

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
Directorate H — Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development and Northern Europe
Unit *H.1* — Competence Centre: Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development

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Territorial Agenda 2020 put in practice

Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of Cohesion
Policy by a place-based approach

Volume I – Synthesis Report

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015

ISBN:978-92-79-48051-5

doi:10.2776/984537

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Printed in Belgium

This report has been prepared by CSIL, Centre for Industrial Studies, which was selected by the Competence Centre Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission, through a call for tenders following a call for expressions of interest (AMI list) 2013CE160AT057. The report consists of two volumes: Volume I contains the synthesis report; Volume II comprises 21 case studies

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The authors are grateful for the very helpful insights from the EC staff and particularly to Martijn De Bruijn and Christian Svanfeldt as well as the members of the Steering Group and the NTCCP that provided comments on the case studies and draft report. The authors are particularly grateful for the more than 50 stakeholders and experts who agreed to provide their opinions on specific cases. Their names are indicated in each case fiche.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| CLLD | Community Led Local Development |
| DG REGIO | Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| ESIF | European Structural and Investment Funds |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| ITI | Integrated Territorial Investment |
| NTCCP | Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| TA2020 | Territorial Agenda 2020 |
| EU | European Union |
| EC | European Commission |

Abstract

Along with the progressive recognition of the concept “territorial cohesion”, different initiatives have been trying to draw on its practical implications. An important step is the adoption of the “Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020” in 2011 that provide strategic orientations for territorial development, promoting place-based policy making. Through the illustration of a number of real life examples putting in practice the principles of a place-based approach, the present study contributes to its wider implementation. Evidence collected shed light on advantages but also challenges of such approaches and discusses why, together with its *constituting features*, it proved to be a key success factor for the initiative considered. The result is a discussion on common keys that can be detected and pointed to as footprint for decision makers. While some elements refer to the usual aspects associated with a place-based approach, namely working in an integrated manner and multilevel dialogue, other key aspects are relatively novel or original and shed light on the fact that place-based approach is a flexible policy choice which can be more successful in delivering the Europe 2020 strategy than traditional approaches, typically single-sector and top-down.

Background

Though firmly structured along thematic priorities, Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 calls for the adoption of a place-based approach to ensure an effective delivery of the Europe 2020 strategy by means of a greater awareness of the territory. While dedicated instruments (in particular Integrated Territorial Investments and Community Led Local Development) provide a specific framework for implementing some of the place-based principles, notably integration of sectors and territorial dialogue, its implementation remains a challenge, in particular in some policy areas traditionally place-blind (such as for example energy, R&D, education). Out of an inner circle, there is little awareness and perhaps even poor understanding of what the place-based approach is about, especially when it comes to putting those principles into practice.



Against this background, evidence from the field shows that interventions inspired by the place-based approach are already evident on field and demonstrate positive results. Interestingly, the adoption of some of its elements emerges as a necessary response to more traditional but in some circumstances less effective approaches (typically sectoral and top-down policies). At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, good practice examples show that a place-based approach might be enforced without being explicitly acknowledged, and thus failing to reap its full benefit, for example in terms of transferability potential.

Objective

The motivation of the study stems from the observation that there is a need to put flesh on the bones of the key principles of the place-based approach which are often recalled in strategic documents of territorial policies in the EU but often disregarded when planning and implementing those policies on the ground. The aim of the study is to provide practical examples of the added value as well as the challenges posed by putting the place-based approach into action.

Twenty one case studies, selected according to a convenient sampling procedure relying on direct (personal experience of team's experts) and indirect (from secondary sources) knowledge of

interesting cases implemented in the past programming periods (starting actually even long before), provide the bulk of evidence from which some key conclusions are drawn. The selected cases are not necessarily best practice in their field, but rather successful initiatives showing interesting design and implementation practices which best illustrate the advantages of a place-based approach.

Box 1 Twenty-one case studies

1. Reshaping regional innovation system (Apulia, Italy)
2. Integrated strategy against social exclusion (Terrassa, Spain)
3. Mainstreaming green economy (Malta)
4. Regenerating an innovation dock (Rotterdam, the Netherlands)
5. Renewable energy as growth engine (Burgenland, Austria)
6. Integrating education policies (Antwerp, Belgium)
7. Logport - Restructuring territorial industrial vocation (Duisburg, Germany)
8. A vision of archipelago town (Rennes, France)
9. Baltadapt – A shared strategy for climate change adaptation (Baltic countries)
10. Guadalinfo - ICT for territorial and social cohesion (Andalusia, Spain)
11. Horta à Porta - Gardens for territorial integration (Porto Region, Portugal)
12. From restructuring to the village concept (Limerik, Ireland)
13. Superfast Cornwall Programme - Beyond the 'big build' (Cornwall and the Isle of Scilly, UK)
14. Unification of archaeological sites - Cultural heritage inspiring urban regeneration (Athens, Greece)
15. Enforcing a pact for employment (Moravian-Silesia region, Czech Republic)
16. COAST project - Biodiversity as territorial asset (Dalmatian Coast, Croatia)
17. Rehabilitation of the manor - Investing in territorial cultural traditions (Luksiai, Lithuania)
18. Place-based rural policy (Finland)
19. Integrated strategy for local public service (Jaslo, Poland)
20. Strategy for the Danube Delta Area - Paving the way for ITI (Danube Delta, Romania)
21. Bio Based Europe -Innovation and training for a bio based cluster (Flanders - Belgium and Zeeland-Flanders – the Netherlands)

Findings

There is not a unique way to implement the place-based approach. Nevertheless, although the impression is that the initiatives reviewed emerge from unique conditions driven by specific local opportunities and are thus, by definition, untransferable, there are a number of common keys that can be detected and pointed to as a footprint for decision makers. There are several aspects that, to some extent and with different degrees, can be part of a place-based approach. While identified as distinguished features, they are however often combined and mixed in a reinforcing aggregation.

Key findings related to such features are the following:

- 1. Valuing and reviving territorial identity as a unique asset is the starting point of every place-based initiative.** Territories have cultural traditions, productive vocation and natural assets nourishing their identity and development potential. Place-based approach emerges as a response to the need to preserve and value such characteristics in the most appropriate way, while adapting to an environment posing more and more demanding challenges. In some cases, where a major effort is needed for reviving or reshaping strategies, genuine scrutiny and the willingness to engage in a vision for the common good are key ingredients to be ensured.
- 2. Ambitious strategies naturally expand beyond geographical and sectoral boundaries.** Needs and challenges are not confined into administrative boundaries and therefore call for integrated policies. For this reason policy design and implementation should be defined at the most appropriate territorial level to deliver the intended change. The guiding principle is to select the territorial level aggregating the relevant partners with stakes and responsibilities over the aspects to be tackled. In addition, an effective policy response may require an integrated approach combining soft and hard measures as well as a holistic approach.
- 3. An open governance system is the instrument to ensure a smooth implementation of the initiative.** Place-based initiatives are inherently participatory and therefore require a policy dialogue to be in place and clear rules of the game in order to avoid free riding, overlapping or fragmented actions. Exogenous pressures have an important triggering effect (and Cohesion Policy has a pivotal role in this respect), while engaging local actors and making them part of the deal is a key requirement to ensure ownership and social acceptance.
- 4. A strong leading capacity is needed to steer the process and ensure a long term commitment to results.** A dedicated body or agency guaranteeing ownership and sticking to the strategic objective is a common solution. Flexibility and user-orientation can be better ensured in this case, which enhances the chance of success. Negotiation and consensus building should be enforced throughout the whole process, from initial design to implementation.
- 5. Experimenting and learning-by-doing are natural ingredients in place-based approaches.** Processes can be long since trust and credibility need time to develop. At the same time, experimentation and piloting phases are necessary in order to learn by doing and test innovative ideas to select the most promising ones. Lying outside the scope of programming and



Background

There has been a progressive recognition of the concept of “territorial cohesion” at EU level culminating with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 which, together with economic and social cohesion, explicitly acknowledges territorial cohesion as one of the three fundamental objectives of the European Union. Different initiatives have been trying to push this forward and draw on its practical implications. An important step in this direction is the adoption of the intergovernmental document “Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020” (TA2020) in 2011 by the EU Ministries responsible for spatial planning and territorial development.

The objective of the TA2020 is to provide strategic orientations for territorial development, promoting place-based policy making within different policies at all government levels and to ensure implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy according to territorial cohesion principles which call for a harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development.

Specifically, the TA2020 identifies six territorial priorities for the European Union which can contribute to the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Box 2 Territorial priorities for the development of the European Union

- Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development
- Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions
- Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions
- Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies
- Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises
- Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions

Source: Territorial Agenda 2020

At the same time the Commission proposed to reform Cohesion Policy, following many recommendations from the 2009 'Barca' report, including a stronger territorial approach to investments. For this purpose two new territorial instruments were introduced: Integrated Territorial Investments and Community-led Local Development.

Despite efforts to communicate the main messages and principles of the TA2020 more broadly, i.e. through a Polish report with examples from Member States of place-based, territorially sensitive and integrated approaches, this appears to be difficult. Especially among actors that are not used to place-based thinking.

Box 3 Notion of place based approach

"A place-based development policy can (...) be defined as:

a long-term development strategy whose objective is to reduce persistent inefficiency (underutilisation of the full potential) and inequality (share of people below a given standard of well-being and/or extent of interpersonal disparities) in specific places, through the production of bundles of integrated, place-tailored public goods and services, designed and implemented by eliciting and aggregating local preferences and knowledge through participatory political institutions, and by establishing linkages with other places; and promoted from outside the place by a system of multilevel governance where grants subject to conditionalities on both objectives and institutions are transferred from higher to lower levels of government".

Source: Barca (2009)

Objective

The aim of this study is to contribute to the diffusion of the key messages of the Territorial Agenda 2020 and show that Cohesion Policy can be used to put these in practice, at the same time enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness.

While key concepts related to the place-based approach are rather well known among those involved in territorial policy design, this is not necessarily the case for a significant share of decision-makers not directly involved in the Territorial Agenda process but still relevant actors in the design and implementation of territorial cohesion policies.

