

IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC REGIONAL MANAGEMENT IN ENSURING AREA SAFETY

Aleš Horčíčka

University of Pardubice, Faculty of Economics and Administration, Institute of Economy and Management

***Abstract:** The article deals with the problems of strategic regional management in the Czech Republic. The aim of strategic management development activities in a regional background is to be successful in achieving objectives in the form of meeting citizen interests and needs in the managed localities and to support ensuring area safety. On that ground, cooperation of all included municipal subjects is necessary. Their cooperation is based on the equal participation principle. The main benefit has to be in the field of utility for all participants (regional and micro-regional clusters) in the process of regional development.*

***Keywords:** Regions and Micro-Regions, Strategy, Strategic Regional Management, Safety Management, Area Safety*

1. Introduction

The paper deals with the problems of strategic regional management in the Czech Republic (selected East Bohemian regions and micro-regions – Holicko, Vysokomýtsko, Chrudimsko).

The basic conceptual document in the field of the Czech regional policy is “Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic for the Years 2007-2013”. Under Act on Support for Regional Development [3], it builds a basic framework for the Czech regional policy – complementarily with the European regional policy and on the other hand as a reference framework for development policies in regions and micro-regions. At this level, the principle of subsidiarity should be taken into account. The paper is focused on the relation between micro-regional and regional development policies.

Impetus to the formulation of development strategies at district, regional and micro-regional level happened the award done by the Ministry for Regional Development on the principles of the Czech regional policy. The objective of this award was to get a national overview of the regional development needs. Regional development strategy is therefore a very important document which affects the development and will further influence the form of development assistance from the European Union side (similar documents have all regions of the EU Member States and are an integral condition for the allocation of funds to specific projects).

In the context of the emergence at new Czech districts creation, a need for the creation of their own development documents appeared.

Identifying key development areas and evaluating of the relevance of the various critical factors for these areas is all important preparatory work within the establishment of regional and micro-regional development strategies.

2. Aim and Methodology

The main objective of the paper is:

- a) to map out key development areas in the adjacent Czech micro-regions and their critical factors – rural areas and agriculture, personal quality of officials, environment, tourism, transport and safety.
- b) to suggest a draft for common solutions in the context of an integrated view on the regions.

Mapping of key areas should provide new knowledge that can be used for better performance of public administration in order to promote micro-regional development.

Follow-up objective is represented by developing joint measures to tackle key areas from the integrated point of view.

The results are based on mapping done by SWOT analysis, research, public opinion and brainstorming within included municipalities. Further information on the situation in examined areas the comparative method provides.

3. Formulation of the Problem

3.1 Strategic Management in Regions and Micro-regions

Strategic management is based on strategic planning, which is the starting point for each management activity. The procedure for setting integrated comprehensive plans is usually composed of the following steps [2]:

- 1) Setting strategic region's goals.
- 2) Strategic analysis of region's surroundings (opportunities, threats).
- 3) Strategic analysis of region (strengths, weaknesses).
- 4) Determining competitive advantages of the region.
- 5) Proposals for the basic variants of complex strategies.
- 6) Processing region's strategy.
- 7) Development and harmonization of sub-variants of regional development strategies (in the area of marketing, innovation, finance, organization, human resources, etc.).
- 8) Selection of an optimal alternative of a comprehensive strategic region's plan.
- 9) Foundation of a comprehensive strategic region's plan.
- 10) Establishment of the budget.
- 11) Elaboration of a comprehensive strategic region's plan and its transfer into the tactical and operational levels.

According to the valid rules, they are the following tactical plans for 1 year stated: marketing, investment, research and development, personnel development, financial.

Operational plans are an adequate tool for the immediate objectives implementation. Tactical and operational plans and projects must include quantitative and qualitative parameters of objectives used for projects and sub-plans solutions, personal responsibility, costs estimate and possible external cooperation.

A comprehensive strategic plan is approved by top management.

3.2 Regional Management and Its Basic Elements

Content of regional management can be expressed [1] as a solution for the management development process using the principles and instruments at the (micro)regional level. The aim of the regional management is interregional disparities reduction, regional development problems solution and increasing the competitiveness of the regions.

