

**INNOVATIVE USE OF RESOURCES
AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMIC
STRUCTURE OF RURAL AREAS ON THE BASIS
OF LOCAL ACTION GROUP MROGA EXPERIENCE**

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Abstract. One of the tasks of local action groups is to support diversification of the economic structure of rural areas. Projects which make use of local resources in unique, non-standard ways (with reference to the achievements of the French school of *Economie de la Proximie*) may be called innovative. Analysis was applied to one of the local action groups from the Łódź voivodeship – MROGA Association for the Local Community Development. The aim of this analysis was to estimate the potential of this structure as regards innovative use of local resources in diversification of the local economy by creating non-agricultural jobs. The case study method was applied; analysis of secondary materials was carried out (the local development strategy and competition documentation regarding to the development of local economy in the area supported by this organization). The selected association (realising own projects) contributes to the innovative development of rural economy. Moreover, in supported area, new non-agricultural workplaces are created in which local resources are also used in a non-standard way.

Key words: innovation, local resources, local action groups

INTRODUCTION

In a knowledge-based economy, one of the determinants of competitiveness (of organizations and local systems) is the process of implementing innovations [compare Gaczek and Komorowski 2006]. In the socio-economic sciences, innovation is defined,

among others, as: 1) introducing new products, organisations and production methods, finding new markets and sources of raw materials [Schumpeter 1960, p. 45-46], or 2) any change in different areas of an organisation's activity, beneficial by assumption, which brings progress in comparison with the existing situation, having arisen within the organisation or out of it and constituting an answer to needs already reported or fulfilling needs not yet revealed [Francik 2003, p. 24]. What contributes to creating and promoting innovations is cooperative unions, strategic alliances (in the area of research and development – R&D) and clusters.

In rural areas, it is local action groups that belong to the networks implementing innovations. In accordance with the attitude of LEADER, they introduce the principle of innovativeness, defined as realising projects which are new on a given territory (as regards the issues tackled and the proposed way of solving the existing problems) [Budzich-Szukała 2008, p. 119, compare Siltanen 2006, p. 6]¹. Their aim is to develop non-production functions of villages: the recreational, residential and cultural ones and to diversify the structure of local economies (create non-agricultural jobs).

In accordance with the assumptions of *Economie de la Proximie*² [see Pecqueur and Zimmermann 2004, Torre and Rallet 2005] the way of local resources use is crucial in the process of implementing innovations by the organizations. We can differentiate natural, cultural and social resources. Moreover, on the basis of: 1) the way of resources application and 2) the area of their localization we can enumerate the following four types (presented in Table 1)³.

A necessary condition in the local resources use is to valorize them, namely to identify them as something that may be used in local development [see Michalska and Zajda 2011, p. 124]. The way of their use determines the trajectory:

- 1) specific (resources unique for the particular area are used in a non-standard way, in relation with the local tradition and specificity),
- 2) general (common resources, typical of many areas, are used in a standard way),
- 3) general with specific features (common resources, typical of many areas, are used in a non-standard (unique) way, connected with the local specificity),
- 4) trivializing (resources unique for a particular area are used in a typical, standard way).

¹ Until 2008, the LEADER+ Pilot Programme had been realised. As part of realisation of scheme I, local action groups – partnerships in the form of non-governmental organisations – had been created. They include representatives of three sectors: 1) the public one, among others representatives of self-governments, schools, community centres and agricultural counselling centres, 2) the economic one: local businesspeople, their organisations and farmers, 3) the social one: non-governmental organisations, farmers' wives' associations and voluntary fire brigades [Kamiński and Kwatara 2005, p. 9, Futymski and Kamiński 2008, p. 14-26, Zajda 2011]. Those partnerships were also created after the completion of the 1st scheme of the programme. They acquire funds for their activity from various sources – mainly from the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

² *Economie de la Proximie* concentrates on consequences of geographical, organisational and institutional proximity of local actors for the socio-economic development.

³ The typology of local resources was proposed by Marc Didier from the University of Montpellier III – a member of the ALDETEC research group. K. Zajda participate in the realisation of that project under the supervision of M. Halamska (IRWiR PAN), see <http://www.cefres.cz/aldetec/eng/indexeng.html>.

