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Towards a Europe of the Localities? Integrated place-based approaches in Cohesion policy in 2014-20 and beyond


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Overview

• Theorising the role of localities in Cohesion policy
• Expectations
• Methodology
• Empirical analysis
  - Territorial objectives
  - Territorial instruments
  - Territorial targeting and selection
  - Governance and implementation of territorial instruments
  - Informal governance framework
• Main challenges and opportunities
• Conclusions
Theorising the role of localities in Cohesion policy delivery

- **MLG** - sharing competencies between different levels of government
- **New regionalism** - substantive changes in the nature of policy intervention due to complexities of policy delivery in a globalised world
- **Place-based approaches** - mix of local understanding and external knowledge to tackle development challenges
- **New localism** - increased complexity of delivery of interventions requires devolving power away from central control to local democratic structures
Does the territorial dimension in EU Cohesion policy represent a paradigm shift?

• Rationale for development of territorial dimension
  – Effective and efficient delivery of public policy requires local involvement
  – More influence for localities in decision making structures

• Implementation expectations
  – No change - central authorities remain in control of most aspects of the implementation process
  – Radical change – significant increase responsibilities for localities in different aspects of policy delivery (strategic development, implementation and management)
  – Patchwork of change – differences between and within Member States). What explains these differences?
One of the longest-running knowledge-exchange networks on Structural Funds in the EU, set up in 1996

IQ-Net is a network which:

- brings together Structural Funds managing authorities and implementing bodies from across the EU
- involves a structured programme of knowledge exchange – research and debate on the design, management and evaluation of programmes
- enables programme managers and their partnerships to exchange experience and share good practice
EPRC

Case study programmes

Austria
  • Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK)

Belgium
  • Enterprise Flanders

Czech Republic
  • Ministry of Regional Development

Denmark
  • Danish Business Authority

Finland
  • Southern and Western Finland Regions

France
  • General Commission for Territorial Equality (ex-DATAR)

Germany
  • Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy & Industry of Nordrhein-Westfalen

Greece
  • Ministry of Development & Competitiveness

Portugal
  • Agency for Development and Cohesion

Slovenia
  • Govt. Office for Development and EU Cohesion Policy

Spain
  • Pais Vasco (Bizkaia) Region

United Kingdom
  • Department of Communities & Local Government
    • Welsh Government
    • Scottish Government

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• the territorial objectives set out in the treaties, partnership agreements, operational programmes;
• the instruments set out in the new regulatory framework (e.g. SUD, ITI and CLLD);
• the extent of territorial targeting and selection of eligible localities;
• the implementation and governance of territorial instruments, and
• the informal EU governance in relation to the territorial dimension.
Objectives of territorial dimension

- Increased focus on the territorial dimension

- An important and obligatory feature in the partnership agreements

But...

- Throughout the Cohesion policy framework a sectoral logic prevails
Territorial instruments/ tools

Mainstream implementation approaches

- Separate Programme
- Separate Priority Axis

New implementation approaches

- ITI
- CLLD

Integrated Sustainable Urban Development
- Minimum 5% ERDF
- Delegation of responsibilities

Other territorial structures:
- Urban
- Rural-Urban
- Sub-regional
- Rural
- Specific geographical features
- Cross-border

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20 Member States intend to use ITIs

17 Member States use CLLD (ERDF and ESF)

Uptake also varies internally
- ITI is a major implementation mechanism in Flanders
- CLLD a major feature in Czech Republic but in Austria only one region.
## Implementation tools for territorial approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Priority Axes for SUD</th>
<th>ITI for SUD</th>
<th>ITI for other territories</th>
<th>CLLD with ERDF/ESF</th>
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<td>Vlaanderen</td>
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</tbody>
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Selecting ITIs

- Criteria for selection often set centrally (Top-down, bottom-up and geographical indicators)
- Political process (Snowballing, historical precedent, city rivalry)
- Competitive calls

Selecting CLLD

- Shaped by rules on population coverage
- Historical precedent is important (based on Leader)
- Inclusive geographical approach (Czech Republic)
- Territorial eligibility is determined on a de facto basis (England)
## Territorial targeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Sub-regional</th>
<th>Specific Geographical Features</th>
<th>Inter-regional</th>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>UK (England)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* ITIs used to implement SUD
- Local bodies significantly involved in strategy development and implementation
- Limited use of intermediate bodies both for ITIs and CLLD
- Opt for shared management model
- Apprehension to delegate responsibilities in relation to project selection?
  - Tension between territorial and sectoral dimension
  - Concerns relating to institutional and administrative capacity
  - Scale of funding limited

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• Working group for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters (TCUM)

• Institutionalisation of informal territorial dimensions offers potential to mobilise local actors

But...
• The governance model remains largely informal and lacks transparency

• Representation is structured to national institutions
Potential of Territorial approaches

Benefits

- Efficiency savings
- Increased local engagement
- Innovative tools
- Change in mind-set
- Inspiration and diffusion

Challenges

- Administrative capacity
- Limited critical mass
- Political challenges
- Governance challenges
- Result-orientation and impact
- Guidelines and approval

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Conclusions

- Emerging commitments to a territorial dimension in Cohesion policy

- Delefobia? - an irrational fear of delegating responsibilities?

- The largely voluntary nature of the instruments means uptake varies but also provides room for testing and experimenting the new approach

- Two competing interpretations/expectations?
  - Commission is concerned with more effective and efficient programme delivery?
  - Localities focused on securing ring-fenced budgets?

- Evaluation and monitoring with a focus on whether territorial strategies are successfully implemented and whether they contribute to Europe 2020.
THANK YOU!

PALDIES!

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