



CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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EUROPEAN LABEL OF GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE



ELoGE

Report on implementation of ELoGE Benchmarking

**Ist Edition in Poland
2018**

*Fundacja Rozwoju
Demokracji Lokalnej*



webankieta

RZECZPOSPOLITA

ŻYCIE REGIONÓW

1. Introduction

The Foundation in Support for Local Democracy (FSLD) received in 2018 accreditation from the Council of Europe for the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELOGE) implementation in Poland.

The ELOGE Programme includes verification of compliance by each notified local government office with 12 principles of good governance defined by the Council of Europe and promoted in all Member States as part of the implementation of the European Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at the Local Level. In the process of applying for the ELOGE, the local government unit carries out self-assessments, conducts surveys among residents as well as employees and councillors, and also collects documentation allowing to check whether the self-assessment is justified. Local government offices deciding to take part in the program undertake a difficult task related to the self-evaluation of the quality of implemented public services. This means that they put a special emphasis on raising the standards of their work in areas subject to self-assessment.

Twelve principles of good governance at the local level, which are verified by local government units:

1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections
2. Responsiveness
3. Efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Openness and Transparency
5. Rule of Law
6. Ethical Conduct
7. Competency and Capacity
8. Innovation and openness to change.
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
10. Sound financial management.
11. Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion.
12. Accountability

The verification of the application of the 12 principles of good governance includes:

- self-assessment of the activity/service of the local government unit according to the tool developed by the Council of Europe, which defines the standards of activities and services implemented by the local government (benchmarking),

- collecting available evidence to demonstrate the implementation of twelve principles,
- assessment of the performance of the local government unit by the citizens, councillors and employees of the office.

In the first edition of ELoGE in Poland, the following 9 local government units received the certificates:

- Commune and Town Office in Chęciny, Świętokrzyskie voivodship,
- Municipal and Town Office in Goleniów, Zachodniopomorskie voivodship,
- Powiat in Krapkowice, Opolskie voivodship,
- Lesznowola Commune Office, Mazowieckie voivodship,
- Municipal Office in Oborniki, Wielkopolskie voivodship,
- Piła City Hall, Wielkopolskie voivodship,
- Commune Office in Stoczek, Mazowieckie voivodship,
- Powiat in Tarnowskie Góry, Śląskie voivodship,
- Town Hall in Wejherowo, Pomorskie voivodship.

Detailed information about the 1st edition of ELoGE in Poland can be found on the FSLD website: www.frdl.org.pl/eloge

2. Implementation and methodology

The implementation of ELoGE in Poland started with careful examination of the guidelines contained in the Good Governance Benchmark document. These guidelines were adapted to local conditions and applied.

2.1 Preparation of tools and materials

Starting from March 2018, based on materials, approved by the Council of Europe, the FSLD team commenced work on the preparation of the Polish version of the benchmark, as well as the development of appropriate research tools – survey questionnaires for residents and employees of offices and councillors. Collaboration with Webankieta portal was established, as part of which the digitalized versions of questionnaires containing the scale and indicators proposed in the Good Governance Benchmark document were designed. The following research tools were created:

- application questionnaire
- 3 versions of surveys for residents (commune, powiat, voivodship self-government)
- questionnaire for officials and councillors
- self-assessment questionnaire.

2.2 Initiation and workshops

The first information on the 1st edition of the ELoGE program in Poland was provided during the Third National Congress of Local Government Units (LGU's) Secretaries in Gdynia, on May 14-15, 2018. During the plenary session "Improving the quality of management in local administration", during the speeches of Ms. Alina Tatarenko from the Council of Europe and Mr. Cezary Trutkowski, the President of FSLD, the general assumptions of the program were presented. This information was further elaborated during the workshop on the next day of the congress. 200 local government executive secretaries from all over Poland participated in the congress.

In the period from mid-May to mid-June, additional documents regarding the Program in Poland have been prepared: regulations, information about the Program, posters, program website.

2.3 Application process

The application process started in mid-June. On the FSLD website, detailed information about the program appeared along with a link to the on-line application questionnaire.



