



## Helpdesk Research Report

# Place-based approaches to aid investment and development impact

William Avis

15.06.2019

### Question

Is there evidence that a place-based approach to aid investment can deliver effective and coherent development impact?

- What are both the conditions and barriers for success for a subnational place-based strategy and development programme?
- Is there recent evidence of successful development impact in regions or subnational administrations, which is place-based/area-based (gathered within the last 5 years)?
- How can sector programs achieve stronger coherence at subnational levels (e.g. infrastructure, law and justice, health, education etc.); How should such synergies be best promoted through programme design and management?
- Are there practical examples of place-based programming which could help inform the development of an effective approach in support of decentralisation in PNG?

### Contents

1. Overview
2. Area or place-based approaches to aid investment
3. Conditions and barriers for success of a place-based approach
4. Case studies
5. References

# 1. Overview

This rapid literature review surveys the available academic and grey literature on place or area-based approaches to aid investment and its role in the delivery of effective and coherent development impact<sup>1</sup>. Place- or area-based approaches to aid investment and development refer to a broad array of interventions under which a place or area is identified as the main entry point, instead of a sector or target group. The approach advocates 'joined up' government and development 'in the round' at the local level. Advocacy for place- or area-based approaches is driven by a belief that traditional approaches and programmes have been unable to adequately respond to complex conflict and development situations.

Area- or place-based approaches have at their core a notion that space matters and shapes the potential for development not only of territories, but, through externalities, of the individuals who live in them. There is no one model or definition of area- or place-based development, neither is there a fixed set of principles and tools. Proponents assert that once the area and its development situation are analysed, the right set of tools and methodologies can be identified to address the specific problems of the area.

Area- or place-based approaches have been heralded as particularly useful for addressing a host of challenges associated with complex conflict or development issues in a specific geographic area. Potential strengths of the approach include:

- **Develops an integrated approach** allowing for holistic solutions and encouraging horizontal linkages and cross-sectoral responses.
- **Provides a platform for partnership and coordination** with high potential for better coordination.
- **Promotes regional cooperation** and therefore utilises economies of scale.
- **Encourages understanding of local context** and takes into account specificity of the local situation.
- **Involves local communities** empowering them, building human capital and ensuring that local people are agents of change.
- **Enhances local democracy**, promoting integration, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.
- **Supports local governance** promoting subsidiarity and decentralisation.
- **Encourages manageability and flexibility.**
- **Improves monitoring and cost-efficiency.**

Despite the potential dividends of an area- or place-based approach, a number of issues have been identified that must be factored into programme design and implementation. These include:

**Geographic and economic realities:** there are areas that, because of fundamental geographic and economic reasons, are unlikely ever to become prosperous.

**Inability to respond to fundamental structural problems:** even in the case of a good understanding of broader context, area- or place-based approaches often have no or limited influence on structural issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> This report expands on Fraser (2011) who explored the impact of area based programming.

**Challenges in prioritising very poor areas in developing countries:** budget constraints limit the scope for public investment in social and economic infrastructure in poorer, more isolated and economically less significant areas.

**Constraints faced in contexts that lack broader structural policy and institutional reforms:** this is often the case in less developed countries.

**Funding constraints:** this limits the scope of what can be achieved in terms of effectively supporting regional socio-economic development.

**Challenges associated with multi-stakeholder collaborations:** even with clearly defined roles it often takes time to build synergies across programmes.

**Dependency concerns:** this is a particular concern in developing countries where dependency on external support is built with donors and implementing agencies often lacking a well-planned exit strategy.

**Challenges in linking area- or place-based approaches with national development policies:** there exists a need to align and establish synergies between place-based initiatives and national policies and strategies.

Reflecting on experiences of implementing area- or place-based approaches, a number of broad recommendations have been made for how such policies can be implemented to leverage some of the strengths outlined above and mitigate some of the challenges. These have been delineated as follows:

1. **The area delineation process needs careful consideration** in order to cover similar sub-regions in terms of development situation without reaching a size where a participation would be impossible;
2. **The bottom-up process and its momentum** – guidance should be offered to people involved in this process so that they understand the nature of their roles and how they are inter-related.;
3. **The top-down accompanying framework of the participatory process.** Information flows should be improved and one way to do so is to put further support and coordination efforts into the relationship with regional and national authorities;
4. **The institutional and legal framework.** It is essential not only to reinforce but adapt the institutional and legal framework in order to ensure sustainability of a cross-border approaches.

## 2. Area- or place-based approaches to aid investment

In recent years there has been a growing interest in place- or area-based development projects as a means of responding to identified ‘special problem areas’ and ameliorating the geographic concentration of social and economic disadvantage (Harfst, 2006; Marczis, 2013; Vrbensky, 2008). Place- or area-based approaches to aid investment and development refer to a broad array of interventions under which a place or area is identified as the main entry point, instead of a sector or target group (Cameron et al, 2004: 311).

### Background

Advocates for place- or area-based approaches highlight that traditional development approaches and programmes have been unable to adequately respond to complex conflict and development situations. This, according to Vrbensky (2008), has led to a shift to a more holistic and sustainable response to complex emergencies and development challenges.

The approach to addressing development and conflict situations through targeted geographical action has a range of antecedents, but area- or place-based programming as commonly understood today is closely associated with debates regarding the European Cohesion (regional) policy that took place between Sapir (2004), who advocated the concept of ‘spatially blind’ policy, and Barca et al., (2012) who advocated a place based approach.

Sapir (2004) presented a review of the 2000-2010 Lisbon (growth and jobs) strategy, arguing that the best way to tackle regional disparities in economic performance was to use ‘horizontal’ policies, (which treat all localities the same), in conjunction with free market forces and labour mobility. This would hasten the movement of people out of declining areas with a labour market surplus, towards more competitive cities where there was a greater demand for them.

In contrast, Barca et al., (2012), whose report laid the foundations for the Europe 2020 strategy, advocated a differentiated policy, in which each place received assistance tailored to allow it to overcome its disadvantages and develop to the full potential of its specific territorial capital. Such interventions are intended to break vicious circles of decline, and to encourage positive cycles of cumulative causation. Central to Barca et al., (2012) concept of place-based policy was the identification of opportunities to realise the potential of local assets and actors, and to kick-start virtuous circles of development which are firmly embedded in their locality.

The concept of area- or place-based development also emerged from the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDPs) ‘Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America’ (PRODERE) initiated in 1989 in six Central American Countries, four of which had just emerged from civil war (Harfst, 2006; Vrbensky; 2008). UNDP post-conflict programmes were subsequently launched in Afghanistan and Sudan. A common theme across these programmes was the targeting of the sub-national level. Collectively, the UNDP programmes marked a concerted effort to develop a distinct integrated area-based development approach (Vrbensky; 2008).

- In Afghanistan, programmes supported the local population in taking responsibility for infrastructure and the rehabilitation of agricultural activities.
- In Sudan, programmes facilitated the stabilisation of the population suffering from drought and displacement outside the conflict area.
- In Central America, programmes facilitated transition from conflict to development through local initiatives and reconciliation consistent with regional peace plans.

In the application of place or are based approaches in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the complexity of challenges was seen to require a comprehensive and integrated, multi-sector, -level and -agency response coupled with flexibility to adequately respond to changing conditions (Harfst, 2006). Since the inception of these programmes, area- or place-based development has been at the core of EU and UNDP strategies for regional integration, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction and welcomed as an instrument for fostering stability, strengthening communities and building local and national capacity. The approach has subsequently been deployed in areas affected by natural disasters or experiencing poverty and exclusion.

## **Rationale and definitions**

Area- or place-based approaches have at their core a notion that space matters and shapes the potential for development not only of territories, but, through externalities, of the individuals who live in them (Barca

et al., 2012). Such a position asserts that development strategies should not be space-neutral, but place- or area-based and highly contingent on context. The application of such approaches is considered particularly appropriate in contexts where economies are experiencing major transitions toward new equilibria in which the short-run and medium-term transitions processes may heavily influence the long-run outcomes (Thissen and Van Oort, 2010). Place- or area-based approaches are seen to have two fundamental aspects (Barca et al., 2012: 139):

- The place- or area-based approach assumes that geographical context matters, i.e. its social, cultural, and institutional characteristics. Space-neutral sectoral approaches are regarded as inappropriate and seen to have explicit spatial effects which undermine the aims of the policy itself unless its spatial effects are explicitly taken into consideration.
- The place- or area-based approach focuses on the issue of knowledge in policy intervention. Underdevelopment is seen to trap, limit and inhibit the growth potential of regions or to perpetuate social exclusion. Underdevelopment is viewed as a failure of local elites to act and can only be tackled by new knowledge and ideas: the purpose of policy is to promote them through the interaction of local groups and the external elites involved in the policy.

The area- or place-based approach's territorial focus derives from the understanding that the space or area in which people live should be the central point for improvement, i.e. the selected area corresponds to the geographical zone where a definite development challenge is faced. It could thus refer to a region or even municipality (or neighbourhood) in any given country, or to a cross-border zone including a variety of towns and individuals from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds; provided they are afflicted by a common problem or set of problems (Santini, 2012: 19-20).

Given the broad nature of contexts (Central America, Europe, Sudan and Afghanistan, etc.) and organisations (UNDP, UNOPTS, EU) there is no one model or definition of area- or place-based development, neither is there a fixed set of principles and tools. Rather, it refers to an array of approaches under which an area is the main entry point, instead of a sector or a target group (Marczis, 2013). Proponents assert that once the area and its development situation are analysed, the right set of tools and methodologies can be identified to address the specific problems of the area (Harfst, 2006). Often, these tools and methodologies will have been tried and tested in other programmes in the country or elsewhere. It is their simultaneous application in an integrated manner that is characteristic of an area- or place-based programme (Harfst, 2006).

