

LOCAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORTING FISHERIES AND TOURISM OF THE SZCZECIN BAY

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Abstract. Communes located by the Szczecin Bay have insufficiently supported fisheries and tourism in spite of being provided with good conditions for their development. The results of questionnaires and surveys held in 2008–2010 indicate that local self-governments gradually communalized fishing ports and offered advisory support for fisherman. Additionally, they showed a flexible approach towards the adjustment of rental fees for port utilities as well as property taxes. The lack of support or its being insufficient resulted partly from inadequate knowledge of problems by local authorities and partly because of the lack of financial resources for maintaining ports, implementing the indispensable infrastructural investments as well as meeting other needs for development. In 2009, the Maritime Office started transferring to local authorities tax fees on estates located under the waters of the Szczecin Bay. The financial situation of the local communities has been essentially improved. With the provided financial means, local authorities were able to prepare and pre-finance projects allowing them to apply for the EU co-financing of infrastructural development projects and other needs connected with tourism and fisheries.

Key words: economic development, local governance

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INTRODUCTION

The scope of a commune's activity includes public matters of local significance which result from the act of the commune self-government [Act of 8 March 1990 on commune self-government...]. Communes located by the Szczecin Bay are mostly classified as rural areas. Due to their location they are provided with ideal conditions for the development of fisheries and tourism, especially water tourism. Each commune owns a fishing port. These are the attributes that require support from local authorities in order to allow their full exploitation.

The aim of this article is to present and evaluate the activities undertaken by local authorities with regard to development on the example of fisheries and tourism of the communes located by the Szczecin Bay. The research hypothesis that was put forward stated that the significance of fisheries of the Szczecin Bay and tourism in the development of communes there located was rather low and the barrier in the development consisted in the lack of possibilities and support for fisheries from the local authorities.

The territorial scope of the research encompassed communes situated in the Polish part of the Szczecin Bay and the Dąbie Lake. The research was based on the materials gathered in the years 2008–2010 as a result of complex survey activity conducted in the communes and among fishermen, a part of which was included in the following study.

The selection of communes was intentional. The sample group included the entities located in rural areas (6), directly by the Szczecin Bay with small fishing ports dealing with bay fisheries, and namely: Nowe Warpno, Police, Stepnica, Wolin, Kamień Pomorski and Międzyzdroje. The communes received questionnaires, all of which were returned. The conducted verification allowed to include those communes in further research.

The research sample among fishermen was designated according to the following two criteria: 1) It was required that fishermen were officially entitled to fishing in the area of the Szczecin Bay, i.e. had suitable permits and fishing licenses. Thus, the respondents included only shipowners or co-shipowners. 2) Fishermen needed to be active in the period covered by the research. The statistical population amounted to 147 respondents (100%), all of whom received questionnaires. The number of the returned questionnaires reached 92, of which, after verification, 90 were qualified for further research, i.e. 61.2% of the bay fishermen. Research results were verified in the years 2009 and 2010 with the use of the in-depth interview method and observation during study tours.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FISHERIES OF THE SZCZECIN BAY AND TOURISM FOR COMMUNAL DEVELOPMENT

The communes located in the Bay are classified as urban-rural and rural communes. Industry in those communes does not play a significant role, with the exception of the communes of Stepnica and Police. For this reason, the communes should seek opportunities for their development among the economic functions other than industry (see among others Stola [1987, p. 25], Dietl and Gregor [1979, pp. 80–96]). Such functions include fisheries and tourism.

Self-governments tend not to perceive fisheries as very significant. This sector is mostly appreciated in the commune of Nowe Warpno, and thought of as being of little importance in Wolin and the remaining communes.

Not all of the self-governments were able to see the positive impact of fisheries on local communities (Table 1). According to the local authorities of Kamień Pomorski and Wolin fishery is and will not be important for communal development. The remaining communes appreciated the role of fishery in their development, since it allows for the creation of new jobs (Stepnica, Police, Międzyzdroje), attracts tourists (Stepnica, Police, Nowe Warpno) and contributes to the creation of the commune image (Nowe Warpno).

