

TP4D

Fostering territorial perspective for development

Towards a wider alliance



FOR several years, territorial approaches to development have been spreading within international organizations and among development partners. They are increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for improving development outcomes. Multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approaches – implemented at an adequate spatial level – appear as a more appropriate conceptual, analytical and operational framework for understanding and addressing the complexity of the structural economic, social and spatial transformations taking place in a globalized and

rapidly changing world. Furthermore, “spatially blind” policies and interventions are starting to raise concerns since they tend to leave behind those places that require the most support to achieve the SDGs.

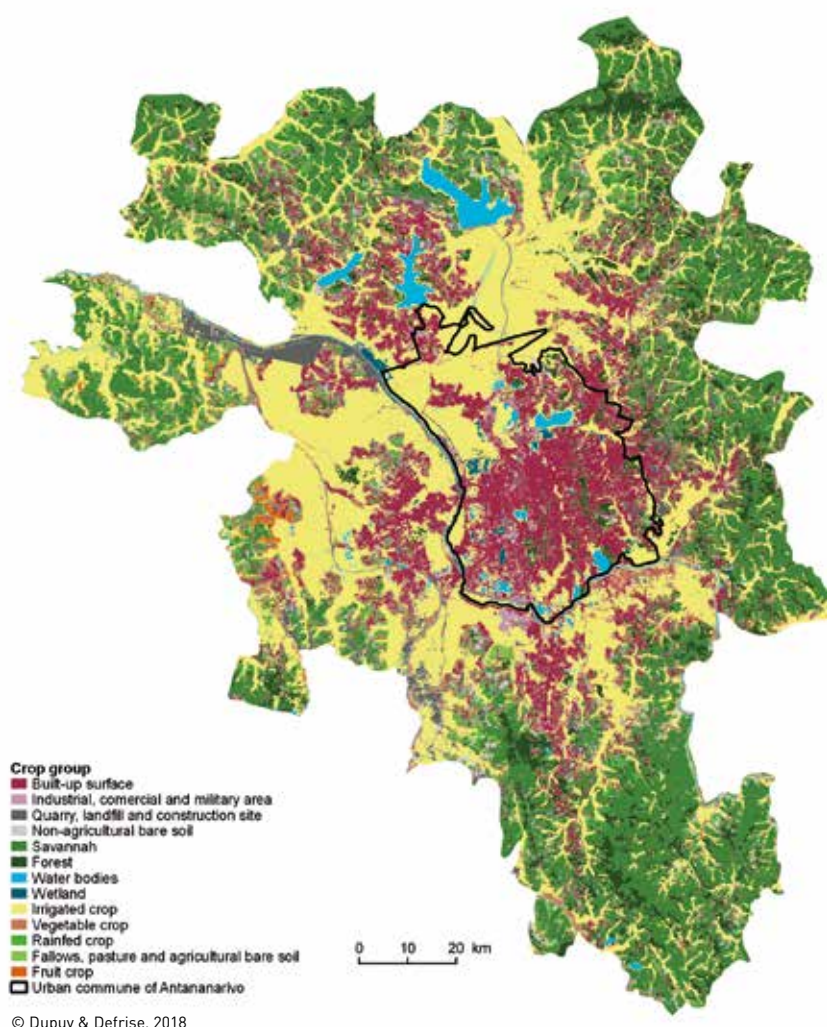
Territorial approaches are a viable option to address the integrated nature of the SDGs. They can complement and improve cross-sectorial effectiveness, as well as increase coordination and true participation. Territorial approaches can contribute to moving towards the implementation of the 2030 development agenda.

This white paper aims at enhancing a common understanding of territorial approaches and calls for a wider alliance between development practitioners, researchers, international organizations, donors and governments, for supporting the adoption of territorial perspectives in policy, program and project design and implementation. It results from a variety of events and projects that have brought together many stakeholders over the last few years, the latest being the international conference “Living Territories” held in Montpellier, France, in January 2018.

(<https://livingterritories2018.cirad.fr>).

This white paper attests to the need for further knowledge development, sharing and funding for implementation.

