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### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS THE BASE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL OF THE NATURE VALUABLE AREAS**

*Main aim of this paper is to show that region with many protected areas is not only dependent on typical, not profitable activities, but can also attract high-tech branches. Sustainable development strategy should take this into consideration. The primary meaning has the need to adapt types of the business activity to specificity of the region. It is possible to indicate fields in which competitiveness can be increased. It concerns sustainable tourism, organic farming, high technology sector, "clean" technologies, alternative energetics etc.*

Keywords: sustainable development, strategy, nature valuable areas, business activity, regional development.

**Introduction.** An aspiration of Polish economy is to improve socio-economic development that will directly determine quality of social life. Particularly important is regional development. The socio-economic development depends on many different aspects. It is possible to distinguish: qualifications of the employers, the state of economic policy, the quality of production factors, the state of economic infrastructure, the structure of business activity and the level of innovation. It shows that development of the region is conditioned variously and multilaterally. The literature confirms that the natural environment is also one of the very important factors that can help in regional development. The region with the nature valuable areas, which for first are scarce and for second difficult to imitate, can also achieve competitiveness advantage.

**Problem statement.** Main problem taking up in this paper is low level of regional development in regions with many protected areas. The question is what determine regional development of the nature valuable region? What kind of activities can be a chance of this type of region, obviously activities that will not influence in negative way natural environment? The solution should be sustainable development. This type of development isn't only concentrating on the economic growth, but is also taking into account two more aspects: natural environment and a life quality of population.

**Analysis of recent studies.** Recent studies about sustainable development are showing that there are three variants of possible action in the context of this idea [1]:

1. Realization of sustainable development assumptions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the worldwide living standard would be balanced what would guarantee our civilization the further harmonious development.

2. Keeping the status quo in the economy and social relations. It would provoke increase in the unstable management of natural resources, pollutants rise, growing of social tensions, migration, unstable sociopolitical situation.

3. Accelerating the "processes of the unequal globalization", deepening the unstable world economy, the environmental degradation and social inequalities, both in the North countries, as well as between the North and the South countries. It would mean the slump of the economy and social relations.

One of definition given by World Commission on Environment and Development [2] is

characterized sustainable development as the “ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. According to Berlie Laurence Schwesinger [3] this sustainability involves a balancing of economic, ecological and social interests (i.e., the triple bottom line or TBL concept developed by the British consulting firm SustainAbility). The other definition (after European Commission Eurostat [4]) shows that sustainable development is an aspiration for assuring the better life quality of the current and future generations.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development improved the standard definition with the widely used three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The Johannesburg Declaration created a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development economic development, social development and environmental protection at local, national, regional and global levels [5].

M. Jacobs [6] characterized five main features of sustainable development: efficiency, fairness, the carrying capacities of the biosphere, life quality and participation. It means that state of the environment is as important as the other aspects like social and economic issues.

Sustainable development is a popular idea but it should be legitimate by law. From national point of view in Poland the main framework, elaborated by the government is a multidimensional strategy “Sustainable Development Strategy for Poland up to 2025” (Polska 2025) [7]. Due to its longterm perspective, sustainable development is perceived of as a process that allows for a gradual balancing of growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. This document has an open character – like a compass for the state and society – and is not narrowly concentrated upon some quantified objectives [8].

**Main aim of this paper** is to show that region with many protected areas is not only dependent on typical, not profitable activities, but can also attract high-tech branches. Sustainable development strategy should take this into consideration.

**Basic material.** In the recent time many communes in Poland following national documents also prepared local sustainable development strategies (LA-21). The implementation of LA-21 could be divided into three different categories [9]:

1. At the lowest level there is a lack of knowledge of LA-21. Sustainable development is contested as an idea, whilst environmental protection is seen as a barrier to economic development.
2. The second level limits the role of the Agenda to the issues of environmental protection. LA-21 is an environmental protection program as a part of local ecological or planning policy.
3. In those areas where Local Agenda 21 is at its highest level of implementation and its recommendations are a major consideration throughout the planning process. It has a clear effect on the environmental, economic, social and political policies of local government.

Local sustainable development strategy is not obligatory in Poland but it helps in many aspects. Sustainable development strategy for example is an advantage for the region with many nature valuable areas in acquiring the additional money from the European Union funds.

Research shows that the correctly formulated sustainable development strategy is taking into consideration economic restrictions resulting from the need to preserve of the nature valuable area. In particular it concerns regions with special natural advantages and a poorly developed industry.

At discussing the conception of sustainable development principles of the realization of this conception was introduced. Some of them are particularly essential from a perspective of valuable natural areas. To particularly important elements of the sustainable development from a perspective of such specific region it is possible to rank:

- protect land, ecosystems and use natural resources wisely;
- fit requirements of the environmental protection to special conditions of natural valuable area;
- socio-economic development with the respect of natural advantages of the natural valuable area;
- the local community active participation in the environmental problem solving;
- specificity of natural valuable area should be taken into account in the local documents.

