IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

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Territorial Agenda 2030 – Implementation Review

Regional Development

Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies
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RESEARCH FOR REGI COMMITTEE

Territorial Agenda 2030 – Implementation Review

Abstract

The Territorial Agenda 2030 'A future for all places' is the latest in a long line of intergovernmental documents paving the way for territorial cohesion in Europe. It defines two overarching objectives, a Just Europe and a Green Europe, which have six priorities for developing the European territory as a whole along with all its places. This paper provides an introduction to the agenda and the state of play of its application.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Prospective
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NOVI	Dutch national strategy for spatial planning and the environment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TA2020	Territorial Agenda 2020
TA2030	Territorial Agenda 2030
TAEU	Territorial Agenda of the European Union
TEN	Trans-European Networks
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Territorial Agenda 2030 'A future for all places' has been adopted in 2020, by the ministers responsible for spatial planning, territorial development and/or territorial cohesion in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank Group and relevant European and national associations. It is the latest in a long line of documents paving the way for spatial planning and territorial cohesion in Europe. It advocates a broader and more timely understanding of cohesion to underpin policy making in Europe. As its predecessors, the Territorial Agenda 2030 is an intergovernmental declaration with no direct legal, financial or institutional implementation instruments. Indeed, rather than implementation, it talks about application and calls on a wide range of players to consider and apply its objectives and priorities.

As imbalances between people and places increase, economic, social and territorial cohesion become ever more important to ensure that Europe does not become divided, and the potential of all places are best utilised. Europe needs to ensure positive future perspectives for all places and people. The Territorial Agenda 2030 offers initial steps in this direction, including contributions to an updated understanding of (territorial) cohesion.

The key drivers for the Territorial Agenda have been summarised under the heading 'Why we need to act' addressing needs related to the 'quality of government and governance', 'places and people drifting apart, i.e. increasing imbalances and inequalities' and 'sustainable development and climate change, i.e. increasing pressures on the environment'. The details are summarised in the table below.

Table 1.1 Rationale underpinning the Territorial Agenda 2030

There is need to act as people and places drift apart – increasing imbalances and inequalities, e.g. in the fields:	There is need to respond to the increasing pressure concerning sustainable development and climate change, e.g. in the fields:
• Quality of life • Services of general interest • Demographic and societal imbalances • Digitalisation and the 4th industrial revolution • Employment and economic development • Interdependencies between places • Global embeddedness	• Climate change • Loss of biodiversity and land consumption • Air, soil and water quality • Secure, affordable and sustainable energy • Just transition • Circular value chains • Nature, landscape and cultural heritage

Source: Territorial Agenda 2030

The Territorial Agenda 2030 further aligns EU territorial development objectives with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Deal. It also underlines the importance of strategic spatial planning and provides orientation for this while strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies at all governance levels. It seeks to promote an inclusive and sustainable future for all places.

It defines two overarching objectives, a Just Europe and a Green Europe, which have six priorities for developing the European territory as a whole along with all its places (see figure).

Figure 1.1 Six priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030

Source: Territorial Agenda 2030

The application of the Territorial Agenda 2030 relies on informal multilevel cooperation between member states, sub-national authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank and other relevant players. All key players are asked to apply the Territorial Agenda 2030 in the context of their regular mandates. How they do this is mainly up of them.

To inspire key players to take action, the Territorial Agenda 2030 is accompanied by a report 'Implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030' with examples for a territorial approach in policy design and delivery. In line with linking existing schemes to implementation of the Territorial Agenda, there is unused potential in programmes and projects.

Furthermore, to inspire joint actions across Europe, six pilot actions were launched with the adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030, a seventh was added recently:

- A future for lagging areas,
- Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances,
- Small places matter,
- Cross-border spatial planning,
- Climate action in Alpine Towns,
- Climate change adaptation and resilience through landscape transition,
- Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing in cities of different sizes and functional urban areas.

They demonstrate, test and develop practices which contribute to Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities. Pilot actions demonstrate how Territorial Agenda objectives can be pursued 'on the ground' at local and regional levels. This involves implementation activities, such as working with local and regional actors on how they can address opportunities and challenges linked to their thematic focus. These activities offer examples of place-based approaches, with consensus-oriented stakeholder dialogues. They implement experimental and/or innovative solutions adapted to local specificities.

Pilot actions for the Territorial Agenda are still at an early stage. As they mature there are progressive improvements in their design, management and implementation. A more systematic capitalisation on

the broad range of experiences under Cohesion Policy could significantly strengthen pilot actions, by providing broader evidence and good practices while also helping to identify potential local and regional dialogue partners across Europe.

To make the Territorial Agenda more visible and disseminate information about its objectives and the pilot projects, a dedicated website has been set up: www.territorialagenda.eu

The Territorial Agenda 2030 envisages a stocktaking in 2024 including a review of the governance system, implementation progress and relevance of the priorities. This review will start during the Spanish EU Presidency in 2023. The focus is expected to be on governance and implementation. Despite the rapidly changing world as well as multiple unexpected events and crises since adoption of the Territorial Agenda in 2020, the priorities are more relevant than ever.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA

KEY FINDINGS

- The Territorial Agenda 2030 is an intergovernmental policy document aiming at 'reducing inequalities between people and between places' and 'ensuring a future for all places and people in Europe'.
- It defines two overarching objectives, a Just Europe and a Green Europe, which have six priorities looking to develop the European territory as a whole along with all its places.
- It further aligns the EU's territorial development objectives with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Deal. It underlines the importance of strategic spatial planning and provides orientation for this while strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies at all governance levels.
- It builds on a range of policy documents starting with the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted in 1999, which subsequently helped establish territorial cohesion as an aim of the EU.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 'A future for all places' (TA2030, 2020) is the latest in a long line of documents paving the way for spatial planning and territorial cohesion in Europe. It advocates a broader and more timely understanding of cohesion to underpin policy making in Europe.

As imbalances between people and places increase, economic, social and territorial cohesion become ever more important to ensure that Europe does not become divided, and the potential of all places are best utilised. Europe needs to ensure positive future perspectives for all places and people. The Territorial Agenda 2030 offers initial steps in this direction, including contributions to an updated understanding of (territorial) cohesion.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 is rooted in the understanding that Europe faces major economic, social and environmental challenges. It also has great potential to improve living conditions in all places and for all people. So, territorial diversity in Europe needs to be better understood and acknowledged. This implies that Europe needs policies with a stronger territorial dimension and coordinated approaches that acknowledge and use the diversity and specificities of places.

To support such a shift in policy making and to enhance the territorial dimension of polices at all levels, Territorial Agenda 2030 'A future for all places' was adopted in December 2020 by ministers responsible for spatial planning, territorial development and/or territorial cohesion in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank Group and relevant European and national associations. This offers a strategic reference with priorities for more balanced, harmonious and cohesive development in the European Union. Under the German EU council presidency, the Council of the EU, back in 2020 acknowledged the contribution of both previous agendas to strengthening territorial cohesion but also called on the Commission, member states, local and regional authorities to promote and apply the Territorial Agenda 2030.[1]

[1] Council of the European Union (2020): Council conclusions on urban and territorial development, 13923/20, Brussels, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13923-2020-INIT/en/pdf.

