



Democratising  
Just  
Sustainability  
Transitions

# Deliverable 3.1: Identification and assessment of participatory processes in sustainability transition measures in case study regions

DUST: Work Package 3, Task 3.1

Final delivery date: 31-10-2023

|                            |  |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Deliverable version</b> | V1.0 Final   |   |
| <b>Dissemination level</b> | PU   |   |
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*Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 101094869.

# Document Information

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Project Acronym            | DUST   |
| Project Title              | Democratising jUst Sustainability Transitions  |
| Project Coordinator        | Verena BALZ - Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft)   |
| Project Duration           | 36 M (February 2023 – January 2026)  |
| Deliverable Number         | D3.1   |
| Deliverable Type           | REM  |
| Dissemination Level        | PU   |
| Contractual delivery date  | M 06   |
| Delivery date              | 31-10-2023   |
| Version                    | v.1.0  |
| Pages                      | 89   |
| Work package               | WP3 – Analysis of factors conditioning the deliberative participation of least engaged communities in place-based policies for just sustainability transitions   |
| Lead Beneficiary           | STRATH   |
| Contributing beneficiaries | TUD, NR, CSD, BTU, UEK, ISOCARP, HSSL BD, SZ REDA, KiJuBB, KADRA, UZH  |
| Keywords                   | sustainability transition, just transition, place-based approaches, multi-level governance, participatory mechanisms, arenas of participation, inclusive participation, marginalised / least-engaged communities |

# Revision History

| Date                      | Version | Author         | Description                       |
|---------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 24-07-2023                | v.01    | Neli Georgieva | Initial structure                 |
| 24-07-2023-<br>09.10.2023 | v.02    | All authors    | Draft based on case study input   |
| 11-10-2023                | v.03    | All authors    | First round of review and editing |
| 27-10-2023                | v.04    | All authors    | Final formatting and editing      |
| 31-10-2023                | v.1.0   | All authors    | Final version                     |

# Table of contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Document Information  | ii   |
| Revision History  | iii  |
| Table of contents   | iv   |
| List of figures   | v    |
| List of tables  | vi   |
| List of boxes   | vii  |
| Abbreviation list   | viii |
| Executive Summary   | ix   |
| 1. Introduction   | 1    |
| 2. Methodology  | 3    |
| 3. Transition challenges & community impacts: case study contexts             | 5    |
| 4. Place-based transition measures in case study regions                      | 9    |
| 4.1. Type of place-based measure  | 9    |
| 4.1.1. EU Cohesion policy, including the Just Transition Fund                 | 9    |
| 4.1.2. National regional development policies                                 | 12   |
| 4.1.3. Regional development strategies  | 16   |
| 4.1.4. Regional energy and climate strategies                                 | 18   |
| 4.1.5. Innovation-oriented policies   | 19   |
| 4.1.6. Spatial planning   | 21   |
| 4.2. Place-based characteristics  | 24   |
| 4.2.1. Setting a specific territorial focus                                   | 24   |
| 4.2.2. Multi-level governance   | 27   |
| 4.2.3. Integrating multiple thematic objectives                               | 33   |
| 5. Identifying participatory practices  | 37   |
| 5.1. Basic consultation   | 38   |
| 5.2. Dialogue   | 43   |
| 5.3. Engagement   | 47   |
| 5.4. Partnership  | 52   |
| 6. Analysing characteristics of identified participatory processes.           | 56   |
| 6.1. Arenas where participation takes place.                                  | 56   |
| 6.2. Stages of the policymaking process open to participation                 | 59   |
| 6.3. Identifying communities and their involvement in participatory processes | 65   |
| 7. Evaluation of the outcome of participation                                 | vi   |
| 8. Conclusions  | viii |
| Annex 1: Participatory mechanisms across stages of the policy cycle           | xvi  |

# List of figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Map of Case-Study Regions .....  | 5  |
| Figure 2: Type of territorial dimensions in a place-based approach .....   | 25 |
| Figure 3: State structure and levels of self-government in DUST case study regions .....   | 28 |
| Figure 4: Multi-level governance architecture of selected place-based policies in the Rhenish district, Germany. Focus on governmental inter-relations. .... | 30 |
| Figure 5: Multi-level governance architecture of selected place-based policies in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Focus on governmental inter-relations. ....        | 31 |
| Figure 6: Dimensions of the integrated approach.....   | 34 |
| Figure 7: Two of the multiple panoramas that illustrate future development in the Groningen region. ....   | 53 |

# List of tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Place based measures for sustainable transition - Cohesion Policy JTF examples .....   | 11 |
| Table 2: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of national regional development policies .....   | 14 |
| Table 3: Place-based measures for sustainable transition – examples of regional development strategies .....  | 17 |
| Table 4: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of regional energy and climate strategies.....  | 19 |
| Table 5: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of innovation policies ...  | 20 |
| Table 6: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of spatial plans .....  | 22 |
| Table 7: Identified place-based measures in the case study regions according to typology with those selected for further research (in bold).....  | 23 |
| Table 8: Assessing depth of participation. ....   | 37 |
| Table 9: Comment periods – examples from case study regions .....   | 39 |
| Table 10: Surveys/questionnaires – examples from case study regions .....   | 40 |
| Table 11: Consultation meetings – examples from case study regions .....  | 41 |
| Table 12: Interviews – examples from case study regions .....   | 42 |
| Table 13: Public dialogue – examples from case study regions .....  | 44 |
| Table 14: Stakeholder dialogue – examples from case study regions.....  | 44 |
| Table 15: Committees and commissions – examples from case study regions .....   | 48 |
| Table 16: Workshops – examples from case study regions.....   | 49 |
| Table 17: Networking platforms – examples from case study regions .....   | 51 |
| Table 18: Participation as a partnership – examples from case study regions .....   | 54 |
| Table 19: Uptake and role of participatory processes across sages of policy/decision making.  | 63 |
| Table 20: Total population in case study areas and percentage ratio of different communities  | 67 |
| Table 21: Type of actors and involvement in place-based policies. Note that in case (some) participatory mechanisms did not indicate full data about type of NGOs or business partners, participation is marked for general actor type (NGO / business partners). Where data were available then the latter are marked in the table. .... | 72 |
| Table 22: Types of participants across participatory mechanisms in case study regions.....  | ii |
| Table 23: Methods to stimulate participation at participatory processes in DUST case studies.   | iv |

# List of boxes

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Box 1 :Cohesion Policy support for sustainable transition, including the Just Transition Fund – key issues .....                 | 10 |
| Box 2: Nationally-initiated support for sustainable transition in regions– key issues .....                                      | 13 |
| Box 3 Regional-level development strategies and sustainable transition – key issues .....  | 16 |
| Box 4: Regional energy and climate change strategies and sustainable transition – key issues                                     | 19 |
| Box 5: Innovation-oriented policies and sustainable transition – key issues .....  | 20 |
| Box 6: Spatial planning frameworks - key issues.....   | 21 |
| Box 7: Territorial focus beyond the administrative boundaries - Carbon intensive industrial cluster in TJTP Groningen-Emmen..... | 26 |
| Box 8: Spatial targeting of sustainable transition measures – key issues .....   | 27 |
| Box 9: The deal-based approach in Oost-Groningen .....   | 32 |
| Box 10: Multi-level governance and sustainable transition – key issues.....  | 32 |
| Box 11: Implementation of JTF in Brandenburg (Lusatia) through diverse programmes and tools .....                                | 34 |
| Box 12: Integrating development in four sectoral pillars – Regio Deal Oost Groningen .....                                       | 35 |
| Box 13: Integrating multiple sectors in sustainable transition measures – key issues.....  | 35 |
| Box 14: Basic consultation - key characteristics.....  | 38 |
| Box 15: Basic consultation - key issues.....   | 42 |
| Box 16: Dialogue - key characteristics.....  | 43 |
| Box 17: Dialogue-based participation - key issue.....  | 46 |
| Box 18: Engagement - key characteristics .....   | 47 |
| Box 19: Engagement-based participation - key issues. ....  | 51 |
| Box 20: Partnership - key characteristics .....  | 52 |
| Box 21: Partnership-based participation - Key issues .....   | 55 |
| Box 22: Arenas of participation – key issues .....   | 59 |
| Box 23: Participation across stages of the policy making process - key issues.....   | 65 |
| Box 24: Identifying participating communities and stakeholders - key issues .....  | iv |

# Abbreviation list

| Term   | Description   |
|--------|---|
| BASE   | Business Academy for Starting Entrepreneurs                                       |
| BB     | Brandenburg   |
| BG     | Bulgaria  |
| CCS    | Carbon capture and storage  |
| CP     | Cohesion policy   |
| CSP    | Comprehensive Strategic Plan  |
| D      | Deliverable   |
| DE     | Germany   |
| EC     | European Commission   |
| ERDF   | European Regional Development Fund  |
| ESF    | European Social Fund  |
| EU     | European Union  |
| IDP    | Integrated Development Plan   |
| ITDSSR | Integrated Territorial Development Strategy of Southeast Region                   |
| JTF    | Just Transition Fund  |
| JTM    | Just Transition Mechanism   |
| KWSB   | Growth, Structural Change and Employment  |
| LAU    | Local Administrative Unit   |
| LDS    | Lusatia Development Strategy  |
| LP     | Lusatia Programme   |
| MLG    | Multi-level governance  |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organisations  |
| NIS3   | National Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation                             |
| NL     | Netherlands   |
| NRW    | North Rhine-Westphalia  |
| NPG    | National Programme Groningen  |
| NUTS   | Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics                                  |
| OP     | Operational Programme   |
| PL     | Poland  |
| RIS3   | Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation                             |
| RD     | Regio Deal  |
| RDI    | Research, Development and Innovation  |
| RDS    | Regional Development Strategy   |
| SA     | Social Agreement  |
| SE     | Sweden  |
| SME    | Small and medium-sized business   |
| STARK  | Strengthening the Transformation Dynamics and Awakening in the Coal-Mining Region |
| StStG  | Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions                                   |
| TJTP   | Territorial Just Transition Plan  |
| WP     | Work package  |
| WRL    | Economic Region Lusatia ( <i>Wirtschaftsagentur Lausitz</i> )                     |
| WSP    | Economic and structural programme for the future Rhenish District                 |
| ZRR    | <i>Zukunftsagentur</i> Rhenish District   |



# Executive Summary

Addressing the varied distribution of costs and benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy across territories and communities is a key challenge for policymakers. Transition processes away from fossil fuels have a substantial impact where they have been drivers of regional or local economies and local employment. From a social perspective, the impacts also vary across different groups in society, with detrimental effects evident, inter alia, in people losing their jobs, surviving with a reduced income, facing the prospect of reskilling or outmigration and increased energy prices. These socio-economic impacts are spatially differentiated, generating territorial inequalities. This presents a major challenge to policymakers concerned with cohesion, in a broader context of eroding democratic institutions and increasing discontent within marginalised communities and structurally weak regions.

Place-based initiatives are increasingly prominent features of the transition policy landscape that can respond to this challenge by supporting deliberative participation. These initiatives range from EU-funded Cohesion policy programmes (including Territorial Just Transition Plans), regional development strategies, regional energy strategies, regional innovation strategies and spatial planning frameworks. This report's analysis of a selection of place-based measures in case study regions indicates that they have potential benefits from the perspective of deliberative participation. They recognise that the relative costs and benefits of transitions have inter-related political, economic, and social consequences with a clear territorial dimension. Moreover, their multi-level governance arrangements have the potential to delegate policy competences to lower administrative tiers and move participatory, deliberative processes closer to communities.

Assessment of participation in these measures indicates that more active participatory processes are evident in policy measures devised at sub-national levels. Supporting the concept of active subsidiarity, place-based policies have promoted the emergence of new spaces where participatory structures and processes can operate (e.g. in the form of citizen committees, workshops and panels). Nevertheless, most activity is associated with basic forms (consultation and dialogue) at early phases of policy design (collecting evidence and obtaining feedback). Participation based on more interactive engagement, partnership and co-creation at policy-stages involving key resource allocation decisions is much less evident.

This analysis raises important issues for future DUST research concerning the involvement of least engaged communities in participatory instruments associated with transition measures. It supports perceptions that contemporary sustainability transition policies are prioritising a long-term and multi-faceted strategic approach, drawing on the participation of a wide range of stakeholders at multiple levels, and including efforts to generate new ideas, mobilise regional capacities and reconfigure social capital. However, transition policy landscapes combine complex 'top down' and 'bottom up' implementation dynamics, multiple arenas for participation with varied links to formal decision-making structures and competing sectoral, community and political agendas. This potentially limits civic participation in key decision-making processes, particularly by least engaged communities that may not lack interest but the capacity and resources for involvement.

Specific factors to be addressed in ongoing DUST research on the participation of least engaged communities in sustainability transitions include: the persistence of 'top down' dynamics in place-based measures; where responsibility lies for deciding which stakeholders and

communities are prioritised in transition measures; the role of awareness raising and capacity-building initiatives to support participation of communities in transition measures, the alignment of structures and arenas for participation with multi-level institutionalised arenas for decision-making; the role of political influence in supporting or limiting participation; and the role of digital tools in deliberative participation.

