

# Small Towns as Beneficiaries of EU Funds (the Example of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship)

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## Abstract

*The objective of this study was to achieve a multidimensional description of the consumption of EU funds by small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship, and to identify the role of this source of funding in the development policy of these localities. The aim was pursued based on secondary data originating from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office and from the database of the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (the EU Grants Map), as well as primary data collected during a survey study conducted among representatives of small towns and urban-rural municipalities which contain a small town in their limits (in total 38 units). The percentage of returned and correctly completed questionnaires was 44,74%. The empirical material gathered during the study proves that the budgets of municipalities in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship in 2006–2016 received PLN 3 244,24 million in the form of grants from the EU and other foreign support programmes, and the share of this sum absorbed by small towns and urban-rural municipalities was 25,91% (PLN 840,44 million), most of which was allocated to urban-rural municipalities (86,61%). Results of the U Mann-Whitney test showed that the distribution of the funds acquired by small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns in their limits, calculated per capita, in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship differed significantly from the sums of money invested by other administrative units of this type in Poland. The research also indicates that the EU funds played an important role in the development policy of small towns, and an opportunity to apply for EU grants had a strong influence on their investment plans.*

**Keywords:** small town, EU funds, statistical nonparametric tests, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship

**JEL:** H79, R19, R58

## Introduction

In 2016, there were 919 towns on Poland's territorial division map, of which 303 had the status of an urban municipality, while 616 acted as the capital towns of urban-rural municipalities. These towns were inhabited by a total of 23 129 492 people, which corresponded to 60,18% of Poland's population.<sup>1</sup> Although the number of towns increased by 37 in 2004–2016, the total number of town residents decreased by 305 722 persons. The structure of towns (with respect to their size) was distinctly dominated by small towns, which made up 3/4 of all towns. Most small towns were found in Wielkopolskie voivodship (92), being the least numerous in the Pomorskie and Świętokrzyskie voivodships (27 in each). While nearly half of the urban population lived in big cities and large towns (46,76%), the structure index value for small towns was just 21,58%. Among the Polish small towns, the urban municipality of Chełmno in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship had

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1. [In the journal European practice of number notation is followed—for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style).—Ed.]

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the biggest population (19 991 inhabitants), and the one with the smallest population was the town Wyśmierzyce (912 residents), the capital of the urban-rural municipality Wyśmierzyce, located in Mazowieckie Voivodship.

Small towns in Poland must meet various challenges, but a key problem in their economy is the shortage of funds. Having a heavy burden of current expenses, they are unable to achieve the desirable level of investment with own financial resources (Kaźmierczak 2011). The extent of investment demands compared to the possibilities of financing investment projects reveals a large gap in funding. Over recent years, it has been possible to largely fill this gap with the EU funds (Zawora 2015). Accessibility of these funds has enabled town authorities to undertake various initiatives: social, economic, cultural, etc., which facilitate a more efficient use of the towns' potential, thus making them more competitive (Kardaś 2014). However, local government units are finding it more and more difficult to acquire and absorb the EU funds. Following the crisis and after a period of more intensive investments and consumption of EU grants, the towns entered the 2014–2020 perspective with a large load of current expenses, decreasing current margin and considerable debt. Among the reasons are new responsibilities imposed on local governments, especially in the domains of social benefits and education, although not associated with the transfer of extra money to finance these tasks (Czekaj 2015).

The aim of this study was to produce a multidimensional picture of how small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship use funds from the EU budget. Another objective was to determine the importance of this source of funding in the development policy of these towns and municipalities.

## 1 Methodology

Lacking a single, universally applicable definition of a small town, first of all the authors needed to make the above term more precise. Whereas little doubt is raised when the term “town” is used (a town is a unit in administrative division which the Council of Ministers has granted the urban rights), much confusion surrounds the multitude and diversity of criteria applied to divide cities, towns and other localities with respect to their size. The most popular division of towns regarding their size is the population, and—depending on an approach—the upper threshold for a small town ranges from 5 000 to 50 000 people (Szymańska and Grzelak-Kostulska 2005). In this paper, the most popular, three-tier approach was used (e.g., Bartosiewicz 2016; Bogdański 2017; Czornik 2004; Gibas 2017; Runge 2012; Sekuła 2012; Wiktorowicz 2016), where small towns are inhabited by up to 20 000 people, medium-size have a population between 20 000 and 100 000, while large ones have over 100 000 residents.