The present study is specifically addressed to those interested in better understanding the place-based approach at work. Through the illustration of a number of real cases, it offers policy makers and stakeholders involved in planning and implementing territorial development initiatives **a toolbox based on practical examples on how to apply a successful place-based approach.**

Methodology

The present report explores the arguments supporting the place-based approach by drawing lessons on advantages and drawbacks as well as practical implications stemming from the case studies analysed. A total of 21 cases have been identified and are illustrated in separate individual fiches which complement the report at hand. This is a convenience, statistically non-representative, sample of real life cases intended to provide practical evidence on the added value of the place-based approach. The selected cases are not necessarily best practice in their field, they simply show interesting aspects which best illustrate its advantages.

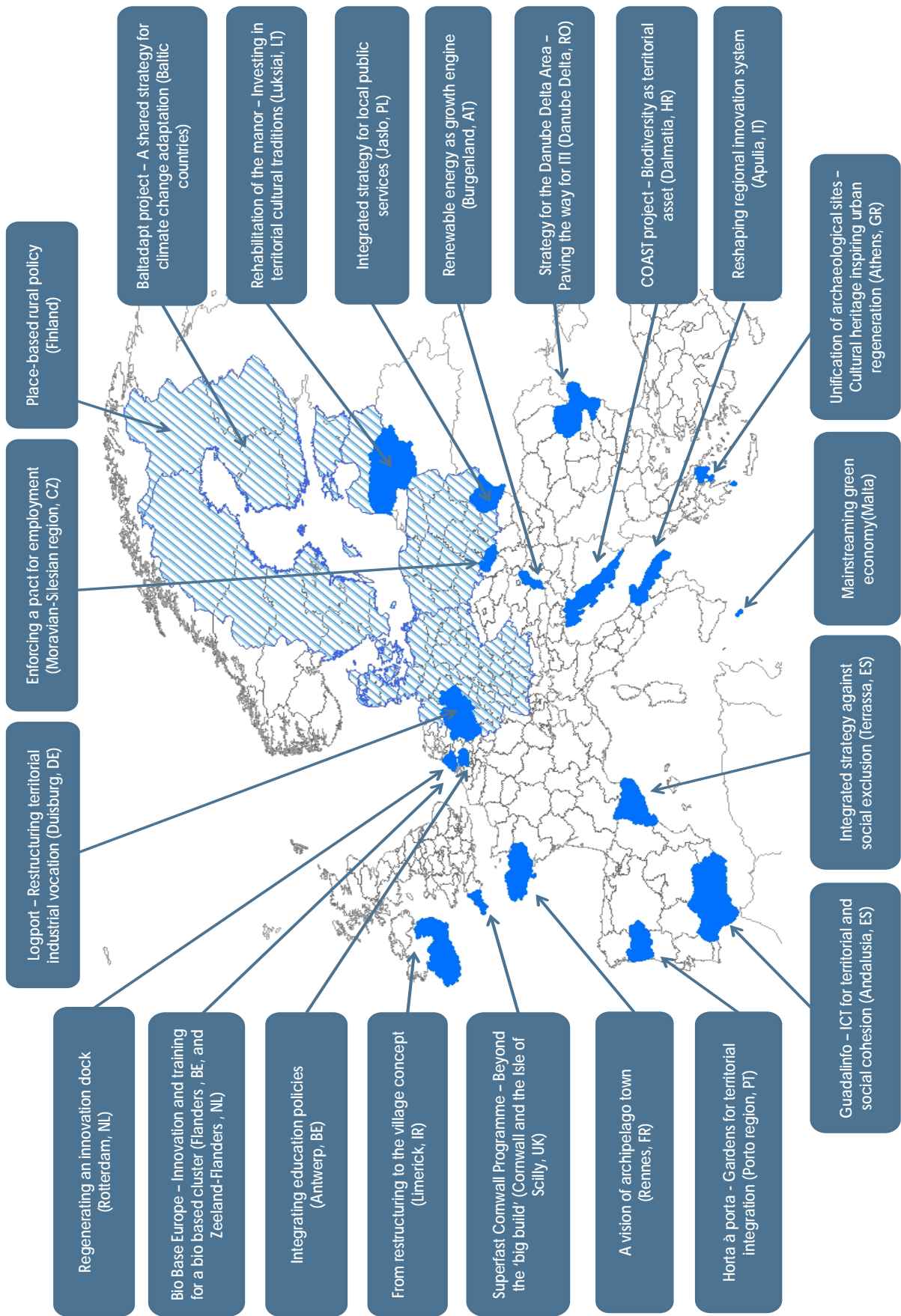
A key requirement in the selection process has been to ensure that the selected practices are distinctive in terms of approach used and results achieved as compared to other more traditional approaches. The practices should also show that a place-based approach can be applied at different territorial scales and for a wide variety of themes. For this reason, typical practices of place-based approaches such as urban regeneration programmes are considered less relevant for the purpose of the present study. The focus is rather on showing why it is worth moving to a place-based approach for those initiatives usually designed with a more top-down and single sector approach.

A bulk of case studies already available in the literature have been used as starting point to select interesting initiatives to be analysed in the case studies. In some cases, however, direct knowledge and experience of either the team's experts or the National Territorial Cohesion Contact Points have also been a valuable source for selecting interesting cases.

From a long list of 50 potentially interesting examples, the study's Steering Group selected 21 examples covering the widest possible range of typologies of interventions, territories and approaches in order to be appealing to a large and heterogeneous audience. Case studies were carried out on the basis of secondary sources as well as face to face interviews collected by a network of country correspondents.

As can be observed from the overview of the selected case studies, which is provided in the map on the next page, the scope of the cases is wide. They can refer to a project, a programme, a strategy or a policy and, thus, they can be implemented at different institutional levels. They can refer to different policy domains and thematic foci and, thus, address different priorities of the TA2020. They can be implemented in different typologies of territories, including urban, rural, island, peripheral and sparsely-populated areas. Finally, they can be either financed by the Structural Funds or not. While this heterogeneity can be an obstacle for comparative purposes, it is of paramount importance in order to convey the message that the place-based approach is a policy choice which can be successfully undertaken at all levels and in a large range of domains so as to ensure an effective delivery of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Overview of the selected cases studies



Key message

Focusing on territorial assets which are place-specific relies on the recognition that building on local knowledge, capacities, traditions and values is the best way to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of territorial development. The selection of the most promising territorial assets requires not only appropriate observation tools but above all the political willingness to engage in a genuine and forward looking scrutiny for the common good. At the same time, in a changing environment traditional vocations and forms of territorial identity should be constantly strengthened and revitalized to be exploited as a source of territorial development. Territorial specificities matter but require an effort in always keeping them to the fore of territorial development strategies.

Territorial specificities as a unique asset

The starting point of a place-based development strategy is the recognition of those development potentials which are **embedded in specific characteristics of a territory and are represented by natural, cultural, social and economic assets.**

All the case studies build on actions aimed at exploiting some specific territorial assets which were not sufficiently or adequately valued because of a number of barriers and constraints that had first to be removed. This is the case for example of the **Apulia region** where a long-standing productive tradition and advanced know-how in a small number of specific high-tech sectors were constrained by a lack of R&D capacity of local SMEs. Only thanks to the recognition of R&D as a local political priority, a series of integrated and concrete actions have been implemented with the aim to remove such barriers and facilitate the exploitation of the existing local productive asset.

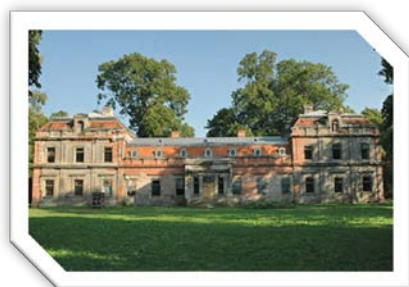
Similarly, the **Flemish-Dutch** case shows that the long-standing knowledge and expertise in biotechnology was not sufficient in itself to trigger the development of a bio-based economy. A specific project was conceived to remove some of the existing barriers such as lack of pilot plants able to bridge the gap between scientific feasibility and industrial application of new biobased products and

"A 'place-based' approach is a policy strategy aimed at promoting development from outside (the place) by means of interventions tailored to contexts." (Barca, 2009)

processes as well as the shortage of skilled operators and technicians.

Another example is the initiative on the *Dalmatian coast*, where the COAST project had the objective to support development opportunities strongly rooted in the respect of environmental sustainability principle and valuing the biodiversity of the natural assets of the region. Key barriers to sustainable management and biodiversity conservation were highlighted and softened through a series of interventions focusing on both improving the investment climate and strengthening the capacity of the regulators. As a result, the project had significantly contributed to encourage innovative “green” business initiatives based on sustainable economic exploitation of natural and landscape values of the area.

Territorial assets to maximise effectiveness and efficiency



“The central building of the Zypliai manor ensemble prior the full-scale reconstruction in 2009”

Caring about territorial specificities is at the same time a matter of effectiveness and efficiency. If resources are already locally available, they simply need appropriate conditions for being exploited, therefore there is no need to fetch them elsewhere. The *Lithuanian manor* in the city of Luksiai, described in one of the cases, is an interesting example. For years, the manor ensemble has been dilapidated and poorly maintained and, as a result, it lost its historical function as a cultural hub. However, the local cultural environment was so rich and vivid and the physical infrastructure of the manor greatly in need of an appropriate destination better reflecting its historical and traditional significance, that what was left to do was getting rid of the administrative and organisational constraints and managing the physical restoration.

Leaving potential assets abandoned and unused may also result in high social costs. This is well illustrated in the case of *Rotterdam* where the village of Heijplaat has been built in the past to host part of the workforce of the city port. As a consequence of the end of industrial activities, the area risked to become a no-go area thus generating possible risks connected to crime and social exclusion.

While development strategies may be inspired by the observation of effective actions implemented in other places, the experience suggests that they cannot be transferred as such but should be adapted to the specific context in which they take place. If the implementation process considers the specificities of the context, the intended change may materialise more quickly and successfully as illustrated in the case of *Cornwall*, where measures for demand stimulation of broadband services were designed and delivered in order to reach a widely scattered and aging rural population. This resulted in a relatively short time in meeting the target in terms of new premises connected with broadband.

Empowering evidence based policy

An in-depth knowledge of history, traditions, cultural features, physical and geographical characteristics, economic and professional competences as well as social collective capital is therefore a necessary step to identify those assets that need to be 'unleashed' in order to trigger some developmental changes.