The target group for regional management is represented by the region's visitors, institutions affecting the live in the region (both internal and external). Planning function and tool mix belongs to the main used principles in this field. In the field of marketing, marketing analyses, researches, forecasts and communication mix are used. Therefore, it can be noted that the outcomes of regional marketing activities are used as a support of regional manager's decision-making processes and development of the regional management in cooperation with all institutions, organizations and citizens involved, affecting the live in the region.

In opposite to managers-generalists regional specialist should still be well oriented in all aspects of regional problems affecting the function of the examined region, particularly relations between all elements in the territory. These relations reflect the effects of the legislative background, specific personal interests and, ultimately, political effects, of course.

The most significant difference in the field of regional managements problems solution (from otherwise specialized management sub-disciplines) is the fact that the activities within regional management are not done in the "laboratory environment", but require continuous contact and even cooperation with aforementioned institutions and organizations affecting the live in the region (and therefore the effort to develop).

In order to determine what should be the output of development problems solution, it is appropriate to recognize the position of regional management in the system of relations in dealing with regional development problems.

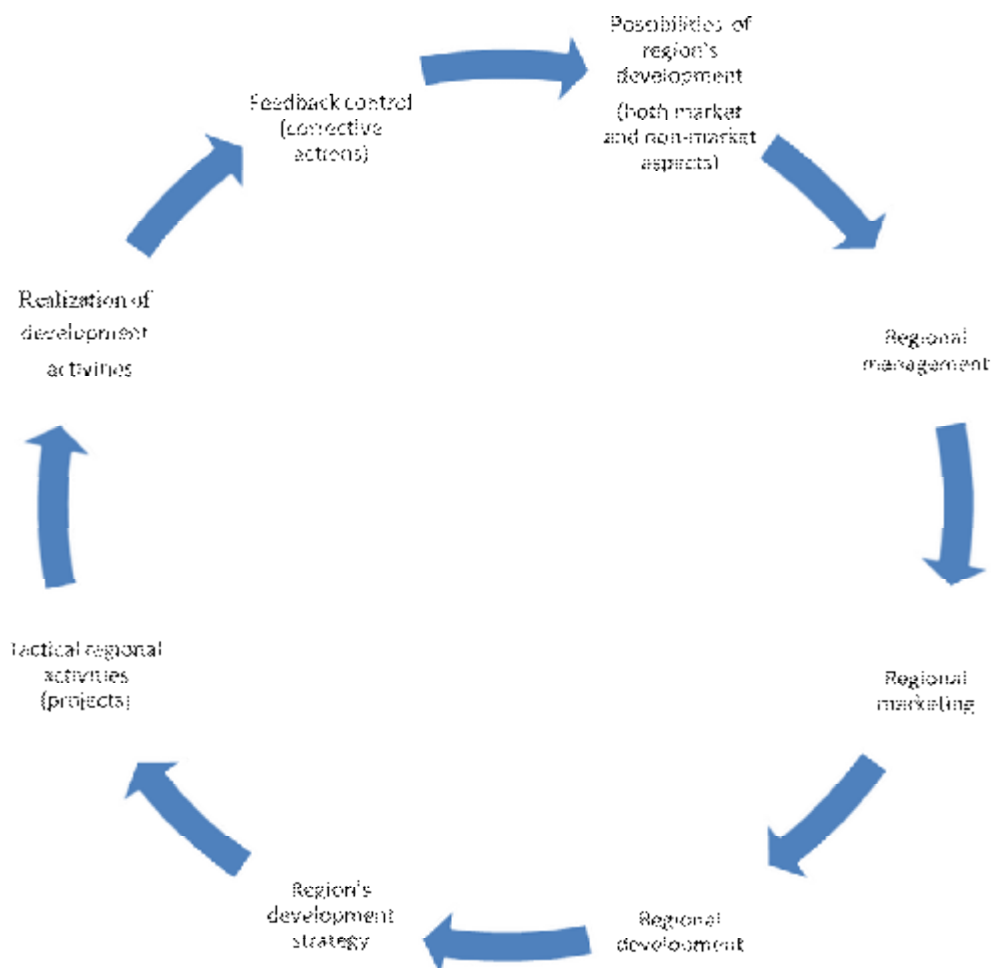


Fig. 1: The status of regional management in the region's development process

Source: Adjusted according to [4].