In the light of the provisions of the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 15 December 1998 on detailed rules for keeping, using and making available the national register of the official territorial division of the country and related responsibilities of government administration bodies and local government units, cities and towns which have an urban status may function as independent municipalities (urban municipalities) or be included in larger administrative units (urban-rural municipalities) (tab. 1).

The position of small towns in the structure of the country's administrative division, described above, made a detailed assessment of their use of EU funds much more difficult. The reason is that by being part of a municipality's revenue, such funds are included in the municipal budget of an entire local government unit collectively, without distinguishing constituent parts, i.e. the town and the rural areas. As a result, our analysis of the secondary data describing the extent of absorption of EU funds by small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship was performed collectively, for the set of data composed for both types of municipalities. However, one sub-group consisted of urban municipalities, in which the population was fewer than 20 000 people, and another one comprised urban-rural municipalities which contained a town with a population of up to 20 000 in their limits.

Another source of difficulty was the changing number of urban-rural municipalities in 2004–2017, as some capital towns of rural municipalities acquired town rights over that period of time. Hence, to achieve a uniform analysis, the year 2016 was taken as the base.

**Tab. 1.** Towns in the structure of Poland's administrative division (year 2016)

Size of town	Urban municipality			Urban-rural municipality			Total number of towns
	Number	Number of residents		Number	Number of residents <sup>a</sup>		
		Min	Max		Min	Max	
<b>Locality having the status of a town (Poland)</b>							
Small	117	1 323	19 991	583	1 667	43 734	700
Medium	147	20 362	95 964	33	27 443	81 207	180
Large	39	100 718	1 753 977	0	–	–	39
<b>Locality having the status of a town (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship)</b>							
Small	5	4 068	17 123	33	3 655	27 911	38
Medium	9	21 355	61 074	0	–	–	9
Large	2	121 191	172 993	0	–	–	2

*Source:* Own calculations based on data published by Central Statistical Office of Poland at Local Data Bank website

<sup>a</sup>Number of residents in the whole municipality (town and rural areas)

The degree to which the funds obtained by small towns in Warmia and Mazury from the EU and other foreign funds were absorbed (including the contribution from the state's budget as co-financing of projects carried out with the contribution of structural funds and the EU Cohesion Fund) was assessed in several configurations, including a comparison with the local system in Poland and with other Polish regions. The analyzed set of municipalities, also within the distinguished two classes, was characterized according to values of basic descriptive statistics, including median, maximum and minimum values, range and variability coefficient. The information used in this part of the study originated from the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office of Poland,<sup>2</sup> and the significance of differences between the groups was evaluated with the results of two nonparametric tests (i.e., the ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis rank test and the U Mann-Whitney test).<sup>3</sup> The selection of the analytical tools was justified by the failure of most data (included in various subsets) to meet the normality of distribution<sup>4</sup> and their quite high dispersion. Although parametric tests are rather resistant to breaking assumptions (as simulations with artificial data with fixed distribution parameters have demonstrated), with distributions being evidently skewed it is safer to rely on tests based on comparing medians, even though they are less powerful. A mean, however, can be deformed easily when extreme results appear, which may either raise or depress it artificially. Consequently, a mean is not a faithful manifestation of what happens to other results in a set of data (Bedyńska, Niewiarowski, and Cypryańska 2013; Krejtz, Krejtz, and Albiński 2013; Stanisiz 2006).

The source of more detailed information on the execution of projects implemented by small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship was the database held by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, called the EU Grants Map.<sup>5</sup> However, during the analysis this source of information was found to present two drawbacks. One was the inability to identify correctly projects executed by two different local governments with the same names (in our study this problem arose when dealing with the urban-rural municipality Biskupiec and the rural municipality Biskupiec). This was a consequence of the scope of data provided on the EU Grants Map, which only specifies the title of a project, name of the beneficiary, value of the project, the amount of the EU funding, and a statement on whether a given project is performed over an area larger than one administrative unit. During the research, the projects were attributed to individual municipalities according to the information given in the column

2. Considering the availability of data, this part of analysis covered the years 2006–2016.

3. All calculations were supported by Statistica 13.

4. Normality of distribution was assessed according to the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test (for sets with fewer than 100 elements) or the Kolmogorow-Smirnow test (for sets with more than 100 elements).

