

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Marek OGRYZEK, Department of Planning and Spatial Engineering, Faculty of Geodesy, Geospatial and Civil Engineering, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Prawocheńskiego 15, 10-720 Olsztyn, Poland, marek.ogryzek@uwm.edu.pl (*corresponding authors*)

Krzysztof RZĄSA, Department of Planning and Spatial Engineering, Faculty of Geodesy, Geospatial and Civil Engineering, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Prawocheńskiego 15, 10-720 Olsztyn, Poland, krzysztof.rzasa@uwm.edu.pl

The rural development policy of the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury in Poland (APS) is conducted by The Agricultural Property Agency – APA (since 1.09.2017 – The National Centre for Agriculture Support). The property managed by the APA includes agricultural land, forests, farm buildings, residential buildings as well as equipment and devices that are part of the social, technical, production, commercial and service infrastructure. The aim of research was to proof the influence of the gratuitous transfer of land from the APS to local government units, to engage them in social activities. The main methods used for it were: the analyse of legal acts in Poland, the analyse of reports and statistic data from APA and method of cartographic presentation – quantitative, cartogram. This article focuses on the social aspects of the APA's operations, based on an analysis of the data supplied by the Regional Branch of the Agricultural Property Agency in Olsztyn. The results of the analyses were presented in table format. The rural development policy concerning the performance of public purposes in rural areas was analysed. The obtained information and materials were analysed to identify social investments carried out on agricultural land donated to local authorities from Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury. The results were used to analyse and describe the social aspects of the APA's operations in rural area in Poland. Rural areas require various types of social assistance services. The Agricultural Property Agency has successfully fostered social development in rural areas, and it has the required resources and experience to continue that mission.

Keywords: Agricultural Property Agency, agricultural land, social aspects of managing rural areas, rural development policy

INTRODUCTION

On 1 September 2017, the National Centre for Agricultural Support (NCAS) was created. This organisation took over the tasks of the Agricultural Property Agency (APA) and part of the tasks of the Agricultural Market Agency (AMA). From 1 September 2017, both of these agencies ceased to exist on the basis of the Act on the National Centre for Agricultural Support of 10 February 2017 (Journal of Laws from 2017, No 623).

Before that day, the APA was tasked with managing Poland's agricultural land stock pursuant to the Act on the Management of the Agricultural Property of the State Treasury of 19 October 1991 (Journal of Laws, 2012, item 1187, as amended) and other regulations. Under that act, the APA was legally entitled to donate land constituting the Agricultural Property Stock (APS) to authorised beneficiaries. (Podgórski, Świętochowski, 2014)

According to Rząsa and Ogryzek (2017), before 2004, the APA initiated various measures aimed at promoting employment and creating new jobs, creating educational opportunities for children of the former employees of State-owned farms, and providing welfare support for the inhabitants of residential estates managed by State-owned farms. The legal provisions sanctioning these implemented measures were amended in 2004.

Because of those legislative changes in 2004, the APA ceased such activities, and concentrated on property management of the APS in the form of the sale of land, or other forms of allocating land, such as transfer for the implementation of public investments. (Bartkowska, Nawrocki, 2011)

Property from the APS can also be transferred free of charge to local government units through a contract concerning ownership (Kurowska et al, 2016) for the following reasons:

- to perform objectives related to the implementation of investments within the meaning of the Act on Detailed Rules of Preparing for the Implementation of the Investments in Fire Protection of 8 July 2010 (Journal of Laws from 2010, No 143, item 96, as amended),
- in order to allow the implementation of the local plan and reconstruction plan, as referred to the Act on Special Rules of Reconstruction, Repair and Demolition of Buildings Destroyed or Damaged as a Result of Natural Disasters of 11 August 2001 (Journal of Laws from 2001, No 84, item 906, as amended),

- for property designated in local zoning plans or a zoning study for the purposes of implementing infrastructure investment.

According to the Report (2015), the Agricultural Property Agency gave units of local government (municipalities) 6,100 hectares of land in Poland free of charge, by the end of 2014. This was about 16% of all land gratuitous transfer. Also entitled to receive agricultural land from the APS are: the State Forests, registered churches and other authorised entities (national parks, housing cooperatives, the Polish Academy of Sciences, Chambers of Agriculture, the National Board of Chambers of Agriculture, public universities, public research and development institutions, foundations and public benefit organisations). The main aim of research realised in this article was to proof the influence of the gratuitous transfer of land from the APS to local government units, to engage them in social activities. The Authors used the following methods for this purpose: the analyse of legal acts in Poland, the analyse of reports and statistic data from APA and method of cartographic presentation – quantitative, cartogram.