UNDP/RBEC (2003: 2) and Harfst (2006: 9) posit that area-based development (ABD) can be defined as:

*Targeting specific geographical areas in a country, characterised by a particular complex development problem, through an integrated, inclusive, participatory and flexible approach.*

Drawing on lessons learned from programmes implemented in post-conflict contexts, UNDP develops the concept and defines area-based development as (UNDP, 2007: 13):

*An approach designed to help countries address the needs of populations affected by the crisis, primarily returning refugees, displaced people and demobilized combatants, by enabling or reinforcing communities' capacities. The approach reconciles long and short-term objectives: responding to immediate needs, alleviating crisis-induced economic devastation and promoting social reconciliation at the local level in a context of respect of human rights. The territorial focus of ABD approach was derived from the understanding that the space, in which people live, should be the primary focus of recovery.*

Contemporary articulations of the area- or place-based concept have been mobilised by the Australian Department for Aid and Trade (DFAT). They define place-based investment as follows:

*identifying either a subnational administration (province or district) or subnational geographic region (e.g. an economic corridor) as the main entry point for intervention, rather than a sector or target group to deliver a comprehensive, integrated, cross-sectoral programs in a specific subnational area.*

The main objectives of area- or place-based development have been defined as (Vrbensky, 2008: 5)

- i) helping to harmonise an immediate recovery response and a long-term development process;
- ii) addressing root causes of conflict, disaster or special developmental situations;
- iii) facilitating the establishment of foundations for political, legal, economic, social and administrative reforms that should prevent or mitigate the impact of future crises and contribute to sustainable development.

The approach also differentiates between what needs to be done and how it should be done, placing particular importance on the second aspect (Harfst, 2006). In this approach, area and problem are clearly linked, i.e. the problem to be addressed by the intervention should define the geographical area of the intervention (Harfst, 2006; Marcziš, 2013).

New area-based initiatives seek to address a diverse range of issues: neighbourhood renewal and urban economic development, human rights, reintegration of returnees, participatory development planning, restoring basic services and reactivating the local economy using a decentralised, integrated and bottom-up approach (Cameron et al, 2004: 311; Harfst, 2006).

## **Application criteria and features of place- or area-based approaches**

The following qualifications and features further enhance the definitions presented above and clarify when an area- or place-based approach may be appropriate:

- The problem has to be area-specific. The area of intervention is typically smaller than the country itself. According to Harfst (2006), the application of the area- or place based approach is only appropriate if the problem can be realistically and effectively addressed at the level of the area.
- The problems to be addressed through area or place based approaches fall into four main categories:
  - Conflict-related (i.e. related to pre- or post-conflict situations affecting a specific area of a country that require preventive development actions, post-war reconstruction, peace-building and reconciliation, reintegration of returning refugees, internally displaced persons, former combatants, etc.).
  - Disaster-related (i.e. natural and/or manmade that affect a specific area of a country, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, drought, land erosion, nuclear disasters, etc.).
  - Poverty-related (i.e. related to 'spatial poverty traps' that have emerged as a result of geographical isolation, climate, terrain, demography, economic restructuring, etc.).
  - Exclusion-related (i.e. related to groups/categories of people concentrated in a specific part of a country, such as regional ethnic minorities, that feel or are marginalised and excluded from participating in society).

- The approach is integrated in its nature, meaning that it addresses the area-specific problems in a holistic manner taking into account, but also utilising, the complex interplay between sectors, factors and actors in a given area. This also means that even if the problem is sector-specific, addressing it through an area- or place-based approach requires a multi-sector approach.
- It is inclusive targeting communities rather than specific target groups within those communities. As a result, by targeting entire communities it is also non-discriminatory.
- The approach is participatory recognising that the solution and the process leading to it, requires not only formal inclusion, but also the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in the area.
- In promoting inclusion and participation, the successful approach therefore applies a bottom-up approach.
- Finally, this approach must be flexible and highly responsive to situational changes in the problem area keeping the intervention constantly relevant. Although traditionally applied mainly in conflict settings, in recent years the application of the approach has considerably broadened.

Given the complexity of many developmental situations, area- or place-based programmes typically intervene in multiple sectors and at multiple levels, involving multiple segments of society in an integrated manner (Vrbensky, 2008). The term 'integrated' highlights the need for joined up interventions that cross sectors and institutions. The meaning of 'integrated development' has also changed over time to become more inclusive and multidimensional.

## Potential benefits of place- or area-based approaches

The promise of place- or area-based development projects is that they offer the space to initiate innovative approaches that promote integration and sustainability, and link planning closely to implementation. The local scale of projects allows for a development process based on an understanding of local needs, conditions, dynamics and potentials, and that includes local residents and stakeholders in a collaborative planning process. The approach has the potential to formulate projects based on an understanding of the way economic, social, bio-physical and spatial aspects of development problems are inter-related, and thus to formulate projects that move beyond a sectoral approach. Even where single issues are considered, cross-cutting concerns such as poverty, gender, sustainability and economic development can be incorporated.

The strengths, benefits and conditions for success of area- or place-based development have been articulated in a number of contexts and by a range of authors. Vrbensky (2008), in a survey among area or place based practitioners from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ukraine identified the strengths of the approach as follows:

- **Develops an integrated approach** allowing for holistic solutions and encouraging horizontal linkages and cross-sectoral responses even if problems are sector-specific. This is because development and conflict prevention requires addressing a number of issues holistically to become sustainable.
- **Provides a platform for partnership and coordination** with high potential for better coordination in a broader programme instead of a limited project approach, promoting cross-sectoral partnerships and division of labour.

- **Promotes regional cooperation** and therefore utilises economies of scale, facilitates inter-municipal cooperation and trust building, establishes regional institutions and investment in regional infrastructure.
- **Encourages understanding of local context** and takes into account specificity of the local situation allowing for a high level of insight and closeness to issues and beneficiaries.
- **Involves local communities** thereby empowering them, building human capital and ensuring that local people are agents of change.
- **Enhances local democracy** promoting integration, inclusiveness and non-discrimination through the involvement of the entire community rather than specific groups, promotion of participation and transparency, avoiding stigmatisation and perceptions of social inequality.
- **Supports local governance** promoting subsidiarity and decentralisation, capacitating local administrations, supporting institutional development and organisational reform leading to increased effectiveness.
- **Encourages manageability and flexibility**, focusing on manageable size allows for integrated, comprehensive approaches that keep programmes relevant in changing contexts.
- **Improves monitoring and cost-efficiency**, better monitoring of results and reflection of lessons learned improves cost-efficiency through the adoption of a coherent approach avoiding duplications and addressing real needs.

### 3. Conditions and barriers for success of a place-based approach

As noted, area- or place-based development targets specific geographic areas in a country, characterised by a particular complex development setting. This complexity highlights both the conditions and barriers for success. The approach suggests that the socio-economic needs and the unrealised environmental, social and economic resources are ‘all in one place’. This implies an extensive analysis phase to identify contextual factors (social, economic and political) – such an analysis is necessary to develop an integrated, innovative and flexible process that covers a range of issues – e.g. for empowering disadvantaged communities, creating jobs, pursuing environmental sustainability, seeking gender equality, promoting youth, confronting prejudice, etc. A common feature of the case studies below is the implementation of a significant research phase.

Complexities, and indeed barriers to success, lie in the variety of local needs, the multiplicity of people and organisations, the complex pattern of public bodies and the fact that territorial development is both top-down and bottom-up in character, calling upon the resources of government and the territory as well as the energy of the local people (Marczis et al, 2013: 4). The flexibility of the above approach is seen to address some of the complexities faced by those involved in development. This approach asserts that development starts with re-building trust and rediscovering local resources. The key challenge is to help communities living in the given territory establish ownership of the development process and establish their willingness to act i.e. to mobilise community resource and localise development. Marczis et al., (2013) caveats that real progress takes place only when the local community is actively involved in development: investing in development not simply by providing funds but by expanding marginalised disadvantaged people’s knowledge, skills and organisation (Marczis et a’, 2013: 7). In what follows, I draw on the literature to highlight those factors that determine regional disparities and thus make area-based interventions particularly challenging as well as how these feed into both barriers and conditions for success.

## Factors determining regional disparities

According to Harfst (2006), a number of factors are seen to influence regional disparities. It is important to thoroughly analyse these, as they will often play a formative role in the success or failure of place- or area-based strategies and development programmes.

**Location, Climate, Demographics:** Remote areas, removed from centres of politics, education and commerce, are often more disadvantaged than others. Low population density and lack of urban centres can create further disadvantages. Often, a combination of these factors can result in a pattern of constant out-migration that diminishes the prospects of such regions.

**Poverty Traps:** Regional differences can occur due to manmade factors. When a part of the country is economically vibrant, other areas may fall behind. Rural-urban migration is a common feature of regional differences. Land erosion, the collapse of a monoculture or industrial restructuring may also impact regions.

**Natural and Manmade Disasters:** Natural and manmade disasters can influence regional development patterns. Natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes, droughts and tsunamis) tend to have relatively short-term effects, with areas able to recover. Manmade disasters tend to be more difficult to overcome. Land erosion is often irreversible and wars create temporary upheavals that can be highly destructive, but from which an area can recover. Nevertheless, an influx of refugees or displacement can be disruptive.

**Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and Cultural Barriers:** Areas can be disadvantaged because of the prevalence of particular ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural groups that find themselves marginalised or excluded. In many instances, minorities live in areas that are already relatively remote. In other cases, the population of a country may have divided themselves on ethnic, linguistic and/or religious lines. In those cases, issues of advantage get overshadowed by ethnic, linguistic and religious issues and become difficult to resolve.