5. The EU Grants Map (<http://www.mapadotacji.gov.pl/>) comprises information from the Central Teleinformation System (SL 2014) and the Project Accounting System (for years 2004–2006) about projects co-financed from funds originating from the EU budget (on 18 February 2018 the number of projects included in the database was 233 108).

“name of the beneficiary.” The lack of the municipality’s code or any additional information added to the name “municipality Biskupiec” meant that it was impossible to specify whether the entry pertained to the rural municipality (excluded from our research sample) or the urban-rural one (which belongs to the sample). In just a few entries, the beneficiary was made specific by having the adjective “Pomeranian” added, which indicated unambiguously the rural municipality. Another disadvantage of the EU Grants Map is that in the set of finished projects there are also contained those which were abandoned at an early stage of performance (e.g., “PISZ ONLINE—development of an information community in the municipality of Pisz”).<sup>6</sup> During our analysis, the set of data generated from this source was submitted to appropriate adjustments.

An attempt was made to mitigate the imperfections of the secondary information resources presented above by supplementing them with primary data collected during the survey (postal and online) addressed to representatives of municipal offices in Warmia and Mazury. The survey was conducted in January 2018, and included 38 municipalities (5 urban and 33 urban-rural) which satisfied the assumed size criterion. Survey answer sheets that were completely and correctly filled in were returned by 17 respondents, yielding the return rate of 44,74%.

Primary data were analyzed with the help of structure indicators and the importance indicator

$$(1) \quad W = \frac{1}{k \cdot N} \sum_{i=0}^k n_i \cdot w_i,$$

where:

$W$  — importance indicator,

$i$  — evaluation index,

$n_i$  — number of indications for a given factor in the  $i$ -th place,

$k$  — the maximum score on a scale from 0 to  $k$ ,

$N$  — number of respondents who answered the question,

$w_i$  — the score corresponding to the location of factor  $i$  (Karaszewski and Sudół 1997).

The importance indicator  $W$  applicable in questions providing scales to give an answer typically assumes a value within the range [0; 1] and informs us what share of the highest possible score the respondents assigned to a given response.

## 2 Absorption of EU funds by small towns

Since Poland’s accession to the European Union, the local governments have been fully legitimate participants in the mechanism of the EU funds and, as proven by statistical data, they have all been taking advantage of this opportunity, although not to the same extent. Altogether over the years 2006 to 2016, the total value of the funds they acquired was PLN 75 658,26 million, which corresponded to 8,66% of budgetary revenues of all Polish municipalities. Nearly 1/5 of this amount was divided among the five biggest urban centers in Poland—i.e., Warszawa (8,25%), Gdańsk (3,64%), Łódź (2,87%), Wrocław (2,55%), and Poznań (2,13%), while the remaining sum was unequally distributed among the remaining 2 474 municipalities. The funds acquired by small towns and urban-rural municipalities comprising small towns in their limits equaled PLN 13 400,86 million (i.e., 17,71% of the total funds obtained by local governments of all types), but the prevalence of urban-rural municipalities (583) in this group meant that a considerable share of this money (83,54%) was allocated to their budgets. The difference between the highest and lowest sum of funds acquired from the EU and other international programmes within this group of municipalities was PLN 199,32 million, and the variability coefficient reached 88,78%. Over the analyzed time period, the municipality which acquired the most funds (PLN 200,36 million) was Myślenice, Małopolskie Voivodship, while the one with the lowest funds awarded (PLN 1,04 million) was the town of Obrzycko, Wielkopolskie Voivodship. Against the background of the other sets of municipalities (i.e., large cities, medium-size towns including urban-rural municipalities with at least one