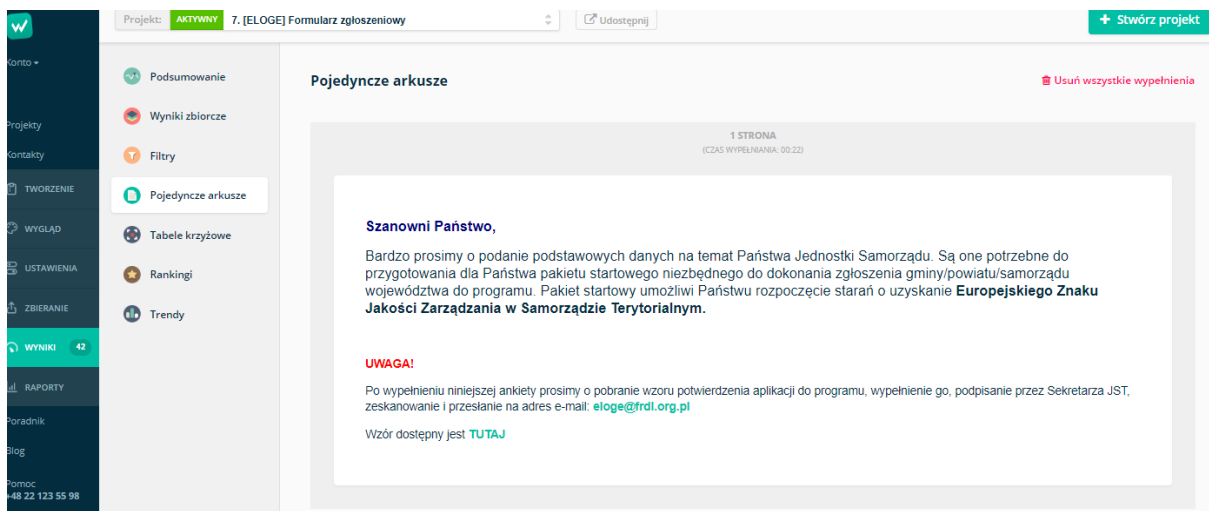
The screenshot shows the website of the Fundacja Rozwoju Demokracji Lokalnej (FRDL). The header includes the organization's name and navigation links: O FRDL, AKTUALNOŚCI, OŚRODKI FRDL, NASZE DZIAŁANIA, STREFA WIEDZY, ELoGE, and KONTAKT. The main content area features the text "Jak uzyskać ELoGE?" and the ELoGE logo. Below this, there are three numbered instructions for the application process:

1. Należy wypełnić ankietę zgłoszeniową ONLINE, znajdująca się [TUTAJ](#). Wzór ankiety w pdf do wglądu znajduje się [TUTAJ](#).
2. W ankiecie zgłoszeniowej należy podać podstawowe informacje na temat Twojej jednostki samorządowej (nazwa, liczba mieszkańców, rodzaj jednostki, itp.). Przed wypełnieniem ankiety należy wysłać skan potwierdzenia zgłoszenia, podpisanego przez Sekretarza JST, na adres eloge@frdl.org.pl.
Wzór potwierdzenia znajduje się [TUTAJ](#).
3. Realizacja wymienionych wyżej 12 zasad przez gminę lub powiat weryfikowana będzie on-line, przy użyciu specjalnie przygotowanego narzędzia dedykowanego dla każdej zgłoszonej JST.

At the same time, information about ELoGE was posted on the websites of 14 FSLD regional centers, and also sent by e-mail to approximately 3,000 executive secretaries of LGUs throughout Poland. The deadline for application to the program was set at July 30.