Relying on objective evidence for decision making has a twofold reason. First, it allows **for explorations** on new or innovative ways to exploit local assets and, second, it guides a **genuine scrutiny on territorial strengths and limits, avoiding myopia and self-interest to prevail**.

While it is rather straightforward to recognise a territorial asset in the archaeological sites of Athens or the biodiversity of the Dalmatian coast described in some of the cases, it is perhaps less straightforward to understand that there is a potential in the waste from industrial wood processing or agriculture which eventually turned to be a valuable input for the biomass production in **Burgenland** which was the initial step for the development of the renewable energy strategy. **In some cases some assets are not even known or not fully appreciated**, as it was the case of the wind energy production (again in Burgenland) which turned to be more profitable than initially expected and the "Parndorf Plain", an almost treeless plain 30 meters higher than its surroundings, which was found to be one of the most suitable places in Central and Eastern Europe for wind energy production. Prestudies had indeed demonstrated that areas in Northern Burgenland had a relatively high potential, but the first investments led to surprise when the productivity of the site was nearly 25% higher than expected. As a result, the region has rapidly become highly specialised in this highly profitable economic activity.

Involving parties bearing technical and scientific know-how into the policy dialogue is a way to manage and control self-interest attitude and to promote the use of evidence based policy-making. The Baltic sea strategy demonstrates that a key success factor was the capacity to involve scientists, experts in climate change related issues, and policy related actors building a bridge between the two communities. The latter being highly dependent on inputs provided by the former to develop policy documents, the **Baltadapt** project contributed significantly to filling the knowledge gap of policy makers in the Baltic Sea Region.

Objective evidence for explorations and genuine scrutiny



"Zürndorf was the location for the first wind energy plants in 1997"

Box 4 An Urban agency for foresight analysis

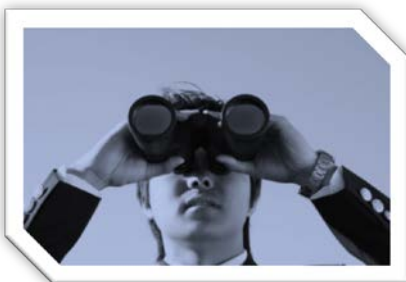
AUDIAR, the Urban Agency of inter-communal development of Rennes agglomeration is a powerful tool for foresight analysis but also for analysis, expertise, and dialogue. It acts as a central house collecting and processing data on the regional and local economy and society. It is active at all territorial levels from town district to commune, Pays, Department and Region. It helps policy makers and elected representatives make informed decision by releasing indicators and analyses on territorial trends. It recently played a very important role in the revision of the strategy. AUDIAR also created a specific Observatory for Agriculture.

CODESPAR is also an instrument for dialoguing about policy issues. But contrary to the AUDIAR, it acts as a platform for discussion, and includes socio-economic partners.

Setting up appropriate knowledge collection systems or implementing diagnostic activities is a way to gather and make relevant information available to decision making. The availability of objective knowledge supporting the decision making process is an aspect which is sometimes underrated. Often, the problem is that information from statistical sources is lagging behind in terms of timing and suitability and, thus, offer limited value for analytical work. In the face of this, regular monitoring activity tailored to the information needs would make programming and planning decisions more evidence-based and better focused. A good example is provided by the **case of Rennes** where different instruments for monitoring policy issues related to spatial planning exist (see Box 4).

An evolving vision for the common good

Territories are filled with untapped development potentials and making information available is just the starting point for priority setting. **Selecting a promising asset and developing a strategy building on it is not politically neutral. There may be no consensus in identifying and addressing territorial potential in development strategies.** In some cases, territorial specificities may be seen as an asset for some parties and a limitation for others. But this is usually due to a lack of coordinated action in developing a common vision. In such cases local, myopic and self-defeating behaviour is dominant. The **Dalmatian** case is very sharp in illustrating how the effort in developing a shared vision about the role of biodiversity may provide an alignment of different interests around a common developmental objective.



Different interests and main threats to biodiversity identified by the COAST project

| | Threats to biodiversity |
|-------------|--|
| Tourism | Construction (also illegal) of tourist facilities at biodiversity rich sites |
| | Tourists' heavy consumption of water, energy, food and the related production of polluting waste |
| | Habitat degradation, waste and in several cases large forest fires (especially on islands) for misbehaviours of tourists |
| Fisheries | High level of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing |
| | Inappropriate fishing practices (dynamite, bottom trawling) are known to cause damage to habitats |
| | Effort required to catch fish is increasing |
| Agriculture | Large-scale, un-managed abandoning of agricultural land |
| | Land and water pollution from agro-chemicals and agricultural waste |
| | Air pollution from agriculture |
| | Land erosion due to agricultural practices |

Source: COAST project for the promotion of biodiversity on the Dalmatian coast

Specifically, a vast number of stakeholders, including large and small private sector operators, banks, government agencies, associations and NGOs, belonging to the tourism, agriculture and fishing sectors were involved during the project preparation phase. This resulted in a sectorally-integrated project, using both market-based and regulatory approaches, targeted to remove barriers for the recognition of biodiversity as a strategic asset to be preserved. The above table summarises the major barriers and rent-seeking behaviours which were identified as negatively affecting Dalmatian biodiversity.

Breaking path dependencies and removing the traps that preempt territorial assets to be fully exploited requires a capacity to engage in a far reaching and ambitious strategy. Evidence from the case study show that the **development of a common vision is necessary to pursue ambitious long-term development objectives and avoid vested interests to prevail**. Developing a vision for the common good is quite the opposite of designing demand driven strategies responding to partisan and rent-seeking behaviours which are at the basis of the developmental traps which need to be removed. At the same time, building a common vision needs time and efforts and it is often the result of exploratory activities aimed at working on finding the most appropriate solutions.

The call for a collective effort may become pressing when **a brand new vision of development trajectory is needed in order to break with a situation which for some reasons became no longer sustainable**. Interesting examples of identifying new territorial assets are provided in those places experiencing severe structural change,

Aggregating consensus on a shared vision



such as the case of **Rotterdam**, where a former industrial shipyards became a hub hosting labs for students and equipped spaces for innovative start-ups, or **Limerik**, where a former electrical factory was turned into a multifunctional site catalysing business activities. In both cases, the consequences of the decline of traditional economic activities (shipbuilding in Rotterdam and appliance assembly in Limerik), not only brought unemployment but also affected the entire urban landscape bringing physical abandonment and social disintegration. Here, the place-based approach turned out to be effective in breaking with the past productive vocation and in turning territorial challenges into opportunities.

A lively narrative for territorial development



"Educational facilities in the Rotterdam campus"

The vision underpinning territorial development is a lively narrative which adapts and evolves. Still, successful initiatives of structural change are those where economic renaissance is strongly rooted in the traditional territorial vocation and know-how, adapted to the new emerging economic scenario. In the case of **Rotterdam**, this is evident in the fact that the Port Authority started working with the existing educational institutions to build spaces to host innovative courses and practical training in domains where large buildings are needed for machines and materials. This, subsequently, attracted start-ups and innovative companies that took up some of the spaces made available aside educational facilities.

In an evolving environment, in fact, territorial vocation and specificities need to be continuously revived, strengthened or even fully reshaped. Ambitious strategies of complete reshaping of territorial vocation are also possible. The cases of Limerik and Duisburg suggest that development strategies requiring the accumulation of new competences can be promoted provided that a common vision is shared by local stakeholders. Specifically, in the case of **Limerick**, at the time of the Krumps factory closure, a conservative position supported the idea that the site would only be suitable for warehouse-type activities. In the face of this prospect, a group of local players pushed a strategy to enhance the education and skills profile of local people in order to attract new enterprises with the final aim to break with the previous pattern of maintaining low-skill employment.

Similarly, in the **Duisburg** case, the closure of the steel factory leading to high structural unemployment required the design of a far reaching development strategy. Here, the interesting aspect to be stressed is that as a result of multi-stakeholder conferences a completely new leading sector has been clearly identified as potential development engine. Thanks to a skilful analysis of the context and the future trends as well as a strong commitment of the state government, local stakeholders selected logistics.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES FOR AN AMBITIONOUS STRATEGY

Key message

When problems are complex and multi-faceted, there is a need to move away from a traditional 'administrative' approach which starts from the assigned competencies and formal mandates to design feasible interventions, to an issue-based policy whose implementation spreads beyond geographical and administrative boundaries. Integration of policies and territories is desirable to maximise synergies and avoid fragmented and even conflicting actions. At the same time, identifying functional areas and implementing multi-sectoral strategies implies adopting new administrative and implementing tools coping with the diversity of actors, competences and practices.

Administrative boundaries may not cope with territorial ambitions

The case studies proved that assets are rarely confined within administrative borders. For instance, in the **Duisburg** case the success of logport is closely connected to the merging linkages between Duisburg and neighbouring municipalities and districts along the Ruhr Area which depend on three different administrative regions. Territorial ambitions may spread also across national borders. An example is provided by the **Flemish-Dutch** case, where the Ghent–Terneuzen Canal and, more specifically, the harbours of Ghent (BE) and Terneuzen (NL) and their respective industrial surroundings have played an important role in the creation of a bio-based cluster.

Challenges such as preserving the environment and maintaining sustainable development call for a level of actions extending beyond municipalities, regions and even countries. **The recognition of the need to work with a more flexible sense of geography** which may be limited, as in the case of islands or urban neighbourhoods, or large, as in the case of metropolitan regions or macro-regions such as the Baltic Sea, **is thus an important feature of the place-based approach.**

*From administrative to
functional areas*

Same territory with different challenges ...

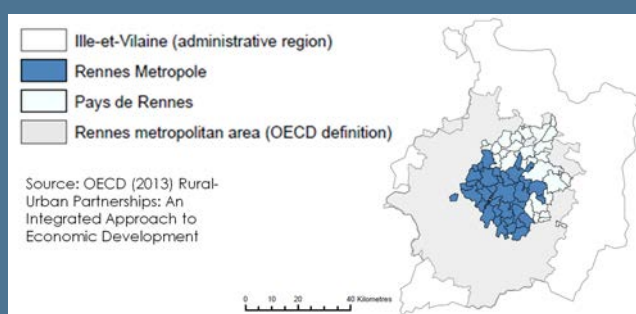
On one hand, it could be recognised that over the same territory there are different needs and challenges that require different ways of intervention. On the other hand, there are cases in which different territories (either belonging to different administrations or with different characteristics) are facing common developmental challenges.

