

# Municipal management strategies of regional development and quantification the position of regions

## Strategie managementu obcí vedoucích k regionálnímu rozvoji a změření pozice regionů

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### Abstract

At present time, as environment for conducting business and for private enterprise is highly competitive and since external and internal conditions for managing and economising change dynamically, it is crucial that every region has clearly defined conception of their future. They define this conception by clear and proper strategy. Monitoring regional differences is necessary for assessment of extent of regional development from regional standpoint as well as from point of view of the whole Czech Republic. It is necessary mainly for determining essential measures of regional politics leading towards decreasing regional disparities and for support of economic growth in regions. The paper deals with quantification the position of regions on the labour market in South Bohemia in Czech Republic (with using created indicator of potential in labour market), and proposes strategies to management of individual municipalities, which would lead towards development of regions and higher competitiveness.

**Keywords:** labour market, potential index, regional development, South Bohemia, strategy, strategic management

### Abstrakt

V dnešní době, kdy je podnikatelské prostředí vysoce konkurenční a interní i externí podmínky pro hospodaření se dynamicky mění, je pro každý region nezbytností mít jasně definovanou koncepci své budoucnosti. Tuto koncepci definují pomocí jasné a výstižné strategie. Sledování regionálních rozdílů je pak nezbytné pro hodnocení úrovně regionálního rozvoje jak v rámci kraje, tak i z celorepublikového hlediska. Je potřebné zejména pro stanovení zásadních opatření regionální politiky směřujících ke snižování regionálních disparit a k podpoře ekonomického růstu v regionech. Příspěvek se zabývá kvantifikací pozice okresů v Jihočeském kraji v České republice za oblast trhu práce (s využitím vytvořeného indikátoru potenciálu trhu práce) a dále

návrhy strategií pro management místních samospráv, které by směřovaly k regionálnímu rozvoji a zvýšení konkurenceschopnosti.

**Klíčová slova:** index potenciálu, regionální rozvoj, Jihočeský kraj, strategie, strategický management, trh práce

## Detailní abstrakt

Pokud chce jakýkoliv region obstát v ostrém konkurenčním boji, musí přesně vědět, čeho chce dosáhnout, jaký je jeho výhled do budoucnosti. Pouze kvalitně vypracovaná strategie a následné strategické řízení celého regionu, může být cestou (tedy postupem), jak cílů dosáhnout. Trh práce významně ovlivňuje vývoj každé ekonomiky alokací výrob a služeb. Vytváří tak regionální rozdíly v poptávce po pracovních silách, které jsou významné a ovlivňují regionální trhy práce. Jedním z cílů příspěvku je navržení možných strategií a aktivit určených managementu obcí, které by směřovaly k regionálnímu rozvoji a zvýšení konkurenceschopnosti. Také by umožnily snížit v regionech negativní dopad trhu práce, kterým je zejména hrozba rostoucí nezaměstnanosti. Jednou z neúspěšnějších a nejrozšířenějších metod pro analýzu vlivu externího okolí pro region i pro analýzu vnitřních vlivů je metoda SWOT. Ta byla využita ke stanovení strategických přístupů vedoucí ke zlepšení situace a rozvoji Jihočeského kraje v České republice, konkrétně se jedná o tyto strategie: rozvoj MSP a vzdělanosti, podpora investorů a společenské integrace ohrožených skupin obyvatelstva. Dalším cílem příspěvku je prostřednictvím souhrnného ukazatele za jednotlivé okresy Jihočeského kraje v České republice odpovědět na následující otázku: Která území kraje se významně liší od průměru kraje, existují v kraji výrazně problémové (zaostávající) oblasti? Cílem je tedy kvantifikovat postavení okresů v oblasti trhu práce. Upravené hodnoty proměnných byly podkladem pro vypočtení ukazatele - indexu potenciálu trhu práce  $I_i^{TP}$ , kterým je možné charakterizovat úroveň potenciálu trhu práce v okresech JK a zároveň provést porovnání jednotlivých okresů a stanovit jejich pořadí. Navržený ukazatel může být využit pro hodnocení situace trhu práce v těchto oblastech: pro posouzení regionálních rozdílů v kraji na okresní úrovni a identifikaci problémových regionů se soustřednou podporou státu, jako jedno z východisek pro zpracování programových dokumentů regionálního rozvoje a jeho realizace prostřednictvím alokace zdrojů jak z národních prostředků v rámci Programů rozvoje krajů, tak z prostředků Evropské unie. Uvedená metodika je flexibilní, do modelu analýzy hlavních komponent, z níž konstrukce koeficientu vychází, mohou být zařazeny další proměnné podle toho, na co bude ve sledovaném období kladen největší důraz. Je však třeba si uvědomit, že samotný koeficient podává jen jednu informaci a je třeba, aby dále byl doplněn o detailní ekonomické zhodnocení. V souhrnném pořadí za trh práce byl vyhodnocen okres České Budějovice jako okres s nejlepším postavením. Na základě vypočteného syntetického ukazatele bylo jako nejhorší vyhodnoceno postavení okresů Jindřichův Hradec a Strakonice.