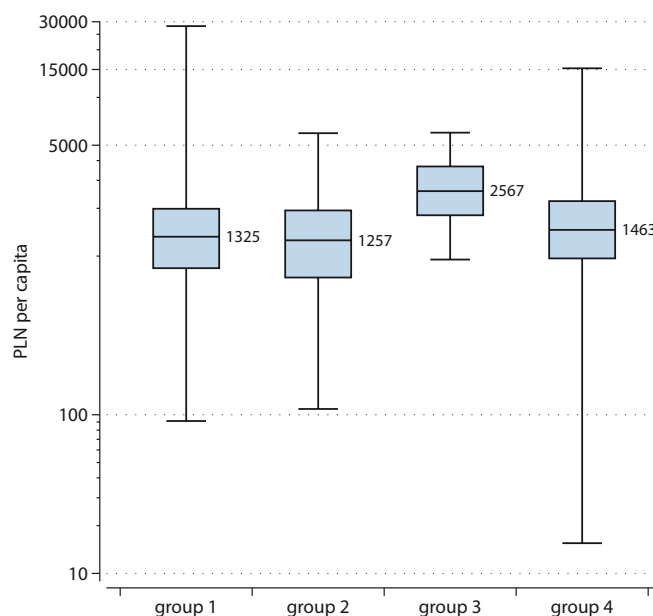
6. More information about the project can be found in *Niestety upadł największy w Polsce projekt walki z wykluczeniem cyfrowym* news from 2012.50.09, available at <http://wartowiedziec.org/index.php/e-administracja/aktualnosci/8580-niestety-upad-najwikszy-w-polsce-projekt-walki-z-wykluczeniem-cyfrowym> (accessed 2018.07.05).

medium town), the group of small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns was distinguished by the lowest value of the median of the analyzed variable, which equaled PLN 15,11 million, compared to PLN 508,76 million in cities and PLN 43,96 million in medium towns.

Because of the existence of a very strong, positive correlation between the sum of funds acquired by municipalities and the number of their residents some relativization was needed in order to attain a more meaningful analysis. It was decided that the best solution would be to relate the value of invested funds to the number of residents, so as to make it independent from the size of a municipality.

In the above approach, the set of small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns turned out to be even more diverse. The variability coefficient determined in this configuration was 104,56%, and the difference between the maximum and minimum sum of grants was PLN 28 062,71 per capita. The leader of this ranking list, with the sum of PLN 28 154,02 per capita was the town Krynica Morska, Pomorskie Voivodship, while the last place was occupied by the town Garwolin, Mazowieckie Voivodship, with the amount of grants equal PLN 91,30 per capita. The outstanding municipalities (where the sum of EU grants exceeded PLN 10 000 per capita) included the municipality Uniejów, Łódzkie Voivodship (PLN 22 637,63 per capita) and Dziwnów, Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship (PLN 11 106,20 per capita). Due to the strong right-skewness of the distribution of this index, the median derived for it was lower than the mean by PLN 390,21, and equaled PLN 1 324,60 per capita. This value was approximately the same as achieved by rural municipalities (median equals PLN 1 462,89 per capita) and by the group composed of medium towns and urban-rural municipalities with a medium town (median equals PLN 1 256,98 per capita). Conversely, it was largely divergent from the median derived for large cities (median equals PLN 2 567,28 per capita) (fig. 1).

In order to determine the statistical significance of the differences observed, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied, and the results ( $H = 53,64$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) enabled us to discard the zero hypothesis (assuming the lack of differences) and justified running post-hoc tests. Multiple comparisons demonstrated that the lack of significant differences appeared in only two groups—i.e., small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns (group 1) and medium towns and urban-rural municipalities with medium towns (group 2) ( $p = 0,99$ ).



