



MECOG-CE

Strategy for Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation and Governance in Central Europe

A practical guide for metropolitan planning



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Summary

This strategic document outlines a comprehensive approach to strengthening metropolitan governance, cooperation, and planning across Central European metropolitan areas, with a particular focus on the challenges and opportunities faced by the MECOG-CE partner metropolitan areas and regions. The strategy reflects both shared spatial dynamics and specific local contexts.

Key themes include the development of flexible metropolitan territories and structures, improved territorial cooperation frameworks, and tools for better planning, monitoring, and coordination. The document identifies the need for more integrated planning processes, stronger institutional anchoring, and the scaling-up of good practices in data usage, stakeholder engagement, and project implementation.

Through a combination of analytical tools, real-world case studies, and policy recommendations, the strategy sets out **practical steps for enhancing metropolitan capacity**. These include fostering dialogue between levels of government, building strategic spatial visions, and designing joint investment and implementation mechanisms. Special emphasis is placed on cross-sectoral integration, the role of soft governance tools, and the importance of aligning metropolitan priorities with European policy goals such as the Green Deal and Territorial Agenda 2030.

Overall, the strategy advocates for a more institutionalized, inclusive, and outcomes-oriented approach to metropolitan development, promoting cooperation not only within core urban areas but also across functional territories and urban-rural linkages.

More concretely, the document **provides strategic guidance** for enhancement of metropolitan areas through the inclusion of seven strategic objectives focusing on important metropolitan aspects:

1. Establish a **Clear Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives**,
2. Define and Optimize **Metropolitan Territories**,
3. Develop and Strengthen **Governance Structures**,
4. Integrate **Relevant Themes into Metropolitan Policy**,
5. Establish **Metropolitan Financial Schemes**,
6. Strengthen **Stakeholder Involvement and Participatory Governance**,
7. **Monitor and Evaluate** Metropolitan Strategy.

Introduction

The **Strategy for Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation and Governance** developed within the MECOG-CE project aims to provide a structured, actionable framework to enhance cooperation and governance across Central Europe's metropolitan areas. By addressing governance models, identifying best practices, and proposing practical approaches, the Strategy supports the development of more integrated and effective metropolitan dialogue and structures, while also taking emerging resiliency considerations into account.

Developed collaboratively by project partners and guided by the Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI) as the Work Package (WP) 3 leader, the Strategy builds on insights from WP1 and WP2. It offers a **flexible methodology that can be adopted in full or applied in parts by existing or newly emerging metropolitan areas** (MAs) to address specific governance needs. A key focus is on outlining challenges, trends, and solutions for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance while incorporating lessons learned from pilot actions (Deliverable 2.3.1 Report on pilot actions) and the implementation of selected governance tools (Deliverable 2.3.2 Catalogue of newly developed solutions), and informing the Action Plans (APs) prepared by partner metropolitan areas, which translate the strategic framework into concrete, locally adapted steps.

This document is **structured into several key sections** starting with definition of its strategic objectives and related strategic steps. It first defines the metropolitan vision and strategic objectives, as well as the concept and scope of metropolitan areas, and then examines governance models. It also explores financial mechanisms, thematic elements, cooperation frameworks, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring mechanisms.



Approaching Metropolitan Strategy

The Strategy for Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation and Governance in Central Europe provides a **structured approach to improving governance frameworks and actions across metropolitan areas**. Recognising that metropolitan challenges vary significantly, there is no “one size fits all” solution. Instead, multiple governance structures may be required within a single urban area to effectively address different challenges. For instance, a clearly defined commuting area may need a strong spatial planning and mobility governance body, while a broader economic cooperation area may function more effectively under a looser, planning-based framework.

The strategy **emphasizes the need for flexibility in governance models**, allowing metropolitan areas to develop tailored cooperation structures that address their specific needs. This approach builds on a key assumption formulated in D1.2.1. (Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation) that metropolitan governance is not confined to formal institutions, but may also take the form of flexible cooperation mechanisms and structured dialogue spaces. Even in the absence of institutionalised governance systems, such dialogue platforms can foster communication, trust-building, and joint decision-making across municipal and sectoral boundaries.

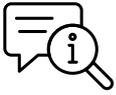
By building on insights from European metropolitan areas and MECOG-CE project partners, this document **serves as a guide for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance**, ensuring effective coordination, and fostering long-term urban resilience.

This document focuses on the structural and thematic elements necessary for effective metropolitan governance, including:

	Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives defining a shared long-term framework to guide coordinated metropolitan development
	Metropolitan Territory defining the spatial scope of cooperation

	<p>Governance Systems governance mechanisms, and decision-making structures</p>
	<p>Financial Schemes securing sustainable funding for metropolitan cooperation</p>
	<p>Thematic Elements areas of potential cooperation among municipalities within the MA, reflecting shared priorities or common challenges</p>
	<p>Stakeholder Involvement cooperation frameworks, ensuring an integrated approach to governance</p>
	<p>Monitoring and Evaluation assessing the effectiveness of governance structures</p>
	<p>Strategic Guidance summarising practical steps for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance</p>
	<p>Key Takeaways summarising main insights to inform strategic metropolitan planning</p>

Each of the structural elements (chapters) starts with a strategic objective and description of the given topic. This understanding is supported by explanations and examples, while the end of each chapter outlines the necessary strategic steps for implementation and reaching the strategic objectives.

	Explanation
	Examples
	Practical steps

The document also contains three annexes: one including tools, another contains tables, and the last one includes maps. The section 8 serves as a strategic guidance for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance. This strategy ensures that each user can tailor the toolkit to their individual challenges, while also considering the comprehensive nature of metropolitan area processes.

	Tools
	Tables
	Maps

The design allows users to navigate the content according to their specific needs and areas of interest.

1. Metropolitan Vision and Strategic Objectives

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.

A clear and shared metropolitan vision is a foundational element of effective metropolitan governance. It offers a unifying direction for diverse municipalities, enables alignment of sectoral and territorial strategies, and supports the articulation of joint long-term objectives. Without such a vision, metropolitan cooperation risks becoming fragmented or reactive. This section explores the functions and added value of a metropolitan vision, and how it can serve as a strategic anchor across the planning and implementation cycle.

1.1 Metropolitan Vision

Metropolitan areas **function as integrated urban regions**, connecting cities, towns, and their surrounding territories through shared labour markets, a common market of goods and services and through a shared transport and energy infrastructure. As **key hubs of economic and social activity**, they require well-structured governance mechanisms to foster collaboration among public, private, and civic actors.

Metropolitan territory represents large urban areas that encompass a central urban core and its surrounding suburban, peri-urban, or rural areas, interconnected through economic, social, and environmental networks. It is usually related with a specific scale of governance and planning with the broader functional urban area recognized in key policy documents and initiatives.

According to **The New Leipzig Charter** (2020), metropolitan areas are a particular type of functional area, characterized by intricate networks of

interdependencies and partnerships essential for sustainable and resilient urban development. These areas are viewed as hubs of economic vitality, in contrast to often declining rural regions, and require integrated territorial policies for coordinated development.

The **New Urban Agenda** (2016) emphasizes metropolitan territories as crucial for achieving coherence between sectoral policies across administrative boundaries, integrating urban and territorial planning strategies. This perspective highlights urban-rural partnerships and inter-municipal cooperation, recognizing metropolitan areas as pivotal in addressing urban challenges, fostering sustainable development, and promoting territorial cohesion.

Documents like the **OECD Principles on Urban Policy** (2019) further identify metropolitan areas as vital for economic growth and public service delivery, and caution that fragmented metropolitan governance can impede effective collaboration and policy implementation.

While not always explicitly labelled as "metropolitan," these territories are often addressed through the lens of functional urban areas due to their importance in facilitating cooperation among local authorities, enhancing urban-rural linkages, and driving integrated regional development.

The **MECOG-CE Common Metropolitan Vision** advocates for stronger institutional capacity and policy recognition of metropolitan areas. It outlines three core components:

1. **Vision for Metropolitan Areas** – Envisions a well-coordinated and sustainable metropolitan governance framework that effectively supports societal needs and policy objectives.
2. **Metropolitan Strengths and Commitments** – Highlights existing resources, skills, and capacities within metropolitan societies to address challenges and implement strategic goals.
3. **Metropolitan Empowerment** – Identifies governance and procedural challenges while proposing solutions to enhance cooperation, efficiency, and decision-making.

These components were developed based on analytical work conducted in the earlier phases of the MECOG-CE project, specifically the identification of metropolitan-specific challenges and governance practices. For more detailed analysis, see MECOG-CE D.1.1.1 Identification of challenges specific for central European MAs and D.1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation.

By prioritizing the metropolitan dimension in policymaking, this vision aims to create resilient, inclusive, and well-governed metropolitan areas that can effectively tackle societal challenges and contribute to sustainable development.



EXAMPLE

The MECOG-CE Common Metropolitan Vision

The Common Metropolitan Vision recognizes metropolitan areas as:

- Functional urban regions comprising agglomerations of densely populated urban cores and their surrounding territories, fostering integrated labour and housing markets, and interconnected through commuting and mobility;
- Urbanized spaces encompassing large cities with pivotal roles in international and national development, alongside towns serving as local and regional centres;
- Surrounding territories of suburban and rural settlements, areas designated for agriculture and forestry, nature protection zones, and spaces dedicated to recreation;
- Being shaped by governance mechanisms facilitating metropolitan cooperation among diverse public, private, and citizen stakeholders.

(Source: MECOG-CE Common Metropolitan Vision)

1.2 Strategic Objectives

The objectives of the Strategy for strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance in Central Europe focus on enhancing governance structures, optimizing metropolitan territories, and improving cooperation frameworks to foster more integrated and efficient urban development. Strengthening governance structures **involves developing flexible and robust metropolitan governance frameworks** that accommodate the specific needs of each urban area. This includes **promoting multilevel governance** to ensure coordination between local, regional, and national authorities while also enhancing institutional capacity for effective decision-making and policy implementation.

The Strategy recognises that metropolitan governance does not depend solely on formal institutions. Metropolitan cooperation can also be **built through dynamic and evolving dialogue spaces** that facilitate communication,

coordination, and trust across territorial and institutional boundaries. These dialogue spaces, whether formalised or informal, are essential for enabling stakeholder interaction, joint learning, and agile governance responses in complex metropolitan contexts.

A **key objective** is to define and optimise metropolitan territories by establishing territorial delineations based on functional urban areas and socio-economic linkages. At the same time, the metropolitan area must be understood as a living and evolving organism. Its delineation cannot be definitive or exclusionary—drawing rigid lines between those “in” and “out.” Instead, it is important to promote flexible, multi-scalar cooperation structures, imagined as concentric circles radiating from the metropolitan core. These can accommodate various levels of collaboration, from strong institutional integration at the centre to soft cooperation in more peripheral zones. Such a framework allows for adaptability over time and acknowledges that the effects of policies often extend beyond formal metropolitan boundaries. The interdependence between urban centres and their rural hinterlands, an essential factor for long-term metropolitan resilience in the face of uncertainty, crisis, or supply chain disruption.

Therefore, it is crucial to improve metropolitan cooperation frameworks by **supporting both voluntary and legally mandated models**. Developing mechanisms for strategic planning, resource sharing, and service integration across metropolitan areas will help overcome institutional fragmentation and foster stronger collaboration among municipalities.

In addition to governance and territorial coordination, developing **appropriate financial schemes is essential** to ensure the viability and sustainability of metropolitan cooperation. One key objective is to promote the establishment of diversified and resilient financial frameworks that can support integrated investments across municipal boundaries. This includes encouraging both formal and informal metropolitan structures to explore funding instruments such as joint metropolitan funds, shared tax revenue models, intergovernmental transfers, and access to EU and national programs (e.g., Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)). Moreover, metropolitan areas should be empowered to engage in innovative financing, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), municipal bonds, and green finance instruments. Tailoring financial mechanisms to the institutional maturity of each metropolitan area helps to overcome fiscal fragmentation, reduce dependency on ad hoc funding, and foster long-term strategic planning. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that metropolitan governance is not only institutionally robust but also financially empowered to deliver effective, inclusive, and sustainable development.

Another crucial goal is to **enhance stakeholder involvement and participatory governance** by actively engaging actors from all parts of the quadruple helix: local governments, businesses, civil society, and academia. This model fosters a more systemic, inclusive, and innovation-oriented approach to metropolitan planning and decision-making. Strengthening public participation through transparent decision-making and monitoring mechanisms is essential, as is facilitating ongoing knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives across these sectors. By embedding the quadruple helix in metropolitan governance, stakeholders can jointly co-create strategies, improve legitimacy, and build long-term trust and cooperation.

Ensuring **sustainable and resilient metropolitan development** is a further fundamental objective. This involves promoting sustainable mobility, affordable housing, climate adaptation and circular economy principles.

Implementing **innovative solutions** for urban planning that acknowledge environmental and resource constraints, and prioritise long-term resilience, can significantly enhance sustainable urban development. Rather than promoting unlimited growth, this approach encourages more balanced and sustainability-driven development, where economic, social, and environmental objectives are carefully aligned. In this sense, 'limits to growth' are understood not as absolute restrictions, but as guiding principles to avoid overexploitation of land, energy, and infrastructure capacity, and to ensure spatial, ecological, and social equity across metropolitan territories.

This perspective also implies the **need to better coordinate sectoral strategies**, such as housing, transport, and energy, with broader metropolitan development goals, ensuring that urban growth remains within the carrying capacity of natural and infrastructural systems. By doing so, metropolitan cooperation can be strengthened in line with European and international urban development frameworks, such as the New Leipzig Charter and the EU Urban Agenda.

Establishing **comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks** will be essential in tracking the outcomes of metropolitan cooperation, ensuring continuous improvement and long-term success in fostering well-functioning, cohesive metropolitan areas across Europe.

Furthermore, the strategy aims to align metropolitan development efforts with other overarching European policy goals, such as the European Green Deal and the Territorial Agenda 2030, thereby reinforcing the contribution of metropolitan cooperation to a greener, more balanced, and inclusive Europe.



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the 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.



GZM Metropolis (Upper Silesia)

2. Metropolitan Territories

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.