1.1. Origin of the Territorial Agenda 2030

To understand the importance and changes to cohesion put forward by the Territorial Agenda 2030, it needs to be seen in the context of evolving European spatial planning policies.

A starting point for EU spatial policies was perhaps the meeting of national ministers responsible for spatial planning in Nantes in 1989. Back then, the elaboration of various intergovernmental policy documents started, leading to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted in 1999, and three Territorial Agendas adopted in 2007, 2011 and 2020.[2] Ideas put forward in key EU spatial planning documents were also echoed or advocated in other documents, most prominently the place-based approach in the Barca Report[3] and the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion[4].

Rooted in spatial planning, from the beginning the policy has been a competences of member states – rather than the European Commission. This is not least reflected in the intergovernmental nature of the key policy documents.

Key EU spatial planning documents in chronological order since 1999 are:

- **The European Spatial Development Prospective** (ESDP, 1999) is a policy framework for EU and national sector policies with spatial impacts, as well as for regional and local authorities, to achieve balanced and sustainable development of the European territory. It was also a reference for co-operation on regional development, encouraging urban region networking.
- **The Territorial Agenda of the European Union** (TAEU, 2007) highlighted territorial cohesion as a permanent and cooperative process involving various political, administrative and technical territorial development actors and stakeholders. This underlined the importance of 'territorial governance'.
- **The Treaty of Lisbon** (2007) introduced the third pillar of EU cohesion policy. Territorial cohesion was added to social and economic cohesion as an underpinning objective of EU Cohesion Policy. Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) includes the aim to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, along with solidarity among member states. Furthermore, Article 174 emphasises the importance of economic, social and territorial cohesion, highlighting the need to address disparities between regions and challenges in less-favoured areas.
- **The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion** (European Commission, 2008) focussed on harmonious development in diverse places, ensuring that citizens can make the most of inherent features of their territories. As such, it argued for transforming territorial diversity into an asset that contributes to sustainable development across the EU.
- **The Territorial Agenda 2020** (TA2020, 2011) addressed a major shortcoming of 'Europe 2020' strategy, namely the missing reference to territorial cohesion. The Territorial Agenda 2020 supported territorial cohesion as a new EU objective by fostering integration of the territorial

[2] Kai Böhme and Peter Schön, 'From Leipzig to Leipzig. Territorial Research Delivers Evidence for the New Territorial Agenda of the European Union', *DisP* 165, no. No. 2/2006 (2006): 61–70; Thiemo W. Eser and Peter Schmeitz, 'The Making of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union: Policy, Polity, Politics', in *European Spatial Research and Planning*, ed. Andreas Faludi (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2008), 249–70; Andreas Faludi and Bas Waterhout, *The Making of the European Spatial Development Perspective: No Masterplan* (Routledge, 2002); Karl Peter Schön, 'A Short History of European Spatial Policy since 1945', in *A New Beginning? Spatial Planning and Research in Europe between 1945 and 1975*, ed. Detlef Briesen and Wendelin Strubelt (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2022), 431–65.

[3] Fabrizio Barca, 'An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy. A Place-Based Approach to Meeting European Union Challenges and Expectations.', 2009, ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/future/pdf/report_barca_v0306.pdf.

[4] European Commission, 'Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion - Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels.', 2008.

dimension within territorial policies at all scales, in favour of 'place-based' policies, and proposing the application of Territorial Impact Assessments (TIAs).

- **The Territorial Agenda 2030** (TA2030, 2020) puts forward territorial policy priorities for Europe with a focus on a just and green Europe, offering a future for all places and people, protecting common livelihoods and shaping social transitions. It calls for strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies at all governance levels and seeks to promote an inclusive and sustainable development path to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Europe.

The above documents aim at balanced and sustainable territorial development in the EU. The original thinking was based on 'social planning', with an emphasis on balanced development as an expression of (territorial) cohesion.[5] In the wake of the ESDP and the first Territorial Agenda, territorial cohesion was introduced in the Lisbon Treaty alongside economic and social cohesion in 2007. While the substantive focus of pan-European policies shifted from cohesion to primary support for growth poles, political documents on spatial development stuck with balanced and territorial development.

This was despite major shifts in Europe's economic, social and territorial development, including the financial crisis, migration, the pandemic and climate change as well as the green and digital transitions. These changes have contributed to increasing territorial and social fragmentation, coining terms such as 'places left behind', 'places that do not matter'[6], 'places of discontent'[7] or 'diverse European geography of future perspectives'[8] which can lead to 'spatial antagonism'.

All this requires a new approach to understanding and addressing cohesion in general, so territorial cohesion in particular might need an overhaul. The Territorial Agenda 2030 lays the groundwork for this. It shifted from the idea of balanced territorial development to more fundamental ideas on cohesion and its importance for the future of Europe. This is expressed in the subtitle 'a future for all places' and runs through the entire document.

1.2. Motivations for updating the Territorial Agenda

The key motivation behind the Territorial Agenda, largely follows the rationale that underpinned its predecessors. The main motivations for renewing the Territorial Agenda and adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030, were to:

- **Strengthen the territorial dimension of policy making** in Europe and raise awareness of the need for more territorial cohesion.
- **Focus on member state competences**, which is why the Territorial Agenda is an intergovernmental document;
- **Ensure continued momentum** of Territorial Agenda processes with regular revisits and updates of the Territorial Agenda to ensure it aligns with changing circumstances and EU policy priorities;

[5] ESPON, 'European Territorial Reference Framework. Final Report.' (Luxembourg: ESPON EGTC, 2019), https://www.espon.eu/etrf.

[6] Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, 'The Revenge of the Places That Don't Matter (and What to Do about It)', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 11, no. 1 (2018): 189–209.

[7] Lewis Dijkstra, Hugo Poelman, and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, 'The Geography of EU Discontent', *Regional Studies* 54, no. 6 (2020): 737–53, https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2019.1654603.

[8] Kai Böhme, Christian Lüer, and Maria Toptsidou, 'Towards a European Geography of Future Perspectives: A Story of Urban Concentration', in *Territorial Cohesion: The Urban Dimension*, ed. Eduardo Medeiros (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 173–91, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03386-6_9.

- **Further the debate on (territorial) cohesion** and update it to reflect a more comprehensive approach beyond spatial planning;
- **Make the language more accessible** by reducing the use of technical terms (such as polycentric development) which hamper understanding beyond spatial planners and by translating it into all official EU languages;
- **Make the document more accessible** and increase visibility by setting up a dedicated website www.territorialagenda.eu and arranging for ESPON to host and maintain the website to ensure continuity across changing EU presidencies;
- **Become more action oriented** with pilot actions showcasing ways to apply the Territorial Agenda 2030 in practice.

The key drivers for updating the Territorial Agenda have been summarised under the heading 'Why we need to act' addressing needs related to the 'quality of government and governance', 'places and people drifting apart, i.e. increasing imbalances and inequalities' and 'sustainable development and climate change, i.e. increasing pressures on the environment'. The details are summarised in the table below.

