

Governing Metropolitan Futures

MECOG-CE Strategy for Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



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MECOG-CE

From Vision to Implementation

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The Strategy

This Strategy provides practical guidance for improving metropolitan cooperation across Central Europe.

Metropolitan areas drive economic growth and innovation, while they are crucial for resilience and sustainability

→ They concentrate talent, infrastructure and economic activity, and they have to ensure resilience, sustainability and security/safety.

Challenges cross administrative borders

→ Mobility, housing, climate and labour markets extend beyond city limits.

Fragmentation weakens impact

→ When municipalities act separately, efficiency and strategic coherence decline.

Need for coordinated governance & joint action

→ Cooperation structures must match functional realities.



From Vision to Strategy

*The Vision defines “where we want to go,”
this Strategy defines “how we can get there.”*



Shared long-term direction

→ The Vision defines the overall ambition for metropolitan cooperation.

Stronger institutional capacity

→ It highlights the need for empowered governance structures.

Better coordination across levels

→ It promotes alignment between municipal, regional and national actors.

Alignment with EU priorities

→ It connects metropolitan development to the Green Deal and Territorial Agenda 2030.

What Is This Strategy Based On?

It is grounded in analysis, pilot testing and practical metropolitan experience.

WP1: Governance analysis

→ Comparative research on partner metropolitan systems.

WP2: Tools & good practices

→ Tested governance tools and innovative cooperation models.

Comparative European experience

→ Lessons from institutional and procedural models.

Practical tools (Annexes)

→ Ready-to-use instruments, maps and tables.



Structure of the Metropolitan Strategy

1. Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives



2. Metropolitan Territories



3. Metropolitan Governance Structure



4. Thematic Areas of Metropolitan Cooperation



5. Metropolitan Financial Schemes



6. Metropolitan Cooperation Frameworks and Stakeholders



7. Monitoring and Evaluation



8. Strategic Guidance



9. Key Takeaways

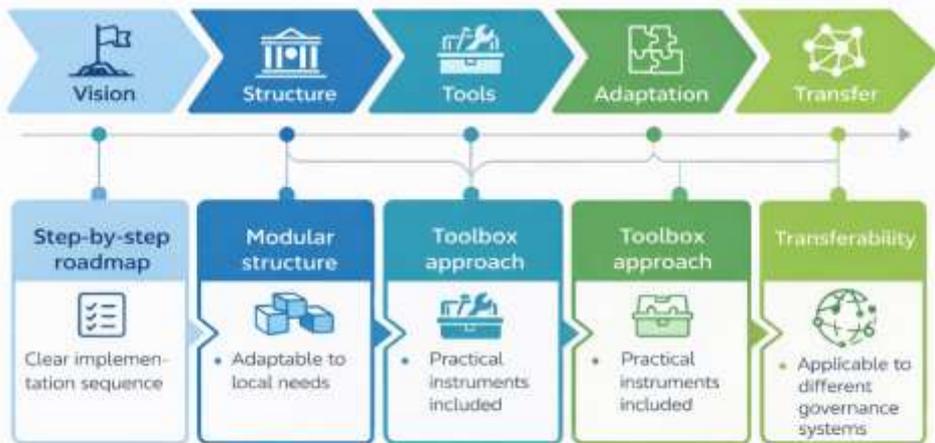


10. Annex

Metropolitan areas can use the full strategy or select relevant modules.

Strategic Guidance in Practice

Implementation Pathway



	Explanation
	Examples
	Practical steps



EXAMPLE

InfoGZM Open Metropolitan Data Observatory

GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area) has launched InfoGZM, an open metropolitan data portal and geospatial observatory that aggregates extensive administrative, environmental, demographic, economic, transport, real estate, and spatial planning data in one accessible platform. Users—including policy-makers, researchers, and residents—can explore interactive maps (e.g., 15-minute city accessibility, EV charging stations), time-series statistics (municipal budgets, population trends), and analytical reports (housing market evolution, labour flows). This centralised system enhances evidence-based promotes inter-municipal transparency, and cooperation between municipalities, researchers, and

(Source: InfoGZM official portal, 2023)



EXPLANATION

Planning philosophy

Planning philosophy shapes decision-making processes to balance shared metropolitan interests and transactional elements, fostering collaboration and effective governance.

- Berlin-Brandenburg:** Emphasizes a planning philosophy centred on shared metropolitan interest, a principle that is also applied in other participating metropolitan areas like Brno and GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area), where dialogue and decision-making processes rely on the alignment of goals among metropolitan stakeholders.
- GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area): Highlights shared metropolitan interest as the foundation for dialogue and decision-making processes, while also incorporating transactional elements.



