ANALYSIS OF TOOLS FOR OVERCOMING THE CONSTRAINTS OF CZECH RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: Rural areas in many countries face challenges related to insufficient infrastructure and limited opportunities for further development. The paper analyses and evaluates the potential of foreign spatial development tools to overcome the limitations of the qualitative development of rural settlements. Examples of instruments are examined in terms of their applicability in the municipality of Martinice (Žďár nad Sázavou district). This paper aims to identify and classify suitable spatial development tools that could be implemented in the spatial planning of rural settlements in the Czech Republic.

KEY WORDS: Spatial development, spatial planning, sustainable territorial development, rural development concept, rural settlements, case study, Martinice municipality

Introduction

After 1990, the Czech countryside had to overcome the consequences of historical development, which significantly changed the landscape’s character, disturbed the original rural identity and deepened the differentiation of rural settlements. Several trends and problems can thus be identified in contemporary rural settlements, ranging from an ageing population and a decline in services to the growing predominance of residential and recreational functions over economic and service functions (Du-
According to an analysis by the Ministry of Regional Development (2019), the development of small municipalities is also constrained by the lack of municipally owned land, problems with the reseeding of sites, and the existence of brownfield sites that are not available for ownership.

Spatial development in the Czech Republic has long been based primarily on land use regulation. Czech spatial planning is regulated by Building Act No. 183/2006 Coll. (and the new Act No. 283/2021 Coll.). The Building Act offers tools to regulate suburbanisation (reasoned definition of buildable areas), for limiting property rights (expropriation, pre-emption) and possibilities to reach agreements with investors and landowners (planning agreements, parcelling agreements). In practice, however, these tools need to be developed more effectively.

Therefore, foreign spatial planning systems, in which other land development tools complement standard regulatory tools, are currently being explored. This paper analyses and classifies foreign examples of spatial development tools that have the potential to overcome the limitations of the qualitative development of rural settlements. The possibility of their implementation in the Czech environment is evaluated using the case study of the municipality of Martinice.

**Methods**

The paper's methodology is based on a qualitative analysis of foreign tools for the spatial development of rural settlements and a descriptive case study. Descriptive methods are used in the case study in order to document and evaluate the background of the work and to generalise the results obtained. The empirical research is based on data obtained through observation and experience by studying relevant documents and field research.

**Tools for Spatial Development**

The main tools that directly govern the development of the territory are the tools for spatial planning. At the local level, spatial and regulatory plans are issued. According to Act No. 183/2006 Coll., a spatial plan establishes the basic concept of the development of the municipality’s territory, the protection of its values, its spatial and area layout, the landscape layout and the public infrastructure concept. In Slovakia, two or more municipalities may have a common spatial plan if the municipalities agree on it. A regulatory plan in the area under consideration sets out detailed conditions for land use and buildings’ location and spatial arrangement.
In foreign environments, the tools of reorganisation of the territory for development are used along with market-oriented and economic tools of development of the territory to ensure sustainable rural development. Thus, regulatory tools can be combined with the sale of agricultural conservation rights, the sale of development rights, the transfer of development rights, or a conservation easement for agricultural land use. The use of these tools has been discussed in various forms in our country, especially in cases of urban planning, e.g. setting up the financial participation of investors based on the buildability of the territory according to the Munich model (Doleželová and Vejhodská 2018).

The Austrian spatial planning system uses various tools for limiting the allocation of new building plots, fees for not developing building plots, and time limits for building on newly allocated plots (European Communities 2011). Abroad, spatial planning tools capture what are termed land rents (Vejchodská 2017). These are tools to raise funds from developers based on the price difference between developed and undeveloped land. Municipalities use these funds to build public infrastructure and amenities.

Establishing a predictable framework for cooperation with developers or investors is essential for developing communities. These frameworks often take the form of various voluntary agreements, concluded on the condition that the spatial plan is amended and land is transferred. Following foreign examples, the new construction law allows for the designation of an area or corridor in the spatial plan, where decision-making is conditional on the conclusion of a planning agreement. The risk in this is the 4-year time limit for its conclusion, after which the condition ceases to be valid.

In summary, the above-mentioned foreign tools are more initiatory, the purpose of which is to motivate actors of spatial development to take certain actions or to implement proposed measures. The tools discussed can be classified as organisational (time-limited construction on developable areas, reorganisation of the territory for construction), contractual (planning agreements, development agreements), economic (land appreciation levies, fees for not developing land, tradable development rights) and administrative (preparation of a spatial plan for the territory of two or more municipalities, conditioning new construction on the preparation of a regulatory plan).

**Constrained Development of the Municipality of Martinice**

Martinice is a rural municipality in the Žďár nad Sázavou district. At the end of 2022, the village had 461 inhabitants (Czech Statistical Office 2023). The municipality is located close to the town of Velké Meziříčí, outside areas with significant exogenous in-
fluences on development prerequisites (suburbia, periphery). The paper’s author was a planner of the municipality’s spatial plan, so he used his professional experience in preparing the case study.