Table 1.1 Rationale underpinning the Territorial Agenda 2030

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• Quality of life • Services of general interest • Demographic and societal imbalances • Digitalisation and the 4th industrial revolution • Employment and economic development • Interdependencies between places • Global embeddedness	• Climate change • Loss of biodiversity and land consumption • Air, soil and water quality • Secure, affordable and sustainable energy • Just transition • Circular value chains • Nature, landscape and cultural heritage

Source: Territorial Agenda 2030

1.3. Territorial Agenda 2030 objectives

In 2020, ministers responsible for spatial planning, territorial development and/or territorial cohesion, in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank Group and relevant European and national associations adopted the updated Territorial Agenda 2030.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 further aligns EU territorial development objectives with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Green Deal. It also underlines the importance of strategic spatial planning and provides orientation for this while strengthening the territorial dimension of sector policies at all governance levels. It seeks to promote an inclusive and sustainable future for all places.

It defines two overarching objectives, a Just Europe and a Green Europe, which have six priorities for developing the European territory as a whole along with all its places.

A Just Europe

- **Balanced Europe:** Better balanced territorial development supported by Europe's diversity. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to

  - take action to encourage neighbourhoods, communities, municipalities, counties, regions and Member states to cooperate on responses to global societal challenges and improving working, living and business conditions in all places as well as strengthening socio economic prosperity, innovation capacity, positions in global value chains and global competitiveness across Europe.
  - invite policy makers from all levels to promote polycentric development models that offer a role for all places.
  - take action to encourage decision makers at all governance levels to unleash the unique potential of territories with specific geographies and adequately address the constraints of these areas through integrated and cooperative approaches.
- **Functional regions:** Convergent local and regional development, less inequality between places. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to
  - search for dialogue with decision makers in cities and towns of all sizes to apply an integrated multilevel governance approach. This means involving people from different governance levels, in particular local and regional ones, as well as diverse policy sectors and societal groups.
  - engage with local and regional decision makers to strengthen cooperation on long-term place-based strategies and address sustainable functional links between neighbouring areas.
- **Integration beyond borders:** Easier living and working across national borders. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to
  - take action to embed stable cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in macro-regional, national, regional and local development strategies. We also support the development of new strategic documents, where needed, and the promotion of co development, involving citizens across borders.
  - intensify the dialogue with policy makers at all governance levels to coordinate national sector policies between countries and to diminish existing obstacles to cooperation.

A Green Europe

- **Healthy environment:** Better ecological livelihoods, climate-neutral and resilient towns, cities and regions. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to
  - support the development of nature-based solutions as well as green and blue infrastructure networks that link ecosystems and protected areas in spatial planning, land management and other policies, and the development of new crisis management tools to increase places' safety and resilience.
  - respect the natural limits of Europe's common livelihoods and increase the resilience of all places impacted by climate change.
  - concentrate on strengthening awareness and empowering local and regional communities to protect, rehabilitate, utilise and reutilise their (built) environments, landscapes, material and immaterial cultural assets and other unique values through instruments of EU Cohesion Policy, Rural Development Policy, spatial planning or any other tools enhancing integrated territorial or local development among others.
- **Circular economy:** Strong and sustainable local economies in a globalised world. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to
  - support Europe's transition to a circular economy and the development of place-based industrial symbiosis processes, also taking into account the need for sustainable soil and land use.

- support the development of local and regional circular economy strategies linking local and global economies.
- encourage the strengthening of innovation capacities in all regions, including local strategies for energy transition and measures in the building, transport and bioeconomy sectors.

- **Sustainable connections:** Sustainable digital and physical connectivity of places. To achieve this, the signatories of the Territorial Agenda set out to
  - invite stakeholders to enter into a dialogue on the need for adequate access to high speed fixed and mobile communication networks in all places, and the need for a digital infrastructure with a low carbon footprint and low impact on human health.
  - further improve links between regional planning and the development of Trans-European Networks (TEN), especially along core network corridors. Linking all places with major transport nodes supports international trade connections and local development opportunities.
  - invite spatial and transport planners to explore new socially and environmentally progressive models for local and regional mobility-as-a-service and to cooperate on multimodal and environmentally friendly accessibility of and within urban centres.

Figure 1.1 Six priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030

Source: Territorial Agenda 2030

By addressing these priorities, the Just and Green Europe objectives of the Territorial Agenda 2030 aim to create a more equitable, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable European territory.

Updating the Territorial Agenda opens a timely debate about the meaning of cohesion. This goes far beyond spatial planning and has been picked up by other players.

Most notably, the Territorial Agenda 2030 explicitly focuses on 'places and people'. It underlines that the ultimate target group of cohesion and reduced disparities are people living in the EU. The territorial or place dimension is merely a vehicle to understand and improve people's livelihoods wherever they live. Accordingly, the aims of the Territorial Agenda 2030 are 'reducing inequalities between people and between places' and 'ensuring a future for all places and people in Europe'. Thus, it pioneers the idea of 'interpersonal cohesion' along with territorial cohesion. This also concerns the green dimension.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 also stresses the interdependencies between places, social groups and economies, both within the EU and beyond. The focus on mutual interdependencies of highly diverse places goes together with the idea of empowering places and people to strive for an inclusive and sustainable future for all places and people according to their territorial preconditions, rather than offering a blueprint for the European territory.

Furthermore, the Territorial Agenda 2030, underlines that (territorial cohesion) can only be achieved through informal multilevel cooperation between a wide range of players (see next chapter).

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA

KEY FINDINGS

- The Territorial Agenda 2030 is an intergovernmental declaration with no direct implementation instruments.
- Its application and implementation rely on informal multilevel cooperation between member states, sub-national authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank and other relevant players.
- Actions putting the Territorial Agenda 2030 into practice can be taken at any governance level and can vary in character and focus. This has been illustrated through 52 projects and seven pilot actions.
- Despite calls upon key players and efforts to inspire action through the examples and pilot actions, it seems that advocation and application of the Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities remains patchy.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 is an intergovernmental declaration with no direct legal, financial or institutional implementation instruments. Indeed, rather than implementation, it talks about application and calls on a wide range of players to consider and apply its objectives and priorities.

2.1. Calls on key players

Application of the Territorial Agenda 2030 relies on informal multilevel cooperation between member states, sub-national authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank and other relevant players. Such application would benefit from cooperation with those in charge of the Urban Agenda, the New Leipzig Charter, EU Cohesion and Rural Development Policy, implementation of the EU Recovery Plan as well as EU macroregional and sea basin strategies. Only then can Territorial Agenda priorities and concerns over spatial inequalities and the transition towards a carbon/climate-neutral economy be addressed appropriately. Taken together, the actions should strengthen:

- multi-level governance;
- place-based approaches;
- coordinated sector policy territorial impacts and coherence;
- cooperation between territories;
- territorial cohesion at European level;
- territorial cohesion at cross-border, transnational, inter- and intra-regional level; and
- member state and neighbouring country contributions to territorial cohesion.

In this context, the European Parliament is invited to note the Territorial Agenda and to consider its priorities in the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) and other committees and intergroups which have a territorial dimension. This may include advocating Territorial Agenda priorities in EU legislative processes.

In a similar manner, the Territorial Agenda 2030 addresses other EU institutions, national and sub-national authorities as well as European and national associations. This is because actions putting the

Territorial Agenda into practice can be taken at any governance level and can vary in character and focus.