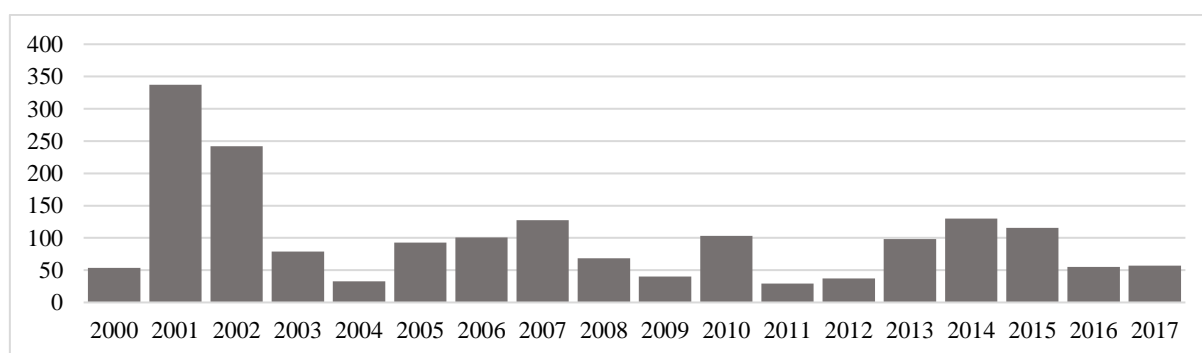
MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the first step, the Authors analysed the legal acts regulating the foundations for the operations of the APA. In that way, the areas of the APA's operations that have a direct and indirect influence on the social aspects of rural areas development were found and identified. In accordance with the currently applicable provisions of law, these operations primarily involve the gratuitous transfer of land from the APS to local government units, to engage them in social activities. In the further stage of the study, numeric data relating the operations of the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn were acquired. The Report on the operations of the Agricultural Property Agency (Raport z działalności... 2015) relating to the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury for 2014 was analysed. The information obtained was used to identify projects that had been implemented by the APA to address social needs and problems in rural areas. The collected data allowed an assessment of the impact of these activities and their scope and dynamic of changes, which is described later in this article. The next step was to examine the actual conditions of implementing the projects in the field, concerning the analysed selected aspects. To do this, the authors visited selected locations to take photographs of the developed facilities and to interview members of the local communities. This allowed the impact of the performed activities on the social aspects of rural development to be fully determined. Specific actions and the related data were collected in tabular form and visualised as figures and maps in the article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From 2000 to 2017, the Regional Branch of the APA in Olsztyn transferred 1799.66 hectares of land from the APS to municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. 98.37 hectares of that land were built-up with residential buildings. Built-up land accounted for approximately 5.5% of the transferred land and involved 674 premises. Undeveloped land was donated to various destinations such as: roads, sports facilities, water pumping stations, cemeteries, playgrounds, common rooms, utility rooms, administrative areas, rural community centres or to walking-cycling paths. 58.14 hectares were passed on for sporting purposes, mostly football pitches. This represents 3.2% of the total area of the transferred land. The Regional Branch of the APA in Olsztyn donated 64.59 hectares for the extension of roads, which represents 3.5% of the total area. Some of these transfers for the roads were caused by a decision on the land division or the need to access public buildings, as well as fire-fighting provisions and the widening of district roads. About 3% of the land was passed for use as green areas, and 4% for recreational areas and playgrounds for children, as well as other uses, such as: 1.7% for cemeteries.