Land use mapping using remotely-sensed imagery: Antananarivo in Madagascar



TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVES FOR ENHANCING RURAL AND URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS AND LINKAGES

Rural areas are constantly changing. Along with peasant societies, they can no longer be defined as places that defend a way of life and support an identity in the face of globalization and urbanization. They are rapidly shifting due to a blurring rural-urban divide, and as a consequence of increasingly dense flows of people, goods, services, and information between rural and urban areas. They are not isolated from urban processes; on the contrary, urbanization is strongly interlinked with rural development.

Urban areas are also transforming. Urban, and in particular peri-urban areas, are evolving in the Global North and South. This evolution has come with a rapid increase in mobility and new dynamics regarding the way in which cities exchange among themselves, as well as the way in which they interact with rural areas. Confronted with the unsustainability of their historical growth model, in a context of rapid expansion, cities face huge challenges: rapid population growth, lack of or increasing costs to access basic services and affordable healthy food, pollution,

negative impacts associated with climate change, lack of productive employment opportunities, etc. All these issues limit the prospects of a decent life and can fuel social unrest. Moreover, most of these issues are disproportionally present in small and medium-size cities.

Today the relevance of rural and urban analytical categories, which have always guided public policies, is being challenged. Although this classification is still relevant to understand the diverse socio-economic and political contexts of rural and urban communities, spatially segmented interventions reinforce spatial discontinuities and prevent adequate answers to development needs, such as infrastructure, services and the overall provision of public goods. Change is needed. Most of the answers will emerge from rethinking and strengthening rural-urban linkages.

Thus, in order to design development policies adapted to the new territorial realities, it is necessary to take into account the entire set of spatial dynamics that characterize a region or territory.

These include the different roles of small towns and cities, their connected and/or close surrounding landscapes, more distant rural regions, and the various networks supporting the flow of people, physical goods and information that are at play among these different spaces. This must also include power relations across different administrative levels and potential conflicts of interest among the multiple stakeholders in every specific area.

Understanding these new dynamics is of paramount importance for renewed development policies. Spatially adapted action must put people and the places where they live at the focus of development efforts. They are key for effective policies. Therefore, renewing and diversifying the analytical frameworks and the methodological references, tools and indicators, is required.

THE TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVE TO DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

A territorial perspective considers the territory as a space of governance for human activities where future projects are conceived and implemented. A territory is governed and influenced by a community of actors dealing with common challenges by defining appropriated actions and policies. It includes all the environmental, social, political, cultural and economic assets and processes interacting within it.

A territorial perspective anchors development strategies on specific territorial assets and interdependencies between different places, including rural-urban linkages. This makes it possible to articulate and integrate sectorial policies on relevant scales of action within the territory.

Far from reducing the approach to the local level, a territorial perspective takes into consideration multiple levels of spatial organization, connecting local, regional, national and international scales, and taking into account the effects and impacts of globalization. This calls for a paradigm shift from the governance of disconnected rural and urban spaces and separate authorities, to one based on multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms that allow all groups of actors to take part in the decision-making process across sub-national and national levels of government.

A territorial perspective to development further allows the identifi-

cation of synergies between different sectors. However, this multi-sectorial vision of development does not set out to overrule sectorial policies or sector-specific interventions (such as value chain interventions) but rather to complement and strengthen them with a view to ensuring the highest social, economic and environmental outcomes in a globalizing world.

At the national level, a territorial perspective is more than the simple coordination of public policies. In order to better define and articulate sectorial policy needs, it relies on a participatory diagnosis and analysis of potentialities and constraints at the adequate scale. It acknowledges priorities, potentials, and opportunities in a long-term perspective while recognizing, preserving, restoring, and improving natural, physical, and human capital. It also requires that some responsibility for planning, financing and managing be transferred to local actors and legitimate local authorities.