Table 1. Typology of local resources
Tabela 1. Typologia zasobów lokalnych

Resources Zasoby	Location-unrestricted Bez barier lokalizacji	Location-restricted Z barierami lokalizacji
Non-specific application Zastosowanie niespecyficzne	resources occurring commonly with non-specific application (e.g. forests) (1) zasoby występujące powszechnie o niespecyficznym zastosowaniu (np. lasy) (1)	resources occurring in particular locations with non-specific application (e.g. a particular water reservoir used in the same way as many others) (2) zasoby występujące w konkretnych lokalizacjach o niespecyficznym zastosowaniu (np. konkretny zbiornik wodny wykorzystywany podobnie jak wiele innych) (2)
Specific application Zastosowanie specyficzne	resources occurring commonly with a specific application (e.g. agritourism farms rendering services related to the local culture) (3) zasoby występujące powszechnie o specyficznym zastosowaniu (np. gospodarstwa agroturystyczne świadczące usługi powiązane z lokalną kulturą) (3)	resources occurring in particular locations with specific application (e.g. historic buildings embedded in the local specificity, used in a unique, non-standard way) (4) zasoby występujące w konkretnych lokalizacjach o specyficznym zastosowaniu (np. obiekty zabytkowe wpisane w lokalną specyfikę, wykorzystywane w sposób unikatowy, niestandardowy) (4)

Source: Michalska and Zajda [2011, p. 124].
Źródło: Michalska i Zajda [2011, s. 124].

Realisation of the principle of innovativeness poses a very difficult task for local action groups: making an attempt of utilizing local resources in various ways, mostly the ones which would emphasize the local context – in other words, such a use of the resources that would be related with the specificity of the area. Therefore, the trajectories of using the resources described as “specific” and “general with specific features” are required. They prove the potential of introducing innovations to the rural areas development.

Examples of innovative projects realized by local action groups (or by organisations or institutions supported by them) were presented in the LEADER+ Magazine. One of them is entitled “Treasures of Maasland in the oral tradition”. A grid of bicycle routes was created on the territory of the Belgian partnership. Riding along the routes was linked to using an audiovisual guide (in the form of an electronic notebook). Installed on a bicycle, it told the tourist about the region, its specificity, history and attractions. The project is an example of an innovative use of technology to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the region [Innowacja... 2006, p. 12]. Another example of introducing innovation to rural areas is a project of the KELT Local Action Group (in Ireland) entitled “Creative use of digital media: developing the skills of young people”. People aged 14-21 were regarded as its recipients. Participating in film production workshops, they gained knowledge on the specificity and tradition of their regions, and then made a film about them [Najlepsze wykorzystanie... 2006, p. 37]. In Austria, a project entitled “Among the treetops” was realised. Two tourist trails, known as “Routes among the treetops”, were made available in the Sauwald region. One of them led through the so-called young forest and was made up of a wooden structure situated over the treetops

(about 10 m over the ground). The other was located at 24 m over the ground. The routes were equipped with suspension bridges, wooden mazes, slides, tree houses and a sound system amplifying the sounds of the forest [Przyszłość... 2006, p. 6]. The project is a model example of applying innovation favourable for the development of tourism.

AREA OF STUDY, STUDY QUESTION, METHOD AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

In the Łódź voivodeship, there are 20 local action groups. They were created as part of realisation of the LEADER+ Pilot Programme (9 structures), as well as after its completion [see Zajda 2011]⁴. The priority tasks of those structures include:

1. Development of tourism and recreation by making use of natural and landscape resources and the cultural heritage of the areas in which the local development strategies work;
2. Improvement of life quality of rural inhabitants;
3. Protection of biodiversity and supporting pro-ecological initiatives;
4. Development of enterprise, competitiveness and potential connected with food and agriculture of rural areas on the basis of knowledge and tradition as well as modern technology and innovativeness;
5. Animation of inhabitants and building the social capital of rural areas;
6. Promotion and cultivation of tradition, handicraft and regional products⁵.

Among the longest-functioning local action groups, MROGA Association for the Local Community Development was analysed. The association works in favour of the development of four rural communes (Brzeziny, Jeżów, Rogów and Dmosin) and one urban-rural commune (Koluszki) located in the eastern part of Łódź voivodeship (the Brzeziny Poviát and the East Łódź Poviát). The area of the partnership is not rich in natural resources. Over 60% of farms cover less than 5 ha. They mostly use class IV a, IV b and V soils. In the local development strategy we can read: "Such a structure, due to a great participation of small farms, is unfavourable for further development of agriculture, which means that it is necessary to look for non-agricultural sources of income and support establishment and development of other kinds of activity" [Lokalna Strategia... 2011, p. 39, 51].