Accordingly, all key players are asked to apply the Territorial Agenda 2030 in the context of their regular mandates. How they do this is mainly up of them.

2.2. Sources of inspiration

To inspire key players to take action, the Territorial Agenda 2030 is accompanied by a report 'Implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030'[9] with examples for a territorial approach in policy design and delivery.

The report highlights 52 examples of initiatives and instruments that pursue a territorial approach and portray the diversity of activities, which have implicit or explicit links with the objectives and priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030. They illustrate different aspects of the territorial approach in policy design and delivery and highlight key insights rather than demonstrate best practices (see figure).

The examples show that territorial approaches can be applied at all governance levels from local to European. Several cases address coordination across governance levels and underline that orchestrating multifaceted governance levels is sometimes pivotal to achieving change in the territories.

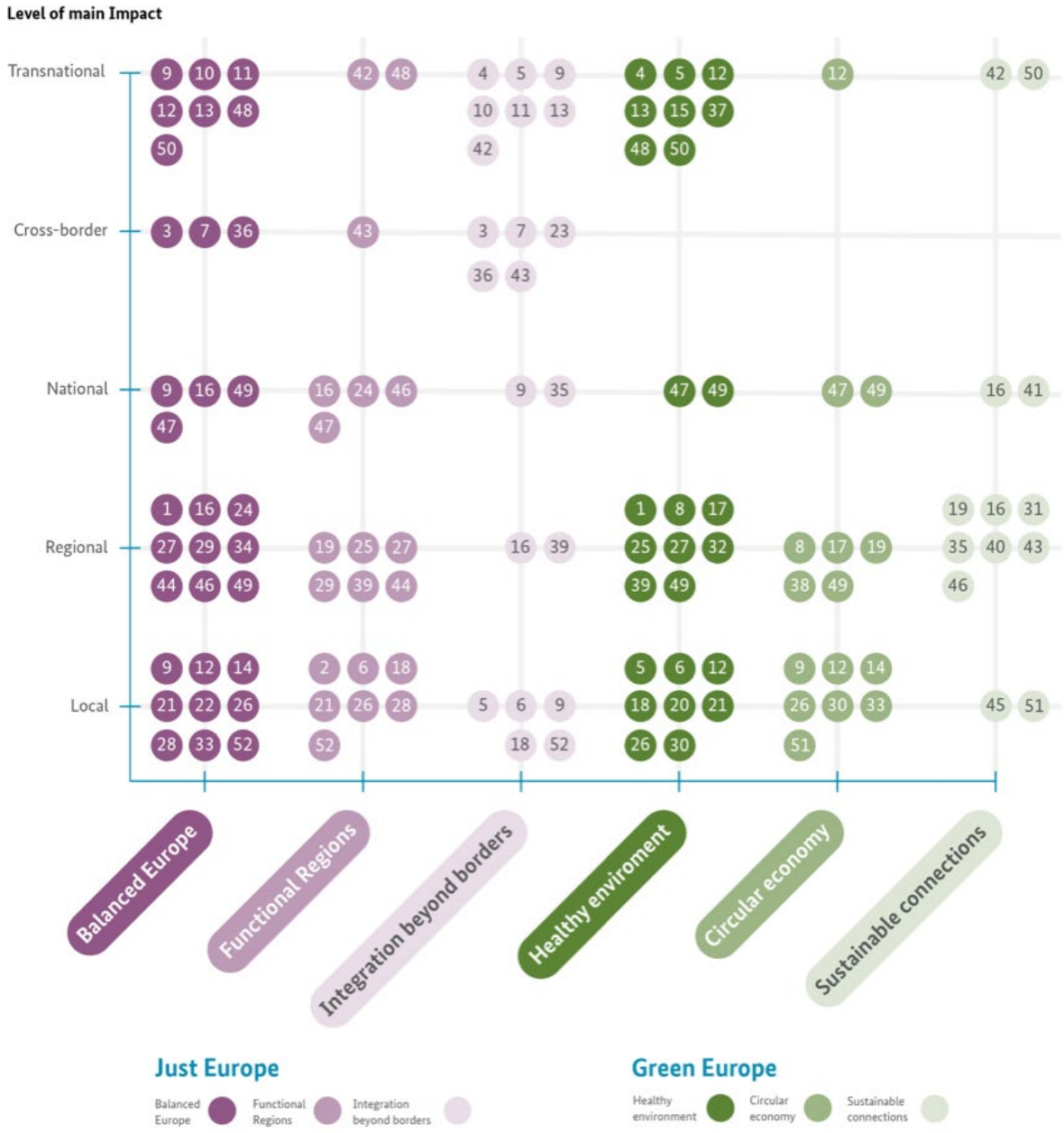
Local and regional examples show that social, economic and environmental challenges and transformations are experienced most strongly 'on the ground'. Indeed, increasing attention is being paid to 'place-based' territorial responses that address specific challenges and potential for local areas.

Cross-border and transnational examples illustrate the importance of Interreg (European territorial cooperation programmes) in coordinating local and regional actions to produce leverage and incentivise cross-regional impulses.

(NOVI) areas, the Dutch-Flemish cross-border region, for implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2030 (NL, 2022). In Portugal, the territorial principles, challenges and strategic options of the National Spatial Planning Policy Programme (NSPPP) directly reflect the concept of territorial cohesion as well as objectives and priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030. There are similar national spatial planning programmes in most other European countries that can be viewed as mechanisms for Territorial Agenda implementation.

[9] See https://territorialagenda.eu/wp-content/uploads/TerritorialAgenda_OngoingExamples_201109.pdf

Figure 2.1 Example showing the impact and priorities of the Territorial Agenda 2030