The identification of the characteristics of a place should take into account territorial scale. For large administrative areas (i.e. countries or regions) with distinctive heterogeneous places, it is important to recognise different ways of addressing developmental goals and priorities. This is shown very well by the **Finnish** case where the national agricultural policy had to take into account the heterogeneity of its rural territories characterised by different features, needs and potentialities. In these cases the institutional structure of the country/region must be able to accommodate the different needs emerged over the whole territory.

Box 5 Functional area

In the definition of the OECD (2002), a functional area is a territorial unit resulting from the organisation of social and economic relations in that its boundaries do not reflect geographical particularities or historical events. It is thus a functional sub-division of territories. Usually, functional areas are organised around one or several nodes, with the surrounding areas linked to that (those) node(s) through different systems (transportation, communication, labour, trade). The relationship and the compatibility between functional areas and administrative ones (both higher and lower administrative territorial levels) is an important issue since it reflects how the different territorial levels fit together and can determine how tasks and responsibilities are shared between them.

In the **case of Rennes**, different geographies for different functions exist. Specifically, Rennes Métropole is a Public Establishment of Intercommunal Cooperation (EPCI), i.e. a formal voluntary municipal cooperation bringing together 43 municipalities, including the city of Rennes. Instead, Pays de Rennes is a wider administrative constituency which includes 5 EPCI.



While, in other circumstances, the two levels could be seen as redundant or competitive, in the case of Rennes, Rennes Métropole and Pays de Rennes endorse complementary functions with a clear division of competence and cooperate smoothly. In particular, the Pays de Rennes is a pertinent area - close to the definition of a functional area - to deal with urban-rural partnership. This is indeed where the "SCoT" (Territorial Coherence Plan), a spatial planning instrument, applies in geographical terms (the SCoT covers 69 municipalities). At the same time, the SCoT is implemented by policies designed by Rennes Métropole and its municipalities (in areas such as economy, urbanism, mobility, housing, energy, etc.).

At the same time, there are cases in which different territories (belonging to different administrative entities and even spatially far-away from each other) face the same development challenges. This is well illustrated by the **Baltadapt** case where a transnational (macro-regional) strategy for addressing adaptation to climate change in the Baltic sea was designed by a shared effort of eight countries with focus on the sea and the coastline. In particular, the project allowed for the identification of a macro-regional network of researchers and policy makers for discussing climate change issues and facilitating the arrangement of valuable contracts between interested actors from around the region.

This second situation requires the identification of relevant areas where the collaboration of different territories around a common goal is needed. Territorial integration therefore may require the creation of functional areas such as metropolitan areas or macro-regions that enable policy coherence in spatially and economically homogenous, but politically fragmented, areas.

Untapping potential requires integrated efforts

When it comes to removing the constraints to the full exploitation of territorial assets, complex and interlinked developmental challenges are usually identified. For example, the **Terrassa** case shows very well how problems related to social cohesion in this Spanish neighbourhood could be traced back to a combination of aspects including lack of employment opportunities, low education attainments, constraints in accessing basic public services and cultural frictions with migrants. In the same way, the **Apulia** case demonstrates that the competitiveness constraints in the Southern Italian region were a mix of decline of traditional manufacturing activities, scarce ICT infrastructure endowment and use of digital service, lack of capacity to secure funding, limited collaboration between research centres and enterprises, short termism of development strategies.

Evidence from the cases shows that **more and more territorial development strategies are called to cope with major challenges which need to be addressed through integrated policy actions.** When addressing climate change, economic restructuring, social inclusion, the most appropriate responses leverage a number of different dimensions. In such cases, a proper response usually calls for a coordinated effort in areas and policy fields traditionally dealt with separately. For instance, the case of the **Danube Delta** in Romania shows that, due to the geographic specificity of the area, a coordinated territorial and multi-sectoral strategy is under development in order to achieve a balanced development from an economic, social and environmental standpoint.

... Different territories with same challenges

"Integration requires a place-based approach, because you cannot integrate different sectoral interventions anywhere else but at ground level." (Barca, 2009)



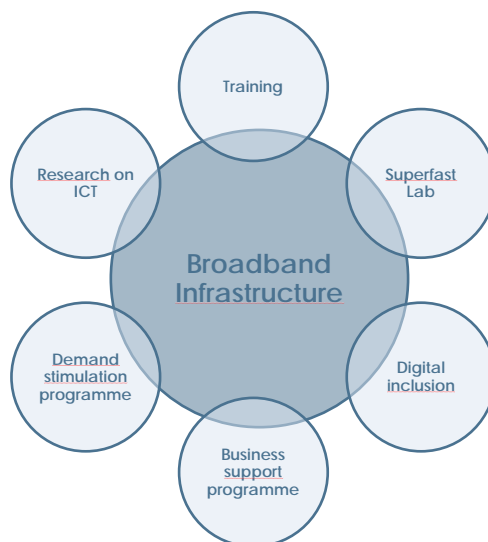
Box 6 Strategy for Danube Delta

The Danube Delta is the second largest delta in Europe, with a total area of 3,446 square kilometers. Within the Danube Delta, there are 16 strictly protected areas, forming the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, with a great variety of specific flora and fauna, where it is forbidden to carry out economic activities. The area also includes a number of localities (towns and villages part of two different counties, i.e. Tulcea and Constanta) forming a buffer zone around the Reserve where tourist activities can be carried out, in compliance with environmental protection regulations. At the same time, the Danube Delta is probably one of the most sparsely populated regions in temperate Europe, with approximately 20,000 people living in a few ports and scattered villages. The isolation and harsh living conditions, mostly subsistence conditions, are also features of the Danube Delta. The specificities and challenges of this unique area have pushed the Romanian Government as well as the Tulcea County to elaborate an integrated development strategy, on which to base the sustainable development of the region also taking advantages of the new instruments proposed by the EC for coordinated use of Funds such as the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI).

*Integration may assume
different forms...*

Integration may take different forms. The most common is the combination of a series of parallel but complementary activities, encompassing different sectors, all contributing to the achievement of the same objective.

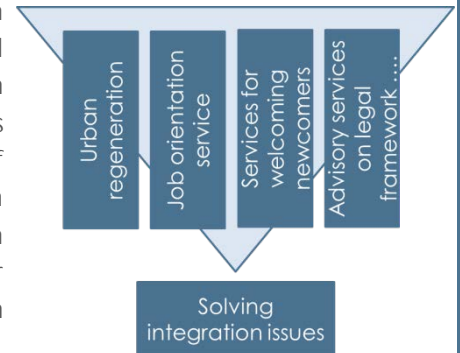
Superfast Cornwall's integration approach



A typical example is the mix of 'hard' and 'soft' measures, thus the construction of a physical infrastructure and the complementary activities to stimulate its use. This is the case of the **Cornwall Programme** for the broadband construction which was conceived since the beginning in combination with a number of ancillary activities and services ranging from demand stimulation to training, R&D activities aimed at better exploiting the ICT technology and even social exclusion measures. The result of such an approach was

speeding up the process of stimulating the demand for digital connection and thus spreading the benefit of the investment more largely and quickly. The same integrated approach is evident in the **Terrassa** case study where the physical restoration of the neighbourhood went together with a number of services addressing the need to promote community cohesion. Since social integration problems arise from a combination of different and multifaceted deprivation circumstances, the idea was to implement an action linking interventions in different fields such as job orientation services to unemployed people, services for welcoming and reception of newcomers, advisory services on legal framework and urban regeneration. Thanks to this approach, a new co-operation between municipal services has been established which allowed for the development of a new working method based on exploitation of synergies.

“Combination of complementary activities encompassing different sectors, all contributing to the achievement of the same objective in the Terrassa case”



Other forms of integration are those of far reaching strategies where, under the same theme, different sectors are brought together, such as in the case of the Baltic strategy or the Dalmatian biodiversity case.

An interesting example of integration is the implementation of a single initiative in sectors which are integrated by nature and can become instrumental to the achievement of different goals. ICT and environmental themes served particularly well to this kind of initiatives as illustrated by the **Horta à Porta** case. The Portuguese Horta à Porta case was initiated as an awareness raising campaign on environmental sustainability promoted by the local municipal company in charge of the solid waste management system in the Porto region. The initiative was so successful and well received by the population that it soon emerged as a self standing initiative aiming at providing recreational activities, addressing social exclusion and supporting family livelihood. A number of gardens addressed to disadvantaged groups were indeed organised as an innovative approach in promoting social inclusion and supporting underserved communities.

“A single initiative in a sector is instrumental to reach a series of different objectives. The Horta à Porta project”



Guadalinfo is another interesting example of the same aspect. The project offers public broadband access to the whole region of Andalusia, with a network of 756 telecentres. Targeting municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, typically located in the most under-populated and disadvantaged areas of the region, Guadalinfo’s aim was not only to increase the use of ICT but also to boost e-equality as a means of helping social cohesion and regional development. In particular, it contributes to minimise the urban-rural digital divide and exclusion in the processes of innovation.

Integrated interventions are facilitated by new instruments available in the EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

With respect to sectoral integration, it is worth mentioning that new instruments supporting integrated and multi-dimensional territorial strategies are available in the EU Cohesion Policy period 2014-2020.

Box 7 Integrated Territorial Investment

An Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) allows Member States, regions and cities to implement territorial strategies in a cross-cutting way by combining funding from several priority axes, several Programmes or several ESI Funds. As such, ITI can only be used if a specific geographical area has an integrated, cross-sectoral development strategy which addresses its development needs. The case of the Danube Delta described earlier is an example where an integrated strategy is going to be conceived and implemented through an ITI. Actually, many examples researched in this study could have used ITI if this tool would have already existed. In the 2014-2020 programming period many European cities will use ITI to execute their sustainable urban development strategies that tackle the economic, environmental, climate and social challenges of the urban areas and take into account urban-rural linkages.

