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URBACT Study
**New Concepts and Tools for
Sustainable Urban Development
2014 - 2020**



European Union
European Regional Development Fund

**“PROMOTING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM
SIZED CITIES”**

Final Thematic Report

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Charlottenburg - a village at about 50 kilometres from Timisoara, Timis County, Romania. It was built 240 years ago by German settlers in the form of a circle.

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ACRONYMS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policies
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CF	Cohesion Fund
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CURE	Convention for a Sustainable and Rural Europe
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FUA	Functional Urban Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
LAG	Local Action Group
LEADER	<i>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale</i> - Links between the rural economy and development actions
MA	Managing Authority
MS	Member State
MUA	Morphological Urban Area
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PA	Partnership Agreement
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UDN	Urban Development Network

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

URBACT III will run from 2014 to 2020 and will build on the experience of URBACT II. The study “Implementing new concepts and tools for sustainable urban development 2014-2020” has been carried out in the perspective of this new programming period for Structural Funds. The cohesion policy introduces new tools and concepts that represent new opportunities for programming the urban dimension. For this Study, focuses on three territorial concepts: **the integrated approach set out in Article 7 of the new ERDF regulation**, the **participatory approach** and specifically the Community Led Local Development approach and **urban-rural linkages**.

In the new programming period, the URBACT programme will finance networks and other activities involving cities that will have to use the above concepts and the tools proposed in the new regulations for the Cohesion Policy. Therefore, achieving a common understanding of these concepts and tools amongst stakeholders who will have to implement them becomes of paramount importance.

1.2. The Study: Towards a shared understanding of the concepts and tools in the new proposals

Aims

Through this study, the URBACT programme aimed to:

- 1. Develop a shared understanding of the concepts and tools for sustainable and integrated urban development among the different stakeholders concerned by these concepts and tools for the next programming period;**

A first and necessary step to develop *a shared understanding of these concepts and tools* is to clarify what is meant by them, including a reflection on the main challenges and issues they may pose. To this end, the work carried out by the research team and the URBACT Secretariat, as well as with the participants of the three working seminars of the project, sought to examine these concepts and their possibilities. In other words, we approached this exercise as a critical reflection aimed at maximising the potential of these concepts and tools, ensuring as much as possible their enhanced up-take.

- 2. Issue recommendations as to how these stakeholders may use these tools to foster a sustainable urban development.**

Following from a shared understanding of the concepts and tools for sustainable and integrated urban development, as set out above, the study team proposed a number of concrete recommendations on how concerned urban development actors across European cities may apply these tools. These recommendations take into consideration different realities across member states (i.e. different levels of economic development) as well as different levels of action (city, region and national level), and any differences in interactions between different spatial levels.

Methods and outcomes

The study applied a mix of methods, including:

- **Review of secondary data** (case studies; practice and academic literature; policy documents, etc.)
- **Interviews with key informants**, i.e. people with particular insights into each topic, representing different sectors, geographies and disciplines.
- **Three working seminars**, each focusing on different concept/tools of this study. At the seminars, invited experts and practitioners (EU, national, regional and city levels) debated policy approaches, good practices, etc. to issue recommendations. The seminars were not public conferences on the above topics but closed working seminars, involving 30 – 50 persons (representatives of national authorities, Managing Authorities, cities) selected to provide specific input to the study based on their concrete expertise and experience.

The outcomes of the study take the shape of:

- **Three thematic reports**, one on each of the three concepts/tools under study. These reports are based on the respective discussion papers that informed each seminar and included both the recommendations coming from the seminar as well as additional information gathered during and after the realization of each seminar.
- **A final report**, bringing together the main findings and recommendations of each seminar report and providing integrated conclusions and a set of recommendations on the three concepts and tools under study.

1.3. Purpose and structure of this report

This report aims to contribute to a shared understanding of the role that the new tools and concepts in 2014-2020 can play in fostering urban-rural linkages for integrated sustainable urban development. The information presented is based on secondary research on the state of play and case studies of existing urban-rural linkages, and on the discussions held at the Study’s seminar “Promoting urban-rural linkages in small and medium sized cities”, held on 10 December 2014 in Paris.

The report is structured as follows: Chapter one briefly presents the study, focusing on its objectives, background, methods and expected deliverables. The second chapter provides a brief overview of the context of the topic of this report. Chapter three explores the urban-rural interactions and relationships since the beginning of the new millennium and highlights key “territorial challenges” and those between various stakeholders, to be tackled in the next period. In addition, this chapter includes lessons learned from the URBACT experience over the period 2007-2013. Chapter four analyses urban-rural relationships through three case studies from Finland, Hungary and Romania, respectively and two examples of networks acting at national and European level and dealing with urban-rural linkages. Chapter 5 presents findings from the Study’s seminar and Chapter 6 conclusions and recommendations. A last section in this report provides a list of useful references and resources.

2. The urban – rural interactions in Europe since 2000

2.1. Overview

To achieve a better understanding of the conditions in which urban and rural areas of Europe existed and operated in the past programming periods (2000-2006 and 2007-2013), in this section we provide a brief overview of some of the key contextual issues, themes and policies relating to the urban-rural debate within the European Community.

Evolution of the key policy context

A first milestone was the Common Agricultural Policy, CAP¹ (one of the oldest European policies, being reformed on many occasions, in particular during the past decade and a half), which together with the EU budget review and cohesion policy resulted in a change of focus for EU policy-making. This included reforms in spending priorities and funding instruments – such as the CAP and structural funds – leading towards the development of a new Financial Framework.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹ came into force on 21 July 2001. For the first time a requirement was placed for certain plans and programmes to be subject to a formal environmental assessment as part of their preparation. The objective was to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. One of the potential positive consequences from an urban-rural relationships point of view could occur in the “studying the alternatives” phase within the framework of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, as it help to preserve the natural and cultural heritages, landscapes, resources, and at the same can prevent spatial “conflicts” in the urban-rural area(s) in question.

Another milestone was the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (2005), making reference to “urban area” rather than “city”, leading the way for a greater urban-rural perspective. It also highlighted four main fields of urban areas towards sustainability: management, transport, planning and design.

Two years later, in 2007, the Lisbon Treaty identified the Community objective of territorial cohesion, as well as the economic and social cohesion. The same year, under the Territorial Agenda - a process led by the European Ministers responsible for spatial planning and development-, it was agreed upon at an informal meeting in Leipzig in May 2007 (tracking back the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999), the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (2000) and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007)). Under this Territorial Agenda, “*Strengthening Urban-Rural Partnership*” is one of the six guiding principles, and including: solidarity between regions and territories, multi-level governance, integration of policies, co-operation on territorial matters and subsidiarity.

The Convention for a Sustainable Urban and Rural Europe (CURE), established in 2008, aimed to offer recommendations on policy frameworks and measures which will assist a sustainable

approach to the future of urban and rural areas in Europe and to build a partnership of organisations that are committed to building sustainable urban-rural relations throughout Europe.

What is different for 2014-2020?

While only an option in the 2007-2013 programming period, urban development will be implemented through strategies setting out integrated actions in the 2014-2020 period (Article 7 ERDF regulation). Article 12 of the ESF regulation also provides for the complementary contribution of ESF to such strategies, reinforcing the integration in tackling urban challenges. Also, a more functional approach allowing for interventions at the right scale is promoted; as interventions of sustainable urban development can cover different types of cities and urban areas, as defined by Member States, it allows financing of integrated actions ranging from neighbourhood or district level to functional areas such as city-regions or metropolitan areas – including neighbouring rural areas.

A key change by the introduction of new tools to promote integrated approaches and actions: new and more flexible tools such as integrated territorial investment (ITI) and community-led local development (CLLD) support the integrated approach to sustainable urban development and facilitate a mix of instrumental and participatory ways of implementing urban development strategies.

With the new regulatory framework, it is expected that cities will have more responsibilities and more opportunities; Member States will be able to give cities the opportunity to design and implement fully integrated strategies, which combine the resources of different priority axes and operational programmes.

Operations will be supported by several funds, multi-fund Operational Programmes and cross-financing: the implementation of integrated urban development strategies will be enhanced by the possibility to combine actions financed by ERDF, ESF and CF either at programme or operation level. Cross-financing between ERDF and ESF of a part of an operation (up to 10 % of each priority axis of an Operational Programme) will remain to complement the multi-fund approach (Article 98, Common Provisions Regulation).

A stronger voice is given to cities² that can play a key role in Cohesion Policy and in meeting the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. For the 2014-2020 programming period, Cohesion policy enhances the role of urban areas. In this perspective, the Common Strategic Framework refers to urban-rural linkages in order to strengthen territorial cohesion that promotes the sustainable urban development and should take into account the need to address urban-rural linkages in a “smart urban-smart rural” perspective.

2.2. Urban-rural relationships

According to the Study Program on European Spatial Planning SPESP 2000³, a difference should be made between urban-rural relationships, which refer to the actually operating, functional linkages between urban and rural areas, and urban-rural partnerships, which refer to initiatives to formulate, adapt and implement an integrated policy.

This study approaches urban-rural relationships in the context of urban, suburban, rural municipalities and various stakeholders within a functional / morphological area aiming to overcome challenges and tackle key issues. Amongst these, the most “common” are urban

encroachment on agricultural land; migration of (especially young) population from informal rural settlements to urban areas; poor services and the sense of inequity in service provision in rural areas; waste management (disposal, treatment, recycling, etc.); a large range of competitions, etc.

Whilst in the past urban and rural areas were regarded as distinct and opposing territories, the distinction between the two has increasingly blurred in recent years, and the interdependency between them has increased⁴. The genuine, traditionally rural areas with their lifestyle became smaller as cities have expanded their hinterland into areas that were previously regarded as rural. People living in these former traditional rural areas more and more commute into the city for work, (higher) education, (specialised) healthcare, shopping, cultural and social events, or other services.

Figure 1. The rural urban fringe lesson

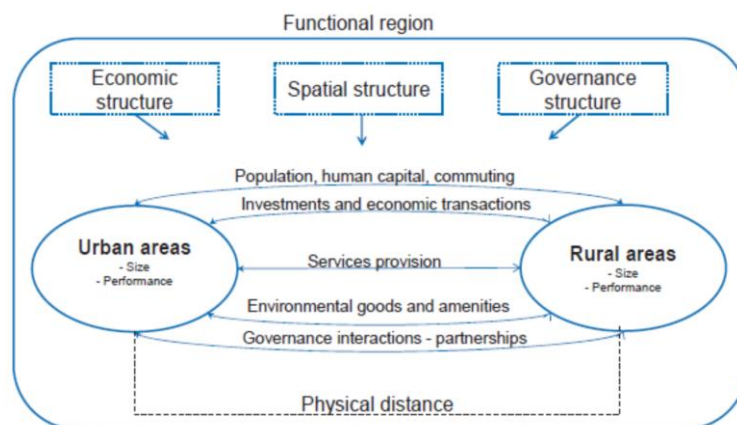


Source: https://geogteacher.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/carturbansprawl_jpg.jpg

Even beyond these areas, rural inhabitants are strongly tied to the urban economy, as the rural economy has changed its compass towards urban markets, various distance-working systems, or small and less small services providers to urban markets as well.

Besides the fact that rural areas were always dependent on cities, that interdependence has become more profound nowadays, also facilitated by greater access to traditional and virtual communications. The nature of these interactions and the deepening of relationships may be seen increasingly as of a partnership, where flows are two-way and a variety of governance systems have evolved to manage the relationships (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Urban-rural relationships functional regions



Source: OECD, 2013b

The impact of physical distance on the urban-rural relationships is critical: the closer the rural areas are to the cities, the stronger their interaction, despite impacting on the “rurality”⁵ of the latter (in fact reducing it). However, at the European scale, there are rural areas that can benefit from a relative isolation and be more touristic attractive – due the increased accessibility and transportation facilities (number and low cost airlines).