1. Regional Programme for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation in the Azores (PT) / *A.L.i.: National regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
2. Metropolitan cooperation through the ITI instrument (CZ) / *A.L.i.: Local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, local*
3. CLLD approach Interreg A Austria-Italy "Terra Raetica" (AT, IT, CH) / *A.L.i.: Cross-border, transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
4. JECAMI Tool for connectivity matrix (All Countries sharing the Alpine Arc) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, regional, local*
5. Alpine Soil Partnership (All Countries interested) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, regional, local*
6. Safeguarding green spaces/peri-urban landscapes in growing cities (AT, FR, DE, IT, SL)
   A.L.i.: Governments of urban and metropolitan areas | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, local
7. TIA: Territorial Impact Assessment for cross-border regions (DE, NL, SE, NO, RO, BG, UK, IE) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional; cross-border*
8. Creating a resilient forest (DE) / *A.L.i.: Local, regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
9. Partnership Hub Wadden Sea (DK, DE, NL) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, regional, local*
10. NANORA: Nano Regions Alliance (FR, DE, NL, IE, LU, UK) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, regional*
11. Carpathian Convention (All countries sharing the Carpathian Arc) / *A.L.i.: Global, EU, Transnational, National, Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, Regional, Local*
12. GEAP: Green Economy Action Programme (AT, DE, FR, IT, SL, CH)
    A.L.i.: Transnational, National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, National, regional, local - with a strong focus on the activation of local change agents
13. Arctic Cooperation: Arctic Programme Cooperation (GL, FO, IE, IS, RU, SJ, UK) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, Regional*
14. Territorial Impact Assessment and territorial cohesion (IT) / *A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
15. Baltadapt: Baltic Sea Climate change adaption (DK, EE, FI, DE, LV, LT, SE) / *A.L.i.: Macroregional, National, Local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local macroregional*
16. Ireland 2040: Integrated national territorial planning (IE) / *A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: National, regional, local*
17. The Cittaslow initiative in Warminsko-Mazurskie (PL) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
18. BeGOOD – Open Data for a smarter society (BE, FR, IE, LU, NL, UK) / *A.L.i.: City | F.I.o.t.o.: City*
19. 6 AIKA - Six City Strategy for sustainable urban development (FI) / *A.L.i.: National, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
20. Greens in the Park (NL) / *A.L.i.: Local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
21. LIFE-MICACC Project – Municipalities as Integrators and Coordinators in Adaptation to Climate Change (HU)
    A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local
22. Urban Lab Pilot, Inner Harbour Norrköping (SE) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, national, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
23. ITI: Integrated Territorial Investments: Approach in the Interreg A Programme (IT, SL) / *A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
24. Reshaping Regional Innovation Systems (IT) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
25. Mainstreaming Green Economy (MT) / *A.L.i.: National, regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
26. Regenerating an innovation dock (NL) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
27. Enforcing a Pact for Employment (CZ) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
28. Reshaping Territorial Industrial Vocation (DE) / *A.L.i.: Regional and Local Government | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
29. ICT for Territorial and Social Cohesion (ES) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
30. Gardens for Territorial Integration (PT) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
31. Beyond the 'BIG BUILD' – Promoting Superfast broadband in peripheral areas (UK) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
32. Biodiversity as a territorial asset (HR) / *A.L.i.: National | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
33. Place Based Rural Policy (FI) / *A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local Rural Areas*
34. Place-Based Response to Covid-19 (FRO, FI, GR, IS, IE, NR, SJM, UK) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local Rural Areas*
35. RAISE-IT: EGTC Rhine-Alpine (BE, FR, DE, IT, CH, NL) / *A.L.i.: EGTC regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Cross border cities*
36. DenkRaumBodensee (AT, DE, CH) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Cross-border, regional*
37. LER: Living European Rivers (All European Countries) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, national, regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
38. Aragon Circular Strategy (ES) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional, local*
39. FISU - Finnish sustainable communities (FI) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional, local*
40. Sarantaporo - Internet for local remote communities (GR) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
41. Community financed FTTH Network (HR) / *A.L.i.: Local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
42. EUSALP AG4 - pushing multimodal, sustainable commuter mobility on local level (AT, FR, DE, IT,SL,CH)
    A.L.i.: Transnational, Regional, Local, cross-border | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, Regional, Local, cross-border
43. Attractive Rail connections in Euregio Via salina und Zugspitze Wetterstein Karwendel (AT, DE)
    A.L.i.: Regional, cross-border | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional, cross-border
44. Regionale Leitplanung Nordraum Wien / Regional planning Vienna North (AT) / *A.L.i.: Regional | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional*
45. Sohjoa: physical and virtual innovation platform of autonomous last mile urban transportation (FI) / *A.L.i.: National, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
46. Alley of Change - Sustainable mobility and integrated transformation in the Ruhr area (DE) / *A.L.i.: Regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Regional, local*
47. "Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat" / Citizen's council for Climate (FR) / *A.L.i.: National | F.I.o.t.o.: National*
48. Cities for Climate Protection program (Global) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, local*
49. My favourite River - Multi-Level Governance at the River Neckar (DE) / *A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Local*
50. Alpine Pearls - Green Travel with Mobility Guarantee (AT, FR, DE, IT, SL CH) / *A.L.i.: Transnational, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, local*
51. Sharing Copenhagen (DK) / *A.L.i.: National authorities, city authorities | F.I.o.t.o.: Functional Urban Area*
52. Rurbance: For a balanced development of the relations between rural and urban areas (AT, FR, DE, IT, SL, CH)
    A.L.i.: National, regional, local | F.I.o.t.o.: Transnational, regional, local

** A.L.i.: Administrative Level(s) involved | *F.I.o.t.o.: Focus level of the operation*

Source: 'Implementing the Territorial Agenda 2030'[10]

In line with linking existing schemes to implementation of the Territorial Agenda, there is unused potential in (national) spatial planning and regional development programmes and projects. The Netherlands highlight one of their 'National strategy for spatial planning and the environment'

INTERACT has launched an initiative on 'bringing territoriality into Interreg'[11] linking Interreg programmes to the Territorial Agenda. This includes a 'Territorial Package' with fiches:

- #1: Why territoriality?
- #2: Territoriality – What is it all about?
- #3: A truly territorial project – Some examples
- #4: Interreg and the Territorial Agenda 2030
- #5: Functional areas as living labs for territoriality
- #6: Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial projects
- #7: Programme and project life cycle – Promoting territorial partnerships
- #8: Programme life cycle – Focus: Project selection

To inspire joint actions across Europe, pilot actions demonstrate, test and develop practices which contribute to Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities. These are presented and discussed further in section 3.

2.3. State of play

Despite the calls on key players and efforts to inspire action through examples and pilot actions, it seems the advocation and application of Territorial Agenda 2030 priorities remains patchy. However, this might be misleading as there is currently no consistent data or review of Territorial Agenda 2030.

ESPON has done a first screening on the needs to survey the state of play for application of the Territorial Agenda 2030. The results recommend that ESPON and INTERACT procure a review focusing on qualitative, rather than quantitative, methods e.g. stakeholder interviews, online questionnaires/ surveys, etc.

[11] See https://www.interact-eu.net/events/bringing-territoriality-interreg

3. TERRITORIAL AGENDA PILOT ACTIONS

KEY FINDINGS

- Seven pilot actions have been or are being implemented.
- Their distribution across Europe is unbalanced. Germany has played a particularly prominent role in initiating and implementing pilot actions.
- All pilot actions have been initiated by national authorities, and deal with issues that are particularly important to them.
- Experimental or innovative processes at local and regional levels have been implemented by a few pilot actions. Many compile evidence and produce case studies and reports. Some propose lessons learnt from a national initiative available to actors across Europe.
- Pilot actions as an approach to Territorial Agenda implementation are still in an early phase. Strategies for their design and implementation are being adjusted. It is also possible to introduce other forms of support for Territorial Agenda implementation such as peer-reviews, policy learning and a handbook.

Pilot actions were initiated in parallel with adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030. They demonstrate how the Territorial Agenda can be implemented. As such, they are sources of inspiration for decision makers and stakeholders across Europe. They also make the Territorial Agenda more concrete.

Six pilot actions were launched with the adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030, a seventh was added recently:

- A future for lagging areas,
- Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances,
- Small places matter,
- Cross-border spatial planning,
- Climate action in Alpine Towns,
- Climate change adaptation and resilience through landscape transition,
- Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing in cities of different sizes and functional urban areas.

3.1. General principles of pilot actions

Pilot actions demonstrate how Territorial Agenda objectives can be pursued 'on the ground' at local and regional levels. This involves implementation activities, such as working with local and regional actors on how they can address opportunities and challenges linked to their thematic focus. These activities offer examples of place-based approaches, with consensus-oriented stakeholder dialogues. They implement experimental and/or innovative solutions adapted to local specificities.