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 6: Strengthen Stakeholder Involvement and Participatory Governance

- ✓ Enhance inclusive governance structures (metropolitan councils or committees that represent various stakeholders to coordinate regional policies).
- ✓ Engage multiple actors in collaborative planning.
- ✓ Include informal dialogues into the process of metropolitan governance.
- ✓ Utilise smart city technologies and open data initiatives to facilitate communication and transparency.
- ✓ Provide training programs for local officials, businesses, and community groups to enhance their role in governance.
- ✓ Regularly hold consultations, workshops, and public hearings to ensure continuous engagement.

7 Strategic Objectives

These seven steps are the backbone of the Strategy.

Clear Vision → Establish shared direction and measurable goals.

Optimised Territory → Define cooperation areas realistically.

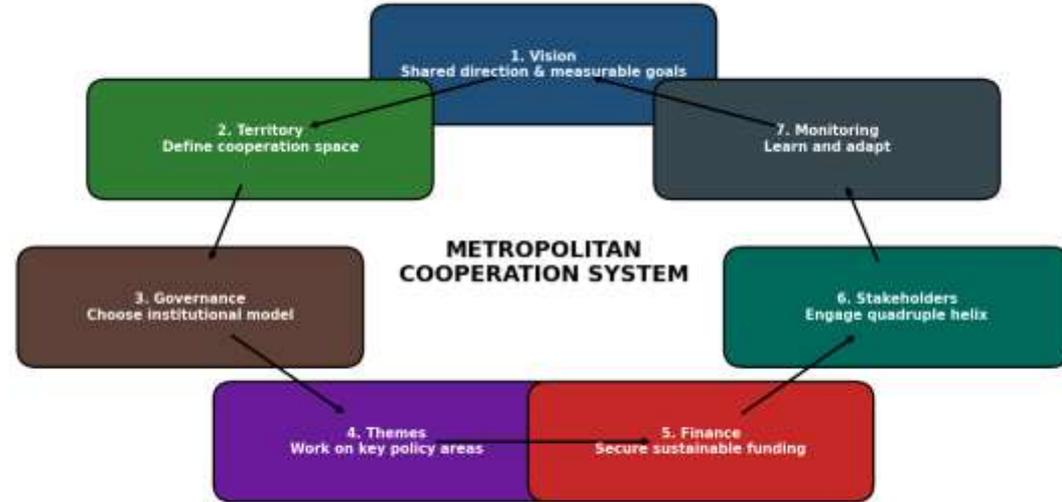
Metropolitan Governance Structure → Choose appropriate institutional or procedural model.

Integrated Thematic Cooperation → Work together on key policy areas.

Financial Schemes → Secure sustainable funding.

Stakeholder Involvement → Engage quadruple helix actors.

Monitoring & Evaluation → Ensure long-term effectiveness.



1. Clear Metropolitan Vision

A shared vision reduces fragmentation and creates political continuity beyond electoral cycles.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1



Establish a Clear Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives

Metropolitan area shall establish its own metropolitan vision and set of strategic objectives for its development and enhancement of metropolitan cooperation.

2. Optimised Metropolitan Territories

*Territorial definition is political and strategic.
Metropolitan areas should be seen
as evolving systems.*

Functional approach

→ Based on commuting flows, labour markets and mobility patterns.

Administrative approach

→ Based on legal boundaries and political agreements.

Transparent and inclusive delineation

→ Avoid exclusion and reinforce legitimacy.

Flexible multi-scalar cooperation

→ Allow concentric or overlapping cooperation areas.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Define and Optimize Metropolitan Territories



Metropolitan area has to delineate its territory based on functional urban and socio-economic linkages and, at the same time, keeping in mind that metropolitan area is a living and evolving organism.



3. Metropolitan Governance Structures

There is no universal model.

The balance between flexibility and authority is key.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3
Develop and Strengthen Governance Structures

Metropolitan area shall establish governance structure tailored to its local context and continuously strengthen its role in the territory.