All applications could only be made by the specially designed web-service. After completing the application questionnaire, the system automatically generated a message with

instructions on how to proceed with application procedure, generated links to pre-designed tools and promotional materials (posters with QR-code with link to the survey for residents). Each LGU, which registered itself to the Program, was also obliged to send a scan confirming the will to participate in the Program, signed by a representative of local authorities. The e-mail address (eloge@frdl.org.pl) and the phone at the FSLD office were active during the entire application process. Many consultations were given, both benchmark related as well as regarding technical matters. 20 local governments were interested in applying to the program. The registration questionnaire was finally completed by 13 local government units. The registration page for the program looked like this:



2.4 Citizens, councillors and employees survey

Local government units which applied to the programme carried out surveys among residents as well as employees and councillors. The deadline for completion of these surveys was August 30. The results served as a verification of the self-assessment. The questionnaires contained 12 questions concerning the 12 principles of good governance from Good Governance Benchmark.

The required research samples have been determined as follows:

Numer of residents in LGU	The minimum number of participants in the research
up to 5000	300
5000-10000	400
10000-50000	500
50000-100000	600
100000-500000	800
more than 500000	1000

Each notified local government unit received a poster containing a dedicated link to the residents' survey and QR Code. The surveys were completed on-line and collected in the Webankieta system. In many LGU's offices equipment was available, which residents could use in order to complete the survey.

The site with surveys for residents looked like this:

The screenshot shows a web-based survey form. At the top, there is a header with the title 'ELOGE' Kwestionariusz dla obywateli - GMINA (nieaktywna)' and a 'Udostępnij' button. A green '+ Stwórz' button is visible in the top right corner. The main content area contains the following text:

Szanowni Państwo,

Nasza Gmina ubiega się o Europejską Odznakę Jakości Zarządzania w Samorządzie Terytorialnym (więcej informacji: www.frdl.org.pl/eloge).

Zapraszamy bardzo serdecznie do podzielenia się Państwa opiniami na temat działalności naszego samorządu. Wypełnienie ankiety powinno zająć od 5 do 10 minut. Państwa udział w badaniu jest niezbędny do prawidłowego złożenia wniosku.

Badanie jest anonimowe - nie ma możliwości identyfikacji odpowiedzi, których Państwo udzieliłicie. Wyniki będą analizowane i prezentowane wyłącznie w zbiorczych zestawieniach.

Samorząd gminy Gmina Lesznowola

3 STRONA
(CZAS WYPEŁNIANIA: 03:12)

Poniżej przedstawiono 12 możliwych stwierdzeń odnoszących się do działalności władz samorządowych w Pani/Pana Gminie.

Przy każdym z nich prosimy określić, czy odpowiada, czy też nie odpowiada ono Pani / Pana przekonaniom.

1) Jestem zadowolony z możliwości wpływania na decyzje władz gminy, w sprawach, które mnie interesują. *

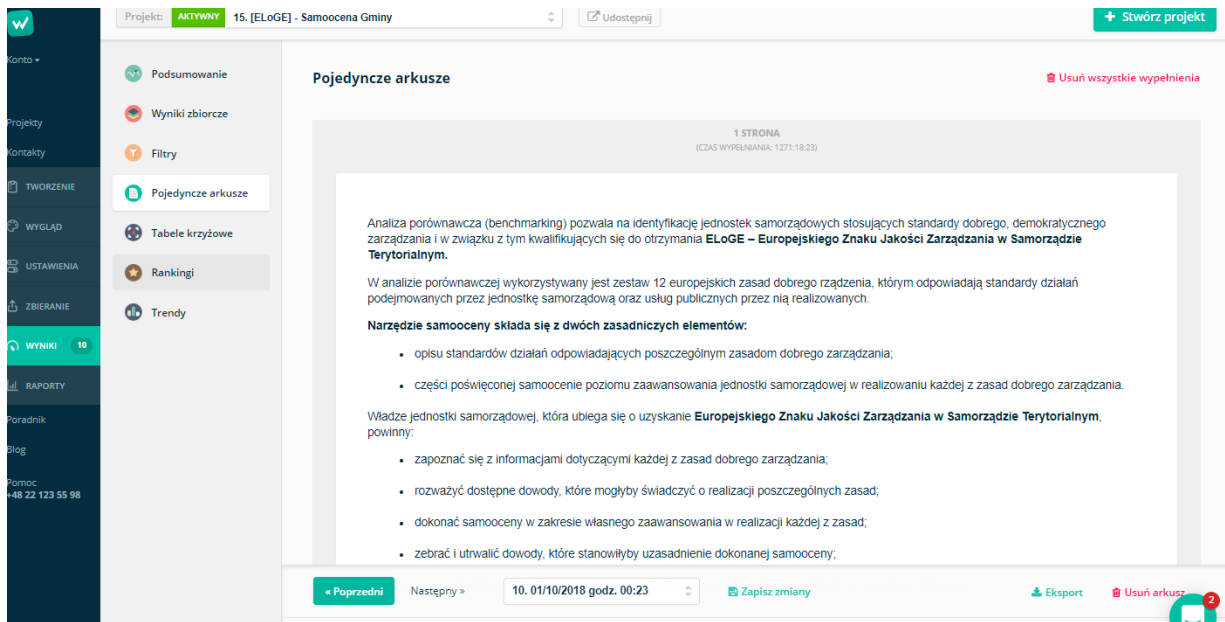
Można udzielić jednej odpowiedzi.

