

European Countryside

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Grzegorzew
Photo: Paweł Pluciński



„European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas”.

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Krzysztof Grabowski

Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am presenting you with the new issue of the "Our European Countryside" bulletin, whose cover is a reference to the holiday season. When planning your holiday, I encourage you to use the accommodation resources of agritourism farms and guesthouses operating in the Wielkopolska Region. When you visit a village in Wielkopolska, you will be able to see how many recreational and tourist facilities have been created in our region thanks to the implementation of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, financed by the European Union, as well as the Wielkopolska Village Renewal programme, financed from the budget of the Wielkopolska Region.

A journey from Poznań to the north of Poland offers an opportunity to see firstly the renovated railway station in Gołęczewo in the Suchy Las municipality, and then to admire the panorama of the Noteć Valley from the modernised observation tower in Ujście, Piła district. Both of these facilities received funding from RDP 2014-2020. We present them in this issue of the bulletin.

Yet summer is not only a time for relaxation, but also a period of intense meteorological phenomena. More and more often we are faced with the problem of drought in summer. This is a challenge for many municipalities, which shows the great need for water and sewage investments implemented in rural areas of the Wielkopolska Region, supported by EU funds under RDP 2014-2020. In spring

2021, the pool of funds for this purpose was increased for the programme beneficiaries in our region. The list of municipalities and utility companies that submitted applications in autumn 2019 and are awaiting funds still holds around a dozen entries. I am confident that we will sign contracts with all the applicants who meet the conditions for aid later this year.

The competition for partners of the National Network of Rural Areas is growing in popularity among applicants. This year we have PLN 1.3 million at our disposal, which will make it possible to implement a number of important activities directed at the residents of rural areas in the Wielkopolska Region. This includes training, meetings, study tours, outdoor events, competitions, research, publications, as well as films, radio programmes and press articles on rural development. You can read more about this in the article on pages 6-7.

I also encourage you to get acquainted with an interesting international project for active women which is being implemented by the "Piast Tract" Local Action Group with its seat in Łubowo, Gniezno district, in cooperation with the Irish Kerry LAG, and also to participate in the second photo competition entitled "RDP in Pictures". One of the photos awarded in last year's competition can be found on page 13.

I wish you a pleasant read on sunny summer days.

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al. Niepodległości 34
61-714 Poznań



Developed by:

Regional Unit of the National Rural Network
Department of Rural Development Programmes
Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region
al. Niepodległości 34, 61-714 Poznań
Tel. No. 61 626 60 00, fax 61 626 60 04
e-mail: ksow@umww.pl
www.wielkopolskie.ksow.pl, www.dprow.umww.pl

Texts:

Katarzyna Sobczak,
Adrian Kapuściński

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RDP

More funds for water and sewage investments

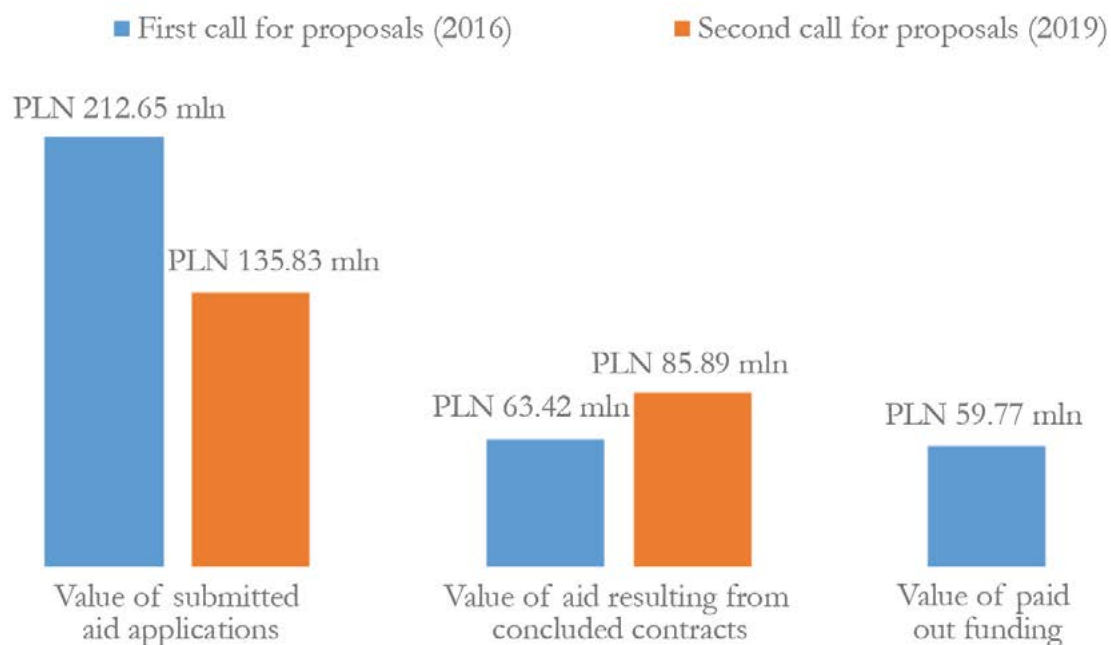
PLN 149 million total has been granted so far in aid to beneficiaries of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 for water and sewage investment projects. This pool may increase in the second half of 2021 as the evaluation of the last aid applications submitted in the call that took place in October 2019 is ongoing.