# 1. Introduction

This report represents the first deliverable (D3.1) of Work Package 3 (WP3). WP3 has the overall aim of providing an analysis of factors conditioning deliberative participation of communities and citizens in place-based measures for sustainability transitions, focusing particularly on communities and citizens that are least engaged in the design and delivery of such measures. It is based on the premise that place-based transition measures provide benefits for deliberative participation over traditional transition policies and plans by introducing more functional geographies capable of understanding and incorporating development potentials and bottlenecks affecting different communities, using a multi-level governance system that opens up a set of arenas for deliberative participation, and joining up diverse policy goals that go beyond sectoral concerns to incorporate issues of social inclusion and territorial cohesion. These assumptions are challenged in the literature, with critiques highlighting issues of complexity posed to deliberative participation in multi-level, multi-sectoral place-based transition measures, especially for communities with limited experience and capacities. The continued influence of traditional ‘top down’ regulatory, funding, and socio-technical regimes is also noted in the literature as a potential barrier.<sup>1</sup>

D3.1 contributes to this debate by assessing place-based policies, spatial plans and instruments related to sustainability transitions in DUST’s case study regions. In particular, this report assesses the range and depth of participatory practices, the arenas where they take place, their inclusivity and outcomes and identifies some of the least engaged communities in those territories. The results of D3.1 will inform quantitative and qualitative research performed in WP2 and WP3 to provide a comparative analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable (inclusive deliberative governance of just sustainability transitions policies) and independent variables (contextual factors and features of participatory mechanisms), informing the focus of the experimental stages of DUST (WP4-5). This report is based on DUST case study research covering eight case study regions in five countries: Katowice and Belchatow in Poland, Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, Groningen in the Netherlands, Gotland and Norrbotten in Sweden and Lusatia and the Rhenish district in Germany. The analysis is part of the DUST analytical dimension and the associated analytical framework developed in DUST’s Theoretical and conceptual framework (Deliverable 1.1). Main concepts and typologies of the analytical dimension are defined and described in more detail in that deliverable.

The report is structured as follows. An overview of the methodology is outlined in Chapter 2. To set out the research in context, Chapter 3 includes a brief introduction of the case study regions, highlighting most acute sustainability transition challenges, perceptions in society and impacts on communities. Chapter 4 identifies the key place-based sustainability transition policies in case study regions assessing to what extent they exhibit main characteristics of what is termed the ‘place-based approach’. This sets the basis for selecting policy measures which are subsequently assessed in terms of participation. Chapter 5 categorises the variety of participatory processes identified in the selected place-based policies according to their depth of participation. This categorisation distinguishes between information provision, consultation, dialogue, engagement and partnership on the basis of two main criteria informed by literature. To gain better understanding of participation in its variety of forms and depth, the report further unpacks different dimensions that shape participation and impact the potential of participatory mechanisms to be more open and inclusive. These dimensions include the arenas where

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<sup>1</sup> Donati, L., Stefani, G., & Bellandi, M. (2023). The Evolutionary Emergence of Quintuple Helix Coalitions: A Case Study of Place-Based Sustainability Transition. *Triple Helix*, 10(1), 125-155.

participation takes place (Chapter 6.1), the stages of policy making that are open to participation (Chapter 6.2) and the variety of actors representing diverse interests and bringing in different type of knowledge to the participatory sphere (Chapter 6.3). Chapter 7 concludes by drawing together findings from the different elements of the analytical framework, identifying linkages and interdependences between them. This allows initial insights to be identified on whether place-based policies for just sustainability transition include all relevant communities, what the barriers to participation are and which social groups are potentially underrepresented.

## 2. Methodology

This report presents a comparative analysis of results from case study research undertaken by partners in the DUST eight case-study regions between June-September 2023. It summarises key findings from research of participatory instruments used in sustainable transition measures in the case study regions. Guidance produced by Work Package 3 leaders supported researchers in case study regions in selecting examples of sustainable transition measures for analysis that had identifiable place-based characteristics. To facilitate detailed assessment, academic partners in case study regions were requested to first identify a range of place-based measures in their territories and then select three for analysis. In the selection process, it was emphasised that measures should have a combination of the following characteristics:

- **Multi-level systems of governance, including emphasis on ‘bottom up’ inputs.** Requirement for or facilitation of multiple stakeholder involvement in governance, integrating ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ inputs from public sector (across levels of government), private sector, third sector, civil society and citizens.
- **A specific territorial focus, including functional spaces.** The targeting of specific territories that can include functional (rather than purely administrative) areas.
- **An integrated approach.** Including objectives that applied multiple dimensions to the territory concerned: economic, social, institutional, environmental and/or incorporating a range of integrated tools (investments, regulations, strategies) that combine support for the public, private and third sectors.

Partners were also asked to ensure that selected measures were in practice meaningful for the just sustainability transition, that there was documentation available in regard to participatory practices organised under them and that these measures would be suitable to cover in other DUST research, notably the Work Package 2 survey/STEP index and Work Package 3 focus groups with citizens.

The case-study research was predominantly based on documentary research. This involved analysis of secondary sources including policy reports and documents related to place-based measures (e.g. territorial strategies, programme documents) and to participatory practices (e.g. calls for participation; records of participation, evaluations of completed participatory practices, etc.), and exploring academic and grey literature, incl. media sources where relevant. In cases where case study partners were directly involved in the formulation of analysed place-based measures and/or in the participatory practices identified, data based on observations were also collected.

The case-study research was structured as follows:

- Step 1: Initial identification and categorisation of policy measures for analysis; Selection of three measures for further analysis;
- Step 2: Review of participatory instruments associated with selected three measures;
- Step 3: Analysis of characteristics of identified participatory instruments, and
- Step 4: Identification of engaged actors allowing initial conclusions on under-represented groups /least-engaged communities/ that would be most relevant to DUST research in the case study context.

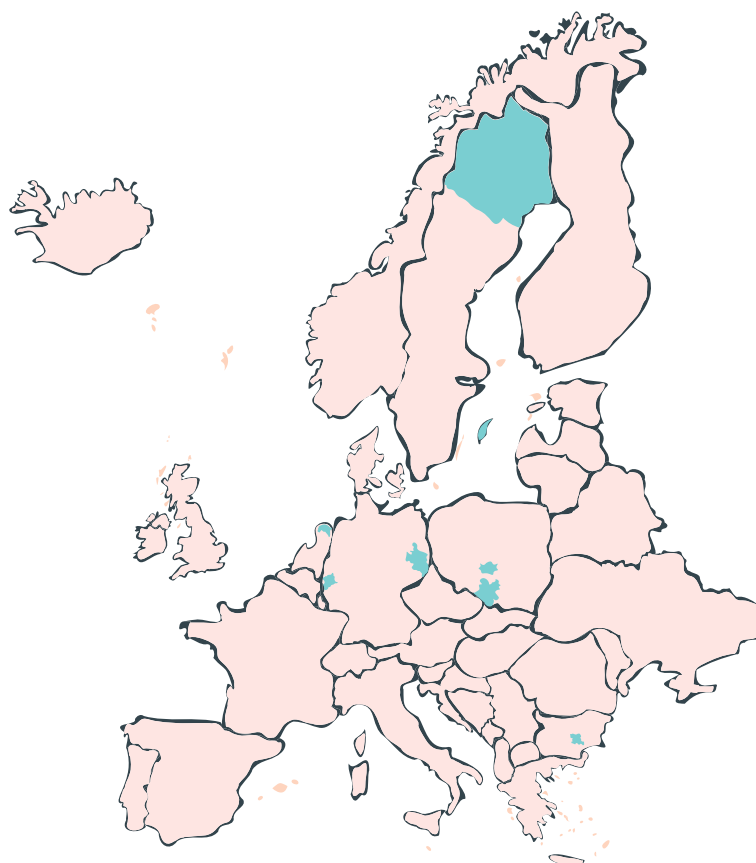
Following the above steps, case study partners compiled short responses on multiple questions and on that basis developed a summary report. The case study research was performed in an iterative manner with several rounds of feedback between the Task leaders and the case study partners. The latter included academic and societal consortium members working directly in the regions. Where relevant, support to the case study research was provided by advisory board members.

It is important to note significant variation across case studies in the availability of documentation and data for desk-based research. Moreover, information on the characteristics of participatory instruments, which were of interest, such as stakeholder involvement and outcomes was limited. Gaps highlighted as part of this initial mapping process will be further explored in subsequent DUST research.

### 3. Transition challenges & community impacts: case study contexts

Before exploring place-based sustainability transition measures and their participatory instruments, it is important to set these in their case study contexts. This section provides an introduction to the different type and scale of transition process being experienced across DUST case studies (see Figure 1 for their location). Transition processes relate to the phase-out of mining or extraction activities of natural resources and the substitution of fossil fuels used in carbon-intensive industries, concentrated in these regions. The socio-economic consequences of such transition processes have been largely estimated in terms of direct job losses. However, long-term challenges related to regional attractiveness (in terms of labour markets and inward investment), depopulation and quality of life have also been perceived. The complexity of transition processes and measures devised to facilitate them also stems from the different perceptions, support or opposition they have triggered in society. Although with varying intensities across case study regions, it is evident that approaches to sustainability transitions are contested within these territories, which has implications for participatory instruments designed to support inclusive deliberative governance of transition policies.

*Figure 1: Map of Case-Study Regions*



### Groningen (Netherlands)

The region of Groningen has encountered significant socio-economic challenges that have had a profound impact on its communities. These challenges include **population decline through out-migration, particularly of young adults and an ageing population**, and an **economic downturn** resulting from the closure of the gas industry and the **adverse effects of earthquakes** caused by earlier gas extraction. The economy of the Groningen-Emmen is currently **heavily dependent on fossil raw materials and fuels**, in particular via the extraction of natural gas in the Groningen region. It is estimated that **around 20,000 jobs will be affected** by the transition away from gas extraction in the region.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, following criticism of the government's response to fracking-induced earthquakes and tremors in Groningen around 2013, the destruction they caused and the limited amount of money set aside to address the damages, there has been a growing sentiment in the region in favour of that the fight against climate change. A substantial portion of the population is demanding an end to gas extraction and use.

### Upper Silesia (Katowicki region) (Poland)

Upper Silesia is the largest hard coal mining region in the EU with more than 70 thousand workers employed in the mines. The focus in DUST is on one of the seven coal sub-regions in Upper Silesia - Katowicki region. The region of Upper Silesia produces both steam and coking coal and is characterised by high concentration of energy-intensive industries. For more than three decades, Upper Silesia has been undergoing a socio-economic transition driven by the broader industrial restructuring and decentralisation of the Polish economy.<sup>3</sup> While the productivity of the traditional coal-related industries has increased, both employment and physical output have decreased. Gradual and piecemeal decline in mining and reductions in the workforce have created **uncertainty and tensions in mining communities, undermining trust both on the part of miners and local authority institutions in national and (sometimes) regional government. Participation in transition is further challenged by traditionally limited engagement of communities and citizens in public policy measures.** Relations between mining communities and public authorities are particularly pertinent as **almost all coal mining sector and traditional energy production companies are fully owned by the Polish State.** Due to the State ownership of these sectors, the energy transition is seen as a separate process from the regional just transition that is planned as part of Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP). These circumstances raise risks for the potential re-development (transition) of the coal mining region.

### Belchatow area of transition (Poland)

The lignite mining and conventional energy production are significant economic sectors in the Belchatow area of transition, located in the Łódź region (Voivodship). The area developed quickly to one of the richest parts of Poland due to this traditional industry. It makes local communities feel more sectorally connected than territorially. **Discussions on the phasing out of the lignite mining and conventional energy production have been followed with significant concern** by citizens of the regions as the Belchatow area hosts the biggest conventional energy plant in Poland, responsible for almost 25% of electrical energy in the country. **Terms like 'green change' and 'low carbon economy' are perceived with scepticism** by local communities. These attitudes are additionally fuelled by political debates and discourses covered in the media. This makes the level of **public trust in the Belchatow area very low.** The fact that lignite mining and traditional energy production companies are fully owned by the Polish State is considered to make the transition process even more complex and tangled.

<sup>2</sup> This number is, however, doubted by some experts, who estimated it to be lower.

<sup>3</sup> Bukowski, M. et. al. (2018) From restructuring to sustainable development: The case of Upper Silesia.



