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**COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN PROGRAMMES  
AND PROJECTS WITHIN THE REGIONAL POLICY.  
THE CASE OF THE ŁÓDZKIE VOIVODSHIP**

**Summary:** The effectiveness of the measures implemented under the EU cohesion policy has become a significant issue. The relevance of the topic is undeniable, given the ongoing discussion of the results of public interventions conducted at the EU level, and the resulting concept of an integrated approach used to study the effects of actions undertaken within the cohesion policy. Based on various studies conducted to date, the authors argue that the effectiveness of the funds allocated in Polish regions could be greater if we focused more on complementarity of the undertaken actions. The paper concentrates on issues related to complementarity between programmes and projects implemented under the EU Cohesion Policy in Polish regions. A case study of a Polish region – namely, Łódzkie<sup>1</sup> – shows that the adopted methods and tools, intended to ensure complementarity, do not work in a proper way. The results suggest the existence of severe restrictions of assessing the actual scope of complementarity and the resulting synergy effects. As both analyses of documentation and in-depth participant interviews indicate that the concept of complementarity in the projects is misunderstood or deliberately distorted (so that the highest score during the application stage can be obtained), it can be stated that the scale of complementarity is far from satisfactory. Based on their research, the authors make conclusions and recommendations regarding the solutions that should be taken into account in order to improve the implementation of the complementarity concept in the next financial perspective for the years 2014–2020.

**Keywords:** complementarity, synergy effects, EU cohesion policy, effectiveness of public intervention.

**KOMPLEMENTARNOŚĆ PROGRAMÓW I PROJEKTÓW  
REALIZOWANYCH W RAMACH POLITYKI REGIONALNEJ.  
STUDIUM PRZYPADKU WOJEWÓDZTWA ŁÓDZKIEGO**

**Streszczenie:** Tocząca się na poziomie Unii Europejskiej dyskusja o wynikach interwencji publicznych oraz przyjęcie koncepcji zintegrowanego podejścia do badania efektów działań podejmowanych w ramach polityki spójności sprawiają, że poszukiwanie mechanizmów podwyższających skuteczność programów i projektów współfinansowanych ze środków unijnych nabiera coraz większego znaczenia. Na podstawie wyników wcześniejszych badań autorzy twierdzą, że skutecz-

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<sup>1</sup> The present research was conducted as part of the „Evaluation of the internal and external complementarity of Łódzkie Voivodship Regional Operational Programme” project, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund in the framework of the Technical Assistance Regional Operational Programme. The project was carried out in 2011; [http://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/wyniki/documents/ocena\\_komplementarnosci\\_wew\\_i\\_zew\\_rpo\\_wl\\_27022013.pdf](http://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/wyniki/documents/ocena_komplementarnosci_wew_i_zew_rpo_wl_27022013.pdf).

ność interwencji publicznych jest większa przy zapewnieniu komplementarności podejmowanych działań. Artykuł porusza więc problematykę komplementarności programów i projektów realizowanych w ramach polityki spójności UE na poziomie regionalnym Polski. Studium przypadku jednego polskiego regionu – województwa łódzkiego – pokazuje, że przyjęte metody i narzędzia, które powinny zapewnić komplementarność, nie działają we właściwy sposób. Wyniki przeprowadzonych badań wskazują na istnienie poważnych ograniczeń w ocenie rzeczywistego stopnia komplementarności i wynikających z niej efektów synergii. Zarówno wyniki analiz dokumentacji, jak i wypowiedzi osób biorących udział w wywiadach pogłębionych sygnalizują, że komplementarność projektów jest mylnie pojmowana lub świadomie wypaczana (w celu uzyskania jak największej liczby punktów na etapie aplikowania), co powoduje, że komplementarność realizowanych projektów nie może zostać uznana za zadowalającą. Przeprowadzone badania umożliwiły autorom opracowanie wniosków i zaleceń odnośnie do rozwiązań, jakie powinny być zastosowane w celu poprawy wdrażania koncepcji komplementarności w kolejnej perspektywie finansowej UE (2014–2020).

**Słowa kluczowe:** komplementarność, efekt synergii, polityka spójności UE, efektywność interwencji publicznych.

## Introduction

One of the main goals of the EU cohesion policy is to speed up convergence between European regions by supporting socio-economic growth of the poorest entities. This goal is reflected in the EU budget for 2007–2013, where 81% of the funds have been allocated for convergence purposes. Poland has one of the greatest territorial disparities in terms of gross domestic product *per capita* among EU countries. Three types of disparity are evident: a gap between Warsaw and the rest of the country; rising disparities between large urban and rural areas; and a persistent gap between eastern and western Poland (see: Regional Development in Poland, Policy Brief, OECD 2008). There is still a significant (albeit systematically shrinking) gap between Poland as a country and the EU-15 members in terms of GDP level. Such disparities make Poland eligible to benefit from EU structural funds. In 2007–2013, of the EUR 67 billion-worth of EU cohesion policy funds, Poland was granted most support for projects developed within the regional policy. There are 16 Regional Operational Programmes whose purpose is to stimulate economic growth and overcome stagnation. EU financial aid to Polish regions is also provided within the Human Capital Operational Programmes, the Rural Development Programme (within Common Agricultural Policy), and programmes supporting cross-border cooperation. There are also investments co-financed from cohesion policy funds that are managed at the national level (mainly transport-infrastructure projects), located in all regions.

In this context, the effectiveness of all the implemented measures comes into question. According to a macroeconomic modelling projection, only the Development of Eastern Poland Operational Programme is expected to bring an increase of 1.38% in gross domestic product (GDP) as well as up to 13,610 new jobs annually, but the evaluation of the real impact of EU aid will be extremely difficult and should be undertaken in a long-term perspective. At this stage, the most important task is to ensure that the funds are allocated to projects with the greatest potential and provide the highest degree of complementarity among

them. In light of the research to date, the authors argue that the funds earmarked for Polish regions could be used more effectively if complementarity among the undertaken actions was greater. The degree of cohesion between the implemented projects, which could increase their impact on socio-economic development and thereby contribute to decreasing the distance to the European regions of higher growth, is far too insufficient.