## Introduction

The intent of monitoring regional differences is to identify differences that have considerable regional significance. The extent of these differences is influenced mainly by economic structure, location, natural conditions, and last but not least by the initiative of managers in individual municipalities.

Issues connected with the questions of regional development are getting at the forefront of many scientific and research branches and also policies of the Czech Republic and European Union (Skokan, 2003). In the Czech Republic the term became more serious when the Czech Republic got closer to and joined the European Union. Regional competitiveness is one of the main aims of economic and social policies of cohesiveness (Stejskal, et al., 2009).

Authors understand the growth of social-economic and environmental potential and competitiveness of regions leading to increasing its inhabitants' living standards and quality of life as regional development (Holátová and Řehoř, 2006). In this respect, it is a dynamic and balanced development of regional structure of relevant regional unit and its parts (regions, micro-regions) and removal of, eventually referring to, regional disparities (MMR, 2006; Lacina, 2007).

Each region in the Czech Republic has its specifics concerning the position inside the state, historical development of given territory, number of inhabitants and its structure (Bělohlávek, 2004). Big differences exist among individual regions in consequence of unequal development potential of individual territories, accumulation of inefficient productions and their decline in certain localities (Kotýnková, et al., 2003).

Skokan (2004) states that regions in Europe became a significant driving power in the whole company development based on knowledge and based on their existing experience, quality and involvement and they will still play more important role when reaching economic growth and competitiveness. In Anglo-Saxon literature we can often find the term of LED (local economic development), which emphasizes the economic aspect of development implemented in certain locality (municipality) (Greenwod, et al., 2010; Blakely, et al., 2008; Blair, et al., 2008).

Cunningham and Meyer (2005) summarized common characteristics in LED definitions: LED is driven by local government but involvement of private sector and civil community is necessary.

Significant social and economic changes occur in all regions. Lower territorial units (municipalities) gain more important role in increasing their competitiveness. They are becoming a motor of economic growth (Turok, 2003). Capello and Nijkamp (2009) state that competitiveness of regions, cities and municipalities form an important part of the theory of regional development. Municipal management approaches represent ways how to municipalities can properly administer, manage and develop their territories in local and regional development (Rolínek and Řehoř, 2006). Recently we can trace convergence and more intensive cooperation of public and private sectors, especially in usage of the same methods of management. Most frequently these are strategic approaches (Hrabánková, et al., 2011).

Strategic management is a process of meeting the conceptions stated in strategic plan and implementation of strategic intentions (Kolektiv, 2006). The importance of strategic management for the development of regions is growing, together with the effort of the regional representatives to increase the performance and competitive advantage of their regions. Individual countries, regions, cities, and towns compete

among each other especially in the acquisition of economic subjects, which create and stabilize new jobs, thereby influencing prosperity and the standard of living of their residents (Rolínek and Řehoř, 2008).

The importance of strategic management is increasing also due to necessity to gain external sources for financing development of regions (Wright, et al., 2003; Rolínek and Řehoř, 2006). To gain financial sources for EU funds the municipalities must set their strategic plans, which should contribute to creation of better municipality's competitiveness when solving particular developmental projects that will allow economical and territorial development (Řehoř, 2010a). Quality improvement of municipal environment can be achieved through correct implementation of local strategies and application of new approaches and municipal managerial tools aiming for regional development (Balanced Scorecard, benchmarking, CAF model) (Řehoř, 2011).