The total pool of funds earmarked for the Wielkopolska Region for the implementation of the measure: "Basic services and village renewal in rural areas" has been increased to cover operations such as water and sewage management, construction or modernisation of local roads, investments in facilities fulfilling cultural functions, shaping public space and protection of historic monuments and traditional buildings. As a result, it has become possible to cover all the tasks concerning water and sewage management which were on the list of projects waiting for financial support from the European Union. The evaluation of the last applications is ongoing and will be followed by an update of the list to allow contracts to be concluded. The money could go to 12

more beneficiaries. The value of their applications amounts to PLN 16.5 million.

— Since the beginning of 2021, I have had the pleasure of signing 16 agreements with beneficiaries of RDP 2014-2020 concerning support for investments in water and sewage management. The aid granted for this purpose amounts to PLN 21.5 million. It is worth noting that the funds which the Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region allocates under RDP 2014-2020 to support investments in water and sewage management have basically become the only possibility for rural municipalities to obtain external funding for this type of task. Such investments have been marginalised in the National Recovery Plan, which is being develo-

Summary of calls for proposals concerning water and sewage management under RDP 2014-2020



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RDP

ped in response to the economic problems caused by the pandemic. The Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy, which will replace the Rural Development Programme in the future perspective of the EU budget, also does not provide support for such important projects for local governments — says Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the region.

In 2021 the funds have been contracted, among others, to support investment projects in the municipalities of Dobra (Turek district), Granowo (Grodzisk district) and Doruchów (Ostrzeszów district). We have asked the Heads of these municipalities to comment on the ongoing projects.



Tadeusz Gebler

Mayor of Dobra

— We have received support in the amount of PLN 684,277 from the funds of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 for the operation titled “Stabilisation of water and sewage management in the village of Skęczniew and construction of household sewage treatment plants in the municipality of Dobra”. The aid granted constitutes 63.63% of the operation’s eligible costs to be incurred. By building a sanitary sewage system and domestic sewage treatment plants, we will improve the quality of life for the residents of the Dobra municipality. Under the Programme, 1.015 km of collective sewage systems will be built and 35 household sewage treatment plants will be constructed. These are the basic services that we try to provide to every resident of our municipality. The planned completion date of the investment is December 2022.



Zbigniew Kaczmarek

Head of Granowo municipality

— The project titled: “Stabilisation of water and sewage management in Bielawy and Drużyń, Granowo municipality” is extremely important from the perspective of the

municipality as it will facilitate the connection of the entire village of Bielawy and part of Drużyń to the collective sanitary sewage system, as well as the replacement of the old water supply infrastructure. In addition to the improvement of roads, this is the second most frequent request made by residents of villages without such a system in the municipality of Granowo. The implementation of the task will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living and quality of the environment through liquidation of old contained tanks and their replacement with a leak-free sanitary sewage system. Due to the enormous investment costs and the multitude of expenses of the local government, the investment would not have been possible without external financial support. The said project has been pending since 2015. We completed the first phase in 2017 and continued to intensively seek funding. We managed to obtain it this year under RDP 2014-2020 in the amount of PLN 1,920,944. By the end of 2021, the water supply network and sanitary sewerage system in Bielawy will be built, and in 2022 we will complete the construction of the Kubaczyn-Drużyń sewerage system.