**Urban Dimensions:** On a different scale, the urban landscape is rarely uniform. Differences between rich and poor tend to be much greater in cities than in rural areas and can be extreme. Due to its very dynamics, large cities evolve constantly and social mobility, even though sometimes thwarted by racial or class issues, is much higher than in rural areas. Yet, while individuals may be socially mobile, neighbourhood patterns take much longer to change.

## Conditions for success of area- or place-based initiatives

Broadly, conditions for success include co-ordinated and mutually reinforcing actions, a common definition and understanding of the development problem, and an agreed overarching development strategy (Cameron et al., 2004: 311-312). While special agencies are frequently involved in integrated area development projects, a variety of institutional forms have been adopted, ranging from special agencies to partnerships and looser initiatives (Cameron et al., 2004), and several agencies and departments may be involved.

The literature notes that policies cannot be directly replicated from one place to another and that these must be adapted to the cultural, socio-economic and political context. Moreover, it is expected that the population is enabled to take part in the solution finding process along with their own resources and capacities. In this respect, a policy-relevant (crucial) issue that has emerged as a result of the diffusion of growth theories is that policy may impact economic growth in the long term, in particular policies including openness and innovation. Implications include the idea that, contrary to common belief, 'developing'

countries, regions, and local economies are not only the poorest, but also the richest, since they are also obliged to follow a continued and genuinely peculiar development trend (including adequate ad hoc policies) to keep welfare (Howitt, 2007). Overall, in terms of policy-making this means that the stimulation/accumulation of these elements at the local level could positively contribute to regional economic integration and convergence of per capita income (Santini, 2012: 22).

In order to deliver on the potential of area-based development outlined above, a number of conditions of success have been identified. These include the following elements (Fraser, 2011; Harfst, 2006; Vrbensky, 2008; Marczis et al., 2013):

**Intervention areas should correspond with existing administrative areas to ensure long-term sustainability and involvement of authorities.** Place- or area-based approaches have been applied at various geographical scales, from individual villages or neighbourhoods in cities to one or more districts, municipalities, regions, provinces, or even a large part of a country (i.e. the North-East). The area may also cross borders if several neighbouring countries find themselves in a similar security or development situation.

The question of what constitutes a reasonable geographic area depends largely on the development situation and the area affected by that situation, be it conflict, disaster, poverty or exclusion-related. As Harfst (2006: 9) has suggested, “applying an ABD approach is only appropriate if the problem as defined can be realistically and effectively addressed at the level of the area. Problems that can be solved at the national level, for example through legislation, should be addressed at that level”.

Although there is no clear-cut geographical limit to how broad an area should be, the question of size vs. manageability is an important one: “the larger the area, the higher the managerial costs and efforts, i.e. the more time needed to travel and access all municipalities and the higher the number of municipality representatives, the harder it becomes to gather people, engage them in active participation, and animate stakeholder meetings. Ultimately, this makes it rather difficult to guarantee a sense of common identity, history and tradition, elements that are indirectly important to ABD implementation” (European Commission, 2011: 5).

**Considerations of social cohesion are also critical when defining the geographic area.** In their report on community security and social cohesion, UNDP (2009: 35) has observed that “targeting a larger, rather than a smaller, area may be less likely to fuel tensions with neighbouring communities. It can also provide a means of bringing separate geographic communities together and building positive relations between them”.

**It is also important to analyse the ‘economic space’ when defining the geographical boundaries of an area and developing a suitable area or place based strategy.** In their guidelines for Local Economic Recovery (LER) in post-conflict countries, the ILO (2010) have observed that while conflict-affected areas tend to have geographically limited networks and be relatively inaccessible, it is important to explore how economic flows connect a specific area to other, not necessarily adjacent, territories.

**Rural and urban economies also face very different issues, requiring tailored area or place based strategies.** Amongst others, rural challenges include land scarcity, insecure tenure and landlessness, poor infrastructure and services, and significant gender-based disparities. Issues in urban areas include unemployment, urbanisation, and the challenges of increasing demand and pressure on urban infrastructure and services (ILO, 2010). Typically, area or place based programmes have been

implemented in rural areas, although there are examples of urban-based approaches such as the Municipal Governance and Sustainable Development Programme in the Ukraine.

**Effective and coherent programme design and management** are critical when several stakeholders are involved and there is a requirement for a high degree of coordination between multiple UN agencies. This involves clear plans for programme implementation and having lines of responsibility clearly demarcated between different agencies and different areas.

**It is important to keep the programme design manageable and be realistic about the resources (time, budget, human resources) available given the complexity of developmental situations within conflict and post-conflict areas.** Vrbenksy (2008) observes that not all interventions need to be included in the initiative itself, and some of the conflict factors can be addressed through parallel, but well-coordinated, activities. This coherence should also avoid raising false expectations.

The tools deployed to deliver the above may not be novel in themselves but their implementation in an inter-related, inter-dependent manner is decisive and a key ingredient of the success of such interventions. From this point of view, the area- or place-based approach renders itself highly flexible and convenient to address complex development circumstances that can be pinned down to a precise geographical context. As the thrust of the approach is to help disadvantaged areas and address in detail the basis of regional disparities, the expected outcome is a tailored intervention programme for the specified development situation in the selected area (Harfst, 2006).

## Barriers to success of area- or place-based initiatives

The application of an area- or place-based approach can be a daunting task. Successful programmes tend to be expensive and labour-intensive and often run for a number of years, in particular if the target area is large and the development situation highly complex (Santini, 2012; Marczis et al, 2013; Fraser, 2011). Due to its complex nature, multiple donors, development agencies and implementing partners can be involved, posing high demands on management and coordination. A number of complexities or limitations are consistently identified in the literature. These include, though are not limited to (Marczis, et al; 2013; Santini, 2012; Harfst, 2006; Fraser, 2011):

**Geographic and economic realities:** There are areas that, because of fundamental geographic and economic reasons, are unlikely ever to become as prosperous as the rest of the country. Programmes must be cognisant that there are significant caveats to what can be accomplished by such an approach. However, proponents of area- or place-based approaches suggest that such interventions, coupled with fiscal measures, budget transfers, social security and other policies, can at least help to ensure that gap between these areas and the rest of the country does not widen and that the area is able to benefit from prosperity generated in other parts of the country.

**Inability to respond to fundamental structural problems:** even in the case of a good understanding of broader context, there is often no or limited influence on structural issues (e.g. related to conflict, governance, poverty, unemployment). This is often linked to cross-cutting issues associated with limited partnerships and lack of coordination: insufficiently broad partnership or inadequate coordination, where partners lack sufficient capacity or mandate to deal with the problems, insufficient focus on or inability to deal with economic development.

**Challenges in prioritising very poor areas in developing countries:** In particular in developing countries, governments often prioritise those areas that are likely to generate income and prosperity that will

contribute to the socio-economic development of the country as a whole. Budget constraints limit the scope for public investment in social and economic infrastructure in poorer, more isolated and economically less significant areas. The scope for interventions in poor countries is rather more limited. Indeed, whilst countries in the global north can afford fully-fledged regional development policies and programmes, such programmes in poorer parts of the world mostly take place in areas that have been or are being affected by, or at risk of crises that require urgent responses or preventive action. Given the practical realities of constrained budgets and a desire to undertake area-wide, cross-sectoral policies, i.e. dealing with a broad range of issues superficially, this could lead to a lack of concentration on key problems. A linked concern may also be concentration of activities on the most visible and easy-to-implement initiatives instead of promoting systemic change.

**Constraints faced in contexts that lack broader structural policy and institutional reforms:** While within certain contexts, rule of law, more or less capable local authorities and mechanisms for decentralisation are generally in place or can become conditionalities for support, this is often not the case in less developed countries. Area- or place-based approaches in poorer parts of the world often face limitations in terms of what can be realistically achieved. In particular in countries with a tradition of highly centralised governance, local authorities may simply lack the legal, administrative and financial tools to provide substantial support to local development. While area- or place-based programmes can (and should) play an important role in advocating for policy and institutional reform at the central level, they are not particularly well-placed to actively support the design and adoption of reforms and political decision-making processes required. Proponents suggest that area- or place-based approaches should be undertaken in parallel and linked with other programmes that specifically support relevant policy and institutional reform processes at a central level, as well as for example local governance capacity development programmes.

**Funding constraints:** Not only do governments in poorer countries have fewer opportunities to establish large-scale socio-economic development programmes in disadvantaged areas, the amount of resources that can be realistically raised from the international donor community is also limited. This limits the scope of what can be achieved in terms of effectively supporting regional socio-economic development. In practice, therefore, such programmes tend to focus on supporting small-scale community-based infrastructure and services rather than large-scale investments, coupled with local governance capacity building and income-generation initiatives that create practical examples and promote an enabling environment for possible larger-scale regional development investments in the future.

**Challenges associated with multi-stakeholder collaborations:** Collaboration between different agencies and organisations within one programme has several benefits. However, even with clearly defined roles, it often takes time to build synergies programmes. One of the recurrent challenges cited in the literature has been overcoming the temptation for each agency to work independently at its own pace, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms and actual sharing of an agreed common programmatic approach and vision often takes time (Al-Kadhmi, 2010). Fragmentation is often associated with local approaches leading to fragmented thinking and realisation, partial solutions and duplications. Indeed, a recurring learning point from evaluations of different programmes is the need to develop, implement, and support institutional mechanisms for more effective information flows and coordination between the many different actors and sectors (Vrbensky, 2008).