Defining the territorial scope of a metropolitan area is not merely a technical exercise - it directly impacts the scope of cooperation, inclusiveness, and legitimacy of governance structures. The delineation determines who participates in decision-making, which policies are coordinated, and how resources are allocated. This section presents different methods for defining metropolitan territories and reflects on their practical and political implications for integrated governance.

The delineation of metropolitan areas can be approached in various ways, and combining different methods may lead to more accurate and functionally meaningful boundaries. Such combinations can help reflect both institutional structures and real-world socioeconomic interdependencies, thereby strengthening the strategic relevance of metropolitan planning. The most commonly used approaches are the following:

- **Functional, proximity-based approach:** In this case, metropolitan areas are put together from municipalities, based on economic and social linkages, such as employment, housing, commuting patterns, often using measures such as travel times to determine which peripheral areas should be included within the metropolitan boundary. (Tool can be found in the Appendix 1.)
- **Administrative approach, based on existing administrative units:** This metropolitan area definition relies on joining together existing territorial administrative units, such as a city, counties or provinces, to define the boundaries of metropolitan areas. The area is often defined by law.

According to Bosker, Roberts and Park (2018) “the definition of metro areas matters for the identification of their boundaries, which, in turn, matters both for policy and for the estimation of key empirical relationships that are fundamental to our understanding of how urban economies work.”

Metropolitan delimitation is not only a matter of technical analysis but also a political and normative act. Boundaries must be defined in a way that avoids reinforcing divisions or marginalising certain communities or municipalities. Rather than aiming for fixed or rigid lines, it is often more appropriate to acknowledge the "fuzzy" nature of metropolitan territories, where different functions (e.g. mobility, housing, economic development) may correspond to different functional urban areas (FUAs). Therefore, any approach to defining metropolitan boundaries should be **transparent, inclusive, and sensitive to local identities and governance structures**, ensuring that no stakeholder is inadvertently excluded from the benefits or responsibilities of metropolitan cooperation.

It is clear that for the same urban area many different territorial collaboration areas can be defined according to different principles. This has been explored by the University of Silesia for the MECOG-CE partner metropolitan areas in the Deliverable 1.2.1. (See References)



EXPLANATION

Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg

In the case of Berlin-Brandenburg the official metropolitan area covers the entirety of the two federal states and is known as the Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg. Besides that, there is a Municipal Neighbourhood Forum existing with much smaller territory and voluntary membership, but probably better modelling the catchment area of the capital city. 51 municipalities in the state of Brandenburg, the city of Berlin and 12 districts of Berlin belong to this partnership.

Finally, there is the Berlin-Brandenburg Transport Association, including Berlin, 14 counties (Landkreise) and 4 cities (kreisfreie Städte) in Brandenburg.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)

2.1 Metropolitan Areas based on the Functional Approach: Large Functional Urban Areas

According to the **Common Metropolitan Vision**, metropolitan areas are "... functional urban regions comprising agglomerations of densely populated urban cores and their surrounding territories, fostering integrated labour and housing markets, and interconnected through commuting and mobility".

When defining MAs, one of the options is to start from **functional geography**, according to which functional areas are understood as "... one or more territorial interdependencies related to economic, social, cultural, or geographical functions" (European Commission – World Bank, 2024). A more detailed definition of functional areas has been given by the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial Planning (CEMAT), as follows: "The functional area is the area or region that functions as a unitary system from a political and / or social and / or economic point of view. In other words, the functional area is defined by the internal system of interactions and relationships and covers, in whole or in part, the territory of several administrative-territorial units that cooperate and are linked / united by economic, communications, transport activities."

Functional territories can take many different forms, according to the function that links different territorial units to each other. Specific types might include economic areas, natural value areas, culturally defined areas, demographically resembling territories. The present **strategy focuses on the most commonly accepted definition of functional urban areas**, which capture commuting flows and complex relationships between an urban centre (or more urban centres close to each other) and adjacent territories of influence.

Based on functional geography, joining a city and municipalities belonging to its commuting zone, metropolitan areas can be defined as large functional urban areas (FUAs), above a given population number.

The map from the **EUROSTAT (2013)** publication shows all the functional urban areas of EU countries. Those of these FUAs, which surpass 250 000 in total population, can be called metropolitan areas. (see the map of Urban Audit cities and FUA in Appendix 3).

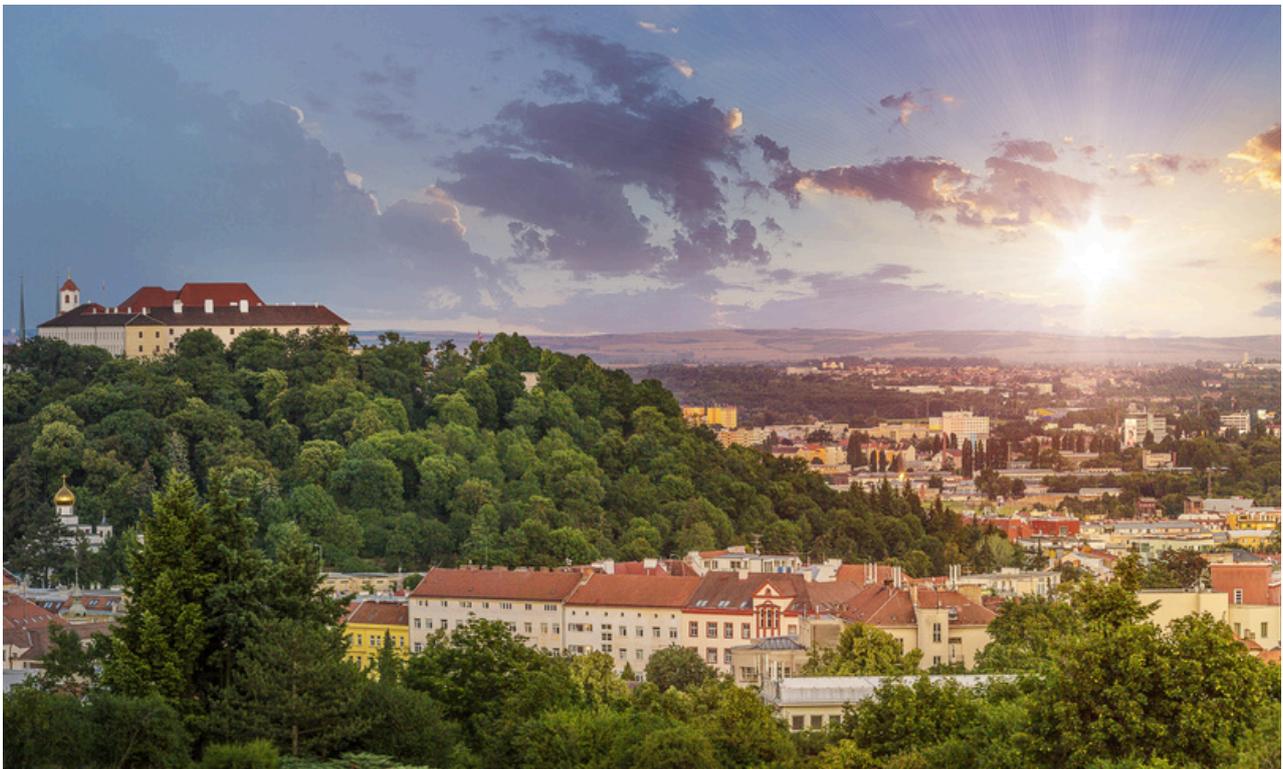
Metropolitan areas encompass the main urban centre along with its surrounding satellite towns and intervening rural spaces that maintain a socio-economic connection to the core city, usually linked by commuting patterns and employment relationships (World Bank, 2020). As defined by the **UN-Habitat (2020)**, a metropolitan area includes both the contiguous region

characterized by urban residential density and the outlying areas with lower population density that remain under the city's influence. This influence often manifests through regular transportation networks, road infrastructure, and commuting opportunities. The MA might create a cohesive community with shared interests and opportunities for collective action. The economic connections between the core and its periphery can become so interconnected that the success of one depends on the other.

Similarly to EUROSTAT, also the **European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion** (ESPON) conducts research on metropolitan areas, focusing on their spatial development, governance, and role in regional economies. ESPON's studies provide detailed analyses of how these areas are structured and function within the broader European context.

These resources offer comprehensive information on the composition and characteristics of metropolitan areas, highlighting the criteria used to define them and their significance in regional planning and development.

Among the MECOG-CE partner metropolitan areas, the Brno Metropolitan Area can be shown as an example for the functional approach to delineate the metropolitan territory.



Brno Metropolitan Area

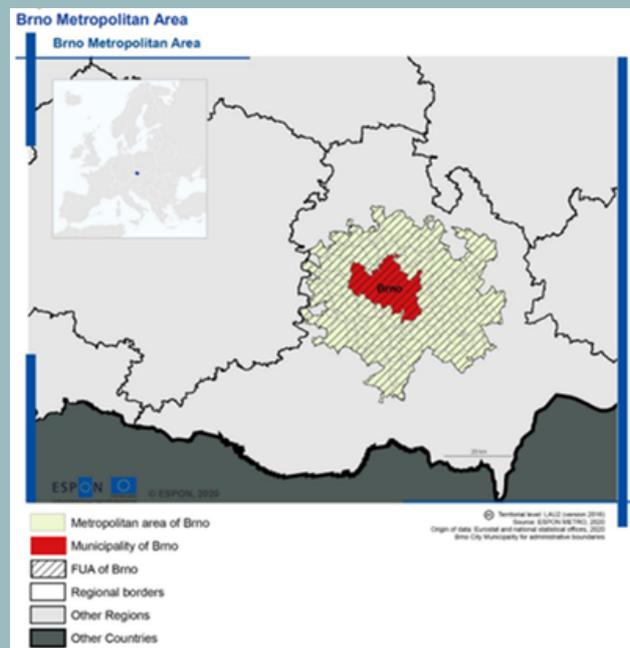


EXAMPLE

Brno Metropolitan Area

Brno Metropolitan Area consists of 184 municipalities. The delineation of this area is based on the unified national methodology created by the Ministry of Regional Development in cooperation with major Czech cities. The territory was defined on the basis of metropolitan processes (commuting to work, school and other journeys) and is therefore a functional territory with natural links (known as FUA – functional urban area). Data from a mobile operator was used to identify individual processes. The Brno Metropolitan Area operates on the basis of informal cooperation, without any legal status. Its territorial delimitation was established specifically for the management of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument. Coordination within the metropolitan area takes place through a voluntary partnership involving municipalities within the defined territory.

(Source: Brno Metropolitan Area and MECOG-CE D1.2.1 Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



Source: [ESPON METRO Case Study – Brno Metropolitan Area \(PDF\)](#).

In addition to conceptual definitions, metropolitan areas can also benefit from **practical tools** that support the delineation and analysis of functional territories. While a detailed description of these tools is provided in the appendix, we briefly reference them here to guide metropolitan areas in applying evidence-based methods. These tools range from geospatial and commuting analysis to participatory mapping and legislative frameworks. Their use can help metropolitan actors define boundaries, understand socio-economic interactions, and design context-sensitive governance structures. (See tools in Appendix 1)

2.2 Metropolitan Areas according to the Administrative Approach, Joining Existing Administrative Units

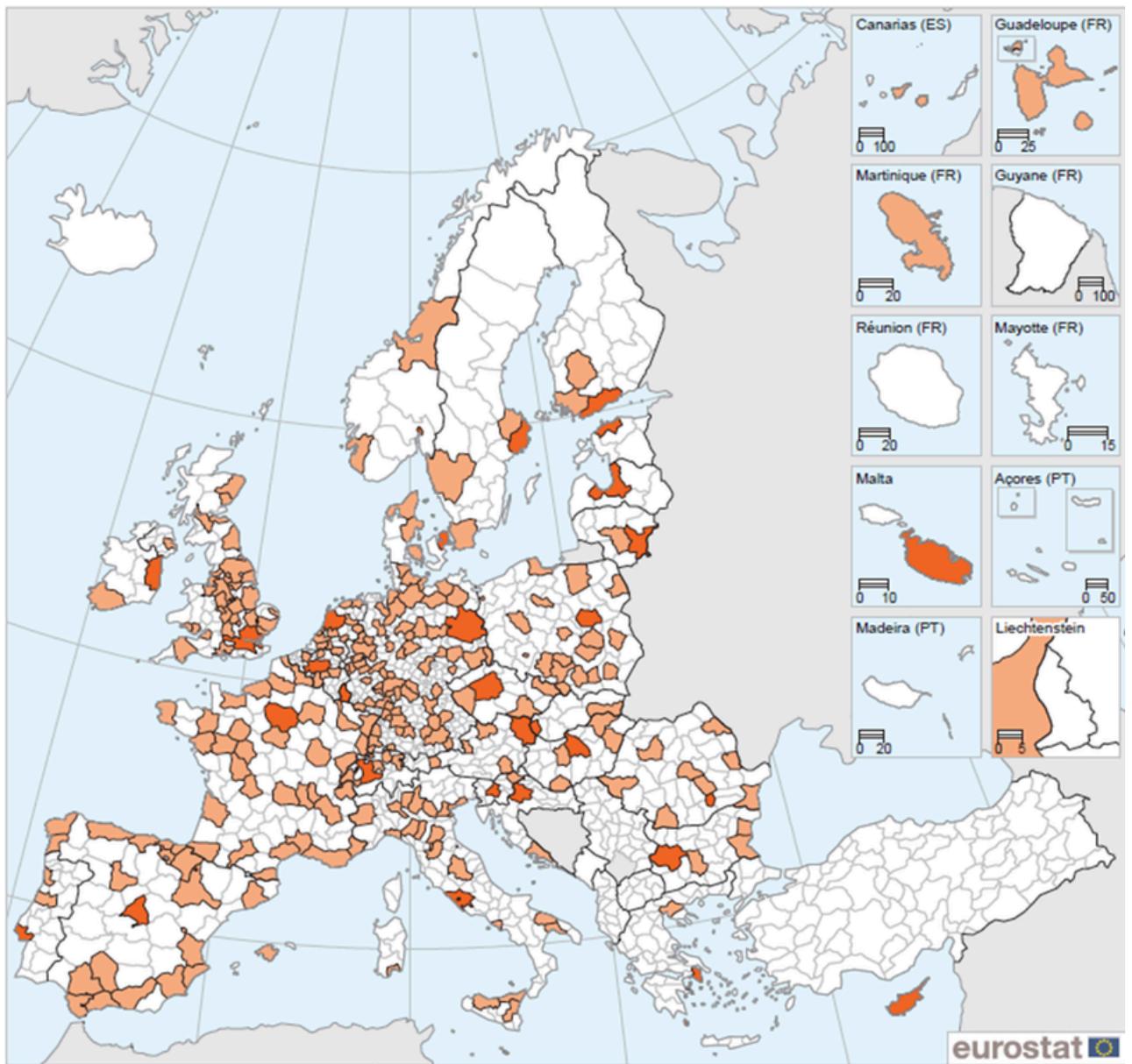
The other approach to define metropolitan areas is based on joining together existing administrative units, which are usually larger than single municipalities.