zdecydowanie się ZGADZAM raczej się ZGADZAM raczej się NIE ZGADZAM zdecydowanie się NIE ZGADZAM nie wiem / trudno powiedzieć

2.5 Self-assessment

Self-assessment questionnaires dedicated to each local government unit registered to the program have been generated from the Webankieta on-line system. According to the schedule, the deadline for submitting the questionnaire was September 20. Self-assessment has been finally completed by 10 local governments (3 units have abandoned participation in the program, mainly due to difficulties in conducting the survey among residents). While filling in the questionnaire, many questions arose from the offices, mainly concerning justifications for the assessments made.

The self-assessment questionnaire in the Webankieta system looked as follows:



3. Results

The results of all the research were collected in the Webankieta system and prepared for analysis in the form of tables. In the evaluation process only 10 local government units that completed the self-assessed questionnaire and carried out additional required tests were taken into account. 9 out of 10 units achieved an average of 2 or more points for each of 12 principles.

3.1 Results in 10 local government offices

Self-evaluation results in 10 local government units:

		Tarnogórski district	Goleniów commune	Złocieniec commune	Piła commune	Lesznowola commune	Krapkowicki district	Wejherowo commune	Oborniki commune	Chęciny commune	Stoczek commune
Points earned		358	434	319	383	390	401	433	398	395	434
The maximum number of points to get		448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448
Percentage result		79,91%	96,88%	71,21%	85,49%	87,05%	89,51%	96,65%	88,84%	88,17%	96,88%
1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections	average	3,00	3,75	2,17	3,92	2,92	3,92	3,75	3,25	3,42	3,75
2. Responsiveness	average	3,57	4,00	2,57	3,43	3,57	3,14	3,57	3,14	3,71	4,00
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness	average	3,20	3,70	1,30	3,80	3,20	3,10	3,60	3,30	3,30	4,00
4. Openness and Transparency	average	3,79	3,79	3,00	3,93	3,71	3,64	4,00	3,43	3,79	4,00
5. Rule of Law	average	3,40	4,00	4,00	3,60	3,80	4,00	4,00	3,80	3,80	4,00
6. Ethical Conduct	average	3,30	4,00	3,90	2,70	3,70	3,60	4,00	3,70	3,50	4,00
7. Competency and Capacity	average	3,33	3,78	2,56	2,89	3,56	3,22	4,00	3,33	3,67	3,89
8. Innovation and Openness to Change	average	3,00	3,80	2,80	3,00	3,60	4,00	4,00	3,80	3,80	4,00
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation	average	2,30	4,00	2,50	3,30	3,50	3,50	3,70	3,80	3,40	3,20
10. Sound Financial Management	average	3,27	4,00	3,53	3,33	3,60	3,47	4,00	3,87	3,67	4,00
11. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion	average	2,86	3,86	3,14	4,00	3,00	3,86	3,71	4,00	3,00	3,71
12. Accountability	average	3,13	3,88	3,00	2,75	3,75	3,88	4,00	3,38	3,25	4,00
general result	average	3,18	3,88	2,87	3,39	3,49	3,61	3,86	3,57	3,53	3,88

As presented in the table, one commune (Złocieniec) did not reach the average score 2 in principle No. 3, as well as did not reach the average aggregate result of 3. Thus, this unit has been excluded from further evaluation proceedings. The results of the self-assessment of the remaining nine local governments allowed for further analysis, i.e. examining the justifications presented in the questionnaire, checking the given sources and analyzing the results of surveys of residents, employees of offices and councilors.