### Norrbottnen (Sweden)

Iron ore has been mined in Norrbotten at an industrial scale since the end of the 19th century. **Norrbottnen is currently the biggest producer of iron ore in all of Europe accounting for approximately 90 % of the total European output.** With the support of the Just Transition Fund, the steel industry (which currently has limited fossil-free alternatives) is converting to carbon neutrality in Norrbotten. **The industry dominates the region's economy and represents just over 10% of the total amount of jobs in Norrbotten as of 2018, corresponding to 6,900 people, most of whom work for one of the large mines.** The region faces challenges such as a shrinking workforce, attracting people to move to and live in the area, as well as increasing opposition to mining due to socio-environmental concerns and land use conflicts. **Trade unions and civil society groups have voiced concern that the Swedish just transition neglects the potential regional social impacts of the transition.**

### Gotland (Sweden)

Although the number of direct jobs provided by the cement industry in Gotland is limited, its **relevance for Gotland's economy is greater than for other regions in Sweden.** Cement and limestone industries are particularly important for rural Gotland, and particularly the northern part of the island.<sup>4</sup> Permit processes of the quarries supplying limestone to the factory has been an important issue from national down to local level. Citizens have participated in consultation meetings for each new permit round for the quarries. **Attitudes towards the quarries and the cement factories diverge among local inhabitants.** Environmental NGOs have over the years taken interest in the permit processes, in an attempt to stop new quarries. Developing the infrastructure that supports the energy transition and electrification of the cement production is also a key challenge. The need for electricity in the cement industry is expected to increase tenfold by 2030. This requires vast investments in an electricity system, hose upgrade will be partly funded by the TJTP. Concerning the TJTP of Gotland, existing research indicates that **national policymakers have prioritised the more technical elements of the transition in the development and formulation of the plan, while civil society/NGOs and citizens were largely excluded from this process.**<sup>5</sup>

### Stara Zagora (Bulgaria)

The province of Stara Zagora hosts the largest energy production complex in Bulgaria (the state-owned "Mini Maritsa-East" EAD) which is powered by coal mined in the region, while its overall economy is highly dependent on fossil fuels.<sup>6</sup> The topic of a sustainability transition has evolved in the region in relation to EU policies and funds including the EU Green Deal, Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Just Transition Mechanism. Despite its low unemployment rate (c. 1,5 %), estimations indicate that c. 35,000 (direct and indirect) jobs could be lost in Stara Zagora as a result of the coal phase-out.<sup>7</sup> **The latter has been a sensitive topic in the province, as well as in other coal mining areas, and it was not discussed in public for a long period of time.** Political discussions and decision-making on the Territorial Just Transition Plans have largely taken place at national level. The finalisation of the plans has been delayed and these have yet not been adopted at the time of writing (October 2023). There is also no formal political decision if and by when coal mining is to be phased out, which creates extensive uncertainties. **Civic**

<sup>4</sup> Moodie, J., Tapia, C., Löfving, L., Gassen, N. S., & Cedergren, E. (2021). Towards a territorially just climate transition—Assessing the Swedish EU territorial just transition plan development process. *Sustainability*, 13(13), 7505.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> [https://csd.bg/fileadmin/user\\_upload/publications\\_library/files/2023\\_05/BRIEF\\_132\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://csd.bg/fileadmin/user_upload/publications_library/files/2023_05/BRIEF_132_ENG_WEB.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

**society organisations have been particularly active**, organising participatory initiatives on the topic of just transition. There is, however, a perception that these initiatives do not receive political recognition at all levels. **Negative implications are assumed to stem also from social media propaganda campaigns and narratives of regional social-economic collapse** and national loss of energy security, if a decision is made to close the state-owned Maritza East Energy Complex.

### **Lusatian Lignite District (Lusatia) (Germany)**

The importance of brown coal for Lusatia [in German: Lausitzer Revier] is high compared to other areas in Germany.<sup>8</sup> Currently, four active opencast mines (mining) and three power plants (power generation) operate in the region. Moreover, there are activities in lignite refining. **In 2019, about 40% of total German lignite production took place in the Lusatian district. In the same year, there was a total of 8,116 people directly employed in the lignite industry.** Counting also the indirect employment effects, around 13,000 people in Brandenburg and Saxony are directly and indirectly employed in the lignite industry. There are specialized regional value chains that are closely linked to the coal and energy industries. **As a result, the national Commission "Growth, Structural Change and Employment" (KWSB) identified the Lusatian lignite region in Brandenburg and Saxony as one of the areas most affected by Germany's policy commitment to phasing out lignite mining and other fossil energy sectors.** The implementation of measures for steering the transition in a socially responsible manner, to compensate for jobs, revenue and opportunities that might be lost in the structural change, have been defined as a key responsibility of actors at the federal (national), state, regional and local level, triggering the formation of new alliances across administrative boundaries and across multiple scales.

### **Rhenish Lignite District (Germany)**

Rhenish District [in German: Rheinisches Revier] in Germany's State of North Rhine-Westphalia is the largest lignite mining region in Germany. **In its three opencast mines a total of up to 65 million tons of lignite are produced annually, although as of 2022 the production is being gradually reduced. About 8,000 people are directly affected by the lignite phase-out, with another 15,000 indirectly affected, as for example in supplier companies. In addition to this, about 50,000 people are employed in the energy-intensive industry.** As a result, the nationally-driven Commission on "Growth, Structural Change and Employment" (KWSB) identified the lignite region of the Rhenish (Lignite) District as most affected by the national political commitment to phaseout lignite mining and other fossil energy sectors. This has incentivised existing regional alliances and institutionalized associations to join forces with local, state and federal (national) actors to steer the transition in a socially responsible manner. A particular priority has been given on targeted training and coaching to retain the existing employment levels.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://lausitz-brandenburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Lausitzprogramm-2038\\_20200914.pdf](https://lausitz-brandenburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Lausitzprogramm-2038_20200914.pdf)

## 4. Place-based transition measures in case study regions

Sustainability transitions represent complex multidimensional processes involving shifts in economic specialisation, in infrastructures and land use, in the provision and consumption of services and resources, in innovation priorities, in skills needs and labour market distribution. A basic contention of DUST research is that to support effective, sustainable and just transitions, public policy measures must incorporate different sectors, territorial scales and societal groups. Academics as well as policy practitioners equally argue that sustainable transitions can only be achieved by empowering local and regional authorities to deliver solutions in line with citizens' needs.<sup>9</sup> Thus, DUST focuses on measures that are founded on 'place based' principles, a concept applied to regional policy and EU Cohesion policy over the past two decades to describe not just a spatial focus within policy making but a strategic and integrated approach to governance with different institutional relationships. The degree to which contemporary policies constitute a place-based policy approach varies, but basic principles include design and implementation in partnership with community actors and the private sector at multiple local, regional, national administrative scales, or indeed in functional spaces that cover socio-economic interactions or linkages across policy sectors and administrative boundaries. The identification of place-based measures for sustainability transition in DUST case study regions has been based on two key dimensions. First, on the type of place-based measure and second, the characteristics of these measures in line with the 'place-based' approach.<sup>10</sup> Based on these two dimensions, each case study region was asked to select at least three key place-based policies, whose participatory activities have been further analysed in the report.

### 4.1. Type of place-based measure

**This step of the analysis aims to shed light on how different types of policy and planning measures translate sustainability goals and facilitate sustainability transitions in a manner tailored to specific territorial needs of the case study regions.** Based on literature review, a basic typology of place-based measures oriented to the sustainability transition was defined. This includes the domains of EU Cohesion policy, national regional development policies and regional-level strategies, innovation-oriented policies, and spatial planning. An overview of all measures is provided in Table 7.

#### 4.1.1. EU Cohesion policy, including the Just Transition Fund

Cohesion Policy (CP) is the European Union's main investment policy, delivered across Member States and regions under a system of multi-level, shared management that involved national and sub-national authorities in designing and implementing national and regional programmes, territorial strategies and projects. CP supports mainstreaming energy transition considerations into its programmes, strategies, dedicating significant investments to projects

<sup>9</sup> [https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/green-deal.aspx?utm\\_source=SharedLink&utm\\_medium=ShortURL&utm\\_campaign=Green%20Deal%20Going%20Local](https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/green-deal.aspx?utm_source=SharedLink&utm_medium=ShortURL&utm_campaign=Green%20Deal%20Going%20Local)

<sup>10</sup> Barca, F. (2008). *An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy: a place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations* (No. EERI\_RP\_2008\_06). Economics and Econometrics Research Institute (EERI), Brussels.

with a strong potential to support transition processes.<sup>11</sup> For the 2014-20 CP period, c. €78 billion of funding was allocated to supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy under CP's Thematic Objective (TO) 4, adaptation to climate change and risk prevention (TO5) and improving environmental protection and resource efficiency (TO6).<sup>12</sup> In the current 2021-2027 period, further emphasis is placed on sustainable transition through a dedicated policy objective of 'greener, low-carbon Europe' and via the new Just Transition Fund (JTF) which dedicates €17.5 billion to alleviate the socio-economic impacts of the transition towards climate neutrality in the regions most affected. The scope of JTF intervention comprises 15 activities supporting sustainable investments in technology and enterprise (e.g. support for microenterprises, sustainable tourism, low-emission district heating, smart and sustainable mobility, energy storage technologies) and more socio-cultural support (e.g. projects tackling energy poverty, culture, education and community building). To obtain funding, Member States are required to prepare Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) setting out an outline of the national transition process and most negatively identified territories (at NUTS 3 level); an assessment of transition challenges, needs and objectives, consistency with other strategies and types of projects; and governance mechanisms (see Box 1).

*Box 1 : Cohesion Policy support for sustainable transition, including the Just Transition Fund – key issues*

**CP provides substantial support for energy transition through investment in programmes and projects that are implemented in a multi-level governance system.** The importance of energy transition in CP in 2021-2027 is reflected in a dedicated policy objective supported by a new Just Transition Fund (JTF).

**There have been significant delays in developing JTF plans, putting pressure on programme authorities to meet spending deadlines and limiting the scope for stakeholder and community engagement in the process.** Spending challenges are owing to the front-loaded expenditure profile of part of the JTF funding. Up to €10 billion should be spent by the end of 2023. A comprehensive project pipeline is needed in regions to allow timely implementation.

**The administrative requirements of programming are demanding given the need for coordination between different territorial levels and thematic areas.** Coordination is required with smart specialisation strategies, other relevant territorial strategies, and especially with national/regional energy and climate strategies.

**A related question is whether there will be sufficient flexibility during implementation.** The high level of programming detail required in the plans may reduce the flexibility to adjust plans during implementation in an experimental manner without recourse to bureaucratic modification procedures.

**Existing research underlines the need for engagement of a variety of governmental and external stakeholders in JTF programming and implementation as an important element of the process.** Formally, the preparation of the programmes has involved a wide array of actors, demonstrating the systemic nature of the transition.

**Nevertheless, literature indicates that the involvement of local communities and stakeholders has been limited so far.** While initial reviews have identified some examples of good practice (e.g. input from citizen assemblies and establishment of a new

<sup>11</sup> Benzie M, Carter T R, Carlsen H and Taylor R (2019) *Cross-border climate change impacts: implications for the European Union*. Regional Environmental Change 19:763-776.

<sup>12</sup> Dozhdeva V and Fonseca L (2021) *A Green Transition: Making the new programmes sustainable*. IQ-Net Thematic Paper 49(2), European Policies Research Centre Delft.

youth NGO in Estonia), existing research indicates that TJTPs could improve measures for partnership and for better cooperation with communities in developing plans.<sup>13</sup>

All DUST case study regions have identified Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP) as relevant place-based measure in their region (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Place based measures for sustainable transition - Cohesion Policy JTF examples*

| Case study                      | Description   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Katowicki region (PL)           | <b>Territorial Just Transition Plan of Silesia Voivodeship, incl. Katowicki region (TJTP Silesia).</b> Silesia has the largest hard coal mining in the EU and is receiving the majority of funding through the JTF in Poland. With a budget of around €2.4 billion this EU funding will support local economic diversification by investing in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) working on renewable energy, clean mobility and other green sectors. It will invest in rehabilitation and decontamination of 2,800 ha of post mining areas and in the training of workers many of whom currently work in the fossil fuels sector and equip them with new skills to work in renewable and climate neutral industries.  |
| Stara Zagora (BG)               | <b>Territorial Just Transition Plan of Stara Zagora district.</b> Bulgaria has been dedicated around €1.3 billion from JTF, which ranked the country fifth in the amount of funding provided. The national Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works have been the formally responsible institutions for the formulation of the TJTP. This includes Stara Zagora which faces the challenge of coal intensive industry dependency and transition to low carbon economy. However, as of October 2023, Bulgaria remained the only country that had not yet formally submitted its Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP) to the European Commission. As a result, Bulgaria has partially lost its just transition funding.  |
| Lusatia (DE)                    | <b>Just Transition Fund (JTF) Germany / Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Brandenburg.</b> The just transition process has been framed at the national (federal) level by the report of the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment, which identified the most negatively affected areas and set the redistribution of funds across areas. The JTF is being implemented at the state (Länder) level by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy of Brandenburg. Brandenburg will receive €785 million to diversify its economy and smoothly move away from a lignite and petrol-based economy. Investments will be made especially in the Lusatian region by supporting innovative SMEs in the green sectors such as production of bio-based materials, resource efficiency and circular economy and the establishment of a hydrogen plant as alternative to the local lignite-based production.  |
| Rhenish (Lignite) District (DE) | <b>Just Transition Funds (JTF) Germany / Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW).</b> North Rhine-Westphalia will receive €680 million from JTF. The Northern part of the Ruhr area, the former so called 'coal pot' of Europe will move from a coal-based industry to an industry based on renewable energy. Investments will focus on restoring the land of lignite mines and creating new small and medium businesses (SMEs) and start-ups in the green sectors like resource efficiency, circular economy, bio-based alternative raw materials, but also land rehabilitation. This will create new job opportunities. Within this, in the Rhenish territory, the lignite mines and power plants will be closed, and the JTF will invest, in particular, in targeted training and coaching to retain jobs. The funds are administered by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Action and Energy (MWIKE) for the ERDF, and by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MAGS) for the ESF. The two funding streams complement each other, in particular the fields of vocational education and training. |

<sup>13</sup> WWF (2023). Summary Report: Territorial Just Transition Plan Scorecard Assessment.