4. Solving the Problem

4.1 Suggestion of East Bohemian Regions' and Micro-regions' Strategy

The suggested strategy will be entirely compatible with the conclusions of the current situation analysis, general intentions and directions and attitudes preferred by the Czech regional policy, and will include in general [5]:

- a) measures to improve the current situation;
- b) measures to ensure the sustainable development of the territory.

We can state, economic growth (development) of researched micro-regions can be achieved in targeting key development areas.

The specific strategic vision for examined micro-regions can be formulated as follows:

Micro-region is a territory, which its (economic) development ensures by means of:

- *operating local government for the benefit of residents and the overall development of the region,*

- *efficient transport infrastructure,*
- *protection and improvement of the environment,*
- *tourism development and good condition for recreation, while respecting nature and cultural heritage,*
- *functioning small business in particular in the field of agricultural production,*
- *provision of security for residents and tourists in order to attract as many new visitors as possible.*

4.2 Suggestion of Safety Management Implementation into East Bohemian Regions' and Micro-regions' Strategy

- *The exact definition of safety management focus (inspiration in the field of Quality Management).*
- *Mapping of key development areas and their critical factors.*
- *The proposed strategy for ensuring area safety must necessarily correspond to the aims and directions of the Czech and regional development documents.*
- *Continuous improvement spiral is the connecting link for all the topics in this field.*
- *The high attention should be paid to the new methods (local and regional development relationship, strategic planning, principles of creating documents in the field of safety management).*

5. Conclusion

Solving regional development (understand right solution) gives a great social responsibility to the investigator. Such a solution must be based on the imperative to ensure “sustainable development”.

In any case, the solution of regional development problems represents a highly creative activity. Differences in socio-economic environment of each region in the Czech Republic does not allow implementation of the “cribbing solution procedure” principle among the regions.

The purpose of regions grouping is broader support of towns and villages to ensure the best possible services for citizens. The effectiveness of management is in particular dependent from the ability of its leaders to provide short- and long-term goals – and to develop the projects and programs, which as closely as possible reflect local conditions and respond to specific needs and requirements of citizens with a focus on rapid response, reaction efficiency, as well as new challenges and changing conditions in the regions.

In order to carry out long-term goals, it is necessary for regions to use the effective management principles. The aim of regional management is through cooperation among all incorporated towns and municipalities to seek about improvement in the field of citizens' satisfaction in those locations.

It is clear that in ensuring area safety must be involved all the bodies from the whole territory. It should be borne in mind that at the beginning of the 21st century

there are many serious threats, whether natural or human origin, which may seriously affect life in regions and micro-regions.

Within the objectives (including ensuring area safety), the focus is on continuous listening to the wishes and demands of citizens (needs analyzing), which represents one of the major bases for the determination of any long-term objectives, systematic needs analysis in regions, providing financial and material resources for its needs and providing the best services. Management at (micro)regional level requires not only good management skills, but also a deep knowledge of the specifics of local authorities and adequate management attitudes.

References:

- [1] ARMSTRONG, H., TAYLOR, J. *Regional Economics and Policy*. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2000
- [2] JOYCE, P. *Strategic Management for the Public Services*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999
- [3] Law No 248/2000 Sb., o podpoře regionálního rozvoje, ve znění pozdějších předpisů
- [4] SCHNEIDER, J. *Regionální rozvoj*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati, 2006
- [5] TEAM: *Program rozvoje Pardubického kraje*. Pardubice: Regionální rozvojová agentura Pardubického kraje, 2006

Contact address:

Ing. Aleš Horčíčka
University of Pardubice
Institute of Economy and Management
Faculty of Economics and Administration
University of Pardubice
Studentská 84
532 10 Pardubice
Email: ales.horcicka@upce.cz
Phone: +420 466 03 6163