Pilot actions also promote transfers of good practices and innovative solutions between territories. Such experience sharing enables localities and regions across Europe to benefit from pilot actions. This implies a communication and/or mutual exchange component.

In parallel, pilot actions should be designed to potentially upscale the results, so broader policies and strategies can capitalise on their findings. This could help inspire a broader uptake of place-based approaches by other players, as well as generate conditions that are more favourable to Territorial Agenda objectives at local and regional levels.

Within targeted territories, pilot actions encourage capacity building and collective learning. Stakeholders such as policymakers, planning practitioners, experts, researchers, civil society

representatives and NGOs can be involved in activities. Pilot actions strengthen local and regional dialogue and consensus-based actions. When needed, these dialogues are supported by new evidence from targeted studies.

Pilot actions should be win-win collaborations between players at different administrative levels. These bring local and regional authorities one step further to addressing concrete issues they are confronted with. They help national authorities raise issues of their choice up the policy making agenda and help them fine-tune strategic approaches on how to best address these issues. European actors can get a better understanding of policy gaps at different geographic levels and design policy instruments to address them.

3.2. Pilot action initiation and geographical distribution

National ministries and agencies have initiated all current pilot actions[12] and they address a theme or issue that is prioritised in their country. Some pilot actions are primarily national, with international inputs and exchanges as an 'add-on', while others are more transnational. The European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions and ESPON have been involved in multiple pilot actions.

Some countries are more represented than others. German national and regional authorities are involved in five pilot actions. The corresponding figure is three for Poland, with two for Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Norway. Belgian, Czech, Spanish, Croatian, Irish, Dutch, Romanian and Swedish authorities are involved in one pilot action only.[13] Other member states are involved in none.

Table 3.1 Pilot action lead partners, partners and geographical focus

Pilot action	Lead Partner/initiator	Other partners	Geographical focus
A future for lagging areas	German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)	Rostock Planning Region, Schleswig-Flensburg District, Görlitz District, Alentejo CCDR, Land Vorarlberg, Région Grand Est. national authorities of Germany, Portugal, Austria and France, European Commission (DG REGIO) and ESPON.	Lagging, sparsely populated rural areas in Germany, Portugal, France and Austria
Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances	Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy	Germany, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and The Netherlands (Luxemburg: observer)	Pan-European
Small places matter	Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development	Poland, Germany, Sweden, Romania, Switzerland and Ireland	Pan-European, with specific focus on Sweden-Norway cross-border cooperation and Rodewisch in Saxony
Cross-border spatial planning	Luxembourg Ministry of Energy and Spatial Planning, Luxembourg	European Commission (DG REGIO), European Committee of the Regions, Rhineland-Palatinate, Euroregions Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra,	Luxembourg cross-border metropolitan region

[12] The only exception is the pilot action dealing with Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing, which is led by the governments of Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels. Regions are the highest level of decision making for spatial planning in Belgium.

[13] Cross-border organisations such as European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and Euroregions are counted twice. Spain is involved only through the Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion.

		Meuse-Rhine and Pomerania, Association of European Border Regions, Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives (CESCI), Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.	
Climate action in Alpine Towns	Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE)	The Alpine Convention, the Alpine Town of the Year Association and stakeholders at the local level. National authorities of Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Norway, the European Commission.	Alpine region
Climate change adaptation and resilience through landscape transition	Portuguese Ministry for the Territorial Cohesion	Croatia	Territories exposed to wildfire hazards in Portugal and flood plains in Croatia
Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing in cities of different sizes and functional urban areas	Walloon government	Flanders and Brussels Capital Regions	Two valleys in Belgium

3.3. Descriptions of individual pilot actions

As mentioned above, each pilot action addresses one or more issues of particular importance to the initiating national authority. Objectives, as well as organisational setups and actions to address them, can be quite diverse. This section describes pilot actions from these different perspectives. It also summarises key outputs, achievements and/or lessons learnt, when possible. At the time of drafting this report, some pilot actions were about to be finalised while others were ongoing.

3.3.1. A future for lagging areas

Targeted issue: Rural areas confronted with demographic challenges, low population density and limited access to services of general interest do not always have the capacity to design and implement innovative solutions. Exchanges of experience and information between localities may help overcome this challenge. Such exchanges could concern solutions for the provision of services, or potential benefits from digitalisation.

Objectives: Develop methods to secure services of general interest and strengthen integrated regional development in structurally lagging rural regions.

Organisational setup: The partnership includes three German regions and three regions from other member states. The action is coordinated by organisations contracted by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development. Other associated partners are involved in discussions and result dissemination. The partnership is described as 'multi-level', with local, regional, national and European partners.

Actions: Digital solutions have been developed locally for healthcare, as well as participative approaches to strategy elaboration, inter-municipal cooperation and the evaluation of public

strategies. Advice has been delivered to targeted and other regions across Europe, as has awareness-raising for policymakers at all levels to enhance their understanding of challenges for lagging regions and framework conditions that could help overcome these.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: Outputs from partner meetings on strategy building, digital transformation and mobility solutions have been synthesised in dedicated publications. The pilot action has shown how improved communication between actors from multiple levels can help make policies for lagging regions more effective. It also concluded that programmes and policies need to encourage experiments (i.e. allow for failures) to promote innovation. Access to funding for local initiatives and support from regional facilitators proved essential to involving the sub-regional level. A final conference will take place in June 2023.

3.3.2. Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances

Targeted issue: The impact of sector policies on spatial (im)balances is not sufficiently known.

Objectives: Develop and test a flexible methodology for TIAs tailored to territorial needs and development goals, designed to support integrated territorial development strategies at different geographic levels.

Organisational setup: The pilot action was based on dialogue between national authorities, drawing on resources from the European Commission and ESPON.

Actions: A survey of European national and regional administration TIAs was organised in February 2022 drawing on related activities, approaches and experience of the Committee of the Regions, the European Commission and ESPON. The focus of 'SPA(TIA)' is on participatory approaches, tools which are easy to use by public authorities and the spatial diffusion of interventions.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: A TIA method, SPA(TIA), has been developed which will be presented in a manual and at a conference in June 2023.

3.3.3. Small places matter

Targeted issues: The role of small places as structuring elements of European territorial development is underestimated.

Objectives: Demonstrate the relevance of the Territorial Agenda for small places, and develop methods to strengthen small places' role in territorial development processes. A key objective was to better understand how to reach out to small local and regional authorities when discussing the Territorial Agenda.

Organisational setup: The European dialogue is mainly between national authorities, many of which have strategies or action plans targeting small towns. Each partner focuses on one or more theme: capacity-building, intermunicipal cooperation, cross-border cooperation, participation, quality of life or roles in climate change adaptation.

Actions: Seminars and workshops. Embedding the pilot action in the Norway-Sweden Interreg cross-border cooperation programme.

In addition, the municipality of Rodewisch in Saxony (Germany) has implemented actions to increase quality of life, especially for families with young children, and attract new inhabitants.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: The pilot action has shown that national authorities have different approaches to small town development and their role in the pursuit of Territorial Agenda

objectives. Dialogues between these approaches can be mutually enriching. Results will be presented at the European Week of Cities and Regions in October 2023. This will also include a proposal on how to continue the work of the pilot action.