**Dependency concerns:** This is a particular concern in developing countries where dependency on external support is built with donors and implementing agencies often lacking a well-planned exit strategy. Government reliance on external support can lead to lack of involvement and support, as well as

potentially, preferential treatment for certain areas. Donor-driven short-term approaches with high expectations may also be inappropriate in conflict contexts and special development situations that require longer timeframes to generate systemic change.

**Challenges in linking area- or place-based approaches with national development policies:** There exists a need to align and establish synergies between area- or place-based initiatives with national development policies and strategies. This is an important consideration as area- or place-based approaches are often accused of missing the macro picture. By ensuring alignment with broader strategic interventions area- or place-based approaches can be linked to macro situations and policies.

Indeed, despite successful results in many parts of the world, given the multi-dimensionality of conflict and development, Marczis et al (2013) question the ability of localised approaches to address these systemically and bring about sustainable peace and development. Similarly, Urbensky (2008) argues that although area or place based approaches are often effective in responding to complex conflict characteristics on sub-national levels, under its current conceptualisation and implementation practices, it suffers from a limited ability to respond to a full complexity of issues related to conflict and development on multiple levels. Urbensky (2008) continues that the contradiction in the terms ‘integrated’ and ‘area-based’ needs to be addressed both conceptually and in practical applications.

## Recommendations for implementation of area- or place-based initiatives

Reflecting on experiences of implementing area- or place-based approaches a number of broad recommendations have been made for how such policies can be implemented to leverage some of the strength outlined above and mitigate some of the challenges. These can broadly be delineated as follows (Matus et al, 2013; Urbensky, 2008; Harfst, 2006; Fraser, 2011):

1. **The area delineation process needs careful consideration** in order to cover all similar sub-regions in terms of development problems without reaching a size where a participatory process would be impossible to implement, nor excluding key players;
2. **The bottom-up process and its momentum** – guidance should be offered to people involved in this process so that they understand the nature of their roles and how they are inter-related. Development proposals should be prepared in detail for which technical assistance and sufficient time are required. Although under the area- or place-based approach proposals (related to major changes in legal frameworks or border/ custom/trade laws) which cannot be addressed at the area level are expected to be excluded from the analyses, stakeholders should not refrain from expressing clearly their needs in relation to these issues. They should be sufficiently motivated in order to continue interacting after the official end of the intervention so that these matters may be referred to higher political-administrative levels;
3. **The top-down accompanying framework of the participatory process must be openly discussed.** Information flows should be improved and one way to do so is to put further support and coordination efforts in the relations with regional and national authorities, possibly with an increase in the physical interaction with local level stakeholders. An adequate top-down communication might help local stakeholders who find it difficult to embrace a global picture, in designing a truly balanced multi-sectoral and rural-urban development programme.
4. **The institutional and legal framework needs to be addressed.** This is an aspect not very well addressed in area- or place-based approaches. It is, however, of utmost importance in the context of cross-border target areas since it is essential not only to reinforce but adapt the institutional

and legal framework in order to ensure the sustainability of a cross-border approach of this kind. Moreover, a stable long-term perspective of funding must be articulated that encourages the mobilisation of local assets and reduces the risk of long-term donor-dependency.

## 4. Case studies

In what follows, a review of area- or place-based programmes is presented. These allow the reader to explore how the approach has been deployed in a number of contexts, what the objectives were and how implementers and evaluators have sought to draw lessons from interventions. These programmes exemplify some of the challenges faced by area or place based interventions but also highlight what lessons can be gleaned from past experiments.

### **Facilitating an area-based development approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans** <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/facilitating-area-based-development-approach-rural-regions-western-balkans>

The project ‘Facilitating an area-based development approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans’ was commissioned in 2010 by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development. The overall objective was to assess the extent to which participatory and holistic approaches such as an area-based approach could be implemented in cross-border rural regions in the Western Balkans.

This report describes in detail the pilot ABD implementation process in the Drina valley – Tara Mountain area. The case study area (included 410,500 inhabitants and a surface area of 7,110 km<sup>2</sup>) consists of 14 municipalities (6 Bosnian, 2 Montenegrin, and 6 Serbian) that are all peripheral to the current economic centres in their respective countries. In addition to their marginalised location, they also shared current development situations, socio-economic drivers (i.e. shared cultural and social history, socio-economic linkages and dynamics, similar geographic and demographic traits, etc.) as well as a post-conflict background.

Assessment of the pilot phase has highlighted a number of lessons from the Tara case study in five key areas which are presented below (Santini et al., 2012):

#### **Area selection and delineation**

Advantage/strength

Disadvantage/weakness

<p>The municipalities involved are homogeneous with all peripheral to economic centres in respective countries.</p> <p>They also share a degree of uniformity in terms of current development situation, demographic and socio-economic drivers (i.e. shared cultural and social history, socio-economic linkages and dynamics, similar geographic and demographic traits, etc.) and post-conflict background.</p> <p>Another common concern and interest is the Drina River and tributaries along which activities related to tourism and agriculture are developed.</p> <p>The creation of the borders, the existence of ancient (but often dormant since the split of Yugoslavia) relations, and the fact that people are using similar languages did allow a fast start in concrete discussion among stakeholders.</p>	<p>The areas selected was critiqued for being too large to ensure close and regular contact. This implies organisational difficulties for the participation process.</p> <p>This distance may support the idea that the municipalities involved may not have a common stand on perceived problems.</p> <p>Nonetheless, some municipalities outside the target area share basic development problems with some that are included in the target area. As such, their exclusion was not well justified, the more so as they are all part of the upper basin of the Drina river and share similar geographical, human and socio-economic features.</p> <p>Ultimately, the cross-border nature of the target area may pose administrative difficulties for economic cooperation.</p>
--	---

### Participation (bottom–up) mechanisms and inclusiveness

Advantage/strength	Disadvantage/weakness
<p><b>Involvement of Stakeholders</b></p> <p>The form of the participatory process implemented promotes a sense of community and selection of action plans which benefit the target area. The resulting sense of social cohesion, inclusiveness and cohabitation, are helpful in bringing together a variety of different ideas. The latter also contributes to the involvement of local leaders present in the stakeholder group. The broad/inclusive selection of participation to the stakeholder groups translates to a non-discriminatory principle which benefits the exchange of ideas and points of view.</p> <p>The good practice adopted from previous experience concerning the composition of public-private partnerships proved to be useful by putting business sector and NGOs together with municipalities, representing an improvement of practice (focused on local governments and therefore not appropriately reflecting priorities of the society and focused on institutional support)</p> <p>The animation team played an important role, thanks to their network in the area. The “cross border” composition of this animation team has also been an asset since it has contributed to overcoming sensitive issues arising from the interactions of heterogeneous participants.</p>	<p><b>Involvement of Stakeholders</b></p> <p>Organising the participation process with selected stakeholders poses the question of its democratic character (which legitimacy in front of elected representatives?) as well as of its openness to outsiders and newcomers.</p> <p>The diversity of stakeholders makes it difficult to come to an arbitration between different ideas, particularly for the case of action plans, where, the list of measures / projects proposed can still look like a kind of “shopping list” with less rationality than the strategy itself.</p> <p>The constant dedication of animation team is something which needs to be ensured in order to support participation. This requires a substantial engagement of resources in terms of skilled personnel and time. Even with skilled animators, participatory processes require much more time than is often dedicated to achieve a real consensus choice in ranking priorities of development and the actions to be implemented, on the basis of appropriate analytical tools. The issue is not a need of more resources for training of stakeholders, but to provide stakeholders with enough time to apply analytical tools, agree on strategies / action plans and subsequent implementation.</p>
<p><b>Participatory Events &amp; Data Collection</b></p> <p>Community surveys are useful to understand opinion of the general public, broadening the input of selected stakeholders. At the local workshop, the analyses carried</p>	<p><b>Participatory Events &amp; Data Collection</b></p> <p>Data at the local level tend to be incomplete and cross-border comparisons are difficult to establish. To ensure</p>

out within the stakeholder group were discussed and supported by a larger set of the community.	comparability, time is needed for gathering expert knowledge and local data
---	---

### Top-down framework

Advantage/strength	Disadvantage/weakness
The contributions of the Delphi group helped address conflicting priorities (e.g. hydro-electricity national priorities vs. agriculture / tourism vs. agriculture). The exercise also proved that information (on programmes, strategies etc. adopted at national or regional level) does not flow easily to the field and stakeholders.	There are difficulties in securing feedback from international and national experts. This feedback implies an important workload (bridging the wide range of international and national frameworks with the numerous initiatives / ideas arising from the stakeholders). Accordingly, the rate of participation/reaction from Delphi group was not always high.  There is the possibility that different experts reflect different priorities / opinions (e.g. perception of the importance / appropriateness of organic production - related actions). Likewise, it is difficult to avoid a certain degree of paternalistic approaches which can lead to mistrust from local stakeholders.
Local presence, ability to understand the context and area specific obstacles.  High level of flexibility in order to adapt analytical tools which contribute to a fuller assessment of the context.	Difficulty in identifying development activities which can be successfully carried out at the area level. Omission of other relevant activities for the target area

### Multi-sectorial approach

Advantage/strength	Disadvantage/weakness
The identified priority areas have latent inter-connections which help address simultaneously the objective of promoting local development in the target area: tourism is supported by natural resources (environmental protection), SMEs and traditional local food production (agriculture); agriculture and rural development should incorporate rural tourism and produce outputs for the tourist sector; main scope for SME developments are tourism and agro-food sectors; agriculture can contribute to protection of environment.	The multi-sectorial nature of ABD can lead to inadequate coordination between implementing agents. Initiatives in a large number of varied sectors may translate into fragmented view of the ABD intervention.  Due to time constraints, some important elements of the multi-sectorial approach have not been reflected in the action plans: the striking example is the waste management and river quality issues.  Other important elements for development intuitively perceived by stakeholders (e.g. export capacities of berries, need to have producers grouped, need to reduce physical and legal barriers to free movement of goods, investment in road infrastructures and improvement of accessibility to the area) are less well reflected in the overall development strategy, either because they seem to be outside the competences of local government or because they seem to be secondary assets.