2.3. Functional urban areas in Europe and key challenges

When considering the geography of functional micro-regions, defined as a territorial area that is smaller than a state to which it belongs, but larger than a municipality. Typical examples of such micro-regions are provinces, districts, departments or even mega-cities. A special case of a micro-region is one that spreads across different states cross border region (OECD, 2003) there is an intense one to one relationship between small and medium sized cities and their rural areas. This means that the functional micro-region is a relevant spatial scale for urban-rural cooperation, regarding transport issues, tourism or territorial marketing purposes. Under this “umbrella”, cities have a growing importance for Europe, not only to their functional areas – it is estimated that in the (URBACT) programme area consisting of the 28 Member States and two Partner States⁶, around 70% of the EU population (approximately 350 million people) live in urban areas of more than 5 000 inhabitants and the share of the urban population under the total EU population continues to grow⁷.

Functional Urban Areas (FUAs), as labour market basins, are key drivers of European, national, regional and local economic performance and important territorial structures in delivering on the Europe 2020 targets. Assessing Polycentric Urban Systems reveals that contemporary urban systems in OECD countries are structured around functional regions, which often overcome established city boundaries. Reading space in terms of functional regions allows assessing changes in urban hierarchies and spatial structures, including the polycentricism of urban systems at national, regional and metropolitan scale. By using a harmonised definition of functional urban areas in OECD countries, this paper first provides a sound definition of polycentricism at each spatial scale, highlighting for each of them the different links with policy. Second, it provides measures of polycentricism and explores the economic implications of different spatial structures. Results show that relatively more mono-centric regions have higher GDP per capita than their more polycentric counterparts. At country level, on the other hand, polycentricism is associated with higher GDP per capita (OECD, 2014).

Therefore FUAs are important territorial assets for Europe due to their role in sustaining a critical mass for development, strengthening urban-rural linkages and encouraging cooperation between cities belonging to a cross-border area, macro-region or even a global integration zone.

Three possible ways of looking at urban areas¹, can be summarised as follows:

- The administrative urban areas, defining urban areas based on the legal or administrative statuses of municipalities. This approach corresponds to the city as an instrument used by the state to structure, organise and control a country, but also as a forum for the interaction of local actors (governance).
- The morphological urban areas, defining urban areas based on the extent and/or continuity of the built-up area, the number of inhabitants, and proportion of the municipal areas covered by urban settlements. This area corresponds to the city or town as a physical or architectural object.
- The functional urban areas, defining urban areas based on interactions between a core area, which may be defined according to morphological criteria, and the surrounding territories. Daily commuting flows are the central parameter in this respect, as they reflect the existence of a common labour market.

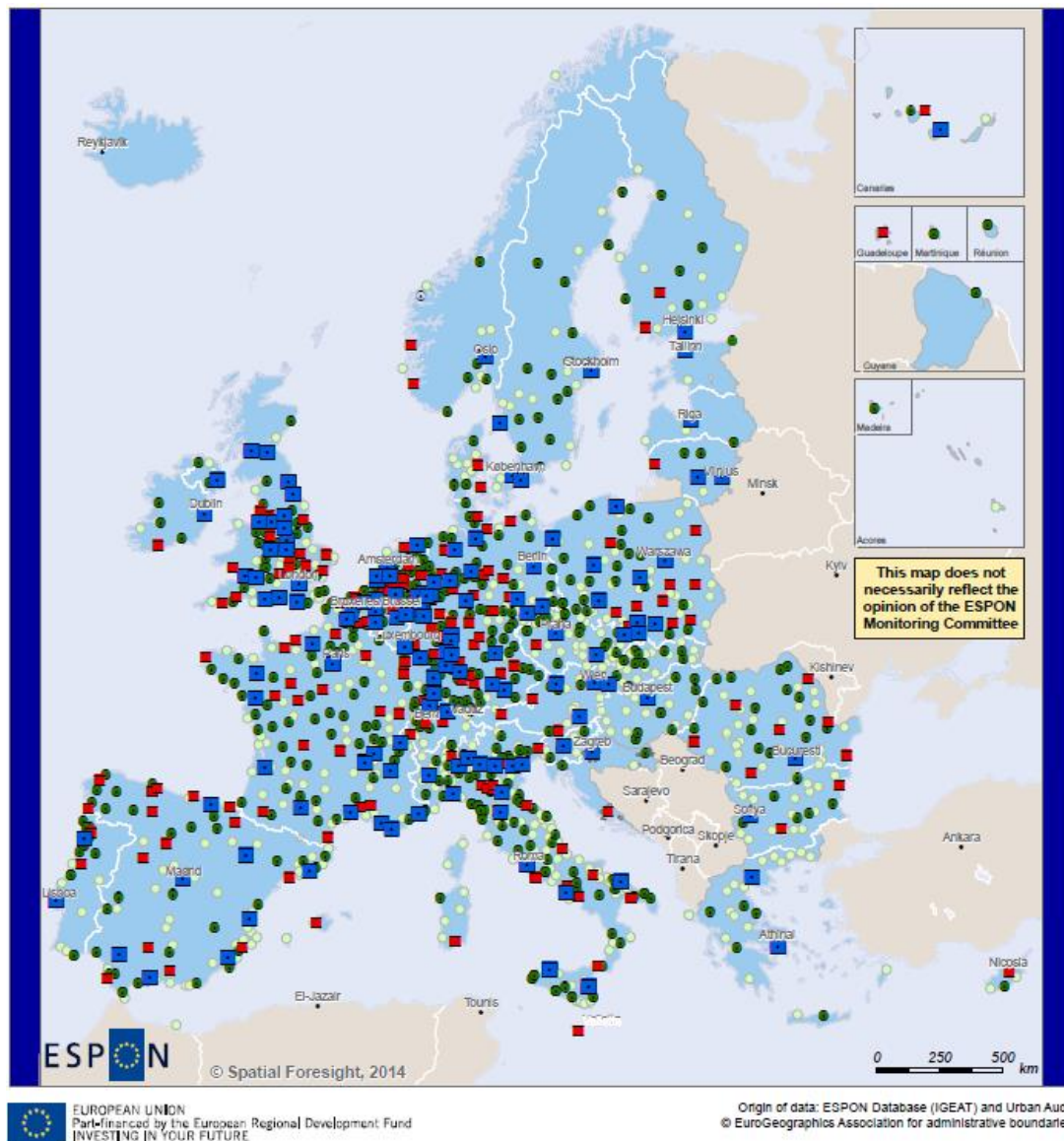
Europe is characterised by a polycentric nature of the continent’s urban system and network of FUAs (as shown in Figure 3 below), reflecting the diversity and density of the European urban system, embracing cities and urban areas of different size and with complementary functions (See Figure 3). A denser urban structure can be observed in central Europe in an area stretching from the UK via the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Southern France; and to the East through the Czech Republic and Poland. Countries such as Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but also parts of Spain, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania are less populated and have less dense urban systems.

As to the URBACT III Operational Programme (ERDF 2014-2020)⁸, the functional city corresponds to territorial and/or socio-economic realities that rarely correspond with the administrative city. Most European city regions are fragmented and comprise many municipalities with complex relationships between them. This raises many issues related for example to the strengthening of urban-rural linkages within an urban area.

¹ See Ramsden, 2011.

Of central interest for this paper are, on the one hand, the Morphological Urban Areas (MUA)⁹, which depicts the continuity of the built-up space with a defined level of density and, on the other hand, the Functional Urban Areas (FUA), that can be described by its labour market basin and by the mobility pattern of commuters, and includes the wider urban system of nearby towns and villages that are economically and socially dependent on an urban centre.

Figure 3: Typology of European functional Urban Areas¹⁰



Another important issue with regards to urban-rural linkages are the important disparities in the socio-economic characteristics of urban and rural communities that undermine the general well-being of society as a whole, such as differential access to core services and employment opportunities. Moreover, urban-rural linkages are usually constructed from an urban perspective,

with rural areas conceptualised as residuals between dynamic urban growth nodes and references to urban-rural linkages. They have generally been confined to the domain of spatial planning and Cohesion policy.

2.4. Lessons learned from the URBACT experience in 2007-2013

Despite URBACT II not having developed networks explicitly targeting urban-rural linkages or relationships, there are several projects dealing with this issue implicitly at the level of thematic networks. Among them are, for example, CityRegions NET, EGTC, LUMASEC, Sustainable food in urban communities and Use Act (as illustrated in Table 1).

URBACT has also given special attention to cities involved in projects with Local Action Plans (LAPs) addressing actions, initiatives or proposals linked to urban-rural relationships. This has been done, for example, by involving relevant stakeholders from rural areas in these urban networks, finding possible solutions to common challenges.

Table 1: URBACT Thematic networks and projects dealing with urban-rural issues

URBACT Thematic network	Project aims	Urban-rural findings
City Regions Net	To develop new structures and tools that make it possible to improve collaboration on the "city-region" level.	Socio-economic problems do not stop at city limits and existing administrative structures and policies are not sufficient to treat the growing number of challenges and the action needed
EGTG (Expertise, Governance for Trans-frontier Conurbations)	To enable stakeholders to exchange on governance methods regarding projects, strategies, etc.	To promote the innovative governance tools in a panel of cross-border agglomerations.
LUMASEC (Land Use Management for Sustainable European Cities)	To identify the scope of strategic and operational action for European cities in land use planning.	In spatial terms governance implies a focus on the city region, the functional urban area in which the socio-economic reality of cities is played out, and which involves the management of both the urban core as well as the rural hinterland is a single planning objective.
Sustainable Food in Urban Communities	To developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems on three areas: growing, delivering and enjoying food	Urban population in relation with the neighbourhood agricultural area and the life of city neighbourhoods – changes in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours.
USEACT Urban Sustainable	To achieve urban development	People and businesses taking up

URBACT Thematic network	Project aims	Urban-rural findings
Environmental Actions	and new or improved settlements opportunities	residence in existing locations, without consumption of further land.

Source: own elaboration based on URBACT website, 2014

The CityRegion.Net network, for example, identified three models for possible cooperation based on the size of the neighbouring cities/municipalities and the objectives pursued, which could be applied to urban-rural areas:

- A model of cooperation among small municipalities
- A model of cooperation between a large city and neighbouring municipalities
- A multi-level decision-making framework

3. Urban-rural linkages promoting territorial cohesion 2014-2020

In this section we provide information on the RURBAN approach to the territorial partnerships, as a supplementary and complementary action and tool for regional and rural development policies. We also consider how to promote urban-rural relationships for sustainable urban development.

3.1. RURBAN preparatory action

The Preparatory Action RURBAN¹¹ (Partnership for sustainable urban-rural development), aimed to bridge across regional policy and rural development policy, was agreed by the European Parliament and was managed by the European Commission between 2010 and 2014.

The main objective of RURBANs was to analyse territorial partnership practices for towns/cities and rural areas, to achieve better cooperation between different actors in developing and implementing common urban-rural initiatives based on the integrated approach, and to promote territorial multilevel governance. In addition, RURBAN aimed to:

- Assess possible economic and social gains from enhanced rural-urban cooperation;
- Identify the potential role of urban-rural partnership for improving regional competitiveness and regional governance;
- See how EU funding through the ERDF and the EAFRD can best be used to support urban-rural cooperation.

RURBAN has supported the production of two important studies: “Partnership for sustainable rural-urban development” (building on existing evidence)¹² in 2012, and a comprehensive study carried out by the OECD in 2013 “Rural-Urban Partnerships: An Integrated Approach to Economic

Development”¹³ featuring case studies (Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain).