AN OPEN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Key message

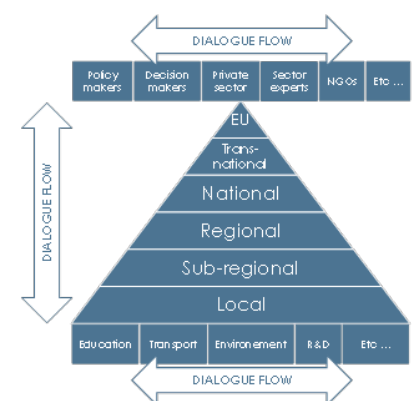
Integrated policies need integrated partnerships. This often involves parties other than public institutions such as the private sector, civil society organisations and even the general public. Local awareness and social acceptance deserve a special attention when building the relevant partnership. While preconditions for good governance such as an enabling institutional context and good government may be out of control of local decision-makers, engaging the relevant partners, ensuring smooth communication channels and providing effective decision-making processes are key factors of success. Cooperative interactions, promoting dialogue and mutual understanding are the modus operandi at the core of the most successful cases. This requires an effective governance system and calls for specific practices to engage local actors.

An enabling institutional context

It is important to bear in mind that, as for all the policy approaches, **the prerequisite for the place-based approach to be really effective lies in its promotion by a sound institutional environment.** As it is often evoked, good institutions are indeed a primary driver for development and growth. Underdevelopment traps are often the results of institutions incapable, unwilling or insufficient to deliver the appropriate incentives and investments to foster development in a given context. An appropriate institutional environment is a matter of sharing responsibilities, interaction practices and tools supporting a sound policy dialogues which can facilitate a good governance system.

A fundamental element of the place-based approach is that it call for multi-level governance which encompasses dialogue across governance levels, sectors and various stakeholders such as NGOs, financial institutions, representatives of social groups. As such, a number of actors need to be taken on board and interventions must be designed, implemented and monitored in partnership. Dialogue and interactions among different actors at different levels is crucial to ensure an integrated approach, which allows for the reconciliation of several policy objectives and a balanced development.

"The concept of (multi-level) governance focuses in particular on the shift from government to governance". (Painter and Goodwin 1995)



In a multi-level governance framework, vertical integration refers to the dialogue between different levels of governance (supra-national, national, regional and local) with the aim to define coherent priorities between territories at different scales and coordination between policy instruments defined and implemented at different levels of governance. **Dialogue across different levels of government serves to establish, in a consensual manner, the responsibilities of each level, so that overlaps are avoided.** Such a dialogue is however shaped by the institutional framework in place which sets responsibilities and delegates powers to the different levels. In order for a place-based approach to be put in place, a prerequisite is the appropriate division of responsibilities providing the most suitable level of power to, by one side, set policy objectives and, by the other, implement the policies with the necessary considerations for territorial specificities.



The case studies provide substantial evidence suggesting that a reshuffle of institutional arrangements may be key to put forward the desired changes. The triggering effect in those cases was the delegation of power to the institutional level closer to the problems to be tackled. **A top-down approach may be less effective when the intervention requires a strong mobilisation of knowledge and engagement of the people living in the target territory.** This is also the case for policy areas which traditionally have been developed as place-blind policies, such as education or R&D.

For example, in the *Antwerp* case, the need for coordination of different education actors to reduce inefficiencies and effort duplications resulted in an institutional reform. Specifically, the city council established the General Education Policy department, which took up the lead of a dialogue which already existed in some form, but was not a common established practice. This initiative was later strengthened by a Flemish decree which, recognising the coordination need singled out by local actors, reinforced the power and credibility of city departments.

R&D is another interesting example of this situation, and in this respect the case of *Apulia* regional innovation system is particularly telling. The Apulia case shows that one of the enabling conditions was the delegation of power on matters related to R&D support from the central to the regional level. This boosted the resources and the effort concentrated on a common long-term development strategy addressed to the regional innovation system, which in turn improved the innovation performance of Apulian companies. Specifically, the regional strategy was better at targeting the specific needs of local stakeholders and the proximity of regional bodies to beneficiaries allowed direct dialogue, resulting in continuous support along the whole project cycle. At the same time, it was key that the national level had continued providing

substantial financing for research and innovation through its National Research Programme addressing convergence regions.

The role of exogenous forces

The place-based approach is not characterised by fully bottom-up initiatives. On the contrary, while local actors usually know best what is needed on the ground, a series of drawbacks could also arise from pure local interest initiatives. First, what is locally popular may not be what is strategically optimal; second, bottom-up initiatives could bring the risks of being associated to short run pay-offs; third, local actors are generally less interested in spillover effects to other territories.

For all these reasons, the pressure from the higher level is of utmost importance to define the overall framework in which actors should play their respective roles, especially when the policy field requires a certain critical mass and there are major potentially conflicting interests in place. In some cases the stimulus provided by the higher government level or external actors with a broader vision were crucial to put things in motion. This is evident for example in the **Duisburg** case, where the State government of Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW) played a central role in the development of the Logport project, by promoting already in 1987 multi-stakeholder conferences and establishing a programme for funding regional development concepts. In the same way, the role of the Austrian Wind Energy Association was pivotal in focusing the attention in **Northern Burgenland** on the opportunities offered by the use of ERDF to support investments in wind turbine prototypes.

An interesting insight from the case studies is that the European Commission with the ESI Funds has a pivotal role to play in providing strategic policy directions, funding, incentives and control addressed to maximise the development potential of the selected interventions. For example, the role of the EU in the case of **Burgenland** proved to be particularly important. Here, EU funding was key to implement a series of pilot projects catalysing first investments in prototypes which then led to increased awareness of actual potential of renewable energy sources.

The supra-national level can be crucial for providing the necessary skills and capacities to implement a far reaching strategy. For example, in the case of the strategy for the **Danube Delta** the role played by the World Bank was to provide technical and methodological support to the public authorities throughout the whole strategic planning process. Here, the complexity of the territorial area, the multiple fields to investigate for assessing the current situation, and the largely participatory exercise to identify specific needs of different stakeholders led the Romanian Government to involve a worldwide recognised institution with the purpose of facilitating a challenging task.

“A balance is then called for between exogenous and endogenous forces, by which local actors set targets and design projects, while the external ‘development agency’ sets the general conditions that the former must follow and tailor to specific places.” (Barca Mc Cann and Rodriguez-Pose, 2011)

The role of the European Commission with the ESI Funds

*“Governance can be defined as the capacity for collective action that involves a broad range of actors and institutions as well as informal and formal activities at different administrative levels”
(Marks, 1993)*

Clear rules of the game

A key ingredient for an effective governance structure relates to the setting up of an **adequate mechanism to integrate the views of a large set of stakeholders**, i.e. other actors beside those of the formal political system.

A governance structure which is able to **integrate a complex set of stakeholders, ranging from formal to informal institutions**, in an area of intervention and/or around a strategy development is important for a twofold reason. On one hand, the interaction among actors can produce new shared knowledge. In the case of *Baltadapt* project, for instance, the cooperation of researchers and policy-related actors enabled mutual learning and contributed significantly to fill the knowledge gap of policy makers in the Baltic Sea Region. On the other hand, engaging a variety of partners may be a way to leverage on local resources, as in the case of the *Lithuanian manor* where local artists were involved by actively promoting cultural events and initiatives. Again, involving Civil Society Organisations or NGOs is a way to channel the actions towards the final users. In the case of *Cornwall*, for example, training events for beginners were organised by local community groups and charities.

Some of the cases have revealed that **the attraction of the private sector can be a success element**. While successful project ideas do not necessarily require particular skills on the part of their promoters, their implementation and operation can benefit from the involvement of a private actor, by reducing investment risk and/or bringing about entrepreneurial approach. The green business support scheme presented in the *Dalmatian* case is an interesting example. It consisted in engaging the private banking sector in co-financing green business ideas, by reducing investment risk through innovative mechanisms. The project experience has indicated that the banking sector can be seen as a key entry point for biodiversity mainstreaming and that smaller regional banks are good partners for these innovative forms of financing entrepreneurial activities.

Another interesting example is provided by the Limerik case. Here, the private sector was the promoter and the leader of the *Limerick* Enterprise Development Partnership, a public-private partnership that purchased and rehabilitated a former industrial site into a “village” hosting training, shopping, business facilities as well as leisure and community services. The private partners in this case proved to be prepared to take initial risk and to manage businesses as well as social affairs, which were crucial to implement a risky and costly initiative breaking with the past and vocational tradition of the city.

The role of the private sector

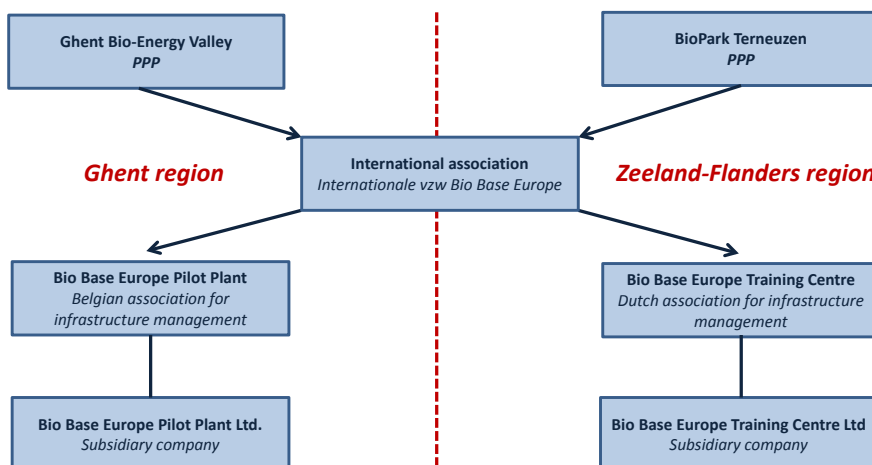
Partnership arrangements may be the most diverse. Case studies show that **setting clear rules of the game in the interaction among the partner members is a crucial aspect of a good governance system**. In fact, any functioning body can attract free-riders or even people with an ambition to take over the leadership of the initiative and shape it to meet their own interests. An interesting practice experienced in the **Czech** case is the rule that any new individual (or institution) willing to be involved in the strategy will not be accepted immediately onto the Steering Committee or Executive Board, but first will have to join one of the working groups and, then, only after proving abilities and enthusiasm at that level, that person will be qualified for promotion to the decision-making bodies.