Urszula Kowalińska

Head of Doruchów municipality

— The project titled: “Reconstruction of the wastewater treatment plant in Doruchów” is intended to significantly improve the quality of wastewater discharge to the environment and to increase the capacity of the plant. The project provides for the improvement of groundwater quality. The current technological layout of the treatment plant does not allow processing of a sudden excess of rainwater. The redevelopment will enable its takeover. Thanks to the funds obtained in the amount of PLN 2 million from RDP 2014-2020, the Government Fund for Local Investment and own contribution, the municipality will be able to implement this investment project. It would not be possible to finance the entire project from the municipality’s own funds alone, as we have one of the lowest basic per capita tax revenues among municipalities in Poland (around 43% of the national average).

PARTNERS OF THE NNRA

Results of the competition for NNRA partners

On 29 April 2021, the Board of the Wielkopolska Region approved the list of assessed operations of partners of the National Network of Rural Areas (NNRA) submitted to competition No. 5/2021. The pool of funds to be distributed amounted to PLN 1.3 million and enabled 42 non-investment projects to be co-financed. Support will be provided for the organisation of outdoor events, exhibitions, training courses, meetings, study tours, competitions, but also for research, publications, film and radio broadcasts.



Photo: Adrian Kapuściński

In 2021, the Wielkopolska Chamber of Agriculture will carry out six projects subsidised from the funds of the National Network of Rural Areas. Pictured from left: Izabela Mroczek - Director of the RDP Department, Krzysztof Grabowski - Deputy Marshal of the region, Piotr Walkowski - President of the Board of the Wielkopolska Chamber of Agriculture and Grzegorz Wysocki - Director of the Chamber of Agriculture's Office.

The competition for partners of the National Network of Rural Areas is announced once a year by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. This year it was organised for the 5th time. Applications were submitted to the Marshal Offices of 16 voivodeships. Only registered partners of the NNRA can participate in the competition. It is worth emphasising that any interested person or institution may become a partner of the NNRA - all it takes is to fill in the form available at www.ksow.pl.

— In 2021, we are allocating a record PLN 1.3 million to support the operations of the NNRA partners. This funding comes from the Technical Assistance of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Many of the tasks planned under the previous competition were thwarted by the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that this year's initiatives by the NNRA partners will come to fruition and that the inhabitants of rural areas in Wielkopolska will benefit from their outcomes — says Deputy Marshal of the region, Krzysztof Grabowski.

Out of 55 applications, worth a total of PLN 2 million, submitted by the NNRA partners in January 2021 to the Office of the Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region in Poznań, 46 projects met the formal and substantive requirements. On 29 April 2021 the Board of the Wielkopolska Region adopted a resolution on the approval of the list of evaluated operations. The available pool of funds made it possible to conclude contracts for 38 tasks, while 3 more initiatives will receive partial funding.

One of the projects selected for funding is the initiative of the Rural Youth Union called "Wielkopolska Young Farmers Network - Time to Work Together". It involves the organisation of four three-day training courses, combined with on-farm visits. The training is aimed at a group of 100 people: students of agricultural schools, farmers and their household members, living in rural areas of the Wielkopolska Region. The project aims to promote and provide young people with knowledge on various forms

Active rest and recreation in the countryside

“Summer is waiting, and with summer the river, and with the river the forest, yet we are still not there” - this is the refrain of a well-known song written by Ludwik Jerzy Kern. Indeed, Poles are most likely to spend their holidays at the seaside or in the mountains, and if they want lakes and forests, Masuria or Tuchola Frest automatically come to mind. Meanwhile, in Wielkopolska there is not only a rich agrotourism offering, but also increasingly better conditions for everyday recreation and tourism. Funds distributed from the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and initiatives taken by the Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region all contribute to this. It is worth planning at least one weekend in the Wielkopolska countryside.