In the last ten years, 26 houses have been completed in the municipality. The trend of housing construction and population growth was consistent with the development trends predicted in the spatial plan. However, the village needed land to meet developmental trends and needs. The municipality's management had to negotiate with the owners to purchase the land, conditional on the designation of developable areas in the spatial plan. After the approval of the spatial plan, the land was parcelled out, and the municipality built public infrastructure and offered the parcels for sale. The limitation of this type of development in other municipalities may be the need for more funds for land purchase and the risk of stalling the whole process in case of landowner disagreement.

The advantage of the subsequent sale of municipal building plots is the possibility of setting the conditions for constructing houses directly in the municipality’s contractual relations with the new owners. In the municipality of Martinice, the building line's location, height, the type of roofing, and the nature of fencing were thus determined. These elements of regulation can already be bindingly established in the spatial plan. However, in the case of any minor change, it is necessary to amend the entire spatial plan.

In most of the smaller development areas on private land and undeveloped areas in a built-up area, the character of the development needs to be defined in detail. Regulatory plans or regulatory elements in the spatial plan need to be prepared for these areas. The current state does not sufficiently protect the existing built character or create a predictable developer environment, which slows down and complicates the development process.

It is difficult for small municipalities without a professional administrative apparatus to make informed decisions about changes in their territory. For them, preparing a spatial plan as the basic conceptual document for the municipality’s development is already administratively demanding and financially costly. Smaller municipalities would be relieved by the possibility of preparing joint spatial plans for two or more municipalities. This possibility would allow many municipalities to concentrate on preparing a more detailed regulatory plan for specific development areas.

Martinice does not face the problems of vacant buildings or brownfield sites in the built-up area compared to other municipalities. Due to financial and ownership
unavailability, municipalities cannot consider these objects in their development planning and are thus forced to seek to designate development areas on agricultural land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints to Further Development</th>
<th>Appropriate Tools for Spatial Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipality does not have a sufficient amount of land suitable for development.</td>
<td><strong>contractual</strong> (planning agreements, development agreements), <strong>organisational</strong> (time-limited construction on developable areas, reorganisation of the area for development) agreement with owners on land purchase, rational use of private land</td>
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<tr>
<td>The municipality does not have sufficient financial resources to buy land.</td>
<td><strong>economic</strong> (levels for land appreciation, capture of the so-called land rent) increase in municipal income</td>
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<tr>
<td>The municipality does not have sufficient funds for basic infrastructure and amenities.</td>
<td><strong>economic</strong> (land appreciation levies, fees for not developing land, capture of land rent, tradable development rights) increase in municipal income</td>
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<tr>
<td>insufficient protection of the existing character of the development and regulation of construction plans</td>
<td><strong>administrative</strong> (conditioning new construction on the preparation of a regulatory plan, creation of a predictable environment)</td>
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<td>the administrative and financial burden of the preparation of spatial planning documentation</td>
<td><strong>administrative</strong> (preparation of a spatial plan for the territory of two or more municipalities) simplification of the role of a small municipality in spatial planning</td>
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Table 1 Appropriate Tools for Spatial Development (Source: Author)

A significant problem for small municipalities is the need for adequate public infrastructure. There is no kindergarten or primary school in Martinice, but transport links with the catchment village are sufficient. There is a municipal library and several playgrounds in the village. Basic services are limited to a convenience store, the future operation of which depends on the financial situation of the municipality (required financial participation of the municipality).
There is no sewerage system or wastewater treatment plant in the municipality. Individual wastewater disposal methods are used until a common sewerage system is built. The financial complexity of providing adequate water management infrastructure would limit the possibilities for the municipality to participate in the development (e.g. purchase of land for construction) for a longer period.

**Results and discussion**

The following table briefly summarises the main constraints to the development of small municipalities and outlines the possibility of addressing them with different spatial development tools. Thus, the potential of using foreign spatial development tools in the Czech countryside is assessed.

Based on the case study of Martinice, the discussed spatial development tools are relevant in the Czech environment and can bring positive changes. At the same time, it is necessary to consider the historical and cultural features, geographical conditions, and traditions of foreign spatial planning systems and thus adapt the spatial development tools to the needs and possibilities of rural areas in the Czech Republic.

The rural area is characterised by its connection with the external landscape. Due to the limited scope of the paper, changes in the landscape and the possibilities of using foreign tools outside the field of rural development were not discussed.

**Conclusion**

This paper analyses foreign examples of organisational, contractual, economic and administrative instruments of territorial development. The case of the municipality of Martinice (Žďár nad Sázavou district) was used to verify that these tools have the potential to address constraints to future qualitative rural development (lack of municipal land, lack of financial resources, inadequate protection of development). Thus, the paper offers suggestions for improving the spatial planning process of rural settlements in the Czech Republic and provides a framework for ongoing research on developing small rural areas.

**References**

CZECH REPUBLIC. Act No. 183/2006 Coll. on Spatial Planning and Building Regulations.