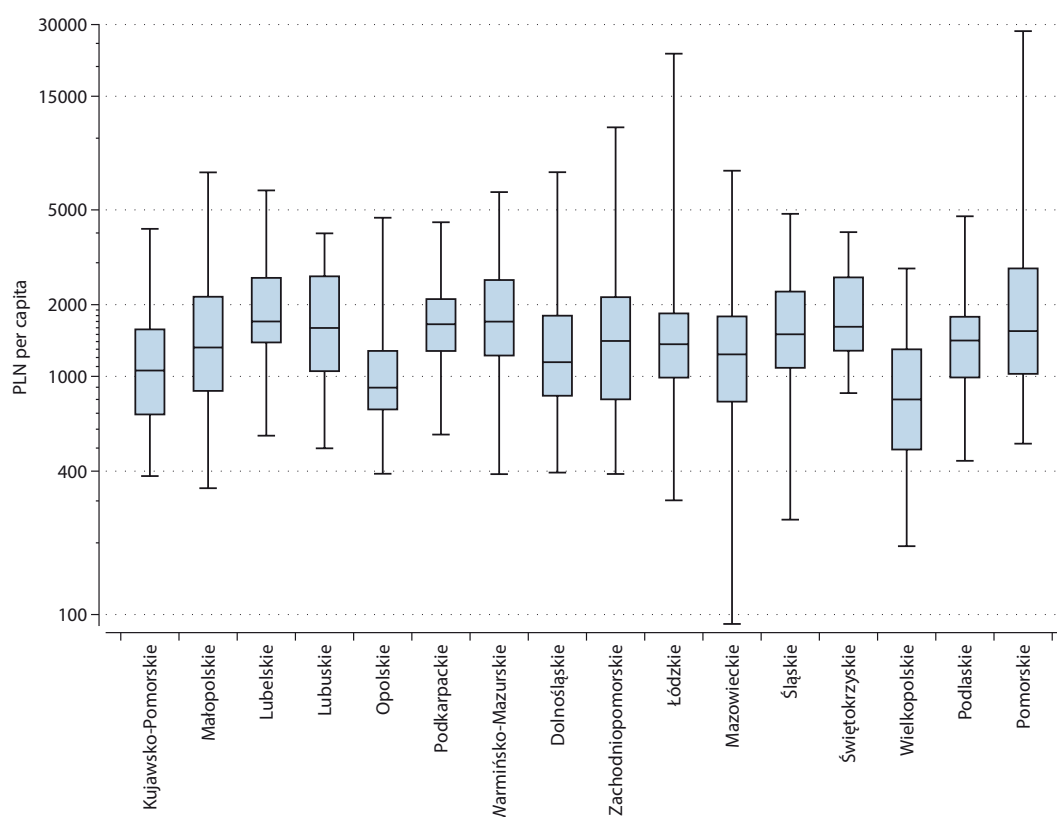
**Fig. 1.** Small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town against the background of Poland's local structure (group 1—small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town; group 2—medium-size towns and urban-rural municipalities with a medium town; group 3—large cities; group 4—rural municipalities)

Note: Logarithmic scale on vertical axis.

### 3 The EU funds in towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship

The information collated in the Local Data Bank shows that the budgets of municipalities in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, in 2006–2016, received PLN 3 244,24 million from grants funded by the EU and other international programmes, which equals 4,29% of the total amount of funds acquired by the local governments in Poland (11th place among all Polish voivodships). The share of this amount obtained by small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town was 25,91% (PLN 840,44 million), and most of this money was distributed among urban-rural municipalities (86,61%), as they were much more numerous. The structure indicator for the total pool of resources obtained by local governments in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, relative to other local governments of this type in Poland, was 6,72%, which secured the voivodship the 7th position in the country. The leader among 38 municipalities that satisfied the size-related conditions defined for this study was the municipality Gołdap (PLN 63,95 million), while the municipality Miłakowo ranked the lowest (PLN 4,33 million). The median for the discussed variable determined for Warmia and Mazury was PLN 19,59 million, which was by PLN 8,58 million higher than the country's median, and secured the voivodship the 5th place in Poland.

Relativization of the EU funds obtained by the group of small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship that relied on the number of residents did not change much the level of differentiation within the group. The dispersion decreased by just 2 percentage points—i.e., from 64,88% (absolute amounts) to 62,88% (relative amounts), which was the tenth score from the top. The highest level of variability was determined for small towns and urban-rural municipalities in Łódzkie Voivodship (175,87%), while the lowest one—in Świętokrzyskie Voivodship (46,23%). The range determined for the local governments in Warmia and Mazury was PLN 5 550,49 per capita (the maximum value was reached by the municipality Ryn—PLN 5 939,10 per capita, and the minimum one—by the municipality Lidzbark—PLN 388,61 per capita), and this was nearly five-fold lower than the result obtained countrywide (PLN 28 062,72 per capita). On the other hand, the median for small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town



**Fig. 2.** Small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town—an analysis in the regional division of Poland

Note: Logarithmic scale on vertical axis.

in Warmia and Mazury was higher than the country's median for the same group of municipalities by PLN 389,34 per capita, and reached PLN 1 697,91 per capita. With this result, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship came the second highest in Poland, while the first place was occupied by local governments from Lubelskie Voivodship (PLN 1 700,17 per capita), and the two last places belonged to Opolskie Voivodship (PLN 896,73 per capita) and Wielkopolskie Voivodship (PLN 800,02 per capita) (fig. 2).