In the area of municipal government there is, besides legal limitations of selected activities, a relatively extensive area for creative approach towards solving development of municipality when municipality can enterprise, invest various ways, choose above standard services to assure for the citizens, etc. This opens a wide field of activities connected with municipality's dispositions, visions and citizens' needs (Holeček, 2009). One of the key tasks of local self-governments is support for local competitiveness. The localities that can best attract people and capital, and in consequence they can increase quality of life for their citizens, naturally with the highest possible utilization of local sources, can be called competitive (Beneš, 2006).

The main aim and successful result of implementation of these endeavours is creation and increase of municipality's and region's competitiveness by important partial aims, which can, e.g. according to Ježek (2007), be: strengthening competitive position of local and regional associations, support for utilization of insufficiently used sources, improvement of employment level and long-term carrier opportunities for local inhabitants, improvement of local and regional entrepreneurial environment.

To fulfil individual aims of local economic development various approaches can be used. According to Žárská et al. (2007) in particular these are the following areas of support: creation of investment environment acceptable for local entrepreneurs, support for small and medium companies, support for new and beginning entrepreneurs, attracting external investments (national or international).

Cooperation, especially of local participants – public administration authorities, educational sector, partnership of public and private sector, labour offices and participation of MPSV, MMR, MPO – is required in order to meet municipalities' developmental aims, strategies and activities. Poor coordination, especially at regional and local level, is considered as a serious system problem (Hrabánková, et al., 2008).

To assess local competitiveness we need to come out of the indicators by which we can compare conditions among the territories. The indicators are harmonized with EU norms and they form the basis for demanding the sources supporting development of municipalities and regions. These are also indicators that are supported by information system in the Czech Republic and so they are fully quantified. The importance of economical analyses of development trends in local territorial units in the Czech Republic becomes essential (Řehoř, 2010b).

There is a range of methods and ways how to assess competitiveness and also a range of views of individual factors. Kahoun (2007) defines indicators of regional competitiveness and classifies them into three categories: macro-economic performance, innovative performance and quality of life. Inclusion of the indicator of quality of life is an effort for taking account of social and ecological criteria of regional disparities. Basically the same approach to define competitiveness factors at the regional level is used by Kadeřábková (2007) when assessing regional competitiveness in Annual Competitiveness of the Czech Republic.

Competitiveness index established by Huggins (2003) represents a dynamic tool, by which competitiveness of regions should be measured. The author applied established index of measuring competitiveness on the territory of Great Britain but if specifically modified the index can be used in other states too.

Significant economists such as Porter, M.E. (1990), Kotler, P. (2007) or Czech authors Skokan, K. (2004) and Wokoun, R. (2008), deal with the issue of competition and competitiveness, competitive benefits and competitive strategies at micro-economical level.

## Materials and Methods

The aim of this report is to quantify the position of regions on the labour market, and to propose strategies, to management of individual municipalities, which would lead towards development of regions and higher competitiveness.

Methodology is based on application of theoretical knowledge from the study of literature, magazines, newspapers, etc. for searching and assessment of mutual relations and connections, which contribute to clarification of solved issues and derivation and formulation of adequate conclusions resulting from such analysis.

First it was necessary to collect sufficient quantity of secondary information and data of regions. In order to assess the situation of the regions, data from the Census and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs were used. If we process extensive data file of indicators, when initial number of attributes is significant and confusing for interpretation, we can use to our advantage one of the methods of multidimensional statistical analyses. Partly reduced data file of variables can be then processed in easier way. The methods can show relations among indications or divide units into clear form according to chosen indicators. Using them we can determine the index of potential of labour market. According to Hendl (2006) multidimensional analysis studies the relations between groups of variables and inside groups of variables and differences in behaviour of variables in various subpopulations. An analysis of main components was used for compiling this report. The results of analysis of main component allowed to identify the variables which affect the overall status and most especially to quantify their weight. Data was first necessary to transform into comparable basis. Adjusted variables were the basis for the calculation of index of labour market development. Software program Statistica version 9 will be used for processing the data acquired.