Photo: Powidz Municipal Office

The Powidz pier on Powidzkie Lake - area of the Powidz Landscape Park.

Between 2016-2020, the Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region concluded 336 contracts with the beneficiaries of RDP 2014-2020, concerning co-financing of tasks aimed at broadly-defined development of tourism and recreation in rural areas. Such measures, implemented by local government units, NGOs, including Local Action Groups, and entrepreneurs, need to be consistent with community-led local development strategies implemented by 28 Wielkopolska Local Action Groups. The value of aid granted in the aforementioned period from European funds amounted to almost PLN 46 million. Some of these funds are used for grant projects.

— I kindly ask all residents of Wielkopolska not to forget about the charms of our region's rural areas while making their holiday plans. Every year the offering of Wielkopolska rural tourism becomes richer and richer, and the gradually receding pandemic allows us to rest in hotels and guest houses. In their vicinity, we can often access non-commercial recreational and tourist infrastructure, created or modernised with EU funds under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP), as well as funds from the region's budget for the Wielkopolska Village Renewal programme — says Deputy Marshal Krzysztof Grabowski.

RURAL TOURISM

Beneficiaries most often requested support for projects related to investment in recreational infrastructure, such as playgrounds, outdoor gyms, outdoor fitness trails and skate parks. Funding was also granted for the development of parks, squares and recreational areas in forests. A large proportion of projects that have already been implemented involved modernisation and adaptation of existing facilities, e.g. in community centres or cultural centres, and their use for tourism, leisure or integration purposes. Applicants were keen to invest in the construction or reconstruction of sports facilities, mainly football pitches. Tens of recreational trails were established or extended, including cycling, walking, educational or hiking trails. The aim of around a dozen operations was to erect small architectural structures in recreational areas by lakes and reservoirs, such as piers, water slides, shelters, benches or other forms of beach development. A total of 9 leisure and education/tourism centres were refurbished or built, including 2 waterfront leisure centres.

In addition to investment in permanent infrastructure, local action groups implement projects to promote the local tourist resources. A good example is the initiative of the "Krajna by Noteć" LAG entitled "Krajna Area - Pro-

motion of the LAG area". The project provides for the development and publication of a tourist and sightseeing map of the Piła district and a guidebook promoting micro-tours of Krajna. The second stage of the task assumes publication of folk art and handicrafts from the area where the LAG operates.

Anyone interested in accommodation in agritourism facilities located in rural areas of the Wielkopolska Region should visit the new website: www.turystyka-wlkp.pl. It contains information on agritourism farms and resorts awarded in all previous years of the competition for the best tourist facility in rural areas in Wielkopolska, organised by the Self-Government of the Wielkopolska Region. In this way, you can plan e.g. canoeing on one of the rivers flowing through our region or a stay in forest complexes full of mushrooms - the Noteć Forest and Drawsko Forest. It is also worthwhile to go fishing in the fishponds, bathe in the crystal-clear Powidzkie Lake or opt for a little horseback holiday. Those looking for creativity will find farms with ceramic workshops, and parents of young children may choose facilities where their toddlers can meet farm animals. For culinary enthusiasts we recommend the rich offering of restaurants associated in the Culinary Heritage Network of Wielkopolska.



The skatepark in Rychtal in the Kępno district was built thanks to EU funds under RDP 2014-2020.

Photo: Rychtal Municipal Office

Polish-Irish training for active women

May 2021 saw the launch of simultaneous online workshops for women - farmers, producers and entrepreneurs from the area of operation of the “Piaś Tract” Local Action Group (Poznań and Gniezno districts) and the Kerry LAG area in Ireland, the equivalent of the Polish LAG. The workshop is part of an international Polish-Irish project called “Active Women in Society”.



Photo: “Piaś Tract” Local Action Group

Trzuskoloń, May 2021: training for female farmers in permaculture, i.e. ecological design of human settlements combined with self-regulating agricultural systems based on natural ones. On the right, Irena Woźniak - trainer - and Magdalena Jankowska from Kliny.