In order to determine if the sums of grants awarded to small towns and urban-rural municipalities in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship (group 1) converted per person differed from the amounts of funds acquired by other municipalities of this type in Poland (group 2), the U Mann-Whitney test was employed. The results ( $z = -2,65$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) enabled us to discard the zero hypothesis, presuming there were no differences, which indicates that both groups differed from each other in terms of the distribution of the analyzed indicator. To make a more detailed analysis and find regions which would be similar to Warmia and Mazury, post-hoc<sup>7</sup> tests were carried out for individual voivodships. They showed that small towns and urban-rural municipalities with small towns in Warmia and Mazury (with an average rank equaled 435,95) were statistically different from municipalities of this type located in just two voivodships: Opolskie (mean rank = 244,72;  $p = 0,0152$ ) and Wielkopolskie (mean rank = 203,69;  $p < 0,001$ ).

As revealed by the EU Grants Map, over the years 2004–2017, the analyzed group of municipalities in Warmia and Mazury performed 614 projects worth PLN 1 004,45 million in total, which received co-funding from EU grants in 68,13%. Nearly 3/4 of these funds concentrated in four domains—i.e., environmental protection service (32,08% of the total invested money), tourism (18,42%), health service (12,47%) and revitalization (11,27%). In terms of the number of projects, the following were popular: education and science (33,22% of the total number of projects finalized), environmental protection (14,17%) and employment and social integration (10,59%).

The areas in which EU-cofounded projects were conducted in small towns and urban-rural municipalities in Warmia and Mazury were determined based on the data collected with the survey. The answers provided revealed that nearly half of all projects were within one of the four domains—i.e., tourism (12,39% of the total of projects indicated by a group of 13 respondents), water pipes and water supply, removal and treatment of municipal sewage and wastewater, maintenance and cleaning of sanitary facilities (11,95%), physical exercise and recreation (11,06%) and culture (10,62%). In turn, the areas in which the EU funds served as the main source of funding were most often reported to be cultural heritage (93,75% of the respondents chose this answer), followed by physical exercise and recreation (87,50%) (fig. 3).



**Fig. 3.** Areas of intervention with the EU funds in small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship ( $N = 16$ )

7. The justification to run these tests came from the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test ( $H = 101,68$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) which enabled us to discard the hypothesis of the lack of differences between voivodships.

The largest project carried out by a small town in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship was the one titled “A comprehensive solution for water and sewage management in the urban municipality of Lidzbark Warmiński,” worth in total PLN 34,21 million. The EU contribution reached 58,90% and originated from the Cohesion Fund available under the Operational Program Infrastructure and Environment (Measure I.1 Water and wastewater management in agglomerations over 15 000 PE). The lowest budget was allocated to the project “Equipping of a civic center in the village of Jamielnik,” implemented by the municipality of Lidzbark. The total value of the investment was PLN 9 708, of which 80% came from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, distributed under the Restructuring and Modernization of the Food Sector and Rural Development (Measure 2.3 Village renewal and preservation and protection of cultural heritage).

Our attempt to verify whether the inclusion of rural parts of urban-rural municipalities into our analysis (enforced by the availability of data) had a significant effect by deforming results of the study proved that although the problems of a town and urban areas in these administrative units are equally important (85,71% of indications), the local governments are far more active in towns with respect to investment projects (53,30% of indications).

The vast majority of our respondents admitted that the role of EU funds in the development policy in their municipalities is big (52,94% of indications) or very big (23,53%), and the domains in which investment projects are carried out with a contribution of funds from the EU budget generate best outcomes is the spatial and environmental sphere. Moreover, the enquired representatives of small towns in Warmia and Mazury agreed that an opportunity to apply for EU funds had a very large (64,71% of indications) or large (35,29% of indication) effect on the shape of future investment projects in their localities, although the degree of adjustment of investment plants to investment needs in their towns was assessed as moderate (47,06%). Among the major investment needs, the representatives of local authorities in small towns in Warmia and Mazury most often pointed to improvement of basic infrastructure ( $W = 0,86$ ) as well simulation of entrepreneurship and economic development of a town ( $W = 0,74$ ) and counteracting negative trends on the job market ( $W = 0,71$ ) (fig. 4).

Although small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town are fully legitimate participants in the EU fund mechanism, their chances of being awarded grants, according to the majority of respondents, are definitely lower (52,94% of indications) or lower (29,41%) than those of medium and large towns. This was mainly due to the shortage of funds for own contribution (27,91% of indications) and the lack of adjustment between areas supported with the funds and the investment needs of towns (27,91%). Other obstacles included: excessive current workload for office employees (18,6%), complicated procedures (13,95%) and insufficient human resources (11,63%).