The significance of the topic and its relevance is undeniable given the ongoing discussion of the results of public interventions conducted at the EU level, and of an integrated approach to the study of effects of the actions undertaken within the Cohesion Policy. The aim of this article is to reflect on the nature of complementarity, its role and the mechanisms provided to ensure its presence in projects implemented with use of EU funds on the regional level. In addition to theoretical considerations, the authors present the results of empirical research concerning the implementation of the complementarity concept in a Polish region—namely, Łódzkie. Within the case study analyses, the authors tried to respond to the following fundamental questions:

- What is the degree of complementarity of the different programmes and projects implemented in the Łódzkie region?
- Is the complementarity volunteered or rather casual?
- Is complementarity really important for the beneficiaries of EU funds?
- What do regional government leaders do to ensure complementarity of their projects?
- What mechanisms and tools are provided by implementation institutions to enhance complementarity of different programmes and projects?

Research tools adopted in the case study include the analysis of statistical data, evaluation reports, literature, and qualitative survey results (interviews with representatives of selected local governments and regional institutions gathered *via* the evaluation research project financed by the Marshal's Office of the Łódzkie Voivodship).

The theoretical analysis and empirical results led the authors to conclude that it was necessary to ensure special mechanisms and measures that provide complementarity of programmes and projects co-financed by the EU and implemented in regions. Final comments and recommendations may be useful for planning assumptions for the implementation frames of regional operational programmes for the 2014–2020 period.

### **Complementarity as a tool increasing the efficiency of EU cohesion policy**

The original definition of complementarity seems to have been borrowed from microeconomy, where complementary goods are contrasted with competitive goods. In the case of complementary goods, owning one of them generates demand for another, and the possession of the second constitutes an indispensable condition for using the first one (or largely broadens the range of its use).

Complementarity, in its most basic sense, is defined in public policies as a mutual complementation of deliberately undertaken activities, achieved through

the directing of a support stream towards their implementation in order to solve a given problem more effectively or attain an objective at a local, regional, supra-regional, or national level (Ministry of Regional Development n.d., p. 3). Complementarity can have various dimensions (spatial, functional, or historical), and the mutual impact between projects can include one or two poles (project A strengthens the effects of project B or projects A and B jointly create added value).

In terms of structural funds, complementarity is understood in a similar manner. The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRO) indicates that operational programmes have been prepared in such a way that they should mutually supplement the measures to be undertaken (Ministry of Regional Development 2007, p. 97). Yet at the same time, it seems that complementarity helps avoid paying twice for a similar undertaking. Consequently, when it comes to the notion of complementarity, operational programmes often point only to the areas of potential risks in financing the same project and its exclusion. Nevertheless, in the context of a search for tools to increase the efficiency of a cohesion policy, it seems reasonable to assume a narrower, positive definition of complementarity—namely, one closely related to the produced synergy effect (see: Ministry of Regional Development n.d., p. 3).

The notion of ‘synergy effects’ is crucial to understand why complementarity of programmes and projects co-financed by the EU funds is so important and how it works. The concept of synergy was introduced in 1964 by H. I. Ansoff, who presented it in the context of companies’ performance. To define ‘synergy’, he used the concept of ROI (Return on Investment): synergy therefore means ‘ $1 + 1 > 2$ ’. He proved that a company’s value as a whole is greater than a simple sum of the values of its components. Suszyński points out that the synergy effect consists in the maximization of positive results through the joint and simultaneous usage of available resources and methods of the activity in configurations assuring them mutual stimulating and strengthening (Suszyński 1992). Generally, a synergic effect can be defined as the difference between the total effect of the action of a set of cooperating objects, and the sum of individual effects these objects would be able to gain by operating separately (Krzyżanowski 1994). It can be represented with a simple formula proposed by Nowicka-Skowron (2000):

$$E_S = E_{TEA} - E_{IEA}$$

where:

$E_S$  – synergy effect,

$E_{TEA}$  – joint effect of acting of a set of elements who cooperate with each other,

$E_{IEA}$  – sum of individual effects possible to reach by elements operating individually.

Of course, the estimation of the range of synergy effect requires solid comparative analyses. However, it is worth stressing that in most publications concerning complementarity, it is assumed that the occurrence of synergy effects leads to greater effectiveness of activities undertaken together.

Complementarity constitutes one of the key principles governing the implementation of community policies and serves to fulfil the established developmental objectives. The need to ensure the complementarity of interventions within the cohesion policy is emphasized in all programme documents and legislative acts at every level of structural-fund management. An approach focused on complementarity and cohesion complies with Article 9 of the General Regulation (Council Regulation 2006), which obligates Poland and other member states to maintain the complementarity of support funds with other financial instruments of the community. Complementarity is highlighted in the community's strategic cohesion guidelines, the National Strategic Reference Framework, and the documentation for each operational programme.

The significance of complementarity results from the fact that its successful implementation in the community's measures, policies, and programmes helps enhance the synergic impact but prevents financing the same undertakings twice. Therefore, additional outcomes can be multiplied with unchanged resources, ultimately resulting in an increased efficiency of public interventions.

A number of publications have underscored the importance of ensuring the maximum complementarity of measures conducted under the cohesion policy. The need to introduce programmes and projects designed to strengthen innovative potential is also argued by T. Grosse, who points out that the promotion of complementarity should become a new paradigm of the EU's cohesion policy (Grosse 2009). A similar statement was made by a group of experts who investigated the problems of synergy of different programmes and instruments implemented under the Lisbon Strategy. In the final report, they stressed that, „in order to achieve synergies, in general terms, ways have to be found to strengthen the commonalities and ‘bridge’ the differences, e.g., by adapting the rules between the two frameworks and/or by aligning their orientations in order to increase their compatibility and interoperability and strengthen their complementarity.” To achieve this goal, it is necessary to organize the synergies of financial instruments, to improve information and communication about possible ways of combining different funding instruments and the use of complementary funding (Van Vught et al. 2011, p. 14). Barca, in his meta-evaluation study on determinants of the effectiveness of the EU cohesion policy, emphasized the special role of integrated and completed intervention. He quoted the results of a previous evaluation report in which, among the four main bottlenecks to the efficient absorption of funds and their effective outcomes, it was highlighted that „an administrative rather than strategic management of the interventions (led) to a lack of synergies with other initiatives” (Barca 2009).

