

**ECONOMICS***Sociology*

Anetta Zielińska, Abilities of Running an Economic Activity on Protected Areas,  
*Economics & Sociology*, Vol. 2, No 2, 2009, pp. 108-113.

---

Anetta Zielińska  
*Economic University in Wrocław*

## ABILITIES OF RUNNING AN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ON PROTECTED AREAS

*Received:* June, 2009  
*1st Revision:* July, 2009  
*Accepted:* October, 2009

**ABSTRACT.** There are the following forms of protected areas functioning: national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, landscape protected areas and areas of Natura 2000. Main goal of the protected areas is to protect natural resources from dezintergating and save them from not being properly used. The goal may be achieved if the economic activity will be proceded according to the rules of the sustainable development in the protected area, for example eco, ecological agriculture and agrotourism.

**JEL Classification:** Q01, P2    **Keywords:** sustainable development, protected areas.

### Introduction

The natural environment is actually valued when its condition is seriously hazarded and the level of its degradation plays a big barrier for socio-economical development, deprivating a quality of life at the same time. Protection of existing natural parks and creating some new once can play a great opportunity for stopping that negative situation.

It should be noticed that a quality of live improvement is still socially expected. People want to live in healthy, naturally abundantly and right functioning environment (Stawicka, 2007). Environmentally protected areas play a meaningful role in bettering a quality of life.

Protecting natural resources, for example through a functioning of environmentally protected areas at present is actually connected with a eco-development concept, which helps to avoid some mistakes and socio-economical wastes.

The notion of eco-development in Polish literature started to be used in eighties as a synonymous of sustainable development. There are many different definitions of eco-development. S. Kozłowski defines eco-development as „a such course of economical development which does not invade in a meaningful and unchangeable way in human natural environment, making important balance between the rights of nature and the rights of economy (Kozłowski, 1997). According to B. Zaufel eco-development depends on „such economical activity which leads into harmony with a nature in the way that it does not cause an irreversible changed in ecosystems (Zaufel, 1986). The notion of eco-development is often used as a synonymous of environmental protection.

Environmentally protected areas do not only serve to the nature but enable socio-economic development according to eco-development principles. The purpose of the article is

to illustrate the importance of economical and social elements to sustained environmentally protected areas functioning.

### The essentiality of environmentally protected areas

The following environmentally protected areas should be recognized as protected areas: nature reserves, nature parks, landscape protected areas and Nature 2000. The idea of environmentally protected areas in XXI century should be much wider recognized than simple conservation of nature resources as the following documents point it out:

- Pan-European Ecological Network – which is implemented among others by EMERALD and NATURE 20000;
- European Ecological Network (ECONETT) – in Polish case ECONET-PL;
- Green European Longs – Polish equivalent Polish Green Longs.

Nature protection does not know the notion of “administrative borders”, thus the environmentally protected areas should include one fragment of space which combines valuable spaces of vegetables, animals, fungus’, and other forms of protected lives.

In Poland (data on 31. 12. 2007) there is 32,1% of the land which is treated as an environmentally protected area. They include: 23 national parks, 1407 nature reserves, 411 landscape protected areas (*Ochrona środowiska 2008*). Additionally on 29. 10. 2007 The Counsel of Ministries a list of a new areas of NATURA 2000. The time of establishing areas being environmentally protected came to the end in this way. There are: 142 birds territories and 817 nest areas which cover 21,00% of the land ([http://www.mos.gov.pl/artukul/7\\_aktualnosci/10209\\_natura\\_2000\\_w\\_polsce\\_polska\\_zamyk\\_a\\_liste\\_europejskiej\\_sieci\\_ekologicznej.html](http://www.mos.gov.pl/artukul/7_aktualnosci/10209_natura_2000_w_polsce_polska_zamyk_a_liste_europejskiej_sieci_ekologicznej.html)).