RURBAN has also coordinated the organization of a number of events and debates, contributing to shaping the 2014-2020 policies. On 28th January 2014, URBAN Intergroup jointly with the European Commission organized the closing seminar “RURBAN – sustainable rural-urban partnerships”. On the occasion it was stressed the fact that the coincidence between the starting point of the new programming period 2014-2020 and the closing of the RURBAN preparatory action can be a drive for the strengthening of the urban-rural cooperation on the ground. Moreover, they underlined that the results of the RURBAN preparatory action had already an impact in the funds’ regulations for the 2014-2020 programming period. Also, the OECD representatives who conducted the RURBAN comprehensive study gave the following answers to two essential questions: „Why urban-rural partnerships are important?” and „How to build an effective urban-rural partnership?” saying that regional and local stakeholders insisted on the complexity of peri-urban relations and difficulties in the cooperation. At the same time, they underlined that structural funds offer a unique opportunity to work across peri-urban territories. They welcomed the possibility of using multi-fund programs (ERDF and ESF) that will facilitate implementation of urban-rural partnerships.

The EU is working together with countries, regions and other partners to promote urban-rural linkages. A truly integrated approach to development must go beyond intra-city policy coordination and traditional rural issues. The integration with surrounding areas, both urban and rural, needs also to be considered. The benefits of stronger urban-rural cooperation include more efficient land use and planning, better provision of services (e.g. public transport, health) and better management of natural resources.

The European Community initiatives LEADER and URBAN (LEADER since the beginning of the ‘90s, URBAN from 1994-2006), initially had a stronger emphasis on using an integrated approach of linkages between the two areas, but this was to some extent lost in the mainstreaming process of regional and rural development programmes.

The **LEADER** programme (an acronym in French meaning *Links between actions for the development of the rural economy*) is an initiative to support rural development projects initiated at the local level in order to revitalise rural areas and create jobs. LEADER+ is the third phase of this initiative, in force from 2000 until 2006, following LEADER I (1991–1993) and LEADER II (1994–1999). LEADER developed seven principles of local development approach:

1. **Area-based:** taking place in a small, homogeneous socially cohesive territory
2. **Bottom-up:** local actors design the strategy and choose the actions
3. **Public-private partnership:** LAGs are balanced groups involving public and private-sector actors, which can mobilise all available skills and resources
4. **Innovation:** giving LAGs the flexibility to introduce new ideas and methods
5. **Integration:** between economic, social, cultural and environmental actions, as distinct from a sectoral approach
6. **Networking:** allowing learning among people, organisations and institutions at local, regional, national and European levels
7. **Co-operation:** among LEADER groups, for instance to share experiences, allow complementarity or to achieve critical mass.

The Community initiatives **URBAN I** 1994 – 1999 (targeting innovative way of addressing area-based urban challenges) and **URBAN II** 2000-2006 (focusing on the economic and social regeneration of cities and urban neighbourhoods in crisis, with a view promoting sustainable urban development) highlighted the importance of participation, of civic involvement, of area-based rooted projects, as well as of the necessity for identification, establishment and implementation of new and tailor-made mechanisms, involving public-private partnerships equally interested in solving their problems and developing their cities.

To sum up, both LEADER programme and URBAN initiative similarly allowed the initiation and elaboration of innovative models for integrated rural and urban areas development based on local partnerships and had a strong influence over the national practices and policies for spatial development, opening if not the door, at least the window towards strengthening their linkages and future cooperation.

3.2. How to promote urban-rural relationships for sustainable urban development

The urban - rural structure of the existing *mosaic* of municipalities (of both urban and rural types) represents a challenge and an opportunity to develop urban-rural partnerships in the field of municipal functions. The role of regional and national level institutions to facilitate urban-rural cooperation across municipal boundaries is crucial. The cross-sectorial nature and fragmentation of urban-rural interactions require a better cooperation between sectors and institutions to design policy interventions that can address these challenges.

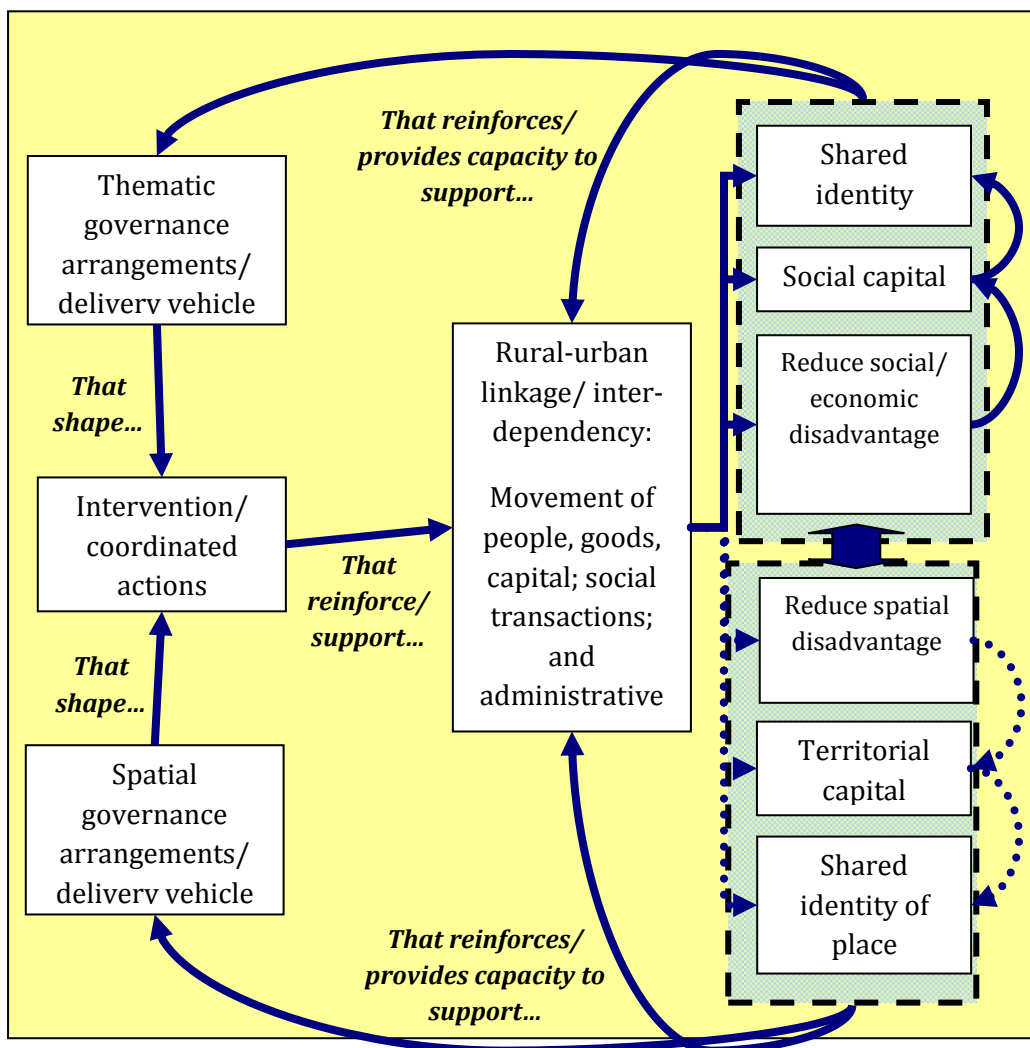
Land use policies of urban and rural areas need to accommodate “other” uses – like urban agriculture, allotment gardens, recreation in nature/forest areas in urban areas and rural urban-type settlements and non-agricultural activities. Without properly supported by adequate and coordinated public policies, the land use policies will be highly impacted by activities belonging to the informal sector¹⁴ (i.e. tax evasion, land unclear ownership, grey market, subsistence agriculture, etc.). There is a particular need that rural aid be better coordinated at all levels with spatial and sectorial policies, not only at the design phase, but also at the implementation and monitoring phases. There is unused potential of nature and environment policies-led measures as stimulus for building urban-rural partnerships, particularly in areas of outdoor recreation, youth policies, public health and social care. The critical review of urban-rural measures from the past can provide examples for future policies, particularly to involve mobile rural-urban population and to use all development potentials. The rural dimension of sustainable urban development should emphasize policies that are supportive of territorial cohesion while addressing the challenge of increasing investment in physical, economic and social infrastructures that are necessary for improving rural productivity and access to markets.

4. Urban-rural relationships

4.1. How do different levels work in practice

A useful conceptual framework to understand how urban-rural linkages work is the one proposed by Smith and Courtney (2009) in their “Preparatory study for a seminar on rural-urban linkages fostering social cohesion”, which set-out governance arrangements (either territorial or thematic) as institutional frameworks for the production of rural-urban linkages (see figure 4). In this framework, governance might be seen as identifying priorities, commissioning projects and actions and as delivering desired outputs (in this case rural-urban linkages).

Figure 4: Conceptualising the relationship between governance, rural-urban linkages and social/territorial cohesion outcomes



Source: Smith I., Courtney P., Preparatory study for a seminar on rural-urban linkages fostering social cohesion, 2009

As seen in Figure 4, Smith and Courtney present separately the forms of territorial and social cohesion, even though territorial cohesion could be understood as a specific case of social

cohesion. Rural – urban linkages are in a circular relationship with both forms of cohesion such that cohesion is both an outcome and a cause of rural-urban linkages.

Either form of cohesion (social and/or territorial) can be defined in one of three inter-connected ways: as the absence of difference on a set of indicators (e.g. structural unemployment), as the presence of behavioural manifestation of cohesion and as the presence of a shared identity.

Governance might be seen as identifying priorities, commissioning projects and actions and as delivering desired outputs (in this case rural-urban linkages).

Following the above conceptualisation, the practical effects on the various levels of governance concerning the preparation and implementation of 2014-2020 programmes include:

Urban authorities receiving funding in line with ERDF Article 7 will have to prepare integrated urban development strategies that are able to tackle the multiple challenges facing their cities. They will also have a broader scope of responsibility concerning the actual implementation of that strategy, as a minimum level of delegation will be required. When designing these integrated strategies, urban authorities are encouraged to use the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)¹⁵, which is a practical web-based tool designed to assist cities in this regard.

Managing Authorities can play an important role by prioritising projects that reflect functional and morphological levels of governance in project-selection systems.

Member states are required to provide a thorough territorial analysis and a stronger urban focus in their relevant Operational Programmes. They will also have to put in place arrangements to delegate a number of tasks (at least project selection) to urban authorities related to implementation of sustainable urban development strategies.

The **European Commission** will pursue: greater integration in terms of urban development by exercising scrutiny on this aspect during the assessment of the Operational Programmes; increased innovation through the **Innovative Actions initiative**; and reinforced capacity building and exchange of experience through the **Urban Development Network** and the financially strengthened **URBACT III** programme, working with the government structures in order to foster urban-rural solidarity, urban-rural cooperation and identifying new opportunities for local economic development.

4.2. Limitations and potentials for urban-rural initiatives

In principle, both new instruments (ITI for Article 7, and CLLD beyond the strictly rural context), can be used for supporting rural-urban partnerships. However, they do not seem to be specifically designed for that purpose. To a certain extent this also explains some limitations for rural-urban issues to be found in the entire integrated territorial approach as it is laid down in the general draft regulations of ESI Funds.

Firstly, the integrated territorial approach and the use of the two new territorial instruments are – as the entire territorial development approach – only highlighted in relation to either urban or rural areas and not explicitly for promoting rural-urban inter-relations.

Secondly, while encompassing many important elements of rural-urban partnership approaches, the CLLD instrument is mainly targeted to smaller territories with a limited population (either

urban neighbourhoods or rural areas) as well as small-scale projects. Moreover, the implementation is highly community driven, which could bring institutional and legal restrictions

In promoting urban-rural initiatives it is crucial to use the existing and proposed funding options adapted to the specific geographic setting of the functional region. There are two general pre-conditions: Concerning the use of the CLLD method for predominantly rural regions, it would be important to include the urban centres (especially medium sized towns) in the design and implementation of territorial strategies and initiatives (also concerning EAFRD funding) and also to support linkages to bigger cities outside the given territory. Additionally, in order to promote territorial governance for stronger urbanised functional areas and metropolitan regions it is necessary to provide inter-linkages to EAFRD funding and rural development policies.