3.3.4. Cross-border spatial planning

Targeted issues: Decarbonisation and resilience challenges in the cross-border functional area.

Objectives: Allow territories across Europe (cross-border or not) to draw inspiration from the 'Luxembourg in Transition' process, and discuss the challenges of cross-border spatial planning in relation to decarbonisation and resilience.

Organisational setup: The partnership brings together cross-border cooperation stakeholders to develop the Luxembourg cross-border functional area, as well as organisations working on cross-border cooperation in other parts of Europe.

Actions: Five meetings between the partners included presentations of 'Luxembourg in Transition' and a critical discussion of its outputs.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: Material facilitates other territories to use methods and tools developed as part of the Luxembourg in transition process. A guidance note helps public authorities interested in applying the Luxembourg process in full, or part.

3.3.5. Climate action in Alpine towns

Targeted issues: The current and future roles of urban agglomerations in the sustainable development of the Alpine Space are under-investigated. Alpine towns can be helped to take the lead in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Objectives: Strengthen the evidence for strategic approaches for urban contributions to climate change and demonstrate how participative planning processes for climate change mitigation can be organised in Alpine towns.

Organisational setup: The pilot action relied on the Alpine Town of the Year Association, its member towns and support from the Alpine Convention to implement Alpine Convention sustainability goals.

Actions: The pilot action implements small-scale activities in towns and has produced a report on the Alpine settlement system with the role of towns in development of the Alpine Space. Five future scenarios were also elaborated. Results were discussed with national authorities from Alpine States and with the European Commission.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: The pilot action provided examples of how low threshold climate measures can be implemented at the municipal scale, and how such initiatives can be supported by a transnational organisation such as the Alpine Convention.

3.3.6. Climate change adaptation and resilience through landscape transition

Targeted issues: With climate change, rural areas are increasingly exposed to hazards such as wildfires, especially in southern Europe. The pilot action helps to better understand the importance of governance models for transition processes.

Objectives: Develop experimental integrated approaches to decreasing the risk, building on the notions of 'landscape planning' and 'landscape transition'. This involves new models for cross-sector coordination and multi-level governance that could enable such landscape transitions.

Organisational setup: The pilot action primarily involves national, regional and local stakeholders (including representatives from different sectors) and researchers from Portugal. Croatian national authorities are also partners.

Actions: The pilot action promotes the Portuguese National Landscape Transition Policy as an example of how an effective policy for landscape transition can be designed and implemented. Procedures to elaborate Landscape Planning and Management Programmes for 14 areas have been initiated. There is also a case study on floodplain ecosystem management in Croatia addressing impacts of climate change.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: The pilot action identifies success factors for landscape transition policy, e.g. an appropriate programme framework, experimental local approaches for policy design at a broader scale, visioning exercises, equitable burden sharing and building trust between stakeholders. In autumn 2023 there will be a peer-to-peer review of experience from the pilot action.

3.3.7. Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing in cities of different sizes and functional urban areas

Targeted issues: Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing which affect the resilience of urbanised areas, e.g. their exposure to floods.

Objectives: Acquire more knowledge on adaptation strategies for valleys exposed to flood risk, based on integrated planning and better understanding of how planning can capitalise on ecosystem services, e.g. rivers and water bodies.

Organisational setup: The pilot action is a cooperation between planning authorities in the three Belgian regions. Partners from other parts of Europe may be associated.

Actions: Two case studies have been implemented, with a good practice guide and two seminars foreseen.

Outputs, achievements and lessons learnt: None at this stage.

3.4. Synthesis of observations

As shown above, pilot actions are diverse and some are more ambitious than others. 'A future for lagging areas' and 'climate action in Alpine towns' stand out for their involvement of local actors. These pilot actions have the opportunity and resources to develop experimental approaches. Frameworks for cross-sectoral and multilevel dialogue have also been established. Outreach activities enable the outcomes to be upscaled.

Local and regional involvement in 'small places matter' has been limited, as it concerns only one municipality in Saxony. There is a dialogue with the Interreg Sweden-Norway programme. However, the pilot action has made it possible to deepen the dialogue between national authorities about how they approach development challenges in small towns such as the 'Small Town Academy' research and networking initiative in Germany, 'Town Centre First Framework' in Ireland, 'Programme for Local Development' in Poland', and the French national programme 'petites villes de demain'.

'Climate change adaptation and resilience through landscape transition' and 'Reducing land artificialisation, urban sprawl and soil sealing' focus on localities and regions for case studies. The authorities and stakeholders are not actively involved. However, these pilot actions build on evidence from the territories, which could be a starting point for experimental or innovative governance initiatives.

'Understanding how sector policies shape spatial (im)balances' mainly involved dialogue between national authorities on the use of TIAs, even if local pilot areas were initially foreseen. While the 'TIA Manual' can be a basis for more systematic assessments of how sector policies shape spatial imbalances, it does not fully correspond to the foreseen outputs of pilot actions.

Some pilot actions are also extensively embedded in an existing national policy process. 'Cross-border spatial planning' and 'Climate change adaptation and resilience' are spin-offs of 'Luxembourg in Transition' and the Portuguese 'National Landscape Transition Policy'. For both pilot actions, a European uptake of results and lessons learnt could be challenging. Issues and solutions appear specific to the institutional and geographic context.

Germany also announced a new pilot action on the circular economy, while other countries are considering new pilot actions or prolonging existing ones.

3.5. Possible next steps

Pilot actions are a good start to furthering application of the Territorial Agenda. Based on the above review there are a few points for further consideration:

- Maintain momentum of the pilot actions, which are promising starting points, but they have not yet fully lived up to expectations.
- Scale up results to the European level. Some pilot actions have not yet provided documentation or organised multi-level dialogues and dissemination events that could contribute to scaling up. In addition to documentation, communication of the results is essential to provide inspiration.
- Pilot action results could be integrated into other EU initiatives, for example Cohesion Policy. Inversely, existing pilot actions could be enriched by compiling and analysing the many ERDF and Interreg projects that have tested innovative solutions and produced good practices.
- The results could offer ideas for new ESPON studies, which could provide additional evidence. ESPON also wishes to produce case studies with the active involvement of local and regional stakeholders, making them similar to Territorial Agenda pilot actions.
- A conference showcasing the pilot actions to local and regional authorities and relevant players at national and EU level could help to better capitalise on the work.
- Results could even be shown at other events, for example Rural Pact or Cities Forum. This could add to good practice and innovative solution transfers between territories.

Pilot action policy labs have been organised since 2020. In April 2022, the third policy lab was organised jointly by the French Presidency and ESPON. This led to the adoption of Do´s and Don´ts (see figure). This is a living document, that may accompany implementation of current and future pilot actions. It provides guiding principles including how to establish a robust platform for pilot actions (based on clearly defined common objectives and benefits for stakeholders), realistic assessments of resource needs, strategies that can adapt to unforeseen events and effective communication of outputs.