All of the local authorities, except for Kamień Pomorski, see the positive role of tourism in communal development. It constitutes an element of the historical and cultural tradition of the region and is treated as “[...] the heart of the local culture, designating social customs and standards, shaping the hierarchy of social prestige and organizing social life of the inhabitants” [Marciniak 2008, p. 12].

According to the researched local entities, tourism constitutes the most prospective economic function. The communes of the Szczecin Bay also appreciate the value of the fishing ports located in their areas, since port structures constitute the technical base necessary for conducting fishing and tourist activities.

Each commune owns a fishing port constituting a multifunctional economic structure (Tab. 2). The basic form of activity is fishing; however, recently tourism has begun gaining importance. Only the port in Stepnica conducts an additional transshipping activity (transport function). In the remaining ports, except for Lubin, this function constitutes a potential sphere of activity [Miszczyk 1999, pp. 67, 70, 74].

Table 1. The role of fisheries in the development of communes in the opinion of the local authorities

Tabela 1. Rola rybołówstwa w rozwoju gmin w opinii władz lokalnych

Commune	Plays no role in communal development	Impedes communal development	Creates working places for the inhabitants of the commune	Attracts tourists	Other
Kamień Pomorski	X				
Stepnica			X	X	
Police			X	X	
Wolin	X				
Nowe Warpno				X	creating commune image
Międzyzdroje			X		

Source: Self-study prepared on the basis of the research conducted in 2008, verified in 2009 and 2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w 2008 r., zweryfikowane w latach 2009 i 2010.

Table 2. Functions of the fishing ports of the Szczecin Bay
Tabela 2. Funkcje portów rybackich Zalewu Szczecińskiego

Commune name (port)	Function type		
	Fishing	Tourism	Transport
Kamień Pomorski (Kamień Pomorski)	+	+	–
Stepnica (Stepnica)	+	+	–
Police (Trzebież)	+	+	–
Wolin (Wolin)	+	+	–
Nowe Warpno (Nowe Warpno)	+	+	–
Międzyzdroje (Lubin)	+	+	–

Key: + function realized by the port; – function not realized by the port

Source: Self-study prepared on the basis of the research conducted between 2008–2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w latach 2008–2010.

THE EVALUATION OF THE GENERAL SITUATION OF FISHERIES OF THE SZCZECIN BAY BY COMMUNE SELF-GOVERNMENTS

Supporting of fishery development by commune self-governments requires their being aware of its general situation. Research showed that this kind of knowledge is not always sufficient. The authorities of Kamień Pomorski, for instance, were not able to evaluate the situation of fisheries and fishermen in the commune, in Nowe Warpno they assessed it as very bad, and in Wolin as bad. Międzyzdroje, Stepnica and Police evaluated it as good or very good. According to local authorities, the unfavourable situation of fisheries in the region results mainly from the lack of resources for new equipment, fry-stocking and fishermen's initiative. This is proved by fishermen's resignation from work and a significant reduction of fishing boats.

The bad condition of fisheries in some of the communes of the Szczecin Bay forced fishermen to change the type of the conducted activity. Tourism may be an alternative for them. In the opinion of self-governments, the region of the Szczecin Bay provides favourable natural conditions for the development of this economic function. Unfortunately, it is impeded by the bad technical condition of tourist infrastructure and the low number of passenger boats unable to keep the pace with the growing demand for cruises on the Szczecin Bay.

The element that is indispensable in supporting the fisheries of the Szczecin Bay and tourism is maintaining of the fishing ports. The act of 20 December 1996 on sea ports and harbours opened the possibility of their communalization and acquisition by self governments, which seem to be the most suitable managing entities [Sosidko 2004, pp. 119–130]. This is confirmed with the results of the research conducted in the communalized ports of the Szczecin Bay – Stepnica (the commune of Stepnica was the first commune in Poland to carry out communalization of a fishing port [Pluciński 1999, pp. 22–29]), in Nowe Warpno and Kamień Pomorski (communalization was carried out in December 2010).