4.3. Forms of urban-rural cooperation

Rural - urban partnerships are responding to a range of challenges and as a result take different forms in different places. Some approaches can be identified in the Member States. Table 2 provides an overview of challenges, approaches and win-win opportunities for urban-rural linkages across a variety of EU Members states/regions.

Also, rural-urban linkages are not attached to a specific size of towns or a certain type of spatial extension. On the contrary, they are a concept applicable to all spatial situations, i.e. the three-fold OECD (2013) typology:

- 1) Large Metropolitan Regions: Rennes, Nuremberg, Prague
- 2) Network of Small and Mediums sized cities: Brabant (Netherlands); Cesena-Forli, Emilia Romagna Region (Italy);
- 3) Sparsely Populated Areas with market Towns: District of Castel Branco (Portugal) /Extremadura (Spain); Saarijärvi-Viitasaari Region (Finland), West Pomeranian region (Poland)

Table 2: Issues shaping urban-rural relations and challenges to address through rural-urban areas linkage

Member State / Region	CHALLENGES	APPROACH	“WIN-WIN” OPPORTUNITIES
AT	Severe depopulation and closure of enterprises in rural areas.	Rural-urban partnerships aiming to attract business and create new jobs in rural areas.	Economic: new sources of revenue Social: better working conditions and work-life balance Environment: less CO2 emissions due to decreased commuting
EE	Problems to deliver quality services in small localities for waste management, education, transport, social services and	Joint provision of public services carried out on a contractual basis, establishing a service for monitoring public order at	Improving quality of life and accessibility to infrastructure by providing public services in the entire area Increasing access to cultural life, by

Member State / Region	CHALLENGES	APPROACH	“WIN-WIN” OPPORTUNITIES
	healthcare	municipal level.	joint organising cultural events
BG	Remoteness and lack of participation in public life / decision for local-territorial development	Local Action Groups, LAGs (LEADER) – small local initiatives for cooperation and jointly identifying solutions to local problems.	LAGs facilitate the access to EU finance for local rooted projects (business – generating, cultural and social, diversification of traditional activities, innovation and resources sustainability)
EN	Administrative burden in disbursing EU funds (EAFRD, ERDF, ESF), separately managed	Common decision-making body for multiple sector projects delivered jointly by urban and rural areas.	Gaining competitive advantage: increased capacity to attracting business, funds and capital. Increased trust from investor’s perspective, by dealing with the rural-urban partnership. Commitment for joint efforts in overcoming legislative, administrative and financial barriers
RO	Reduced capabilities and accessibility of rural areas to EU funding for infrastructures such as waste management, water service, or public transportation	Setting up inter-communal associations and develop a new common vision for the urban-rural area (articulated, rural-urban balanced and equally socially oriented)	Increasing territorial cohesion on long term, bringing a shared vision of the urban –rural area with long term impact on both rural and urban communities Improving the quality of life by social cohesion, better public services and sustainable environmental protection
NL	Pressure of metropolitan area(s) towards smaller cities and rural landscape (case of NUTS 3 Oost-Zuid-Holland)	Rural localities and smaller cities association	Protection of the open space, rural assets, beautiful landscapes, tradition and local food
ES	Unbalanced character in urban-rural relations, due to diffuse urban sprawl and domination detrimental to the rural areas and specific resources	Partnership of the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs to identify new forms of territorial governance	Urban and rural relations as an instrument for territorial cohesion. New scenarios of territorial systems interaction between rural and urban subsystems, aiming to set-up a complementary relationship based on territorial cohesion and sustainability and protection of rural and natural landscapes
BE	Coordination of different levels of governance (the case of coastal issues and	Study of the University of Gent on rural-urban partnership between the	Focus on commercial issues that would prioritise labour market and tourism development. Lessons

Member State / Region	CHALLENGES	APPROACH	“WIN-WIN” OPPORTUNITIES
	in Westhoek Province (West Flanders)	cities and rural municipalities of the area, to agree of combination and diversification of tasks among them.	learned: diversification of functions and a good steering between different levels have potential to influence on spatial planning in the coastal area.
Nordic countries	Demographic changes and migration of young people from rural to urban areas Global competition Economic growth rising costs to social services	Urban-rural linkage and cooperation	Sweden: Increasing the attractiveness of the rural areas, support local networks and infrastructure (i.e. healthcare services) Finland: CLLD approach (LEADER - city)

Source: own elaboration based on CEMR, 2014

To sum up, among the main reasons to initiate various forms of cooperation, linkages and partnerships between rural and urban areas could be the following:

- *Functional interdependence and mutual benefits* of both areas;
- *Achieving territorial balance and ensuring connectivity* (material and immaterial ones) and accessibility between rural and urban areas;
- *Inclusiveness*: cooperation between (urban and local) administrations AND involving private actors (small businesses, SMEs, entrepreneurs) and civil society based organizations;
- *Long term political commitments* for common interests of all political spectre representatives (surpassing the electoral mandates);
- *Preserving landscapes and rural identity*, as well as rural specific resources (land, culture, nature, traditions, etc.);
- *Creating good governance networks* and supporting municipal reforms that “make all actors happy” and not the ones unilaterally proposed at the State level, that can negatively influence the trust among local partners or create mistrust, especially at the level of rural municipalities;
- *Promoting accessibility and balanced economic growth* between urban and rural areas needs linkages and cooperation forms adequate to the local situations.

4.4. Examples of existing urban-rural linkages

It must be underlined that urban-rural linkages do not constitute a scope in itself but an effective means of achieving policy objectives and of addressing territorial challenges in a more comprehensive way.

The three cases included in this report are examples of urban-rural linkages located within the lower-density and less intense urbanised / peripheral areas of the polycentric continental system (see Figure 3: Typology of European Functional Areas, page 11 of this report). In this respect, all cases were chosen to be featured due to a series of characteristics, one of which being the remoteness in geographical and/or social terms. Other characteristics are the diversity of the approaches of the urban-rural linkages, the inter-municipal forms of cooperation, their functional types of urban-rural linkages having specific potential and problems.

All three can be considered examples of successful and innovative approaches, as their contexts, needs and opportunities converge creating win-win situations by identifying in each case local rooted answers and solutions, building on relevant experiences and achievements (Finland), switching the cap from national to cross-border scale of rural-urban linkages (Győr, Hungary), or reinventing themselves in a new paradigm (Alba-Iulia, Romania). Also, the first case is located in an old Member State (in fact is merely a large approach, not a single case), meanwhile the two other are located in new member states (Hungary and Romania), where the less successful urban-rural initiatives happen (RURBAN Study, 2012)

Last but not least, it is important to mention the first hand information received along the last months from active participants directly involved in each case¹⁶.

Example 1: Finland: *The Finnish “LEADER cities” approach and City of Pori example*¹⁷

Understanding the “LEADER City”

A number of 55 Local Action Groups (LAGs) cover the whole rural territory of Finland. Except the capital Helsinki area, the urban-rural interaction can be managed and promoted within these existing organisations, by involving the neighbouring towns and by giving specific focus on different types of development needs inside small and medium-sized towns and the rural areas surrounding them.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry selected 55 LAGs for the 2007-2013 programming period. The groups represent developing rural areas in 396 municipalities (data from 2007 as mergers of municipalities have since reduced that number) and receive funding from the Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland. The public funding for the LEADER Local Action Groups was of € 242 million over the seven years. A fifth of the funding is made up of municipal funding for the LAGs in the area. During the programming period, in addition to public funding, the LEADER projects attracted € 128 million from businesses, organisations and other groups.

The interest and continuity in urban-rural cooperation in Finland is briefly presented at the end of this case study in Box 1.

The case of City of Pori and LAG Karhuseutu ry

Pori is Finland’s eleventh largest city (population 83 000), and home to one of the largest commercial bulk ports in the country (see its location in Figure 5). The city centre, on the banks of the Kokemäenjoki River, is about 20 km from the coast of the Bothnian Sea and belongs to intermediate urban-rural area, close to a city (ESPON, 2013). Following a severe recession in the 1980s, significant changes resulted in a diverse economic structure that has enabled Pori to fare reasonably well during Europe’s economic crisis compared with similarly sized cities. Since 2003, a renovated former cotton factory has provided space for the University Consortium of Pori and dozens of entrepreneurs in media and communications, and other service industries. Pori National Urban Park was established in 2002, helping gain publicity and support for the natural and cultural landscape of the Kokemäenjoki River Delta and nearby urban areas.

Figure 5: Map of Finland, including the city of Pori in the south west of the country.



LAG Karhuseutu ry, one of Finland's 55 LAGs, is an association aimed at developing its countryside. The Association was founded in 1997 and has 192 members (private persons, small enterprises, municipalities and associations). The most important task is to encourage people, communities, and enterprises to develop their actions and their environment.

The Karhuseutu Association activates and advises actors on how to obtain LEADER financing and how to implement projects. The association's executive committee's main task is to decide which projects obtain Leader financing. The executive committee is composed of 9 actual members and their deputies. The composition of the executive committee follows the tripartite model, which means that it is composed of public figures, members of the association and independent private persons. The executive committee's operations are independent of all political parties.

In the past, Karhuseutu Association completed the national Pomo-Programme from 1997-2001, as well as the LEADER+ Programme from 2001-2006 (including 177 projects with a total of 6, 6 M €, of which 3, 8 M€ was public funds (50 % EU, 30% state, 20% municipality and 2, 8 M€ private funds). From 2007 to 2013, the Regional Development Programme emphasized on creation of new means of livelihood, networking, children and youth. This Programme budget was of 6, 8 M€, of which 4, 4 M€ public funds (45% EU, 35% state, 20% municipality) and 2, 4 M€ private ones.

Looking ahead, the City of Pori is planning to initiate an urban CLLD "City-LEADER" two-year project at the beginning of 2015, funded by the European Social Fund and the city itself. Due to the nature of ESF the focus of the project is not only on developing new mechanisms for civil actors to participate in the development of their local areas, but also to improve the opportunities of different social groups that have difficulties in finding employment or education. This project will be carried out in co-operation with the local Leader action group (LAG Karhuseutu) together with Diaconia University of Applied Sciences.

Two other Finnish LAGs were analysed:

- **LAG Kehittämisyhdistys SEPRA ry (Kotka)** is a predominantly remote urban-rural region (ESPON 2013), with a total population of 56 000 inhabitants.
- **LAG Joutsenten reitti ry** includes **Hämeenkyrö**, **Punkalaidun** and **Sastamala** municipalities, part of Birkaland – Tampere region, and **Huittinen**, part of Stakunta), with a total of 55 000 inhabitants is an intermediate urban-rural area, close to a city (ESPON, 2013).

The situation of the three Finnish LAGs situated on the west coast, western and southern Finland: Karhuseutu ry, Joutsenten reitti ry and Kehittämisyhdistys SEPRA ry (see map) is relevant in the context of the “LEADER City” approach, aiming to build urban CLLD projects and strengthen the urban-rural linkages and partnerships based on the 2007-2013 programming period experiences and success.

Despite significant differences, information on all three LAGs can be summarised in a single table (see table 3 below), as the most important aspect to be highlighted is the CLLD approach. It is important to note that some institutionalised forms of governance like LAG's are totally dependent on EU funds in order to carry out their tasks.