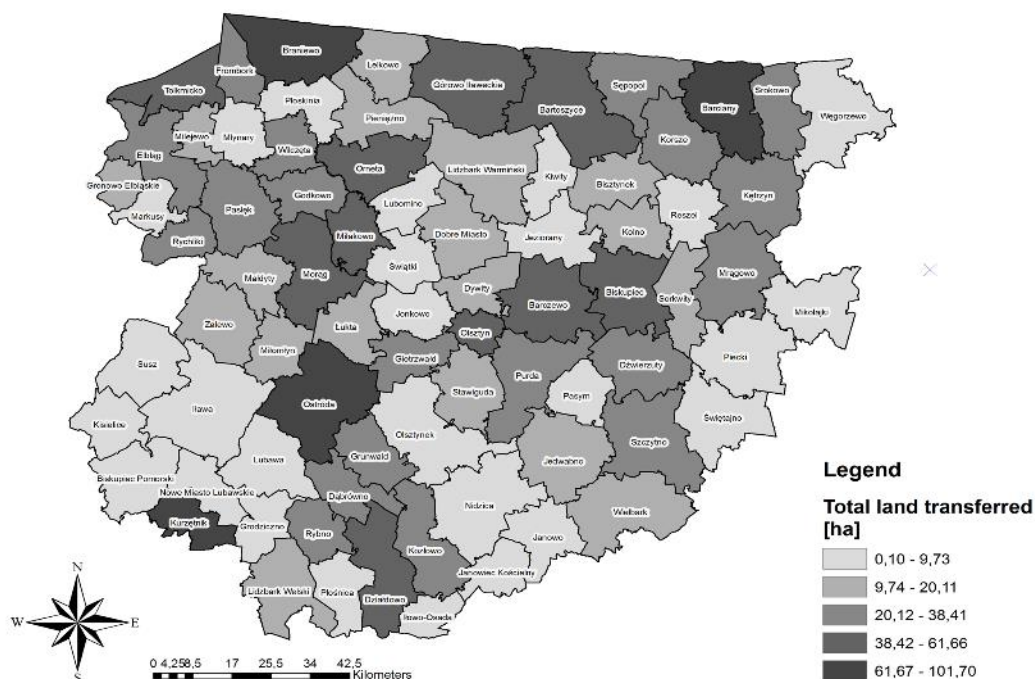
Figure 1 presents the area of transferred land in the years 2000-2017.



Source: own work, based on data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 1. The area of transferred land in the years 2000-2017

On the basis of the data presented in Figure 1, it can be concluded that the largest area of land was transferred in 2001, and the smallest area in 2004. Further analysis shows that, on average, each year 97 plots were transferred. Figure 2 presents the spatial distribution of transferred land for municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship from 2000 to 2017.

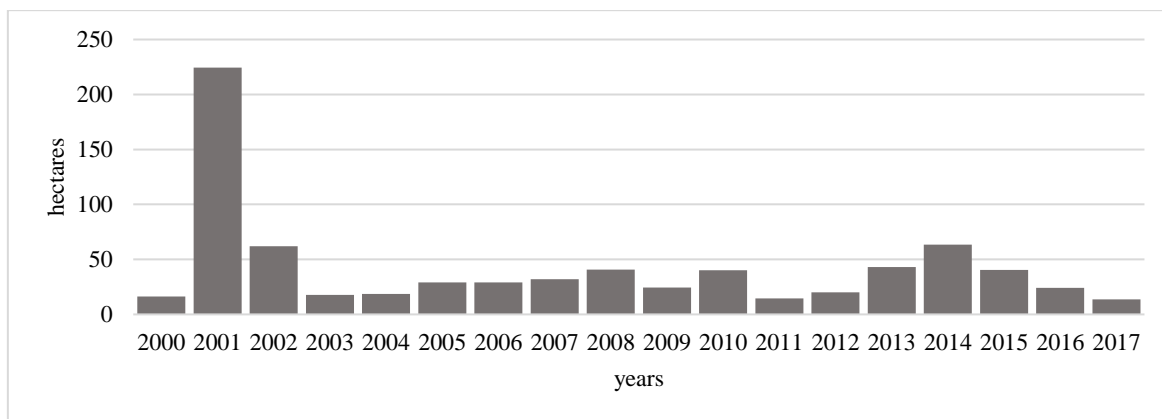


Source: own work, based on the data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 2. Total transferred land for municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship from 2000 to 2017

On the basis of the data presented in Figure 2, it can be concluded that the largest area of transferred land was in the municipalities: Ostróda, Braniewo, Barciany and Kurzętnik. In the Ostróda municipality 51 ha of land were transferred, only widening the national road No 52, designing the national road No 16 and widening the national road No 15 Inowrocław-Ostróda. In the Barciany municipality, over 56 hectares of land were transferred under an investment to expand the cemetery, including more than 17 hectares for the road. In the Kurzętnik municipality, 11.8 hectares of land were transferred for the municipal ski lift, 1.7 hectares for sports facilities and 40.6 hectares for sports and recreational areas. In the Braniewo municipality, there were a series of smaller investments.

Figure 3 presents the dynamics of transferring land for the construction of roads in the years 2000-2017.



