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WG1: Local Government

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Title **The Role of Local Self-government in Implementing the Local Initiative as a Form of Public Services Co-production**

Abstract Local initiative is a form of co-production of local public services introduced by national legislation in Poland, in 2010. Local initiative focuses mainly on small projects aiming at maintenance or upgrading the local infrastructure, e.g. parks, playgrounds or leisure facilities. According to the legislation, the citizens' input may have the form of labour, providing raw materials or financial contribution. The procedure for establishing the cooperation requires an application from the group of interested residents to be submitted to the local government. Local government considers application and, in case of acceptance, concludes an agreement with the applicants for implementation of the projects. This agreement specifies scope of the projects and contributions of both parties.

While general principles of the local initiative are set by national legislation, the local governments enjoy extensive autonomy in regulating detailed elements of initiative through local legislation.

This paper aims at identifying key regulatory strategies developed by the local governments with regard to local initiative. Resolutions of local councils regulating local initiative in all Polish municipalities (almost 2,500) have been reviewed in order to distinguish major patterns of regulation of the following aspects of local initiative: a) the scope of initiatives allowed; b) the criteria for assessment of the applications; and c) procedures for negotiating and concluding agreements with the applicants for implementation of the initiatives.

Then, cases of communes where the most projects were realized using the local initiative will be analyzed. The aim of the research in this respect will be to determine the factors that made it possible to achieve success in implementing a form of co-production of public services, which is a local initiative.

The outcomes of this review of laws have been confronted with

observations on the key factors stimulating or hampering co-production and fostering benefits from co-production, based on literature review. This will enable evaluation of regulatory strategies applied by the local governments in terms of their impact on maximizing benefits from co-production.