The importance of complementarity of different policies and actions is repeatedly stressed in documents and statements issued by various EU institutions. In the Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on complementarities and coordination of the cohesion policy with rural development measures, it is stated that „it is of key importance to the EAFRD's success to ensure mutual complementarity between activities co-financed under the EAFRD and those co-financed under the structural funds, and thus for the assistance under the various funds, in

particular the European Fund for Regional Development, the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund, to be suitably coordinated and for the complementarity of those funds to be ensured” (European Parliament 2009). The Committee of the Regions argued that, to have a more significant impact on regional cohesion and competitiveness, measures aimed at reducing economic, social, and territorial disparities must be based on coherent actions. Guaranteeing that national and EU interventions are truly complementary becomes a serious challenge for the next implementation period (Committee of the Regions 2012).

Taking into account the discussion thus far, the institutions involved in the implementation of the cohesion policy should focus on actions that could ensure maximum complementarity of programmes and projects on all levels: European, national, regional, and local.

### **Types of complementarity**

The existing literature offers many classifications of complementarity types. One of the sources suggests the following division into territorial, historical, and functional complementarity:

- (1) Territorial complementarity concerns the correlation between projects implemented in the same territory.
- (2) Historical complementarity concerns the correlation between projects implemented in different periods, but relating to the same goal.
- (3) Functional complementarity concerns projects interrelated on an objective and substantive basis (see: PSDB 2010, p. 32).

The division—and therefore the point of differentiating between territorial, historical, and functional categories—can be called into question because ultimately the functional correlation always turns out to be necessary, whereas territorial concentration is only an exceptional case in which it can be obtained, just as complementary projects do not have to be implemented simultaneously. However, these deliberations show two important aspects: first, complementarity is based on a common objective; second, it only involves related projects. The relationship can be physical (e.g., tourist attractions with accommodation and catering facilities that are conveniently interconnected), in which case territorial proximity will indeed be useful; or abstract and virtual.

Such an analysis can be compared to the conclusions of research on PO RPW (Development of Eastern Poland Operational Programme [Weremiuk et al. 2009, p. 20]), according to which complementarity can be assessed in terms of:

- Location in space (e.g., road projects as sections of a single large transport corridor)—spatial complementarity; or
- Substantive scope (e.g., projects in the field of telecommunications infrastructure complemented by training projects on the use of the Internet)—objective complementarity.

Furthermore, from the perspective of various levels of the EU funds management, the following types of complementarity can be distinguished: between periods/within one period, between policies/within one policy, between funds/within

one fund, between programmes/within one programme, between priorities/within one priority, between measures/within one measure, and between projects/within one project. Obviously, these categories are not separate, so inter-period complementarity can coexist with inter-programme complementarity. In fact, this list serves to demonstrate that measures aimed at ensuring complementarity of projects have to cover all levels and, consequently, be conducted in many stages of structural-fund management.

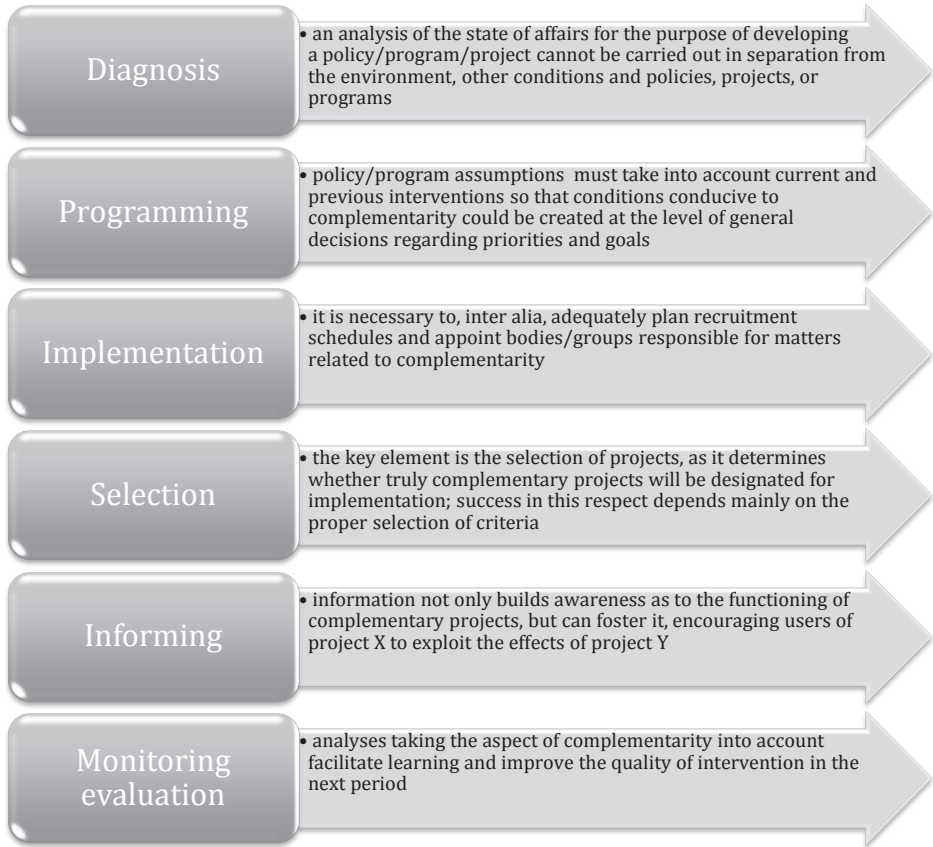


Fig. 1. Provision of complementarity and the stages of managing an operational programme

Source: Kupiec, Wojtowicz, Kościelecki 2011.