Table 1. The surface of legally protected areas in Poland between 1990–2007

The forms of nature protection	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	
	[in thousand of hectares]					total usage of national land [%]
National parks	165,9	270,1	306,5	317,2	317,3	1,0
Nature reserves	117,0	121,3	148,7	165,2	168,8	0,5
Landscape parks <sup>a</sup>	1215,4	1930,8	2446,9	2516,9	2515,1	8,0
Landscape protected areas	4574,8	5782,7	7137,7	7044,5	6959,8	22,3
Other forms <sup>b</sup>	brak	41,2	124,0	132,1	140,4	0,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6073,1</b>	<b>8146,1</b>	<b>10163,8</b>	<b>10175,9</b>	<b>10101,5</b>	<b>32,3</b>

a. By 1994 the data were enlarged about the area of nature protected territories located on landscape parks and landscape protected areas, since 1995 without nature reserves in order to avoid double counting this same space (it is approximately 1,00% of legally protected areas).

b. Documentary stands, ecological fields, nature-landscape assemblies.

The source: author’s elaboration supported by *Ochrona środowiska*, GUS, Warszawa 2008, p. 284.

It is expected that areas protection would help to create national system which could play sort of space settlement of mutually supported forms being combined by ecological corridors.<sup>1</sup>

### Economic activities on environmental protected areas

The idea of economic activities on environmental protected areas depends on harmonizing a structure and intensiveness of sustained economy with criteria of nature values. At present theoretic concept of sustained economy is focused on connecting socio-economic functions with natural environment..

Function of areas protection requires many limitations in economic activities and they are not connected with traditional way of economy. In the act concerning nature protection (Ustawa o ochronie ...) there are regulations which allow or forbid such economic activities on protected areas. The most strict regulations concerning protections are applied to national parks, moderates – concerning landscape parks the most liberal – on the areas of protected landscapes and protected areas of NATURA 2000. It should be remembered that the most expected way of development on protected areas is ecological economy.

Ecological economy being with consent with idea of eco-development on protected areas should be realized by such disciplines as:

- pro-ecological forms of tourism,
- ecological agriculture (production of healthy food),
- forest and hunting economy,
- souveniring.

Table 2. Economic activity on chosen nature protected areas

The type of activity	National park including protection		landscape park	the area of protected landscape	the area of Natura 2000
	strict	partly			
Eco-tourism	-	+	+	+	+
Agrotourism	-	X	+	+	+
Bick tourism turystyka	-	X	+	+	+
Popular tourism	-	X	x	+	+
Ecological agriculture	-	X	+	+	+
Care – birding forest economy	X	+	+	+	+
Rational forest and hunting economy	-	-	x	+	+

(-) impermissible; (x) permissible; (+) advisable

The recourse: (Zielińska A., in print).

In the table it was not characterized nature reserves because in their boundaries according to the act about nature protection any economical activity is illegal.

The implementation of eco-development idea in boundaries of protected areas plays a role of saving used resources paradigm. The paradigm requires such a way of economical

<sup>1</sup> Ecological corridors are understood as the areas which play role of the area being a platform migrations of different living organisms.

activity where exploitation of environmental resources does not lead to degradation of exploited systems and their surroundings or it does not cause destabilization of balance in natural environment but at the same time meets the needs of present as well as future generations (Solon, 2004).

It seems reasonable to valorization of protected areas from the perspective of nature and economy (sustained economy). It can add to expected scale of economical activity on those areas. It might give answer to the question – where is the border between human expansion and exploitation. Certainly proper function of protected areas can have a meaningful impact on the growth of economical activity.

Ecological economy (f.e. ecological agriculture, eco-agro-tourism) plays an important role to economical development and bettering a quality of life of local community. Ecological food gets a reasonable price on the market and it gets bigger and bigger demand. For that reason development of ecological agriculture is the way for more effective functioning of protected areas. Tourists usually visit national and landscape parks to admire their richness flora, fauna and beauty of landscapes. The most popular form of tourism on protected areas is eco-agro-tourism.

### **Social perspective of protected areas**

Protected areas play important role in realization appointed goals by Strategy of Sustainable Development until 2025 which emphasize that one of the most significant task is to “improve ecological security of the country, bettering quality of life, ensuring an optimal condition of natural environment upon the territory of whole country and by guarantying that Polish natural and cultural heritage will be passed to next generations (*Strategia Zrównoważonego...*, grudzień 1999). Thus eco-development concerning protected areas should be recognized as a social dimension, too.