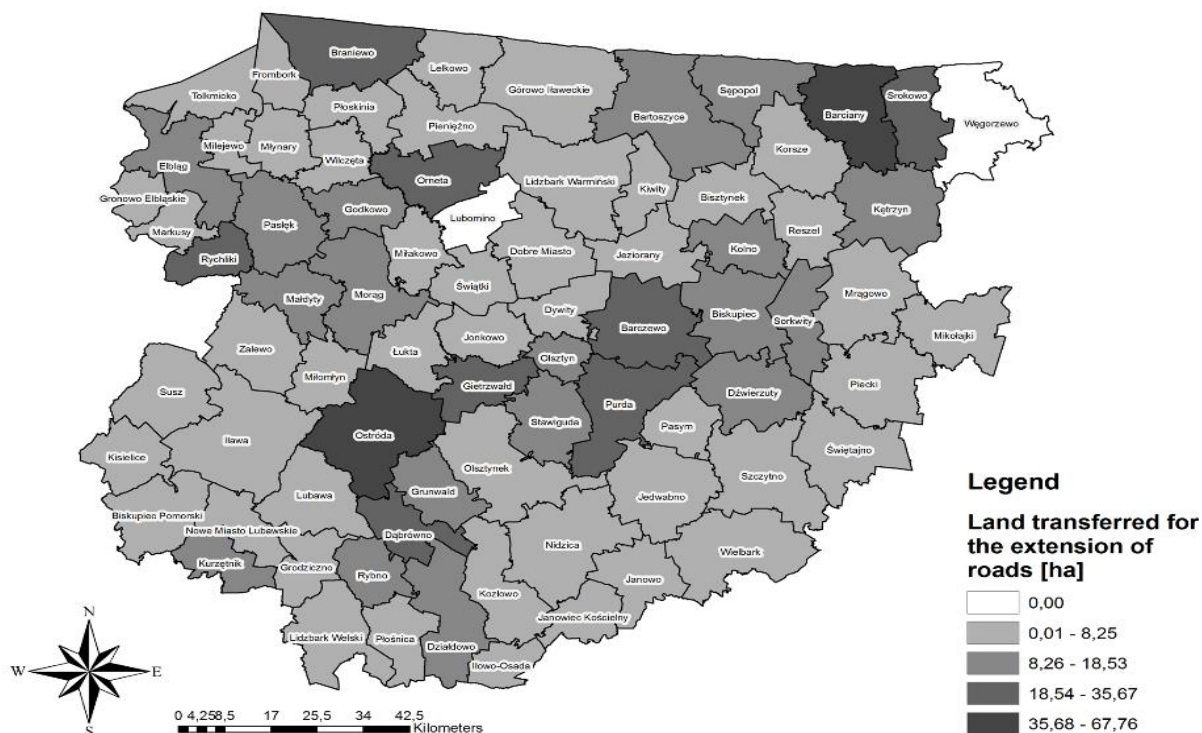
Source: own work, based on data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 3. Land transferred for the extension of roads

On the basis of the data presented in Figure 3, it can be concluded that the largest area of land was transferred for the extension of roads in 2001. Further analysis shows that, on average, 38 plots were transferred each year, with an average area of about 1 hectare. Figure 4 presents the spatial distribution of land provided for the construction of roads for the municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship from 2000 to 2017.

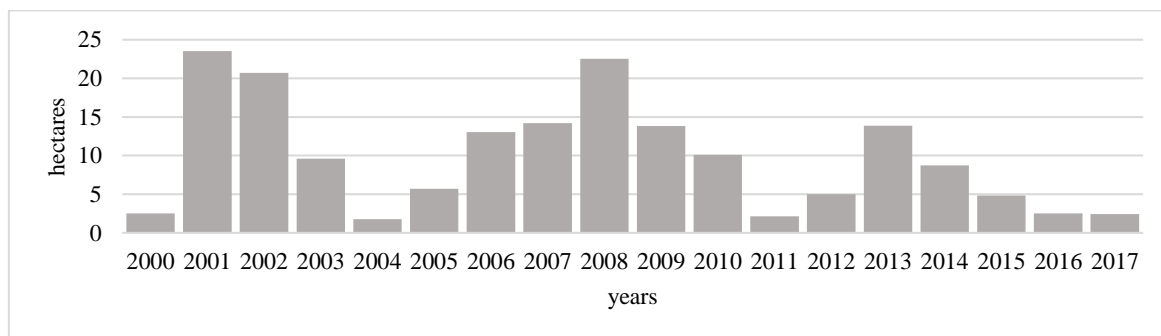
On the basis of the data presented in Figure 4, it can be concluded that the largest area of transferred land was in the municipalities of Barciany and Ostróda. The road investments in these municipalities are described above. The fact is that in the municipalities of Lubomino and Węgorzewo no land was transferred for the construction of roads.