These principles are emphasizing the need to take into consideration the natural environment in the business activities. Legal regulations are clearly determining forms of the business activity. Above all activities the large-industrial, intensive agricultural production and all forms of the business activities harmful for the environment are excluding. The primary importance has the need to fit types of the business activity to natural area conditions.

It is possible to divide forms of the business activity typical for protected areas in two groups. First – traditional – these forms are mentioned many times in literature as the typical business activity in regions with many protected areas (e.g. the organic farming or sustainable tourism). The second group is the business activity associated with the sector of high technologies. It should be stressed that the region with many protected areas is not only dependent on typical, not profitable activities, but also can attract high-tech branches.

Traditional forms of the business activity acceptable on natural valuable areas are mainly:

- an organic farming;
- a sustainable tourism and ecotourism;
- local craft, including the production from clay, wood, wickers, straws.

Organic agriculture is a form of agriculture that combines tradition and innovation to benefit environment and local society. It offers good quality products produced with ecological methods. Fruits, vegetables, milk, meat and eggs production in combination with clean technologies, the tradition, the knowledge and farmers experiencing can contribute to economically activations of underdeveloped natural valuable areas. At the bottom of the organic farming growth, apart from the necessity of the natural environment care, is increase in demand for healthy food. So far it is noticeable on foreign markets, where prices of ecological products are much higher than of remaining products. In Poland market of organic foodstuffs, in spite of predicted of his height, is still increasing. The first problem are higher prices compared with the conventional food. Therefore the market of ecological friendly products is narrowing to specialist shops, which are locating in large urban agglomerations. This situation discourages producers, which in the connection with the considerable distance from markets, need to use agents. As a result the price they receive for organic product is the same like for the traditional product. Only producers, which are providing health food shops directly receive higher prices.

Second form of the business activity acceptable on natural valuable areas is ecotourism. Definition The World Conservation Union (IUCN) states that *Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations* [10]. Principles of ecotourism are [11]:

- minimize the negative impacts on nature and culture that can damage a destination;
- educate the traveler on the importance of conservation;
- stress the importance on responsible business, which works cooperatively with local authorities and people to meet local needs and deliver conservation benefits;
- direct revenues to the conservation and management of natural and protected areas;

- emphasize the need for regional tourism zoning and for visitor management plans and designed for either regions or natural areas that are slated to become eco-destinations;
- emphasize use of environmental and social base-line studies, as well as long-term monitoring programs, to assess and minimize impacts;
- strive to maximize economic benefit for the host country, local business and communities, particularly peoples living in and adjacent to natural and protected areas;
- seek to ensure that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental limits of acceptable change as determined by researchers in cooperation with local residents;
- rely on infrastructure that has been developed in harmony with the environment, minimizing use of fossil fuels, conserving local plants and wildlife, and blending with the natural and cultural environment.

Business activity should not be narrowed to above mention forms. They are important and usually using on protected areas, but there should be implementing business activities associated with the sector of high technologies. High-tech branches are more profitable and can attract some investors, employers and stakeholders. Of course it is essential that all forms of activity should follow sustainable development principles.

It is possible to state that the specificity of the area is supporting development of above mentioned forms of the business activity. Those activities can influence socio-economic development of the region. The development of this kind of activity can be a specialty and a chance of areas with natural valuable environment. The example of such region is the north-east part of Poland.

Other forms of the business activity, which can be run without barriers on the nature valuable areas are:

1) the sector of high technology – enterprises from the sector of high technology are usually interested in ecological activity. Therefore their location isn't influence negative impact on the environment. Secondly, caring about corporate image and good public relations high-tech are investing in ecological friendly production and technology;

2) “clean” technologies – means all processes, which are aimed at reducing the level of environmental pollutions at the source. It can be achieved in the twofold way: firstly – consuming the limited amount of non-renewable raw materials in the manufacturing process, being based above all on renewable raw materials. Secondly, in comparing to traditional technologies, limiting waste resultant in the manufacturing process. Production being based on “clean” technologies is a proper form of the business activities also in case of areas with natural valuable advantages. “Clean” technologies are supporting the use of renewable energy, more effective using of natural resources and reducing waste and the environmental pollution. On the other hand can improve economic profit for companies;

3) alternative energetics – it is exploiting the alternative energy get from renewable sources. The sources of renewable energy could be: flowing water (hydroelectric energy), sun (solar energy), warmth from inside of the earth (geothermal energy), wind (wind power) and energy from consuming biomass. In case of area with not destroyed environment using above mentioned energy sources has the number of advantages. Undoubtedly deficiency in pollutants of the natural environment is a main advantage. Generating the alternative energy doesn't influence for contaminations emission into the atmosphere as well as isn't contributing to waste production. Wind, water or sun are renewable and unfailing sources of energy. However economic and ecological benefits depend on the proper localization of windmills, hydroelectric power stations or solar collectors;