Table 3: Summary of urban-rural linkages in 3 Finnish LAG examples

Rural-urban area(s)	LAG Karhuseutu (Pori) LAG Kehittämisyhdistys SEPRA ry (Kotka) LAG Joutsenten reitti ry (Huittinen, Hämeenkyrö, Punkalaidun and Sastamala)
Context	Developing the 2014-2020 integrated CLLD strategies in their urban - rural areas, in order to start "city-Leader" strategy and projects at the beginning of 2015 funded by the European Social Fund and co-financed by the respective urban areas. The territorial focus is that cities in the LAG areas to benefit from the rural CLLD experiences from the previous programming period (2007-2013) and to cooperate with the rural area in an integrated approach.
Issue(s)	Disengaged young people, elderly and immigrant's isolation, reduced social connectivity, environment challenges (i.e. nature protection).
Rural-urban linkages / topics	Learning and inclusive multi-cultural environment and focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning rural depopulation into population growth • Finding and nurturing embryonic new businesses • Restructuring village services and encouraging a new kind of production • Developing local energy self-sufficiency • Highlighting and exploiting specialist expertise in rural areas • Promoting functioning infrastructure • Creating new secondary occupations in rural areas • Raising the value of, developing and exploiting the natural environment • Creating a culture product, opening the doors to collaboration and accessibility • Activating the immigrant population • Getting young people involved • Increasing collaboration in projects and around different themes • Creating new collaborative networks.
Aims / objectives	Creating different, appropriate and inspiring learning environments that aim to be welcoming and inclusive and provide a safe neutral territory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote community actions and cooperation to increase recreational activities for residents • To take care and benefit better of urban environment and nature • To promote multiculturalism and prevent social exclusion.
Delivery framework	Local partnerships for the strategy development around three key working groups (community, business and environment).

	<p>The administrative organisation of the association for the strategy delivery will be members of the committee representing all sectors, selected at the annual general meeting. Members will serve for one year and may serve for no more than four consecutive terms.</p> <p>Organisational philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision; • Common priorities and objectives; • Clear division of tasks and responsibilities; • Decision making mechanism.
<p>Social and territorial cohesion outcomes</p>	<p>Economic sustainability: a viable outcome will continue to run without grants after the project period and will cover the entire area.</p> <p>Effects on employment and inclusiveness: projects, initiatives that create jobs and community life.</p> <p>Sustainable development: positive environmental impacts. Social cohesion through improving qualifications of workforce, improving potential wages and reducing out-migration of young people and elderly inclusion and participation.</p>

Box 1: Finnish rural-urban linkages and cooperation in the last decades

The Finnish development initiatives and rural-urban interactions in the last twenty years aimed at the reconciliation of urban and rural policies, initiating cooperation and coordinating multi-stakeholder processes (governance). Rather than “partnership”, such linkages referred to as “interaction policy”, generated from the urban-rural continuum or fusion (themes related to services, labour markets, commuting, education etc.), moved on to encompass issues and areas where the rural and the urban are still somewhat distinctive and can thus provide for profitable urban-rural exchange (themes dealing with leisure and second homes, cultural heritage, locally produced and consumed food). Parallel to this there has been a shift from common settings and administration to grass-roots level action.

Initially the regional level was taken to be the most suitable for urban-rural interaction policy, focusing on three core issues (Eskelinen, H. & Schmidt-Thomé, K. 2002):

- An emphasis on the “reflective effects” of the urban centres on their respective hinterlands. Experience shows little evidence of these reflective effects being able to penetrate the areas beyond the immediate vicinity of the urban centres themselves and the limited benefits of the Urban Programmes leading lately in the construction of their successors, the Regional Centres Programmes;
- The theme of inter-municipal co-operation has also been placed under the heading of urban-rural interaction. However, the co-operation procedures concentrated on urban-rural dynamics and interaction policy;
- The least explored aspect of the urban-rural approach is the potential for urban-rural exchange. On the edges of the intermingling urban-rural continuum still lies the traditional and distinct entities of the “rural” and the “urban”. The potential for such distinctiveness to be profitably converted into partnership arrangements seems to be emerging, albeit slowly – for example, locally produced food is increasingly seen to have “added value” (especially in relation to “the mad cow disease”, the avian flu, or the Genetic Modified Organisms, GMOs). Moreover, the creative use of the natural and cultural heritage as development assets can often lead to unforeseen success stories.

Example 2: Hungary: The city of Győr with its hinterland¹⁸

In this example, cross border forms of cooperation and partnerships between small municipalities exist and the cooperation is multi-purpose; there are agreements in place (such as the Arrabona EGTC, Expertise, Governance for Trans-frontier Conurbations) and the municipalities involved that have common political meetings to learn from each other and take common strategic decisions.

Primary information about Győr and its hinterland

Győr is a city with dynamic economic development, situated along the Budapest-Vienna axis and represents a city of national significance, which, albeit escaping the polarisation force of Budapest, is more attracted to the agglomeration of Vienna.

Győr is a medium-sized city since it falls into this category at the European scale. Nevertheless, its population is decreasing, while in 2012 it counted 131 000 inhabitants, one year later the Central Statistical Office registered only 128 000 inhabitants in the core city (KSH 2012, 2013). The population decrease is explained by intensive sub-urbanisation. However, while the administrative city is shrinking, its functional urban area is growing, as the City Győr with its hinterland belongs to the economically most successful Hungarian regions and its location at the border with Austria and Slovakia, together the development of the automotive industry play a crucial role in its development.

Figure 6: Map of Hungary, including the city of Győr in the north west of the country.



Hungary has a high level of primacy of its capital city while second cities are much smaller, below Budapest, the category of large provincial cities with a population of 300–500,000 is lacking. On the next level of the city hierarchy are the regional centres, among which *Győr* has improved its ranking only recently, following *Debrecen*, *Pécs*, *Szeged* and *Miskolc*. The population of these largest Hungarian towns or cities – except for Debrecen – does not exceed 200,000 inhabitants. So Győr, Miskolc and Pécs the three city areas are those that the methodology of Hungarian statistic considered as agglomerations, in addition to the agglomeration of the capital city (Pfeil, E. 2014). Győr is already characterised by the newer type of urban development, in which greater emphasis is laid upon modern business services (e.g. it is the most significant provincial banking centre) than upon conventional administrative centre functions.

Territorial linkages and cooperation in the urban-rural area of Győr

Győr – in a similar way to the other four large Hungarian cities – maintains a relatively small number of cooperations with other municipalities of the settlements network, and even if formalised cooperations existed since 2003 (such as the Győr Multi-purpose Micro-regional Association), their dynamics are lagging far behind the desired level, as the Hungarian Government approved a new act on local governments in 2011 that transformed the division of tasks between the local and the sub-national levels of public administration. The regulation of the local level of self-governments entailed in several areas the narrowing down of the responsibilities; some competencies were absorbed by the state (primary and secondary education, health care services etc.). The institutional frameworks of the cooperation of municipalities (multi-purpose micro-regional association, micro-regional development council, association forms according to the Act on municipalities) were overruled by the legislator. The conditions for cooperation have become more difficult and the targets of cooperation are more restricted than before. Consequently the rural-urban linkages have changed thoroughly.

The Report on Local and Regional Democracy in Hungary¹⁹ (Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2013), identify that „the 2011 reforms led to a deterioration of the legislative framework on local and regional issues in Hungary”. In particular the report underlines a deep concern about the overall trend towards recentralisation of competences and the weak level of protection afforded, at constitutional level, to the principle of local self-government. It underlines the fact that the local authorities in Hungary remain strongly dependent on government grants, and that the consultation procedure needs reinforcement, bringing it in line with Charter provisions on timely and appropriate consultation practices.”

Győr City was not satisfied with this new frame of micro-regional cooperation and linkages, deciding to join an urban network formed by small and medium sized cities targeting to keep the balance of the Danube basin as an ecological system in the cross-border area.

Due to its size, Győr, the centre of the Automotive Industrial District, can aspire for the position of sub-centre of the metropolitan region with Vienna as its centre. According to ESPON (2005), there exist the following potentially polycentric transnational areas:

- i. Vienna / Bratislava / Gyor Area;
- ii. Copenhagen / Malmo Area and Oresund Region;
- iii. Krakow / Katowice / Ostrava Region; and
- iv. Lyon / Grenoble / Geneva / Lausanne Area.

The Vienna-Bratislava Region²⁰ has been recognised as a functional entity by the European Union and studies from the OECD have been available for various years (OECD, 2003). Now the two cities create a functional metropolitan region with 3.5 million inhabitants that, as both Austria and Slovakia are part of the European Union, is connected by labour market, housing and transport corridors. Although the cross-border collaborations are growing in number there still is no institution responsible for the coordination of the metropolitan region. The Region is characterised by different Länder on the Austrian side, each one having a different Urban Planning Law (Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland) and Bratislava following the Slovak Urban Planning Law (Patti, D. 2013).

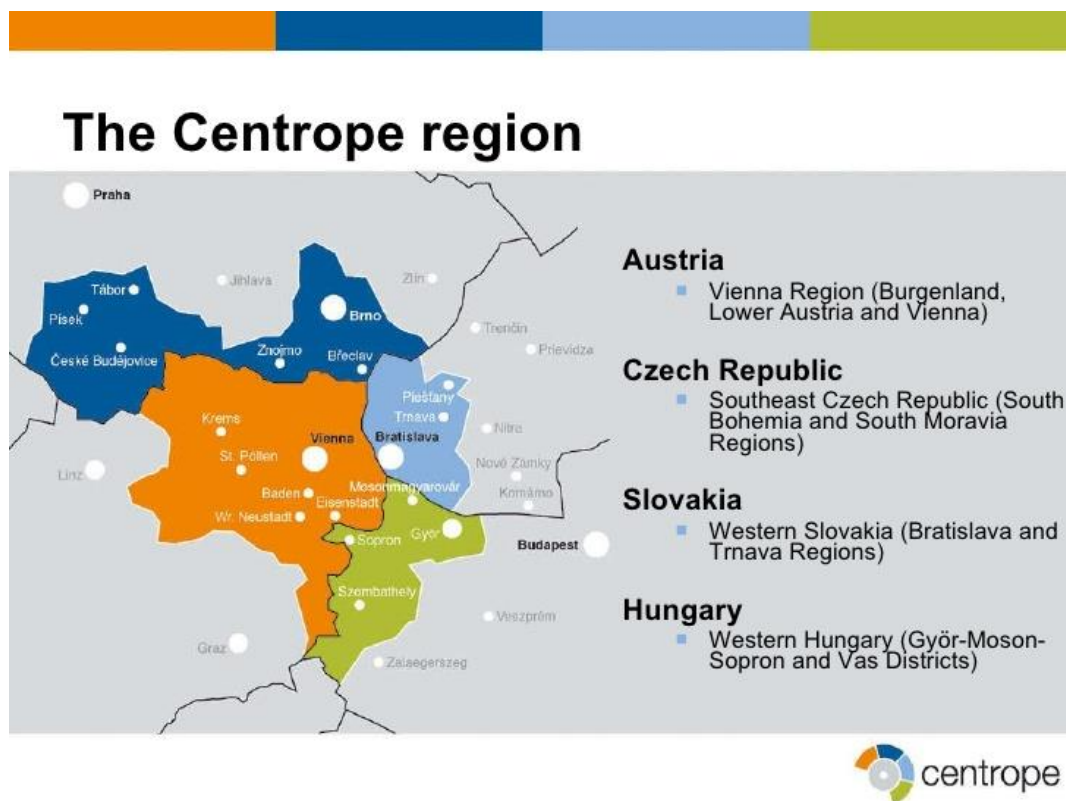
Many super-national initiatives are active on the territory yet none of them have binding decisional power. Among the most relevant is the CENTROPE Initiative²¹ that brings together eight federal provinces, regions and counties that make up the Central European Region, with 6, 5 million inhabitants.

The concept of CENTROPE was launched in September 2003 in Kittsee (Austria), when provincial governors and mayors of the border quadrangle agreed upon the joint establishment and support of the Central European Region. The region is an example of multilateral cross-border cooperation among the following actors:

- Austria (Federal Provinces of Burgenland, Vienna, Lower Austria)
- Slovakia (Bratislava County, Trnava County, Cities of Bratislava and Trnava)
- Czech Republic (South Moravia region, South Bohemia region, City of Brno)
- Hungary (Gyor-Moson-Sopron County, Cities of Sopron and Gyor).

