU budget and the need to comply with EU regulations. In addition, there was a significant change in the perception of

¹³ <http://www.bosbank.pl>

¹⁴ [http://www.pois.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/o_pois.aspx\(17.06.2014\),](http://www.pois.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/o_pois.aspx(17.06.2014),)

[http://www.wfosigw.zgora.pl/poii/dok.php?a=k1&b=1010\(17.06.2014\),](http://www.wfosigw.zgora.pl/poii/dok.php?a=k1&b=1010(17.06.2014),)

<http://www.fundusze.lubuskie.pl/Fundusze-Europejskie/Program-Operacyjny-Infrastruktura-i-Srodowisko-2007-2013>

the environment, not as a problem, but an element necessary to create conditions for the harmonious development of the state and the individual regions. The system of financing environmental policy and environmental safety at the regional level is made up of many elements, including the instruments analyzed by the authors as affecting the development of the regions.

For the analysis, the following financial instruments were taken into consideration: environmental funds: the National Fund, WFOŚiGW and GFOŚiGW, PFOŚiGW, EU funds in the form of LRPO, OPI. Table 1 shows the amount of funds spent in 2006-2010 by means of various instruments.

Tab. 1 The value of funds spent on environmental protection in the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010 in PLN.

Funding instruments	Value of funding in PLN				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
NFOŚiGW	b.d.	b.d.	24486000,00	50000000,00	54000000,00
WFOŚiGW	31836903,72	50162201,86	9274973,58	13163437,76	26579828,12
PFOŚiGW	832800,00	1105689,00	1146555,00	2032324,00	2156951,00
GFOŚiGW	2910978,00	1958189,00	3409004,00	3500082,00	11910503,00
LRPO (including IPI)	0,00	0,00	0,00	64427129,23	14323176,00
POiŚ	0,00	0,00	0,00	57489219,00	
BOŚ	462000	no data	182600	834600	no data

Source: own elaboration based on Report on the implementation of Regional Environment Programme for the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010, Zielona Gora 2011.

GFOŚiGW, PFOŚiGW

In the years 2006-2010 the investments related to environmental protection in the Lubuskie region, funded by the Municipal and County Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management (GFOŚiGW, PFOŚiGW) amounted to a total of over 76 million PLN. Figure 2 shows the expenditure of Municipal and County Funds with regard to tasks.

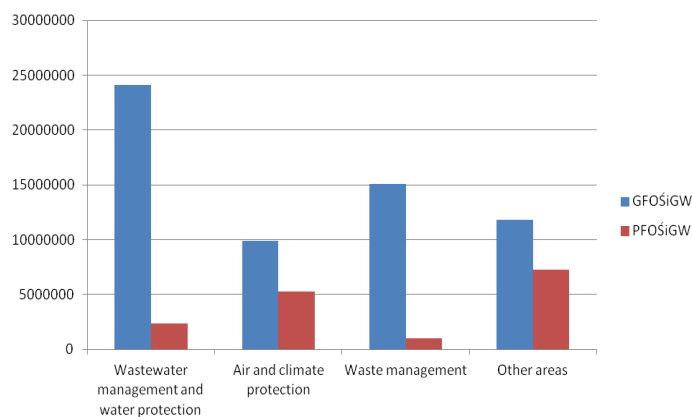


Fig. 2 Expenditure of Municipal and County Funds for Environmental Protection in the Lubuskie Region for 2006-2010 in PLN.

Source: own elaboration based on Report on the implementation of Regional Environment Programme for the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010.

Local government units financed with municipal and county funds for environmental protection activities in the amount of 67 328 013,00 PLN, of which the largest grant received water protection and wastewater management, because of the greatest needs of local communities in the area.

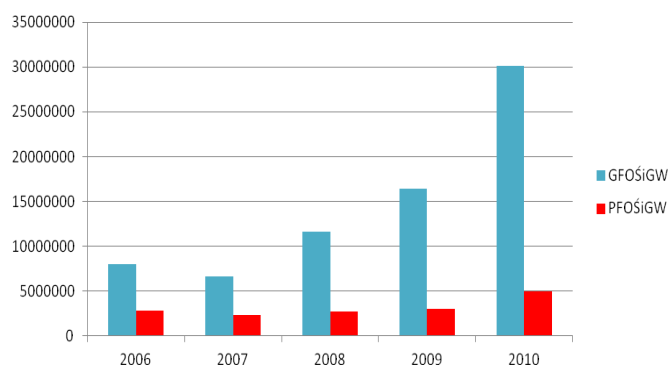


Fig. 3 The value of expenses of GFOŚiGW and PFOŚiGW in the field of environmental protection in 2006-2010 in PLN.