Figure 3.1 Pilot action 'Do's and Don'ts'

Don't s	Do's
Do not rush the starting phase	**Take time to get the focus right :** - Place the project in an overarching EU strategic framework or legislative process relevant to all Member states - Integrate state of the art evidence from national and international research - Better use of NTCCP members could be made: e.g. via "support groups" **Plan the development phases of your project clearly** and be clear about the work you expect from others - Consult with various players before starting (networks of local stakeholders with commons needs, international expertise) - Investing more time than planned on the project prefiguration and conceptual phase can secure a good start - Work packages and exchanges are complex and require dedicate staff (time, resources, ensure that all partners get something out of the project)
Cooperation is not enough, it is a means to an end	**Consider the sell back factor: what's in it for partners and stakeholders?** - Clarity on commonly agreed objectives allows for flexibility in the implementation phase - Managing to set up a multilevel partnership with local and regional actors each supported by their national authorities and European actors is an asset - Offering different entry points in the PA in order to attract the interest of actors from a variety of levels
Do not stay in your corner ask for advice and support	**Interact and Espon EGTC can assist** by sharing evidence, putting PA in contact with relevant policy networks or scientists and providing organisational tips on workshops and dialogue with stakeholders.
Do not have everything fixed in advance	**Be flexible** to keep the interest of all partners alive (carrying out regular surveys amongst partners to monitor results)
Enthusiasm is not enough:	**Consider planning for extra internal or external human resources to help:** e.g. hiring service providers for coordinating work between partners, for undertaking the background research or drafting the final outputs.
Avoid one track strategies: you will need a plan B at one point	**Find allies!** Team leaders might go away, national priorities might change. Develop a **multilayer strategy** to embed your project in a **web of alliances** (raising the interest of policy makers through networks, embedding your PA in Interreg programmes, building bridges with other PA or ongoing initiatives in a similar area, etc.).
Do not weigh too much on others	**Consultation of stakeholders should be used with care**: stakeholders are surrounded by competing demands and they can become weary. The same goes for partners.
PA cannot be compared to one another other	**Taking stock** of how each one of them is important : **ex post assessments** to understand how things were done for each PA; check against lessons learnt from policy labs; analogies with the Urban agenda partnership; quick surveys inside a PA can be useful to ensure all in going well in a partnership.
How to end a pilot?	**What type of closing event:** a small gathering limited to the partners, a presentation in a large event with policy makers, or inserted in a large thematic conference, group several PA together to show their links, a mix of the 4? ➔ ESPON and its network can have an important role in communicating and disseminating the PA results.
Would innovative outputs be conceivable?	**Most outputs** take the form of reports, a toolbox, guidelines…Could we imagine other formats? E.g. make a better use of the material produced during the exchanges; the involvement a broader community in the exchanges of the partnership can contribute to enriching them; using more the TA 2030 web site, other platforms/tools could perhaps be considered?
Replication and nex developments?	PA results can be **replicated** in other networks via the dissemination of lessons learnt, methodologies and good practices or inspire new developments.

Source: https://territorialagenda.eu/wp-content/uploads/1-page-DO-and-Donts.pdf

Pilot actions as approach to furthering the application of the Territorial Agenda are still at an early stage. As they mature there are progressive improvements in their design, management and implementation. A more systematic capitalisation on the broad range of experiences under Cohesion Policy could significantly strengthen pilot actions, by providing broader evidence and good practices while also helping to identify potential local and regional dialogue partners across Europe.

It may also be useful to better distinguish between different support for Territorial Agenda implementation. The term 'pilot action' could be used to designate initiatives that involve experimental and innovative regional and local processes, accompanied by sharing good practices and upscaling solutions into national and EU policies. This could be accompanied by peer reviews, enabling decision makers and stakeholders from different parts of Europe to compare and assess approaches to a specific issue. In addition, a handbook on Territorial Agenda implementation could target local and regional authorities. This could offer recommendations on process design, implementation, funding, collective learning and strategy renewal. It could be a living document, incorporating developments in regulatory frameworks, EU incentives and funding opportunities for example. Such a handbook could also be linked to a database of good practices providing examples from Cohesion Policy programmes and national initiatives pursuing Territorial Agenda objectives. Finally, policy learning services could help local and regional authorities to design and implement measures that contribute to the Territorial Agenda.

4. EXPECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

- A performance review and possible revision of the Territorial Agenda will be launched in autumn 2023.
- The European Parliament could support application of the Territorial Agenda, contribute to its dissemination with experience of its application, as well as actively contribute to the debate about future steps.
- The European Parliament can ask member states and the European Commission to pay more attention to the Territorial Agenda, not least in the debate on the future of Cohesion Policy.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 envisages a stocktaking in 2024 including a review of the governance system, implementation progress and relevance of the priorities. This review will start during the Spanish EU Presidency in 2023 and will be supported by an external contractor. The focus is expected to be on governance and implementation. Despite the rapidly changing world as well as multiple unexpected events and crises since adoption of the Territorial Agenda in 2020, the priorities are more relevant than ever.

In parallel, there may be new and prolonged pilot actions. This includes a possible German-led pilot action on the circular economy and continuation of the Norwegian-led pilot action on small places. The approach to pilot actions may be further developed in Territorial Agenda Implementation Partnerships, following the approach of the Urban Agenda. There are also first ideas on a possible conference for the Territorial Agenda and its implementation to reach a wider group of local and regional players.

The European Parliament could support and further encourage these developments by:

- Recalling that the Territorial Agenda invites the European Parliament to take note and consider its priorities in the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) and other committees and intergroups with a territorial dimension. This may include advocating Territorial Agenda priorities in EU legislative processes and supporting communication and dissemination of the Territorial Agenda.
- Asking member states to further disseminate the agenda as well as strengthen their efforts to put the Territorial Agenda into practice beyond single pilot actions. For this, the Territorial Agenda needs to increase its outreach to be a more visible anchoring point for debates concerning territorial cohesion and the future.
- Advocate the Territorial Agenda as a framework for action. The Agenda could be a reference providing a sense of direction and its application could be more outspoken about the need for a shared vision for Europe. It could be turned into a framework for bottom-up visions showing the diversity of Europe, recognising all parts of society and territories, stimulating constructive thinking about future developments with differing ideals and features. Such territorial visions could be developed in bottom-up processes involving broad sections of local communities – following the place-based approach. Instead of all visions pointing in one direction and just being variations of the same idea (e.g. the green and digital transition), they should advocate diversity where different places have different lifestyles or development objectives (e.g. post growth). The common denominator should be the Territorial Agenda, based on the policy aims of a green and just future for all places.

- Ask the European Commission to consider the Territorial Agenda and experience with its implementation as inputs for future Cohesion Policy. This may include making cooperation across administrative borders (within and between countries) an essential feature of all future Cohesion Policy programmes. This will help overcome functional mismatches and address interdependencies. As the Territorial Agenda outlines, the challenges of increasing disparities between places and people are too big to be handled by a single body and enhanced cooperation is essential to address increasing disparities between places and people.

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The Territorial Agenda 2030 'A future for all places' is the latest in a long line of intergovernmental documents paving the way for territorial cohesion in Europe. It defines two overarching objectives, a Just Europe and a Green Europe, which have six priorities for developing the European territory as a whole along with all its places. This paper provides an introduction to the agenda and the state of play of its application.

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