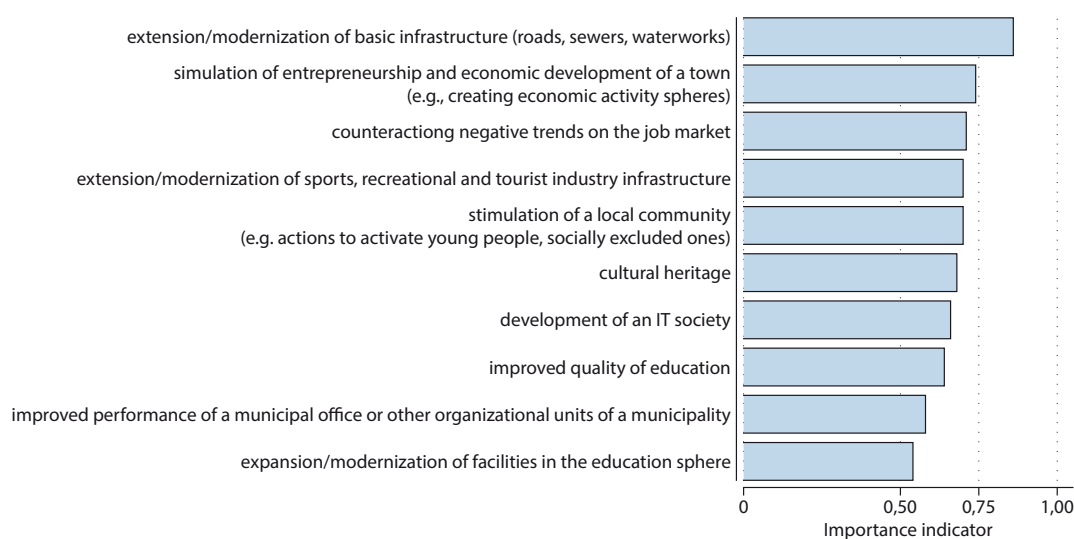


Fig. 4. Intensity of investment needs in small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship ( $N = 16$ )



## Summary

The extent and pace of development processes in local government units are closely related to the revenue earned and the level of performed investment. Constantly growing expectations as to the improvement of the quality and scope of public services expressed by local communities, as well as dynamic changes in the environment of municipalities, force the local authorities to manage their finances more effectively and efficiently and to use various sources of financing. Starting on 1 May 2004, local governments have been able to co-finance pro-development measures with grants from the EU budget. Local governments benefit from this opportunity in various ways—from sporadic execution of a few projects, to a situation in which the share of funds from the EU and other foreign programmes in the total budget revenues attains a significant percentage.

Within this study, a multidimensional analysis was made regarding the use of funds originating from the EU budget by small towns in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. In addition, the role of this source of funds in the development policy of these municipalities was determined. Slightly more than 1/5 of the EU funds acquired in 2006–2016 by all local government units located in Warmia and Mazury reached the regional small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town. In absolute terms, the municipality Gołdap was the leader in the absorption of EU funds, having acquired PLN 63,95 million, whereas the municipality Miłakowo was at the other extreme, with a mere PLN 4,33 million. In relative terms (after relativization with respect to the number of inhabitants), the municipality Ryn won the first place (PLN 5 949,10 per capita), while the municipality Lidzbark came in last (PLN 388,61 per capita). The results of the U Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests showed that the distribution of sums obtained by small towns and urban-rural municipalities with a small town in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, when expressed per inhabitant, differed significantly from the amounts invested by municipalities of this type elsewhere in Poland. Regionally speaking, they differed from the results obtained in Opolskie and Wielkopolskie voivodships.

The most frequently indicated aims of the EU projects implemented in small towns in Warmia and Mazury were to expand and/or modernize basic infrastructure (23,64% of indications) and to expand and/or modernize sports, recreational and tourist industry amenities (21,82%). Despite investing considerable funds in these domains, they remain high on lists of investment priorities in small towns, especially basic infrastructure, which scored the highest in the calculations of the importance indicator (0,86). The vast majority of respondents recognized that the EU funds played an important role in the policy of development of small towns, and the chance to apply for these funds had a big impact on the shape of their investment plans.

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