Attract-SEE – Assessing Territorial Attractiveness in South East Europe. Establishing a Common Territorial Monitoring Framework

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1 ABSTRACT

According to ESPON "ATTREG" project, "attractiveness is intended as the interaction of a complex set of characteristics based on the presence/absence of certain forms of Territorial Capital with the attraction of various "audiences". Effective territorial monitoring system of territorial capital assets and better coordination among different development and sectoral policies are basic conditions for achieving territorial cohesion and territorial development goals on transnational, national, regional and local level. The South-East-Europe project ATTRACT-SEE will support policy makers to achieve better coordination of territorial attractiveness policies – based upon place-specific assets – as well as their implementation and evaluation. The aim of the project is to establish a framework concept of territorial attractiveness at SEE scale as well as to develop tools useful for policy makers to enhance the quality of decisions concerning territorial cohesion and growth.

Firstly, a common territorial monitoring framework will be established, based upon a shared concept of "territorial attractiveness" as well as upon its assets. The objective is to create a model of a monitoring system suited to the needs of policy and decision makers, in view to provide outputs useful for supporting policy development and implementation. Through the establishment of a shared system of indicators, the model will then be applied to monitor territorial quality and attractiveness. Secondly, a policy coordination process will be designed, promoting, supporting and actively moderating participation and involvement of policy and decision makers from different sectors and administrative levels.

Concrete outputs such as a common territorial monitoring framework, transnational as well as trans-national/national/regional territorial quality and attractiveness reports, policy coordination process handbook, and stakeholder involvement workshops will create and/or strengthen permanent stakeholder networks in spatial and regional planning.

The paper gives an overview of the design of this research project and the implementation of a territorial monitoring system for South-East Europe. It focuses on the question on how to describe territorial attractiveness. It presents considerations and first results on the description of a concept of territorial attractiveness which will be the basis for the definition of common monitoring indicators.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Regional characterisitcs

South-East Europe is one of the most heterogenous and complex regions in Europe. Transformation processes and new boundaries have changed political, economic, social and cultural patterns and relations. The region has been undergoing a fundamental change in economic and production patterns since the 1990s. While some regions, especially the capital cities, are adapting well to the new challenges, others are trying to re-orientate themselves. Significant for the programme area are regional disparities in terms of economic power, innovation, competitiveness and accessibility between urban areas and rural areas. In the European transportation network, South East Europe is acting as a bridge between North, South, East and West Europe. The existing networks however cannot keep pace with the rise in demand and the increasingly

demanding standards specifications. A large number of instruments and concepts like the Trans-European Networks (TENs) and the Pan-European Transport Corridors cross the area, but need to be further developed. There are rivers suitable for freight transportation, maritime borders and the Danube, an important international inland waterway and integrating factor in many fields, such as transport, trade and environment. South East Europe is characterised by broad biodiversity and natural resources of high environmental value. The potential for the use of environmentally friendly technologies and the assets for future economic and social development are the strong points of the area, but inherited environmental damage has to be addressed as well (URL 1). Current challenges and driving forces for the spatial development are growing impact of globalization and structural changes after the recent economic crisis, demographic and social challenges and the (upcoming) EU-integration (EU 2011).

Figure 1: South-East-Europe according tot he SEE Transnational Cooperation Programme (Source: URL 1).

2.2 Territorial Cohesion of the European Union

Based on the Territorial Agenda 2020 of the EU one major objective of the European cohesion policy has been to strengthen economic and social cohesion. The main issues of cohesion are to (URL 2):

- Capitalise on the strengths of each territory so they can best contribute to the sustainable and balanced development of the EU as a whole;

- Manage concentration – Cities have both positive and negative impacts – intensifying innovation and productivity at the same time as pollution and social exclusion;

- Better connect territories – People should be able to live wherever they want, with access to public services, efficient transport, reliable energy networks and broadband internet throughout the territory;

- Develop cooperation – The effects of climate change and traffic congestion do not stop at traditional administrative borders, so new forms of cooperation are needed between countries and regions. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region are examples of new, macro-regional approach;

- Foster Urban-Rural linkages.

