

An initial investment is needed to get to know one's neighbours and their mode of functioning before **working with them, on their soil or for them** – three of the main types of relationship between economic players that the border can give rise to.

Beyond that, public-sector players can take action in two (potentially complementary) ways:

- First, they can decide to support their businesses or nationals on the other side of the border, and encourage them to access the neighbouring market (commercial opportunities, labour market, etc.). In this case, it is the market that is the engine for cross-border integration. Here, the public action is more “border region” than cross-border in nature.
- Second, they can put a system of cross-border governance in place, regarding the cross-border territory as a whole, where in particular joint economic action can be encouraged for the benefit of both sides. This requires the ability to know the territory (difficulties linked to the absence of appropriate statistics in cross-border settings) and also to jointly decide on actions to implement. Here, cross-border integration is not only economic but also political in nature. This type of set-up is not common, but we can see the beginnings of it in territories such as the Euregio Meuse-Rhine.

Cross-border cooperation sometimes comes up against differing conceptions of its nature, between the view that economic development should be left solely to market forces and one in which development is also fostered by public intervention. In France, the public-sector players – the territorial authorities, national government and chambers of commerce and industry – are very active in territorial planning and economic development (vocational training, support for business creation, development aimed at international markets, etc.). In neighbouring countries, public intervention is sometimes less extensive in the area of economic development (e.g. Switzerland), where however it focuses on creating favourable framework conditions (infrastructure, taxes). Often, less public intervention is also observed when a territory's economy is flourishing.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This introduction to economic development in cross-border territories starts by presenting nine portraits of different territories, mainly based on interviews conducted by the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière during the course of this project and that briefly set out the cross-border economic relationships, the framework conditions, the labour market and the players involved in economic development.

The second section comprises a cross-cutting analysis of the different aspects of cross-border economic development, which draws general conclusions from the comparison of the territories studied; in particular, it discusses public action in the French context at a time when it is the subject of far-reaching reforms affecting the areas of economic development and employment.

In order to illustrate cross-border economic realities in greater detail, ten good practices factsheets are appended to this introduction. They present exemplary or innovative projects and partnership initiatives that may serve as inspiration for other cross-border territories.