	Other sectors are completely absent from the strategy / action plan, either because they are still escaping from the local economic dynamics (forest and hydro-electricity production, driven from national level) or because such sectors (i.e. health, culture, etc... services in general). may be seen as secondary objectives considering the present stage of development of the area
--	---

### Organisational and financial perspectives.

Advantage/strength	Disadvantage/weakness
<p>The municipalities are thinking of entering in a light but permanent commitment in the form of cross-border Network supported by a Memorandum of Understanding</p> <p>Stakeholders also expressed their wish to continue collaborating under the format of an informal network.</p> <p>There are some existing financial sources to explore, in particular the IPA Cross Border Cooperation component.</p> <p>SWG-RRD could serve as an institutional umbrella to facilitate funding and promote execution of the different action plans envisaged in the ABD programme.</p>	<p>ABD methodology lacks an institutional follow up component. Experiences from European Territorial Cooperation field might be taken into account.</p> <p>The promotion of ABD relies on donor support. Logically, each donor has its own procedures and follow different methods depending on their need to justify their use of money to their authorities / citizens. This does not necessarily fit with results from participatory exercises.</p> <p>Despite the dependency on donors being acknowledged, the stakeholders had difficulties to come with proposals for self-financed action, with the notable exception of a wish to continue discussing local development issues even without external donors intervening.</p> <p>The long term perspective for funding local development plans relies on the perspective of accession to the EU. However, these perspectives are still far away.</p> <p>Given the short time frame for the identification of activities and although the specified action plans are complete, they deserve fine tuning and further improvement. Moreover, some activities are not well integrated into the ABD programme and further reflection should be carried out.</p> <p>In addition, output monitoring mechanisms and indicators are accordingly still very weak and incomplete.</p>

### Area Based Development Approach in the Western Balkans - A tool for rural development with up-scaling potential

[https://www.ciheam.org/publications/141/012\\_-\\_SWG.pdf](https://www.ciheam.org/publications/141/012_-_SWG.pdf)

The Area-Based Development Approach in the Western Balkans was an initiative, developed and implemented by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe with support from the EU and Food and Agriculture Organisation.

The project was implemented to address a number of issues in the region, namely, complex inter-dependence of poverty, social exclusion, ethnic tensions and administrative burdens, especially of the

cross-border regions. One of the critical problems of the cross-border areas of the Western Balkan countries is how to reach remote rural areas in decline where poverty and lack of sufficient economic activities lead younger generations to migrate. The project aimed to encourage sustainable economic growth of the target regions by strengthening the cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies, the private sector and NGOs in the fields of local development and regional cooperation by building up local and regional cross-border capacities. The project adopted three parallel processes:

- 1) Facilitation of cross-border and regional cooperation and reconciliation by providing mechanisms for legitimate, transparent, participatory and ongoing processes of needs assessment, priority setting, and action planning in a particular region.
- 2) Contribution to sustainable economic growth of a particular region by facilitating implementation of identified actions and in particular by providing investment support in the sector with the possible highest added-value and catalytic effects to the rural economies.
- 3) Strengthening cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies and NGO's in the field of local development and regional cooperation by building-up local and regional cross-border capacities.

The SWG through the implementation of the action has developed a number of lessons which are outlined below. While these are primarily associated with programme itself, they will provide an insight into elements other programmes may wish to consider (Illic & Dzimrevska, 2015):

- Permanent and strong involvement of all key stakeholders, local government, civil society and private business is essential for developing and implementing integrated cooperation actions based on the area-based approach. This includes commitments to enter into partnerships, both public/private and among private business partners and NGOs.
- The SWG considered that involving national and local chambers and associations in identifying representatives from civil society and the private sector as formal members of the stakeholders groups was important.
- Local stakeholders should be participate in activities and in preparing action plans in accordance with their respective interest in the action concerned.
- Although the political mandate of the SWG does not cover all policy areas of importance to solve common problems in the selected cross-border areas, the SWG should continue to facilitate actions to solve such issues. This concern in particular, problems related to solving environmental and transport infrastructure issues.
- In this regard, the Ministers of Agriculture, members of the SWG, should ensure close cooperation with the respective line Ministries to facilitate resolution of all issues for the common good of the areas concerned to foster economic growth and quality of life as well as the attractiveness for tourists visiting the areas.
- The SWG acknowledge the support from the EC in the preparation for implementation of an ABD and urges the EC to enhance the dialogue with the SWG and member governments on the legal requirements for strategic planning, programming and implementation of the Regional and Territorial Cooperation policy area to ensure timely implementation.

## Least Developed Micro-regions Programme (LDMR) – Hungary

<http://localdevelopmentforinclusion.org/assets/20-tools-and-case-to-area-based-development-programming-at-the-national-level.pdf>

The Least Developed Micro-regions Programme (LDMR) Programme was implemented by the national government in the most disadvantaged regions in Hungary. This programme attempted to address social (including public service) and economic (including transport) challenges in targeted territories (urban and rural) using EU funds in an integrated manner. The project aimed at “the elimination of area-based poverty and social exclusion in the 33 most disadvantaged NUTS 4 regions in Hungary” (LDMR). The implementation process started in 2008 and the first run of the approved projects was implemented between 2009 -2013.

Marczis et al., (2013) argue that the LDMR Programme is, in many respects, a good example for the interventions which integrate various sectoral activities in order to develop a region in a place-based manner. The integrated approach, and within that the application of a local development methodology, has been seen to have greatly helped to reinforce the ownership and local governance:

- The planning and implementation was based on statistical micro-regions, and this place-based approach made it possible that a greater degree of local conditions and needs prevailed in the design and implementation.
- A better coordination of resources took place at different levels.
  - At the programme level, as several Operational Programmes were included in the programme. The use of funds from various Operational Programmes made it possible that more complex problems of the micro-regions were tackled.
  - At project level, because a relatively high cross financing rate was allowed (e.g. 25% cross financing rate between the resources of European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund), and the project coordination was continuous between the institutions and the local actors/stakeholders.
- The regional planning process highlighted that it is not the projects that should be adapted to the calls for applications, but the calls for applications should be adapted to micro-region’s known needs. This expectation was met in the Programme in several cases (calls were tailored to the specific micro-regional planning documents and project packages).
- The least developed micro-regions were able to obtain development under lighter and more flexible terms, virtually independent from the competition in the application process.
- Vertical and horizontal cooperation, and planning in a participatory manner, was achieved with the involvement of civil organisations and the business sector.
- The programme created an opportunity to improve rural-urban relations (city and its functional area), since during the compilation of the project package, the regional and local infrastructure conditions and deficiencies, and (public) services had to be taken into account.
- One of the results of the strong institutional coordination followed during the entire programme is that dialogues developed between the micro-regions and the institutions concerned. The representatives of institutions obtained information directly about the beneficiaries' needs, and regional stakeholders received first-hand information about the content and professional expectations in relation to the project packages. This may have contributed to a greater coordination of the available resources and the local needs.

- The amount of resources allocated for each micro-region encouraged them to carry out cost effective planning, as it was in the interest of the micro-region to achieve as much as possible by using the allocated funds.
- The external facilitation eliminated the lack of local expertise, experience and lack of resources, but in the long-run, local-level capacity building is essential.
- The integrated approach, the specific features of planning and evaluation process (e.g. favouring projects that will benefit disadvantaged residents in disadvantaged areas, and the involvement of equal opportunity experts) helped to uncover projects that will really assist the most disadvantaged communities to catch up, thus reducing disparities within the given territory.

#### ***Factors hindering the implementation of the Programme***

Although the concept of the LDMR Programme was considered by Marczis et al., (2013), a good example for the integrated approach, certain factors hindered the planning and implementation processes. These factors primarily stem from the structure of the grant application system, from the legal regulations guiding the implementation procedure, and from difficulties at local level:

- The range of eligible activities was limited first by the sometimes unfavourable structure of Operational Programmes because of the mono-fund system, and further limited by the national action plans, and calls for applications.
- Cross-financing was limited between the sources of funding, and the different eligibility, contracting, reporting and control routines also hindered these processes.
- Since the planning and funding mechanism of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and its domestic institutional structure differs greatly from that of the Structural Funds, agricultural and rural development funds could not be included in the programme, which - taking into account that these micro regions are primarily rural areas - also reduced the complexity of the emerging project proposals and of the final project packages.
- A difficulty was that for the staff of institutions, which had been "socialised" on systems supporting individual projects, it posed difficulties to manage integrated, modular programmes. Together, these problems have resulted in systemic problems (e.g., information asymmetry between the institution and local levels, the inflexible call criteria, lack of cooperation between expert networks), which, if solved, may contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of integrated programmes. However, it is important to note that such programmes not only need strong coordination capacity at central level, and a mandate for the coordination office, but also firm support from external experts.
- Finally, barriers at local levels were also experienced relating to the attitude of regional stakeholders and partly from the lack of experience in local planning and cooperation (e.g. the local community was unprepared to participate in the planning process; project-oriented approach of local decision-makers; stakeholders with various interests and motivations).

#### **National Area-based Development Program (NABDP) in Afghanistan**

<https://norad.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/publikasjoner-2016/norad-collected-reviews/evaluation-of-the-national-area-based-development-programme-nabdp-in-afghanistan.pdf>

The National Area-based Development Program (NABDP) in Afghanistan was a joint intervention of UNDP and the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) under the National Implementation

Modality (NIM). It commenced in 2002, was extended into a second phase (2006-2008) and its third phase which concluded in June 2015. NABDP sought to reduce poverty and vulnerability through a dual focus on productive rural infrastructure and institutionalisation of District Development Assemblies (DDAs), with gender as a cross cutting theme.