Political declaration adopted during this event stressed the aim to profile CENTROPE region as a framework for effort to increase wealth and sustainable growth across the central European area. In the process of competition and cooperation, the regions and cities are not merely utilising their advantages and abilities, but they are improving and learning new skills.

Figure 7: The Centrope Region



Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/Shelly38/zuzana-lettner-vienna-business-agency-centrope-project>

From Győr’s perspective, it would be highly beneficial to establish cooperation with the CENTROPE region, which extends beyond four countries’ borders. Thus, it institutionalises the cooperation among the Austrian, Slovakian, Czech and Hungarian territorial units and cities.

The transnational cooperation targeted an ambitious objective during its foundation in 2003: the establishment of a socio-economic zone transcending administrative boundaries and national borders which aspired to becoming the most economically advanced area of Central Europe. This polycentric region realises thematic cooperation and joint projects, and will obviously be able to ensure the intensive integration of Győr into the border region pursuing competitiveness objectives. Therefore, regional dimension activities in the metropolitan area of Győr can only be envisaged only through integration with an even more advanced area (Pfeil, E. 2014).

The main cooperation sectors among Győr and its hinterland in the planning period 2014–2020 are: Public services such as social care, public education, health care; tourism; housing, real estate policy; and transport including both public transport and individual car transport. As regarding the cross-border-cooperation, its focus is on territorial cohesion, environment and economic development of the entire urban-rural region.

The Arrabona EGTC includes as member 5 Slovakian and 24 Hungarian municipalities, increasing its importance since its foundation, in 15 June 2011 and focuses on cross-border-cooperation. The Mayor of City Győr is the President of the institution. The EGTC approved its new Integrated

Spatial Strategy in 2014, which focuses on three priority axes, derived from the EU Cohesion policy:

1. Fostering knowledge-based economy

- Enhancing cooperation in innovation
- Establishment of cross-border clusters
- Common Research activity in the cross-border area → support of applied researches
- Increase employment and training in the cross-border region
- R+D in environmental and agricultural sector
- Fostering mobility of researchers and students
- Coordinated information system in the cross-border area

2. Balanced dividing of urban-rural functions in the cross-border area

- Cooperation in environmental affairs, concerning the climate change, landscape regeneration, common water management, renewing energy etc.
- Cooperation in provision of public services
- Infrastructure development in tourism
- Cooperation in health industry for development of public and private services
- Fostering clustering in health industry
- Establishment of a market for local products
- Development of cross-border transportation systems
- Fostering linkages between transportation and tourism
- Formulating of a common programme package

3. Increasing social capital

- Fostering Cultural connections
- Fostering cooperation in sport activities
- Support of bilingualism
- Development of the communication network
- Marketing of the cross-border area

Table 4: Summary of the urban-rural linkages context for Győr

Rural-urban area(s)	The City Győr with its hinterland (Győr Municipality and Arrabona EGTC).
Context	Győr tries to maintain linkages with other members of the settlement network through Arrabona EGTC, against the trend of dynamics that are lagging far behind the desirable level. Also, Győr belongs to Vienna’s influence area (the so called Bratislava – Vienna – Győr area) and established partnerships with Austria and Slovakia neighbouring areas (cross-border urban-rural cooperation).
Issue(s)	Overcoming the changes of the central decision in reshaping (reducing) the cities role. The local government of Győr seceded from the cooperation in 2014 and, as a consequence, it has lost significant development opportunities.
Rural-urban linkages / topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish territorial cooperations (at regional and metropolitan levels) within the CENTROPE region, that extends beyond four countries (Hungary, Austria,

	Czech Republic and Slovakia) borders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing public services (i.e. public transportation) • Economic competitiveness and tourism attractiveness.
Policy area where EGTC is active	Territorial cohesion, economic development (Geopark; entrepreneurship, tourism)
Aims / objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the regional position • Social and economic cohesion • Access to EU funds and territorial competitiveness (high qualified human resources) • Development of the tourism in the area of Győr and its hinterland.
Delivery framework	Municipal partnership framing partnership projects. The multi-purpose micro-region association (MMA) role will be most probably taken by Arrabona EGTC, that intends to substitute in several functions the former MMA, but it has a much wider scope in handle of urban-rural linkages with fostering economic, environmental and social cohesion in the border area. The Arrabona EGTC wasn't efficient in absorb of EU supports in the former programming period, consequently its new spatial strategy aims the reaching of different EU grants. For that reason the 2014 - 2020 strategy includes 21 project packages with the hope to implement them with integrated interventions of several local and regional / national relevant actors.
Social and territorial cohesion outcomes	(Potential) social cohesion through education and lifelong learning outcomes. Increased mobility and accessibility for all. Economic and employment sustainability.

Example 3: Romania: City of Alba Iulia - AIDA Intercommunity association²²

In Romania, access to structural funds is the main reason for urban-rural cooperation. Setting-up inter-communal associations was a pre-condition for getting EU funding for waste and water services infrastructure investments. Urban-rural cooperation was incentivised by structural funds also in the case of regional growth poles - functional areas linked to a city that represents the motor for growth in the region and that creates a competitive advantage at national or EU level.

Based on the experience acquired since almost ten years of implementing relevant projects, transferring valuable expertise from all around European countries, regions and cities, continuous capacity building and participatory planning processes – including an URBACT LSG and LAP, Alba Iulia Municipality and AIDA Intercommunity Association, started the implementation of a strategy under the STATUS Project and Strategic Agenda, aiming to strengthen the urban-rural area linkages and sustainable develop it on medium and longer terms (2020-2020).

Figure 8:

Map of Romania, including location of the city of Alba Iulia in the centre-West of the country.



Primary information about Alba Iulia Municipality and AIDA

Alba Iulia is a medium-sized Romanian city (61,000 inhabitants), a county capital in the heart of the historical region of Transylvania. It is one of the oldest settlements in Romania, which has had a strategic and/or symbolic relevance over the centuries. Today, Alba Iulia is an urban development pole that concentrates the institutional, economical, social, and cultural life of almost 100,000 people and is historically important for Hungarians, Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons. The micro-region Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development (AIDA), established in 2007, represents the development interests of a community of 12 local public administrations, consisting of two municipalities, one city and eight communes. A general strategy of the area has already been drafted prior to the STATUS project, yet the main associated municipality and capital of the County – Alba Iulia – was lacking a strategic document to guide its development in the following years. Through entering the STATUS project, AIDA aimed at developing an instrument to support Alba Iulia in shaping the agenda for integrated urban development, consistent with the existing potential and current realities of the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Municipality can build on a good record of past collaborations and public participation (including the rural neighbouring areas), and take advantage of the experience gained in the frame of the URBACT CityLogo project (dealing with integrated brand management), as it implied

the establishment of an URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG) organized around the following categories of stakeholders: Public authorities, (Municipality of Alba Iulia, Regional Development Agency), Business (i.e. the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Alba Iulia), local entrepreneurs, the NGO sector and civil society representatives, such as the University. The Alba Iulia ULSG is a very active and dedicated one, currently strongly involved in the sustainable development of the municipality and micro-region.

The STATUS Project and the Strategic Urban Agenda

The STATUS Project participation is part of a larger concerted action meant to redevelop the city and its surroundings. The process started in the last programming period, when Alba Iulia managed to attract around 150 Million Euro in structural funds, which for a medium-sized town of 63,500 people represents an important achievement in mitigating the effects of the financial crisis. After a fruitful period of implementing projects financed by the Romanian Operational Programmes (ROP, Environment, Capacity Building, etc.), AIDA in cooperation with the Alba Iulia Municipality has entered STATUS in order to implement an integrated strategy for urban-rural development in the AIDA micro-region, aiming to:

- 1) Connecting, integrating and capitalizing on prior targeted investments,
- 2) Improving and correlating technical, economic and social development by also mitigating risks
- 3) Shifting the paradigm in governance and participation by applying an EU-wide methodology for co-design developed through STATUS project.

The city needs to improve and update its reference documents on development and urban planning, among which the most important is represented by the Development Strategy of Alba Iulia. The strategy will be periodically updated in cooperation with neighbouring localities, focusing on seizing new opportunities over the programming period 2014-2020. The strategy focuses on the general guidelines of sustainable development of the area such as territorial planning/zoning, infrastructure, economy, environment, energy, tourism, IT, human resources, social, cultural, educational, administrative, sports. Another improvement to be brought through this process is to the Master Plan, which is currently in the approval process.

The purpose of the whole process is to create a medium and long-term vision of development for the Alba Iulia and AIDA, not coming from the administration in a unidirectional manner as is still customary in Romania, but rather through a joint effort uniting public, private and civil society key stakeholders. In this regard, Alba Iulia and AIDA have aimed at thinking differently, with the help of the STATUS Methodology, in designing a participatory process that has laid the base for future investment and the sustainable growth of this historical capital of Romania.

It is the aim of this document to not only provide the city with a common strategic development agenda, endorsed and undertaken by all stakeholders, but to also generate the next line-up of transversal, large scale projects to be implemented in the 2014-2020 programming period, pursuing the use of structural funds as well as the development of partnerships and favourable conditions for private investment.

The Strategic Priority Nr. 1 of the STATUS AGENDA is an urban-rural CLLD initiative, including an Agriculture Innovation Cluster. This priority is the creation of a social enterprise development strategy covering the area of the Alba Iulia Intercommunity Development Association, using the new CLLD instrument. Its action plan will include the following four axes:

1. Axis A – Greenbelt development and infill densification, through the low-impact productive use of the strategic land reserves around Alba Iulia. Areas mapped for preservation will,

through a concession agreement, be provided for commercialised agriculture (production, animal products, fruit crops, etc.) or even community gardens.

2. Axis D – Agriculture Market and Local Employment, through both development of the primary sector and the creation of jobs, part- or full time, for farmers and young entrepreneurs interested in developing small farms;
3. Axis E – Innovation and ecologically equipped productive areas, through the incentives and opportunities for food industry development and through the creation of a food science research centre, in partnership with the “1 December 1918” University, Science Faculty;
4. Axis F - Tourism, wellness and environment, through the development of agro-tourism, “authentic experience” packages for tourists, etc.

The idea is to redevelop the productive agriculture in an urban-rural partnership among:

- AIDA and the comprising local municipalities;
- Local farmers: promotion of small farms with low/medium intensity production of high-quality products and encouragement of part-time farming, urban/fringe relevant actors, and youth initiatives. Investments in technology supported by cluster / association (EU structural funds),
- Existing and potentially interested food industries and the “Refractara” Business and Industrial Park, for the development of upper-echelon (premium, bio) products for local use and export,
- The Food Science research centre and main market hall of Alba Iulia (Priority Project 12) and the neighbourhood “social market” distribution system (Priority Project 15), for local commercialisation,
- Logistics companies for distribution and export,
- Tourism companies for strategic partnerships (agro-tourism and day-trips from the city);

In this project will develop an authentic brand for produce, particularly for ecological products (wines, fruit-based products, dairy and meat products, etc.).

The project provides both horizontal and vertical linkages between sectors (economic and public/private), comprising a strong urban-rural connection between the Alba Iulia Municipality and the AIDA.