By managing the port areas the communes were able to realize many more tasks as compared with the previous port administrator – the Maritime Office in Szczecin – see Table 3. Competences of the Maritime Office were limited by the act of 21 March 1991 on mari-

Table 3. The scope of tasks realized by entities managing fishing ports – commune authorities and Maritime Offices

Tabela 3. Zakres zadań realizowanych przez podmioty zarządzające portami rybackimi – gminy oraz Urząd Morski

Tasks	Entities managing the ports	
	Communes ¹	Maritime Offices ²
Managing port utilities and infrastructure	+	+
Predicting, programming and planning port development	+	–
Construction, extension, maintenance and modernization of port infrastructure	+	+
Land acquisition for port development	+	–
Provision of services related to the use of port infrastructure	+	–
Promotion and gaining users	+	–
Harmonization of port development with the commune	+	–

Key: Communes¹ – the ports managed by communes included Stepnica, Nowe Warpno, Kamień Pomorski; by Maritime Offices² – Trzebież, Wolin, Lubin.

Source: Self-study based on the research conducted in 2008–2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w latach 2008–2010.

time areas of the Republic of Poland and maritime administration, narrowing them down to the activities related to financing and managing infrastructure and port lands [Pluciński i Sosidko 2007, p. 3].

The other tasks, especially those related to formulating forecasts, programming and planning port development, land acquisition for the ports' developmental needs, conducting promoting activities, gaining new users and harmonizing port development with commune development were practically overlooked by Maritime Offices. Communes, on the other hand, were prepared to carry out all the tasks being the responsibility of an entity managing the ports.

In the other ports state or mixed property – state-communal – prevailed, and the managing entity was the Maritime Office in Szczecin. Communes did not take the opportunity of their communalization, since local authorities were concerned that the profits made by the ports would not cover the costs of their maintenance. What was also of significance was the decapitalized port infrastructure and the necessity of providing large sums for its modernization [Leśniewski 2007, p. 56].

In the recent period the situation began to change. In the face of the communes' better access to resources for their modernization, the bad technical condition of the infrastructure is no longer the barrier preventing port communalization. It is proved with the example of the recently acquired port by the commune of Kamień Pomorski.

SUPPORTING FISHERIES AND TOURISM OF THE SZCZECIN BAY BY COMMUNAL AUTHORITIES

Survey results indicate that each of the researched self-government units declared its willingness to support fisheries. The most commonly offered kind of help involved advisory support (in Kamień Pomorski, Police, Międzyzdroje), and the most diversified

forms of support for fishermen (organizational, legal, advisory support) were noted in the commune of Międzyzdroje. However, what mattered most were the specific examples of support offered by local authorities, which are presented in Table 4 below.

Only the authorities of Nowe Warpno and Stepnica could specify the concrete activities that allowed to provide their fishermen with some financial support in their difficult situation. The provided help consisted in their showing flexible approach in adjusting the lease fees for using the fishing port facilities and the property tax amounts. A part of the surveyed communes also supported tourist activity related to fisheries. The self-governments of Stepnica, Polica, Wolin and Nowe Warpno organized annual sports-cultural events for their inhabitants and tourists (Table 5). According to the surveyed communes they were to promote the region and sustain its historical and cultural values.

An important task of local self-governments is to acquire the EU funds for full-scale restructuring and modernization of the state's economy. In the researched period only the commune of Stepnica made use of the EU funds aimed at supporting fisheries. It received nearly PLN 2.5 million from the Sectoral Operational Programme "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004–2006". With the use of the acquired funds the commune was able to renovate the port basin and equipment, purchase new devices and plan other works. The remaining five communes failed to take the opportunity of port modernization provided by the EU funds. The main reason was the lack of resources for co-financing of investments and the difficulties with their pre-financing, what was particularly emphasized by the authorities of Nowe Warpno. Moreover, they were mostly small communes with relatively small budgets, for whom the costs of preparing the projects already constituted a large financial burden.

Table 4. Financial support of communal local authorities for fishermen in the years 2003–2010
Tabela 4. Pomoc finansowa władz badanych gmin skierowana do rybaków w latach 2003–2010

Commune	Year							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Kamień Pomorski	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Stepnica	deferred lease payment	deferred lease payment	reduction of lease fee (PLN 9,000)	reduction of lease fee (PLN 9,000)	no	no	no	no
Police	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Wolin	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Nowe Warpno	no	remitted lease fee (PLN 9076.96) remitted property tax (PLN 292)	remitted property tax (PLN 7410.09)	remitted property tax (PLN 4974)	no	remitted lease fee (PLN 466) remitted property tax (PLN 448)	remitted property tax (PLN 789)	no
Międzyzdroje	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

Source: Self-study based on the research conducted in 2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w 2010 r.