During the lifetime of NABDP there were improvements in security until 2005 but subsequently there has been a deterioration. International military forces have been present and many provinces have had Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Many aid donors have aligned their development assistance with the PRTs, including several contributing to NABDP.

The goal of NABDP is to contribute to a sustainable reduction of poverty and an improvement of livelihoods in rural Afghanistan through a comprehensive area-based development approach. It is UNDP's largest programme oriented to poverty reduction and was situated in the Subnational Governance and Development Unit (SNGDU). In MRRD, NABDP sits with the very large National Solidarity Program (NSP) as part of the governance stream of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The intended outcomes of NABDP have been expressed differently in each phase - variously as strategies, components, outcomes, results, and outputs.

Emmot and Jawhary (2016) assert that NABDP has delivered some important results in a very complex environment, with reasonable effectiveness:

- District Development Assemblies (DDAs) were established in 388 districts during Phases 2 and 3 and are performing, as would be expected in the context, in a range from excellent to weak. Most have implemented at least one project and some have been able to attract new and larger investments from other donors. The capable DDAs are limited only by availability of funds.
- Communities have benefited from improved access to energy, irrigation and transport infrastructure through around 2,000 projects although it is nowhere near enough to meet their needs. Where the intention of the infrastructure was to increase agricultural output, there is insufficient information to know whether this has happened. All infrastructure has been directly requested by the communities but not all is productive.
- Thousands of jobs have been created, mainly through casual labour in construction. This has provided families with short-term income. Few sustainable jobs were created. Women have been included as members of the DDAs or in advisory arrangements appropriate to the context. A small number of women have benefited from economic empowerment projects separate from the mainstream infrastructure projects.

The main factors influencing positive achievement of results were the commitment of NABDP staff, local ownership of the Provincial Rural Development Departments, and the availability of sufficient funds. Factors limiting achievement were the thin spread of resources across all provinces and the low level of funding in some provinces.

Efficiency has been positively influenced by the NIM modality, enabling strong ownership at central and provincial level, and the ability of staff to access less secure areas by adopting the kind of low profile impossible in UNDP and NGOs. NABDP is cost effective for the implementation of projects, which are mainly of high quality and a source of pride for DDAs. Efficiency has been negatively influenced by the donor practice of earmarking, which results in huge imbalance between provinces, and petitions from parliamentarians, which result in a backlog of designed projects for which there is no available funding.

Assessment of impact is limited by availability of data. If there has been impact, it is small scale and unfocused. Overall in Afghanistan, poverty and vulnerability have not decreased. MRRD has sought to be equitable in the distribution of resources to all provinces under a policy of 'some for all, not all for some' but earmarking has made this impossible to realise.

Sustainability is weak. The DDAs have proved unsustainable in the face of changed subnational governance policy although the momentum created around local level governance for aid effectiveness may be sustainable. Much of the infrastructure is not sustainable as there is no arrangement for operation and maintenance except in micro hydropower.

A number of lessons have been gleaned from the execution of the NABDP in Afghanistan. These are summarised below:

**Focus is a political issue.** In such a seriously conflict-affected country, MRRD has to be seen to be delivering in all provinces and the Minister comes under sustained pressure to commit resources equitably. The area-based concept, with a focused approach, was therefore probably never going to be possible. Any design needs to take the political economy into account.

**Bottom up planning is not enough to achieve impact.** The felt needs of communities are not always in line with the mandate of MRRD or the objectives of the project related to agriculture and livelihoods. They also may not have the specialist knowledge or vision about what is possible. Bottom up planning needs to be complemented by top down planning for economic growth based on sound analysis.

**MRRD has little impact on agricultural outputs in the absence of an agriculture plan.** NABDP has coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture (MAIL) in order to prevent duplication but there is no mechanism for linkage between ministries for strategic planning purposes

**Working close to peri-urban centres may have more impact.** This is already happening by default because populations are clustered near provincial centres for security, jobs, education and markets. It would be much more cost effective than trying to reach remote and often insecure areas. However, it would be politically unpopular and would need a careful rationale.

**Establishing new institutions takes a very long time.** If MRRD wished to implement through cluster CDCs, experience indicates that it will be a long, slow and difficult process. With declining resources there would be too many clusters to be effective or efficient and the same sustainability issues would arise over time.

**Projects do not develop core capacity.** As a parallel project, NABDP has added capacity at both central and provincial level but not built it. A new design should begin to address the issue by building the management arrangements around core departments of the ministry.

**Building on what exists is likely to be more effective than starting in a new place.** A design which seeks to involve five ministries, in a concept of livelihoods and economic growth that is unfamiliar, is likely to fail. Continuing with MRRD, and focusing on making infrastructure productive is conceptually simpler with a greater chance of success.

**Agreeing a realistic, affordable and sustainable implementation mechanism is important but complicated.** A stronger role for the PRRDs will be important but, in the absence of decentralisation policy, will need an experimental approach. NABDP was successful in initiating DDAs and can potentially lead in establishing a workable means of planning at provincial level.

**Breaking with governance will be important to avoid the risk of business continuing as usual.** Though there is a process in place for assessing capacity of DDAs and converting some of them to the new District Coordination Councils (DCCs), there is insufficient capacity or resources for this to happen.

**UNDP needs a stronger role in oversight.** This particularly applies to quality. Some aspects are important to factor into the design so that government staff are safeguarded from excessive political influence.

## **National Area-Based Development Programme – Afghanistan**

**<https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/AFG/NABDP%20Annual%20Report%20-%202015.pdf>**

The programme annual report (2015) also highlight a series of lessons learnt that may be useful in addressing potential challenges

### Lessons learned

**Directly contracting CDCs and DDAs:** When small and uncomplicated infrastructure projects were contracted directly to some CDCs or DDAs, they were sometimes managed more cost-effectively and completed with better quality than when they were contracted to private companies, depending on such factors as the effectiveness of the relevant CDCs and DDAs and the inclusiveness of project planning. It is likely that the democratic nature of CDCs and DDAs increased oversight and community ownership of these projects, and reduced the possibility of corruption. Although implementation isn't the main role of DDAs and CDCs, their effectiveness in overseeing procedures and ensuring quality execution should be promoted.

In 2015, the report claims there was an increase in the capacity of several CDCs and DDAs for implementing development projects because of previous experience and trainings. Investment in building their capacity is likely to pay off in the long run. Lessons identified include:

**Engaging women in a broader way:** Women have been engaged as DDA members and in WEEP projects as the participants of livelihoods trainings. However, gender has not been a cross-cutting theme in all projects. Most projects have not actively sought to engage women. A number of ways in which infrastructure projects in general could have involved women were identified:

- 1) include women in needs assessment and the project design
- 2) as labour for less physically-demanding tasks
- 3) in the management and maintenance of projects

This has also threatened the sustainability of projects. For instance, in the case of some water supply projects, only male community members participated in the awareness raising of maintenance needs. In reality, however, women have most contact with these facilities.

**Needs assessment:** Although most projects are implemented at the request of local communities, a more objective needs assessment should have been carried out to guarantee effectiveness and sustainability. For instance, WEEP projects reported difficulties selling the final products of these trainings. A needs assessment could have revealed whether there was a market for the products that WEEP participants were trained to make. It could also have identified better ways to link participants to specific markets.

**Sustainability:** Many infrastructure projects built by NABDP have not been properly maintained after handover. Some community centres were found to have hosted events for private purposes, partly due to a lack of regulations for proper use. Here are a few measures that could have been implemented:

- Requiring communities or parties responsible for maintaining infrastructure to draw up plans regarding the use and maintenance of facilities.
- Making community members or other users aware of the need for maintenance and relevant policies.
- Having such plans and policies as a condition for final handover by NABDP.

**Documenting results:** Many projects in NABDP have not invested enough resources in documenting results. For instance, we could have monitored:

- Extra income generated by the skills acquired through WEEP trainings.
- Increased annual yields from irrigation projects.

It is recommended that monitoring of such indicators is included in the future work plans and enough resources are allocated for this. Moreover, the database related to output 2 and 3 was ill-managed due to inadequate capacity to operate the system and faulty maintenance practices. By comparison, the data for output 1 was updated and consistent. The reason is that output 1 data was managed with Excel, which is more familiar to most staff. Also, the data for output 1 was stored in multiple smaller databases based strictly on the categories required for reporting. On the other hand, output 2 and 3 data was stored in one database, organised in categories not strictly consistent with reporting needs and not accurately updated.

**Community mobilisation:** In the case of the cancelled well project in Nahr district of Ghazni province, the land owner refused to let NABDP dig the well on his private land for the community. This problem could have been resolved by more effective community mobilisation. Community mobilisers could have engaged community members in coming up with a solution that compensated the land owner while allowing the project to be successfully implemented.

Community mobilisers play a very important role in resolving disputes and maintaining effective communication between the project team and the community. They also help the project team introduce new initiatives. For these reasons, the report recommend that the importance of community mobilisers be fully appreciated and more resources invested in the development of these in future projects.