| Case study       | Description   |
|------------------|---|
| Groningen (NL)   | <b>TJTP Groningen-Emmen.</b> In the Netherlands, JTF allocates €623 million via one national operational programme (OP) and one national TJTP. The national OP defines six regional JTF regions, with each having an own TJTP and detailing of the overarching priorities that the national OP sets out. The TJTP Groningen-Emmen, with a programming horizon of 2027, will deploy €330 million – roughly half of the Dutch JTF - to mitigate the economic and social consequences of the climate transition, to work on a green economy, and the creation of new employment opportunities.   |
| Bełchatow (PL)   | <b>Territorial Just Transition Plan of Łódzkie Voivodeship (TJTP Łódzkie).</b> Next to coal mining, the Łódzkie region also hosts the biggest single emitter of CO <sub>2</sub> in the EU, the lignite power plant in Bełchatów. Poland has committed to reduce substantially lignite extraction and combustion capacity in the region by 2030. Across Łódzkie, €369.5 millions of EU funding will be invested in new business infrastructure for local SMEs and in research laboratories, as well as in energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment. The Fund will support workers currently employed in the Bełchatów power plant as well as in mining and related sectors. These workers will be trained with new skills to be ready for new green jobs. The JTF will also support measures to decarbonise local transport by, for example, investing in new electric buses.   |
| Norrbottnen (SE) | <b>Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Norrbotten.</b> The Plan will receive €93.4 million with the objective to support a transition to carbon neutrality in the steel industry's value chain whilst maintaining the global competitiveness of Norrbotten's steel industry. The steel industry's value chain includes mining and recycling of input raw materials to processed steel product. The Plan includes investments in research and innovation (including at universities and public research organizations, and promoting the transfer of advanced technology), investments in the use of clean energy technology and infrastructure (including energy storage technology, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) and investments in improving the circular economy (including through preventive measures and waste reduction, resource efficiency, reuse and recycling). The Plan also includes measures for skill enhancement and retraining, to protect current value chain employees.  |
| Gotland (SE)     | <b>Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Gotland.</b> With a budget of €37.4 million, the main focus of the TJTP is on the transformation of the cement industry while maintaining competitiveness to sustain economic and employment levels. As part of a dedicated R&D&I programme, the Plan aims to support the cement industry to substitute carbon fuels with waste-based and bio-based fuels (incl. CCS technology) as well as the production of new grades of cement and materials. Investments in improving infrastructures for a flexible and robust energy system in the island is also a key action targeted in the plan. €9 million of the JTF will contribute to the increased capacity of Gotland's electricity grid. Specifically, JTF will finance part of a new construction and voltage upgrade of the electricity grid passing from south to north part of the island. A strengthened electricity grid as well as an increased share of renewable electricity generation are prerequisites for the conversion of the cement plant in the county. The investments in the upgrade of the electricity system are one of the areas in the TJTP for Gotland that is most tangible for citizens as well. |

## 4.1.2. National regional development policies

### **Sustainable transition requires regional policy interventions outside of EU Cohesion policy.**

Carbon intensive production and power stations are inevitably concentrated in particular places, and also typically become linked into other regional sectors and supply chains, as well as political, social and cultural networks. Indeed, regional policies have often emerged in countries in response to the structural economic difficulties of coal producing regions. In some countries, central government investment in industrial estates and the provision of loans and other incentives to firms establishing plants in coal producing areas with high unemployment rates due



to structural change laid the foundations for contemporary regional policy.<sup>14</sup> A range of regional policy instruments are used to respond to structural changes, combining contributions from national, regional and local levels in the allocation of resources to investment in sustainable development. The form these regional policy instruments take is determined by domestic institutional settings, policy-making traditions etc.

**Some of these policies are national-level responses to sustainability transition challenges facing specific regions.** There are strong rationales for national oversight of regional policies for sustainability transition. National governments are able to set targets and create rules and incentives in ways that steer development in these regions towards long-term sustainability goals. They are also important funders for initiatives in these regions, attaching rules and criteria to associated resources. Traditional regional policies for coal-producing regions were based on hierarchical, command-and-control steering through nationally-set regulations, rules and targets, often focusing on sector-specific issues. This ‘top down’ dynamic raises questions about the scope for participation in policy-design and delivery from regional and local stakeholders and communities in the territory concerned. However, contemporary national-level policies targeting these territories increasingly recognise the complexity of transition, the uncertainty about the future, and the large number of stakeholders impacted by the process, each with their own goals and perspectives. These initiatives work in different ways. They can involve a targeted response to the coal sector, with a national-level programme or action plan assessing the problem of coal phase outs in specific territories and communities and developing measures on how they could act to support this process. These measures often focus on multi-level government coordination with an emphasis on business and labour market support, community investments. and making available governmental expertise on how to manage just transitions and build partnerships in affected regions (see Box 2).

*Box 2: Nationally-initiated support for sustainable transition in regions– key issues*

**Regional policies have often arisen in countries as part of national government efforts to address industrial restructuring** in coal producing regions.

**Traditionally, these involved top-down implementation** of investments, subsidies and regulatory measures with limited scope for participation in design and implementation at regional or local levels.

**Contemporary national-level policies facilitating transition in specific territories take a more inclusive approach to implementation**, coordinating support across a wide range of partners in design and implementation: regulatory reforms, direct investment, overseeing multi-level coordination, dedicated capacity-building in affected regions.

DUST case study regions in Germany, the Netherlands and Poland included prominent examples of national policies targeting territories facing sustainability transition challenges (see

Table 2).

<sup>14</sup> [Davies, Sara and den Hoed, Wilbert and Michie, Rona \(2020\) Energy Transition in Europe's Coal Regions : Issues for Regional Policy.](#) University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

*Table 2: Place based measures for sustainable transition - examples of national regional development policies*



| Case study                             | Description   |
|--|---|
| Lusatia and Rhenish (Lignite) District | Germany's regional policies are closely linked to the constitutional goal of achieving 'equivalent living conditions'. This constitutional goal provides the justification for the existence of the Regional Joint Task – i.e., for an instrument involving the Federal level as well as the State (Länder) level (the latter being constitutionally responsible for regional policy). As part of this, since 2019, the Federal government has committed itself to allocating significant targeted funding (c. €40 billion in 2020-38) via the <b>Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions (StStG)</b> to States (Länder) with the largest lignite regions, covering existing federal programmes and new priority investment projects, with a view to ensuring transition out of coalmining and energy production, in support of climate change targets. <sup>15</sup> The funds are distributed via two structural aid instruments: financial aid (Pillar I) and federal measures (Pillar II). Pillar I provides financial assistance to the lignite regions to compensate for differences in economic strength and to promote economic growth. The funds are made available directly to the Länder (incl. Brandenburg and NRW) for particularly significant investments in the coal regions (incl. €5.2 billion for the Rhenish District and €3.6 billion for Lusatia). <sup>16</sup> Pillar II is a so-called Federal measure which falls under the responsibility of the Federal government, to improve economic competitiveness and create jobs (incl. €9.6 billion for the Rhenish District and €6.7 billion for Lusatia). <sup>17</sup> |
| Groningen                              | The <b>National Programme Groningen (NPG)</b> is a national policy response to political protests in the region following earthquakes triggered by rapid gas extraction. <sup>18,19</sup> Its budget is €1.15 billion. It is aimed at fostering growth and development in the North of the Netherlands, with particular emphasis on the province of Groningen. Similar to the German case, the Programme emphasises the importance of partnership between the government, province and municipalities, reflected in sub-programmes applied at different levels including a provincial (regional) programme, local programme and <i>Toukomst</i> <sup>20</sup> (future vision) sub-programme focused on residential initiatives.   |
| Katowicki region                       | The <b>Social Agreement on the Transformation of the Hard Coal Mining Sector and selected Transformation Processes in the Silesian Voivodeship (SA)</b> , including Katowicki region, was signed by representatives of trade unions, the national & regional government, employers and local government in Katowice in 2021. It can be seen as a measures that represents both sectoral & territorial orientation. The Agreement was the result of negotiations between representatives of the government and trade unions, in response to growing spontaneous protests of miners, mass meetings at the coal mines in Silesia and the announcement of manifestations in the cities of the Silesia Voivodeship. The SA defines employment guarantees, social protections for employees in future closed mines, guarantees for wage indexation, rules for supporting clean coal technologies, the establishment of the special Silesia Transformation Fund, etc. The document sets the dates for the phase out of hard coal mining in individual mines by the end of 2049 (the schedule of the coal mine phase-out process). All these solutions have been designed to guarantee stability in the Silesia labour market.  |
| Belchatow area of transition           | The <b>Social Agreement on the Energy Sector and the Lignite Mining Industry</b> including the Separation of Assets of Energy and Coal Mining from Companies with State Treasury Shareholding was signed by representatives of trade unions, employers and the national government in 2022. The Agreement regulated the conditions for the transition of the energy sector and the lignite industry, including employee protections, financial conditions for the transfer of employees to a new company, defining support systems during the transition, investing in clean technologies, etc. In addition, the Agreement foresees a national government's commitment to support financially the transition processes in the regions affected, as per defined territorial scope (based on the location of energy sector enterprises - electricity power plants, lignite mining industry, mining companies). Belchatow area of transition is one of the territories concerned under the Agreement as it hosts the biggest conventional energy plant in Poland.  |

<sup>15</sup> BMWi (2019c) *Eckpunkte zur Umsetzung der strukturpolitischen Empfehlungen der Kommission "Wachstum, Strukturwandel und Beschäftigung" für ein "Strukturstärkungsgesetz Kohleregionen"*, Berlin, May 2019

<sup>16</sup> <https://revierwende.de/lage-der-strukturentwicklung/>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Dedicated webpage available at: <https://www.nationaalprogramm groningen.nl/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/Groningen/rapport>

<sup>20</sup> Dedicated webpage available at <https://www.toukomst.nl/>

### 4.1.3. Regional development strategies

Regional just transitions initiatives are described here as all those policies and interventions directed to managing industrial transitions initiated at the subnational (regional) level that address just transitions goals. **While national governments have initiated policy responses targeting transition regions, there are also important measures led from the regional level.** A prominent feature of regional policy since the 1990s is the implementation of integrated regional development strategies. These set out key priorities, highlight specific territorial issues and provide a framework to coordinate actions across policy and administrative jurisdictions. Strategies need to be multi-faceted, including not only on physical regeneration and infrastructure, but also support for business creation and investment, for re-training workers and wider education/training, as well as for R&D&I, and for community development. The role of regional development strategies in transition processes is increasingly recognised in academic literature: the role of space and the form of future economies are key questions for regional development strategies addressing sustainable transition. These measures can operate in coordination with national policies targeting these areas, but they are differentiated from national government initiatives in several ways. First, regional development strategies are often in operation across all regions, not just those with the most pressing transition challenges. Second, increased emphasis is placed on regional-level ‘ownership’, reflected in the ‘bottom up’ identification of territorial needs and potentials and the leading role of regional actors in drafting and implementing strategies. The regional scale is closer to workers, community members, and local governments than that of national governments, and as such, can work on the ground with local governments, businesses, workers, and residents to support them.<sup>21</sup> Strategic planning offers strong potential for promoting inclusion and participation in just transitions and strengthening regional governance in transition through the stages of drafting strategies (gathering territorial data, agreeing needs and priorities, developing project proposals, monitoring progress etc.). Regional strategies also support participation by applying cross-sectoral, multi-scale and place-based approaches, developing novel formats of knowledge co-production. However, there have been criticisms in the literature of the process of regional development strategic planning and implementation in supporting transition, in terms of ensuring that strategic objectives are implemented in practice, lack of flexibility, a lack of cooperation and participation between administrations and multiple levels and between public authorities and other territorial stakeholders and potential gaps between long-term strategic orientation and short-term implementation.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, regions (particularly in unitary states) can have their capacities and scope for action disproportionately shaped by national governments. As such, ‘top down’ national strategies, policies, and interventions can significantly shape regional agency and functions (see Box 3).<sup>23</sup>

#### *Box 3 Regional-level development strategies and sustainable transition – key issues*

- **Regional development strategies are widespread policy instruments** that frequently include sustainable transition among their objectives.
- **The drafting and implementing of these strategies offer a range of processes and arenas for participation** of territorial stakeholders and communities.

<sup>21</sup> Krawchenko, T.A.; Gordon, M. How Do We Manage a Just Transition? A Comparative Review of National and Regional Just Transition Initiatives. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 6070.

<sup>22</sup> Antje Matern, Martin Špaček, Jessica Theuner, Robert Knippschild & Julius Janáček (2023) Strategies for energy transition and regional development in European post-coal mining regions: Ústí Region, Czechia, and Lusatia, Germany, Territory, Politics, Governance, DOI: 10.1080/21622671.2023.2231972

<sup>23</sup> Krawchenko, Tamara Antonia, and Megan Gordon. 2021. "How Do We Manage a Just Transition? A Comparative Review of National and Regional Just Transition Initiatives" *Sustainability* 13, no. 11: 6070

- **From the perspective of participation, there are challenges** in achieving consensus in setting priorities, maintaining long-term commitment and coordinating ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ objectives.

Several case study regions have development strategies that include sustainable transition as a key objective (see Table 3Box 3).