Territorial approaches must not be confused with the approaches applied in Integrated Rural Development projects, which emerged in the 1970s. These projects were often a top-down and expert-driven way to improve the effectiveness of rural development in a given area. They incorporated a wide range of sectorial interventions, usually created parallel structures in rural areas with no connection(s) to either

urban challenges or specific rural and urban interrelations, and lack of a solid reflection on the adequate geographical space of action. On the contrary, a territorial approach is not restricted to local development, which prevents multi-level governance and the need for addressing interdependencies between various levels of action. It implies more than administrative decentralization. It includes a programmatic dimension and decision-making processes seeking coherence between various scales of action.

A territorial approach also goes beyond biophysical approaches. It embraces integrated landscape management, which considers the socio-ecological dimension of interactions between species and ecosystems, as well as the socio-economic dimensions of the use of natural resources. Moreover, it recognizes the fact that human settlements of various sizes are embedded within a bigger landscape and the reciprocal dynamics between these spaces.

Even though a territorial approach takes a spatial perspective to development, it is not limited to pre-existing administrative boundaries. On the contrary, it makes it possible to define relevant functional territories that make sense for local actors and respond to collectively identified development challenges.

PRINCIPLES OF A TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT



PEOPLE-CENTERED

A territorial approach recognizes the social construct of people living in a certain area and their relations. It helps generate an identity that confers sense, content and purpose on local development efforts based on the convergence of interests and wills.



PLACE-BASED

Whilst considering the challenges and potentials of a specific area (territory), a territorial approach also looks at spatial interrelations between different places to identify synergies and unlock new potentials for growth and overcoming spatial inequalities. This includes links between various users of a landscape or linkages between urban and rural areas, particularly regarding the important roles of intermediary towns and cities for the development of their rural environment.



CROSS-SECTORIAL

Rural development approaches frequently focus on agricultural production as the foremost development option, since there is no doubt that for the near future the sector will remain one of the main economic engines in rural areas of the developing world. Nevertheless, given the dynamics of structural transformation processes, the sector will be challenged to secure the livelihoods of increasing rural populations, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Already, rural households often pursue multi-stranded and multi-local livelihood strategies that build on the wide set of opportunities characterizing their landscapes. They will increasingly depend on employment outside agricultural production while exploiting

the opportunities offered by the broader agri-food sector. Territorial approaches will maximize income generation options created by agro-industries, by small and medium enterprises, and by nascent service-related activities in a broader agri-food sector.



MULTI-LEVEL

With increasing levels of decentralization, territorial approaches build on connecting the micro, meso and macro levels to relocalize national (and even global) development strategies. Financial decentralization enhances budgetary independence of local administration in favor of improved local investment to catalyze place-based transformation processes. At the same time, strengthened decentralized institutional structures, with adequate political power, can influence national development strategies by addressing the challenges and reaping the potential benefits of specific areas.



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER

Inclusive and sustainable rural and urban transformation is not the responsibility of a single actor. Obviously, the public sector alone is not in a position to realize the economic and social uplift of a nation everywhere within its territorial borders. A territorial approach recognizes the role of a multitude of actors – public & private sector and civil society, both in rural landscapes and urban areas - and the transformative power of their specific contributions. There is need for identifying and resolving conflicts of interest and empowering communities of interest to shape transformation processes within their territories.



MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

Aiming to enhance inclusive and sustainable development against the interlinked set of SDGs, a territorial approach strives for balanced development that recognizes social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions and the reciprocity of strategies and interventions within the scope of the four dimensions.



INTEGRATION AND SYNERGIES

A territorial approach has a very strong element of integration, not only between various levels but also between economic sectors, places and stakeholders. This principle of integration should be reflected in renewed development policies supported by the implementation of functional decentralized partner structures and capacities. This will allow a move towards increased policy coherence and more coordinated efforts to ensure inclusive and sustainable development allowing for a strong impact at territorial level and better synergies.



FLEXIBILITY

Societies, and natural and political conditions in partner countries are highly heterogeneous. Moreover, their potentials and challenges differ. This implies that there is no standard development solution. Likewise, a territorial approach is not connected to a specific program type. It is rather a framework to better understand, map and analyze complex systems of interdependencies and interactions as a way to inform policy makers, adapt strategies and prioritize investment in place-based sectorial interventions.