To determine strategic approaches to improve the labour market situation in the selected regions was used SWOT matrix. Major strengths and weaknesses (characterizing the internal environment of the region) and the opportunities and threats (external influences) were determined by the Řehoř (2007) in the article SWOT analysis of the labour market of South Bohemia.

## Results

Altogether 11 indicators sorted into 4 presented domains were assessed within quantification of situation in districts – see table 1. Before actual assessment, other suggested indicators, whose correlation coefficient in absolute value exceeded value 0,8, were excluded (e.g. proportion of people over 60 and between 0-14 years).

At first it was necessary to standardise data and render them in comparable basis. Adjusted values of variables were the basis for calculating an indicator - index of

labour market potential  $I_i^{TP}$ , by which can be characterised the level of labour market potential in districts and at the same time carry out comparison of individual districts and specify their ranking. Created indicator should serve as an information system giving evidence regarding extent of development in the district, in area of labour market.

Table 1. Indicators used in among-district comparison in South Bohemia

Tabulka 1. Indikátory použité při komparaci okresů v Jižních Čechách

Descriptor	Indicator	Unit of measure	Source
Employment	Proportion of economically active population out of total number of inhabitants in the region	%	Czech Statistical Office (CSO)
	Proportion of employees in agriculture out of total number of employees	%	CSO
	Proportion of employees in industry out of total number of employees	%	CSO
	Proportion of employees in services out of total number of employees	%	CSO
Intensity of economic activities	Number of registered businesses (25 or more employees) per 1000 inhabitants	number	CSO
Unemployment	Unemployment rate	%	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA)
	Proportion of people with disabilities out of total number of unemployed	%	MLSA
	Proportion of people over 55 out of total number of unemployed	%	MLSA
	Proportion of long-term unemployed out of total number of applicants	%	MLSA
	Number of job applicants per 1 available job offer	number	MLSA
Labour policy	Proportion of active employment policy	%	MLSA

Source: author

Created indicator: 
$$I_i^{TP} = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i w_i$$
,

where: i - number of variables in the model,

x<sub>i</sub> - distance value i-variable from anti-optimum in j-district,

w<sub>i</sub> - weight of i-variable calculated on the basis of results of model analysis of main components.

Presented method is flexible, other variables can be added in the model analysis of main components, out of which the structure of coefficient arises, according to what will acquire the greatest emphasis during the monitored period. It is, however, necessary to be aware that the coefficient itself provides only one information and it is important that it will be complemented by detailed economic evaluation. Standardised values had to be calculated from data by way of formula:

$$Z_{ki} = \frac{x_{ki} - \bar{x}_k}{s_k}$$

where: x<sub>ki</sub> – value of indicator of one district, k is district and i is indicator,

$\bar{x}_k$  – average value of indicator for all districts,

s<sub>k</sub> – standard deviation of indicator for all districts.

Values adjusted this way have zero mean and unitary standard deviation, and they are mutually comparable. Moreover distance of standardised values from anti-optimum was determined. Anti-optimum was specified as minimum value indicator among districts (indicators with positive influence in the given area – direction of influence in the table marked with plus sign) or maximum value indicator among districts (indicators with negative direction influence - the more, the worse - holds true) – see table 2. Weights of indicators were set according to accomplished analysis of main components. The highest weight has proportion of employees in industry (0.41), proportion of employees in services, number of registered businesses and unemployment rate (about 0.38). The lowest weight has proportion of economically active population and proportion of long-term unemployed (about 0.03).

Table 2. Anti-optimum, direction of influence and weight

Indicator	Anti-optimum	Direction of influence	Weight
Proportion of economically active population out of total number of inhabitants in the region	-1.25	+	0.336
Proportion of employees in agriculture out of total number of employees	-1.87	+	0.7719
Proportion of employees in industry out of total number of employees	-1.85	+	0.41456
Proportion of employees in services out of total number of employees	-1.20	+	0.38529
Number of registered businesses	-1.86	+	0.38583

(25 or more employees) per 1000 inhabitants			
Unemployment rate	1.75	-	0.37675
Proportion of people with disabilities out of total number of unemployed	1.45	-	0.15739
Proportion of people over 55 out of total number of unemployed	1.50	-	0.11324
Proportion of long-term unemployed out of total number of applicants	1.47	-	0.03305
Number of job applicants per 1 available job offer	1.66	-	0.06532
Proportion of active employment policy	-1.35	+	0.02885

Source: author

The same direction movement of all indicators was assured by calculating distance of standardised values from anti-optimum in absolute numbers. Resulting synthetic indicator represents a sum of multiplication of distances from anti-optimum and relevant weights for individual districts. From this calculation also arises determination of resulting ranking of districts in area of labour market.