Table 3: Place-based measures for sustainable transition - examples of regional development strategies

| Case study       | Description  |
|------------------|--|
| Katowicki region | <b>Silesia Voivodeship Regional Development Strategy (RDS)</b> represents the basic document programming the territorial development of the Silesia Voivodeship (NUTS2). Such strategies are prepared by each Voivodeship (at NUTS2 level) in Poland. The main objective has been defined as changing the economic profile of the region and gradually replacing traditional sectors of the economy, such as the mining and steel sector, with new ventures in more productive, innovative and technologically advanced sectors.   |
| Belchatow area   | The <b>Lodzkie Voivodeship Regional Development Strategy (RDS)</b> represents the basic document programming the territorial development of the Łódzkie Voivodeship (NUTS2) led by the Łódzkie Marshall Office. According to the Act on the principles of development policy (Journal of Laws 2023, items 225 and 412), the regional strategy is a mandatory document in the context of the EU Cohesion Policy. The strategy covers a wide scope of interventions addressing various stakeholder groups.   |
| Lusatia          | <p><b>Lusatia programme (LP) 2038</b> (<i>Lausitz Programm 2038</i>) defines the strategic goals of the State government (Land Brandenburg) as well as the decision-making and accompanying structures to steer the transformation process and implement financial assistance to the region in accordance with the Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions. The measure is articulated to the model of EU regional policy, with the financial assistance to be broken down into multi-year promotion periods. The LP 2038 includes objectives for strengthening region's competitiveness through the establishment or expansion of science and research institutions, and the settlement of companies with innovative power, research and development in the field of the hydrogen economy, energy, low-emission industries and technologies as well as the circular economy, sustainable land use and the bioeconomy.</p> <p>The <b>Development Strategy 2050</b> is divided into seven future areas: Infrastructure and public services; I&amp;R; Economic promotion and development; Skilled development; Marketing, culture, art and tourism; European model region; Participation. These are based on the areas of action that the State Governments of Saxony and Brandenburg have jointly decided on. In the future areas, starting points are described on a topic-specific basis, from which the relevant goals and action categories are derived. The Development strategy is a framework for the development and implementation of concrete future projects, including with structural funding.</p> |
| Rhenish District | The <b>Economic and Structural Programme for the Future Rhenish District (WSP)</b> is a measure operationalising at the state level the federal StStG. It defines the strategic goals of the state government - NRW. The Programme outlines four key fields under which objectives of structural transformation are defined: energy and industry; resources and agribusiness; innovation and education; spatial development and infrastructure. The Programme also sets out a comprehensive governance framework with decision-making and accompanying structures responsible to steer the transformation process and implement financial assistance provided by StStG.  |
| Norrbottn        | <b>The Regional Development Strategy (RDS)</b> for Norrbotten outlines a comprehensive plan for the sustainable growth and enhancement of the Norrbotten region in Sweden. This strategy focuses on harnessing the area's unique strengths, such as its rich natural resources and strategic geographical location, to foster economic prosperity, innovation, and social well-being. It emphasizes collaborative efforts between public,  |

| Case study   | Description  |
|--------------|--|
|              | private, and civil society sectors to promote job creation, infrastructure development, and environmental sustainability.  |
| Gotland      | The <b>Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Gotland</b> “Our Gotland 2040 – Regional development strategy for Gotland” sets out the long-term sustainable regional development in Gotland. It contains a vision and three overarching goals with impact targets. It is complimented by an implementation programme which is carried out in collaboration with stakeholders and other authorities. The formal mandate comes from the Act on Regional Development Responsibility which states that the institution responsible for regional development - Region Gotland - in collaboration with other authorities, private sector and civil society, shall develop a strategy for long-term sustainable regional development for Gotland. The strategy is set in a framework informed by the identification of mega trends and regional challenges, and outlines development priorities tackling these. Three implementation programs are developed targeting business conditions and innovation; climate, energy and environment and social welfare. The strategy informs the priorities set out in the Comprehensive plan for Gotland (Översiktsplan) as well as the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Gotland 2021-2027.  |
| Stara Zagora | <p>The <b>Integrated Territorial Development Strategy of Southeast Region (NUTS II) 2021-2027</b> (ITDSSR) is formally part of the domestic regional policy, a strategic planning document defining the overall political, spatial, economic and sectoral framework for the development of the region in the period 2021-2027. The strategy recognises that a major challenge in the development of the region during the plan period 2021-2027 is the transition of the energy industry. This would require new production facilities and new jobs as well as significant investment and a clear programme for the restructuring of the regional economy linked to education and the infrastructure. The strategy is largely driven by EU Cohesion Policy, which is the main source of funding. It is the basis for implementing an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) funding instrument in the 2021-27 period coving the territory of the whole NUTS II region, including Stara Zagora.</p> <p><b>Integrated development plans (IDPs) of the three municipalities most impacted by the coal phase out in Stara Zagora district (Stara Zagora; Gulabovo and Radnevo).</b> These plans are both part of domestic regional policy (as they are part of the strategic and spatial planning framework set up by the Regional Development Act), and of EU Cohesion Policy as their timeframe is aligned with the multi-annual financial framework and serve as a basis for the implementation of territorial instruments under the Programme Development of Regions 2021-27. These municipal plans complement the Integrated territorial development strategy of the Southeast region for the period 2021-2027, following a hierarchical order from national to local level.</p> |

#### 4.1.4. Regional energy and climate strategies

**In some countries, regional energy and climate strategies provide a dedicated framework for the spatial implementation of renewable sources of energy.** National energy and climate plans (NECPs) were introduced across EU Member States by regulation in 2019 to address issues of decarbonisation, energy efficiency, energy security, research, innovation and competitiveness. Within this, specific regional approaches can be important in the energy transition, as the process has implications for space and the environment that go beyond single municipal jurisdictions (see Table 4). Regional strategies offer the opportunity for regional and local authorities, in close collaboration with communities and organisations from the energy sector, to develop specific renewable energy projects in the region. This can require inter-municipal decision-making in order to ensure prevent situations in which one municipality will

obtain the benefits while the other suffers from unfair sharing of costs and benefits.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, national energy policy may be too generic and may overlook the unique needs and differences between territories. Despite these advantages, the design and implementation of regional energy and climate strategies risks creating redundant or overlapping structures with other national and regional initiatives, making it unclear who is responsible for which task and creating administrative burden. Furthermore, regional approaches can be blamed for ‘hollowing out’ local governments, particularly in relation to democratic control of the executive power (see Box 4).<sup>25</sup>

*Box 4: Regional energy and climate change strategies and sustainable transition – key issues*

**Often implemented under the framework of national energy and climate plans,** regional energy and climate strategies provide a dedicated framework for the spatial implementation of renewable sources of energy in a given territory.

**These can be particularly important given territory-specific variation in the balance between energy supply and demand across space** which makes territorial coordination and cooperation essential.

**Nevertheless, it is important to limit the risk of overlap with other national and regional strategic frameworks** and minimise administrative complexity and burden for participating local authorities and other stakeholders.

Regional energy and climate strategies are in operation in several case study regions. The two Swedish cases selected these strategies for close analysis (see Table 4).

*Table 4: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of regional energy and climate strategies*

| Case study              | Description   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Norrbottnen and Gotland | Building on the long-term energy and climate policy objectives adopted at national level, <b>Regional Energy and Climate strategies</b> (ECS) have been developed by the County Administrative Boards in the regions in line with their responsibility to oversee regional energy transition, regional climate impact reduction and regional climate adaptation efforts. They include how the region plans to integrate climate and energy issues into regional development. The Boards are also expected to undertake an analysis of the impact of climate change on the county itself and, as needed, on neighbouring counties. For Gotland the strategy “Together towards 2030: An energy and climate strategy for Gotland” highlights six focus areas that are central to contributing to the goals of energy and climate policy. Priority measures include such that can provide fast effects and those, which enable large reduction in emissions in the long term. The six priority areas include sustainable energy system; climate smart industry; resource efficient buildings; fossil free transport system; land use sectors and sustainable consumption. |

#### 4.1.5. Innovation-oriented policies

**The pursuit of sustainable development as a regional policy objective has in some contexts prompted a re-assessment of innovation and technological change, and how this can**

<sup>24</sup> Boogers, M., Klok, J., Denters, A., Sanders, M. & Linnenbank, M. (2016). Effecten van regionaal bestuur voor gemeenten: bestuursstructuur, samenwerkingsrelaties, democratische kwaliteit en bestuurlijke effectiviteit. Universiteit Twente: Enschede.

<sup>25</sup> Hoppe, T. & Miedema, M. (2020). A Governance Approach to Regional Energy Transition: Meaning, Conceptualization and Practice. Sustainability, 12(3).



**provide solutions to territorial or place-based needs.**<sup>26</sup> Regional innovation policies potentially promote the involvement of a broader set of stakeholders including users of associated technologies and professionals in territories, strengthening the relationship between science, innovation and society. Regional and/or national innovation strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3) are a requirement under EU Cohesion Policy. To varying degrees, they have informed a place-based approach to innovation as part of national regional policies and EU Cohesion policy measures identified above. For instance, in the TJTP Groningen-Emmen, where a strong emphasis on innovation and knowledge is present in track 1 ‘Economic perspective’, while innovation is also mentioned as part of track 2 ‘Green perspective’. The S3 framework and methodology can potentially promote bottom-up and inclusive experimentation processes that explore place-based pathways to sustainable regional development. Here, experimentation refers to ‘iterative action that generates small wins, promotes evolutionary learning and increased engagement, while allowing unsuccessful efforts to be abandoned’. Some innovation strategies have used foresight tools to deliberate alternative transition scenarios and pathways considering the role of variety of innovation approaches to tackle sustainability challenges. Such iterative action encompasses a broad notion of innovation, including entrepreneurial, technological grassroots, social and public sector innovation (see Box 5).<sup>27</sup>

*Box 5: Innovation-oriented policies and sustainable transition – key issues*

**Regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies are increasingly directed toward sustainability challenges** as part of their growing emphasis on societal problem-solving.

**Participatory governance across public, private, academic and civil sectors is a basic principle underpinning Smart Specialisation strategies**, sourcing local knowledge about the capabilities and challenges in the territory.

**Foresight tools can be used to discuss the role of innovation in transition scenarios** but this depends on the availability of local expertise.

Nevertheless, **capacity building is especially important in directing Smart Specialisation towards sustainability goals**, especially when it comes to moving beyond stakeholders from public, private and science sectors and engaging with local communities.<sup>28</sup>

In DUST case study regions, a key measure in this domain are the innovation strategies for smart specialisation (see Table 5).

*Table 5: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of innovation policies*

| Case study       | Description  |
|------------------|--|
| Katowicki region | <b>Regional Innovation Strategy of Silesia Voivodeship 2030 (RIS Silesia)</b> – Smart Silesia ( <i>Regionalna Strategia Innowacji Województwa Śląskiego 2030 – Inteligentne Śląskie</i> , Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego, 2021). A document in line with the EU Cohesion Policy in the field of innovation-oriented policy. It identifies fields of |

<sup>26</sup> Smith, A., Voß, J. P., & Grin, J. (2010). Innovation studies and sustainability transitions: The allure of the multi-level perspective and its challenges. *Research policy*, 39(4), 435-448

<sup>27</sup> Coenen L., Campbell S., Wiseman J. (2018) Regional Innovation Systems and Transformative Dynamics: Transitions in Coal Regions in Australia and Germany. In: Isaksen A., Martin R., Trippel M. (eds) *New Avenues for Regional Innovation Systems - Theoretical Advances, Empirical Cases and Policy Lessons*. Springer, Cham.

<sup>28</sup> Miedzinski M., Coenen L., Larsen H., Matusiak M., Sarcina A., Enhancing the sustainability dimension in Smart Specialisation strategies: a framework for reflection. Step-by-step reflection framework and lessons from policy practice to align Smart Specialisation with Sustainable Development Goals, Miedzinski M., Matusiak M. editors, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022

| Case study     | Description  |
|----------------|--|
|                | smart specialisation that should be the focus of support for innovation in the region. These include energy, the green economy, and emerging industries.   |
| Belchatow area | <b>Regional Innovation Strategy for Lodzkie Region (RIS3 2030)</b> ( <i>Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Województwa Łódzkiego LORIS 2030, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Łódzkiego, 2015</i> ). A document in line with the EU Cohesion Policy in the field of innovation-oriented policy. It includes as a key objective support for energy transition (generation of energy from renewable sources). |
| Stara Zagora   | <b>The National Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2021-27 (NIS3)</b> is developed under the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy. It is renewed for each multi-annual financial period, and it serves to set innovation priorities to be funded by multiple CP Programmes. Limited amount of funding is also made available via domestic innovation funds.                                       |

#### 4.1.6. Spatial planning

##### **Sustainable transition challenges also have clear relevance for spatial planning measures.**

There are spatial planning elements in the other categories of place-based instruments noted above (Territorial Just Transition Plans, Regional Development Strategies etc.). However, spatial planning that determines land zoning/land use and land use rules have specific relevance to sustainable transition as they can include city or regional spatial, transport and mobility plans and brownfield regeneration interventions or plans enabling/promoting the production of renewable energy or the circular economy. Spatial plans at regional or local levels can include guidelines for incorporating aspects related to mobility, natural risks, climate change, water, housing, energy and logistics.