Priority actions / measures:

- Development of a partnership strategy between public authority – fringe/peri-urban/rural agriculture – industrial sector – research and development – logistics and local vendors;
- Definition of boundaries for the area of intervention;
- Preparation and agreement upon the CLLD Strategy in full detail (participative process);
- Preparation of action plan and funding application. Key investments for the Strategy:
 - Establishment of a unique foodstuffs and animal product brand for the area;
 - Creation of a common platform and structure to manage the small producers’ needs, to enable communication and to foster synergy within the AIDA area.
 - Allotment of fringe/greenbelt and agricultural land by concession / contest to farmers, young entrepreneurs, agriculture start-ups;
 - Development of an incentive policy for commercialised production of fresh produce, animal products, fruit crops by supporting farm enterprises and micro farms (differentiated policies, start-up funds, etc.) – both production and commercialisations;
 - Creation of a food science research and innovation centre for the area (Priority Project 12);

- Expansion and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, investments in technology;
- Redevelopment strategy for vineyards and solariums;
- Operationalising economy chain partnerships: incentives for using local produce as feedstock for food industry;
- Periodic review and monitoring of CLLD Strategy.

Table 5: Summary of the urban-rural linkages context for AIDA / Alba Iulia:

Rural-urban area(s)	AIDA - The Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development, an organized territorial agglomeration, a NGO governed by the public law, of public utility and representing the interest of 3 urban communities, 8 rural communities and Alba County Council.
Governance system	A medium sized city (Municipality of Alba Iulia) works together with the Intercommunity agency (AIDA) to upgrade their regional position and attract opportunities as to their strategy.
Issue(s)	The strategy needs to be updated in line with the new realities, prepared in aim of seizing new opportunities for the programming period 2014-2020.
Rural-urban linkages /topics	Axis A – Greenbelt development and infill densification Axis D – Agriculture Market and Local Employment Axis E – Innovation and ecologically equipped productive areas Axis F - Tourism, wellness and environment
Aims / objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To connect, integrate and capitalize on prior targeted investments; • To improve and correlate technical, economic and social development by also mitigating risks; • To shift the paradigm in governance and participation by applying an EU-wide methodology for co-design developed through STATUS project.
Delivery framework	<p>AIDA inter-municipal coordination as decision-making body throughout the process. As for the technical organisation, the strategy includes the development of a mechanism, having the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a partnership strategy between public authority – fringe/peri-urban/rural agriculture – industrial sector – research and development – logistics and local vendors; • Definition of boundaries for the area of intervention; • Preparation and agreement upon the CLLD Strategy in full detail (participative process); • Delivery the financed projects within the period 2014-2020.
Social and territorial cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on employment and inclusiveness: projects, initiatives that create jobs and community life;

outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development: positive environmental impacts; • (Potential) Social cohesion through improving qualifications of workforce, improving potential wages and reducing out-migration of young people and elderly inclusion and participation.
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What do these examples tell us about urban-rural linkages?

Despite the diversity of the above examples, all three include among their proposed priorities and objectives the need to reconnect at their “own” territorial level on a new basis, establishing territorial cooperation arrangements. They also include the objective to link-up with EU learning networks, methods, experiences and resources. Social and territorial results are important in each case. The solutions adopted are tailor made, because they needed to relate to local issues. They foster urban-rural linkages for integrated urban development, focusing on social inclusion, participation and sustainability.

The three cases have in common the **creation of a local urban-rural coordinating entity to lead the process** (e.g. informal partnership, agency, intercommunity association) with a clear delivery framework and decision making mechanisms. In addition, a **commitment and strategic determination towards access to education and long life learning** features in all initiatives, practices and projects. Lastly, all these examples exhibit an **approach towards locally-rooted answers and solutions**, summarised below for each case:

- **In Finland, the “LEADER-City” approach** connects urban and rural policies on challenging issues (e.g. the environment, isolation and immigration, lack of connectivity) using the CLLD instrument; adding value to urban-rural exchanges (e.g. through the theme “locally produced and consumed food”); and creatively using the natural and cultural shared heritage to increase the role of the local community and prevent social exclusion.
- **In Hungary, the city of Győr and its hinterland**, taking into account that the rural-urban linkages significantly changed in 2011, decided to switch the “umbrella”, but not the objective: instead of continuing the ineffective national micro-association system, they chose to affiliate to a trans-national initiative. As a consequence, lessons learned since 2004 were transferred to a new organisation, established within a cross-border-cooperation project – the EGTC. The focus is on three priority axes, derived from the EU Cohesion policy: fostering knowledge-based economy, balanced dividing of urban-rural functions in the cross-border area and increasing the social capital.
- **In Romania, Alba Iulia – the AIDA Intercommunity association** used the opportunity provided by the country becoming a full EU Member State in 2007 to establish an inter-communal association at something approximating the functional urban area level²³, and to forge a new identity, able to access EU financial support and to increase its standing within the region. The latter was achieved by designing a participatory process that laid the basis for future investment, for sustainable growth according to the functional areas’ needs and aspirations, and for strengthening urban-rural interactions. Thus, the Strategic Urban Agenda (developed in the frame of the STATUS Project) has as its key priority an urban-rural CLLD action plan: “Agriculture Innovation Cluster”, which includes as its main axes: Protection of the greenbelt and infill densification; Agriculture markets and local employment; Innovation and ecologically equipped productive areas and Tourism; and Wellness and environment, through the development of agro-tourism.

Representative networks supporting urban-rural linkages

At the EU level, the **European Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET)**²⁴ brings together all fisheries areas supported by priority Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF 2007-2013). Through information exchange and a dedicated support unit, this network aims to assist the different stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of fisheries areas (encompassing especially rural, but as well the neighbouring urban ones) at local, regional, national and European level.

The core of the network is made up of over 300 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs). These public-private partnerships set up at local level, work towards the sustainable development of their areas. Based in 21 Member States, these FLAGs each manage a budget to support a range of projects proposed and carried out by a wide variety of local stakeholders.

La Fédération Nationale des Agences d'Urbanisme (FNAU)²⁵, is a French network (partnership urban planning agencies) having projects and activities at national and international (in Asia, Africa and Latin America) level and a pool of some 1,500 professionals within 52 agencies (among which 3 overseas), that considers delivering strategic urban planning requires different kinds of tools, such as: an effective assessment of the city state and its evolution; a fair & shared analysis; a common platform for debate between stakeholders; and capacity building in prospective, planning and urban policies.

As the partnership “is in the DNA” of the FNAU here are below a few historic milestones, showing a strategic evolution, a deepening and a “tailor made” approach of the tools and support provided, by:

- Helping cooperation between cities and the national government during the 70's;
- Helping to implement devolution policies during the 80's and 90's;
- Helping inter-territorial cooperation during the 2000's; and
- Helping to define “territorial common goods” policies.

5. Findings from the Study on urban-rural linkages

In this section we summarise key findings from the discussions held at our Study's thematic seminar “Promoting urban-rural linkages”, held in Paris on 10 December 2014 (see agenda and list of participants in the appendix to this report).

A general issue raised by representatives of Member States was the need for greater definitional clarity with regards to the key terms “urban” and “rural”. Many participants stressed that these definitions are not self-evident and are highly context sensitive. In order to clarify and facilitate a general understanding of all actors involved, we propose to follow the OECD operational definitions (OECD, 1994) of “urban” and “rural” territories regarding the regional typology (approach and methodology) as presented below.

The OECD approach to define the concept of “rural” is based on three dimensions:

A. **Spatial dimension (territory) that** considers different situation at territorial level in relation to the development tendencies.

B. **Multivariable approach.** At the same time, demographic, social, economic and environmental aspects are considered. This allows considering the possible interactions among different variables characterising rural regions with important implications in terms of policy definition

C. **Dynamism.** The analysis does not capture the picture of a certain moment but also the evolution of each variable.

Although OECD approach is widely adopted and relative “easy” to implement, in literature it is possible to find some criticisms addressed to the methodology.

As to the methodology, OECD has established a regional typology to which regions have been classified as **predominantly urban (PU)**, **predominantly rural (PR)** and **intermediate rural (IR)** adopting the following 3 criteria:

Population density: a community is defined as **rural if its population density is below 150 inhabitants per km²** (500 inhabitants for Japan and Korea).

Percentage of population in rural areas: a region is classified as

- **predominantly rural** if more than 50% of its population lives in rural areas,
- **predominantly urban** if less than 15% lives in rural areas and
- **intermediate** if the share is between 15% and 50%.

Urban centres: a region that would be classified as rural on the basis of the general rule is classified as intermediate if it has an urban centre of more than 200.000 inhabitants (500.000 for Japan and Korea) representing no less than 25% of the regional population; on the other hand, if a region is classified as intermediate rural but it has an urban centre of more than 500.000 inhabitants (1 mill for Japan and Korea), then it is classified as urban.

The debates on urban-rural linkages focused on two sets of questions. A first set sought to characterize the kind of urban-rural linkages / partnerships participants’ (cities and regions) were involved in the process, which are the partners, success factors and pitfalls and the role of their respective cities in these partnerships. A second set of questions focused on specific recommendations on how to best support urban-rural partnerships, and looked particularly at the role that the URBACT programme can play to this end in 2014-2020.

5.1. Urban-rural partnerships: What, Who and Where?

Types of existing win-win rural urban linkages

There was consensus amongst discussants that across Europe there are some good examples of valuable examples of existing functional urban-rural linkages and partnerships to build on. This holds true especially in “old” EU Member States, where these examples range from the very small scale and direct situations (i.e. small and medium size cities with “random” linkages with their rural neighbouring area), to more sophisticated and complex ones (such as in large metropolitan areas with strategic partnerships), as well as in the New Member States, where most of the (new) urban-rural linkages were established not necessarily changing the former territorial relations, but adapting to the new tools and new available

financial opportunities. Participants also referred to an important number of strategies and projects that could be successfully developed and amongst which an important number already started to be implemented, as is the case of URBACT LAP’s, EFF FLAGs, and LEADER LAGs projects and actions.

A case in point is the Finland “LEADER - City” approach, where a large number of cities already started urban-rural CLLD projects or intend to do so in the new programming period 2014-2020, based on the successful experiences of the LEADER+ programme previously implemented (2007-2013). Another example is Bulgaria, where municipalities use the Local Action Groups set-up under the rural development programme as platforms for urban-rural cooperation.

Conditions for success and possible pitfalls

No matter how simple they are, urban-rural linkages and partnerships combine spatial, economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions. Hence, their effectiveness and sustainability depend on a series of success factors and pitfalls. The main factors mentioned by seminar participants are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6 - Main success factors and weaknesses in urban-rural partnerships.

SUCCESS FACTORS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using shared core values (e.g. heritage, traditions, solidarity) to build a more cohesive territory ▪ Mutual interests of urban and rural actors (e.g. shared view of goals and of common challenges); ▪ Equal partnership rights; ▪ Forms of organisation and coordination that fit local needs and conditions; ▪ Good communication (timely, both ways, etc.) ▪ Networking to relevant systems and structures ▪ Capacity to find win-win solutions; ▪ Concrete projects, aiming to overcome concrete / real problems; ▪ Small and continuous steps; ▪ Bottom-up approach; ▪ Long-term political commitment to defining and implementing a common vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under-representation of key local stakeholders (e.g. entrepreneurs / businesses, or civil society organizations); ▪ Misunderstandings and power asymmetries; ▪ Interference of other (usually superior) governance levels (provinces, regions or national governments) in decisions; ▪ Long-term dependency on grants or on a single funding source (including EU funding); ▪ Lack of leadership, capacity and motivation ▪ Lack of flexibility and capacity to adapt; ▪ Transferring irrelevant / not adequate “successful” projects / initiatives in relation with the local needs / opportunities; ▪ Excluding relevant actors and potential partners; ▪ Lack of an unitary, integrative approach ▪ Using extensively /prevalent on the external expertise

Role of the city in urban-rural partnerships

Participants were asked to reflect on the role of their cities in urban-rural partnerships, as well as on how these operate. There was recognition that it is usually the cities that take the lead in the process to develop joint urban-rural initiatives. This happens because they are usually the largest actor in terms of budget and population and responds to their relatively greater experience,

expertise and capabilities, institutional infrastructure and technological capacity. However, there was agreement on the need to ensure a balanced approach and equality of participation, involving rural actors in all stages, from decision making to collecting and sharing data, information and analysis.