The question was posed: What is the potential of that structure as regards innovative way of local resources use contributing to creation of non-agricultural jobs? The general question was followed by detailed questions:

1. What local resources were identified (valorized) by the local action group in the strategic document determining its functioning?
2. Which type [see Table 1] are those resources?

⁴ Most of those groups have been operating since 2006. The structures created after the completion of the PPL+ scheme appeared in 2008.

⁵ The leading directions in local development strategies of Łódź LAGs prepared by the Implementation Division of the Department of Rural Areas Development Fund, presented at the conference devoted to the LEADER attitude in the Łódź voivodeship on 18th June 2009.

3. What kinds of projects, which aim is to create new work-places (or the improvement of local companies competitiveness), are implemented by a local action group or by rural inhabitants who are supported by this structure?
4. Do those projects use valorized local resources?
5. Are the projects innovative (is their way of use local resources mostly reflected by the specific trajectory and the general one)?

The method of case study was applied in the research. The technique of secondary materials (the local development strategy and competition documentation available on the association's website and in its office)⁶ analysis was used.

LOCAL RESOURCES IN THE AREA OF THE MROGA LOCAL ACTION GROUP

The task for each local action group is to valorize the local resources, to identify them as something that may be used in various projects implemented in the supported area.

MROGA Association for the Local Community Development valorized natural, cultural and social resources. The resources predominantly represent type two. They occurring in particular locations (in supported communes) and have non-specific application (nature reserves and natural landscape parks are used in a similar way in other places in Poland – tourist trails, bicycle routes).

Three resources represent type 4 – they are location-restricted and are used in a unique way, characteristic only for the given local action group. The first of them is the history of military activities during World War I, the second is the narrow gauge railway, and the third, unique dinosaur remains. All of them are used with the aim to create a brand tourist product. The narrow gauge railway is going to be used as a means of transport enabling to see the attractions of the region and to participate in a staging of the Battle of Łódź of 1914 [Lokalna Strategia... 2011, p. 70-71]. The natural resources such as the remains of dinosaurs are going to be used in the project entitled "Dino-Park and the Land of Santa Claus in Kołacinek". In the document, we can read: "It is in our territory that remains of extremely varied fauna and flora, remains of dinosaurs, plants etc. lie hidden under many layers of deposits. The creators of the Dino-Park have brought to the ground beauty from hundreds of millions years ago, in the original form or reconstructed." [Lokalna Strategia... 2011, p. 77]. Operation of the park is to contribute to enhancing competitiveness of the area as a place attractive for tourists and to creating new non-agricultural jobs. Moreover, the unique use of local resources is supposed to contribute to the development of tourism concentrated on sentimental and historical issues and diversification of the economic structure of the area: "The project of creating a brand tourist product connected with the Battle of Łódź of 1914 is a huge enterprise. Its aim is first of all to help create the basis for development of tourism in the territory of communes around Łódź: a completely unknown phenomenon in that area. It is a perfect opportunity to establish not only museums and tourist trails but also

⁶ The analysis of secondary sources (with the use of local resources typology – see Table 1) was carried out in 2012.

Table 2. Resources identified in the Local Development Strategy of LAG MROGA and their types
Tabela 2. Zasoby zidentyfikowane w Lokalnej Strategii Rozwoju LGD MROGA oraz ich typy

Kind of resource Rodzaj zasobu	Name of resource Nazwa zasobu	Type of resource Typ zasobu
Natural Przyrodnicze	1 natural landscape park – 1 park krajobrazowy	2
	7 nature reserves – 7 rezerwatów przyrody	2
	3 landscape protection areas – 3 obszary chronionego krajobrazu	2
	landform features, dinosaur remains ukształtowanie terenu, szczątki dinozaurów	4
Cultural Kulturowe	burial grounds, memorial sites – cmentarze, miejsca pamięci	2
	Brzeziny style in the Łowicz folk art brzeziński styl w kulturze łowickiej	2
	sacral monuments – zabytki sakralne	2
	museums – muzea	2
	manor complexes – zespoły dworskie	2
	historic mills – zabytkowe młyny	2
	chapels and churches – kaplice i kościoły	2
	history of the January Uprising and military activities during World War I and II historia powstania styczniowego oraz działań wojskowych w czasie I i II wojny światowej	4
	narrow gauge railway – kolejka wąskotorowa	4
Social Społeczne	32 voluntary fire brigades – 32 ochotnicze straże pożarne	2
	9 sports clubs – 9 klubów sportowych	2
	non-governmental organisations and folk bands organizacje pozarządowe i zespoły folklorystyczne	2
	folk artists – artyści ludowi	2

Source: own study.
Źródło: opracowanie własne.

chains of hotels, motels and inns where regional foods will be served. The project can become a flywheel of development of broadly understood infrastructure aimed at serving tourists, which would result in creating new jobs and improving the material status of the inhabitants” [Lokalna Strategia... 2011, p. 74].