There are challenges in adapting spatial plans to sustainable transition processes and in ensuring community participation in this. Literature indicates that there are limitations in how spatial planning frameworks address the aims of a just transition and how they are targeted to specific industries and regions experiencing these shifts. Although sustainable transition measures often have goals are situated in specific spatial contexts they often do not explicitly pronounce any spatial dimensions. This “spatial blindness” increases factual challenges at the local and regional levels, seen both as a spatial-physical space where nature, (new) technologies, settlements, buildings or infrastructures have to be developed, tested and constructed, as well as socio-cultural and political environments where different actors, institutions and political arenas negotiate sustainability and aim to implement sustainable practices.<sup>29</sup> Spatial planning that address transitioning uses and remediation of land in high industry regions are often absent.<sup>30</sup> There are also challenges in the potential mismatch between the scope of transition challenges and the scale of spatial planning (at regional or local levels), the lack of a mechanisms.<sup>31</sup>

##### *Box 6: Spatial planning frameworks - key issues*

**Spatial planning informs land zoning/land use and thus has specific relevance to place-based sustainable transition.**

<sup>29</sup> Levin-Keitel, M.; Mölders, T.; Othengrafen, F.; Ibendorf, J. Sustainability Transitions and the Spatial Interface: Developing Conceptual Perspectives. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1880. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10061880>

<sup>30</sup> Krawchenko, T.A.; Gordon, M. How do we manage a just transition? A comparative review of national and regional Just Transition Initiatives. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 6070.

<sup>31</sup> Nowak, M.J.; Monteiro, R.; Olcina-Cantos, J.; Vagiona, D.G. Spatial Planning Response to the Challenges of Climate Change Adaptation: An Analysis of Selected Instruments and Good Practices in Europe. *Sustainability* **2023**,

**A prominent role can be given to public participation in the spatial planning process**, including through the visualisation of development scenarios based on different combinations of territorial needs and potentials.

**There are significant barriers to be addressed in the process of supporting participation in sustainable transition through spatial planning**, related to complex regulatory and institutional settings and the need to ensure synergies with regional and local development strategies.

Spatial planning frameworks are evident in DUST case study regions, though some of these did not explicitly address transition issues (see Table 6).

Table 6: Place based measures for sustainable transition – examples of spatial plans

| Case study       | Description   |
|------------------|---|
| Katowicki region | <b>Spatial Plan of Silesia Voivodeship</b> ( <i>Plan Zagospodarowania Województwa Śląskiego, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Śląskiego, 2016</i> ). It is a place-based document in a regional dimension defining spatial planning intervention. However, the date of its preparation (2016) means that it does not include activities mitigating the impact of transitions.  |
| Belchatow area   | <b>Spatial Plan of Lodzkie Voivodeship</b> ( <i>Plan Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego Województwa Łódzkiego, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Łódzkiego, 2018</i> ). It is a place-based document in a regional dimension defining spatial planning intervention. The moment of its preparation (2018) means that it does not include actions mitigating the impact of transitions (until 2022 Belchatow Area of Transition was not eligible for JTF).  |
| Gotland          | <b>Comprehensive Strategic Plan.</b> The municipal Comprehensive plan provides guidance on land and water use for development purposes, and protection of valuable natural and cultural areas on the island of Gotland. It sets the framework for the use of land and water areas, sets the balance between exploitation and conservation, the spatial organisation of society's functions and technical systems, physical infrastructure and architectural design <sup>32</sup> . The plan is not legally binding but forms a substantial decision-making basis for the processing of detailed plans, building permits and other decisions taken by Region Gotland. So called “deepened comprehensive plans” are produced for different local areas on the island which complement the Comprehensive plan. They are produced in line with the priorities of the Comprehensive plan. The Plan that is currently in force is for the period 2010-2025 <sup>33</sup> , while a new Comprehensive plan is under development “Översiktsplan Gotland 2040”. <sup>34</sup> The formulation of the latter took place simultaneously with the formulation of the Regional Development Strategy, which allowed the two measures to be informed by joint participatory instruments. |

Drawing this data together, DUST case study research identified a range of measures being implemented in territories facing transition challenges. These address sustainable transition to varying extents and in different ways and they are associated with a range of mechanisms to facilitate participation by communities and actors in their design and delivery. Table 7 sets out key examples of these measures and highlights those selected for further analysis of participatory instruments (in bold).

<sup>32</sup> Incl. the following themes: Intraregional balance climate; Cultural values; Natural values; Development of the coastal zone; Business development and infrastructure issues; The development of tourism; Water and sewage systems; wind power development.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gotland.se/50630>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.gotland.se/oversiktsplan2040>



Table 7: Identified place-based measures in the case study regions according to typology with those selected for further research (in bold)

| Case study region            | EU Cohesion policy  | National regional policies & regional strategies  | Innovation-oriented policies   | Spatial planning measures                                  |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Katowicki region (PL)</b> | Territorial Just Transition Plan of Silesia Voivodeship (TJTP)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Silesia Voivodeship Development Strategy (Silesia Strategy 2030) (RDS);</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Agreement on the Transformation of the Hard Coal Mining Sector and Selected Transformation Processes in the Silesian Voivodeship (SA)</b></li> </ul>   | Regional Innovation Strategy of Silesia Voivodeship 2030 (RIS3 Silesia 2030) | Spatial Plan of Silesia Voivodeship                        |
| <b>Belchatow area (PL)</b>   | Territorial Just Transition Plan of Lodzkie Voivodeship (TJTP)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lodzkie Voivodeship Development Strategy (RDS)</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Agreement on the Energy Sector and the Lignite Mining Industry (SA)</b></li> </ul>  | Regional Innovation Strategy for Lodzkie Region (RIS3 Lodzkie Region 2030)   | Spatial Plan of Lodzkie Voivodeship                        |
| <b>Groningen (NL)</b>        | Territorial Just Transition Plan of Groningen-Emmen (TJTP)                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regio Deal Oost-Groningen (RD)</b></li> <li>• <b>National Programme Groningen (NPG)</b></li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>Stara Zagora (BG)</b>     | Territorial Just Transition Plan of Stara Zagora district (oblast) (TJTP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Integrated Development Plan of Municipality of Stara Zagora/Gulabovo/Radnevo 2021 – 2027 (IDP)</b></li> <li>• District Development Strategy of Stara Zagora 2014-2020</li> <li>• <b>Integrated Territorial Development Strategy of Southeast Region (NUTS II) 2021-2027 (ITDSSR)</b></li> </ul> | <b>National Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2021-27 (NIS3)</b>  |  |
| <b>Norrbottn (SE)</b>        | Territorial Just Transition Plan of Norrbotten, (TJTP)                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional Development Strategy Norrbotten 2030 (RDS)</b></li> <li>• <b>Energy and Climate Strategy of Norrbotten (ECS)</b></li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>Gotland (SE)</b>          | Territorial Just Transition Plan of                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Energy and Climate Strategy for Gotland (ECS)</b></li> </ul>  |  | <b>Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Gotland 2040 (CSP)</b> |

|                              |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                              | <b>Gotland, (TJTP)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional Development Strategy Gotland 2040 (RDS)</b></li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>Lusatia (DE)</b>          | <b>Just Transition Fund (JTF) / Territorial Just Transition Plan of Lusatia (TJTP)</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions (StStG)</b></li> <li>• <b>Lusatia Programme 2038 (LP 2038)</b></li> <li>• <b>Lusatia Development Strategy 2050 (LDS 2050)</b></li> </ul> |  |  |
| <b>Rhenish District (DE)</b> | <b>Just Transition Fund (JTF) / Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Rhenish (Lignite) District</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions (StStG)</b></li> <li>• <b>Economic and structural programme for the future Rhenish District (WSP)</b></li> </ul>                         |  |  |

## 4.2. Place-based characteristics

Selected measures incorporate features of what is termed the ‘place-based’ approach.<sup>35</sup> These include (1) specific territorial focus including functional spaces; (2) multiple stakeholder involvement in governance; and (3) integrating objectives that apply multiple dimensions to the territory concerned.

### 4.2.1. Setting a specific territorial focus

A key principle of place-based approaches is targeting measures at the relevant scale, including functional one, to capture and address interrelationships and interdependencies within or between places. This can include targeting of specific cities or parts of a city with specific problems, areas/regions with certain geographical or socioeconomic characteristics such as rural areas, structurally weak regions, etc. Emphasis is also placed on measures that cover functional areas rather than administrative boundaries, for instance covering city regions, spatial economic networks between urban centres and urban-rural links, macro-regional scales or inter-municipal co-operation.<sup>36</sup>

Defining an appropriate territorial focus for policy action is essential to meet the specific needs of sustainable transition and take advantage of the opportunities/potential of the area in question. Transition challenges are experienced at different scales (global, regional, urban, household scale). Transition needs and potentials are not often contained within administrative borders, and, therefore, wider functional spaces (which can evolve over time) are a key consideration for policy makers and for assessment of participatory instruments. Different spatial scales have power dynamics, creating zones in which different political, social and spatial projects and interests co-exist. Tensions in setting eligible areas for coverage by transition measures could entrench existing inequalities, generating conflict or marginalisation. However, setting a specific territorial focus also has the potential to create spaces in which diverse actors

<sup>35</sup> Barca, F. (2008). Op cit.

<sup>36</sup> O’Brien, P., Sykes, O., & Shaw, D. (2015). The evolving context for territorial development policy and governance in Europe—from shifting paradigms to new policy approaches. *L’Information géographique*, 79(1), 72-97.

– including those most politically and socio-economically marginalised – are able to participate.<sup>37</sup>

**The definition of the appropriate area for a sustainable transition measure depends on a range of factors.** It is not necessarily a methodological question, but can be influenced by other factors, such as wider policy agendas and governance tools.<sup>38</sup> Building consensus on the specific territorial focus for sustainability transition policies is also not a straightforward process. It may involve both bottom-up and top-down considerations, and there is a need to consider the objectives of the strategy and the partners involved. Achieving critical mass is a key issue as well (i.e. the size of the area to deliver the objectives, but also the scope of the partnership). The variety of policy governance traditions and institutional contexts in Europe – ranging from strongly centralised Member States to decentralised Member States, the size of local and intermediate authorities and their attitude towards cooperation – are additional features that influence the choice of the territorial focus.<sup>39</sup>

**Amongst the case study regions, the selected measures cover different territorial dimensions.** The following section aims to provide some illustrative examples of the broad categories of territorial targeting based on economically functional areas, geographical features, and other place-specific characteristics.

Figure 2: Type of territorial dimensions in a place-based approach

| Functional geographies |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Territorial dimension  | Territories with specific geographical features (urban, rural, coastal/island) |
|                        | Territories with specific characteristics & potential                          |

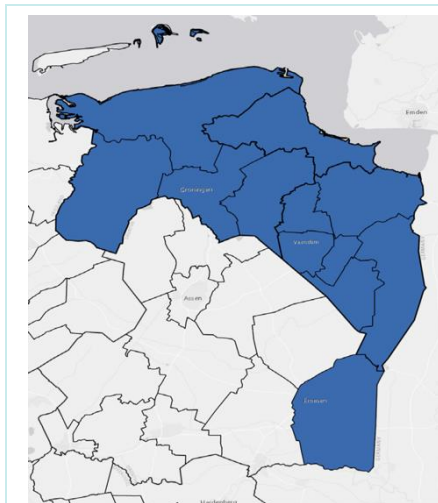
While most selected case study measures promoting sustainability transitions fall within the administrative boundaries (predominantly at NUTS2 or NUTS3 level), some have adopted a broader, functional approach. This is particularly evident with the TJTPs - of Lusatia, Rhenish District, Groningen, Belchatow Area of Transition) – where territorial delimitation is based to a large extent on the basis of economic activities, crossing administrative boundaries. To give a concrete example, in the TJTP Groningen-Emmen (NL), this concerns a cluster-type approach focusing on carbon intensive industrial cluster, which is also connected to a wider labour market area (see Box 7). The Belchatow Area of Transition represents another example where the territory is delineated specifically for the TJTP, consisting of 35 local self-government areas, across two NUTS3 sub-regions (Piotrkowski and Sieradzki), within the larger Lodz region (voivodship).

<sup>37</sup> McEwan, C. (2005). New spaces of citizenship? Rethinking gendered participation and empowerment in South Africa. *Political Geography*, 24(8), 969-991.

<sup>38</sup> Pertoldi, M., Fioretti, C., Guzzo, F., Testori, G., de Bruijn, M., Ferry, M., ... & Windisch, S. (2022). *Handbook of Territorial and Local Development Strategies* (No. JRC130788). Joint Research Centre (Seville site).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

*Box 7: Territorial focus beyond the administrative boundaries - Carbon intensive industrial cluster in TJTP Groningen-Emmen*



The core area of the TJTP Groningen-Emmen are the province of Groningen, including the NUTS3 areas ‘Delfzijl and surroundings’ (*Delfzijl en omgeving*), ‘East Groningen’ (*Oost-Groningen*) and ‘Groningen Other’ (*Overig Groningen*), as well as the municipality of Emmen, which is part of the province of Drenthe. These areas were defined as they belong to a large carbon-intensive industrial cluster (and the related labour market) in the Northern Netherlands (understood as functional area).