The above-mentioned typologies should not all be treated as competitive, but rather as providing a variety of perspectives on the issue of complementarity.

In the context of the above, the examination of the ways the concept of complementarity is actually implemented may provide interesting conclusions. As I. Otolá states, the main problem with the determination and estimation of the effects of synergy is related to the choice of the kinds of estimations. Thus, to

study the real synergic effects resulting from implementing a given project, the application of the ex-post analysis is needed (Otola 2007, p. 70).

To answer some basic question regarding the practical implementation of complementarity, the authors analyzed the case of the Łódzkie region. They tried to determine whether the projects that were granted EU funds were complementary and therefore potentially liable to generate positive synergies. The study mainly explored complementarity understood as a mutual complementing or supplementing of individual projects as well as mutual strengthening and intensifying of the effects of projects aimed at attaining a similar objective or fulfilling the same function. Such a definition served as the basis for the analysis of actual complementarity at the level of implemented projects. It has to be stressed that the authors concentrated on examining complementarity and not on estimating the size of synergy effects, which should be done by adopting comparative studies of alternative variations (Suszyński 1992). Such studies have to be undertaken on the level of each intervention, while in the present study, the authors' interests were focused on mechanisms that should provide complementarity. The estimation of the size of synergy effect – an extremely important issue in the context of examining the effectiveness of EU Regional Policy – should be an inherent element of ex-post project evaluations.

The following graph presents the methodological assumptions adopted to examine the real complementarity in the studied region.

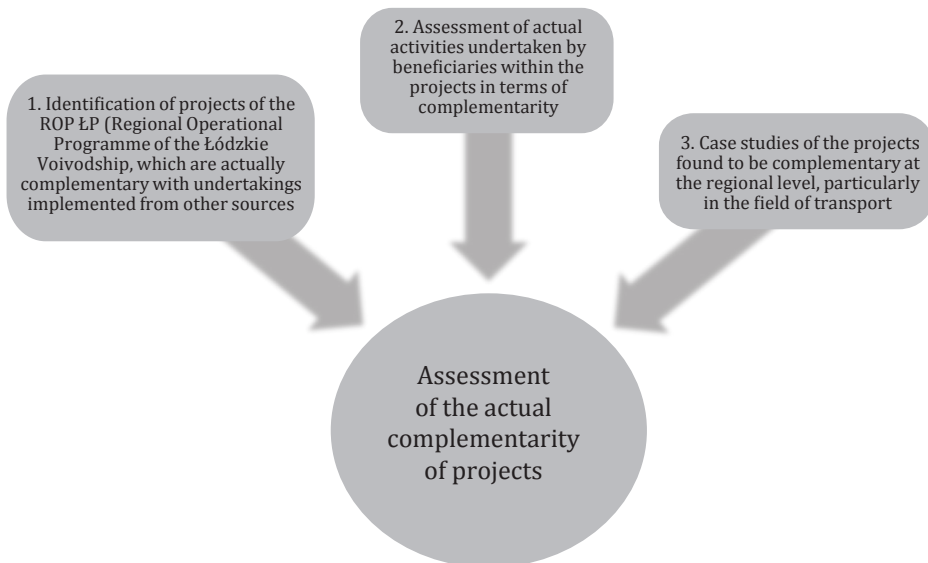


Fig. 2. The scheme of the study on actual complementarity

Source: Authors.



### Real complementarity of programmes and projects – the results of the Łódzkie Voivodship case study

In addition to projects implemented as part of the ROP ŁV, the Łódzkie Voivodship launches projects within all sectoral operational programmes available.

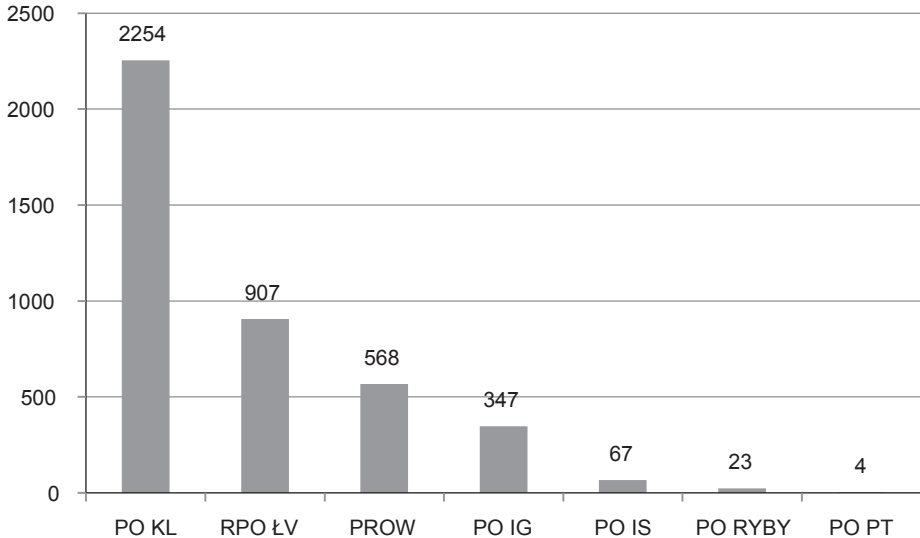


Fig. 3. Number of projects implemented in the Łódzkie Voivodship under respective operational programmes (as of June 2011)<sup>2</sup>

Source: Authors.

Complementarity of the projects implemented under the ROP ŁV has been assessed by means of various research tools so as to provide the broadest possible picture of the issues discussed. In the first stage, the analysis covered experts' assessments of project applications, focusing on the general criterion of complementarity. In total, 64% of all application fiches have been analyzed ( $n = 585$ ;  $N = 907$ ) for projects implemented within the ROP ŁV, and they received an average score from two forms; the average value of the scores given by three experts was calculated in the case of only 12 projects.