2.3 Current situation of monitoring in South-East-Europe

In practice, the implementation of the objectives of territorial cohesion is partly slowed down because of a lack of coordination between decision makers from different sectors and administrative levels. For example, there is only little awareness of how sectoral decisions can influence the region as a whole. Even though a number of good practices exist on local or regional level, harmonised methodologies and tools to analyse and monitor the spatial development and spatial trends are missing on national and transnational level. Nevertheless, monitoring can provide useful results for the establishement of evidence-based and strategic developments. A monitoring system is a tool for a comprehensive observation of the implementation of territorial and sectoral policies (ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE 2008; UNITED NATIONS 2007) and the need for a common monitoring system, transparent planning and decision making as well as stronger cooperation between regions is growing. These requirements were in the centre of discussion at several transnational workshops and conferences such as at the conference on "Potentials of territorial

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cohesion in western Balkan" organized in 2010 by the Ministry of Evironment and Planning in Slovenia. A second impulse was given one year after in Ljubljana during an event organized between the South-East-Europe Programme and the project Plan4all (URL 3) that contributed to the harmonization of spatial planning data according to INSPIRE – the European Directive for the establishment of a spatial data infrastructure in Europe (URL 4). In this context the question rises how a monitoring system can be established in South-East-Europe.

3   ATTRACT-SEE PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND STATUS OF THEIR REALIZATION

3.1 Project aims and structure

The project Attract-SEE – Assessing Territorial Attractiveness in South East Europe deals with the above question. The aim of the project is to develop a transnational monitoring system that supports the establishement of policy coordination framework in concerned regions and to develop tools for policy and decision makers enhancing the quality of their development decisions. It is funded under the European South-East-Europe Programme between October 2012 and September 2014. The consortium has ten project partners. These are Geodetic Institute of Slovenia (lead partner), CEIT Alanova (Austria), Office for National Economic Planning (ONEP) (Hungary), Emilia-Romagna Region (RER) (Italy), Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning (MzIP) (Slovenia), The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) (Slovenia), Republic Agency for Spatial Planning (RAPP) (Serbia), Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe (NALAS) (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Institute of spatial planning of the Koprivnica-Križevci County (ZAVOD) (Croatia) and Federal Ministry of Physical Planning (FMPU) (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Further one associated, strategic partners from the EU, and several observers are involved in the project.

Project Attract-SEE is designed out of two parallel in several worksteps interlinked activities. First tier of activities is set out to develop a common territorial monitoring framework (TMF) applicable in partner countries and regions. Second tier of actions is developing and facilitating a policy coordination process promoting interaction among territorial monitoring and policy making. Stakeholders involved into a policy coordination process – mainly through project`s workshops – will participate in designing TMF providing their needs for information, their expectations as the manner in which territorial information could be presented in the most suitable way.

The project consists of six work packages (WP), covering the transnational project and financial management (WP1), communication activities (WP2), common territorial monitoring framework (WP3), attractiveness of SEE territories (WP4), development of common territorial monitoring reports (WP5), and policy coordination (WP6). WPs are divided into several activities which are being implemented in parallel. The project started 1st October 2012. According to the timeline of the project (first period of five is finished), most of the activities have been started and some of them have already been finished. Activities in WP2 started with the common project visual identity. The project website (http://www.attract-see.eu/) and some promotion material were prepared, too. The Project Communication Strategy is in preparation. Creation of the common territorial monitoring framework (WP3) has started with an overview of the EU territorial monitoring best practices. ESPON (URL 5) Programme and EUROSTAT (URL 6) solutions (e.g. NUTS classification), INSPIRE Directive (eg. data harmonization and interoperability models) will be applied. The Inquiery on Territorial Monitoring Systems was delivered to all the project partners and results were analysed to get the common denominator of needs, expectations, and feasibility of the project implementation. Common set of attractiveness indicators for SEE region is being prepared. The final version of the Report on Territorial Attractiveness (WP4) was prepared and is presented in the text below. Development of the common territorial monitoring (WP5) started with collecting information on spatial datasets. Data overviews for each country/region involved were prepared. Their analysis got answers concerning available spatial datasets in SEE region. Dataset sources, dataset regulations, accessibility of datasets, and dataset maintenance periods were explored. Policy Coordination Process Handbook (WP6) is in preparation and will serve as a common methodological support for all the project partners.

Based on the analyses of existing monitoring systems in partner countries as other good practices TMF will be developed in the project, supporting observation of existing territorial development and territorial trends.

TMF will define overall process of territorial monitoring including data gathering and analysis, indicator preparation and calculations and territorial report preparation.

A transnational attractiveness synthesis report will be developed as the project output. Territorial reports provide information and knowledge on territorial structures, potentials and trends. The report will be based on the quantitative results from the analyses of established harmonised indicator system on the territorial level of the partner countries and regions. Where applicable and available, data for other SEE countries will be used and presented. Project aims to inform policy and decision makers and draw their attention about wider territorial picture and encourage them to take it into account when developing and implementing various sectoral policies. The report will be presented to stakeholders at the transnational level at the transnational stakeholder involvement workshop, which will be organised alongside the final project conference.