Map Source: JTF Groningen-Emmen OP

**Territorial targeting may be based on the territorial definitions of urban and rural, or the linkages between them.** However, within these there are other features that make the territories more distinctive (e.g. sparsely populated, mountainous, island/coastal, border, mix of urban-rural areas). Based on a desk review of the selected case study measures, geographical features have not necessarily been key determinants in the definition of the territorial focus. However, there are some examples where there is a distinct targeting based on geographic characteristics: on an island area (e.g., all measures in Gotland), small areas (such as villages in Regio Deal Oost-Groningen) and those that draw in rural, urban and neighbouring areas. In Bulgaria, for instance, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Stara Zagora municipality covers the main urban area - the city of Stara Zagora - as well as all rural areas (villages) that are part of the administrative municipal boundaries. The Plan also includes planning and cooperation provisions with neighbouring municipalities and districts based on functional linkages.

**The territorial dimension is also defined on the basis of the areas’ specific characteristics, challenges and potential, such as in terms of its socio-economic status, innovation potential, or specific environmental characteristics.** For example, the Territorial Just Transition Plans identify the specific territorial challenges related to green transition, while many of the regional strategies are specifically focussed on generating sustainable growth and jobs in areas with less favourable development conditions. Targeting territories on the basis of these types of characteristics and potential is common across the case study regions given their just transition challenges and potentials, albeit measures are not always defined at the functional scale. Territorial focus may also be informed by a more complex set of criteria linked to quality of life. The territory targeted by the Regio Deal Oost-Groningen, for instance, encompasses six municipalities in the province of Groningen, notably, the municipalities of Midden-Groningen, Oldambt, Pekela, Stadskanaal, Veendam, and Westerwolde. The area was selected based on relatively low scores concerning ‘broad prosperity’ and quality-of-life indicators. The focus is on different types of areas, including a village or a neighbourhood, that are in particular need for improvement of quality of life.

Key issues to take into account when considering the role of territorial focus in the assessment of transition measures are summarised in Box 8.

*Box 8: Spatial targeting of sustainable transition measures – key issues*

Spatial coverage of sustainable transition measures includes a range of scales (e.g. in a city, a region or a neighbourhood), based on existing regional or local boundaries, functional relationships across territories, specific geographical features or the key objectives of the measure itself.

Measures covering regional spaces (i.e. meso-level territories between local and national levels) are prominent. These offer advantages in terms of opportunities to integrate municipalities in urban centres and regional hinterlands in transition processes that cut across specific locales. In some cases, regional-level coverage ensures sufficient legal and administrative competences and capacities to support measures.

From the perspective of participation, there are a range of challenges stemming from territorial demarcation of transition measures: the mapping of deliberative political arenas onto this spatial coverage, the involvement of local communities in the demarcation of these spaces; and, how participatory instruments can ensure the translation or upscaling of transition needs and potentials envisaged at local or micro territorial scales to broader regional or national visions.

## 4.2.2. Multi-level governance

**Effective governance arrangements are at the core of the place-based approach, integrating ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ inputs from public sector (multi-level), private sector, third sector and civil society (non-government organisations, voluntary sector etc.).** In place-specific, rather than centrally designed and implemented measures, coordinated inputs come from a range of actors and at multiple administrative levels. The analysis in this report focuses on the variety of modes of governance that identified place-based policies exhibit in terms of involved institutions, allocation of roles/responsibilities, and mechanisms of coordination.

**In the context of place-based policies for sustainability transition, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy measures should involve delegating or decentralising responsibilities away from central states** and the formation of multilevel modes of governance, stratified across subnational, national, and supranational levels of government.<sup>40</sup> The multilevel architecture of the place-based approach prescribes to the upper levels of government a role of setting the general goals and performance standards, while the lower levels are provided “the freedom to advance the ends as they see fit”.<sup>41</sup> This shall recognise the range of actors with a stake in transition processes across sectors, administrative levels and stakeholder types (public, private, third sector). Multi-level governance (MLG) mechanisms adopted in measures for sustainability transition identified in DUST include vertical governance arrangements to involve several governmental levels as well as horizontal governance mechanisms involving variety of actors/stakeholders from the targeted territories. While the concept of multi-level governance refers to interlinkages between both governmental and nongovernmental actors, this section focuses on the dimension of governance between governmental actors/levels, as the involvement of nonstate actors is analysed in following sections.

<sup>40</sup> Topaloglou, L., & Ioannidis, L. (2022). From transition management towards just transition and place-based governance. The case of Western Macedonia in Greece.

<sup>41</sup> Barca, F. (2008) *op. cit* p41.

Before doing that, it is important to recognise that the institutional landscape across the five countries where the eight DUST regions are located varies significantly (see Figure 3). First, two case studies are located in a federal country, while the remaining six in unitary ones. In terms of levels of subnational government, four case studies are located in countries with two levels – regional/provincial and municipal – Groningen (NL), Stara Zagora (BG)<sup>42</sup>, Gotland and Norrbotten (SE), where the DUST case studies are located at the regional/provincial level. In the case of Bulgaria, however, there is only one-level of self-government – the municipal one, while Gotland is a peculiar case in Sweden as in 2011 the municipal government also became a region under the name Region Gotland. Four case studies are located in countries with three administrative levels – regional (State or Voivodeship), sub-regional (districts/counities) and municipalities (Belchatow area of transition, Katowicki region, Lusatia and Rhenish region). The two German DUST case studies are functional areas located either within one State (Rhenish District) or across two States (Lusatia) and include multiple districts and municipalities. The Belchatow area of transition is also a functional geography covering several counties across two statistical NUTS3 regions, while the Katowicki region corresponds to a NUTS3 level made up of several counties.

The overall level of decentralisation of government responsibilities and fiscal autonomy also differ across the countries where case studies are located. Comparatively, decentralised policy making is more prominent in Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, and a more centralised approach is adopted in Bulgaria and Poland, albeit in the latter case there are strong regional self-governments, following a regionalisation reform.<sup>43</sup> Another aspect to be considered is the established governance models across case studies. Some governance models are largely hierarchical, and this is evident in most of the regions - in the German, Dutch, Polish, and Bulgarian contexts. In the case of Sweden, both sub-national levels act as self-governing entities under the central government, and the local level (municipalities) are not subordinate to the regional level (counties).

Figure 3: State structure and levels of self-government in DUST case study regions

| State structure        | one level of subnational self- government   | two levels of subnational self-government          | three levels of subnational self-government                 |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Federal country</b> |   |  | Lusatia (DE)<br>Rhenish region (DE)                         |
| <b>Unitary country</b> | Stara Zagora (BG)<br><br>(a second administrative level - <i>oblast</i> – exists, but governed by a deconcentrated administration of the State) | Groningen (NL),<br>Gotland (SE)<br>Norrbotten (SE) | Belchatow area of transition (PL),<br>Katowicki region (PL) |

**Case study regions have selected different types of measures that are applied at different governmental levels.** In some cases, these measures are in hierarchical order starting with the strategic framework at national level and its instrumental translation at regional and local level. This is the logic followed by the German case studies in relation to StStG and also in the Stara

<sup>42</sup> NUTS level 2 statistical regions are also defined in Bulgaria but with no governmental structure attached to them. Some form of regionalisation is promoted via Cohesion Policy with funding being targeted at the regional level in the period 2021-27.

<sup>43</sup> Thijs, N., Hammerschmid, G., & Palaric, E. (2017). A comparative overview of public administration characteristics and performance in EU28. European Commission, Brussels.

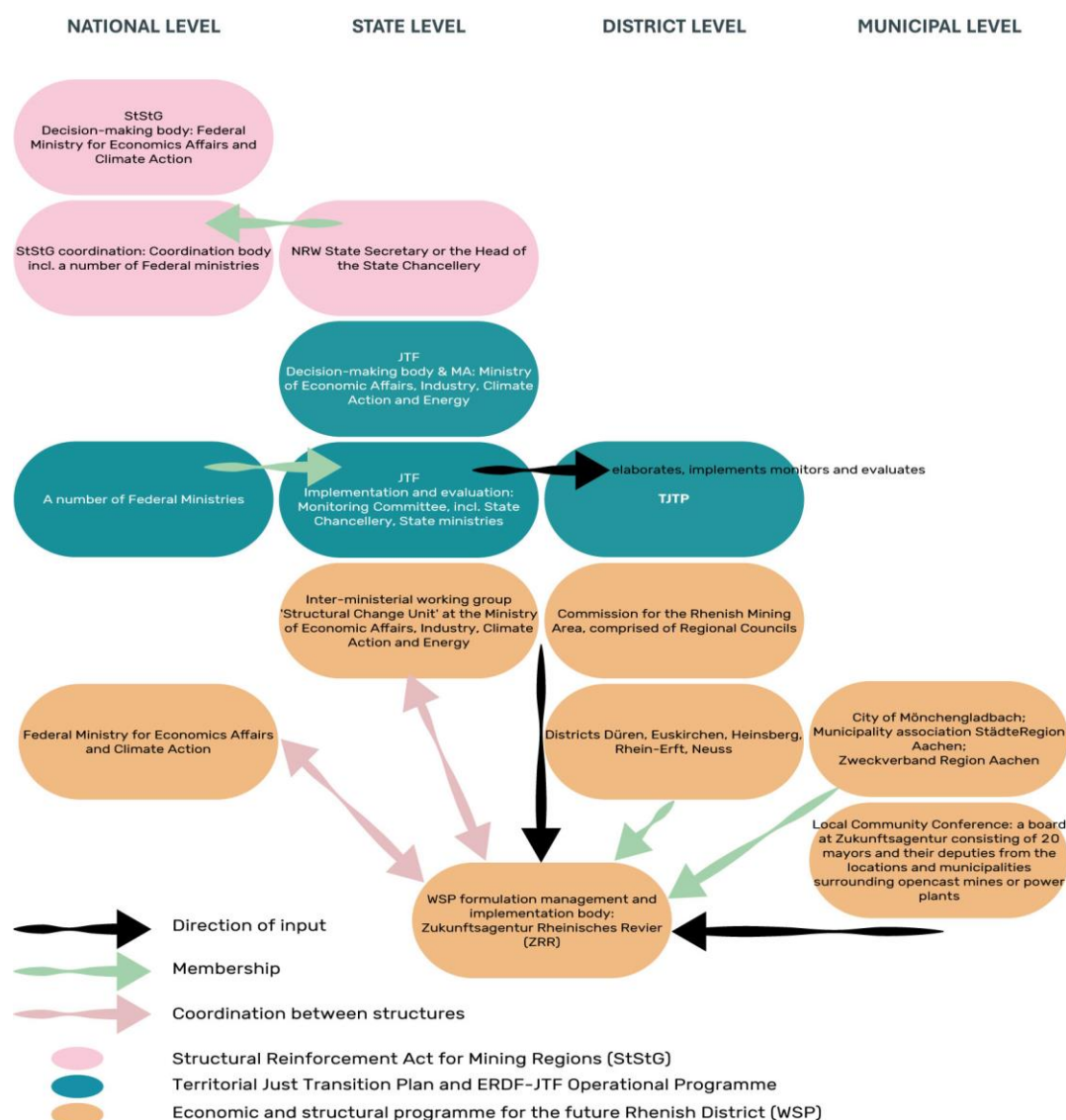
Zagora case where a hierarchy of regional, subregional (*oblast*) and local territorial development measures have been picked up as key place-based instruments. In the Swedish, Dutch and Polish case studies a mix of measures have been selected at different governmental levels which, however, do not follow hierarchical order.

Due to these differences across selected measures and the variations in overall administrative systems, there are diverse multi-level governance architectures evident across DUST case study regions. Nevertheless, there are certain comparative findings that can be highlighted (see also Box 10).

**Measures focused on structural change, driven by Cohesion policy (JTF) or alternative domestic measures (StStG in German regions; Social Agreement in Polish regions), feature a key role of the national level in setting the overall framework.** This is evident in all case studies, including those where Cohesion policy programming and implementation has been rather decentralised (in the Dutch and Swedish context). **The extent to which these measures have triggered the institutionalisation of multi-level governance mechanisms - either vertically across levels of government, or horizontally within the same level - varies.** Such MLG mechanisms appear more extensive in the case of Groningen, Lusatia and the Rhenish district (particularly under StStG). Taking the Rhenish district as an example, a diversity of new coordination bodies, committees or working groups have been set up to bring together different levels of government together and to coordinate between the different governmental tiers (see Figure 4). Conversely, in the case of the two Swedish cases, the two Polish cases (when it comes to the Social Agreements) and Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, the model appears so far centralised at the national level. It shall be noted, however, that while the JTF/TJTPs in the two Polish cases do not evidence the institutionalisation of new governance structures, these measures exhibit dispersal of power to the regional level to develop TJTPs, including the space to create key transition projects at that level. This does not seem that evident in the Bulgarian and the Swedish case studies.



Figure 4: Multi-level governance architecture of selected place-based policies in the Rhenish district, Germany. Focus on governmental inter-relations.