<sup>2</sup> PO KL = HC OP (Human Capital Operational Programme); RPO WŁ = ROP ŁV (Regional Operational Programme of the Łódzkie Voivodship); PROW = The Programme for the Development of Rural Areas; PO IG = IE OP (Innovative Economy Operational Programme); PO IS = IE OP (Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme); PO RYBY = Operational Programme „Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector and Coastal Fishing Areas”; PO PT = TA OP (Technical Assistance Operational Programme).

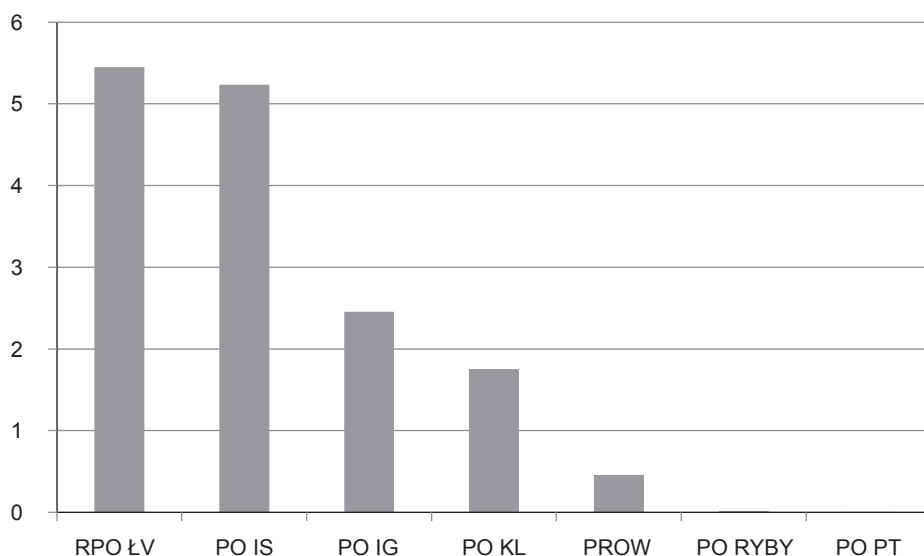


Fig. 4. Total value of projects implemented in the Łódzkie Voivodship under respective operational programs (in PLN billion)

Source: Authors.

The results of the analyses suggest that the experts' assessments of the complementarity criterion during the substantive evaluation of projects are highly diverse. The majority of projects received 3 points on average (on a scale from 0 to 4; 28.6% of all projects analyzed). What needs to be emphasized is the fact that nearly 1% of the examined applications received an average score of 0.5 or 0 points.

The projects whose complementarity was positively assessed (3 or more points) comprise fewer than half of all undertakings that received financing from EU funds in a regional programme. Thus, it can be stated that the degree of complementarity in almost every second project has been assessed as high or very high.

The next stage of the analysis involved an additional evaluation of the projects whose complementarity was assessed as high (an average score of at least 3 points) by the experts in the previous stage. The projects selected for analysis ( $n = 135$ ) correspond proportionally to the number of applications whose complementarity was positively assessed, within particular measures. Thus, they do not constitute a representative sample of the entire programme. The results are presented in the following diagram.

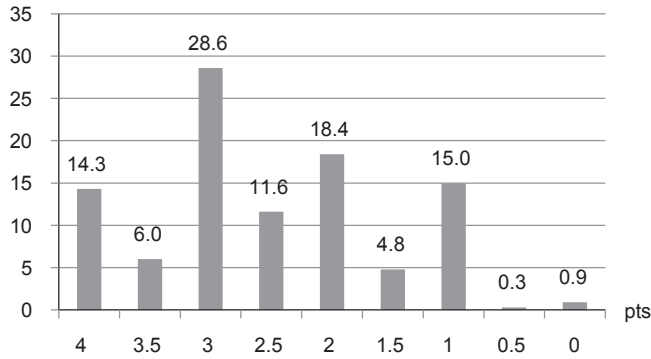


Fig. 5. Average value of complementarity assessments made by the experts—members of the Competition Board (as a percentage of all examined applications)

Source: Authors.

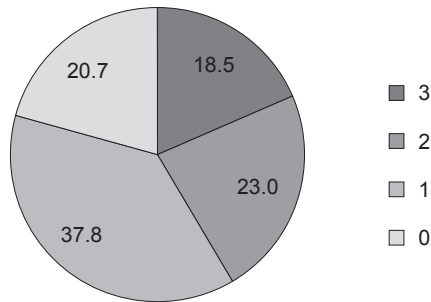


Fig. 6. Assessment of the degree of complementarity of the projects selected for an in-depth analysis, presented by percentage (n = 135; assessment scale 0–3)

Source: Authors.

The results presented in Fig. 6 indicate that potential complementarity of the projects implemented under the ROP LV, determined on the basis of interrelation leading to better effects of implemented undertakings, is significantly lower than the value that follows from the assessment of complementarity made on the basis of the criteria adopted by the Marshal's Office. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that inadequate tools for complementarity assessment are selected at the stage of application verification. Another problem with a thorough complementarity assessment is insufficient description of the type and nature of complementarity in the grant application. Beneficiaries often only list the projects they consider complementary to the main project, stating that „the projects complement each other in the implementation of established goals”.