WHAT WE CAN GAIN FROM TERRITORIAL APPROACHES

Against the background of the SDG's, territorial approaches can support the identification of and synergetic use of interrelations between 'single purpose' development efforts (dedicated to the achievement of single SDG targets).

Policy makers can build on the information created by the implementation of territorial approaches in order to close information gaps, to make better-informed decisions across different sectors.

Policy makers and the private sector can use territorial information to guide and prioritize investments.

Decentralized systems can apply a territorial approach to improve the localization of national, regional or global development goals.

Territorial development requires adequate platforms for local participation that allow the negotiation and prioritization of local development measures and expected outcomes. These can be powerful bodies to drive development.

The availability of better datasets covering economic, social and environmental parameters improves planning, implementation and evaluation. It helps to define sets of relevant indicators to measure success, tackling both the sectorial ambi-

tions of policies and actual investments and interventions.

Participatory and inclusive measurement of change induced by policies also enhances stakeholder and collective empowerment. In the long term, an accumulative virtuous process of evaluation strengthens the territorial perspective. Learning from previous experiences nourishes new generations of programs, projects and policies.

Territorial approaches promote inclusive development by supporting growth in all regions instead of just focusing on those places or territories in which economic growth is already taking place.

Using participatory modelling of land use in the form of role-playing games helps to promote information sharing and negotiations between actors



HOW TO IMPLEMENT A TERRITORIAL APPROACH

Whatever the development policy, program or project, territorial approaches are instrumental in improving the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public and private interventions.

Regarding the process, the following broad steps are necessary:

- A pre-diagnosis based on a literature and policy review and on the existing data informing the territorial assets and socio-economic dynamics;
- A multi-stakeholder consultation process that challenges and improves the pre-diagnosis by identifying the major challenges, opportunities and constraints;
- Participatory studies and knowledge sharing to understand territorial dynamics, past and present, and identify and discuss scenarios for plausible futures based on territorial foresight.

Results from territorial assessments provide guidance for:

- The definition of the most relevant scale and territory for action;
- The identification of the main drivers for change, the strengths and weaknesses and the priorities for action;

- The ex-ante design of projects or programs and the definition of the support required for their implementation;
- The definition of adequate and ad hoc governance structures relating to policies, projects or programs (e.g. co-building of a platform for information sharing, feedback, collaborative monitoring);
- The implementation of territorial projects and programs;
- The monitoring, assessment, and re-design of these projects and programs.

To support the effectiveness and efficiency of territorial approaches, and to facilitate coordination and strategic planning, local and national bodies have to be strengthened, in terms of both human and financial resources.

To overcome sectorial views and tap territorial potentials, it is necessary to:

- Strengthen analytical capacities and reinvest in development strategies at local and national level;
- Reinforce territorial statistical and information systems at various scales to ensure complete and consistent data to describe, analyze and monitor territorial long-term socio-economic dynamic performances;

- Facilitate access to and understanding of data and evidence for all stakeholders.

An important success factor to make territorial approaches work is functional decentralization and multi-level frameworks of action. Promotion of decentralization is therefore integral to territorial approaches, to ensure relevant and inclusive design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions.

Adopting a territorial perspective and measuring development progress in these dimensions reinforces both strategic decision making and the identification and design of effective development interventions.

It helps to define sets of relevant indicators for success and failure, tackling both the sectorial ambitions of policies, programs and projects, and their contributions to inclusive territorial development.

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Therefore, we call for an international alliance to:

- Promote and raise awareness of territorial approaches as a means for the implementation and measurement of progress and the concrete achievement of the SDGs;
- Engage development partners (governments, academia, civil society organizations, regional organizations, private sector) to mainstream territorial approaches in their programs;
- Mobilize multi-disciplinary research to enhance the knowledge base and strengthen the theoretical and operational framework, as well as tools and methodologies to build a sound theory of change and support the paradigm shift based on proven and successful practices;
- Build the capacities of and empower national and local institutions and actors, notably women and young people, to better participate in the design of their future.



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