Source: own elaboration based on Report on the implementation of Regional Environment Programme for the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010.

Examining the period of 2006-2010, it should be noted that the amount of funds spent by municipal funds gradually increased, while in the case of county funds this trend did not occur.

NFOŚiGW and WFOŚiGW

National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (NFOŚiGW) in 2006-2010 in the Lubuskie Province co-financed the activities including the following areas: air protection; Green Investment System - GIS; development of air protection programs; environmental education; support of environmental NGOs; nature conservation; water management; environmental risk prevention and liquidation of consequences; protection of land; water conservation; efficient use of energy. In 2006-2007, Lubuskie Province received one of the smallest support levels from the National Fund. In 2008-2010, the amount of funding and payments from the National Fund grew steadily.

In the analyzed period statutory activities of environmental protection were also subsidized by funds from WFOŚiGW in Zielona Góra. The following spheres were supported by grants: water conservation and water management, land protection, conservation, protection of the atmosphere, environmental education, monitoring and prevention and elimination of environmental hazards. On the basis of reports on the activities of the Regional Fund for the year 2006-2010 table 2 was prepared.

Tab. 2 The number of proposals for action in the field of environmental co-financed by WFOŚiGW and the value of funds spent (PLN).

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of submitted applications	195	254	193	103	131
Number of funded applications	97	124	48	42	68
Amount of grant	31836903,72	50162201,86	9274973,58	13163437,76	26579828,12
Grants	64	88	37	29	45
Loans	33	36	11	13	22
Subsidies to bank loans	0	0	0	0	1

Source: own elaboration based on Reports on the activities of the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Zielona Góra in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, the Provincial Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Zielona Góra.

In the studied period, the number of applications varied, but always was above 100, and in 2007 exceeded 200. The number of funded proposals was much lower. The funding also

showed no upward trend. Supreme grants awarded in 2007 and it amounted to more than 50 million zloty (Table 2, Figure 4).

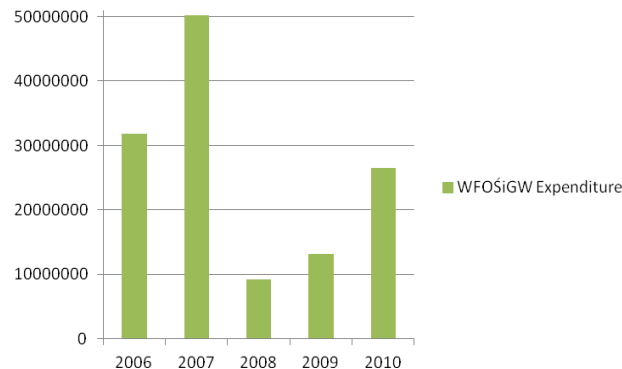


Fig. 4 The amount of granting (PLN) awarded by the WFOŚiGW in 2006-2010

Source: own elaboration based on Reports on the activities of the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Zielona Gora in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, the Provincial Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Zielona Gora.

Figure 5 shows the structure of the projects supported by WFOŚiGW. In the years 2006-2010 the Regional Fund co-financed many projects in the area of Protection of water for a total amount of 85 413 559.18 PLN, which represents 54% of total funding. Co-financing of projects in the field of air protection accounted for 16% of total funding and amounted to 24 917 406.09 PLN. The smallest amount supported the initiatives on conservation and environmental education.