Interesting conclusions derive from an analysis of a case study for the project entitled „The provision of transport access to an entrepreneurship area and facilities of ‘The Land without Barriers’ in the town and commune of Poddębice”. The undertaking, for which the beneficiary received a subsidy, involved the renova-

tion of several sections of commune roads. The complementary projects indicated by the beneficiary in the application included other investments carried out under a broader programme entitled „The Land without Barriers”, and aimed at providing Poddebice and its neighbouring areas with more favourable conditions for economic development, connected with the promotion of the tourism sector (intended for the disabled and persons requiring rehabilitation). Yet complementarity between the projects was not shown to be direct (it can be regarded as complementarity of the second or even third degree), which results from the location of the roads renovated under the project: they do not reach any of the investment sites covered by the „The Land without Barriers” programme, nor do they directly improve tourist access to Poddebice. After the renovation, they reduce the traffic burden on the voivodship road No 703, which serves as a transport route connecting the A2 motorway and the centre of Poddebice. According to the beneficiary, all investments improving the condition of the commune’s infrastructure have a broader objective (i.e., to improve the conditions for the development of the tourism sector), and this testifies to their complementarity. It seems impossible to determine the degree of complementarity, as indicated in the application, without locating the roads on the map of Poddebice. Thus, a question arises: to what extent are the experts assessing complementarity able to estimate the actual cohesion of projects that involve the modernization of road infrastructure?

#### The characteristics of existing types of complementarity of RPO ŁV

The types of complementarity have been categorized into the following levels:

- Interdependence at the level of projects implemented within the same measure;
- Interdependence at the level of various measures, but within the same priority of the ROP ŁV;
- Interdependence at the level of various priorities, but within the ROP ŁV;
- Interdependence at the level of various funds, but within the same policy (e.g., ESF, ERDF within the cohesion policy);
- Interdependence at the level of various policies (e.g., common agricultural policy, cohesion policy); and
- Interdependence at the level of various programmes, but within the same fund and policy.

The first three types of interdependence can be classified as internal complementarity, whereas the other three are external complementarity.

The results of the analyses suggest that the most common type of complementarity is interdependence at the programme level, which was observed in 42% of all examined complementary projects. This means that projects classified as complementary are implemented within various (other than ROP ŁV) operational programmes. Nearly one in four complementary projects involved interdependence at the level of funds, so the projects classified as complementary were financed from various funds, but within the same policy. Complementarity arising from implementation of projects within various policies was found in 16% of cases. The least represented group comprised complementary projects, whose

interdependence related to projects implemented within the same measure, priority, but different priorities of the ROP LV (interdependence at these three levels was observed in almost 18% of the analyzed projects). Taking these results into consideration, it should be stated that the complementarity of projects launched as part of the ROP LV is largely external in nature, rather than internal, the latter being identified in only 12% of the analyzed projects.

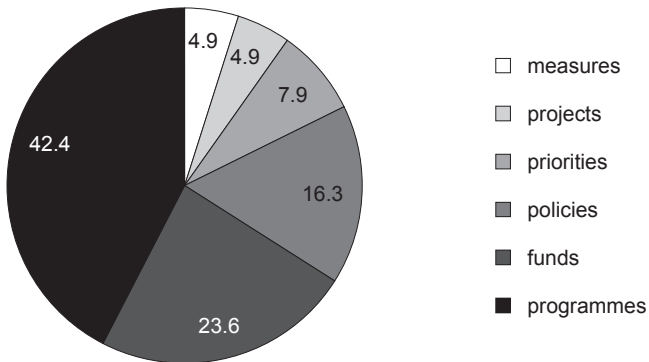


Fig. 7. Types of complementarity of the ROP LV projects and projects classified as complementary, presented by percentage

Source: Authors.

Another analyzed aspect was the direction of mutual impact between projects classified as complementary. Three possible directions were identified:

- 1) A project implemented under the ROP LV produces the desired effects if a project indicated in the application as complementary is also implemented;
- 2) A project indicated in the application as complementary produces the desired effects if a project implemented under the ROP LV is implemented; and
- 3) A project implemented under the ROP LV and a project indicated in the application as complementary complement each another and increase their effects.

Differences in the occurrence of these types of impact have been found to be relatively insignificant. In the majority of cases, the effects of a project implemented under the ROP LV depended on the effects of a project indicated as complementary in the application (39%). Interdependencies based on project complementarity, which led to mutual strengthening of their effects, had almost equal proportions. The third direction of impact, i.e. effectiveness of a complementary project depending on a project implemented under the ROP LV as a result of implementation of the latter, is the least frequent case (22% of projects). Such a situation can arise due to insufficient information from the project-implementing entity on the undertakings launched by other institutions (as was observed in the case of road works carried out by higher-level local governments that did not classify projects conducted by communes as complementary).

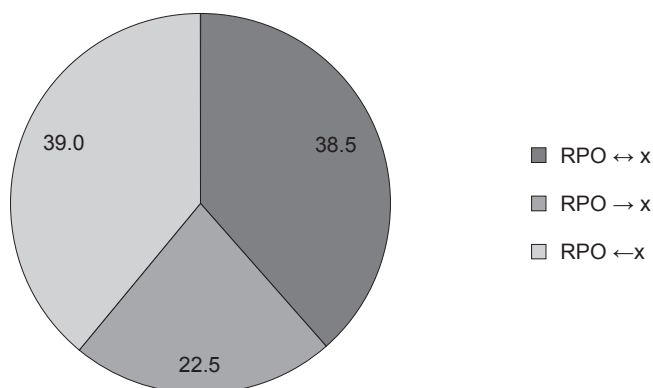


Fig. 8. Directions of impact of complementary projects, presented by percentage<sup>3</sup>

Source: Authors.

### Functional complementarity

In the current analysis, fewer than 30% of projects classified as complementary are functionally (objectively) so.