Society, especially the one in local means recognizes protected areas as a barrier, threat for socio – economical development. It should be pointed that protected areas create great opportunities for local community, f.e.:

- abilities of employment in a system of protecting nature (creating new places for temporal employment);
- lifting qualifications (f.e. farmers running ecological or touristy agricultures);
- improving ecological education like for tourists by organizing eco-educational excursions;
- cultivating regional and local traditions/customs and international promotion of culture especially concerning those areas located around the borders;
- active involvement of local governments and communities in processes of planning, confirming and nature protection;
- promoting active weekend rests, healthy styles of life among societies and popularizing the idea of self responsibility of healthy life;
- development of scientific projects concerning nature protection.

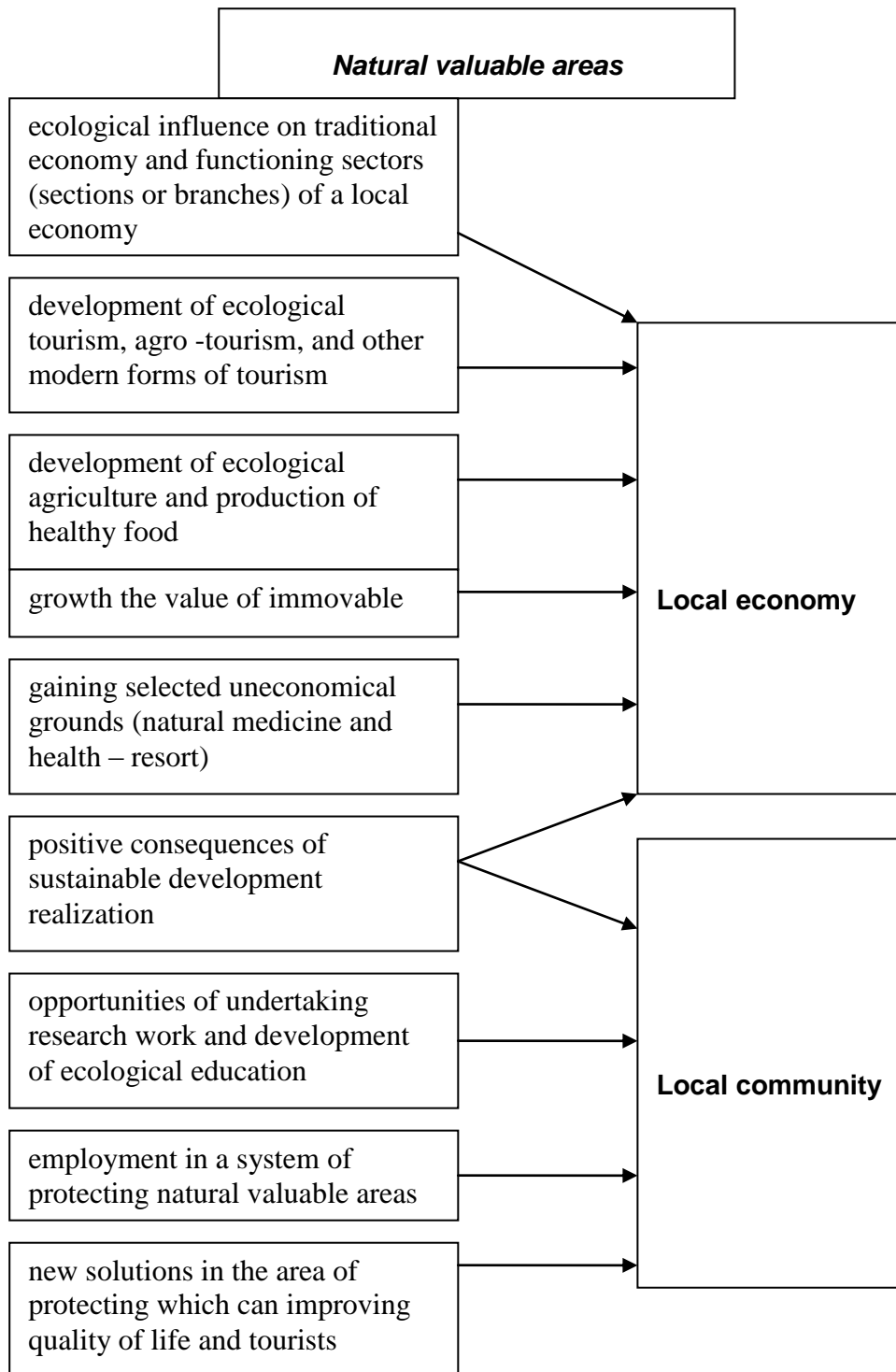


Diagram 1. Simulative influence of natural valuable areas on local economy and community  
 Source: A.Becla, A.Zielińska, *Problemy rozwoju małych miast na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych w: Miasta w okresie przemian*, Uniwersytet Opolski 2005, s. 115-124.

Any social conflicts considering the fact that there are concentration of different functions on the territories of protected areas (environmental, social and economical) many social conflicts concerning their functioning might arise. In this case bigger ecological consciousness of society should take place. It is possible to do on the way of spreading information and popularization. Local community should understand that protected areas are

not only threats to functioning those communities but they play a big chance for development of those areas.

## Conclusions

The idea of eco-development plays an important role to protected areas. They are especially destined for fast and effective implementation of eco-development in practice. It is important to adjust pro-ecological forms of activity to the conditions of protected areas and lifting ecological consciousness of local community. Ecological consciousness about protected areas in society is incomplete. There is a big opportunity to stimulate socio-economical development on protected areas and implement good practices. It is commonly accepted that ecological economy will meet economical needs of local community at present as well in the future and will make better quality of life not only people living on the protected areas but all society.