Clear rules to control free-riding



Another interesting example of partnership arrangement is provided by the **Flemish-Dutch** case. Here, five structures with different functions linked with the management of the bio base cluster have been specifically established by the two founding Public-Private-Partnerships. Among other things, this structure allowed for a clear definition of tasks, allocation of competencies and resources. On one hand, sharing responsibilities on an equal and clear manner enforces the satisfaction and acceptance of project partners in both countries. On the other hand, it enhances the feeling of interdependency, i.e. the idea that project components and partners need each other for achieving a mutual goal.

The organisation structure of Bio Base Europe



Since involving partners is time-consuming, care should be taken in setting and agreeing the timeline of the process from the beginning. One way is to **structure the partnership and involvement of local actors in a strictly formalised way** to ensure an appropriate division of tasks as well as a smooth implementation of the strategy. The **Rennes** case is a good example in this respect since the district makes the most of institutional arrangements provided by the French

Build up strictly formalised partnership

law for inter-communal cooperation. With the aim to combat administratively fragmentation and to reach better capacity to coordinate common action, Rennes Métropole was indeed established. It is a formal voluntary municipal cooperation bringing together 43 municipalities which, taking part in this partnership are actually delegating some of their powers. Initiatives by Rennes Métropole are backed by legal regulations and decisions, albeit taken unanimously, are binding. This kind of strictly formalised partnership has allowed Rennes Métropole to devise coherent strategies and to smoothly implement and monitor them.

Making local population part of the deal

A specific attention should be given to the involvement of local population since it helps to increase the sense of participation and legitimacy. **Local population should be the ultimate major beneficiary of place-based initiatives therefore their expectations, preferences and concerns should be at the core of the design and implementation of the strategy.** Also, they should be well linked with the wider development strategies. In this regard, many case studies show that social acceptance by the concerned population is a key ingredient of initiative success. *Horta á Porta* is an example of project in which the participatory approach has been one of its key success factors since it has assured people and institutions spontaneous adhesion and participation. For the *Lithuania* manor the importance of local brigades bringing enthusiasm, fresh ideas and personal effort was a key element in maximising the use of resources. Ownership and social acceptance is a key enabler of territorial development strategies, and the acceptance of the wider public tends to be stronger if the intervention builds on local traditional vocation and sense of identity. An evident example is the intervention on the unification of the archaeological site of *Athens*. Besides the aspect of cultural heritage, the drive leading to restoration in that case clearly drew from a sense of appropriation of its past glory lying at the heart of the local population and which was able to leverage the public intervention. However, the success of the initiative has been partially hampered by the limited participation of local community groups in the decision making process. In that case, in fact, public consultations in the initial phase of the program design were not organised.



"Consultation for the formulation of the Mata National Environmental Plan"

Engaging the wider public at the early stage of laying down strategies and programmes is particularly important. This is made evident by various cases, such as for example the design of the *greening Malta strategy* or *the Danube Delta Strategy* in Romania. In those cases, an extensive consultation process has been organised to collect opinions which resulted in a threefold effect: on the one side it significantly contributed to the tailoring of the strategy/policy to the emerging bottom-up demand, on the other side it allowed for the consensual reconciliation of divergent interests, and, finally, it helped to raise awareness and spread consensus.

A variety of tools can be used to involve local population including focus groups, conferences, online platforms, websites, online surveys. While consultations and public hearings are the most common way of informing and raising awareness around a planned intervention, both before approval and during implementation of the initiative, a relatively new tool to gather a comprehensive picture of the people's view and aspirations is an internet-based survey. An interesting example in this regard is shown by the **Malta** case study (see Box 8). Workshops are indeed a more participatory tool to engage the views of different actors who were made part of the decision-making process rather than simply observers. For example, in the **Terrassa** case organising workshop was vital to better define the needs of the neighbourhood and design the relative initiatives accordingly. This led the neighbours and the neighbourhood organisations to be at the same time recipients, implementers and "owners" of the intervention.

Different mechanisms of consultation and interaction exist

Box 8 Consultation process in the Malta case

EcoGozo is a vision, adopted in 2009, intended to underpin political actions to make the island of Gozo an eco-island by 2020. The Ministry for Gozo coordinated a nearly one year-long consultation process to policy makers, professionals, operators in the field, experts, civil organisations, and different segments of the general public, from the children to the elderly. In order to gather a comprehensive picture of the people's view and aspirations about the island's future, an internet-based survey was opened to everybody and promoted in the national media; printed postcards were distributed to Gozitan inhabitants to collect their suggestions, and more than a thousand submissions were received; face-to-face meetings with non-governmental organisations and other bodies and presentations in schools were organised. More than 60 experts in various fields were asked to add their proposals, and then to process all the received replies. This led to the formulation of around 800 recommendations, classified by theme, which represent the people's vision for the transformation of their island into a sustainable reality.

A more structured way to systematically involve the local population is the setting up of appropriate platforms for consultation and co-decision-making. An interesting example is offered by the case of **Jaslo**. The "Agora of Jaslo" is a civil forum of non-governmental organisations set up in each local government unit of the Jaslo county operating on the basis of unified principles. The ten-person task forces (five representatives of the villages or settlements and five representatives of the NGO's and business milieus) were selected during local meetings. The meetings of the Agora of Jaslo took place at least twice a quarter and during such meetings diagnostic data developed by experts were analysed and interpreted and the progress of work on the Strategy was discussed. Recently, the Agora of Jaslo has been transformed into an

association equipped with the task of monitoring the quality of public services in the area encompassed with the project activities.

Another interesting example is the *Finnish case* where local action groups (LAGs) were set up for developing local strategies for rural development. This proved to be an important innovation as compared to more centralistic rural development policies with a strong national direction and enabled to internalise locally diffused contextual knowledge, i.e. the tacit knowledge of various stakeholders, into the development decision process. LAGs are a way of empowering the local level. They are grass-roots development groups, which initiate and support development projects on the basis of a strategy and action plan defined in concert with both the national and local level of the government. In the Finnish case, a tripartite principle has been indeed followed in the composition of the board: one third of members represents the municipalities of the area, one third represents companies or corporations, and one third ordinary citizens. This is a way of bringing forward the views of the local population in an effective way.

A new instrument available for the period 2014-2020 encourages the mobilisation of local communities

Building on such experiences reflecting the approach of the LEADER Programme, the EU cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020 provides a specific instrument, the Community Led Local Development (CLLD).

Box 9 Community - Led Local Development (CLLD)

CLLD encourages the mobilization of local communities and allows local level to better take their needs into account in a holistic manner. Differently from its predecessor, it enables communities to use different funds to deliver projects that are responsive to the local needs and to improve strategic local development. The idea is that Local Action Groups composed of representatives of local public and private socio-economic interests are the preferred agent to develop integrated and multi-sectoral area-based development strategies, designed taking into consideration local needs and potential.

CLLD is therefore a tool which can allow reaching a set of complementary goals. First, it encourages local communities to take action and to shape development paths, this, in turn, helps to build and enhance community capacity. Secondly, active involvement of different local agents helps to promote the community ownership of interventions implemented which, in turn, helps to increase their effectiveness. Finally, the CLLD promotes the implementation of integrated and multi-sectoral operations through financial support from the different European Structural and Investment Funds.

Involvement of local population can go much further than being merely consulted...

But the involvement of local population can go very far from being merely consulted to being systematically involved in the decision making process. Place-based approach is at its highest expression when local people have a real opportunity to share the benefits of

the intervention. A particularly interesting case is the *Burgenland* case, where not only revenues from the energy permissions were used to finance social services such as school and hospitals, but also the regional energy provider, which was the main investor in the new renewable energy sites, offered shares with a guaranteed annual rate of return of 3% for ten years, which were heavily demanded by the regional population.

The selection of appropriate tools depends on the phases of the decision process, on the type of intervention to be implemented as well as on the type of target population. It is important to bear in mind that while dialogue allows exchange of point of views and facilitate common agreements, the multiplicity of stakeholders can also make control and coordination more vulnerable.

Key message

Political dialogue is fundamental to develop coordinated responses and integrated interventions. At the same time it requires a strong commitment to negotiation and consensus building, which should be embedded in a strong leadership. Leading capacity and a strong ownership of the initiative is fundamental to steer the process and proactively keep a long term commitment to the whole strategic vision. Thinking out of the box and developing creativity and problem solving attitude are additional useful aspects of a committed leadership.

The need for a strong leadership

An open participatory approach is a distinctive feature of a place-based approach and, at the same time, one of the major challenges. Impasses, conflicts and endless discussions and confrontations are the main risks that may occur if the partnership has no strong direction.



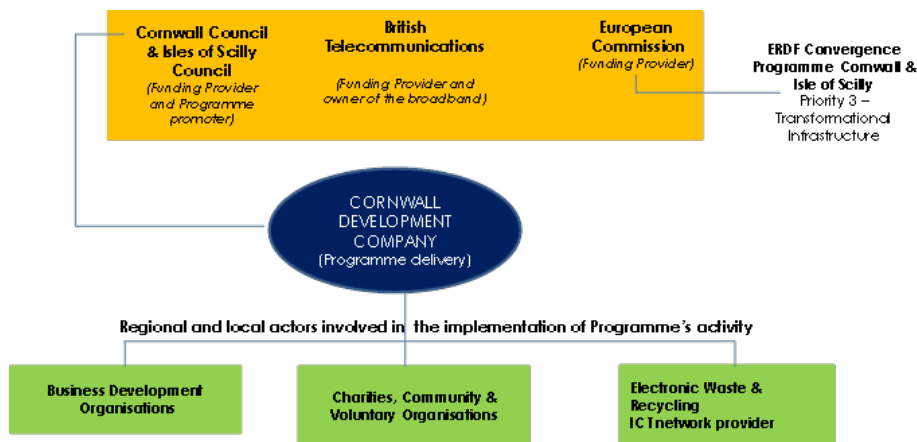
The involvement of a high number of stakeholders has caused some difficulties during the design and the implementation of **the Superfast Cornwall Programme** in terms of time needed for achieving agreements. Eventually, the smooth implementation of the programme has been achieved thanks to the leading role played by the management board of the Cornwall Development Company, which has facilitated communication among the different stakeholders and enabled the setting up of common targets and objectives to be achieved. **A solid leading partner is in fact necessary to help the process sticking to the long-term shared vision.** This aspect is particularly evident in a number of the cases reviewed, although the institutional solutions are different.

Setting up a dedicated implementing body...