Another analysed social aspect was the transfer of land for sport facilities (without children's parks). Figure 5 presents the area of land transferred for the construction of sports facilities such as playing fields or "orliki" ("orliki" is the name of a sports field built under a national programme).



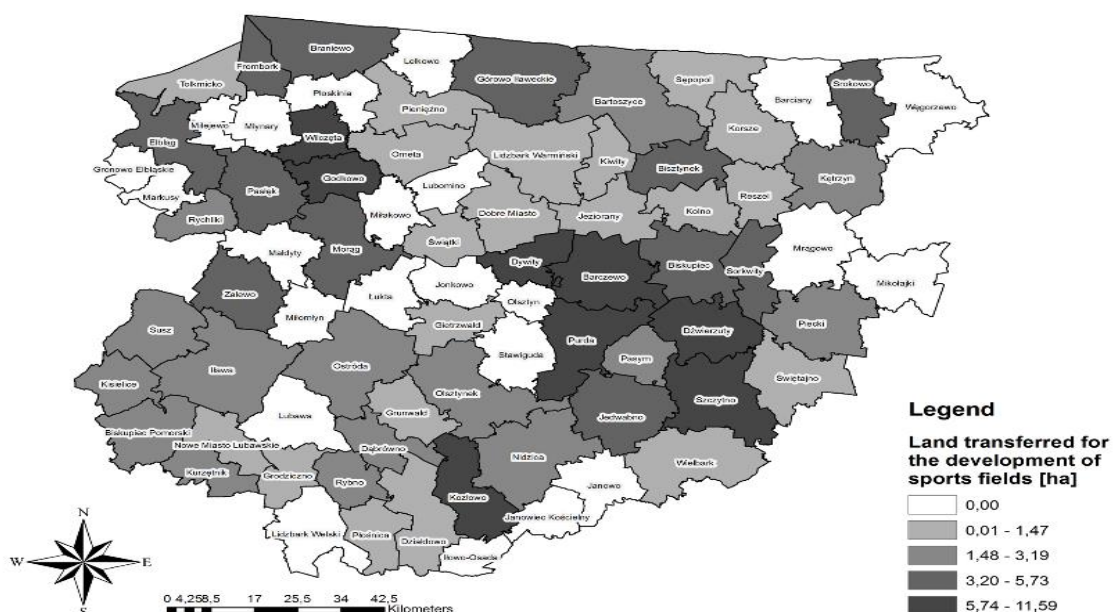
Source: own work based on the data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 4. Land transferred for the extension of roads for municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship from 2000 to 2017



Source: own work, based on the data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 5. Land transferred for the development of sport fields



Source: own work, based on the data provided by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn

Figure 6. Land transferred for the development of sport fields for municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship 2000-2017

On the basis of the data presented in Figure 5, it can be concluded that data distribution is fragmented and sinusoidal. The phenomenon was escalating and declining over 17 years. Further analysis shows that, on average, each year 9 plots were transferred, with an average area of about 1.3 hectares.

Figure 6 presents land transferred for the development of sport fields for municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship from 2000 to 2017. It can be concluded that there are some municipalities that received more than 5 hectares of land for this aim, but there are about 20 municipalities without any support.

A case study of the transfer of land for sport fields

Photo 1 presents the sports field ("Orlik") in the Braniewo municipality from the cadastral district of Szyleny, and for contrast Photo 2 shows the sports field in Podąg in the Godkowo municipality.



Photo 1. "Orlik" in Szyleny (Ogryzek M.)



Photo 2. Sport field in Podąg (Ogryzek M.)

The inhabitants of Szyleny say that, thanks to the "Orlik", their village is visited by the inhabitants of other villages of Braniewo municipality and even, they underlined, from the town of Braniewo. Their village has gained in popularity and recognition thanks to sporting events organized on the "orlik". This is a good example of how the investment stimulated the local village community to action, and what positive effects can be obtained thanks to the transfer of land by the APA. By comparing photos 1 and 2, you get the impression that the people from Podąg are unhappy with their sports facility. In the course of an interview with members of the local communities, they admitted that they would like to have an "orlik", but due to the fact that the municipality is not wealthy, it is jointly agreed that the first priority will be a children's playground (they also received land from the APA in Olsztyn) and the construction of a rural community centre (also on land they received from the APA in Olsztyn). These projects can be found on photos 3 and 4. The municipality received funding for these goals from EU funds. Currently, the municipality is attempting to obtain funds for the construction of a sports facility.