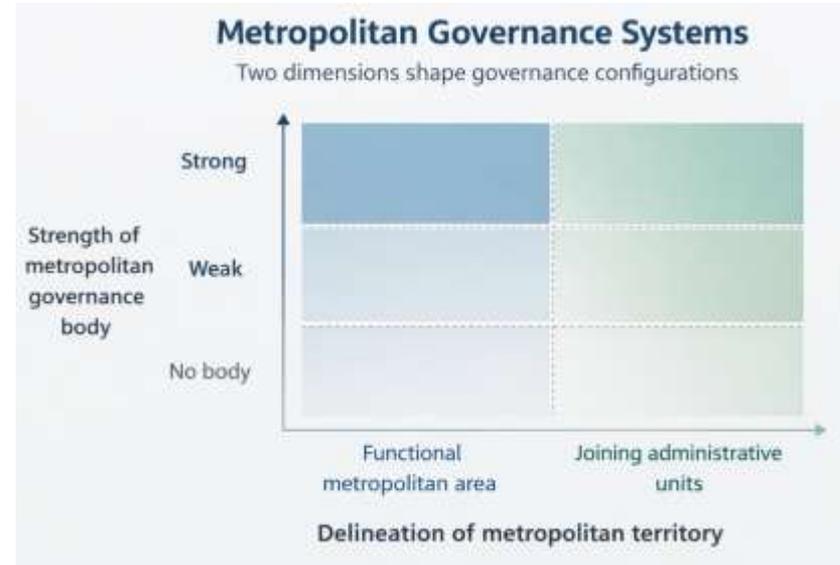
Metropolitan governance systems are shaped by two key dimensions:

1. Strength of the metropolitan governance body

- Strong metropolitan body with clear competencies
- Legally defined but politically weaker metropolitan body
- Weak metropolitan coordination structure
- No formal metropolitan governance body

2. Delineation of the metropolitan territory

- Functional metropolitan area based on real economic and mobility links
- Cooperation based on joining existing administrative units



Political Decision-Making Systems

National support strengthens institutional models, but bottom-up cooperation can also succeed.



Directly elected metropolitan bodies

→ Strong democratic legitimacy.

Delegated councils of mayors

→ Coordination through municipal representation.

Programme-based governance (e.g. ITI)

→ Cooperation structured around funding cycles.

Planning-based coordination

→ Strategic spatial frameworks replace formal institutions.

4. Integrate Thematic Cooperation

Thematic integration makes cooperation tangible.

Regional development

→ Strengthen economic competitiveness and innovation.

Transport & mobility

→ Improve connectivity and sustainability.

Spatial planning

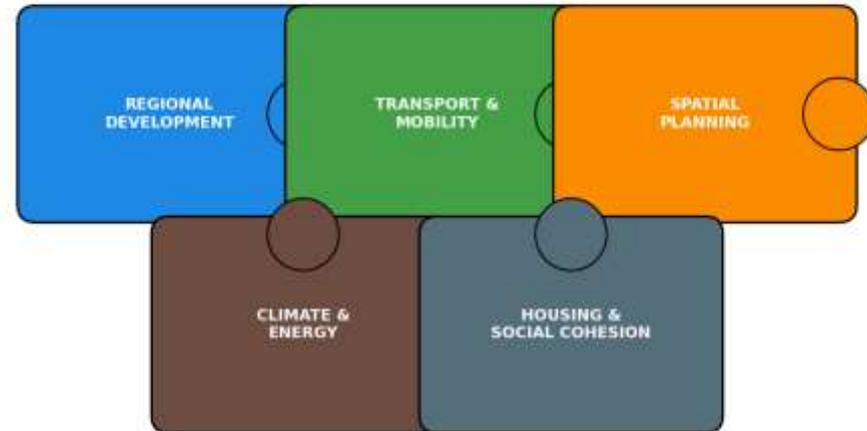
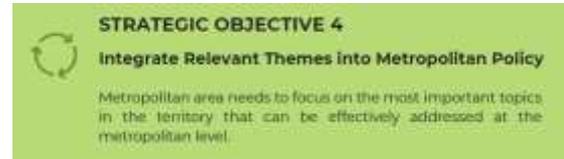
→ Coordinate land use and infrastructure.

Climate & energy

→ Support resilience and transition goals.

Housing & social cohesion

→ Address affordability and inequality.



5. Financial Schemes

Financial sustainability determines whether metropolitan cooperation is operational or symbolic.

Strong authority with own budget

→ Direct taxation or stable transfers.

Institutionalised cooperation without own budget

→ Project-based financing, often EU-supported.

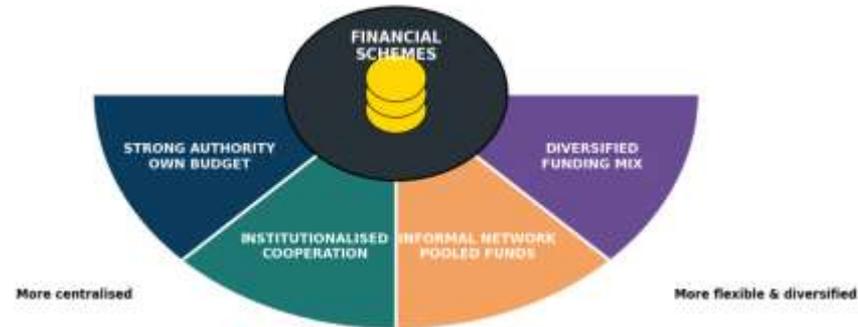
Informal network with pooled funds

→ Voluntary municipal contributions.