In relatively few cases, complementarity involves the implementation of so-called „soft” (non-investment) projects, financed under the HC OP (Human Capital Operational Programme) or the SOP HRD (Sectoral Operational Programme—Human Resources Development). It would be interesting to analyze the reason for such a small number of soft projects among complementary projects in relation to undertakings implemented within the ROP ŁV. This question is even more justified when one considers that 2,254 HC OP projects were launched in the Łódzkie Voivodship.<sup>4</sup>

The results of in-depth analyses of case studies suggest that beneficiaries might skip projects whose interdependence consists in their complementarity. For instance, during a phone interview, a respondent—who represented a beneficiary implementing the project „Providing additional equipment to the mechatronic laboratory in the Łódź Centre for Teacher Improvement and Practical Training”—listed projects financed from the HC OP that were undoubtedly complementary to the one in question, but not included in the application. The project „Agrotourism inside out!” was also excluded from the application, although it was complementary to the one entitled „Improving transport accessibility between the communes of the Skierniewice District, along with auxiliary infrastructure”. The main objective of a project implemented in 2010–2011 under Measure VI.3 Local initiatives for the employment activation in rural areas, within HC OP, was to enhance the district residents’ occupational and social development by improving their qualifications and skills required to set up and run an agrotourism farm. A road project carried out as part of the ROP ŁV improved transport accessibility in a part of

<sup>3</sup> RPO = Regional Operational Programme.

<sup>4</sup> According to data delivered by the Marshal’s Office of Łódzkie Voivodship, as of 30 June 2011.

the district, where—following the „Agrotourism inside out!” project—new agrotourism farms are to be established. Furthermore, the road project involves the construction of bicycle paths that will expand and supplement current bicycle routes, and make this form of recreation in the district more attractive. This in turn may lead to an increase in the number of tourists who will make use of the services offered by the agrotourism farms and generate their income. It is worth mentioning that the beneficiary in both these projects was the same entity: the Skierniewice District.

### The assumptions of complementarity in the application documentation

The interviews and case studies conducted as part of evaluation provide a solid basis for the conclusion that, for the majority of the analyzed projects, descriptions of complementarity included in the applications are consistent with their actual nature.

In several cases, a lack of complementarity (although indicated during the application stage) resulted from a discontinuation of planned projects (beneficiaries usually explain it as a failure to obtain financing for which they applied in various programmes). If a project is discontinued, its complementarity effects might be either weakened/reduced or even completely eliminated. The latter situation involves projects characterized by first-degree complementarity, whereby their mutual impact is either bilateral, or the effects of the complementary project strengthen the effects of the main project. Such interdependencies are most evident in road projects, as confirmed by one of the respondents: „Our assumptions were correct; however, since some projects have not been completed, we could not get the effect of complementarity. Due to a lack of connection, the projects are non-cohesive, so our only tangible achievement is the length of the roads constructed.”

The beneficiaries pointed out that some projects that they saw as complementary were not cohesive with the main project. They tended to list every possible project implemented by a given beneficiary or whose spatial or objective scope approximated the planned undertaking. They adopted the „won’t hurt, but can help” attitude in order to „boost” their chances of receiving high scores for the complementarity criterion during the substantial evaluation stage.

### The complementarity of projects aimed at developing and modernizing road infrastructure

In general, the analyses suggest that complementarity of projects implemented under Measure I.1 of the ROP ŁV, „Roads”, helps to expand and modernize the region’s road network. In their plans for road development, the beneficiaries take into account the largest road investments in the region—namely, the construction of the A2 motorway and the modernization of national roads forming the basic transport network in the voivodship. Specifications included in the application documents concerned major transport routes and emphasized their role as con-

nectors of lower-class roads with voivodship and national routes. Yet the complementarity of road projects can be somewhat limited, as local-government authorities and institutions responsible for road supervision are often concerned with the technical condition of the road surfaces and the resulting urgent need for repairs. Therefore, they do not devote enough attention to the optimal complementing of road-improvement projects within a given area, including both those that are still in progress and those that have already been completed.

In the case of road projects implemented under the ROP LV, the beneficiaries often mentioned (apart from spatial complementarity) their projects' objective complementarity, usually concerning undertakings in the field of tourism development and entrepreneurship support. In the case of the former, road repairs along a given section enhance the effects of investments that facilitate access to attractive tourist facilities and areas (monuments, tourist trails, etc.). The latter type of projects, due to improved transport accessibility, creates conditions that are more conducive to starting and running a business. As previously mentioned, relevant bodies at the district and voivodship levels are not always aware of the complementarity of their projects in relation to projects launched by communes in which a given road is located. Such a situation was observed in two case studies performed within the framework of the evaluation study.

An almost model example of combining funds from various sources for the purpose of creating a cohesive transport route is the project entitled „Improving transport accessibility between the communes of the Skierniewice District, along with auxiliary infrastructure”. The overall objective of the project was to improve transport accessibility of the Skierniewice District and, therefore, all of the Łódzkie Voivodship. This investment was intended to improve the standard of living for the residents of the Skierniewice and Żyrardów Districts, broaden access to investment areas serving public benefit, and provide conditions for the development of innovation- and tourism-related businesses. The project involved a systemic reconstruction of the surfaces of district and commune roads within the Skierniewice District, along with their auxiliary infrastructure (bicycle and pedestrian paths, car parks, etc.). In the project, 13 km of district roads and 7 km of commune roads were reconstructed; along their length, 1 km of bicycle paths was built.

All those projects (implemented by various entities, using funds from various sources) are complementary because together they make up a consistent communication route that bypasses Skierniewice. Each of the reconstructed road segments shortens travel time. However, the profit from the implementation of all the projects consists in something more than just the time saved by drivers (synergy effect). Implementation of all projects resulted in the creation of its kind since the ring road – which is now used by drivers to bypass the city of Skierniewice. If any one of the road sections had been left unmodernized, the bypass would be much less attractive and useful.