3.2 Evaluation committee and final results

The European Label of Governance Excellence was granted by the decision of the evaluation committee, composed of:

- Cezary Trutkowski, president of the board of the FSLD (Chairman),
- Hanna Wawrowska, author and head of the *Rzeczpospolita Życie Regionów* newspaper project,
- Katarzyna Zakroczyńska, program director of the FSLD,
- Sławomir Mandes, Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw,
- Mikołaj Cześniak, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Social Sciences and Humanities.

The committee held two meetings on September 25 and October 1. During the first meeting, numerical results of self-assessment of 10 local government units were presented. Decisions were taken to exclude from further proceedings the Złocieniec local government unit. The results of the remaining 9 local governments were analyzed, that is:

- each member of the committee received detailed data from the survey of two or three local governments,
- the numerical results of the self-assessment study were compared with the numerical results of the survey of residents as well as employees and councillors,
- the self-governments' justifications for all the indicators included in the survey were analyzed and the credibility of the given sources was checked.

The committee members met again on October 1 and discussed the results. Based on them, the decision was made to grant ELoGE to nine local government offices. Everybody was informed about the decision on October 2.

4. Award Ceremony

The ELoGE Award Ceremony took place on 8 October 2018 in Warsaw (Polin Museum). Statuettes and certificates were presented by Mrs Jutta Gutzkov, Head of the Good Governance Division of the Council of Europe and Cezary Trutkowski, President of the Board of FSLD.

During the ceremony there were present about 200 representatives of local governments in Poland. This celebration was combined with other annual prestigious awards for this professional environment: The Jerzy Regulski Award, The Michał Kulesza Award and the Local Governments ranking organised annually by "Rzeczpospolita" daily. Thanks to the cooperation with the publishing house "Rzeczpospolita - Życie Regionów", it was possible to give media coverage to the ELoGE Award Ceremony, attract a wide audience and organize it in a prestigious place in Warsaw.



5. Feedback from local governments offices

Tomasz Szrama, Mayor of the City of Oborniki:

“From the beginning of my engagement as the mayor of Oborniki, together with the officials, we are trying to raise the standards of work and service for the residents. I am glad that the efforts of the office and officials and the involvement of the residents contributed to the fact that we were among 9 communes in Poland which received EloGE in 2018. It is extremely important for me that, among many certificates for which you simply have to pay, you can not buy it, because it is awarded for a specific job.”

Beata Dudzińska, Deputy Mayor of the City of Piła:

“The decision to join the procedure for obtaining the ELOGE certificate was dictated by the desire to confirm the management standards implemented in our municipality. Frequently, as a community, we are successfully subjected to assessments and audits of Polish institutions, which is why this time we decided to check ourselves on the level of European standards established by the Council of Europe. We applied for a European Label of Governance Excellence in the belief that we provide high quality services for the City. As it turned out later, we fulfil 12 principles of good governance related to the quality of undertaken activities and ethics. The EloGE sign is very important to us first of all because our residents participated in the assessment of our work.”

Mieczysław Wójcik, Mayor of Stoczek Commune (1994-2018):

“Participation in the EloGE programme is an excellent opportunity to check the quality of services provided at the office by an independent institution with the help of tools that allow you to get to know the opinion of residents, council office employees, providing them with anonymity in the same time. Obtaining the Certificate is undoubtedly a success for me as the commune administrator, but also for all employees of the office. Thanks to the aggregate research results, we have the opportunity to take action to eliminate our weaknesses, which will be a direct benefit for residents using our services.”