The partnership agreement between the two groups was signed in November 2020. The budget of the project is PLN 1,058,000 and the funds come from the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The aim of the cooperation is to improve the social and economic competences of women and to promote local traditions. In the Local Development Strategy of the “Piaś Tract” LAG, women hold a special place as a disadvantaged group in access to the labour market. This is why a series of training courses, both in Poland and Ireland, has been prepared for the same three groups of women: for female farmers - training in self-development and permaculture (designing ecological human settlements); for female local producers - training in self-development and Internet marketing; and for female entrepreneurs - training in Internet marketing and business negotiations.

The training workshop is the first stage of the project. The next will be preparation of a film promoting the participants in the project. They will talk about their experiences of running their business and participating in the project. The film will be presented to a wider audience through the media. In the third phase, a face-to-face workshop will be organised if the pandemic situation does not prevent it. Finally, a meeting of groups from both countries is planned for September or October 2021. The organisers of the project hope that direct relations and mutual familiarisation with the specifics of the individual activities of each of the ladies will contribute to the creation of lasting relations, exchange of information and various practices, and perhaps also to the creation of distribution channels for the products manufactured by the participants in this international initiative.

Tower overlooking the Noteć Valley

When visiting northern Wielkopolska or travelling to the Baltic Sea on national road no. 11 it is worth planning a stopover in Ujście in the Piła district. Not far from the main road, on the Upper Estate, there is a nearly 10-metre-high viewing tower where one can admire a beautiful landscape. The facility was modernised in 2020 thanks to funding that the municipality of Ujście received from European funds under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.



Photo: Ujście Municipal Office

The observation tower in Ujście was built in 2006, enabling the local residents and tourists to admire the beauty of the Noteć Valley. But over time, the wooden elements of the tower began to deteriorate and pose a danger to users. Steps were taken to obtain external funding from the RDP 2014-2020. The project entitled: "Modernisation of the viewing tower in Ujście" was implemented under the LEADER initiative from funds allocated for the implementation of community-led local development strategies. The works carried out included a complete renovation of the viewing platform and its supporting pillars, which were replaced with steel sections. The new supporting columns with their reinforced concrete core, which was then clad with clinker bricks, follow the style of the tower. Wooden cobblestone floors were also made. Funding for this

task from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development amounted to PLN 62,173.

Thanks to the implementation of this operation, Ujście gained a renovated, charming recreational and tourist facility, taking advantage of the natural viewpoint on the Toruń-Eberswalde ice-marginal valley and increasing the attractiveness of the town and municipality. The tower also offers a panoramic view of a battle site from the Swedish Deluge in 1655. In the immediate vicinity of the tower a children's playground was arranged, a bookshelf was erected and oak trees were planted to mark the town's 600th anniversary. The whole site is a scenic and historical attraction, undoubtedly worth a visit.

New lease of life for a historic railway station

In February 2020, the rebuilt railway station building in Gołęczewo, in the Suchy Las municipality near Poznań, was put into service. The municipality obtained funds for this task from the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, under the sub-measure: "Protection of historical monuments and traditional buildings". The value of the grant was PLN 427,696.



Photo: Suchy Las Municipal Office

Gołęczewo, a small town in the municipality of Suchy Las in the Poznań district, became famous all over Europe for a little while more than a hundred years ago, still in the times of the German partition. At the beginning of the 20th century the decaying estate of Zygmunt Błociszewski was bought by the Prussian Colonisation Committee and at the request of the German emperor Wilhelm II a model German village, Golenhofen, was designed and built here. The buildings in the village were erected in the various architectural styles of almost all the German states: Thuringia, Westphalia, Baden and Saxony. The small station building at the Poznań - Oborniki - Piła railway station was erected using half-timbered technique, popular especially in Alpine regions. That's the heritage of the glory days. Today, Gołęczewo benefits from its proximity to Poznań and the phenomenon of suburbanisation, i.e. serves as sleeping accommoda-

tion for a larger city. In August 2017, the municipality launched a tender for the construction of an interchange in Gołęczewo and nearby Chłudowo. The aim of the investment project was to increase the accessibility of Poznań - Piła railway line No. 354 for the residents of the municipality of Suchy Las.

