

ABSTRACT

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The main research objective of the paper was to identify and evaluate the mechanisms of the impact of the economic activity zones (EAZs) on the local development of the communes in the area in which they are located. The main objective of the research was to verify the main hypothesis stating that the economic activity zones are a stimulant for local development in the municipalities in which they are located. The body of the paper includes the introduction, six chapters, and conclusions. Each chapter provides a comprehensive view of the issue under study and serves as a reference point for further consideration. The paper is supplemented with an appendix containing results of the calculations.

The first chapter systematises knowledge about the local development process. It presents basic theoretical issues related to local development, the role of entrepreneurship and innovation, and the importance of foreign direct investment in shaping development at the local level.

The second chapter presents the tasks and competences of local government units in creating local development.

The third chapter discusses economic activity zones as one of the instruments for stimulating socioeconomic development in the communes. It presents the origins and classification of economic activity zones and the conditions in which they operate.

The fourth chapter describes how the EAZs operate in the region and presents the outcomes of their activities in rural and urban-rural communes of the Małopolskie Province. The fifth chapter presents the results of the analysis of the level of socio-economic development of rural and urban-rural communes of the Małopolskie Province. A synthetic measure of the socioeconomic development of the communes of the Małopolskie Province was calculated using the zero unitarisation method, based on selected diagnostic characteristics. The measure was used to assess the relationship between the location of economic activity zones and the level of socioeconomic development of particular communes.

The final chapter presents the results of a survey conducted among representatives of enterprises operating in the area of economic activity zones and representatives of local authorities from the communes where EAZs operate. It also provides recommendations for local authorities regarding the creation and functioning of local economic activity zones. The summary includes the verification of the main hypothesis based on the results of the verification

of the detailed hypotheses as well as the main conclusions and findings of the study. It also points out that further research is needed and shows directions for it.