



IN A NUTSHELL...

Cross-border strategies must translate the concept of “co-opetition” into action. This can take a variety of different forms – from a unilateral approach aimed at supporting economic development on just one side of the border, potentially involving the identification of opportunities in the neighbouring country (a competitive “border region strategy”), to a co-construction approach (a cooperative “crossborder strategy”). These two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but the second (cooperation) is more complex and takes longer to elaborate and implement, both politically and technically (with a lack of objective data on necessary cross-border cooperation).

Regional innovation strategies, which are a more recent development, are often more conducive to the establishment of cross-border partnerships. Indeed, innovation is a more specialised area, which makes it easier to create networks of research laboratories, universities and businesses which straddle the border, developing such partnerships in order to achieve the transfer of technology. Prior technology transfer, the relative lack of economic competition in terms of production and marketing fosters cooperation.

While a fully cooperative economic development strategy is not necessarily possible, a crossborder territorial development strategy addressing the local conditions governing economic development is both possible and desirable in all of France's border regions. Along France's northern and eastern borders in particular, which are characterised by competitiveness gaps and strong economic competition, which make economic cooperation difficult, such a cooperative territorial development strategy could enable a win-win outcome, at least as regards this aspect of cooperation.