## Discussion

In overall ranking (table 3), district České Budějovice was evaluated best and it is on the top rung, thanks to the lowest rate of unemployment, the highest number of registered businesses and private enterprise, proportion of employed people in services and proportion of active employment policy out of total expenses on employment policy. The district reached the highest rung in four out of 11 monitored indicators. It is on the lowest rung when comparing proportion of employees in agriculture and in industry. This district has, however, position in area of employment which is difficult to compare with other districts, namely by effect of job offer concentration.

Table 3. Position of South Bohemia's districts

	České Budějovice	Český Krumlov	J. Hradec	Písek	Prachatice	Strakonice	Tábor
Value of synthetic indicator	4.3	3.4	2.8	3.2	4.2	3.1	3.9
Rank	1	4	7	5	2	6	3

Source: author

Jindřichův Hradec and Strakonice districts were evaluated to have the worst position. In both cases it was particularly due to lower proportion of employees in services, number of registered businesses and private enterprise, proportion of economically



active population out of total number of inhabitants in the region and due to proportion of long-term unemployed out of total number of applicants.

SWOT matrix was used to determine strategic approaches leading towards improvement of the situation in labour market in chosen regions. Suggested general strategies and activities (in brackets) for eliminating problems occurring in labour market are:

1. development of small and middle size enterprise (SME) (improve conditions for small and middle size enterprise, particularly in the country and in rural areas and eliminate their lagging behind towns and thus prevent people from moving out of these places, make more favourable conditions for founding and running small and middle size enterprise in form of soft subsidies and grants, facilitate access to financial resources, facilitate administrative requirements when founding companies and businesses, support cooperation among businessmen and entrepreneurs in the region),
2. develop tertiary education and lifelong learning (develop key competences, ability to work with information, speak foreign languages, work on PC),
3. support investments in the region (enable strategic investors to enter the region and create favourable conditions, full reduction of income tax, for the duration of 10 years when new factory or plant is build, or partial reduction when existing production capacities are enlarged or modernised)
4. increase employment of endangered groups of inhabitants through retraining (increase support to facilitate entering working process to young people after studies, introduce incentives for employers so they employ these endangered groups of inhabitants).

To fulfill all previous general strategies and activities is primarily need for cooperation of local actors - government authorities, the education sector, employers, employment agencies and participation of relevant ministries of Czech Republic. The weak coordination, especially at regional and local level, is seen as a serious systemic problem. The active employment policy (requalification, public works) by a Labour office positively influence the reduction of unemployment and increase employment. Other programs implemented by the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry for Regional Development (the system of investment incentives, program to support the development of economic zones, support programs for small and medium-sized enterprises, revitalization program of strategic enterprises) enable to realization of the strategies of development of SME and support investors.

In the following years it is necessary to pay more attention to a group of applicants who have permanent residence in micro-regions, in which there is above-average rate of unemployment compared to relevant district. These applicants are exposed to a combination of disadvantageous factors (i.e. level of education, age, they look after relations, bad transport infrastructure, etc.), that in many cases completely prevent them from developing full potential on the labour market. Projects supported by financial means provided by European social fund can offer suitable solution of this problem.

Competitiveness of regions, and especially of municipalities, is conditioned by many factors that can be more or less successfully measured and then successfully compared. Assessment results of the competitiveness level (towards the labour market) achieved by regions are good sources of information when considering

economic performance, innovative capabilities and region's potential and, last not least, quality of life of inhabitants in municipalities.

Monitoring of regional and local differences is necessary for assessment of the level of regional development within a region as well as municipalities and the whole of the republic. It is required especially for setting principal measures of regional policy aiming for decreasing regional disparities and supporting economic growth in regions. The achieved results can be used by relevant municipal managers and managing or administrative bodies as base of taking measures for more effective management.

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