In different pilot areas more detailed separate territorial reports will be prepared on the basis of available indicators and on the basis of existing national/regional analysis in the field of territorial attractiveness and quality. In order to ensure comparability of reports on transnational level, common methodology for territorial attractiveness report will be used. This methodology will define draft content and form of the report. The policy coordination process is very important result of the project and is described in next chapter.

3.2 Project stakeholder involvement

The policy coordination process is expected to result in a more long term coordination network. To support the activities a Policy coordination handbook will be prepared at early project implementation stage and aims to guide territorial development experts in establishing stakeholder networks, and in coordinating the process in their pilot areas with engageing stakeholders. This document will define the strategy for involving stakeholders: the aproach, the principles and guidelines for implementation. It will also present the benefits, the drivers and the barriers for effective involvement.

Equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills, and following the methodology defined in the policy coordination process handbook, the relevant project partners will develop the stakeholder involvement plans in each project region/country. In fact these documents will be the action plans for implementation of stakeholder involvement in practice. Stakeholder involvement will be implemented at national workshops. Each partner should organize four national workshops where objectives and results will be discussed and verified. Such a concept of stakeholder involvement will enable regular verification of intermediate results and will strenghten the stakeholder networks.

4 DEFINING TERRITORIAL ATTRACTIVENESS

4.1 Concept and operational implications

"Attractiveness": what are we talking about? Although more and more frequent in development plans, programmes and other policy documents, not always the appeal of the word goes together with a clear meaning. Attract-SEE assumed as a starting point the previous ESPON ATTREG Project (URL 7), that after considering several European case studies, provided a framework definition of attractiveness "as the interaction of a complex set of characteristics based on the presence/absence of certain forms of Territorial Capital with the attraction of various "audiences" varying in their level of transience in place from long-term residents as working population to short-term visitors and some hybrids mobilities between the two". In this sense, attractivess becomes "a place-specific asset that guarantees some kind of socio economic stability", referred to the different dimensions of Territorial Capital (Environmental; Economic and Human; Anthropic; Socio-Cultural and Institutional Capitals).

According to Attract-SEE partners, this perspective attributes to the concept of attractiveness a clear "territorial" dimension. In concrete terms, territorial attractiveness grounds on a mobility concept and implies the capacity of a place to attract and retain subjects from other places, due to its advantageous features. We can consider that building an "attractive region" needs to focus two complementary dimensions:

- the home internal side, made of quality settlements and ecosystems, able to regenerate social cohesion, reproduce knowledge, create decent jobs and make good value of entrepreneurship: it is key for retaining citizens, skilled workforce, enterprises, etc. already living in the "place";

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- the external side, made of international acknowledgement of these territorial qualities, linked to the capacity to attract and hold talents and investments, to attract visitors/tourists for different purposes (culture, nature, business, etc.) and ensure their "loyalty" as availability to return to the "place".

This approach allows to operationalize the concept within EU cohesion policy and to make it assessable at SEE scale, considering both the trans-national perspective and the internal one, at country/region scale.

4.2 Methodology

The methodological approach to reach this objective included three steps, developed complementarily and through three operative tools adopted and provided to project partners (PPs) and to stakeholders.

Step 1 focused on the assessment of the concept of "Territorial Attractiveness" adopted by PPs country/region, making specific reference to official Spatial Policy Documents (strategic and/or operational Plans and Programmes). For the purpose it has been developed a "Tool of Inquiry" addressing on one hand the territorial monitoring systems in use in partners' countries/regions and the identification of specific best practices and on the other focusing on the concept of attractiveness adopted, the supporting assets and the specific indicators utilised. The questionnaire was provided by e-mail.

Step 2 was aimed at assessing the answers provided by partners on the concept of Territorial Attractiveness according to their relevant strategic and/or operational Plans and/or Programmes as well as at identifying the assets considered as strategic. The results were subsequently re-elaborated and returned to project partners and to project international stakeholders during the Ljubljana conference and partner meeting (December 13-14, 2012). During these events partners were provided with a first outlook of the concepts of Territorial Attractiveness in use in each context while a first characterization of the concept was attempted, specifying in particular the features that explain the actual meaning of Territorial Attractiveness („attracting whom, where, how?"). Secondarily, a preliminary classification of the Territorial Capital assets to be considered was presented. The potential relationships between local visions/policies adopted by partners and the main EU strategic documents for development were also explored (i.e. EU 2020 and the Territorial Agenda 2020).

