

Effective Metropolitan Cooperation in Central Europe

From Diversity to Mutual Collaborative Learning

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



Co-funded by
the European Union

MECOG-CE

PROJECT FINAL MEETING
Brno | 18-19 March 2026

Robert Pyka, Zuzanna Neuve-Église, Krzysztof
Bierwiazzonek, Małgorzata Suchacka

Agenda

1. The overall approach to the analytical work
2. Best tools identified, their categorisation and transferability potential
3. Summary of key findings and lessons learned



1. The overall approach to the analytical work

1. The overall approach to the analytical work

1.1 Shift in the rationale of metropolitan cooperation

From an emphasis on

- Economic **growth** and **competitiveness** as the primary drivers of metropolitan cooperation
- Dependence on **globally circulating resources** and weak links with **regional hinterlands**
- The **extraction** of local resources within a **linear economic** model

towards a broader focus on

- Metropolitan cooperation focused on **resilience, sustainability, and security**
- Stronger **cooperation** with peri-urban and rural areas enhancing **autonomy** and **self-sufficiency**
- A **circular economy** approach based on urban and **metropolitan metabolism**



1. The overall approach to the analytical work

1.2 Shift toward more participatory metropolitan cooperation

From an emphasis on

- New Public Management focused on **efficiency, hierarchy** and **private-sector management tools**
- **Institution-centred**, rigid, stability-oriented metropolitan governance

towards a broader focus on

- New Public Governance emphasising **collaboration, participation**, and networks
- Linking formal institutions with **bottom-up initiatives** from the private, social and community sectors
- More flexible, inclusive, and **innovative metropolitan development**



1. The overall approach to the analytical work

1.3 Diverse Paths, Shared Learning

- Central European **metropolises vary** in institutionalisation and political empowerment
- **Western metropolises** (e.g., Torino, Stuttgart) have **long-established structures** but reconsider their institutional oriented trajectories
- **Eastern metropolises** (e.g., Brno, Katowice) followed **accelerated post-1989 paths**, supported by EU instruments like **ITIs**.
- Differences create **opportunities for mutual learning**:
the East seeks political autonomy;
the West seeks flexible, participatory cooperation.



1. The overall approach to the analytical work

1.4 Metropolitan space of dialogue and cooperation

- These assumptions determined our analytic approach based on the **perspective of a metropolitan space of dialogue and cooperation**

Metropolitan dialogue spaces include interactions between public and private actors operating at different territorial levels. Such dialogue emerges when actors recognise their mutual interdependence and the need to coordinate goals and actions beyond the local level.

- This approach enabled us to understand **how cooperation operates in practice**, regardless of the level of formal institutionalisation or political empowerment.
- We discovered that every partner metropolitan area has **interesting solutions to share** and that mutual learning is possible.





MATRIX FOR IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES ENHANCING METROPOLITAN COOPERATION

Please provide contact details of an editing person:

A. National context		Short description / explanation (up to 200 words)	
1.	Level of autonomy of municipalities in terms of:	1.1 Budget resources*	* Please indicate shortly what the main sources of municipalities' revenue are. If share of transfers from the central budget, and the share of own revenues (whose revenues are controlled by local authorities)?
		1.2 Responsibilities / competences*	* Please indicate shortly the scope of competences of municipalities (main areas have a general competence clause, e.g. they can determine their own tasks if they have reserved for other local government units)?
2.	Strength of local / metropolitan leadership and its influence at the national level	2.1.1 Strength of local leadership*	* Please indicate shortly the position and legitimization of political power of representatives (mayors, presidents etc.) (e.g. direct/indirect elections)?
		2.1.2 Strength of metropolitan leadership*	* If applicable, please indicate shortly
		2.2.1 Presence of official municipal representatives (chancellors, mayors, etc.) in central government bodies*	* If applicable, please indicate shortly
		2.2.2 Presence of official metropolitan representatives in central government bodies*	* If applicable, please indicate shortly
3.	Presence and importance of a metropolitan issue in the national political agenda	* If applicable, please try to specify shortly in what way the metropolitan issue is the national political agenda (all kinds of expression of the political will to empowerment of the metropolitan level, laws, policies, strategies, or decisions/declarations etc. at the national level)? Please present briefly the scope metropolitan cooperation and governance in the country. You can indicate the evolution of metropolitan governance in the national context.	