Overall, in order to understand how these partnerships operate and who the initiator is, it is important to understand their evolution, which often defines their characteristics, together with the local and national contexts. For example, often new urban-rural associations and partnerships are established in the framework of projects and programmes as (new) operational urban-rural bodies for their areas. Examples include the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) under the EFF 2007-2013 (and EMFF in the new period), or the intercommunity associations that are established to reach the critical mass of territory and population size to qualify for specific funding schemes, or to be able to provide cost effective public services (i.e. public transportation, waste management). Consequently, these partnerships operate according to the respective programme procedures and funding requirements. This could be beneficial if they contribute to the sound development of the partnership, or negative if they are perceived as “bureaucratic necessities”, without building local capacity and improving long term effectiveness. An important challenge regarding the sustainability of these partnerships is to continue to live after the end of their funding or to survive between two programming periods.

5.2. Supporting rural-urban partnerships at all levels

Capacity building needs

Participants were asked to reflect on the capacities needed by both urban and rural actors to, as well as on how to develop these. There was general agreement on local capacity building being a key condition for a successfully implement these partnerships, notably through investing in human capital, skills and training.

Specific capacities and skills that need to be developed for urban-rural partnerships, according to most participants, included:

- Technical understanding and capacities in the field of land management in order to foster the development of healthy and sustainable urban-rural relationships.
- Understanding on how to best apply the 2014-2020 territorial instruments and the variety of available funding schemes (initial preparation and ongoing consultancy support to help partnerships to soundly and adequately develop the necessary tools), and to develop the capacity to bridge across local needs and national and EU funding opportunities.
- The capacity to organise urban and rural actors, including broad stakeholder involvement and partnership building skills.
- The capacity to overcome scale differences of urban and rural contexts;

Effective methods to develop these capacities, as mentioned by participants, included:

- Urban-rural tailor-made projects and thematic networks to be consolidated /developed by URBACT for existing and interested potential urban-rural partnerships,
- Thematic workshops and facilitated exchanges between similar areas,
- Mentoring processes to building effective partnerships; Continuously mentoring the partners relationship to facilitate reaching the goals; Mentoring in critical phases, such as: setting direction, moving forward and building the partnership agreement;
- Learning from and promotion of good practice examples by the Commission, URBACT, ENRD in cooperation with the relevant regional and national authorities (whenever possible).

Support needed from different government / governance levels

Seminar participants identified various kinds of support that different governance level could lend to urban-rural partnerships to be initiated and developed (see table 7):

Table 7 - Types of support to urban-rural partnerships by government / governance level

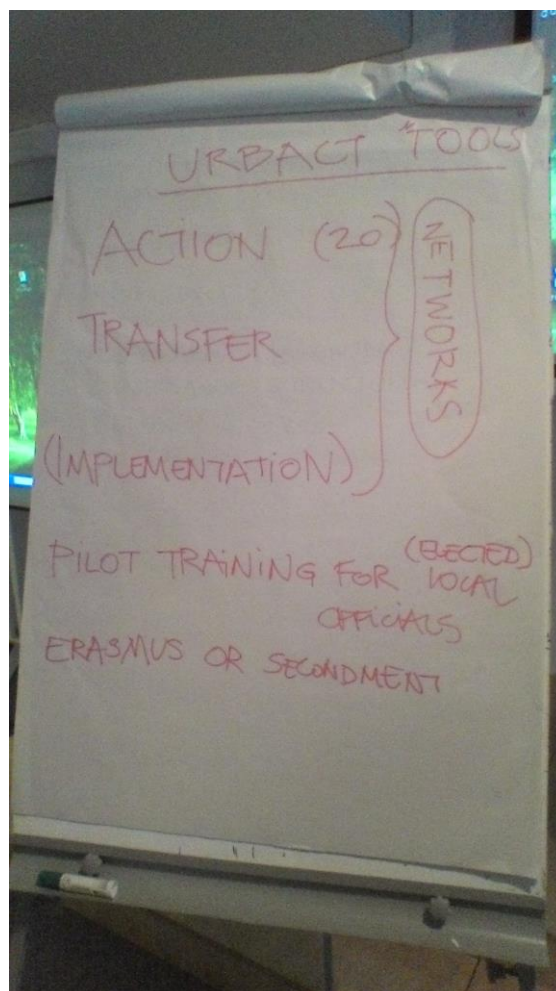
Government / Governance level	Type of support
European Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting the Member States’ needs related to urban-rural linkages and cohesion through relevant policies and instruments; • Increasing the level of flexibility and accessibility for various stakeholders; • Designing new governance solutions to support urban-rural partnerships.
National government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translating the (national) vision into policies and providing the national relevant framework for land use, social inclusion, big infrastructure, etc., • Providing relevant legislation supporting territorial partnerships and cooperation and set-up co-financing schemes and financing incentives. • Integrating the countryside surrounding cities in spatial development strategies for urban regions aiming at more efficient planning of land-use;
Regional government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating regional strategies and programmes; • Providing support and facilitating rural-urban linkages and partnerships; • Proposing CLLD projects tackling urban-rural issues as and where required.
National and regional governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and integrating different types of policies that impact urban-rural areas;

Government / Governance level	Type of support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an enabling framework for urban-rural partnerships.
Managing authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with urban-rural partnerships at different stages of their functioning process: e.g. providing technical advice and assistance, supporting the monitoring and evaluation process, providing useful information and linkages with external organisations, etc.

Complementary support to be provided by the URBACT programme

URBACT’s involvement and active support was seen by most participants as an essential element in the programming period 2014-2020, and more specifically, in fostering urban-rural linkages. The URBACT’s method(s) are seen as valuable tools that are applicable and flexible to the local scale where these linkages take place, as well as connecting well to higher governance levels. Specific aspects of the URBACT programme that were particularly valued included its thematic networks, dissemination and learning approach, continental coverage and past project and capitalisation experience.

Figure 9: Image from the Paris urban-rural seminar working groups’ findings



While not necessarily in line with URBACT’s objectives or remit, views collected from stakeholders in the context of this study (notably through the discussions held at the thematic seminar) pointed to a specific role for URBACT. This referred mainly to learning exchanges, capitalisation and dissemination in relation to the new territorial instruments the ITI and CLLD (see first two thematic reports of this Study) where these relate to urban rural linkages. For example, URBACT was called upon by seminar participants to help to build trust among urban and rural partners, bridge across local needs and EU and national funding opportunities, as well as to provide a platform for exchange on knowledge and experience. This is to be done by continuing to capitalise the knowledge on urban-rural issues from URBACT II networks and especially from ULSG and LAPs. This approach could be further developed by financing new networks focusing on urban-rural partnerships in URBACT III.

Specific roles mentioned for URBACT in this context included:

- Provide a broader learning and information exchange and networking platform for urban and rural actors interested to find and/or to share relevant knowledge and experiences;
- Provide capacity building and coaching expertise (under specific conditions, according to the URBACT III operational programme);
- Facilitate linkages between urban and rural actors and key EU-level organisations (e.g. Committee of the Regions, COR urban inter-group of European Parliament, CEMR or Eurocities);
- Support thematic networks that bring together urban-rural partnerships and linkages.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the data and analyses presented in this report, we can conclude that, in urban-rural linkages, successful strategies and spatial policies of both areas are intertwined. Thus, only an integrated vision of the challenges facing rural and urban areas, respectively, will ensure win-win scenarios for both. In this perspective, we would like to conclude this report with a set of recommendations at different policy and action levels:

All levels should:

1. Recognise urban-rural areas as meaningful territories for policy making purposes and acknowledge the need to properly define them, not as transition zones, but based on their own specific characteristics;
2. Use urban-rural areas as an operational term, part of a common and technical vocabulary;
3. Regard the urban-rural question as part of a strategic territorial approach, to be supported at EU, MS, regional and local levels through programmes, projects, capacity building actions and cooperation networks;
4. Target relevant education levels, such as planning courses and training for public administration / civil servants, on the specific nature of urban-rural territories and identities.

The European Commission should:

5. Develop a clearer framework for the existing relevant programmes and funds (i.e. the Rural Development Program -RDP, the Regional Operational Program -ROP, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund -EMFF, ERDF, ESF) to work together accompanied by the harmonisation of existing rules (started with CPR 2014-20) and by a stronger regulatory emphasis on urban rural cooperation in each fund’s regulation;
6. Strengthen the territorial cooperation tools within the LEADER and EMFF around the Union Priority (UP) 4, related to local strategic development;
7. Strengthen the cooperation tools with focus on urban-rural under ERFD and ESF in the frame of INTERREG and ETC programs;
8. Initiate a joint action on urban-rural linkages between DG REGIO and DG AGRI, possibly involving ENRD to address urban-rural issues.

The Member States, Regions and Managing authorities could:

9. Strengthen the urban-rural CLLD and facilitate its inclusion it in the frame of the existing funding opportunities;
10. Supporting the urban rural linkages by providing facilitation and capacity building by using their existing technical assistance and expertise;
11. Facilitate and provide support and increased access to the available resources for all urban-rural associations and interested actors.

The URBACT programme could:

12. Welcome urban rural partnerships to bid into URBACT calls for thematic networks for action planning, transfer and implementation;
13. Support successful cities in networks to use an adapted version of the URBACT method for action planning to form appropriately scaled urban rural local support groups;
14. Undertake capitalisation of urban-rural good practices and lessons learned, of local resources and building / strengthening the partnership approach between urban and rural stakeholders;
15. Facilitate ongoing debates on urban-rural linkages as part of URBACT programme-level activities, e.g. through supporting a work stream on Urban rural linkages;
16. Take active part in wider EU level discussions about urban-rural linkages, in collaboration with relevant groups, such as ENRD, FARNET, LDNet, Energy Cities and others.

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- ¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/cohesion/urban_rural/index_en.cfm
- ¹² <http://haaglanden.nl/sites/haaglanden.nl/files/Bijlage%201%20bij%20het%20verslag%20van%20Bologna.pdf>
- ¹³ <http://www.oecd.org/economy/rural-urban-partnerships-an-integrated-approach-to-economic-development.htm>
- ¹⁴ <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/2e4ede543787a0c085256a940073f4e4>
- ¹⁵ <http://www.rfsc.eu/>
- ¹⁶ Sources of information for the case studies: Finland: Petri Rinne, Vice-president ELSARD, FARNET Geographical Expert for Finland and Raisa Ranta, LAG Manager LAG Karhuseutu, PORI; Hungary: Edit Somlyódyne Pfeil, PhD, Associate Professor - Regional Policies Researcher, Győr Department of Regional Studies and Public Policy, Széchenyi István University Kautz Gyula Faculty of Economics and Anikó Babos, Strategic Planner, Department of Urban Development, Municipality of the City of Győr; Romania: Nicolaie Moldovan, City Manager, Alba Iulia Municipality
- ¹⁷ http://www.mmm.fi/en/index/frontpage/rural_development/finnish_rural_policy/finnish_leader.html
<http://www.seprat.net/?lang=en>
<http://joutsentenreitti.fi/briefly-in-english/>
<http://www.karhuseutu.fi>
- ¹⁸ <http://www.arrabona.eu/english/index.html>
- ¹⁹ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2113213&Site=COE#Top>
- ²⁰ http://www.corp.at/archive/CORP2013_16.pdf
- ²¹ <http://www.centrope.com/en/centrope-project/centrope-initiative>
- ²² http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/CityLogo/Albalulia_baseline_citylogo.pdf
<http://www.seecityplatform.net/>
<http://www.urbasofia.eu/index.php/en/status>
- ²³ Accession to the EU established the setting-up inter-communal associations was a precondition to obtain EU funding for waste and water services and infrastructure investments
- ²⁴ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/>
- ²⁵ <http://www.fnau.org/index.asp> ; <http://www.fnau-international.org/>