Robert Krupowicz, Mayor of Goleniów Commune:

“We appreciate independent studies and evaluation regarding our business. Awarding our municipality with the EloGE is another motivation to create a broadly understood civil society. Only the full involvement and participation of residents allows for clear formulation and effective implementation of goals that consciously meet the needs of local communities.”

Robert Jaworski, Mayor of the City and Commune of Chęciny:

“We decided to participate in the EloGE programme to show that the Commune and Town Office in Chęciny has been guided by high standards of good administration for many years.

We have managed to introduce European quality in governance based on compliance with law, due financial management and above all on ethical conduct and integrity. Appreciation of our management quality principles by the Council of Europe is the culmination of our hard work and confirmation that we are working at the highest European level. Acquiring the EloGE certificate is for us a great honour and motivation for further actions.”

Krystyna Kosmala, Tarnogórski Powiat (district) Staroste:

“Powiat (district) office in Tarnowskie Góry decided to apply for the EloGE certificate mainly to find out how local society assesses its work. Obtaining this certificate is a very big distinction because it confirms that our clients assess the daily work of officials very well, and the office is positively received outside. The award is a satisfaction not only for the Powiat authorities, but also for all employees who through their activities contribute to the efficient management of the unit.”

Maciej Sonik, Krapkowicki Powiat (district) Staroste:

“The measure of quality in the management of local government are not only the indicators, but above all the satisfaction of residents with efficient, professional and friendly service, treated in the category of partner, not the client.

The mission of district management requires full openness to the needs of the community and continuous improvement, taking into account the best European models and ideas. These principles are represented by the European Label of Governance Excellence.

The EloGE awarded to us we treat as a commitment and an incentive to further improve the powiat management process.”

Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik, Mayor of the Lesznowola Commune:

“We have considered the decision on granting the EloGE to Lesznowola commune as a great deal, all the more that these certificates were granted in Poland for the first time. The provision of broadly defined services to our residents at the highest level is the basis of the Office’s activities and the objective of our officials. The European EloGE Certificate is therefore not only a great distinction but also a commitment.”

Krzysztof Hildebrandt, President of the City of Wejherowo

“The residents of Wejherowo can proudly say that we have been included in the group of nine Polish local governments awarded with a certificate by the Council of Europe, which confirms the high quality of the work of the Wejherowo office, in accordance with European standards. Residents using the services of the Municipal Office in Wejherowo filled out surveys, in which they highly appreciated the effects of

its activities. I am glad that the jury of the competition also highly appreciated the management procedures existing in the office, considering them to be good practices worth sharing with others.”

6. Conclusions

- Out of 20 interested local governments, 13 entered the program. This was followed by oral and written consultations with the Program office. The program was joined by those LGU's, which recognized as a real the passage through the whole process.
- Out of 13 local governments notified, 10 offices undertook activities to implement the surveys. This was caused by problems with conducting surveys among residents during the summer holidays.
- To fulfil the whole duty was rather difficult for local governments in Poland. It was especially complicated for small communities with small offices, where it is hard to find people to give them additional duty connected with ELoGE.
- Once finished all local government offices were satisfied for their work and the treated it as an occasion for self evaluation. They appreciate the hard work required from them, they think it was worth doing.
- Organising the ELoGE award ceremony together with other prestigious awards was a good decision for the promotion. Because of that, polish ELoGE edition was mentioned many times in national and local press.
- It is planned to organise ELoGE every two years and we have already announced it during the ELoGE Award Ceremony. So the next round will take place in 2020.
- Lesson learnt is to start the whole process of application and data gathering much more earlier, preferably on early spring and to finish it before summer holidays. We need more time to analyse data before taking the final decision.
- As experience shows, one possible modification to the procedure could be to replace citizens survey (always difficult to implement in methodologically justified way) with public meetings with citizens during which the officials from LG unit could present their achievements and publicly justify and defend their self-assessments against the benchmark. If such a solution is adopted the program would consist of: self-assessment, meetings with citizens, surveys with employees and councillors.

Cezary Trutkowski

Prezes Zarządu FRDL