## References

1. [http://www.mos.gov.pl/artukul/7\\_aktualnosci/10209\\_natura\\_2000\\_w\\_polsce\\_polska\\_zamyka\\_liste\\_europejskiej\\_sieci\\_ekologicznej.html](http://www.mos.gov.pl/artukul/7_aktualnosci/10209_natura_2000_w_polsce_polska_zamyka_liste_europejskiej_sieci_ekologicznej.html) [data dostępu 29.10.2009 r.].
2. Kozłowski S., 1997, *W drodze do ekorozwoju*, PWN, Warszawa, s. 14.
3. *Ochrona Środowiska 2008*, GUS, Warszawa 2008.
4. Solon J., 2004, *Ocena zrównoważonego krajobrazu – w poszukiwaniu nowych wskaźników*, [w:] (red.) M. Kisotowski, *Studia ekologiczno-krajobrazowe w programowaniu rozwoju zrównoważonego przegląd polskich doświadczeń u progu integracji z Unią Europejską*, Problemy Ekologii Krajobrazu – tom XIII, Uniwersytet Gdański, Gdańsk, s. 54.
5. Stawicka J., 2007, *Ochrona różnorodności biologicznej*, [w:] Hewelke P. (red.), *Zasoby przyrodnicze szansą zrównoważonego rozwoju*, Wydawnictwo Szkoły Głównej Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego, Warszawa, s. 38.
6. *Strategia Zrównoważonego Rozwoju Polski do 2025 roku*, Ministerstwo Środowiska, Warszawa grudzień 1999.
7. Ustawa o ochronie przyrody z 16 kwietnia 2004 r. (Dz.U. nr 92, poz. 880, art. 6, 15, 17, 24, 33 z późn. zm.).
8. Zaufal B., 1986, *Problematyka i założenia ekorozwoju*, [w:] *Ekorozwój szansą przetrwania cywilizacji*, Wydawnictwo AGH, Kraków, s. 17.
9. Zielińska A., *Istota świadomości ekologicznej społeczeństwa w odniesieniu do obszarów przyrodniczych*, w: (red.) Eugeniusz Rydz, Adam Kowalak, *Świadomość ekologiczna a rozwój regionalny w Europie Środkowo – Wschodniej*, Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku, Słupsk 2008, s. 50-58.
10. Zielińska A., w druku, *Rozwój zrównoważony jako determinanta funkcjonowania obszarów przyrodniczo cennych*, [w:] *Problemy rozwoju polityki regionalnej i lokalnej w dobie globalizacji i integracji*, Uniwersytet Szczeciński Katedra Polityki Społeczno-Gospodarczej i Europejskich Studiów Regionalnych.