Best practices (flagship projects / activities) potentially transferable to other MA in CE



6. Based on point 6.1, please describe up to 5 examples of flagship projects / activities resulting from the metropolitan cooperation and dialogue with no more than 500 characters.

6.1 Name of project, policy, tool etc.	6.2 Main goals, organisation, functioning	6.3 Metropolitan impact and results	6.4 Innovative aspect	6.5 Involvement of stakeholders	6.6 Potential of transferability
1.		*Please include the type of results (short-term / long-term; direct / indirect (outcomes of cooperation, shared knowledge...))			*Please specify if the potentials, know-edges and give a justification for your choice.
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Subject of metropolitan cooperation and dialogue



Mark "X" if applicable, describe the action range in the field and provide examples of tools and best practices. If needed, please add additional areas of intervention at the end of the table as a separate row.

4.1 Domains / areas of intervention	Range of action/competence within the domain (short description up to 200 words)	Tools and good practices (short description up to 300 words)	General strategy including a given domain or sectorial strategic document
		* Please describe briefly projects/policies/tool types	*Please specify a type of document, provide the link
4.1.1 Spatial Planning			
4.1.2 Regional Development (growth, innovation, R&D, etc.)			
4.1.3 Housing			
4.1.4 Waste management			
4.1.5 Water Management			
4.1.6 Energy			
4.1.7 Education			
4.1.8 Tourism & Leisure			

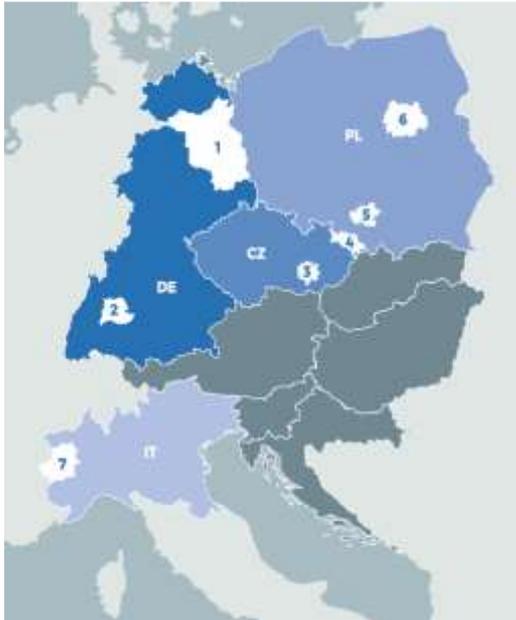
2. Best tools identified, their categorisation and transferability potential

From Analytical Framework to Empirical Evidence

Nearly **80** tools and practices

Objectives:

- ❖ to facilitate the exchange of resources and experiences grounded in flagship practices
- ❖ to strengthen metropolitan partnerships, build governance capacity and enable bottom-up validation and adaptation

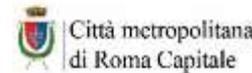


Identified practices in CE MAs N=47

- DE** ¹ Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Area
- DE** ² Stuttgart Region
- CZ** ³ Brno Metropolitan Area
- CZ** ⁴ Ostrava Metropolitan Area
- PL** ⁵ Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area
- PL** ⁶ Warsaw Metropolitan Area
- IT** ⁷ Turin Metropolitan Area

Identified practices in MAs outside CE N=29

- Italy, France, Great Britain, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands



Identified best tools & practices

14 thematic domains

➤ Transport / Mobility	10
➤ Education	9
➤ Regional Development	8
➤ Management of metropolitan area	6
➤ Culture & heritage, metropolitan identity	4
➤ Social policy / inclusion	3
➤ Spatial planning	3
➤ Promotion & territorial marketing	2
➤ Green infrastructure / landscape	2
➤ Energy	2
➤ Revitalisation	2
➤ Housing	1
➤ Toursim & Leisure	1
➤ Waste management	1



3 main analytical dimensions

- thematic domains & major contemporary challenges (thematic / procedural)
- innovative or added value in specific regional context
- potential for transferability (chances / barriers to the transfer)

Practices reflect the shift:

- from growth logic
→ toward **resilience, sustainability
& circular economy**
- from hierarchical governance
→ toward **participatory
models of cooperation**



More information

Storymaps MECOG-CE

Our idea

What if Central European metropolitan areas **join forces and develop solutions** for better metropolitan cooperation and governance?