One of the possibilities is to use the nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) (Glossary: Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), - Statistics Explained - Eurostat). The so defined metropolitan areas refer to NUTS level 3 approximations of functional urban areas, with at least 250 000 inhabitants. They are composed of a city and the surrounding NUTS3 units, comprising a territory best approaching the commuting zone. The EUROSTAT Methodology publication includes a map of EU metropolitan areas, in which all the MECOG-CE partner MAs are included.



Warsaw Metropolitan Area

Figure 1. Metropolitan areas based on NUTS3 areas, 2021



Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 10/2020

- Capital city metropolitan regions
- Other metropolitan regions
- Non-metropolitan regions

0 200 400 600 800 km

Based on population grid from 2011 and NUTS 2021.

Source: Eurostat, JRC and European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/metropolitan-regions/methodology>.

The map shows the NUTS3 administrative units, and the red areas are the metropolitan areas, consisting of one or more of these units.

In many cases metropolitan cooperation is not (or not only) based on the detailed analysis of the territory, but mainly on **political agreements, laws adopted on higher political level**. An example for this approach is the Turin Metropolitan Area, covering the city of Turin and the surrounding province, which were united by national law in 2015 into the Metropolitan City of Turin. Further examples (from the MECOG-CE project) include Stuttgart, Berlin and the GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area).



EXAMPLE

Metropolitan areas based on political agreements in MECOG-CE Countries

- **Stuttgart:** the establishment of the Verband Region Stuttgart happened in 1994, with a law by the Federal State of Baden Württemberg, creating a strong collaboration between Stuttgart and five counties, led by a directly elected regional parliament – a rare example all over Europe.
- **Turin (institutional governance):** the establishment of Metropolitan City of Turin happened in 2015 by a national law, by merging Turin city and the surrounding province. Italian metropolitan cities are local public authorities established by national Law and constitutionally recognised, with the city mayor (elected only by the residents of the city) acting as metropolitan mayor. There is a metropolitan Council and a metropolitan Conference existing, the latter composed by the 312 mayors of the metropolitan municipalities.
- **Berlin-Brandenburg:** The Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg was formally established through a state treaty initiated in 1995, and further strengthened by the State Spatial Planning Programme adopted in 2007. The overall strategic framework for the Berlin-Brandenburg capital region is legally binding for municipalities, their financial subsidies are partly connected to their status in the plan (hierarchy of cities/central-place-system). There is no extra new body, the joint government meetings constitute the steering body.

- **GZM Metropolis, Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area:** in Poland a government act of 2017 established only one metropolitan area, the GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area), with a site in Katowice. The GZM's governing structure consists of the Metropolitan Board and the Assembly. The members of the Assembly are delegated mayors or heads of municipalities and communes (41 delegates, 1 of each commune).

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 2: Define and Optimize 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.

3. Metropolitan Governance Structure



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Develop and Strengthen Governance Structures

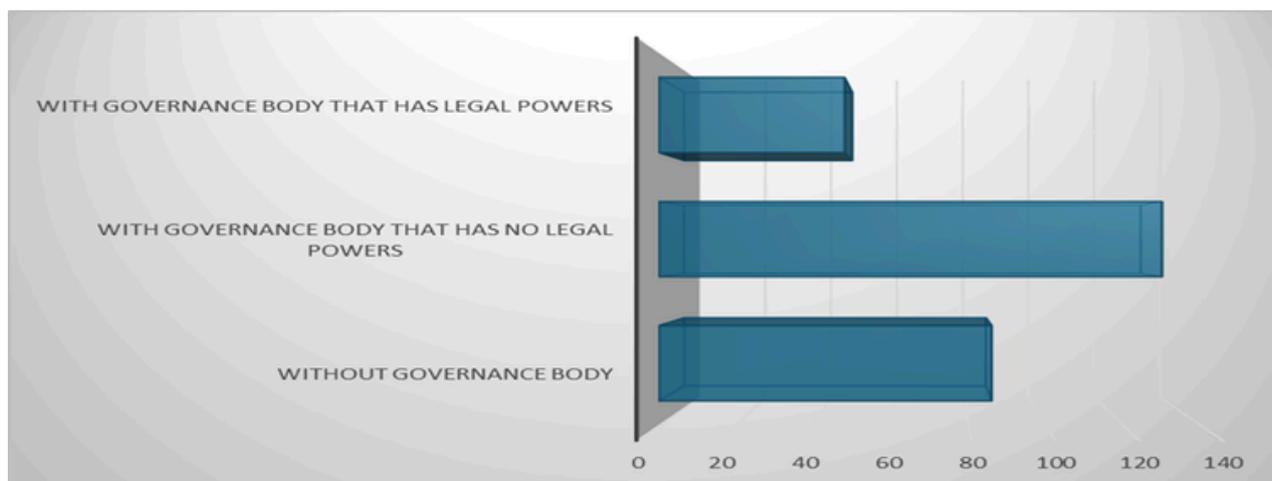
Metropolitan area shall establish governance structure tailored to its local context and continuously strengthen its role in the territory.

Effective metropolitan governance relies on clear institutional arrangements and robust mechanisms for cooperation among stakeholders. As metropolitan areas encompass multiple municipalities and actors, **governance structures must balance flexibility, coordination, and accountability**. This section examines different models and tools for fostering metropolitan cooperation, highlighting their role in delivering cohesive and responsive governance.

3.1 Type and form of political agreement

The metropolitan governance structure refers to the type and form of basic political agreement about cooperation form(s) in an urban area. In a **large survey** in the early 2010s, OECD revealed basic information about metropolitan areas in OECD countries (OECD, 2014). Among the 263 metropolitan areas identified across 21 countries, 68% had some form of metropolitan body (an organisation with a mandate that allows it to work on more than one issue that is related to metropolitan area governance). A smaller part of this group, 27% of the whole, had the right to adopt binding laws or regulations. Figure 2 presents an overview of the distribution across metropolitan governance categories.

Figure 2. Number of metropolitan areas with different types of metropolitan bodies (N=263)



Source: OECD, 2014:13.

The OECD results¹ revealed two clear models: metropolitan areas with governance bodies **defined by law** (27% of all areas), and metropolitan areas **without any governance body** (32% of all areas). Most metropolitan areas are in between these models, having some kind of governance body, which lack a solid legal grounding.

Another **empirical research** (study by the Metropolitan Research Institute for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Geróházi-Tosics, 2018) analysed six metropolitan areas of Europe (see Appendix 2 Table 2). The analysis revealed two main forms of metropolitan governance: the institutional and the procedural form.

The **institutional form** (represented in the study by Stuttgart, Greater Manchester, Barcelona Metropolitan Area) refers to the existence of a metropolitan organisation, either a new government level or a strong institutional setting, on a fixed territorial basis with a sufficiently large range of competencies.

The **procedural form** (represented in the research by Zürich, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam) refers to mechanisms and rules which allow for coordinated activities within a sufficiently large metropolitan territory, without a strong metropolitan institution and not necessarily in fixed territorial constellations.

This typology aligns with and is further nuanced by the approach adopted in MECOG-CE D.1.2.1 report (section 4.2.8). The research identified three forms of metropolitan cooperation and dialogue spaces (formalised institutional

^[1] The OECD (2014) figures are presented as a comparative baseline. The governance typology remains the benchmark, while EU policy (e.g. New Leipzig Charter) and international guidance (OECD Principles on Urban Policy) further encourage multi-level governance in functional urban areas.

cooperation, structured procedural collaboration, and more informal, ad-hoc dialogue platforms) offering a practice-oriented expansion of the basic institutional/procedural dichotomy. While this Strategy primarily builds on the distinction between institutional and procedural forms of governance, these categories correspond to the **“hard” and “soft” spaces of metropolitan cooperation**, also introduced in MECOG-CE. At the same time, the identification of three dialogue spaces provides a complementary lens, highlighting the flexible and often hybrid nature of real-world metropolitan governance arrangements. This broader perspective acknowledges the diversity of metropolitan governance models in Europe and their varying degrees of formality, territorial scope, and stakeholder involvement.



EXPLANATION

Hard Spaces

In the MECOG-CE analysis the institutional form has been called “hard spaces in metropolitan governance”, referring to formally established structures with clear legal frameworks, institutionalized decision-making processes, and defined territorial boundaries. These spaces are created through national legislation, regional agreements, or official mandates, usually granting them authority over metropolitan planning, resource allocation, and policy implementation. Hard spaces operate with structured governance, defined budgets, and political accountability, enabling them to influence policy and investment decisions directly. However, while they provide stability and enforceability, they often require significant political negotiation and coordination, which can sometimes limit their flexibility in addressing dynamic metropolitan challenges.

Soft Spaces

In the MECOG-CE analysis, the procedural form has been called "soft spaces" for dialogue and cooperation (Mikuła et al. 2024), driven by bottom-up collaboration among local authorities and various stakeholders, independent of central government reform efforts (Haughton, Allmendinger, Counsell, Vigar, 2010; Allmendinger, Haughton, Knieling, Othengrafen, 2015; Purkarthofer, Granqvist, 2021). These "soft spaces" represent areas where dialogue takes place without

formal decision-making authority, yet they can contribute to the creation of a metropolitan cognitive community. In such communities, participants usually develop shared concepts around metropolitan challenges and establish a common language to build civic capital (Cohendet, Grandadam, Simon, Capdevila, 2014; Nelles, 2013). The transition from these "soft" spaces to more formal, "hard" spaces with decision-making authority is not necessarily linear. Rather, metropolitan dialogue must balance the roles of formal institutions and the agency of metropolitan actors.

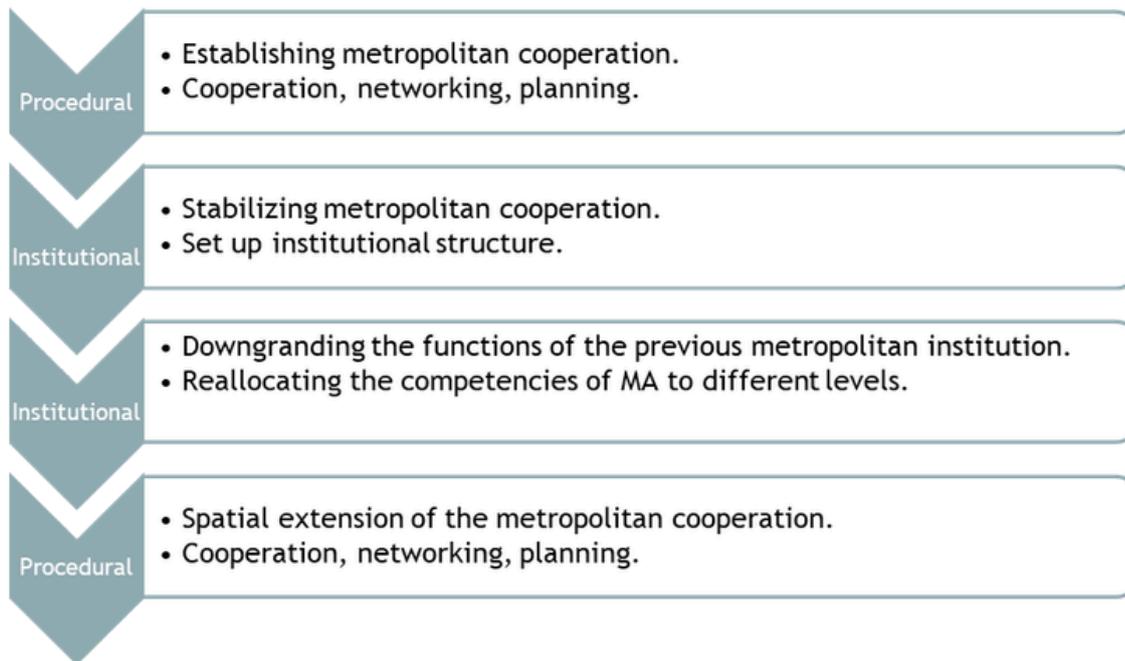
(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)

The **institutional and procedural** (similar to hard and soft) forms are very different but not mutually exclusive; in practice, each form tends to incorporate selected elements of the other. For example, the key element of the procedural form is strategic and spatial planning, which is also an important aspect in the institutional form; and vice versa: even though the existence of a strong institutional structure at the metropolitan level is specific to the institutional form, the functional approach also strives for some forms of institutions, although in a much more flexible way.

In an abstract way, the dynamism of metropolitan development in growing urban areas can be outlined as follows. Collaborations develop **in procedural way beyond the border of the administrative city** through networking, and common activities, like planning and marketing. After a time, these collaborations **achieve a form of institutionalization**, covering a certain metropolitan area, with new competencies devolved to that, mostly by national legislation. After a while, the area of the new institutional arrangements proves again to be too small compared to real economic processes and a new process of procedural collaboration building starts on an enlarged metropolitan scale. This might again lead to an act of institutionalization – and these steps follow each until metropolitan expansion is feasible, or the enlarged area would cover too large a share of the upper governmental level (e.g. the region or province).

This cyclical pattern of procedural and institutional development is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 3. From Procedural Collaboration to Institutionalisation: A Cyclical Model of Metropolitan Development



Source: Geróházi-Tosics, 2018:14

The change between the institutional and procedural forms can also happen in the opposite direction, when an institutional form is dissolved and replaced by more informal cooperation forms between the municipalities (such process can be observed e.g. in the Amsterdam urban area).