TRAJECTORIES OF UTILIZING LOCAL RESOURCES IN THE AREA SUPPORTED BY THE MROGA LOCAL ACTION GROUP

In the period of the 2007-2013 programme, local action groups acquire funds from the Rural Development Programme (RDP)⁷. Office of the Marshall (through local action groups) announces competitions in which local inhabitants who would like to set up their own company or to improve its competitiveness may take part. Local action groups act as institutions evaluating the submitted applications. What kind of projects supported by the MROGA Association for the Local Community Development are implemented? Do those projects use local resources? Are they innovative (is their way of use local resources mostly reflected by the specific trajectory and the general one)? Do they contribute to creating non-agricultural jobs?

All competitions concerning realisation of the measures "Diversification into non-agricultural activities" and "Establishment and development of micro-enterprises" were analysed. They can contribute to diversification of local economy. The list of applications support by the local action group are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. List of applications supported by the MROGA Association for the Local Community Development (recommended for financing from RDP funds 2007-2013 within the framework of the measures "Diversification into non-agricultural activities" and "Establishment and development of micro-enterprises")

Tabela 3. Wykaz wniosków, które uzyskały wsparcie Stowarzyszenia na rzecz Społeczności Lokalnej MROGA (rekomendację do finansowania ze środków PROW 2007-2013 w ramach działań: „Różnicowanie w kierunku działalności nierolniczej” oraz „Tworzenie i rozwój mikroprzedsiębiorstw”)

Year Rok	Kind of competition Rodzaj konkursu	Title of application supported by LAG Tytuł wniosku, który uzyskał akceptację LGD	Amount applied for (PLN) Wnioskowana kwota (zł)
1	2	3	4
2010	Diversification into non-agricultural activities Różnicowanie w kierunku działalności nierolniczej	"Improving the competitiveness of a non-agricultural business activity aimed at acquiring customers and income by means of construction of a utility building for the activity" „Podwyższenie konkurencyjności pozarolniczej działalności gospodarczej dla pozyskania klientów oraz dochodu poprzez budowę budynku socjalnego dla działalności"	100 000

⁷ They can apply for them within the framework of the following measures:

- Implementation of Local Development Strategies

By means of that measure, they can realise measures: Diversification into non-agricultural activities, Establishment and development of micro-enterprises and Village renewal and development.

- Inter-territorial and trans-national cooperation
 - Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory.
- LAGs can also obtain funds for realisation of so-called small grants.

Table 3 – cont. / Tabela 3 – cd.

1	2	3	4
2011	Establishment and development of micro-enterprises Tworzenie i rozwój mikroprzedsiębiorstw	“Construction of a building for a grocery shop and purchase of equipment aimed at increasing income from the conducted activity and creating a new workplace, as well as improving comfort of the inhabitants by organising self-service shopping” „Budowa budynku sklepu spożywczego oraz zakupu wyposażenia w celu wzrostu dochodu z prowadzonej działalności i stworzenia miejsca pracy, a także zwiększenie komfortu mieszkańców poprzez zorganizowanie handlu metodą samoobsługową”	893 503
		“Increasing the competitiveness of a business and increasing employment by implementing new technology. Purchase of equipment aimed at improving the standard of services provided, which will result in increasing the income from the conducted activity” „Podwyższenie konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa i zwiększenie poziomu zatrudnienia przez wdrożenie nowej technologii. Zakup wyposażenia w celu podwyższenia standardu świadczonych usług, co spowoduje wzrost dochodu z prowadzonej działalności”	62 610.4
		“Purchase of photographic and film equipment aimed at improvement of competitiveness on the local market of photography and video services and increase of employment in further years” „Zakup sprzętu fotograficzno-filmowego w celu podwyższenia konkurencyjności na lokalnym rynku usług fotograficznych i video oraz wzrost zatrudnienia w kolejnych latach”	85 834
	Diversification into non-agricultural activities Różnicowanie w kierunku działalności nierolniczej	“Increasing the number of customers and income from the supported activity by starting new services” „Wzrost liczby klientów i dochodu z działalności objętej wsparciem przez uruchomienie nowych usług”	100 000
	Establishment and development of micro-enterprises Tworzenie i rozwój mikroprzedsiębiorstw	“Conversion of the existing building and changing its purpose aimed at introducing to the local market new services connected with tourism, improvement of competitiveness of the services and increase of employment on the territory of the MROGA LAG” „Przebudowa istniejącego budynku oraz zmiana sposobu użytkowania w celu wprowadzenia na lokalny rynek nowych usług okołoturystycznych, zwiększenie konkurencyjności usług oraz wzrost zatrudnienia na terenie LGD MROGA”	300 000
	“Preparation of land infrastructure for construction of a house designed for rent and foundation of houses in order to introduce new services on the local market, improvement of competitiveness and broadening the scope of services provided on the territory of the MROGA LAG” „Przygotowanie infrastruktury terenu pod budowę domów pod wynajem oraz posadwienie domów w celu wprowadzenia nowych usług na lokalnym rynku, podniesienie konkurencyjności świadczonych usług oraz zwiększenie ich zakresu na terenie LGD MROGA”	285 000	