In 2009 the communes began to show more interest in obtaining the EU funds when their budget situation radically improved as a result of reimbursing by the Maritime Office in Szczecin of the tax on communal lands located under the waters of the Szczecin Bay.

The first commune to receive the tax reimbursement in 2009 was Stepnica. The total amount of the resources to be paid out in installments reached PLN 104 million. To understand the size of this amount let us only state that the yearly budget of Stepnica reaches approximately PLN 6 million. Among the remaining communes, Nowe Warpno will receive PLN 130 million, Kamień Pomorski – PLN 15 million, Police – PLN 9 million. The amounts of tax reimbursements for Wolin and Międzyzdroje are still under calculation [Ziębka 2009]. As a result of receiving those resources the authorities of Kamień Pomorski decided to start the construction of a yacht port within the project “The Tourist Trail of the West Pomeranian Region”. The ports selected for the investment project – The Network of Touristic Ports of West Pomerania “The Tourist Trail of the West Pomeranian Region” are situated in the areas of the communes of Kamień Pomorski, Wolin and Międzyzdroje. The investments (construction of new yacht marinas) are co-financed from the resources of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy [Zachodniopomorski Szlak... 2011]. Its value is estimated at PLN 19 million, of which PLN 7 million come from the Operational Programme Innovative Economy. The remaining resources come from the tax reimbursement. The investment works will be started at the beginning of 2011, and the planned completion period is autumn 2011 [Powstanie nowoczesna... 2010].

The improvement in the financial situation also led to commencing of the construction works on a yacht marina in Wolin. The investment, initially rejected by the commune authorities, was approved after guaranteeing tax reimbursement by the Maritime Office in Szczecin. Its estimated cost amounts to PLN 7 million, of which PLN 4 million is financed from the resources of the EU [Zachodniopomorski Szlak... 2010]. Moreover, the communes of Międzyzdroje, Wolin and Stepnica will in the years 2011–2015 have at their disposal over PLN 34 million for the realization of projects related to fisheries and tourism (construction of sailing marinas and piers, stocking of bodies of water, opening passages of rivers, renovation of

Table 5. Sports and cultural events connected with the fisheries of the Szczecin Bay organized by the communes in the years 2003–2010

Tabela 5. Imprezy kulturowo-sportowe związane z rybołówstwem Zalewu Szczecińskiego organizowane przez gminy w latach 2003–2010

Commune	No ¹	Yes ²	Event
Kamień Pomorski	X		
Stepnica		X	“Bread and Fish Day” Fest
Police		X	„Trzebież Time”, „Trzebież Neptunia”
Wolin		X	Mayor of Wolin Cup “Regatta”
Nowe Warpno		X	„Bream Fest”
Międzyzdroje	X		

Key: No¹ – the event was not organized, Yes² – the event was organized.

Source: Self-study based on the research conducted in the years 2008–2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w latach 2008–2010.

Table 6. Financial support for fisheries and tourism of the Szczecin Bay provided by the researched communes

Tabela 6. Finansowe wsparcie rybołówstwa i turystyki Zalewu Szczecińskiego przez badane gminy

Commune	Support type ¹ and its value (thous. PLN)		
	Port investments	Support of fisheries and tourism co-financed from the OP "Fisheries 2007–2013" ²	Other support
Kamień Pomorski	Construction of a yacht marina – 19 000	No	No
Stepnica	Modernization of the fishing part of the port – 25 000	Projects related to fishing and tourist activities (in total for three communes) – 34 000	Remittance of lease fees for fishermen – 18
Police	No	No	No
Wolin	Construction of a yacht marina – 7 000	Projects related to fishing and tourist activities (in total for three communes) – 34 000	No
Nowe Warpno	No	No	Remittance of property tax and lease fees for fishermen – 23.46
Międzyzdroje	No	Projects related to fishing and tourist activities (in total for three communes) – 34 000	No

Key: Support type¹ – refers to projects already completed, in progress and those with guaranteed financial support; OP "Fisheries 2007–2013" – Operational Programme "Sustainable development of the fisheries sector and coastal fishing areas 2007–2013" (three communes will be able to benefit from the programme – Stepnica, Wolin, Międzyzdroje, with the total amount at their disposal of PLN 34 million).