Photo 3. Rural community centre in Podąg (Ogryzek M.)



Photo 4. Playground in Podąg (Ogryzek M.)

CONCLUSIONS

The paper presents a study on the free of charge transfer of rural land, built-up and undeveloped, by the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn, to municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. On the basis of the analysis, it can be concluded that, during the last 18 years, the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn transferred 1799.66 hectares of land from the APS to municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship to engage them in different social activities. This paper shows the results of analysis of the purposes of the transfer of land by the APA. The authors examined randomly selected land transferred as sports facilities. The proposals were verified during a visit to the fields. In all these

cases, the actual use of the transferred land fully complies with the aims of transferring the land, and the opinions of society obtained during the interviews confirm the positive social reception of the transferred land. During the interview, there were no unfavourable votes about the activities of the APA Regional Branch in Olsztyn. The inhabitants spoke flatteringly about the supported initiatives. The gratuitous transfer of plots from the APA's resources had a positive impact on the improvement of the conditions for sport and leisure in municipalities and towns in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. Recreational and sports offerings were increased in municipalities thanks to progress in sports facilities and improvements in accessing these objects through the free of charge transfer of plots for roads. The residents of villages also emphasised that an important element was land transferred for use as playgrounds. Thanks to that, offers for children increase, or at least are not limited only to the rural community centre. In the landscape of the village, such objects as "orliki" or playgrounds appeared relatively recently and are enjoying great popularity.

The most important conclusions are:

1. From 2000 to 2017, the Regional Branch of the APA in Olsztyn transferred 1799.66 hectares of land from the APS to municipalities of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship. The largest area of land was transferred in 2001, and the smallest area in 2004.
2. The most important social destinations of that area were: roads, sports facilities, water pumping stations, cemeteries, playgrounds, common rooms, utility rooms, administrative areas, rural community centres or to walking-cycling paths.
3. Built-up land accounted for approximately 5.5% of the transferred land and involved 674 premises.
4. The largest amount of land was intended for recreational areas and playgrounds for children (4%) and for the extension of roads (3.5%). The smallest amount of land was intended for cemeteries (1.7%).
5. The largest area of transferred land was in the municipalities: Ostróda, Braniewo, Barciany and Kurzętnik.

To sum up the analysis taken, promoting sport and recreation in the countryside of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship in the form of the gratuitous transfer of land by the APA for those aims, in light of the studies should be considered successful, required and socially necessary. It can be concluded that free of charge transfer of rural land changed the area of municipalities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship and helped them to realise different social activities, such as: extension of roads, sports facilities, water pumping stations, cemeteries, playgrounds, common rooms, utility rooms, administrative areas, rural community centres or to walking-cycling paths.

Acknowledgments

This study was developed as part of research grant No 04/SFKiW/2017 entitled "An analysis of the principles of managing the agricultural property of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury in the context of legislative changes".

REFERENCES

1. Act on the Establishment of the Agricultural System of 11 April 2003. Journal of Laws from 2012, No.803 with subsequent amendments.
2. Act on the Management of Agricultural Real Estate of the State Treasury of 19 October 1991. Journal of Laws from 1991, No. 107.464 with subsequent amendments.
3. Bartkowska, B., Nawrocki, T. 2011. Agencja Nieruchomości Rolnych jako powiernik Skarbu Państwa. (Agricultural Property Agency – trustee of the State Treasury). *Studia Iuridica Agraria*, Vol. 9. pp. 13–9. University of Białystok, Faculty of Law, Poland. [In Polish]
4. Kurowska K., Ogryzek M., Kryszk H. 2016. Rola Agencji Nieruchomości Rolnych w gospodarowaniu i kształtowaniu przestrzeni obszarów wiejskich. (The impact of the Agricultural Property Agency in the management and shaping of rural areas). University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. [In Polish]
5. Podgórski B., Świętochowski L. 2014. Gospodarowanie nieruchomościami Zasobu Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa. (Management of Real Estate of the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury). *Wieś i Rolnictwo*, No. 2(163), pp.173–188. Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland. [In Polish]
6. Raport z działalności Agencji Nieruchomości Rolnych na Zasobie Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa w 2014 (Report of activity of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury in 2014). *2015 Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Vol. 3548, Warsaw, Poland. [In Polish]
7. Rząsa K., Ogryzek, M. 2017. Social aspects of rural development. *Baltic Surveying*, Vol. 7, pp. 42–49.