3.2. Metropolitan Political Decision-making Systems

The institutional and procedural forms differ fundamentally regarding their political decision-making systems. By definition, the institutional form has a formalized decision-making body, while this is missing in the case of the procedural form.

In the institutional form the **decision-making body** can have different variants:

- **Based on a higher-level legislative act** – the most stable form. The legally established metropolitan bodies differ from each other regarding the form of political representation mechanism. The strongest version is based on direct elections of the members of the metropolitan body. One of the very rare examples of that can be found in Stuttgart: the Region Stuttgart has an Assembly, the members of which are directly elected, based on party lists. In the more usual form, the members of the metropolitan body are delegated among the politicians of those municipalities which belong to the metropolitan area.

This is the case e.g. in the Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona, which has a Metropolitan Council with 90 delegated metropolitan councillors (36 municipalities are represented proportionally to their population and political representation of the municipal elections). In such cases, the president is usually elected by the members of the council. This delegated metropolitan body can be made slightly stronger politically if its president is elected directly by the population, as is the case of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

- **Beyond the formal political board**, the composition of the governance structure can vary significantly. In most cases, an initial political-level governance board, composed of elected officials is required to establish legitimacy and coordination mechanisms across municipalities. Once this formal foundation is in place, it becomes feasible to introduce more diversified governance formats that involve a broader set of stakeholders. Such advisory councils or metropolitan forums may include civil society organisations, private sector representatives, academic experts, and other relevant actors, thus broadening the deliberative base of metropolitan policy-making. These expanded governance structures can provide important guidance, feedback, and legitimacy to political decision-making and have been adopted in some metropolitan areas to varying extents. The Warsaw Metropolis Association offers a concrete example of this two-tier governance arrangement, combining a political leadership board with a broader partnership council.
- **Based on timely limited programmes or agreements** – less stable form, as the statute of the metropolitan leadership depends on the programme design. A typical example for that is the case of the Brno Metropolitan Area, where the basis of the metropolitan cooperation is the ITI tool, which is part of the EU Cohesion Policy. In the area covering 184 municipalities, Brno, South Moravian Region and 6 municipalities with extended powers have signed a Memorandum on cooperation. The legal format is a voluntary partnership, however, it lasts at least for the time of the EU programming period (7 years), it has internal structures such as Steering Committee and Working groups, and it can be renewed for the next programming period.

In the procedural form of metropolitan governance, there is **no formalized decision-making body**. Instead, its functions can be replaced by spatial planning frameworks, in different ways:

- in the case of Copenhagen, the cooperation within the metropolitan area is ensured by the Finger Plan, a compulsory planning scheme, controlled by the central government.

- In the case of Zürich, the metropolitan area covers eight cantons. The government requires a compulsory association of these cantons, by establishing a Metropolitan Conference, in which each municipality and the 8 cantons are represented. The work is going on in the existing organizations of the members, there is only a small secretariat and a Metropolitan Council existing, with the aim to coordinate and prepare the yearly meeting.

The institutional and procedural forms cannot be ranked clearly according to the efficiency of governance coordination. The **institutional form** is better in handling difficult cooperation issues, but the law-based stability of the institution can become an impediment if development is dynamic and the growing functional area exceeds substantially the metropolitan territory defined by the rigid legal statute. The **procedural form** offers more flexible possibilities to adapt to the changing territorial realities, however, the looser connections between municipalities make decision-making more difficult (apart from handling win-win type situations).

In a substantial number of cases, metropolitan areas do not have any governance mechanism, i.e. neither institutional, nor procedural (planning-based) coordination. These are the weakest cases, without any organized collaboration. This type was neither represented in the study prepared for Barcelona, nor in the MECOG-CE analysis. As an example, Budapest can be mentioned, where the metropolitan area can only be considered as a statistical unit, where practically no organized links and processes prevail.



Berlin-Brandenburg Metropolitan Area



EXPLANATION

Governance System

The governance system of a metropolitan area is closely linked to its founding principles. The MECOG-CE partner metropolitan areas can be classified based on these two fundamental aspects:

Governance system

	Strong metropolitan body	Legally defined, but not strong metropolitan body	Weak metropolitan body	Without metropolitan body
Delineation of territory				
Functional area		GZM	Brno, Ostrava, Warsaw	Budapest
Joining admin. areas	Stuttgart	Berlin-Brandenburg, Turin		

Budapest is not a partner of MECOG-CE, it is mentioned here only as an example.

(Source: Own elaboration)

Based on the findings of the MECOG-CE, it becomes evident that the success of metropolitan cooperation is **strongly influenced by the role played by national governments**. Where central governments actively support metropolitan areas, through legal frameworks, stable funding schemes, and institutional engagement, coordination mechanisms tend to be stronger and more effective. Such support not only reinforces the stability of institutional forms but also enables more strategic and long-term metropolitan planning.

Conversely, in contexts where national engagement is limited or inconsistent, **bottom-up approaches become increasingly important**. In these cases, metropolitan collaboration is often sustained by flexible, informal structures, such as partnership networks, planning forums, or thematic working groups, rather than formal institutions.

This duality highlights that **different governance contexts require tailored approaches**: strong institutional frameworks do not replace, but rather complement, bottom-up coordination efforts. Therefore, optimising metropolitan governance requires a twofold strategy: enabling national-level legal and policy environments, while simultaneously fostering active cooperation among local governments and stakeholders. These complementary directions could lay the groundwork for a shared understanding and collective ambition toward more effective and equitable metropolitan governance.



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 3: Develop and Strengthen Governance Structures

- ✓ Establish a flexible metropolitan structure designed to foster cooperation across municipal boundaries and to jointly address shared urban and territorial challenges.
- ✓ Develop legal and institutional frameworks that enable and strengthen territorial partnerships and inter-municipal collaboration within the metropolitan area.
- ✓ Establish metropolitan governance bodies with clear roles and responsibilities, or develop (spatial planning) frameworks for territorial cooperation in the functional urban area.
- ✓ Implement legal and policy mechanisms that support decision-making at the metropolitan level.
- ✓ Foster multi-level governance by ensuring coordination between municipal, regional, and national governments.

4. Thematic Areas of Metropolitan Cooperation



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Integrate Relevant Themes into Metropolitan Policy

Metropolitan area needs to focus on the most important topics in the territory that can be effectively addressed at the metropolitan level.

Metropolitan cooperation extends beyond institutional design; it materialises most visibly through the thematic domains where municipalities, regional actors, and stakeholders agree to collaborate. These thematic areas—ranging from transport and spatial planning to energy, housing, or culture—**reflect how metropolitan governance translates shared objectives into concrete action**. Identifying and organising cooperation along thematic lines allows metropolitan areas to respond more effectively to cross-boundary challenges and to align local initiatives with broader strategic goals.

This chapter explores how such **thematic cooperation** evolves, the scope of functions most commonly managed at the metropolitan level, and the mechanisms through which responsibilities, resources, and implementation capacities are shared among participating municipalities. In doing so, it builds upon earlier discussions of governance forms and financial frameworks, shifting the focus from how metropolitan areas are governed to what they collectively seek to achieve.

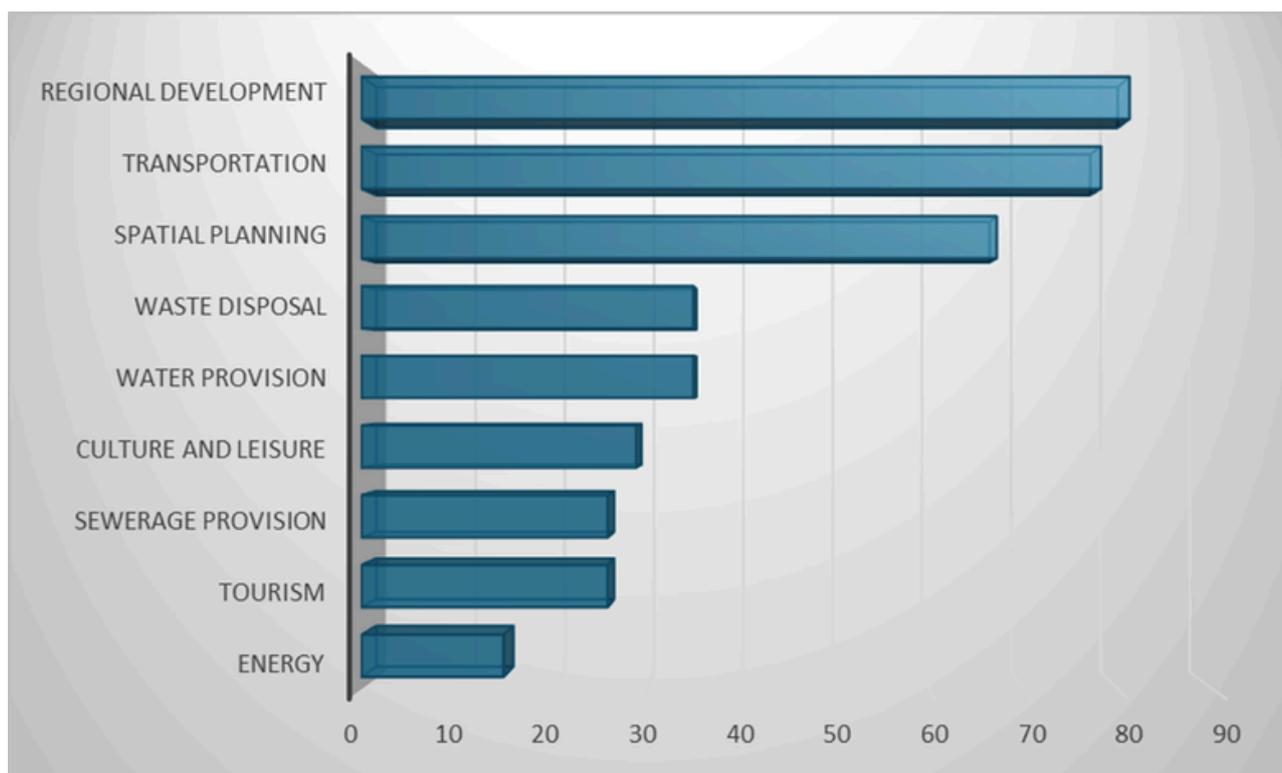
The strengths of the metropolitan level coordination can be measured by the range of functions and competencies the metropolitan level has, either through its statute or the agreements with different partners.

These thematic functions, dealt with at the metropolitan level, were explored in the already mentioned OECD (2014) survey and in the MECOG-CE project (D.1.2.1). A metropolitan thematic function means an **agreement between the municipalities belonging to the metropolitan area** that the responsibility for a given public policy is transferred from the municipal to the metropolitan level (or, in case of top-down creation of the metropolitan system, the function has been assigned to the metropolitan level, instead of the municipalities). Such a

case also means that the **institutional background and financial resources** for the given function have to be established on the metropolitan level. While local municipalities and their mayors lose the direct control over certain function, in many cases the responsibility is shared, with both municipal and metropolitan levels cooperating on specific thematic areas—such as mobility or spatial planning—under a jointly agreed framework. As members of the metropolitan leadership, municipalities retain influence over decisions made in these policy fields.

In addition to the formal transfer or assignment of competencies, the strategy places strong **emphasis on coordinated implementation** across municipalities. Metropolitan cooperation in thematic areas often requires harmonised planning, shared monitoring mechanisms, and joint service delivery, especially in fields such as mobility, housing, or energy policy.

Figure 4. Thematic fields of cooperation, in percentage of all metropolitan areas, 2014



Source: OECD, 2014:14.

According to the OECD survey, there are **three thematic fields**, in the case of which the public functions have the largest chance to be exerted on metropolitan, instead of local level. These are **regional development, transport and spatial planning**. The most common field of work on metropolitan level is **regional development** (81% of all governance bodies), dealing with the economy of the metropolitan area: to attract specific

companies or industries, to affect the structure of the local labour market, to promote the skills of the local population or dealing with the regeneration of particular geographical areas. 78% of governance bodies work on **transportation**, on issues related to public transport, but also on individual transport in general and on roads in particular. The third most common function is **spatial planning** (67% of governance bodies). All other fields of work are significantly less common and are typically found only in certain countries: waste disposal (35%), water provision (35%), culture and leisure (29%), tourism (26%), sewerage (26%), and energy (15%).

As OECD warns, these data have to be handled with caution. Running a function on metropolitan level might mean very different actual control/power over the function. For spatial planning, for example, some governance bodies merely inform member local governments of each other's plans, whereas others exert centralised control over the entire planning process in a metropolitan area. This means that there is a broad range of options when deciding about a function (thematic field), and how to share the responsibilities between the metropolitan and the local level.

The analysis about six metropolitan areas (Geróházi-Tosics, 2018) shows clearly the **large differences between the metropolitan-level thematic competencies** (see Appendix 3, Table 2). As a general rule, the **institutional form** of metropolitan governance allows for **larger number of functions** to operate on metropolitan level, while the **procedural form** offers much **less opportunities**.

- In the **institutional governance form**, Stuttgart Metropolitan Area is organising public transport, spatial planning, economic development and marketing. Also Barcelona Metropolitan Area has broad functions, such as territorial planning, urban planning (Metropolitan Urban Master Plan, land and housing policies), services of metropolitan interest (public transport, waste, water, sewage, etc). Accordingly, the budget of the metropolitan level is high: 350 million EUR and 684 million EUR, respectively.
- In the **procedural governance form**, as exemplified by Copenhagen, the only function performed on the metropolitan level is a strong spatial plan (Finger Plan), elaborated on national level. In the case of Zürich, metropolitan functions cover spatial planning, lobbying towards the central government, and pilot projects with metropolitan relevance. Accordingly, the budget of the metropolitan level is very low: no budget at all in Copenhagen, while below 1 million EUR in Zürich.

These examples represent MECOG-CE metropolitan areas and are based on the analysis done by University of Silesia.



EXAMPLE

Regional Development in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Regional development in metropolitan areas encompasses a wide range of activities, often interconnected with other domains. Two key aspects emerge: the emphasis on innovations - technological, organizational, and social - and alignment with sustainable development principles, focusing on environmental, social, and economic dimensions. While these priorities form a common foundation, unique approaches are evident across metropolitan areas.

