



# Country Fiche on Terrestrial Spatial Planning

## POLAND

Updated March 2025

# 1. Current situation and main challenges

Spatial policy in Poland (excluding maritime spatial planning) is regulated by the Act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development with several amendments, as well as by number of other regulations, enclosed in over 100 legal acts.

State administrative organization in terms of spatial planning is divided into 3 levels: national, regional and local, with respective documents. The documents are binding for the lower level, but there is no instant update of a lower level document required after a higher level document amendment.

The primary basis for obtaining a building permit are local spatial development plans, presently covering about 32,6% of the country, adopted in accordance with a study of conditions and directions of spatial development of a municipality. In areas without spatial development plans, individual terms of construction are required to obtain a building permit. The carrying out of most infrastructural public investments (including public roads and utilities) is regulated in *lex specialis* laws, overruling local spatial planning documents.

The key problems of functioning of the spatial planning system are:

- 1) ineffective spatial policy at all levels of planning, including inadequate coverage of local spatial development plans and insufficient control over unplanned suburbanisation and, resulting from it, increasing costs of transportation and other technical and social infrastructure,
- 2) lack of stability and efficiency of the investment and construction process in areas without spatial development plans – lack of compatibility between terms of construction and study of conditions and directions of spatial development of a municipality, resulting in lack of safety of investment and spatial conflicts,
- 3) impeded carrying out of public investments excluded from *lex specialis* procedures, as a result of inadequate coverage of local spatial development plans and insufficient coordination between the consecutive levels of planning.

The solution to abovementioned circumstances is last amendment to the Act of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003 on spatial planning and development, approved by Polish government 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and should be implemented (as for today) by the end of 2025. This is the first stage of the reform of the spatial planning system regarding local level. The new act on spatial planning:

- 1) introduced a requirement for all municipalities to prepare and adopt a municipal strategy, related also to territorial development;
- 2) introduced a requirement for all municipalities to prepare and adopt new instrument – general spatial development plans, to be converted into local legislation, which shall lay down the general rules for building in the municipal area and it will establish zones for supplementary construction. The plan must be coherent with the municipal strategy;
- 3) introduced a requirement that obliges investors to carry out additional projects for the benefit of the municipality when building new development projects, with a view to, inter alia, reduce the development of housing without a sufficient provision of services;
- 4) defined the process in which stakeholders may participate in the drafting of the strategies and the general plans in municipalities.

## 2. Contacts

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### *Optional items to be filed in:*

## General information

Planning responsibilities:

<b>Level of administration</b>	<b>Institution / Entity</b>	<b>Planning responsibilities</b>
national	Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy	elaboration of the national development concept (long-term document) and medium-term national development strategy
regional	Voivodeship marshal (self-government)	elaboration of 1) regional spatial development plan 2) landscape audit
	Metropolitan area (self-government)	study of conditions and directions of spatial development for the metropolitan area
local	Municipality (self-government)	elaboration of: 1) study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the municipality (remains legally valid until the end of 2025.) 2) general spatial development plans (preparation in progress according to the reform) 3) local spatial development plan or the integrated investment plan 4) resolution on the rules of placing advertisement

## Spatial planning system

Level of administration		Spatial planning act	Remarks
national		National development concept 2050	Obligatory, interdisciplinary, long-term, currently during approval of Council of Ministers; defines trends, challenges and development scenarios until 2050
		Medium-term national development strategy	Obligatory document, adopted in 2016, basis for the main directions of development of the country, binding for regional development strategy. New strategy is currently in the process of preparation, it will be integrated document which guides socio-economic and spatial development and introduce a new tool: national model of functional and spatial structure.
regional		Regional development strategy	Obligatory documents, by the end of 2026 they must be updated. New strategies will also apply to spatial planning and development.
		Regional development plan	Obligatory, basis for the directions of regional infrastructure development (coherent with regional development strategy), binding for land use plan
		Landscape audit	Obligatory, basis for identification of protection requirements of priority landscapes, binding for regional spatial development plan and land use plan
Local	Valid until the general spatial development plan is adopted, but no longer	Study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the municipality	Obligatory, binding for local spatial development plan
		Local development plan	Basis for building permit, obligatory only for specific areas or types of objects (including. wind farms or large retail centres), otherwise discretionary

than until the end of 2025		(in areas without spatial development plans - individual terms of construction required to obtain a building permit)
	resolution on the rules of placing advertisement (uchwała w sprawie zasad sytuowania reklam, obiektów małej architektury i ogrodzeń)	Discretionary, basis for rules of placing advertisement and street furniture in public spaces, when adopted - allows taxation of advertisement (based on separate resolution)
From beginning of 2026 or earlier – from adoption of the general spatial development plan	Local development strategy for municipality or Supra-local development strategy (strategia rozwoju gminy lub strategia rozwoju ponadlokalnego)	Obligatory for all municipalities (obligation to adopt one of these strategies), coherent with general spatial development plan
	General spatial development plan (ogólny plan zagospodarowania przestrzennego gminy)	Obligatory for all municipalities, binding for local spatial development plan, integrated investment plan or individual location decision
	Local development plan (miejscowy plan zagospodarowania przestrzennego)	Basis for building permit, obligatory only for specific areas or types of objects (including: wind farms or large retail centres), otherwise discretionary
	Integrated investment plan (zintegrowany plan inwestycyjny)	Optional, basis for building permit, prepared by the investor, adopted by the commune  (in areas without spatial development plan or integrated investment plan - individual terms of construction required to obtain a building permit)
	Resolution on the rules of placing advertisement (uchwała w sprawie zasad sytuowania reklam, obiektów małej architektury i ogrodzeń)	Discretionary, basis for rules of placing advertisement and small infrastructure in public spaces, when adopted - allows taxation of advertisement (based on separate resolution)