Source: own study.
Źródło: opracowanie własne.

In 2010, 4 applications were recommended by the MROGA Local Action Group. The aim of the first of them was to create an amenity building situated near the educational path promoting natural and cultural heritage of the area of the partnership. The building is going to serve as a stopping place e.g. for organised groups of children and teenagers sightseeing the territory of the partnership. The project refers to utilizing local resources – natural and cultural ones. However, it is not non-standard, unique for the area of the local action group, hence the trajectory of using the resources can be described as general.

The second project which was recommended by the association in 2010 concerns construction of a grocery shop. It does not refer to resources mentioned in the local development strategy, so it is impossible to establish the trajectory of their use.

The beneficiary of the third project received financial support for purchase of diagnostic equipment for a garage (among others, a diagnostic tester with the necessary software). Just like the previous one, the project does not make use of local resources identified in the local development strategy. It does contribute to the development of a micro-enterprise, but not by means of innovation.

The scope of the last project subsidized in 2010 includes, apart from purchase of photographic and film equipment, creating a website to promote the natural and cultural resources of the region covered by the support of the local action group. The applicant also provided for realisation of educational activities addressed at children and teenagers and promotion of young artists' works by means of it. The projects makes use of local resources – natural, cultural and social ones. The trajectory of their use can be described as general with specific features. Common resources, typical of many local action groups, are used in a unique way, connected with the local specificity. The aim of the project is to promote them by means of a website addressed mostly to young people. Competitions of their works and presenting their achievements are going to contribute to cultivation and promotion of the local heritage. The project will contribute to diversification of the economic structure of rural areas (the micro-entrepreneur anticipates an increase of employment in the future), and at the same time has the features of innovativeness.

In 2011, three applications were positively evaluated by the MROGA Local Action Group. The first of them is a very interesting example of using local resources. In its description, we can read: "The enterprise is construction of a wooden route in the forest – "A walk in the clouds". The route will be made of wooden stilts of various heights, depending on the landform. It will serve the people who want to have active rest and use some recreation in the forest. The persons walking will be able to see the forest and its surroundings from a completely different perspective – from the level of the treetops". The project clearly refers to the "Routes among the treetops" created in the operation area of an Austrian local action group called "Regionalverband Sauwald". It makes use of local resources in a way that is unique, new in the given area, at the same time drawing on other groups' experience. In this project the trajectory called 'general with specific features' was used. It is an example of diffusion of innovation, facilitated by study visits and cooperation of local action groups but also by promotion of achievements of particular groups with the use of the media. LEADER+ Magazine (available on the website www.ec.europa.eu) and counseling provided to business people and workers of a local action group are supposed to direct their activities, to relate them to the local

development strategy and to contribute to improving the competitiveness of the area as much as possible.

The scope of the second project recommended in 2011 includes organisation of pottery workshops (for individuals and for groups) by the applicant. They are to help diversify the local economy by stimulating the creation of new jobs connected with handicraft. On the basis of project documentation alone, it is hard to determine what kind of local resources (identified in the local development strategy) the project utilizes. It does contribute to transformations in the local economy but not necessarily by means of innovation.

The last of the projects recommended for subsidizing by the local action group is going to strengthen the residential function of the partnership area (construction of houses for rent). The buildings shall be located in an attractive place; making use of natural resources is anticipated. The enterprise is not innovative.

CONCLUSIONS

Among organisations which operate in favour of implementing innovations in rural areas are local action groups. The greatest potential in that regard belongs to those that have made a thorough analysis, valorization of local resources and work so as to use them in accordance with the specific trajectory and the general trajectory with specific features. Those structures contribute to creating non-agricultural jobs with the use of innovations.