An interesting solution adopted in some of the analysed case studies is the set up of a dedicated implementing agency entrusted to implement the project and having the necessary capacity and resources to steer the process with a forward looking perspective. This is the already mentioned case of the **Cornwall initiative** which delegated a development company, arm's length of the regional council, the task to support the private investor in the construction of the physical infrastructure as well as managing the entire

programme of complementary activities coordinating the partners and monitoring the timely and accurate implementation.

Superfast Cornwall's governance

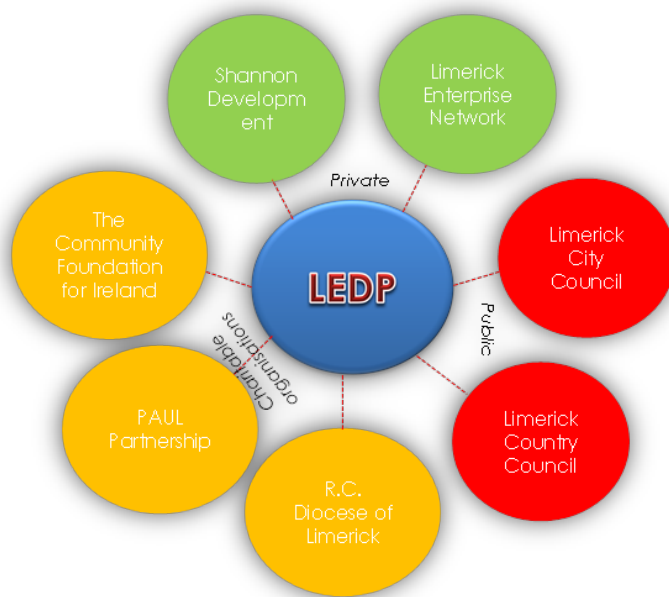


A similar story is the **Greek** case of the unification of the archaeological sites of Athens where a Ministerial decision established a new anonymous state-owned company to which entitled the relevant resources and responsibilities. In particular, the aim of the company was the implementation of the program for the unification of the archaeological sites of Athens according to a detailed list of 6 projects including a total of 80 interventions. This innovative solution facilitated more rapid and effective actions by, on one side, bounding the overall responsibility on a unique body instead of spreading it into several different offices in the national and local government, and, on the other, moving the nature of operations into the private law and the rules of the market to allow a faster and more flexible decision making process.

Another example is provided by the **Limerik** case, where a group of seven stakeholders (see figure below) established the Limerick Enterprises Development Partnership, as a public private voluntary partnership with non-profit status. While operating as a social enterprise, it was driven by the private sector to ensure that both social and economic objectives of the project would be achieved in an efficient and sustainable way.

... Or a dedicated strong partnership...

The Limerick Enterprises Development Partnership



A limitation of more traditional approaches to territorial development, in fact, is that splitting the responsibilities of implementing a complex venture into different bodies or departments according to their institutional competences increases the chance of potential conflicts and fragmented actions. While different organisations and institutions may share responsibilities in contributing to addressing the same problems **there is the need of identifying a specific body for which this becomes the 'core business'**. Only in this way a long term commitment is ensured. For example, in the *Apulia* case, one of the key steps in implementing the regional innovation strategy was to rationalise the responsibilities of the different agencies and bodies involved in the implementation of innovation policies. Simplifying the whole system under a single agency which acted closer to the Regional government and as a direct implementing agency of the regional strategy helped in adopting a more responsive attitude to users' needs.

... but individual leadership is also crucial.

Institutional leadership is not the only relevant aspect, **individual leadership is also crucial**. A number of cases describe the inspiring and visionary role of key local leaders in initiating a process of renovation. This is the case for example of the local artist in *Lithuania* who advocated for a new destination and management structure for the Zypliai manor and personally engaged in the venture, or the local major and local engineer in Southern *Burgenland* who strongly believed in the potential of biomass as alternative to imported fossil energy sources or, again, the local leaders promoting the *Moravian Silesian* Employment Pact.

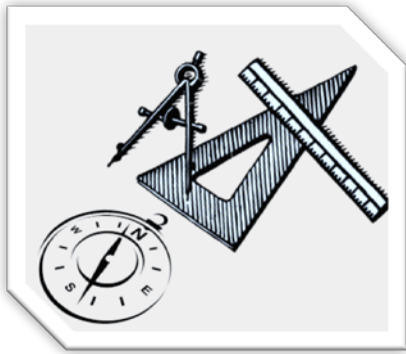
Aggregating consensus and negotiation

A major task of the leading partner is aggregating consensus and keeping the commitment to the long term objective high. Aggregating a large consensus is hard job, and evidence from the case studies suggests that implementing a place-based approach requires a lot of efforts for negotiation, compromises and managing trade offs among the engaged partners. **The aim of this negotiation should be to reach alignment of different policies and interests, i.e. anticipate and reconcile the conflicts naturally-arising among different policies goals and interests, in order to guarantee, since the policy design stage, that a holistic long-term development vision is shared and pursued by different actors.**



One of the most remarkable example of a large consensus building approach is the one showed in the *Burgenland* case study, where the early involvement of all relevant stakeholders, ranging from NGOs and representatives from tourism and agriculture to Austrian Institute for Spatial Planning, and local municipalities facilitate the development of win-win situations and the acceptance of the strategy for wind energy production. For example, zoning was introduced with areas where wind energy plants are strictly prohibited to protect the environment and other interests related to tourism and agriculture sectors. Also, the expansion of the wind energy production sector was limited to technological advancement or “repowering”, meaning the substitution of existing plants with larger or productive ones. These limitations concerning the wind energy facility locations were key to the acceptance by all stakeholders and made the fast growth process possible. Instead of looking for the maximisation of profits from the land permission, the regional government aimed at a large consensus building among conflicting interests.

At the same time compromises should never alter the nature and rationale underpinning the original vision, although this might prove extremely ambitious. For example, in *the Rotterdam* case of the requalification of abandoned industrial shipyards, when it came to the selection of the start-up companies to be located in the new innovation campus, the Port Authority was able to stick to the ambition to focus only on a limited number of sectors and themes which were aligned with the skills and competences developed by the universities. Although this selective procedure was causing delays in filling in the available spaces and hampering profit-making capacities of the venture, the Port Authority firmly adhered to the original ambition and avoided short termism to prevail. In this way, the initiative that could have been developed as a traditional real estate venture, led to a far reaching strategy of urban development and R&D promotion.



Creativity and problem solving

It is clear from the stories collected that pioneering and ground-breaking initiatives need flexibility and creativity. This requires **moving from a compliance-oriented into a more a result-oriented** attitude of all the partners and in particular the leading one. There is the **need to adopt entrepreneurial capacities to solve problems which may be new or unexpected and which require innovative solutions**. In the **Apulia** case, a closer scrutiny of the implementation process identified a major constraint of grant schemes for R&D in the necessity of the firms to pre-finance co-funded investments. To this end, the adoption of a pro-active and client-oriented approach allowed to find the administrative solution to provide pre-financing to targeted beneficiaries which was not possible in the past. Now, to overcome liquidity problems of Apulian firms, the regional agency is able to disburse in advance up to 90% of the Structural Funds' grants (against a suitable bank guarantee by the beneficiary firm). Although the problem is well known and shared everywhere, the regional agency is currently the only regional intermediate body in Italy which provides this kind of service.

Result-orientation also needs to be creative, for example to **adapt to local needs and enable a better and quicker response from potential users and final beneficiaries**. As illustrated in the **case of Cornwall**, where measures for demand stimulation of broadband services were designed and delivered in order to have a wide reach to scattered and aging rural population, training courses for internet beginners were organised in the municipal hall, churches and even pubs. Similarly, the demand stimulation for bio-based products as well as for "green" skills was assessed as a critical factor to the success of the bio base cluster in the **Flemish-Dutch** case. As such, the bio base pilot plant was complemented by a training centre which also provides marketing and communication activities in order to raise the awareness of enterprises and consumers on bio base matters.

Adopting a customised approach...

Thinking out of the box and find innovative solutions may be demanding and requires specific entrepreneurial skills. A couple of initiatives are particularly interesting and show practical examples of how to adopt a more users-oriented approach and more effective communication channels. Interesting innovative practices concern the enhancement of the attractiveness of technical education for young people in the case of **Moravian Silesian** Employment Pact. First, the image of professions such as bricklayers has been redesigned and presented in much more attractive terms. Second, the expert knowledge and experience of these professionals such as design engineers, builders and other professionals working in firms' R&D units nearing their retirement age is being used to transform these personalities into 'regional celebrities', who are subsequently invited to various schools for discussions with students.

In the case of **Antwerp**, initiatives addressing school leaving and truancy were designed drawing from past experience where school retention has been found not to be the solution. For this reason a more personal coaching approach is now provided to accompany students in the identification and solution of their problems. The fact that coaches are young people who suffered problems similar to the ones tackled by the network is a key for success. Being these coaches part of local communities, they have “street credibility” before their peers.

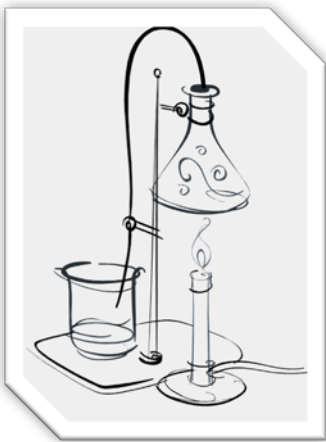
Adopting a customised approach is particularly effective not only when dealing with individuals but also with firms. The service provided by PugliaSviluppo, the regional agency for R&D in the **Apulia** region, provides support to enterprises through a diversified portfolio of instruments designed to address the specific needs of possible beneficiaries in the region. For example, the maximum volume of financing allocated by the Region, as well as the type of financing instrument (traditional grants, or financial engineering systems, such as microcredit) depends on firm’s size. Also, funds are allocated on the basis of a negotiation procedure between the firm and PugliaSviluppo in order to provide more targeted support and avoid the bureaucratic complexity usually affecting open tenders launched by the national government.

As shown in the case of the **Greek** body entrusted for the project of the unification of archeological sites, **moving the nature of operations into private law and the rules of the market** facilitates a more flexible decision making process and a more result-oriented approach as compared to the usual practice of public sector bodies.