Our solution

New solutions will be **jointly developed** and will be based on existing best practices and tools for enhancing metropolitan cooperation. These will be **tested and applied** in partner metropolitan areas.

Which partners are part of MECOG-CE?



Executive Summary

D.121
Summary of existing tools/best practices at partner's MA for enhancing metropolitan cooperation.

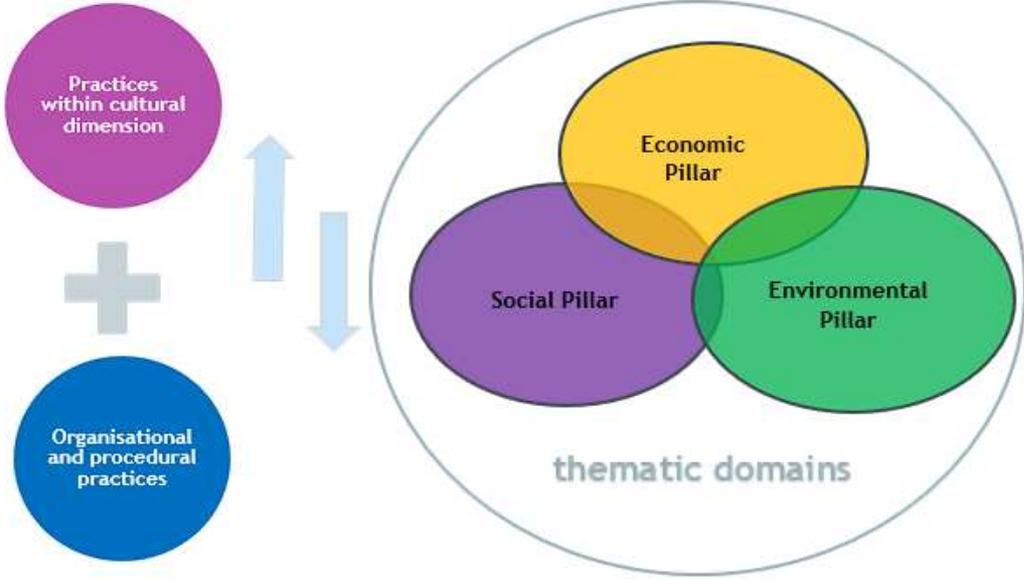
Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area



Dimension 1 - Main groups of identified best tools and practices with reference to three pillars of sustainable development

ITI as a window of opportunity

Sustainable metropolitan area



Key thematic challenges



10 practices

sustainable mobility



9 practices

lack of trust and cooperation among MA members



9 practices

social inequality

Best practices - change in the metropolitan cooperation rationale

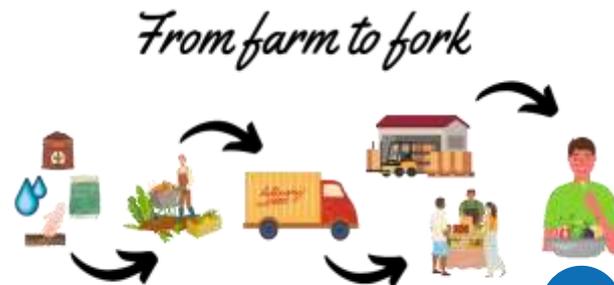
🍌 EXAMPLE: Food Districts: Building Metropolitan Resilience (Turin)



- 3-year District Plan
- Urban-rural cooperation
- Short supply chains
- Sustainable agriculture
- Identity-building dimension

Represents:

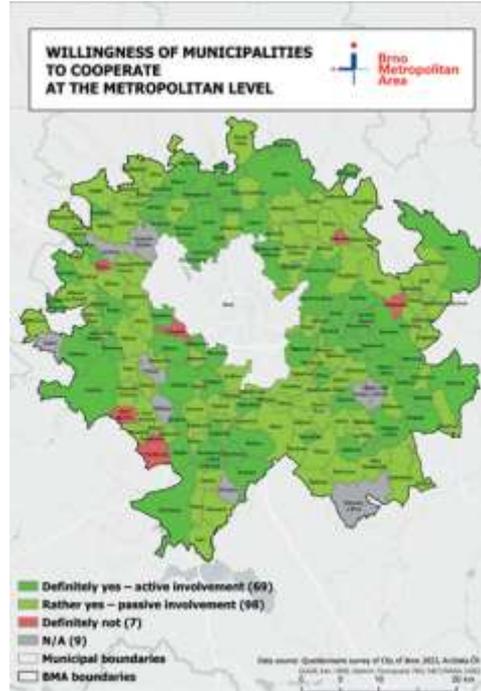
- Circular economy logic
- Metropolitan metabolism approach



Other examples of best tools & practices



Dolní Vítkovice (Ostrava MA)



Questionnaire Among Mayors
(Brno MA)



Prototyping Academies of the Metropolis GZM



Berlin-Brandenburg Transport Association (VBB)

Dimension 2: Innovation Patterns and Added-Value

- **innovation understood contextually** - new or added value in the metropolitan social system and not an entirely novel solution

Types of innovation:

- ❖ **organisational innovations**

Municipal Neighbourhood Forum (Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg)

- ❖ **social innovations**

Welcome Center (VRS - Stuttgart Region)

- ❖ **technological innovations**

Brno Center for Waste Recovery (Brno MA)

- ❖ **cross-cutting innovations**

Revitalisation of a former steelworks in Ostrava (Dolní Vitkovice) (Ostrava MA)

- ❖ **Universal strong advantage and added value:**

- **broad cross-sectoral cooperation**
- **participatory and user-centred approaches**

- ❖ **Key benefits for MECOG-CE partners**

- **exchange of knowledge**
- **increase in mutual trust**
- **improvement of cooperation between stakeholders**



pragmatic dimension of trust →
built through joint
implementation of projects

Dimension 3: Conditions of Successful Transfer

❖ Three-stage validation process in MECOG-CE project:

at the level of the “donor” metropolitan area → fostering bottom-up approach to decision-making
expert analysis → objectivization of the selection process
the receiver’s assessment and recontextualization

Higher transferability:

small-scale projects in education and competence-building, based on soft measures; conceptual work in the strategy design; tools within the cultural dimension of metropolisation (promotion, raising awareness, increasing participation), dialogue platforms, surveys, conceptual strategies

Lower transferability:

infrastructure-heavy projects, context-bound legal instruments

Transfer ≠ Replication

Transfer => reflexive adaptation and reconfiguration

3. Summary of key findings and lessons learned

3. Summary of key findings and lessons learned

- Central European metropolitan areas **vary** in institutionalisation and political empowerment across **historical, inter-state, and intra-state levels**.
- Development of metropolitan cooperation remains an **open, active, and unfinished process** in all the examined metropolises.
- **Soft dialogue spaces** and combining formal/informal structures **reveal actual cooperation practices**, beyond formal institutionalisation.
- Low institutionalisation can still **enable joint initiatives**; innovative governance emerges from overlapping metropolitan dialogue spaces.



3. Summary of key findings and lessons learned

- Mutual **learning is possible**, but direct transfer of tools requires their adaptation.
- Participatory approaches and **citizen engagement** are key for resilient metropolitan governance.
- All forms of territorial cooperation, including those at the metropolitan scale, **begin with dialogue**, that should continue to accompany it.
- Assuming that dialogue can be abandoned may be **a significant trap** for powerful metropolitan institutions.



Thank you!



STRENGTHENING METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE



www.interreg-central.eu/projects/mecog-ce



mecog@brno.cz

**Robert Pyka, Zuzanna Neuve-Église, Krzysztof
Bierwiazzonek, Małgorzata Suchacka**

Institute of Sociology

Observatory on Urban and Metropolitan Processes

University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)

Address: ul. Bankowa 11, 40-007 Katowice



robert.pyka@us.edu.pl



www.us.edu.pl