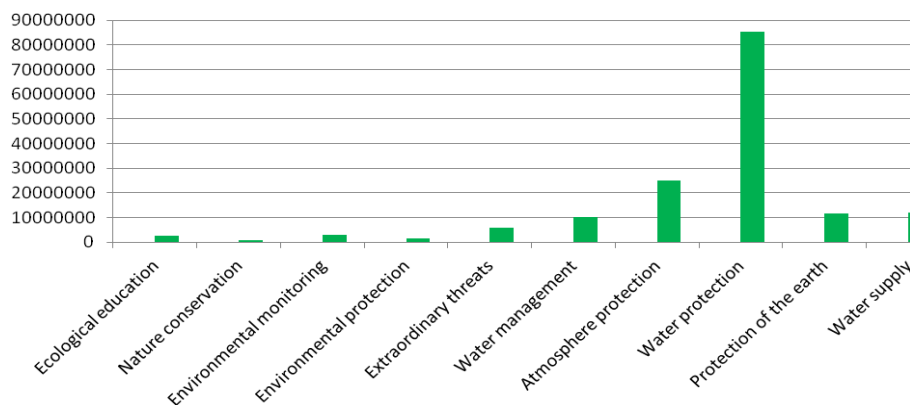


Fig. 5 The structure of financing environmental projects by the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management divided into the fields of financing (PLN)

Source: Report on the implementation of Regional Environment Programme for the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010.

Funding within LRPO 2007-2013

In 2009 and 2010 within the framework of priority III Protection and management of the natural environment, co-financed action 3.1 Infrastructure environmental protection, 3.2 Improving air quality, energy efficiency and the development and use of renewable energy sources and 3.3 Management of the natural environment. Since the beginning of the program were carried out two calls for proposals. The total amount of funding in those years was 23 039 989.94 PLN. As part of LRPO 2007-2013 also IPI projects were co-financed. Indicative Investment Plan (IIP) includes investment projects of strategic importance for the implementation of LRPO. Their implementation is particularly important due to the achievement of indicators of socio-

economic development of the region. The total amount of funding in those years amounted to 55 710 315.29 PLN.

Funding within POIiŚ 2007-2013

Within the framework of the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2007-2013 under the priority axis I. Water and wastewater management and priority axis II. Waste management and protection of the earth, action measures 1.1 Wastewater in agglomerations above 15 thousand Pe was supported, moreover, 3.2.1. Complex projects in the field of municipal waste management with particular emphasis on hazardous waste and 2.2. Restoring natural values to degraded areas and protection of coasts. Since the beginning of the program until 2010, 7 competitions were held, in which 11 applications were submitted. The total amount of funding was 57 489 219.70 PLN.

5 Conclusion

In the years 2006-2010 in the Lubuskie Region environmental protection and ecological safety was supported through a variety of instruments. Their diversity allowed for greater availability of funds and to a large extent, enabled the realization of the investment. Problems such as air pollution, poor groundwater, pressure of municipal sources on surface water and groundwater, waste inordinate, excessive noise, insufficient flood protection are not only a threat to the environment, but also a potential barrier to the development of social and economic spheres. The actions undertaken in the Lubuskie Region through solving environmental problems influenced the development of the region. In the analyzed period there was a significant improvement in indicators of environmental, economic and social conditions in the region¹⁵.

The environment is a common good, and in accordance with the "polluter pays" principle, any entity using the environment (entrepreneur, a physical person) is financially responsible for its pollution. Due to the enormous backwardness in the field of the environment resulting from the political and historical conditions in Poland it is not possible to finance measures to protect the environment primarily from private funds. Therefore, the effective environmental policy model, which emphasizes the responsibility of the state for the protection of the environment and its standards obliges local authorities Lubuskie Province to take action in this area. After 2004, when Poland was among the countries of the European Union, the Lubuskie region granted the access to EU funds for environmental protection. Due to the EU co-financing major infrastructure projects were implemented, such as water treatment plants and sewage treatment plants. Also educational and training initiatives were co-financed, allowing the increased environmental awareness and local authorities, entrepreneurs, employees more aware of the environment in their activities.

¹⁵ Accurate data in the Report on the implementation of Regional Environment Programme for the Lubuskie Province for 2006-2010, Zielona Gora 2011, the Program for Environmental Protection for Lubuskie Province for 2012-2015 with perspective to 2019, Annex to Resolution No. XXI / 185/12 Lubuskie Regional Assembly of 12 March 2012, the Medium-Term development Strategy impact assessment of Lubuskie Province development on the development of the Lubuskie Province.

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