The municipality also thought about revitalising the old railway station while the section was modernised by PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe SA. The aim was to preserve the original appearance of the building and to restore its utility functions, as it will serve the customers of the Poznań Metropolitan Railway. One of the rooms in the station was turned into a reception point for the district police officer. Access for people with disabilities was improved by removing thresholds and for cyclists a sheltered bicycle shed was erected next to the station.

“RDP in Pictures”

We present another prize-winning photo in the “RDP in Pictures” competition, organised in 2020 by the Regional Unit of NNRA in the Wielkopolska Region. “Szczepan Windmill at Sunset” by Maciej Grzeszczak won first place in the category: “How has the RDP changed the Wielkopolska countryside?”. We would also like to encourage you to participate in the second competition. Entries can be submitted until 30 October 2021.



Photo: Maciej Grzeszczak

“Szczepan Windmill at Sunset”

Szczepan Windmill is located in Budziszław Kościelny in the municipality of Kleczew, Konin district. It was built in 1858 in Kościan, but years later, in 1926, it was moved to Budziszław. Its last owner there was Szczepan Mrówczyński, after whom the landmark was named. The windmill was still milling grain in the 1970s, then gradually fell into disrepair. It was restored in 2011 thanks to funding from the European Union under the Village Renewal and Development Programme, which aims to preserve the cultural heritage of Polish villages.

A few words about the author:

Maciej Grzeszczak

(born in 1968) - historian by education, works at the Municipal Public Library in Kleczew. He is the author of two books: “Kleczew w czasie powstania styczniowego 1863–1864” (“Kleczew during the January Uprising 1863-1864”) (Rys Publishing House, Poznań 2010) and “Ignacewo 1863” (Bellona Publishing House, Warsaw 2015, Historical Battles series). He has also published, among others, a series of articles on the history of Kleczew in *Rocznik Koniński*. Social and cultural activist of the municipality and town of Kleczew. His interests include photography, fiction, hard rock and heavy metal music.

Details on the second competition can be found at www.wielkopolskie.ksow.pl.

Wielkopolska white soup, i.e. “biała polewka”

This was a dish well-known to our grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Older Wielkopolska residents probably remember it from their childhood, because back in the 1970s it was often served in Wielkopolska on Lenten Fridays or during Lent. Today it may be forgotten, but is worth bringing back, because in summer it becomes a cooler, and in winter a hearty and nutritious soup. Perhaps the famous black soup, known as Czernina in Wielkopolska, will regain its glory through its white equivalent?

Various variants of white soup are known in virtually every region of our country, because these simple ingredients were available to everyone. In Silesia, they have their “polywka”, i.e. buttermilk soup, entered on the List of Traditional Products of the Opole Voivodeship by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2020. The Silesian version differs from the Wielkopolska version because of the addition of onion, pepper and mashed potatoes with butter instead of fried or whole potatoes. Wielkopolska white soup is a sour soup, seasoned only with salt, with boiled or fried potatoes served on a separate plate. It can be prepared with sour cream, sour milk or buttermilk. If you like to experiment, you can sprinkle the white soup with chives, add natural yoghurt and serve it as a cooler in summer.

Ingredients:

- 1.5 cups natural buttermilk
- 1 glass sour cream or sour milk
- 3 tbsp wheat flour
- salt to taste
- on a separate plate 3-4 boiled or fried potatoes

Preparation:

Boil buttermilk on a low heat. Blend flour with cream to form a smooth paste and add to the boiling buttermilk. Keep stirring until the soup thickens. Finally, season to taste with salt and serve with warm potatoes. Let the soup cool down before serving, then it becomes more refreshing and suitable for summer.



**Regional Unit of the National Rural Network
Department of Rural Development Programmes
Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region**

al. Niepodległości 34, 61-714 Poznań
Tel. No. 61 626 60 00, fax 61 626 60 04
e-mail: ksow@umww.pl

www.wielkopolskie.ksow.pl | www.dprow.umww.pl

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