## **Municipal Improvement and Revival Programme phase II (MIR II) South Serbia** <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/23360/1/WP02.pdf>

The Municipal Improvement and Revival Programme phase II (MIR II) was the second phase of a programme which began in 2003, with a geographical focus on South Serbia. MIR II built on the achievements of the first phase in terms of confidence building, poverty reduction, municipal infrastructure development and change in the behaviour of municipal officials. The overall objective was to strengthen local good governance in South Serbia in terms of the delivery of services to citizens and local and inter-municipal stewardship of social and economic development. The programme sought to support South Serbia municipalities to, individually and jointly, plan and take strategic action to achieve the sustainable economic and social development of the region and to fulfil their obligations to citizens. MIR II activities were organised under four main components:

- inter-municipal co-operation for development,

- municipality strategic planning for development,
- improved municipal management and administration, and
- improved delivery of municipal administrative services.

In addition, promotion of gender equality and environmental protection are two issues cross-cutting these four components.

The evaluation concluded that the intervention had had a number of successes and identified the ingredients of the area-based approach that had contributed to these:

**Contribution to political representation and participation.** Regional MIR II governance structures have been inclusive and have demonstrated both to the Albanian and Serbian leaders the benefits of minority participation in political and policy processes and concrete activities. The Albanian mayors who have actively participated in the Steering Committee increasingly understand the necessity of Albanian municipalities to develop within the broader framework of South Serbia. The chairing of the MIR II Steering Committee by the Coordination Body has had two indirect benefits related to political participation. It has contributed to increased transparency and accountability of the Coordination Body and simultaneously it has broadened the involvement of Albanian leaders in the work of this institution. The use of transparent and responsive mechanisms for resource allocation and project selection at regional and municipal levels has set an example of how participatory and non-discriminatory planning and decision-making works in practice. This also led to greater efficiency in addressing the needs of communities in various municipalities. MIR II has facilitated access by local Albanian and Serbian leaders to high level governmental and international officials, both through their participation in the Steering Committee meetings as well as frequent meetings and visits in the region and Belgrade related to concrete programme activities. This has enabled the presentation of local needs, potentially increasing a sense of integration.

At the municipal level, the development strategies were developed in 11 municipalities through an open, participatory and inclusive planning process creating space for the non-discriminatory participation of all ethnic groups, civil society and the private sector. The strategies were formally approved by the Municipal Assemblies and represent a consensus of all political parties on the future municipal development and investment priorities. The establishment of Citizen Assistance Centres (CAC) in the municipalities ensured improved and non-discriminatory access to services by all communities and citizens. These Centres represent a 'one-stop-shop' for the interaction between local administration and its customers, be it the general public, private or non-governmental sector. It allows for streamlined, transparent and non-discriminatory provision of services related to notary and registry and also more sophisticated processes and permits. All these new developments contribute to a greater efficiency and transparency in the work of the municipalities and provide an opportunity for multi-ethnic interaction.

Additionally, the capacity-building activities, including training needs assessment and targeted trainings and study tours, bringing together officials from several municipalities across ethnic lines, have contributed to individual and institutional capacity development, professional networking and trust-building. Interviewees have pointed out that the relationships formed have been sustained. The extensive training in general management, project cycle and financial management leads to greater effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of public management, generally improving governance at the municipal level. The general management training is followed by the establishment of functioning planning and reporting systems. Extensive training on communication and preparation of internal and external communication strategies, contributed to more transparent and open interaction between politicians, municipal administration and the general public, which is crucial especially in a multi-ethnic and post-conflict

environment. Participation and inclusiveness as well as objective media coverage of the region is further supported through other, perhaps more limited but very effective activities, such as trainings of journalists and artwork contests.

**Addressing economic inequalities and development.** Previous programmes have directly targeted the employment of former fighters and the long-term unemployed. This has been complemented and systematised by MIR II through stimulating the local economy and directly supporting the private sector through the development of farmers groups and cooperatives. In addition, among the criteria reflected by the Steering Committee in the allocation of resources were the economic situation, post-conflict needs and inequalities. This has resulted in the allocation of resources to deprived municipalities and has contributed to reducing some of the economic inequalities. In the implementation of economic development related activities, MIR II has placed emphasis on ensuring transparency and equal opportunity. This has meant that a mixed group of Albanian and Serbian contractors has been used for the project implementation in various localities. The introduction of clear procedures has also led to greater accountability and therefore improved delivery in implementation. Similar principles have been used in the programme staff selection. The establishment of a Regional Development Centre (RDC) is critical for systematically supporting the economic development of the region. It will equally support all municipalities in the South Serbia region and promote a regional approach, which will also benefit Albanian-dominated municipalities. The Albanian municipalities have actively participated in the creation of the Centre and are active in its Assembly, which is the main governing body. Work done and studies related to the development of a tourism plan, reducing investment barriers and infrastructure such as waste management feasibility studies, water supply and sewage networks will directly increase tourism potential, are likely to have direct and more equitable impacts on economic development across the municipalities.

At the municipal level, all strategic plans emphasise the importance of economic development. They include strategic analysis and recommendations, often with concrete measures and investments that are important in stimulating economic development. The investment projects have contributed indirectly, through infrastructure and transport projects and directly, for example by building the market places, to local economic development. This was complemented by programme components aimed at improving management of the agricultural sector and regional guarantee fund. In particular, the establishment of agro-corners and the implementation of subprojects have supported agricultural and rural development as crucial sectors for future economic development. In addition, mixed municipal staff have attended agricultural training. Training in general management, project cycle management, financial management and communication has increased awareness and capacity to create positive conditions for economic development at the municipal level.

**Impacts on access to services.** The improvement of access to services through infrastructure projects has been the most visible part of the MIR II programme and represents by far the largest budgetary item. It has been implemented with sensitivity to community needs, as well as with careful consideration of inter-community relations. The majority of investments into social infrastructure, in particular in education, health, drinking water, sewage and waste management, have directly addressed social inequality issues. These projects also directly and indirectly contributed to employment generation. At a regional level, the Regional Development Centre leads work on feasibility studies related to water and waste management and the water supply. This, as well as further assistance by the RDC to municipalities in accessing European Union and other funding for investment into social infrastructure further contributes to a reduction of horizontal inequalities and improvement in the social situation.

## **Integrated area-based development in Osh province in the Kyrgyz Republic**

[https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KGZ/Annual%20Narrative%20and%20Financial%20Progress%20Report\\_Osh%20ABD\\_2016\\_funded%20by%20ORF\\_ENG\\_Updated.docx](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KGZ/Annual%20Narrative%20and%20Financial%20Progress%20Report_Osh%20ABD_2016_funded%20by%20ORF_ENG_Updated.docx)

The programme "Integrated area-based development in Osh province in the Kyrgyz Republic" aims to assist the Kyrgyz Government to establish conditions for prevention of violent conflicts and to secure sustainable human development in Osh Province through implementation of inter-linked comprehensive measures aimed at significant reduction of poverty, improving the welfare of target communities at risk and establishing more favorable conditions for sustainable development of human capital in three target districts of Osh Province.

### **Key achievements for 2016:**

- The pilot communities were selected and their development priorities identified based on a comprehensive socio-economic review, analysis of the specific development gaps, comparative advantages and development opportunities. The selection of target communities, results of their capacity assessment and development priorities was widely consulted and endorsed by the national stakeholders, including regional and district state administrations and local communities.
- Series of local consultations have been delivered with the engagement of various stakeholders at all levels to ensure cross-sectorial approach to the interventions and clear buy-in.
- Awareness raising campaigns were organised to inform local stakeholders on the Project outcomes and specific interventions. UNDP facilitated an active interaction of local communities and local self-government to create common understanding on the opportunities that exist to reduce vulnerability through various economic activities, improved access to water, environmental security, and generation of employment and rehabilitation of social and economic infrastructure.

### **Difficulties, challenges and measures to prevent or mitigate the risks:**

- Selection of pilot communities was based on the review of the socio-economic situation, conducted during the inception period, as well as using the criteria agreed with partners at the local level. The selection process was accompanied by certain difficulties, due to the heterogeneous pattern of villages in Osh province, and it was difficult to find a village that was 100% compliant with the established criteria. This resulted in the selection of the target villages with the number of households that is ranging from 130 to 4,000, with different degree of remoteness from the district and regional centers, both mono-ethnic and ethnic-diverse, and with various rates of socio-economic infrastructure. One of the preconditions for selecting villages for interventions was strong commitment of local self-government and communities to transformational changes.
- The Program interventions are designed to provide inputs to the implementation of local socio-economic development plans. However, the analysis during inception phase demonstrated weak capacity of the local municipalities in prioritising the local development needs, strategic planning and clear communication gaps. Therefore, the Program will more specifically focus on enhancing the local capacity in the development of sustainable and resilient local development plans with coherent M&E frameworks.

## Municipal Development in the South West Serbia Programme (PRO I) South West Serbia (Sandzak)

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/23360/1/WP02.pdf>

The Municipal Development in the South West Serbia Programme (PRO I) was designed to build on the results of previous UNDP interventions. These activities concentrated predominantly on municipal capacity building and strategic planning with limited resources for investment. The first phase of the programme was initiated in 2006 with implementation envisaged until 2008 and was supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction and Swiss Development Cooperation, with UNDP as implementing partner.

The overall objective of the programme was to strengthen local government in facilitating socio-economic development by effectively using EU and other funding support. The specific purpose was to develop capacities of local stakeholders and local governments, so municipalities in South West Serbia, individually and jointly, plan and take strategic action to achieve the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. This was to be achieved through:

- i) improvement of municipal capacity to plan and implement selected priority projects based on sustainable development plans and EU funding requirements; and
- ii) creation of inter-municipal and area-based development partnerships for sustainable socioeconomic growth and to better exploit future EU funding support in Southwest Serbia.