Step 3: international stakeholders and partners were asked to express their opinion on the relevance of the Territorial Capital assets identified for Territorial Attractiveness assessment, to obtain a revised picture of the concept and a framework of the assets to be considered, adjusted to the perspectives of each partners. This was done using two types of questionnaire aimed at evaluating the relevance of any asset, including the possibility to suggest the introduction of new assets considered relevant. In particular, international stakeholders questionnaire (directly distributed during Ljubljana Conference) were asked to provide a "qualitative" assessment of the assets identified (in terms of relevance/non relevance) while partners questionnaire (sent by e-mail) provided a "quantitative" assessment (assets ranked from 1 to 5, according to a growing relevance) as well as a double level of assessment, to be held at national and transnational level.

After a wide debate, the assets indicated by partners were grouped into macro-themes and put in relation with specific target groups ("audiences"), in view to give evidence to their different level of interest in each assets and – in some cases – to the real trade-offs (see tab. 4.1 in the next paragraph). Attract-SEE partners are presently facing the job to identify proper indicators for attractiveness assets, to be considered at transnational and national scale, in view to produce, in the forthcoming months, specific reports that will pave the way for the establishment of a Common Territorial Monitoring Framework.

4.3 Results of the work process

First of all, Attract-SEE partners agreed on some specific features of the concept:

(1) Quality of places gains high importance: cohesion/inclusiveness, culture, public services, effective governance are key for attracting and retaining a specific "audience". E.g. in the case of cities seen as "engines of regional development", attractiveness depends not only on the sum of its structures and infrastructures but also on its capacity of attracting and retaining people.

(2) Territorial scales and diversity of places are the key to assess attractiveness: it is on diversity that depends the generation of flows from one place to another and the effectiveness of different strategies – such as specialization or balance of mixed factors – depends on the context and dimension of the area considered.

(3) Drivers for "attractiveness" are different: Territorial Capital assets should thus be considered in relation to "who is attracted by what". E.g.:

- environmental capital, including good climate and a high quality landscape, attracting "silver migrants";

- economic/knowledge capital – concentrated in core European cities – attracts both investments and talents;

- social inclusion capacity as well as good governance arrangements reinforce flows of migrants, both new citizens and enterprises, facilitating the birth of new initiatives by "contamination" of ideas and resources,.

(4) "Plurality" of needs/expectations grounds the demand for diversified policies targeted to different actors that, while commonly looking for "quality of places", do not always share the same concept of what quality actually is, e.g.: natural and/or cultural tourism development policies may strongly conflict with heavy infrastructure policies (e.g. industrial/logistic poles), if pursued on the same territory. This calls for "good governance" of spatial development processes, also ensuring the management of objectives trade-offs.

(5) (Un)stability of factors of attractiveness: positioning of the territories should rely on stable features that allow a long term strategy but, while some drivers for attractiveness may prove to be volatile (e.g: big events) if not included in a wider vision, also the same understanding of territorial attractiveness may change. E.g.:

- many territories become very "fragile" after 2008 crisis, with social capital supporting innovation capacity of a local system (e.g. an industrial district) breaking down;

- knowledge capital may be attracted elsewhere as well as financial capital, according to more favourable conditions;

- climate change can determine strong changes in territorial quality and make e.g. a territory less attractive for tourists/visitors; financial crisis can make the management of cultural/natural resources less reliable discouraging both fruition and the implementation of proactive environmental prevention policies.

Targets / TC asset		Companies/ Investments	Tourists	Residents	Migrants
Environmental capital					
Environmental quality	Environmental quality (air, water, waste, greenhouse gases, etc.)		x	x	x
Territorial/ecosystem integrity	Territorial/ecosystem fragmentation		x	x	
	Biodiversity		x	x	
	Risk management	x		x	
Natural resources and energy	Natural resources management (renewable/non renewable)			x	
	Energy management (fossil fuels / renewable resources)	x		x	
Anthropic capital					
Urban quality	Access to public services	x		x	x
	Towns/settlements revitalisation/networking			x	x
	Urban health/liveability /env. services			x	x
Landscape quality	Visual attractiveness		x	x	
	Landscape diversity		x	x	
	Balanced urban-rural relations			x	
Infrastructures	Local/global accessibility	x	x	x	x
	Basic infrastructures for daily life (to be detailed:)	x	x	x	x
Socio-cultural capital					
Culture	Cultural heritage		x	x	
	Multiple cultural services		x	x	x
Quality of life	Welfare/Cost of living	x	x	x	x
	Social equity/poverty reduction			x	
	Multicultural integration			x	x
	Sense of belonging/citizenship			x	
	Gender mainstreaming			x	
Economic/human capital					
Knowledge & Innovation	Research	x			x
	Education/capacity building	x		x	x
	Attracting/holding competences	x			x
Employment	Employment	x		x	x
Specializations / Key	Diversified economic activities/services	x			