MECOG-CE metropolitan areas focus on regional development through tailored strategies emphasizing innovation, revitalization, and sustainability:

- **Berlin-Brandenburg** integrates regional development with transport and spatial planning through innovative axes linked to train infrastructure, fostering knowledge transfer and economic growth.
- **Brno** focus on IT innovation, entrepreneurship, and start up incubation (e.g., CERIT Science Park) supported by complementary regional strategies. Several integrated projects are funded through ITI tool.
- **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area) aims to improve quality of life and combat demographic challenges through SME competitiveness, revitalization of degraded areas, and economic activities, complemented by regional partnerships.
- **Ostrava** aligns with GZM's focus on revitalization, adding digitalization, research commercialization, and university-industry collaboration.
- **Stuttgart** emphasizes eco-innovation, circular economy, and sustainable development, with Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart GmbH (Regional Development Agency) fostering regional networks and partnerships.
- **Turin** leverages Territorial Pacts to enhance infrastructure, industrial development, and connectivity through coordinated public-private efforts.
- **Warsaw** drives growth as the Masovian Voivodeship's hub by focusing on innovation, digitalization, high-skilled workforce development, and administrative concentration.

Each area reflects unique priorities while adhering to broader sustainable development and innovation goals.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



EXAMPLE

Mobility and Transport in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Mobility, a core activity in metropolitan areas, is crucial for the efficient functioning of a metropolis, with public transport serving as an essential public service. The modern approach to mobility in these areas follows sustainable urban mobility planning principles, focusing on accessibility, quality of life, and reducing car dependency. This integrated approach involves the development of all transport modes, long-term strategies, and active stakeholder and citizen participation. Mobility is closely linked to the climate crisis and sustainable development, aiming to reduce CO2 emissions while also reflecting the lifestyle and culture of urban residents.

- In **Berlin**, the Berlin-Brandenburg Transport Association (VBB) takes a forward-looking approach, enhancing transport infrastructure and launching initiatives like the "i2030" program to connect developing centres with Berlin and improve regional connectivity.
- **Brno** integrates transport planning with ITI-funded projects, focusing on sustainable mobility through the construction of new tram lines, transport terminals and cycling infrastructure, underpinned by the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.
- In the **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area), mobility efforts focus on creating an integrated transport system, especially rail, and reducing individual transport through projects such as the velostrade system and last-mile solutions, while a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan supports long-term planning.
- **Ostrava** invests in modernizing its transport network using ITI funds, enhancing public transport services, including tram and bus systems, while addressing environmental sustainability through clean energy buses and updated road infrastructure.
- **Stuttgart** places a high emphasis on sustainable mobility with its Verkehrs- und Tarifverbund Stuttgart (VVS, Transport and Tariff Association), focusing on rail and transport network integration. The Stuttgart 21 project aims to improve rail infrastructure and sustainable mobility across the region.
- **Turin** focuses on the development of public transport through its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS), which guides initiatives to improve accessibility and reduce pollution, enhancing the overall quality of life in the metropolitan area.
- In **Warsaw**, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan was developed to

enhance mobility through integrated transport options, focusing on balancing different modes of travel and improving overall urban mobility with bicycle lanes and park-and-ride facilities.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



EXAMPLE

Spatial Planning in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Spatial planning is a key focus for metropolitan institutions, and its importance varies based on legal frameworks and responsibilities. In some regions, spatial planning is a statutory task that requires cooperation with various stakeholders, particularly municipalities within the metropolitan area. Effective spatial planning relies heavily on consultations with local municipalities and addressing the specific needs of sub regions, such as those under suburbanization pressure or with particular functions, like tourism. Additionally, addressing climate change adaptation through spatial planning is a common goal.

In areas where spatial planning is not a formal duty of metropolitan institutions, the approach often integrates spatial considerations into broader strategic planning efforts. This ensures that spatial planning remains a key factor in long-term metropolitan development, even if not under the direct responsibility of the metropolitan structures. Furthermore, in regions where spatial planning is managed at the federal or state level, metropolitan institutions often work in alignment with these higher-level structures to guide the planning process.

- **Stuttgart:** The regional plan provides a binding framework for spatial planning within the Stuttgart Region, focusing on sustainable settlement development, transport infrastructure, energy supply, and the preservation of green spaces. It is developed through collaboration with municipalities and includes mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring implementation, such as legal agreements and advisory support.
- **Turin:** As per national law, Turin's metropolitan area is required to prepare a seven-year general spatial plan that coordinates infrastructure, service networks, and urban transformations. This plan sets limits on land consumption and aligns with regional and national development strategies. It is developed collaboratively

with municipalities and subject to approval by the Metropolitan Council and the Assembly of Mayors.

- **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area): Spatial planning is one of the key responsibilities of the metropolitan association, guided by strategic priorities such as climate change adaptation, mobility, accessibility, spatial and social cohesion, and metropolitan innovation. Planning is differentiated for the core of the metropolis and its surrounding areas, focusing on both resilience and cohesion.
- **Berlin-Brandenburg:** The Berlin-Brandenburg Capital Region State Development Plan (LEP HR) defines the spatial planning framework for spatial development in the capital region for a period of ten years. The LEP HR contains regional planning specifications on the following topics, among others: Economic development, commerce, and large-scale retail trade; settlement and open space development; transportation and infrastructure development; climate, flood protection, and energy. The LEP HR is further specified in both states either through regional planning or land use planning and is the only state development plan in Germany that applies to two federal states.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



Warsaw Metropolitan Area



EXAMPLE

Culture, Cultural Heritage in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Culture and cultural heritage play a vital role in shaping metropolitan identity, fostering social cohesion, and enhancing the attractiveness of metropolitan areas. Cultural initiatives not only reflect the shared history and diversity of metropolitan areas but also serve as instruments of soft power that can reinforce a sense of belonging among residents of different municipalities. Strengthening cultural cooperation at metropolitan level contributes to more integrated and inclusive development strategies, especially in polycentric regions.

- **Berlin-Brandenburg** supports cultural heritage through the co-financing of the Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin network.
- **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area) builds metropolitan identity by promoting cultural events such as The Night of Theatres and The Industrial Heritage Path.
- **Turin** enhances cultural initiatives, local events, and heritage preservation, with a focus on culinary traditions through the Food Districts project.
- **Brno and Ostrava** metropolitan areas focus on co-financing culture-related integrated projects via ITI.
- **Stuttgart** fosters regional cultural activities through the Culture Region Stuttgart, with VRS as a member.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



EXAMPLE

Energy Policy in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Energy policy at the metropolitan level is often shaped by national and EU directives, but some metropolitan areas actively engage in energy-related projects. These initiatives aim to address energy consumption, the climate crisis, and challenges such as the ongoing war in Ukraine. The efforts often centre on enhancing energy efficiency, increasing renewable energy use, and ensuring energy supply sustainability.

- **Berlin-Brandenburg** treats energy resource management as a strategic action linked to governmental agreements, with no extensive local initiatives.
- **Ostrava** addresses energy transition through post-coal transformation programmes, with emphasis on energy-efficient renovation of buildings, local district heating systems and by locally produced clean energy. These efforts are supported by national and EU recovery funds and reflect a strategic alignment with climate neutrality goals.
- **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area) cooperates voluntarily among municipalities to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources, with initiatives such as joint energy purchasing and investments in renewable energy for public and residential infrastructure.
- **Stuttgart** balances the spatial challenges of climate-neutral energy goals by identifying suitable sites for wind and solar energy investments, supported by a transparent, participatory planning process.
- **Turin** acts as an Energy Observatory, collecting data and managing authorizations for electricity production, as well as carrying out regulatory checks on systems related to energy consumption and environmental impact.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



EXAMPLE

Food Cooperation in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Food systems are emerging as a key area for metropolitan cooperation, linking urban and rural territories through local partnerships. This solution promotes sustainable food policies based on short supply chains, local production, and public procurement strategies. It enables voluntary cooperation between producers, consumers, public institutions, and civil society — without the need for formal legal mandates. The process typically includes territorial food assessments, cross-sectoral working groups, and shared action plans to improve access to healthy, local food. In addition to enhancing food resilience, this approach supports local economies and advances public health goals.

- **Turin** focuses on the establishment of cooperative networks among stakeholders operating in selected agri-food production chains having a local, metropolitan, regional, or interregional extension. Strengthened cooperation through the establishment of food districts could then result in a more participated and effective governance of agri-food policies at the metropolitan level.
- **Brno** launched food-related cooperation as part of the MECOG-CE project, including a pilot action and further activities based on new solution. These initiatives aim to promote sustainable food systems and foster cross-sectoral engagement at the metropolitan scale.

(Source: MECOG-CE D2.3.2. Catalogue of newly developed solutions)



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 4: Integrate Relevant Themes into Metropolitan Policy

- ✓ Map existing sectoral strategies at local, regional, and national levels that impact metropolitan cooperation.
- ✓ Identify key priority areas for metropolitan development, such as public transport integration, climate adaptation, or social inclusion.
- ✓ Ensure thematic areas align with the broader metropolitan vision and long-term objectives.
- ✓ Create interdisciplinary working groups that bring together representatives from the different sectors.
- ✓ Integrate the selected thematic areas into the general metropolitan strategy, with clear objectives, actions, and coordination mechanisms.
- ✓ Translate strategy into concrete metropolitan action plans with specific goals, timelines, and funding mechanisms.
- ✓ Thematic cooperation may vary in spatial scope – some thematic areas (e.g., transport, environmental management) may extend beyond or differ from the core metropolitan area. This flexibility should be acknowledged when integrating themes into metropolitan policy.
- ✓ Where appropriate, develop separate thematic strategies for complex topics that require more detailed planning (e.g., climate adaptation or mobility).

5. Metropolitan Financial Schemes



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

Establish Metropolitan Financial Schemes

Metropolitan area has to secure appropriate funding for its development, preferably from various sources.

Ambitious metropolitan strategies require adequate institutional capacity and resources to be implemented effectively. The availability of **skilled personnel, financial tools, and administrative support** determines whether cooperation remains aspirational or becomes operational. This section addresses the key capacity needs and enabling conditions for successful metropolitan governance.

Metropolitan cooperation can take different forms, ranging from fully institutionalized metropolitan authorities to informal networks of municipalities. The availability of dedicated budgets or reliance on ad hoc financial arrangements significantly impacts how metropolitan projects are funded. Below is a classification of financial schemes based on institutional setup and budget availability.

A) Strong institutionalized metropolitan authorities with own budget (dedicated metropolitan institution and own budget & taxation powers)

In this funding scheme, metropolitan authorities have legal fiscal autonomy and can collect taxes, issue bonds, and allocate funds for regional projects. Their budget is stable and predictable, allowing for long-term planning. This model is common in large metropolitan areas with formal governance structures. Revenue sources can be the following:

- **Direct taxation & shared tax revenues**

- Metropolitan authorities collect their own business, property, or transport taxes.
- Example: Barcelona Metropolitan Area collects taxes to fund public transport and waste management.

- **Intergovernmental transfers from national/regional governments**
 - Regular budget allocations from higher government levels.
 - Example: Stuttgart Region receives funding from the state of Baden-Württemberg.
- **Municipal contributions to a Joint Metropolitan Fund**
 - Municipalities contribute a portion of their budgets to fund shared projects.
 - Example: Greater Paris Metropolis (Métropole du Grand Paris) coordinates municipal contributions.
- **Municipal Bonds & Debt Financing**
 - The metropolitan authority issues bonds for infrastructure investment.
 - Example: London Metropolitan Transport Authority uses municipal bonds to expand the metro network.
- **Hybrid public financing mechanisms**
 - In some metropolitan areas, budgets are composed of a mix of legally mandated national tax shares and complementary local contributions. This model ensures financial stability while allowing for local co-ownership of the institution.
 - Example: GZM Metropolis (Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area, Poland) receives a fixed share (5%) of the personal income tax collected from its residents, transferred by the national government under the 2017 Metropolitan Act. Additionally, GZM coordinates project-based contributions from its 41 member municipalities. This model ensures financial stability while allowing for local co-ownership of metropolitan governance.

B) Institutionalized metropolitan cooperation without own budget (dedicated metropolitan governance body, no direct taxation or financial autonomy)

In this model the metropolitan authority relies on external funding (e.g., national government, EU funds, municipal contributions). Budgets are often project-based, making long-term financing challenging. This scheme is common in metropolitan associations or inter-municipal agreements. In many of these cases, the core city also manages the funds, further reinforcing its coordinating role. However, in some cases such as in the Czech Republic, it is based solely on national legislation, without the use of associations or formal inter-municipal agreements. Funding sources include:

- **EU Structural & Cohesion Funds (e.g., ITI, ERDF, UIA)**
 - Metropolitan authorities apply for European funding for infrastructure, sustainability, and digitalization.
 - Example: Brno Metropolitan Area and Warsaw Metropolitan Association uses Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) to fund joint metropolitan

- projects. This represents a weak form of institutionalization, in which implementation occurs through an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) mechanism. The "weakness" of this institutional concept is dependence on external resources (ERDF/ESF via ITI).
- **National/regional government transfers for specific projects**
 - The central government provides targeted funding for metropolitan cooperation.
 - Example: Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan planning funded by joint state transfers.
- **Voluntary municipal contributions**
 - Cities contribute funds on a project-by-project basis.
 - Example: Turin Metropolitan Area (before reform) relied on voluntary contributions from municipalities to support inter-municipal projects under a loose governance structure prior to the formal establishment of the Metropolitan City.
- **Service fees** (e.g., transport, waste management)
 - Metropolitan institutions collect fees from users but do not have direct taxation powers.
 - Example: Barcelona Metropolitan Transport Authority operates using fare revenues and municipal transfers, similar to the Verband Region Stuttgart.
- **Public-private partnerships (PPP) for infrastructure**
 - Private sector finances and operates projects under long-term agreements.
 - Example: Metropolitan City of Turin uses PPPs for transport and energy projects.

C) Informal metropolitan networks with shared budget (no formal metropolitan authority, budget exists through voluntary pooling of resources)

In this model, municipalities voluntarily pool resources to finance specific projects. Funds are project-based and dependent on political will. This financial scheme is common in regional cooperations without legally binding metropolitan structures. Funding sources include:

- **Shared investment funds among municipalities**
 - Cities agree to co-finance specific infrastructure, transport, or energy projects.
 - Example: Metropolitan Area of Porto (Portugal) pools funds for transport integration.