A number of lessons were gleaned from the operation of the programme in Serbia:

**Contribution to governance and political representation.** Regular meetings of the Steering Committee contributed to improved mutual understanding and cooperation between municipalities themselves and with central Government. This helped to partly redress some of the municipal and regional governance deficits. The use of transparent and responsive mechanisms for resource allocation and project selection at regional and municipal levels has set an example of participatory and non-discriminatory planning and decision-making. The creation of working groups as part of the process leading to the preparation of a Regional Development Plan, as well as the establishment of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) helped consolidate these governance gains. It will be of utmost importance to ensure that the RDAs are not politically instrumentalised. The study tour for representatives of all municipalities to Slovenia resulted not only in practical learning and the exchange of experiences but also in the critical opening of the region and motivation from positive examples of EU member states with a shared history and similar context.

At the municipal level, all sustainable development strategies have been developed through participatory and non-discriminatory processes including the establishment of representative local action groups, public hearings, use of international expertise and a study tour to Slovenia. The extensive SWOT analyses and socio-economic and baseline studies of all municipalities and districts supported by the programme contribute not only to greater understanding of issues in the region, but also provide objective baseline data important for eliminating or at least mitigating perceived but often unsubstantiated inequalities.

Through capacity needs assessments and functional reviews of the municipalities completed in 2007 in all municipalities (including more than 170 questionnaires filled in by municipal staff), the directions for capacity-building were identified and are being addressed through extensive capacity building training. Transparency and accountability at the municipal level has been promoted by PRO through the creation of

Municipal Implementation Units and Development Committees that are inclusive and broad-based in their composition. These committees participated in the selection of investment projects.

**Economic impacts.** Municipal development strategies have placed special emphasis on economic development and provide a useful framework for work on key economic issues. Municipal Implementation Units in all municipalities have played an active role in the implementation and monitoring of investment projects. Projects, which mainly concentrated on physical infrastructure and social services, have contributed to the creation of an enabling environment for economic development. However, future investment projects should more directly support economic activities. The formulation of a Regional Development Plan and establishment of the RDAs should further contribute to the systemic creation of an enabling economic environment. It is important to ensure that the RDAs pay attention to economic issues, especially productive activities and investment that stimulates job creation. All these activities contribute to addressing important conflict factors related to economic development as identified in the situation analysis and to the inclusion of Southwest Serbia into a broad, economically more viable regional context.

**Social impacts.** The preparation of development strategies led to the identification of key social issues at the municipal level. Whereas inclusiveness and participation has been challenging at times, particularly with strained civil society and municipal relations in some areas, it has contributed to an increased level of accountability in local government. A range of education, health, and cultural investment projects have been implemented addressing some of the social issues identified in the situation analysis and municipal development strategies. The establishment of Citizen Assistance Centres (CACs) in all municipalities have facilitated the re-organisation of administrative processes and internal organisational structures, capacity building for staff and both short and long-term interventions to improve services to citizens. The creation of a Civil Involvement Fund was considered promising as it should support civil society through the implementation of small projects and encourage work with citizens and other partners.

## Development Corridors

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08995e5274a31e000016a/Topic\\_Guide\\_Development\\_Corridors.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08995e5274a31e000016a/Topic_Guide_Development_Corridors.pdf)

The focus on developing isolated growth poles and growth triangles has been replaced since the 1990s by a realisation that trade and economic opportunities are better enhanced by corridors that link areas of supply and demand. Development of economic corridors, as opposed to development of growth centres, recognises the wider economic trends of regionalism and globalism. The evolution of a transport route into a transport corridor, thence a trade corridor, and eventually an economic corridor involves cycles of improving hard and soft infrastructure. Throughout the developing world, difficulties exist in managing transport infrastructure, including proper planning, efficient operations, and adequate maintenance. These problems should not be ignored for development corridors and must be addressed in order for a transport route to evolve into an efficient development corridor.

Summary of lessons learned to date in corridor development

- Each development corridor has its own unique characteristics and development objectives defined by the social and economic conditions of the region prior to development of the corridor and the intended social and economic conditions upon attainment of the corridor development objectives.
- There is often no clear distinction between transport corridors, trade corridors, and economic corridors; transport corridors facilitate trade and this will bring about some increase involvement in corridor development in economic activity.

- Strong political commitment is required to achieve a corridor development agreement, and strong political support will be required to see the corridor through to its full potential and to continue to optimise benefits from the corridor during the operational phase.
- Anchor infrastructure projects are catalysts for corridor development; they are pivotal to ensuring economic growth and regional integration, which are essential for evolution into a full economic corridor.
- If properly planned, using a SDI approach, economic corridors can have a positive developmental impact up to fifty kilometres either side of the main corridor route.
- The most serious impediments to corridor success are administrative (institutional), including regulation, logistics, cross-border management, etc.
- Institutional strengthening usually includes trade facilitation.
- Regional programmes can deliver good results, but require ownership from participating partners; there needs to be clear delineation between national and regional institutions and accountable governance arrangements.
- Long-term commitment from the public and private sectors is essential for the success of development corridors.

## 5. References

- Al-Kadhimi, S. (2010). Local Area Development Programme (LADP). Powerpoint Presentation, November 26th 2010. <http://css.escwa.org.lb/sdd/1352/Session3-4.pdf>
- Barca, F. et al. (2012). The Case for Regional Development Intervention: Place-Based Versus Place-Neutral Approaches. *Journal of Regional Science* Volume 52, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9787.2011.00756.x>
- Cameron, J. et al. (2004). Integrated Area Development Projects: Working Towards Innovation and Sustainability. *Urban Forum*, Vol. 15, No. 4. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39670475.pdf>
- Emmott, S. & Jawhary, A. (2014). Evaluation of the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP) in Afghanistan. Norad Collected Reviews. <https://norad.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/publikasjoner-2016/norad-collected-reviews/evaluation-of-the-national-area-based-development-programme-nabdp-in-afghanistan.pdf>
- Emmott, S. & Jawhary, A. (2014). Evaluation of the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP) in Afghanistan. UNDP Afghanistan. <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/8013>
- Fraser, E. (2011). The impact of Area Based Programming. University of Birmingham GSDRC. <http://gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq759.pdf>
- Harfst, J. (2006). A Practitioner's Guide to Area-Based Development Programming. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/speakerscorner/a-practitioner-guide-to-area-based-development-programming.pdf>

- Hope, A. & Cox, J. (2015). Development Corridors. Coffey International Development.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08995e5274a31e00016a/Topic\\_Guide\\_Development\\_Corridors.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08995e5274a31e00016a/Topic_Guide_Development_Corridors.pdf)
- Illic, B. & Dzimrevska, I. (2015). Area Based Development Approach in the Western Balkans: a tool for rural development with up-scaling potential. CIHEAM.  
[https://www.ciheam.org/publications/141/012\\_-\\_SWG.pdf](https://www.ciheam.org/publications/141/012_-_SWG.pdf)
- ILO (2010) Local Economic Recovery in Post-Conflict: Guidelines. ILO.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_141270.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_141270.pdf)
- Marczis, M. (2013). Tools and case to national programming on Area-Based Development for Inclusion. UNDP BRC ABD. <http://localdevelopmentforinclusion.org/assets/20-tools-and-case-to-area-based-development-programming-at-the-national-level.pdf>
- Matus, S. et al. (2013). Challenges to Participatory Development in a Rural Cross Border area of the Western Balkans. Economics of Agriculture 3.  
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1e94/1d4d990285059a5c0b17ae01933aeca79ef5.pdf>
- Sapir, A. et al. (2004). An Agenda for a Growing Europe: The Sapir Report. European Commission.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227467942\\_An\\_Agenda\\_for\\_a\\_Growing\\_Europe\\_The\\_Sapir\\_Report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227467942_An_Agenda_for_a_Growing_Europe_The_Sapir_Report)
- Santini, F. et al. (2012). Facilitating an area based development approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans. European Union. <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/facilitating-area-based-development-approach-rural-regions-western-balkans>
- Thissen, M. & van Oort, V. (2010). European place-based development policy and sustainable economic agglomeration. Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie 101: 473–480.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2010.00620.x>
- UNDP (2003). UNDP and Area-Based Development Programmes: An Overview. UNDP.
- UNDP (2007). Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development. Practice Note. UNDP.  
<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/poverty-reduction/poverty-website/supporting-capacities-for-integrated-local-development/Supporting-Capacities-Integrated-LocalDev-PracticeNote.pdf>
- UNDP (2009). Community Security and Social Cohesion: Towards a UNDP Approach. UNDP.  
[http://www.securitytransformation.org/images/documentos/687\\_UNDP\\_BCPR\\_CSSC\\_Concept\\_Paper\\_Final.pdf](http://www.securitytransformation.org/images/documentos/687_UNDP_BCPR_CSSC_Concept_Paper_Final.pdf)
- UNDP (2015). National Area-Based Development Programme ANNUAL REPORT 2015. UNDP.  
<https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/AFG/NABDP%20Annual%20Report%20-%202015.pdf>
- Vrbensky, R. (2008). Can development prevent conflict? Integrated area-based development in the Western Balkans – theory, practice and policy recommendations. London School of Economics.  
<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/23360/1/WP02.pdf>

## **Suggested citation**

Avis, W. (2019). *Place-based approaches to aid investment and development impact* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1457). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

## **About this report**

This report is based on 10 days of desk-based research. It was prepared for the Australian Government, © Australian Government 2019. The views expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GSDRC, its partner agencies or the Australian Government.

The GSDRC Research Helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of key literature and of expert thinking in response to specific questions on governance, social development, humanitarian and conflict issues. Its concise reports draw on a selection of the best recent literature available and on input from international experts. Each GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report is peer-reviewed by a member of the GSDRC team. Search hundreds of reports at [www.gsdrc.org/go/research-helpdesk](http://www.gsdrc.org/go/research-helpdesk). Contact: [helpdesk@gsdrc.org](mailto:helpdesk@gsdrc.org).