... also with firms

Key message

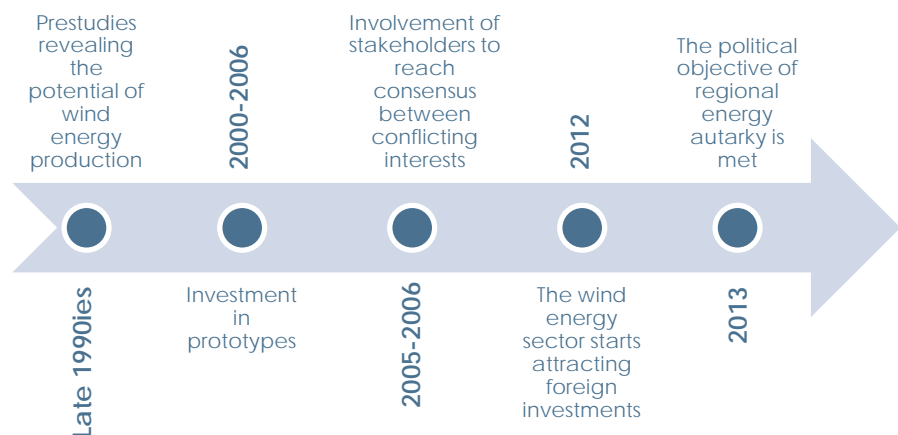
A forward looking perspective and cooperation need time to develop. By nature, long term and ambitious objectives lie outside the timeframe of programming periods and evaluation. Experimentation may be necessary when testing new solutions or scouting for innovative practices. At the same time it opens the door to possible failures and thus requires low risk aversion and sufficient resilience of the system in order to learn from the experience and quickly adjust to build on the lessons drawn. While the intended changes may take more time to materialise, the exploratory phase and learning by doing process may strengthen the strategic vision and the partnership, ultimately leading to even more important change.



Building on a long process

A quite common aspect featuring almost all the cases analysed is the relatively long timespan occurred to design, test and finally implement the selected initiatives. This aspect is particularly emphasised in the case of far reaching strategies, such as for example the renewable energy system in **Burgenland** where the first piloting actions were taken since the mid Nineties and even more so in **Rennes** where the discussion about territorial development are rooted in a policy debate dating back to the Seventies.

Burgenland's timeline



In many cases, although the first steps were taken in an apparently fragmented and uncoordinated manner, the initial phase was indeed particularly relevant to discuss different scenarios, identify relevant stakeholders and raise awareness among the wider public. Instead, in a more advanced stage of the initiative, building on past experiences, the implementation progressed smoothly and according to shared values and practices.

It is interesting to note indeed that in some cases the principles of the place-based approach have emerged in a rather spontaneous way as a response to longlasting processes of adjustments and fine tuning. The strategies selected and the solutions finally adopted were not, in fact, necessarily foreseen since the beginning, but were adopted and refined in a sometimes slow but enduring process of discussion, consultations and especially experimentation.

The long time scale seems particularly relevant with respect to two specific aspects, which are investigated in the following sections: the first one is related to the governance structure and the need to build trust and cooperative attitude among key actors and the second one relates to the construction of an ambitious strategy which needs investigation and testing time to be credible and solid enough.

Trust and capacity need time

Ambitious strategies rely on credibility and capacity. Both aspects need time to grow. As already mentioned, a necessary ingredient of place-based approach is political dialogue and multi-level governance structure. Evidence from case studies shows that more effective experiences are recorded in those places where mutual trust and partnership arrangements were facilitated by longlasting practices and experience of collaboration. This is a key success factor for example in the Employment Pact for **Moravia and Silesia** (CZ), where it was recognised that the strong sense of regional identity and partnership was secured thanks to a history of initiatives carried out, initially in a rather uncoordinated way, with the aim to fight against long term unemployment. Engaging in a common strategic effort and developing hands-on joint experience built a sense of confidence and cooperation which proved to be a success factor.

A long tradition of institutional cooperation and high level of trust and consensus is also a distinctive feature of the initiative of **Rennes Métropole**. Inter-communal relationships work smoothly in the area thanks to a long tradition of collaboration and mutual understanding which developed the value of equity as a factor of good cooperation.

As clearly stressed by the interviewees of the **Terrassa** case, moving towards new working methods requires an initial effort to learn about how to work together in an integrated manner. For Terrassa,



Long-lasting practices and experience of collaboration facilitate mutual trust and partnership arrangements...

... Otherwise you need time and efforts to learn how to work together

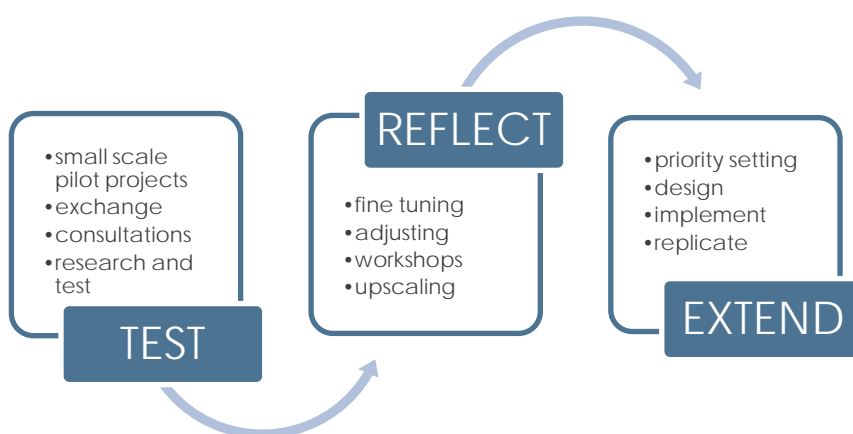
decisions were taken collectively on the basis of common planning and, most importantly, each department was able to adopt a shared vision towards the Plan, rather than adding its own vision to the other departments' strategies. After an initial impasse, learning by doing effects were reported and cooperation and partnership were assessed as successful.

Also political support and commitment may need time to develop

In the case of strongly bottom-up approaches, not only confidence among partners but also political support and commitment may need time to develop. Again, the **Czech** case study reports that it took two years for the initiative to come to the fora of the political agenda. Taking root within the mindset of regional politicians, which might be initially scared of the over-ambitious plans put forward by the promoters, is a matter of persuasion and credibility. The case study shows particularly well that the initial reluctance of politicians and public servants was a result of their concern that the pact would generate an additional workload and would constitute yet another lobby-group longing for public money. Overcoming this hindrance was facilitated to a large extent by previous informal contacts among stakeholders during the implementation of various – often one-off – projects.

The power of demonstration and pilots

Besides the value of building partnerships and capacity, **time is also required to experiment and test new ideas for innovative strategic visions**. The typical path observed in the considered initiatives is exploratory in nature and progresses thanks to a trial and error approach which is part of an interative learning process (test-reflect-extend iteration).



In the described long processes, pilot and demonstration initiatives are key in fine tuning tools and ambitions. For example, in the **Czech** case study, after five years of fragmented initiative to tackle structural unemployment in the region carried out on the initiative of a private consulting firm, it was clear that a strong public leadership was vital for its acceptance among a wide range of regional stakeholders. For this reason the ownership of the initiative was shifted to the Association for the Development of Moravia-Silesia

Region, strongly supported by the Regional Office, which proved to be more credible and powerful in engaging local partners.

While pilot and demonstration projects may seem sometimes slowing the process of tackling major challenges, their power should not be underestimated. In the *Cornwall initiative* the lessons learned during the pilot phase of supporting SMEs in adopting flexible working practices paved the way to further exploring the benefits and challenges associated to flexible working. The results of this pioneering project highlighted the potential of superfast broadband for increasing productivity and improving work-life balance.

The same applies to the role of EcoGozo strategy in *Malta*, which was developed as a pilot incubator for an integrated sustainable development strategy. The initiative acted as a laboratory for testing new ideas, and was further extended to the whole territory of Malta.

Exchange with other territories may be a relevant source of inspiration in this phase, as was the case for example in *Burgenland*, where a number of interregional and international projects on exchange of best practices paved the way to applied research projects on biomass.

As already mentioned, European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds have a major role to play in this respect, acting as catalyser of experimentation. Many cases show that the injection of Funds from Cohesion Policy was a key enabler in undertaking risky ventures which finally proved to be successful. The triggering effect is however not only as funding provider, but also as policy advisor setting priorities and overarching objectives. In a number of cases the urgency to comply with EU directives set in motion a process of strategic planning reaching far beyond the mere compliance need. This is well documented in the *Malta* case where the EU obligations in the environmental field paved the way for the adoption of a National Environmental Policy addressing other national issues such as neighbourhood noise, dust and other local concerns, and to tackle environmental issues in an integrated way.



LESSONS LEARNED:

a change in the mind-set

While strongly advocated in strategic documents addressing territorial development, the place-based approach is emerging also from the field as a suitable response to major challenges faced by EU territories such as coping with structural change, combating social exclusion and promoting environmental sustainability.

Although the impression is that of initiatives emerging from unique conditions and thus, by definition, untransferable, there are a number of common keys that can be detected as a footprint for decision makers. While some elements point to the usual commons of the place-based approach, such as working in an integrated way and multilevel dialogue, other aspects are novel and shed lights on the complexity and the experimental nature of such approaches.

There are a number of specific lessons on single aspects of the place-based approach which can be drawn from the histories collected here, but the general and more fundamental conclusion clearly points to the need of a, sometimes rather drastic, change in the mind-set of decision makers.

The adopted approaches represented a breakthrough as compared to past practices and look like pioneering and visionary experiences. They emerged from a strong pressure to deliver change and were made possible thanks to a clear move from compliance-driven to pro-active and issue-based policy making. In many cases the required capacities and skills to make the initiatives a success were new and needed time and resources to build and develop.

Here, ESI funds can play a major role not only providing necessary financial resources to undertake risky ventures, but also setting priorities and indicating promising paths. On top of that, in the 2014-2020 period specific tools provide a structured and well defined framework for implementing place-based strategies: ITI and CLLD. Evidence shows that experiences on the field are already in place building on the key principles promoted by these new instruments.

This consideration also suggests that the place-based approach is not a panacea but should be carefully chosen when it can maximise its effect. This is precisely when territories are called to face complex and pressing challenges, hampering their developmental capacities and requiring extraordinary efforts. In such cases, as well demonstrated by the evidence collected, a place-based approach can deliver the change.

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