Table: Comparative Typology of Metropolitan Financial and Institutional Setups

Institutional Setup	Own Budget	Funding Sources	Examples
Strong Metropolitan Authority	✓ Yes	Direct taxation, bonds, intergovernmental transfers	Business tax sharing, congestion pricing, municipal bonds
Institutionalized Cooperation (No Own Budget)	✗ No	National/regional grants, EU funding, municipal transfers	ITI funding, PPPs, voluntary municipal contributions
Informal Network with Shared Budget	✓ Yes (Voluntary)	Pooled municipal resources, EU project funding	Joint investment funds, land value capture, rotating contributions

Source: Own elaboration



Ostrava Metropolitan Area



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 5: Establish Metropolitan Financial Schemes

- ✓ Identify and implement a mix of funding sources for integrated investments.
- ✓ Secure funding streams from national and EU programs for sector-specific projects.
- ✓ Utilize public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure investments.
- ✓ Develop integrated metropolitan funding models, such as shared tax revenues or investment funds, to finance cross-municipal projects.
- ✓ Implement user fees, congestion charges, and/or green bonds to support sustainable initiatives.
- ✓ Establish a dedicated metropolitan budget to enable long-term, predictable financing.



Stuttgart Metropolitan Area

6. Metropolitan Cooperation Frameworks and Stakeholder Involvement



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.

Metropolitan areas are dynamic and multifaceted systems that require effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders to achieve sustainable development, efficient governance, and an enhanced quality of life. The success of metropolitan cooperation hinges on the **active engagement** of government entities, private sector actors, civil society organizations, academic institutions and local communities. Their participation strengthens decision-making, improves resource allocation, and facilitates policy implementation, ultimately fostering more cohesive and resilient urban regions.

This review serves as an **overview of key cooperation frameworks** and stakeholder involvement methods applied in European metropolitan areas. It aims to identify transferable models that can support inclusive and adaptive metropolitan governance.

6.1 Collaborative Planning

Collaborative planning in metropolitan cooperation is a governance approach that **emphasizes partnership, inclusivity, and shared decision-making** among various stakeholders. This method recognizes that metropolitan areas extend beyond single administrative boundaries, requiring coordinated efforts to manage effectively transportation, housing, economic development, environmental sustainability, etc. By engaging multiple actors in the planning process, collaborative planning fosters a sense of ownership, strengthens institutional trust and enhances the efficiency of policy implementation across metropolitan areas.

A key feature of collaborative planning is its **adaptability to different metropolitan challenges**. It allows for flexible, multi-scalar governance structures that can address diverse issues, from public transportation networks to climate resilience strategies. Unlike top-down governance models, collaborative planning encourages participatory approaches, ensuring that decisions reflect local needs and priorities. Through mechanisms such as stakeholder forums, joint strategic plans, and inter-municipal agreements, metropolitan areas can align their objectives and resources, preventing fragmented policies and inefficient service delivery.

Furthermore, collaborative planning **supports long-term sustainability and resilience** in metropolitan governance. By integrating diverse perspectives and fostering dialogue, it helps create innovative solutions that balance economic growth with environmental and social concerns. This approach also enhances transparency and accountability, as open discussions and shared decision-making processes allow for continuous evaluation and refinement of metropolitan strategies. Ultimately, collaborative planning strengthens metropolitan cooperation by creating more inclusive, responsive, and well-coordinated metropolitan areas that can effectively tackle complex challenges.



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.

- **Silesia Region:** Transactional elements are particularly evident in the implementation of ITI projects, especially those coordinated by the Association of Municipalities and Counties of the Central Subregion of the Silesia Region.
- **Ostrava and Stuttgart:** Introduced Innovative Metropolitan Prototyping as a novel governance tool to foster collaborative planning. Rather than applying static strategies, both metropolitan areas used scenario-based prototyping to engage stakeholders across municipal, sectoral, and civil society boundaries. In Stuttgart, prototyping helps unlock cross-municipal synergies in housing, while Ostrava used the tool to reframe cooperation in shrinking areas, promoting co-creation over top-down planning. This approach exemplifies an experimental and iterative planning philosophy grounded in learning and collective ownership.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)

6.2 Data Sharing and Digital Platforms

Data sharing and digital platforms play a crucial role in strengthening metropolitan cooperation by enabling seamless communication, efficient service delivery, and **evidence-based decision-making**. Metropolitan areas encompass multiple municipalities and administrative entities that often face challenges in coordinating policies and infrastructure. By implementing shared digital platforms, **cities can exchange real-time data on different activities** (e.g. transportation, environmental monitoring, public services, economic activities, etc.) ensuring that governance decisions are based on accurate and **up-to-date information**. Open data initiatives further promote transparency and civic engagement, allowing stakeholders, including businesses and residents, to contribute to metropolitan planning processes.

A key benefit of digital platforms in metropolitan cooperation is their **ability to integrate multiple sectors** and facilitate cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Smart city technologies, such as interconnected mobility systems, geographic information systems (GIS), and digital governance tools, enable municipalities to align their policies and infrastructure development. For instance, shared transport data can improve regional mobility planning, while integrated

environmental monitoring systems can help coordinate climate adaptation strategies across metropolitan areas. By leveraging digital tools, cities can create more efficient and responsive governance structures that adapt to the evolving needs of urban populations.

Digital platforms **facilitate participatory governance** by allowing residents, businesses, and organizations to access and contribute to urban data, making metropolitan planning more inclusive. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics can **help predict urban trends**, **optimize resource allocation**, and **enhance resilience** in metropolitan areas. As technology continues to evolve, fostering data interoperability and ensuring cybersecurity will be critical in maximizing the benefits of data-driven metropolitan cooperation while safeguarding public trust and data privacy.

While most advanced data-sharing platforms currently operate at the city level, these systems offer valuable lessons for potential metropolitan-scale applications. In the absence of fully developed digital governance frameworks at the metropolitan level, the following mostly urban examples highlight scalable models for data integration, citizen participation, and evidence-based decision-making. Metropolitan areas can adapt and expand such systems to fit inter-municipal cooperation needs, fostering shared data infrastructures across wider functional territories.



EXAMPLE

Helsinki's MyData Operator System

Helsinki has implemented the MyData operator system, which utilizes consent management mechanisms to enable users to share data for specific services and purposes. This approach empowers citizens to control their personal data while facilitating collaboration between public authorities and private entities to develop tailored services that meet community needs.

(Source: Eurocities, 2025)

Eindhoven's Open Urban Data Platform

Eindhoven has developed an Open Urban Data Platform based on the SynchroniCity architecture and the Living-in.EU principles, incorporating Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms (MIMs). This platform integrates various data sources, including information on underground infrastructure, public transportation, and environmental data. By providing a comprehensive view of urban systems, it supports informed decision-making and fosters collaboration among different stakeholders within the metropolitan area.

(Source: EC, 2021s, 2025)

Barcelona's Digital Tool for Participatory Monitoring

Barcelona's Decidim platform empowers citizens to engage in decision-making and monitor urban projects. It facilitates consultations, debates, proposal submissions, and real-time tracking of project progress, ensuring transparency and active public involvement.

(Source: Decidim, 2024)



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 decision-making, promotes inter-municipal transparency, and fosters data-driven cooperation between municipalities, researchers, and civil society.

(Source: InfoGZM official portal, 2023)

6.3 Capacity Building and Education

Capacity building and education are fundamental to strengthen metropolitan cooperation by **equipping stakeholders with the skills, knowledge, and institutional frameworks** needed for effective governance. Metropolitan areas face complex challenges that require interdisciplinary expertise, long-term strategic planning, and adaptive management approaches. Through targeted training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, local governments, policymakers, and urban planners can **enhance their capacity to** design and **implement integrated metropolitan strategies**. By fostering continuous learning and professional development, metropolitan areas can ensure that decision-makers are well-prepared to address emerging urban challenges and leverage innovative solutions.

Education also plays a crucial role in **fostering a culture of collaboration** and civic engagement within metropolitan governance. Universities, research institutions, and training centres can act as hubs for metropolitan learning, facilitating knowledge exchange between academia, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders. Educational programs focusing on urban management, sustainable development, and digital governance can equip future leaders with the skills needed to navigate complex metropolitan environments. Additionally, public awareness campaigns and citizen education initiatives can empower residents to actively participate in decision-making processes, fostering more inclusive and democratic metropolitan cooperation.



EXAMPLE

Observatory of Urban & Metropolitan Processes (OPMIM) University of Silesia

The OPMIM Observatory functions both as a scientific and practical body: it conducts comprehensive research on urban-rural linkages and territorial cooperation in the Silesian metropolitan region, while actively transferring knowledge through the Local Government Academy initiative.

This Academy brings together municipal officials, researchers, and students in joint workshops, enabling evidence-based policy dialogue and capacity-building for metropolitan governance. Beyond formal structures, it strengthens the quadruple-helix linkage, supports adaptive decision-making, and fosters continuous institutional learning.

(Source: University of Silesia – OPMIM Observatory)



EXAMPLE

Prototyping Academy in GZM Metropolis

The GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area) implements a Metropolitan Prototyping Academy model, originally co-developed at the University of Silesia's campus. This offers a low-risk, iterative “sandbox” environment where local authorities, academia, civil society, and private actors collaboratively co-design and test pilot solutions—for example, to improve campus mobility, enhance climate resilience, or develop data-based services. This agile, experimental space strengthens stakeholder collaboration and prepares pilot-tested innovations for scale-up across the metropolitan area.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)

Stuttgart Region Stakeholder Training Series

The Stuttgart Region Association organises regular training sessions and knowledge-exchange events for municipal staff and local stakeholders. These programmes focus on integrated territorial planning, climate action, and public communication. Trainings are delivered in cooperation with regional universities and aim to strengthen local capacities to participate in metropolitan-level governance.

(Source: Stuttgart Region Association, 2024)

Metropolitan Education Labs – City of Turin

The City of Turin runs a series of “Metropolitan Education Labs” that bring together schools, universities, and neighbourhood associations to explore urban sustainability, energy efficiency, and digital participation. These labs are integrated into broader metropolitan policy goals and foster early civic engagement in governance processes.

(Source: Torino CITYLAB, 2025)

6.4 Stakeholder Dialogues and Forums

Stakeholder dialogue can take both direct and indirect forms of communication, with varying levels of formality. **Direct communication** often occurs through informal interactions or official meetings, such as regional assemblies, steering committees, and working groups, where representatives meet in person to discuss issues and make decisions. These direct interactions are common across most metropolitan areas, also in cases where formal meetings are held (e.g. Brno Metropolitan Area, GZM Metropolis (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area), and the Stuttgart Region).

Indirect communication, in contrast, typically involves formal correspondence or less personal exchanges (e.g. Capital Region Berlin-Brandenburg). However, even in these instances, forms of direct communication, such as formal meetings, are still important for metropolitan stakeholders.

The **general trend** in metropolitan dialogues is that **direct communication, often accompanied by informal exchanges**, plays a dominant role, fostering agreement and collaboration on shared metropolitan goals. These direct forms of communication are particularly evident in voluntary associations, where informal relationships prevail and cooperation tends to be more consensual. On the other hand, institutions with political power, which may rely more on formalized structures, are better equipped to address complex problems that require more firm decision-making, even if consensus is harder to achieve.

Metropolitan dialogues bring together diverse stakeholders, **making consensus** an ongoing challenge. While many actors emphasize cooperation, conflicts can arise due to differing local and state interests, political views, or municipal priorities. Factors such as urban or rural distinctions, size, and location within the metropolitan area further influence these differences.

Despite these challenges, metropolitan dialogues aim to **reconcile differences** and establish common ground. Strategic documents play a key role in fostering alignment, helping to transition from conflict during planning to greater consensus in implementation. As a result, metropolitan dialogues fluctuate between consensus-building and conflict resolution, depending on the stage and issues involved.

In this context, a metropolitan dialogue and cooperation space can be understood as the full spectrum of interactions—formal or informal, strategic or operational—through which actors from the public, private, and civic sectors coordinate around shared metropolitan concerns. These exchanges often extend across multiple territorial levels and encompass areas such as planning, mobility, and joint projects that require supra-local arrangements. The vitality of such spaces lies in their responsiveness to functional interdependencies and in their capacity to translate everyday discussions and commitments into collective action. (Source: adapted from D1.2.1, Mikuła et al., 2024)



EXAMPLE

Types of dialogue in MECOG-CE Metropolitan Areas

Stakeholder dialogues and forums are essential for fostering collaboration and addressing challenges within the Metropolitan Areas. These platforms facilitate communication among local authorities, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders, promoting inclusive decision-making and sustainable urban development.

- **Stuttgart:** Formal meetings, such as the regional assembly and committees, serve as primary communication platforms, ensuring structured dialogue within the metropolitan governance framework.
- **Brno:** Direct communication is emphasized, particularly in the Steering Committee and Working Groups, where personal meetings are the cornerstone of cooperation and decision-making processes.
- **GZM Metropolis** (in the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area): Direct communication plays a key role, with meetings of the Assembly and its representatives consistently characterized by direct dialogue. Informal discussions also contribute to strengthening cooperation.
- **Berlin-Brandenburg:** A contrast exists between formal relations in politically powerful structures and informal relations in voluntary associations. The Municipal Neighbourhood Forum (MNF) is a unique informal platform enabling cross-municipal cooperation. While not a formal governance body, it fosters dialogue and joint action on multiple themes—such as housing, urban regeneration, and mobility—based on shared local priorities.
- **Warsaw:** The Association conducts continuous multilevel dialogue with its 79 member municipalities primarily through regular formal structures, including monthly Board meetings and quarterly General Assemblies. In addition, informal working group meetings are organized as needed to address specific topics collaboratively.

(Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1. Report on metropolitan governance systems and existing tools/best practices at partner MAs for enhancing metropolitan cooperation)



EXAMPLE

Stakeholder Engagement through "White Spots" Identification

Effective metropolitan planning must address areas and themes where participation is currently weak or absent. The "white spots" approach identifies these underrepresented spaces—both geographic and thematic—and provides targeted tools to engage missing stakeholders. Using mapping exercises, outreach events, and inclusive planning formats, it helps ensure that civil society, smaller municipalities, and marginalized groups are involved in shaping regional strategies. This participatory method not only improves the legitimacy of planning outcomes but also reveals hidden needs and priorities.