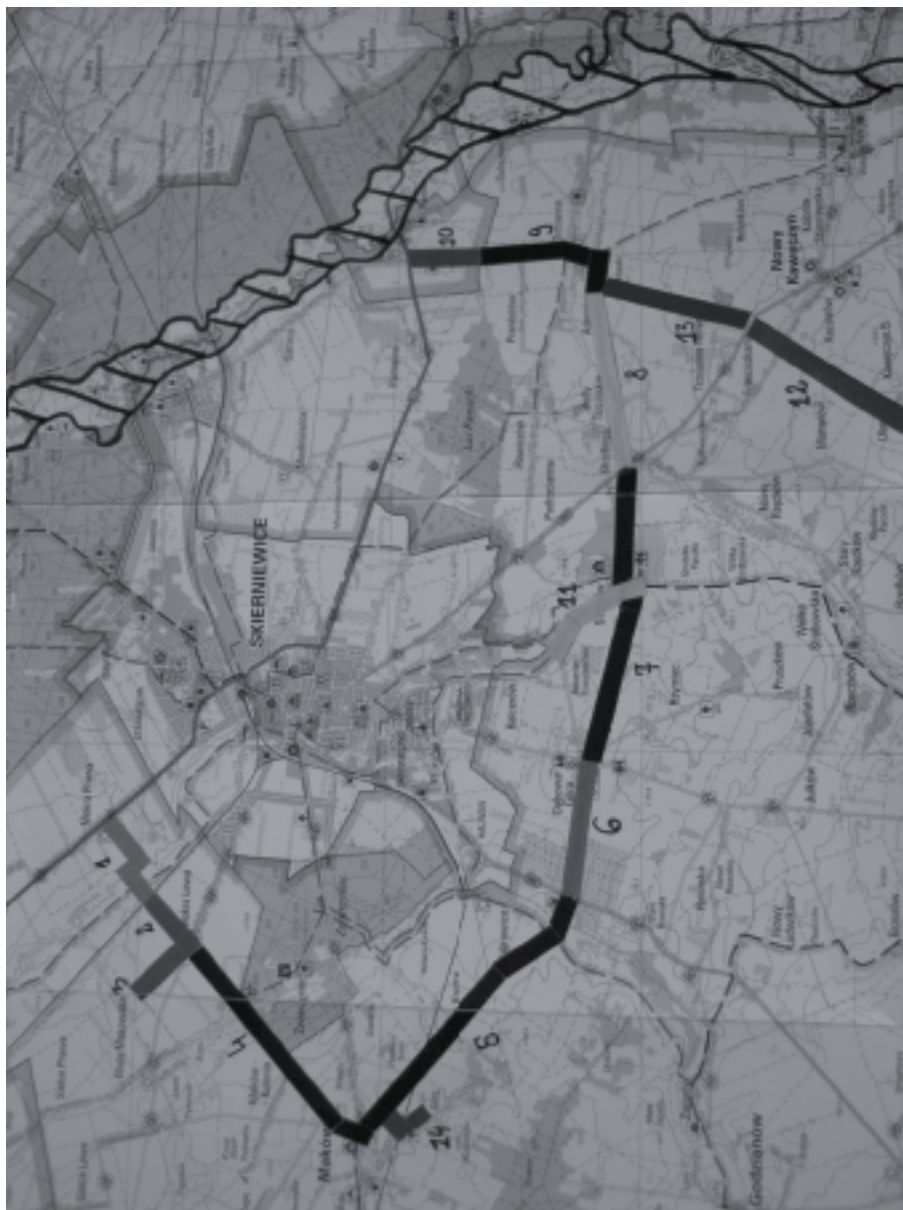


Fig. 9. Graphic presentation of road sections renovated under the project „Improving transport accessibility between the communes of the Skiernewice District, along with auxiliary infrastructure” and complementary projects

Source: Authors.

The road sections marked as 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 14 were redeveloped as part of the project within the Regional Operational Programme of the Łódzkie Voivodship; sections 6 and 13 – within the National Plan of Local Roads

Improvement 2008–2011; and sections 1, 8, and 10 were financed by the local governments of the Skierniewice Commune, the Skierniewice District, and the Żyrardów District.

## Conclusions and recommendations

It seems unquestionable that complementarity increases the efficiency of public undertakings. Various assessments and evaluations show that one of the barriers limiting positive results of interventions co-financed from EU funds is the insufficient degree of mutual complementarity of programmes and projects that should be guaranteed in both the planning and implantation phases at all levels (European, national, regional, and local). Complementarity stimulates and enhances synergic impact while excluding the risk of financing of the same projects twice. In order to ensure greater efficiency and better performance of specified objectives, it is necessary to strengthen mechanisms that serve the implementation of cohesive and complementary projects.

It is important to acknowledge that complementarity can maximize the results of public interventions and that, as indicated above, mechanisms ensuring the highest possible degree of complementarity should serve as the basis for a new paradigm of cohesion policy. This is especially vital in the context of the next programming period for the Cohesion Policy 2014–2020.

Given the results of the study on the actual complementarity of projects implemented under the ROP ŁV, it is rather impossible to determine once and for all whether the recorded level of complementarity is acceptable and whether it ensures higher efficiency of activities co-financed from EU funds. The analyses suggest that assessments of actual degree of complementarity and the resulting synergy effects meet with severe restrictions. As the analyses of documentation and of in-depth participant interviews indicate that project complementarity is misunderstood or deliberately distorted (to obtain the highest score during the application stage), it can be concluded that the scale of complementarity is far from satisfactory.

In order to increase this scale, it is necessary to reorganize the scoring system for this criterion at the application-verification stage, to inform beneficiaries about complementarity so that they are able to identify correctly specific effects resulting from project complementarity, and—finally—to promote projects that could potentially aid in the implementation of smaller complementary projects (e.g., building a broadband Internet network could support IT projects in public administration and companies).

However, the case study shows that it is not in the interest of funds' beneficiaries to ensure complementarity between different projects. At the application stage, they claim complementarity which does not exist in reality, in order to gain points and get financing for their project. It is the role of Managing Authorities to assure that co-financed projects are complementary to each other and therefore liable to produce positive synergy effects. The best way to achieve this would be to implement integrated projects whose ex-ante evaluation would consist in solid

assessment of potential synergy effects. Of course, this requires – as mentioned earlier in this article – the development and dissemination of comparative methodology for estimating synergy effects of planned projects. Managing Authorities should also focus on estimating the size of the synergy effects examined during ex-post evaluations by elaborating special guidelines and harmonized methodology for the next implementation period.

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