Diversified funding mix

→ Combine EU funds, national support, PPPs and innovative finance.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5
Establish Metropolitan Financial Schemes
Metropolitan area has to secure appropriate funding for its development, preferably from various sources.



6. Stakeholder Involvement

*Metropolitan governance is relational.
Trust-building is as important as institutional design.*

Government actors

→ Provide political leadership and coordination.

Business sector

→ Contribute investment and innovation.

Academia

→ Offer evidence-based expertise.

Civil society

→ Strengthen legitimacy and social inclusion.

Collaborative tools

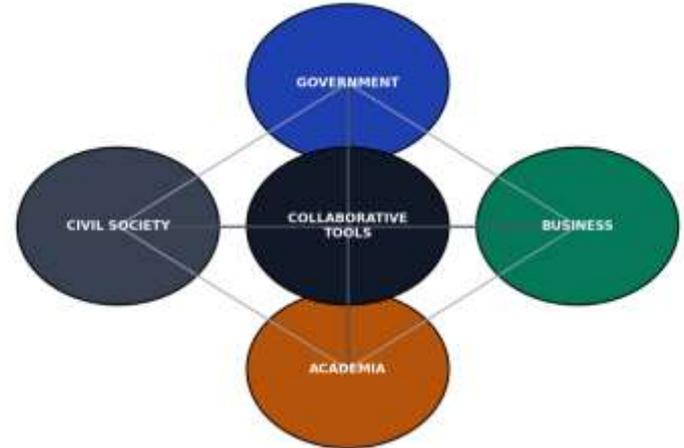
→ Use dialogue forums, digital platforms and prototyping.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

Strengthen Stakeholder Involvement and Participatory Governance

Metropolitan area shall involve different stakeholders in the development of the territory and focus on several means of participatory governance.



7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring transforms strategy into a continuous learning process.

Define clear indicators

→ Measure cooperation outcomes.

Track implementation

→ Follow progress regularly.

Adjust governance structures

→ Improve based on evidence.

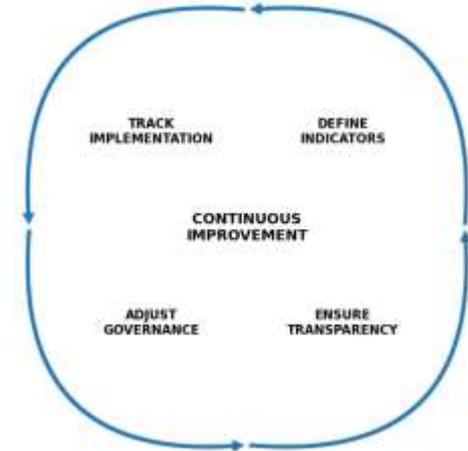
Ensure transparency

→ Maintain stakeholder trust.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7
Monitor and Evaluate Metropolitan Strategy

Metropolitan area needs to establish systems for the proper monitoring and evaluation of metropolitan strategy to support evidence-based decision-making.



Strategic Guidance

The Strategic Guidance provides a structured approach to enhancing metropolitan governance, fostering collaboration, and implementing sustainable policies that align with European and international frameworks.

It includes strategic objectives and the steps connected to them.

Excerpt from the Strategy: 2 out of the 7 Objectives



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIC STEPS

Strategic objective 1: Establish a Clear Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives

- Formulate a shared metropolitan vision. It can build upon the common framework developed within the MECOG-CE initiative.
- Set measurable objectives for strengthening metropolitan cooperation.
- Conduct a metropolitan analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strategic objective 2: Define and Optimise Metropolitan Territories

- Identify the metropolitan cooperation area(s).
- Apply a territorial approach that balances institutional realities with functional interdependencies.
- Propose legal or policy mechanisms to formalise the metropolitan area at national or regional level.
- Assess the level of municipal and stakeholder commitment to cooperation, as an input for governance design.

Putting Strategy Into Action



Metropolitan cooperation is not automatic

→ It requires deliberate institutional effort



Design it consciously

→ Build appropriate structures



Finance it sustainably

→ Secure predictable funding



Continuously improve it

→ Adapt and learn over time



Strengthen Your Metropolitan Cooperation

This strategy is intended as a practical tool for metropolitan cooperation.

We encourage you to use it in your work and disseminate it within your networks.

A printed copy is included in your welcome package.



Thank you for your attention

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