- The tool focusing on bottom-up, process-oriented stakeholder involvement was co-developed by the Joint Spatial Planning Department Berlin-Brandenburg, the City of Warsaw, and the City of Brno, within the framework of the MECOG–CE project. It was part of the cluster titled “Strengthening metropolitan institutionalization through developing joint opinions supporting informal and dialogical planning processes”.

(Source: MECOG-CE D2.3.2. Catalogue of newly developed solutions)



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.
- ✓ Utilize 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. Monitoring and Evaluation



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.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a systematic process used to assess the design, implementation, and impact of policies, programs, and projects. Monitoring involves the continuous collection of data to track progress against set goals, while evaluation is a periodic assessment that determines the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of initiatives. M&E helps organizations and governments to make **evidence-based decisions**, improve program performance, and enhance accountability. By using qualitative and quantitative methods, M&E frameworks provide insights into **what is working, what needs improvement, and how resources can be better allocated** to achieve strategic goals. This approach ensures that programs are on track to meet their objectives and allows for timely adjustments to enhance effectiveness (World Bank, 2004). Implementing robust M&E systems is essential for fostering transparency, learning, and accountability in development initiatives. It enables stakeholders to understand the outcomes of their efforts, make informed decisions, and demonstrate the value of their investments (World Bank, 2004).

In the context of metropolitan cooperation, **M&E** plays a crucial role in fostering coordination among multiple municipalities and regional governments. It ensures that joint policies and initiatives — such as public transport networks, environmental sustainability programs, and economic development projects — are effectively implemented and deliver expected benefits. By providing evidence-based insights, M&E helps align different stakeholders, improve decision-making, and enhance accountability in metropolitan governance. **Monitoring** should not be viewed merely as a requirement, but as a valuable tool that provides evidence to support results-driven frameworks. When combined with active stakeholder involvement, monitoring fosters

a sense of shared responsibility for both the achievements and the challenges encountered (The World Bank Methodological Toolkit, 2024).

Several European metropolitan areas have developed structured M&E frameworks to track and improve cooperation among municipalities. These frameworks help assess governance, economic integration, sustainability, and public service delivery.



EXAMPLE

Observatoire des Politiques Métropolitaines (France)

The observatoire is a specialized body dedicated to analysing and evaluating public policies within metropolitan areas. Its primary function is to provide comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of various metropolitan initiatives, focusing on areas such as urban planning, transportation, economic development, and social cohesion. By systematically collecting and analysing data, the observatory aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the impacts of their strategies, facilitating informed decision-making processes. One of the key activities of the observatory is the publication of detailed reports and studies that assess the outcomes of metropolitan policies. These publications often include statistical analyses, case studies, and evaluations of specific programs or interventions.

(Source: Cerema)

Engaging metropolitan stakeholders in the strategic planning process, Turin Model

The Metropolitan City of Turin has developed a structured questionnaire to gather feedback from a wide range of metropolitan stakeholders. Administered periodically, the survey collects perceptions from mayors, civil society, businesses, and academia on the relevance and implementation of strategic goals. The results are used to evaluate progress, update priorities, and strengthen transparency in governance. This tool institutionalizes feedback loops, making metropolitan strategies more responsive, inclusive, and accountable over time.

(Source: MECOG-CE D2.3.2. Catalogue of newly developed solutions)



EXAMPLE

Monitoring the impact of strategies, Cluj MA (Romania)

The Integrated Urban Development Strategy for the Cluj Metropolitan Area, Romania, outlines a long-term vision for Cluj-Napoca and its surrounding region, setting general and specific objectives along with development priorities. A key focus of the strategy is improving urban connectivity through initiatives such as promoting green public transport, reducing traffic congestion, and enhancing multimodal mobility. To ensure effective implementation, the strategy includes an action plan detailing priority projects, funding sources, and a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation.

To track progress, a Monitoring Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of both the Integrated Urban Development Strategy and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. This committee fosters cooperation among stakeholders and is supported by the metropolitan governing body, which provides administrative and technical assistance. It also produces an annual monitoring and evaluation report and organizes yearly meetings to assess the strategy's effectiveness.

The strategy employs three types of indicators: output indicators, which measure specific project achievements like new cycling lanes or green spaces; result indicators, which track improvements in sustainability and social inclusion, such as reductions in emissions or increased social services; and impact indicators, which evaluate long-term societal changes, including public transport use, local GDP growth, and overall quality of life. These indicators align with EU performance monitoring frameworks and ensure that the metropolitan strategy delivers tangible benefits to residents and the environment.

(Source: Cluj City Hall, 2022)



EXAMPLE

A model for monitoring cooperation, Brno MA (Czechia)

Brno Metropolitan Area offers a replicable model for tracking cooperation impacts through a datahub, mayoral surveys (2017, 2020, 2023), and an interactive ITI project map. The Integrated Development Strategy ensures continuous monitoring of integrated investments. Brno tracks joint integrated projects implementation through specific indicators managed by the Department of ITI management and metropolitan cooperation. A GIS map of ITI projects enhances public transparency by visualizing completed and ongoing investments.

Department of ITI management and metropolitan cooperation created and continuously updates the data at the level of metropolitan area. This data is also available to the public on metropolitni.brno.cz website. Unlike static documents, the data hub and ITI project map enhance transparency, interaction, and public awareness, fostering a shared metropolitan identity. A mayoral survey, conducted every three years, assesses municipal willingness to cooperate and identifies key areas such as transport, energy, education, and waste management (participation: 88% in 2017, 96% in 2020, 95% in 2023). The findings support the Integrated Development Strategy of BMA 21+ and inform potential institutionalization of metropolitan cooperation.

(Source: Brno Metropolitan Area, Brno data hub)



STRATEGIC STEPS

Within the strategic objective 7: Monitor and Evaluate Metropolitan Strategy

- ✓ Establish a system of indicators to assess the effectiveness of metropolitan cooperation and governance.
- ✓ Conduct regular evaluations and stakeholder reviews to ensure alignment with evolving metropolitan needs.
- ✓ Foster adaptive governance by integrating feedback loops and best practices from other metropolitan areas.
- ✓ Develop transparent data collection and reporting mechanisms to track progress and inform policy adjustments.
- ✓ Engage independent assessments and benchmarking exercises to measure impact and improve accountability.



Metropolitan City of Turin

8. Strategic Guidance

Metropolitan areas play a critical role in economic development, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Strengthening metropolitan cooperation and governance ensures that MAs function effectively and address common challenges through coordinated strategies. This 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 steps connected to these 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.

Strategic objective 3: Develop and Strengthen Governance Structures

- Establish a flexible metropolitan structure designed to foster cooperation across municipal boundaries and to jointly address shared urban and territorial challenges.
- Develop legal and institutional frameworks that enable and strengthen territorial partnerships and inter-municipal collaboration within the metropolitan area.
- Establish metropolitan governance bodies with clear roles and responsibilities or develop (spatial planning) frameworks for territorial cooperation in the functional urban area.
- Implement legal and policy mechanisms that support decision-making at the metropolitan level.
- Foster multi-level governance by ensuring coordination between municipal, regional, and national governments.

Strategic objective 4: Integrate Relevant Themes into Metropolitan Policy

- Map existing sectoral strategies at local, regional, and national levels that impact metropolitan cooperation.
- Identify key priority areas for metropolitan development, such as public transport integration, climate adaptation, or social inclusion.
- Ensure thematic areas aligned with the broader metropolitan vision and long-term objectives.
- Create interdisciplinary working groups that bring together representatives from the different sectors.
- Integrate the selected thematic areas into the general metropolitan strategy, with clear objectives, actions, and coordination mechanisms.
- Translate strategy into concrete metropolitan action plans with specific goals, timelines, and funding mechanisms.
- Thematic cooperation may vary in spatial scope – some thematic areas (e.g., transport, environmental management) may extend beyond or differ from the core metropolitan area. This flexibility should be acknowledged when integrating themes into metropolitan policy.
- Where appropriate, develop separate thematic strategies for complex topics that require more detailed planning (e.g., climate adaptation or mobility).

Strategic objective 5: Establish Metropolitan Financial Schemes

- Identify and implement a mix of funding sources for integrated investments.
- Secure funding streams from national and EU programs for sector-specific projects.
- Utilize public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure investments.
- Develop integrated metropolitan funding models, such as shared tax revenues or investment funds, to finance cross-municipal projects.
- Implement user fees, congestion charges, and/or green bonds to support sustainable initiatives.
- Establish a dedicated metropolitan budget to enable long-term, predictable financing.

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.
- Utilize 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.

Strategic objective 7: Monitor and Evaluate Metropolitan Strategies

- Establish a system of indicators to assess the effectiveness of metropolitan cooperation and governance.
- Conduct regular evaluations and stakeholder reviews to ensure alignment with evolving metropolitan needs.
- Foster adaptive governance by integrating feedback loops and best practices from other metropolitan areas.
- Develop transparent data collection and reporting mechanisms to track progress and inform policy adjustments.
- Engage independent assessments and benchmarking exercises to measure impact and improve accountability.

9. Key Takeaways

The Strategy for Strengthening Metropolitan Cooperation and Governance in Central Europe offers a comprehensive, flexible, and pragmatic framework for enhancing the governance structures of metropolitan areas across the region. Grounded in the practical experiences of MECOG-CE partner metropolitan areas and enriched by European and international best practices, the document lays out both strategic directions and operational tools for more integrated and effective metropolitan governance.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Flexible metropolitan vision and governance models**

The strategy offers a forward-looking metropolitan vision that supports adaptive governance solutions tailored to different contexts. It takes into account the diversity of metropolitan challenges and outlines pathways that combine institutional and procedural governance forms, enabling metropolitan areas to choose structures that best reflect their functional and political realities.

- **Defining metropolitan territories**

Two major approaches are presented for delineating metropolitan areas—the functional and administrative models—both of which can be used separately or in combination. Emphasis is placed on tailoring territorial definitions to economic, social, and commuting patterns.

- **Robust governance structures**

Governance systems should be designed to reflect the maturity, scale, and ambitions of metropolitan areas. Legal foundations, political representation mechanisms, and decision-making processes are all critical components to ensure legitimacy and accountability.

- **Thematic and cross-sectoral cooperation**

Key policy areas—such as spatial planning, transport, climate resilience, housing, and food systems—benefit greatly from coordinated and integrated action at the metropolitan scale. The strategy encourages the integration of sectoral strategies into a coherent metropolitan framework.

- **Sustainable financial schemes**

Long-term financial sustainability is essential for effective metropolitan cooperation. The strategy proposes a gradual progression of models starting with voluntary inter-municipal collaborations without own budget, moving towards hybrid schemes, and culminating in strong metropolitan authorities with taxation powers. This highlights the importance of matching funding instruments to the maturity and institutional setup of each metropolitan area.

- **Stakeholder involvement and collaborative planning**

Meaningful participation of local governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia is vital. The strategy recommends using collaborative planning, open data, participatory tools, and structured dialogues to foster inclusive metropolitan development.

- **Monitoring and evaluation for learning and accountability**

Establishing robust M&E systems is key to tracking progress, enabling adaptive governance, and building trust. Practices such as stakeholder surveys and data-driven assessments ensure continuous improvement and transparency.

- **Strategic guidance and practical steps**

The strategy concludes with a step-by-step guide, enabling metropolitan actors to build vision-driven, inclusive, and results-oriented governance structures tailored to local contexts.

The strategy is intended as a living document that can evolve with the needs of metropolitan areas, supporting them as they respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

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Appendix



TOOLS

To address the challenges associated with the delineation of metropolitan areas (MAs), various tools can be used, tailored to the specific needs and institutional frameworks of Western European (WE) and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. These tools help clarify spatial boundaries, manage metropolitan territories effectively, and support decision-making processes in urban planning and policy development.

1. Geospatial Analysis Tools (GIS-Based Approaches)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are crucial for delineating metropolitan areas by providing spatial analysis of territorial boundaries, land use patterns, and infrastructure networks. GIS tools such as ArcGIS or QGIS can help identify contiguous urban areas, analyze commuting flows, map economic connections, and even integrate demographic and socio-economic data to define metropolitan boundaries more comprehensively.

- Example: Buffer zones around central urban cores, or GIS-based network analysis of transportation systems to delineate commuting catchment areas. GIS by ESRI or QGIS open-source software.

2. Statistical Thresholds and Criteria-based Methods

Using statistical criteria to define metropolitan areas based on census data and socio-economic indicators is an effective way to set boundaries. This can include looking at population density, employment centers, or GDP concentration in specific areas. The European Union's **Eurostat** provides statistical methods to guide these delineations based on urban-rural definitions and regional economic integration.

- Example: Applying thresholds for population density and employment within specific radius distances from the urban core to determine if areas should be classified as part of a metropolitan area. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/about>²

[2] This is U.S.-based example provided as a comparative reference. It reflects the U.S. Census Bureau and OMB's classification system, which differs from the European practice. In the EU, metropolitan delineations are typically based on Eurostat and OECD Functional Urban Area (FUA) methodologies, which apply different thresholds and spatial logic.

To address the challenges associated with the delineation of metropolitan areas (MAs), various tools can be used, tailored to the specific needs and institutional frameworks of Western European (WE) and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. These tools help clarify spatial boundaries, manage metropolitan territories effectively, and support decision-making processes in urban planning and policy development.

3. Commuting Data Analysis

One of the most commonly used methods for defining metropolitan areas is based on commuting patterns, which can reflect the functional interconnection between the urban center and surrounding regions. Tools for spatial econometrics and commuting network analysis can map and quantify these patterns, helping urban planners delineate metropolitan areas based on labor market connections.

- Example: Analyzing transport and traffic data to measure commuting intensity, identifying suburban and peripheral areas where commuters travel into the urban core for work. Maptitude by Caliper Corporation³: Offers tools for commuting and transportation mapping, aiding in visualizing workforce access. <https://www.caliper.com/maptitude>

4. Institutional Mapping and Governance Structure Tools

For regions with established institutional frameworks, mapping tools can be used to understand the formal administrative and governance structures that influence metropolitan delineation. These tools can integrate administrative division layers with economic and demographic data, making it easier to analyze jurisdictional responsibilities across metropolitan areas and assess alignment between official boundaries and functional regions.