4) small and medium enterprises in food-processing industry – natural valuable areas are a chance for development companies connected with the food-processing industry. On one hand

the agricultural production is an excellent resources background and on the other hand the local society has the possibility of gaining additional profits from another activity. Apart from the food-processing industry on natural valuable areas can develop small and medium enterprises in food-processing industry in food-processing industry not exerting negative impact on the environment;

5) recreational and therapy services – dominating form of the business activity taken up on natural valuable areas are tourist services associated with sustainable tourism. Recreation services supplementing the tourist offer in the region. The vast range of well-prepared recreation services can influence increase in tourist demand. However therapy services are necessary because in the given area a spa tourism could be also dominating form of the tourism;

6) intangible services – protected areas could be a barrier for the localization of industrial enterprises. Progress in intangible services introduction can be an excellent alternative for specific region. Good examples of services that can be run on natural valuable areas are health care services, education, social welfare, sports-recreational and cultural services. They should not influence in negative way the environment, and in the significant way will contribute to the improvement local society's live;

7) traditional craft – workshops continuing the traditional folk handicraft are available to tourists (pottery, sculptor's, blacksmith's workshops, weavings);

8) regional and local products – products with extraordinary reputation produced with traditional methods from raw materials coming from the region. Brand name, ingredients and technology of the product are being legally protected;

9) herbalism –nature valuable areas are excellent place for herbs rising using in illness prevention and therapy.

**Conclusions and directions of feather researches.** Including the nature with different forms of protection through creating national parks, landscape parks or nature reserves in spite of controversies amongst the local population, should not be regarded exclusively as the development barrier. It should be also a factor of the regional development. In particular it concerns regions with special natural advantages and a poorly developed industry. Natural valuable areas are fulfilling not only protective, but also many different functions like tourist, research, holiday, agricultural, hunting etc. Therefore a term multifunctional area is more accurate expression. Depending on the specificity of nature valuable area restrictions on the conducting business activities are dependent. The most restriction regulations concern national parks and nature reserves. Moderate rules concern areas around national and landscape parks. Gentle rules are applied on protected landscape areas as well as on the ground around landscape parks. It is essential, that through the number of legal articles one should not restrict all economic initiative on the nature valuable area. The nature valuable areas should be treated as economic resources. The conservation of nature cannot concentrate only on creating enclaves, through which the chance of the economic development of the given area is being blocked. Therefore enlarging existing protected areas or creating new is often incurring local society. Creating new protected areas as well as holding already existing will be only accepted by society when implemented restrictions don't influence in decreasing the standard of living of the local population.

The problem states in this paper cannot be solved yet. For example there must be additional research concerning the role in the regional development small and medium enterprising in food-processing industry (SME) running in the nature valuable region. One should determine, what SME can do or not, to preserve the sustainable development. Good option can be using Corporate Social Responsibility as a social aspects of sustainable development.

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##### **Сталий розвиток як основа регіонального розвитку цінних природних територій**

*У статті показано, що регіон з великою кількістю територій, що охороняються, може здійснювати не лише типові, неприбуткові види діяльності, але також бути привабливим для розвитку в ньому високотехнологічних галузей. Це має бути враховано при розробленні стратегії сталого розвитку. Визначено, що необхідність адаптації видів підприємницької діяльності, що здійснюються на території регіону відповідно до його специфіки, має першочергове значення. Виділено сфери діяльності, за рахунок яких конкурентоспроможність території може бути підвищена, – це сталий туризм, органічне сільське господарство, сектор високих та «чистих» технологій, альтернативна енергетика та інші.*

Ключові слова: сталий розвиток, стратегія, цінні природні території, бізнес-активність, регіональний розвиток.

#### ***А. Ивасевич-Орловская***

##### **Устойчивое развитие как основа регионального развития ценных природных территорий**

*В статье показано, что регион с большим количеством охраняемых территорий может осуществлять не только типичные, неприбыльные виды деятельности, но также быть привлекательным для развития в нем высокотехнологичных отраслей. Это должно быть учтено при разработке стратегии устойчивого развития. Определено, что необходимость адаптации видов предпринимательской деятельности, осуществляемых на территории региона в соответствии с его спецификой, имеет первостепенное значение. Выделено сферы деятельности, за счет которых может быть повышена конкурентоспособность территории, – это устойчивый туризм, органическое сельское хозяйство, сектор высоких и «чистых» технологий, альтернативная энергетика и другие.*

Ключевые слова: устойчивое развитие, стратегия, ценные природные территории, бизнес-активность, региональное развитие.

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