sectors					
Tourism	Attractiveness of tourism system	x	x		
Investment Promotion	Foreign investments attraction	x			x
	Quality business locations/services	x			
	Partnerships relations	x			x
Population	Population growth, % pop in age 15-64 years			x	x
Institutional capital					
Governance	Effective governance arrangements	x		x	
International relations	Cross-border cooperation	x			x
	Internationalization	x			x

Table 1: Matching assets with different group of targets.

To conclude, "Territorial Attractiveness" is not an absolute concept: "attractiveness" of a territory can change according to the targets and the assets of the Territorial Capital considered and positioning a territory in its external context implies a matching between specific assets and targets to attract. These two orientations have to be related to the different goals/visions of the overall territorial development strategy.

5 MONITORING FOR SPATIAL DECISIONS

5.1 Building territorial monitoring tool

Public policies and other sectoral/strategic decision-makers need monitoring tools to continually and easily follow-up and understand effects and trends within local, regional, national and/or transnational levels produced by their actions and plans, which are aimed at sustainable and balanced territorial development.

From spatio-temporal perspective, these monitoring tools should provide platform for collection and storing various types of data and information on different territorial development conditions, statuses and events through time periods; from public policy process perspective, monitoring tools should support territorial development knowledge creation, using analysis, comparison, interpretation and presentation methods, needed for informed and timely decision-making. Due to described territorial development character and needs of policy creation and management process, territorial monitoring tools are usually supported by GIS technology advantages, which are in some cases further enhanced by particular expert or decision-making systems (based on multicriteria analysis or system dynamics approach).

Therefore, following the EU's Territorial Agenda 2020 aimed at territorial development cohesion by appropriate policies development and implementation throughout member and candidate/neighbouring states/regions, Project would propose territorial monitoring tool that should support territorial attractiveness policies and decision-making processes coordination within the South East Europe region.

5.2 Design and implementation of the monitoring framework

In building monitoring tool for attractiveness policy development/implementation and coordination within the project area, both social and technical dimensions of common information platform would be considered and designed to involve each project partner country's specifics, on one side, and to provide basis both for local as well as SEE-wide attractiveness development decision-making process, on the other.

Starting from the current territorial development practices of project partners as well as SEE Programme objectives and EU initiatives falling within the technical and social domains of the project scope, common territorial monitoring framework (CTMF) would be built. Its outlines would be positioned among the relevant European initiatives and programmes results and recommendations, like ESPON, INSPIRE/Plan4all and other relevant approaches (OECD, UN).

On the technical side of common territorial monitoring tool for attractiveness assessment, project partners would develop as outputs:

(1) Common methodology for territorial attractiveness indicators identification based on OECD and UN approache's principles "pressure, state, response" for those events or processes identified as relevant for attractiveness development within each project partner's territory and SEE in general. Also, policy interrelation matrix would be developed for policy effects evaluation and strategic decision-making against identified attractiveness trageting values and groups; and

(2) Common data and metadata model for territorial attractiveness indicators definition based on INSPIRE/Plan4all recommendations and data specifications, and adjusted to project partners' existing

experience as well as specific needs. Additionally, interpretations of attractiveness indicators' values would be done against relevant ESPON projects' results. On the social side of territorial attractiveness monitoring tool for SEE, national stakeholders communities consisting of policy and other sectoral/strategic decision-makers would be involved in the project acitivities at the four workshops during the project duration. The main objectives of those workshops are to present project aim, activities and results to stakeholder communities, but also to build capacity in domain of territorial monitoring results understanding and utilization, building thus ownership over the project outcome and its results' sustainability.

Finally, based on gap analysis of existing territorial monitoring experience in each project partner against developed CTMF, sustainability of the project results would be additionally secure by action plans where each partner would identify steps needed for achieving territorial monitoring goals.

6 OUTLOOK

The results of Attract-SEE should be used by politicians and decision makers to improve cooperation and networks between European countries, to support territorial cohesion and development in South-East-Europe. Next steps of Attract-SEE are the finalisation of the design of the common monitoring framework, the final definition of monitoring indicators based on a defined methodology, and the development of the common data model. The main aspects of all project phases are a policy coordination process as well as the involvement of stakeholders.

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