Source: Self-study based on: Powstanie nowoczesna... 2010; Zachodniopomorski Szlak... 2010; Ponad 90 milionów... 2010.

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie: Source: self-study based on: Powstanie nowoczesna... 2010; Zachodniopomorski Szlak... 2010; Ponad 90 milionów... 2010.

boats, providing special fishing grounds, organization of fishing fairs, trainings, etc.). The investment projects will be co-financed from the Operational Programme "Sustainable development of the fisheries sector and the coastal fishing areas 2007–2013", where the financing will reach 60-100% [Ponad 90 milionów... 2010].

The communes of Nowe Warpno, Police and Międzyzdroje have not yet taken the decisions on the realization of investment projects. However, there is no doubt that the future reimbursement from the Maritime Office in Szczecin will influence their investment activity.

Table 6 below presents the values of the financial support for fisheries and tourism of the Szczecin Bay in the researched communes. It covers infrastructural investments realized in fishing ports, projects related to fisheries and tourism co-financed from the OP "Fisheries 2007–2013" from which the resources will be available in the years 2011–2015, as well as other kinds of support (lease fees or property tax remittance for fishermen).

CONCLUSIONS

The location of the researched communes and the ports operating within them result in the communes' having the suitable conditions for the development of fisheries and tourism, particularly water tourism, which has an impact on the development of the Bay communes.

Commune self-governments differ in their assessment of the situation of fisheries and fishermen. Irrespective of this assessment, fishing ports in the communes have undergone either complete (Stepnica, Nowe Warpno) or partial (Police, Międzyzdroje) communalization.

Research results indicate that each of the surveyed communes declared their willingness of supporting fisheries. The most commonly offered kind of help involved advisory support. Only the communes of Nowe Warpno and Stepnica offered financial support to the fishermen by showing a flexible approach towards the adjustment of the lease fees of the fishing port facilities and property tax amounts. Some of the communes also supported tourist activity related to fisheries. The authorities of Stepnica, Police, Wolin and Nowe Warpno held annual sports and cultural events which were to promote the region and sustain its historical and cultural values.

In 2009 the financial situation of the communes significantly improved as a result of reimbursing by the Maritime Office in Szczecin of the tax on communal lands located under the waters of the Szczecin Bay. With the provided financial means, local authorities were able to prepare and pre-finance projects allowing them to apply for the EU co-financing of infrastructural development projects and other needs connected with tourism and fisheries.

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DZIAŁANIA WŁADZ LOKALNYCH WE WSPIERANIU RYBOŁÓWSTWA I TURYSTYKI ZALEWU SZCZECIŃSKIEGO

Streszczenie. Gminy zlokalizowane nad Zalewem Szczecińskim nie wspierały dostatecznie rybołówstwa i turystyki pomimo dobrych warunków do ich rozwoju. Wyniki badań ankietowych oraz wywiadów pogłębionych przeprowadzonych w latach 2008–2010 wskazują, że władze lokalne stopniowo skomunalizowały porty rybackie, oferowały rybakom pomoc doradcą. Ponadto wykazywały elastyczność w podejściu do opłat czynszu dzierżawnego za użytkowanie portu rybackiego oraz podatku od nieruchomości. Brak lub niewielkie wsparcie wynikały częściowo z niedostatecznej znajomości przez władze problemów a częściowo z braku finansowych środków na utrzymanie portów, na niezbędne inwestycje infrastrukturalne oraz inne potrzeby rozwojowe. Od 2009 roku Urząd Morski zaczął przekazywać gminom podatek od gruntów komunalnych znajdujących się pod wodami Zalewu Szczecińskiego, co znacznie poprawiło sytuację finansową gmin. Mając środki na przygotowanie i prefinansowanie projektów, gminy mogły zacząć ubiegać się o środki unijne na rozwój infrastruktury i inne wydatki związane z rozwojem turystyki i rybołówstwa.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój gospodarczy, samorząd lokalny

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