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In recent years, many countries have focused on sustainable development issues in their economic policies. In turn, institutional quality is important for ensuring the sustainable development of the state. One of the key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG8). Achieving this goal is particularly important both for Ukraine, which has faced serious demographic problems due to Russian military aggression, and for Poland, which has accepted a large number of refugees from Ukraine.

The aim of the article is to determine the role of institutional quality in ensuring the implementation of SDG8 for Poland and Ukraine. To achieve this objective, the paper uses the following methods: visualisation, calculation of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients, logarithmic transformations, Augmented Dickey-Fuller test (ADF test), and Granger causality test. The study uses the World Bank's SDG 8 indicators as well as the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for Ukraine and Poland. The data cover the period from 1996 to 2020.

The calculation results showed that the correlations between WGI and SDG8 indicators are country-specific. The Granger test demonstrated that causal relationships between WGI and SDG8 indicators in the first and second differences of logarithms vary for Ukraine and Poland. The identified patterns allow us to conclude that the impact of the institutional environment on economic performance has cross-country variations. In addition, the comparison of data for Ukraine and Poland shows that different institutions in the countries have dissimilar effects on employment and productivity by sector. All calculations were carried out by EViews 12 and Statistica programmes.

**Keywords:** institutional quality, employment, SDG 8, Worldwide Governance Indicators, ADF-test, Granger causality