MROGA Association for the Local Community Development valorized first of all natural and cultural resources. Still, some of them (the Battle of Łódź of 1914 or Dino-Park) will be used in an innovative way, contributing to creation of new jobs.

The local action group, as the intermediary, is also responsible for evaluation of applications submitted for subsidizing. Its task is to support these which are going to be implemented with the aim to develop the rural areas, to create the new, non-agricultural workplaces or to improve the competitiveness of existed companies. Out of the seven analysed applications (the period 2010-2011), there were two innovative ones (they used common resources in a non-standard way). Three of them aimed at creating non-agricultural workplaces. That is not the best result possible. Taking into consideration the overall activity of the MROGA Association for the Local Community Development, we can, however, state that it contributes to the innovative development of rural areas. It realizes projects which make use of local resources in a non-standard way and it supports diversification of the local economy.

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Streszczenie. Na obszarach wiejskich do sieci tworzących i wprowadzających innowacje należą lokalne grupy działania. Ich celem jest dywersyfikacja struktury gospodarczej wsi, stymulowanie procesu tworzenia nowych miejsc pracy poza rolnictwem. W realizowanych projektach lokalne grupy działania wykorzystują różne zasoby. Zgodnie z założeniami ekonomii bliskości można z nich korzystać w różny sposób, co przesądza o sposobie ich użytkowania: 1) specyficznym, 2) ogólnym, 3) ogólnym z rysami specyficznymi, 4) banalizującym. O potencjale lokalnych grup działania pod względem wprowadzania innowacji do rozwoju gospodarki wiejskiej świadczy wykorzystanie zasobów lokalnych zgodnie z kierunkiem specyficznym oraz ogólnym z rysami specyficznymi. Obiektem badania było Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Rozwoju Społeczności Lokalnej MROGA. Postawiono pytanie: Jaki jest potencjał tej lokalnej grupy działania w zakresie innowacyjnego wykorzystania zasobów lokalnych na rzecz tworzenia miejsc pracy poza rolnictwem? Pytaniu ogólnemu towarzyszyły następujące szczegółowe: 1) Jakie zasoby lokalne zostały zidentyfikowane (poddane waloryzacji) przez lokalną grupę działania w dokumencie strategicznym wyznaczającym jej funkcjonowanie? 2) Jaki typ reprezentują te zasoby? 3) Jakiego rodzaju projekty, których celem jest tworzenie nowych miejsc pracy (lub wzrost konkurencyjności lokalnych firm), są realizowane przez lokalną grupę działania lub mieszkańców wsi korzystających z jej wsparcia? 4) Czy projekty te wykorzystują podda-

ne waloryzacji zasoby lokalne? 5) Czy są one innowacyjne (czy wykorzystują zasoby zgodnie z trajektorią specyficzną lub ogólną z rysami specyficznymi)? W badaniu zastosowano metodę *case study* oraz technikę analizy materiałów zastanych (lokalnej strategii rozwoju oraz dokumentacji konkursowej dostępnej na stronie internetowej stowarzyszenia oraz w jego siedzibie). Na podstawie analizy lokalnej strategii rozwoju zidentyfikowano zasoby, jakie mogą być wykorzystane przez stowarzyszenie w różnego rodzaju projektach i określono ich typy. Wykazano, iż niektóre z realizowanych przedsięwzięć (Bitwa Łódzka 1914, Dino-Park) wykorzystują je w sposób innowacyjny, przyczyniający się do powstania nowych miejsc pracy. Analizie poddano również wszystkie konkursy dotyczące realizacji na obszarze funkcjonowania Stowarzyszenia na rzecz Rozwoju Społeczności Lokalnej MROGA następujących działań: „Różnicowanie w kierunku działalności nierolniczej” oraz „Tworzenie i rozwój mikroprzedsiębiorstw”. Na siedem wniosków poddanych analizie dwa były innowacyjne (powszechne zasoby wykorzystywały w sposób niestandardowy). W trzech wnioskach zadeklarowano utworzenie nowych miejsc pracy. Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Rozwoju Społeczności Lokalnej MROGA wnosi wkład w innowacyjny rozwój obszarów wiejskich. Realizuje projekty wykorzystujące zasoby lokalne w niestandardowy sposób i sprzyja dywersyfikacji lokalnej gospodarki.

Słowa kluczowe: innowacja, zasoby lokalne, lokalne grupy działania

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