- Example: The ESPON Territorial Tool Box offers maps and frameworks that allow users to visualize administrative boundaries and integrate data on local governance within metropolitan areas. ArcGIS Online Metropolitan Divisions: Provides data on metropolitan divisions, useful for understanding administrative boundaries. <https://www.arcgis.com/>

5. Stakeholder Mapping and Participatory Tools

Engaging local governments, communities, and other stakeholders through participatory planning tools can improve the process of defining metropolitan areas, particularly in regions with less formal institutional recognition.

[3] Maptitude is a US-based tool and is included here as a non-EU reference for comparative illustration only, given the project's Central European focus.

Participatory workshops, surveys, and engagement platforms such as web-based GIS platforms allow communities to input their knowledge about geographical and socio-economic interconnections that might not be visible through quantitative data alone.

- Example: Using participatory mapping tools or surveys to understand the daily mobility patterns of citizens in different regions, with a focus on subjective perceptions of metropolitan boundaries. RideAmigos Data Analysis Tools⁴: Assists in creating better urban transportation solutions through advanced data analysis. <https://rideamigos.com>

6. Legislative and Policy Mapping Tools

In the context of post socialist countries with weaker institutional frameworks, legislative mapping tools can track legal developments related to metropolitan governance. These tools assess the alignment between local policies and broader regional strategies, helping identify gaps in legislation related to metropolitan cooperation and governance.

- Example: Creating a legislative mapping tool that tracks the establishment of formal metropolitan governance frameworks, such as inter-municipal agreements or regional governance regulations, and monitors how such frameworks evolve over time. HUD's Metropolitan Area Look-Up⁵: Allows users to identify metropolitan areas based on state and county combinations. <https://www.huduser.gov/>

7. Network Analysis Tools

In addition to GIS and commuting data tools, network analysis tools can be used to evaluate the functional connections that go beyond geographic proximity. This involves examining transport networks, utility connections, and other forms of infrastructure that integrate the metropolitan area. A prime example is the Travel-to-Work Areas (TTWA) tool, used by some national statistical offices, which aggregates commuting data to analyze labor market areas and employment interactions between the urban core and its surrounding regions.

- Example: Tools that integrate transport network data (such as road and rail infrastructure), providing insights into physical connections that bind metropolitan areas together. TRANUS: An integrated land use and transport modeling system used for simulating and analyzing urban and regional planning policies. <https://sites.google.com/site/tranusmodel/tranus-english>

[4] RideAmigos is a US-based. The example is provided as a non-EU reference for comparative and illustrative purposes only.

[5] The U.S. example (HUD Metropolitan Area Look-Up) is included for illustration and should be treated as a comparative reference.

Appendix 2



TABLES

Table 1. Domains of activities/interventions of metropolitan structures

	Berlin- Brandenburg MA	Brno MA	Upper Silesian MA	Ostrava MA	Stuttgart MA	Turin MA	Warsaw MA
Spatial Planning	x	•	x		x	x	x/•
Regional Development (growth, innovation, R&D, etc.)	•	•	x	•	x	x	x/•
Housing	x/•				•		
Waste management	•	•	•		x/•	x/•	
Water Management	•		•			x	
Energy	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Education	•	•	•	•			x/•
Tourism & Leisure		•		•	x	•	
Social policy / inclusion		•	•	•		x/•	•
Culture & Heritage, Metropolitan Identity	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Promotion & Territorial marketing	•		x	•	x	•	
Sewage Management			•				
Transport	x	•	x/•	•	x/•	x	x/•
Healthcare	•						
International cooperation	x/•	•	•		•	x	x/•
Other domains and subjects of cooperation and dialogue	•	x/•	•	x/•	x/•	x/•	•

x – statutory domain of activities; • – non-statutory domain of activities;
x/• – some aspects of the activities in the domain are statutory

Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1: 57.

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Table 1. Domains of activities/interventions of metropolitan structures

	Berlin- Brandenburg MA	Brno MA	Upper Silesian MA	Ostrava MA	Stuttgart MA	Turin MA	Warsaw MA
Spatial Planning	x	•	x		x	x	x/•
Regional Development (growth, innovation, R&D, etc.)	•	•	x	•	x	x	x/•
Housing	x/•				•		
Waste management	•	•	•		x/•	x/•	
Water Management	•		•			x	
Energy	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Education	•	•	•	•			x/•
Tourism & Leisure		•		•	x	•	
Social policy / inclusion		•	•	•		x/•	•
Culture & Heritage, Metropolitan Identity	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Promotion & Territorial marketing	•		x	•	x	•	
Sewage Management			•				
Transport	x	•	x/•	•	x/•	x	x/•
Healthcare	•						
International cooperation	x/•	•	•		•	x	x/•
Other domains and subjects of cooperation and dialogue	•	x/•	•	x/•	x/•	x/•	•

x – statutory domain of activities; • – non-statutory domain of activities;
x/• – some aspects of the activities in the domain are statutory

Source: MECOG-CE D1.2.1: 57.

Table 2a. Main characteristics of metropolitan areas (1) - Copenhagen, Zürich, Barcelona

	Copenhagen	Zürich	Barcelona
Population	1,876,691 (OECD 2014) 1,881,000 (ESPON 2006)	1,246,968 (OECD 2014) 1,615,000 (ESPON 2006)	3,846,697 (OECD 2014) 4,251,000 (ESPON 2006)
Type of metropolitan organisation closest to FUA	No organisation	Zürich Metropolitan Area Association (currently about 110 municipalities are members).	Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona for Barcelona and the First Zone
Legal background	No organisation	Voluntary cooperation	Law 31/2010, of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. (by the region of Catalonia)
Type of representation on the metropolitan level	No organisation	Each municipality + 8 cantons represented at the Metropolitan Conference. Metropolitan Council (executive): 8 members from cantons, 8 from municipalities.	Metropolitan Council with 90 metropolitan councillors, the 36 municipalities are represented proportionally to their population and political representation of the municipal elections.
Functions exercised on the metropolitan level	Strong spatial plan (Finger Plan) elaborated on national level	Spatial planning Lobbying towards the central government Pilot projects with metropolitan relevance	Territorial planning Urban planning (Metropolitan Urban Master Plan, land and housing policies) Services of metropolitan interest.
Annual budget	No budget	Appr. 0.9 million EUR (2017)	684 million EUR for metropolitan administration (AMB); 1,700 million EUR with all the metropolitan companies and institutions (2017)
Source of budget	No budget	Fees from the members and contribution to project costs from the members	Direct tax from citizens, contribution of municipalities, devolved funds of public services from the region EU funds, certain sectoral taxes on companies
Strengths of metropolitan cooperation	Spatial plan is a strong tool to shape the area in a coordinated way	Spatial plan is a strong tool to shape the area in a coordinated way	Strong power in services (water cycle, waste, environment; sustainable mobility and public transport, social and economic development, strategic planning)
Weaknesses of metropolitan cooperation	Partners cooperate only on win-win projects	Fluctuating membership, smaller settlements tend to be left out (metropolitan agenda is not "fancy" enough)	AMB does not cover the full FUA. Competences are limited. Lack of legitimacy by citizens due to lack of direct elections.
Future aspirations regarding metropolitan cooperation	To modify the spatial plan to provide more opportunities to rural settlements and make it more flexible	To involve as many municipalities as possible Stronger roles in implementation	New competences with the legal and financial resources. Lead the process of transformation of the economy. Reducing the social gap. To become the environmental authority of the metropolitan area.

Source: Metropolitan Research Institute for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Geróhási-Tosics, 2018:12.

Table 2b. Main characteristics of metropolitan areas (2) - Amsterdam, Grater Manchester, Stuttgart

	Amsterdam	Grater Manchester	Stuttgart
Population	2,452,659 (OECD 2014) 2,497,000 (ESPON 2006) 2.388 million inhabitants, 33 municipalities (2015)	1,935,559 (OECD 2014) 2,556,000 (ESPON 2006) 2.7 million inhabitants (2011), 10 boroughs	1,965,942 (OECD 2014), 2,665,000 (ESPON 2006)
Type of metropolitan organisation closest to FUA	2,452,659 (OECD 2014) 2,497,000 (ESPON 2006) 2.388 million inhabitants, 33 municipalities (2015)	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Region Stuttgart
Legal background	Voluntary cooperation, a covenant is signed	Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009) provided the opportunity; but the 10 boroughs created their own constitution	Act on the Establishment of the Verband Region Stuttgart 1994 (by Land Baden-Württemberg)
Type of representation on the metropolitan level	Informal, no defined representation	Councillors of the 10 boroughs are the council members + directly elected mayor	Directly elected members of the Assembly (election based on party lists)
Functions exercised on the metropolitan level	Forum for bi-, multi-lateral negotiations	Public transportation and high-ways, spatial planning, economic development, police, waste management, health care coordination, funds in social and housing topics	Public transportation Spatial planning Economic development Branding
Annual budget	No budget	Approx. 340 million EUR with direct competencies, about 2,2 billion EUR with all common services (in addition controls different funds and national sources) (2016)	Appr. 350 million EUR
Source of budget	No budget	Devolved funds, EU funds, tender funds, levy on council tax, mayor's own tax levying competence	Allocated from the county tax
Strengths of metropolitan cooperation	Historically strong culture of cooperation	Historically strong metropolitan identity, joint political will of the 10 municipalities to work together. Increasing number of devolved competencies from national level.	Directly elected region represents metropolitan interests over the local ones more efficiently
Weaknesses of metropolitan cooperation	Partners cooperate only on win-win projects	Challenge to create the 'spatial framework' - metropolitan spatial plan - which needs unanimous approval	Lack of direct tax revenues. Strong restrictive power in planning but less power in initiating development.
Future aspirations regarding metropolitan cooperation	To elaborate metropolitan level spatial plan, to implement the "action plans" for the area. To sign city deals (devolution contracts) with the central state	To finalise the spatial framework plan To involve more services (or coordination of more services) under metropolitan umbrella	To have direct taxation rights Elections with not (only) partly lists but individual election wards

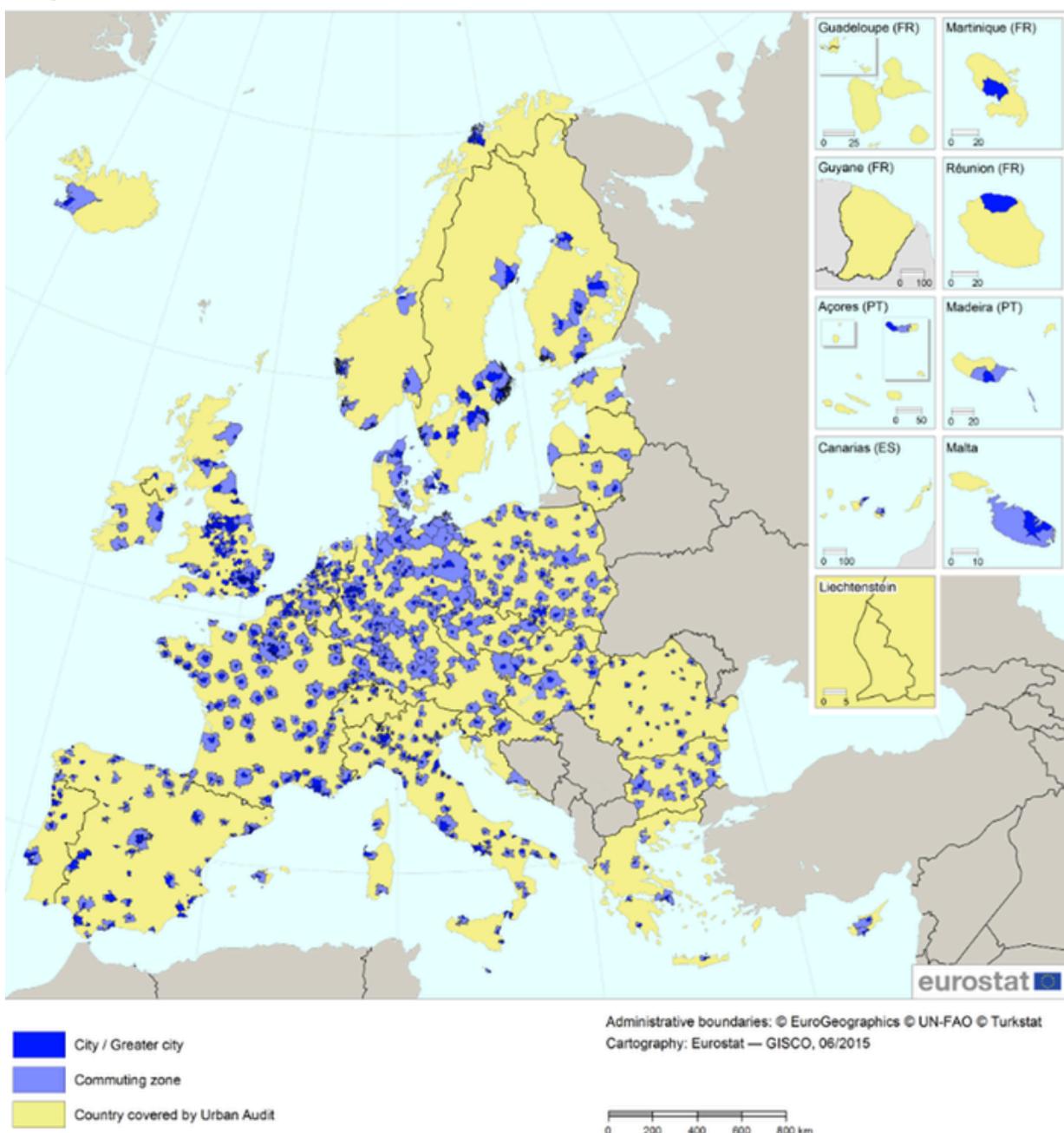
Source: Metropolitan Research Institute for the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Geróhási-Tosics, 2018:12.

Appendix 3



MAPS

Map 1. Urban Audit cities and Functional Urban Areas, 2012



Based on population grid from 2006. Directorate-General for Regional and Urban policy.
Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Territorial_typologies_for_European_cities_and_metropolitan_regions



MECOG-CE

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