

The objective is to overcome the instability resulting from frequent reforms of public policy and clarify each partner's role. This also helps to prevent duplication of cross-border structures, partnerships and projects.

Information on each player's role must be constantly updated, firstly because staff turnover in the area of cross-border cooperation is fairly high, and secondly because cross-border partnerships depend heavily on the personal investment of officials.

#### EXAMPLE:

**The 2011 "Almanach Benelux"** provides an overview of public-sector players, cross-border initiatives and cooperation structures in several areas including economic development. The almanac also explains government structures and the distribution of competences in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and Germany.

[http://www.benelux.int/files/4213/9177/0845/almanach\\_2011-2015.pdf](http://www.benelux.int/files/4213/9177/0845/almanach_2011-2015.pdf)



↳ In complex governance configurations such as those for cross-border economic development, it is useful to **identify the coordinator or lead partner of the partnership**. There are two main options:

- A more hierarchical structure, in which one type of player acts as the lead partner or coordinator, especially with regard to drawing up a cross-

border economic development strategy. The recent reforms in France tend towards the strengthening of the role of a regional lead partner or a region/conurbation tandem.

- A more collegial network structure, in which one player acts as a neutral coordinator of the partnership, charged, in particular, with facilitating the collective work of the players. This role is closer to that of cross-border structures (Euroregions, Eurodistricts and cross-border conurbations).

## CONNECTING THE DIFFERENT TERRITORIAL LEVELS AND THEMATIC COMPONENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



↳ Identifying the value added of cross-border economic development consists also in **defining the right territorial level depending on the issue**, while maintaining some flexibility in the definition of scope.

- **The employment area level** – cross-border cities and conurbations, Eurodistricts, cross-border nature parks, etc. – is relevant for spatial policy and planning: urban transport, land use, business areas and ordinary public services.

- **The regional level** – Euroregions (Greater Region, Aquitaine-Euskadi) is especially relevant for innovation and research, clusters, major transport infrastructures (e.g. airports or regional transport). Euroregional strategies for innovation or economic and territorial development may be defined at this level.

- **The national and European levels** are where the main structures for laws, cohesion, redistribution, etc. may be found. For cross-border economic development purposes, what is important is inter-governmental coordination (coordination of tax laws, major transport infrastructures, TEN-T, and energy, TEN-E, etc.).

The relevant cooperation level may differ depending on the economic sector and actual conditions in the cross-border territory. In general, cooperation levels are broader (regional to global) in more technology intensive areas. However, a more localised approach may be more appropriate for rural or presential economic sectors, which are typical in some less easily accessible border areas (e.g. mountain regions) where there is often a predominance of small SMEs.



↳ Given the large number of public and private-sector partners potentially involved in economic development, it is more pragmatic to **create flexible and adaptable partnerships**, to avoid overly complex governance configurations.

When drawing up economic strategies or action plans for a particular sector or area, for example, it is more efficient to start from a broad scope of possible cooperation, with informal governance, and from there form smaller partnerships.

#### EXAMPLE:

**The TTR-ELAt (Top Technology Region/Eindhoven-Leuven-Aachen triangle)** cross-border region was created in 2009 from the merger of TTR and ELAt, two economic projects in a region considered by the OECD to be an "innovation leader". It spans three countries (B/NL/D), six regions and six cities that collaborate to develop cross-border connections in three sectors: chemicals and innovative materials, high-tech systems and life sciences. This collaboration is more pragmatic than formal, leading notably to the set-up of ad-hoc sub-groups or bilateral cooperation on specific issues. It is "à la carte" cooperation, based on voluntary participation and smart specialisation.

<http://www.oecd.org/gov/regional-policy/publicationsdocuments/TTR-ELAt.pdf>