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It is also evident that measures focused on structural change have triggered the formation of jurisdictions that are driven by functional needs. This is in line with research on multi-level governance that has challenged the notion of territorially fixed levels of government and introduced the notion of 'flexible jurisdictions'.<sup>44</sup> Notable examples are located in the two German case studies where limited liability companies - *Zukunftsagentur* Rhenish District & *Wirtschaftsregion* Lusatia – were established at a functional regional level encompassing several coal mining districts, including across State borders (in the case of Lusatia). These entities have been created to formulate and implement funding instruments that translate the strategic framework from national level (StStG) to the level of the functional coal region. These entities play a key role in setting up, implementing and coordinating across governmental tiers some of the measures selected by the German case studies – the Lusatia Programme 2038 &

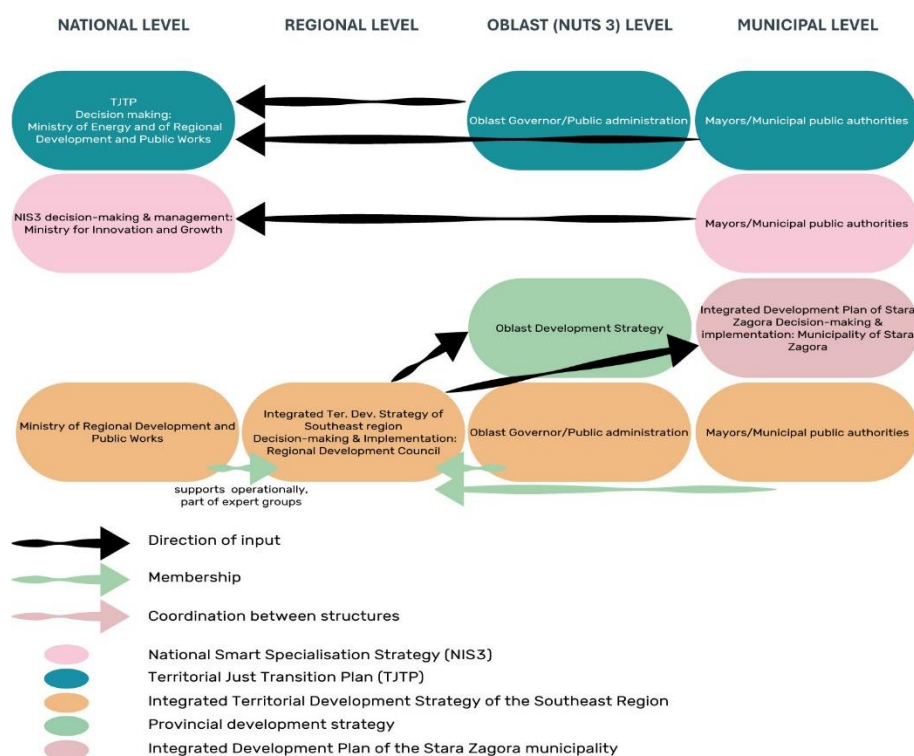
44 Bruno S. Frey, Reiner Eichenberger, FOIJ: Competitive governments for Europe, International Review of Law and Economics, Volume 16, Issue 3, 1996, Pages 315-327



Development Strategy 2050, and the Economic and Structural Programme for the Future Rhenish District (WSP).

**In some case studies, more extensive governance mechanisms and dispersion of power are more apparent in measures that are not directly linked to structural transitions but rather with broader development issues.** This is evident in Stara Zagora's territorial development measures (see Figure 5). It can be presumed that the hierarchical order of these measures helps to set certain broad objectives at an upper level, while leaving each territorial level to develop concrete priorities depending on its needs. A step in the direction of multi-level governance is also the creation of an inter-governmental body in the face of the Regional Development Council, bringing together lower as well as upper levels of government together and promoting inter-municipal cooperation. It shall be noted, however, that such structures are rather novel in the Bulgarian context. Therefore, they face challenges related to sub-national administrative capacities and lack of cooperative culture. Attention shall also be paid to the fact that the implementation of these strategic measures is dependent predominantly on Cohesion policy programmes set at national level. The latter normally have more narrow focus than the diverse needs and actions identified and developed at subnational levels. As a result, this may drive sub-national governments to prioritise activities that align with national objectives in order to draw from available funding, rather than addressing bottom-up needs. This is particularly a risk in countries like Bulgaria where subnational administrations have very limited fiscal independence.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 5: Multi-level governance architecture of selected place-based policies in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Focus on governmental inter-relations.



<sup>45</sup> Fiscal Decentralisation Database is available at [https://www.oecd.org/tax/federalism/fiscal-decentralisation-database/?utm\\_content=bufferd2930&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=linkedin.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.oecd.org/tax/federalism/fiscal-decentralisation-database/?utm_content=bufferd2930&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

**Another set of measures that create preconditions of multi-level governance are those representing contracts or agreements. According to literature, these measures can serve as a key governance and co-ordination instrument in regional development policy.**<sup>46</sup> These normally bring different configurations of subnational authorities, businesses and other actors to address specific issues (e.g. health, climate change), offering the potential to build consensus across territorial and sectoral stakeholders on potentially divisive issues, bringing together budgets and administrative resources. As they are based on defined roles and responsibilities across different levels, contracts are prized as tools to align priorities and prevent overlaps in a multi-level context. A more intangible benefit of such mechanisms is that they can help build trust across levels of government. This type of measure normally involves a negotiation stage during which objectives, an action plan, and agreed commitments are defined concerning the contributions by partners to bundles of policy instruments. A notable example within the DUST case studies is the Regio-Deal in Groningen (see Box 9)

*Box 9: The deal-based approach in Oost-Groningen*

Regio Deal Oost-Groningen is part of the Dutch national Regio Deals policy, allocating national Regional Budget (Regio Envelop) fund to projects in specific territories. The instrument was set up in 2017. The Deals are proposals for the allocation of the fund by partnerships, preferably between sub-national governments, knowledge institutes and businesses in self-defined territories. National funding from the Regional Budget needs to be complemented with regional public and private sector funding. The Regio Deal Oost-Groningen is part of the second block of funding of €950 million in 2018-2022 and was agreed in 2020. The deal aims at revitalizing and transforming socio-economic conditions in the Oost-Groningen region. The deal has been proposed by the province of Groningen, and six municipalities in the East of the province. These governmental actors collaborate with a range of non-governmental partners, including businesses, knowledge institutes, and community stakeholders. The deal focuses on several key policy areas, including economic development, innovation, education, infrastructure, and quality of life.

**Another measure that formally also fit into this category is the Social Agreement on the Transformation of the Hard Coal Mining Sector selected by the two Polish regions.** The Agreement has been negotiated between the Polish government, representatives of trade unions, representatives of the Association of Mining Communities and public authorities at regional (*voivodeship*) level, as well as coal companies. It addresses just transition by stipulating a package of safeguards for employees of mines planned for closure. It also envisages investment in clean coal technologies. However, the Contract is unclear on who would make the investments, and whether they are economically feasible even with public support. It includes specific provisions for Silesia, including a call for establishing the Fund for the Transformation of Silesia with the objective of coordinating the transformation of former mine sites (as well as industrial and post-industrial sites) with broader economic development efforts in the province. Funding for this element would come from the EU Just Transition Fund.<sup>47</sup>

*Box 10: Multi-level governance and sustainable transition – key issues*

**One of the key features MLG is the scope to delegate and decentralise tasks in sustainable transition measures to regional or local levels and to territorial stakeholders and communities.** Under the place-based logic, the dispersion of delivery responsibilities

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/df3fa2fe-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/df3fa2fe-en>

<sup>47</sup> Just Transition in Poland: A Review of Public Policies to Assist Polish Coal Communities in Transition Aleksander Śniegocki, Marek Wasilewski, Izabela Zygmunt, and Wesley Look

across levels is seen to be more flexible and efficient in responding to transition challenges at various territorial scales. The input of regional and local authorities is incentivised, also integrating inputs from territorial stakeholders and communities. This can be accompanied by new systems, structures and tools that maximise the input from partners and stakeholders.

**However, there are differences in how countries apply existing distribution of policy competences and capacities across levels and types of stakeholder.** In centralised MS, national or regional authorities can be reluctant to delegate governance tasks to lower levels. Smaller and/or less experienced actors (both local authorities and other local stakeholders) may lack sufficient capacity, which is one reason why governance tasks may be retained at higher levels.

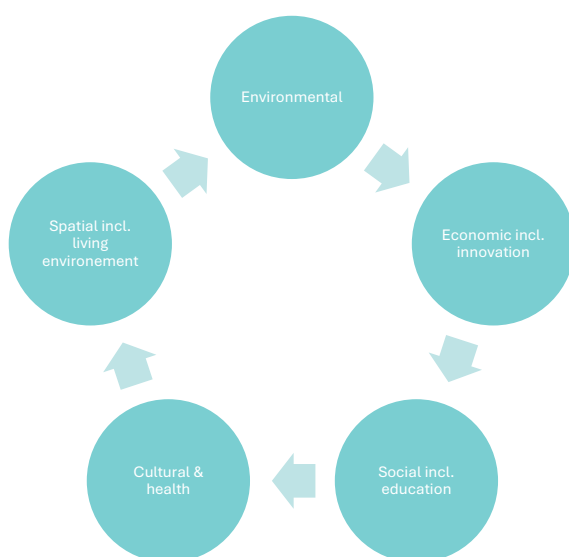
**Coordination and communication systems offer arenas for participation but there are challenges of capacity and complexity.** Coordination boards, working groups, partnerships, informal networks, and conferences consisting of members from different and same governmental levels make up the variety of structures that provide coordination of acts toward sustainable transition in the framework of MLG. However, the emergence, forms, and power relations within the coordination schemes vary, and these variations inform local inputs into sustainability transitions, as will be further discussed in chapter 6. In addition to this, literature points out that an excessive number of committees and discussion groups can make MLG complicated, make lines of accountability opaque and act as a disincentive for participation by stakeholders, especially those with limited capacities.<sup>48</sup> Such potential challenges to MLG shall be further analysed in DUST research.

### 4.2.3. Integrating multiple thematic objectives

**Place-based measures aim for thematic or sectoral integration to meet inter-related territorial needs, drawing in economic, social, institutional, environmental and other elements.** These types of place-based measures aim for thematic or sectoral integration to meet inter-related territorial needs, drawing in economic, social, environmental and other elements (see Figure 6). For instance, investment to improve connectivity for exports will not be enough without investment and training to ensure the competitiveness of firms in a given location.

<sup>48</sup> Poyraz, A.Y., Szalmáné Csete, M. (2022). Multi-level Governance of Sustainability Transition in the European Union. In: Leal Filho, W., Dinis, M.A.P., Moggi, S., Price, E., Hope, A. (eds) SDGs in the European Region. Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals – Regional Perspectives. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91261-1\\_88-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91261-1_88-1)

Figure 6: Dimensions of the integrated approach



**Some case study measures encompass multiple objectives, including social, economic and environmental issues.** This is well illustrated in some of the Territorial Just Transition Plans which are concerned with addressing the social, economic, spatial and environmental challenges related to the phasing out of fossil raw material extraction or decarbonisation of greenhouse gas-intensive processes or products. As a result, measures integrate tools and mechanisms for implementation that address one or multiple objectives. This is illustrated by the example of the TJTP in Brandenburg (see Box 11). Other TJTP appear to have more dominant focus on certain objectives. As evident from DUST case study research and other literature<sup>49</sup>, some TJTP such as in Sweden have a strong focus on economic measures, particularly on identifying technical solutions for the industrial transition, limiting the scope for social measures.

Box 11: Implementation of JTF in Brandenburg (Lusatia) through diverse programmes and tools

The implementation of JTF is foreseen through diverse programmes and the use of different integrated tools which address one or more of the following aspects of the TJTP:

- diversification, modernisation, conversion and reorientation of companies within the lignite value chain;
- skilled labour development;
- energy transformation measures;
- application-oriented R&D&I;
- digital infrastructure;
- creating circular value networks;
- expansion of local public transport services;
- re-naturation of land and water bodies;
- extra-curricular and in-company educational opportunities.

**Even when TJTPs pursue more balanced distribution of support to multiple thematic objectives, a question remains as to what extent these objectives are able to address the existing regional disparities and imbalances across socio-economic statuses.** The reason is that the majority of measures seem to lack clear linkages between pursuing economic

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, Stapper, M. (2023) The road to a just transition: A comparative analysis of Territorial Just Transition Plans, Policy Brief.

transformation and targeting diverse communities. In some domestic measures, a more systematic approach to ensure that support is provided not only for economic prosperity but also for social cohesion is, however, evident. Besides the broader social, economic and environmental objectives, these measures provide specific criteria on the targeting of the objectives. The Regio Deal Oost Groningen provides an example of how this is attempted in practice (see Box 12).

*Box 12: Integrating development in four sectoral pillars – Regio Deal Oost Groningen*

The Region Deal Oost Groningen aims at improved socio-economic conditions in the region of Eastern Groningen. For this purpose, it seeks to integrate development in four sectoral pillars, notably (1) education, (2) work and income, (3) health, and (4) residential environment. Each of these pillars is associated with different organisations, but the Deal recognises the need to address place-specific challenges in an integrated way. The Regio Deal explicitly calls for connections between these pillars, e.g., improvements of the living environment in neighbourhoods and villages are to be connected to efforts dedicated to employment and education. The Deal is also strongly aligned with the Dutch 'broad prosperity' (*brede welvaart*) approach.<sup>50</sup> This is a monitoring approach that has been developed by the Dutch Central Office for Statistics (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, CBS) and describes how prosperity is developing in the Netherlands. The approach measures a broad selection of economic, ecological and social aspects of prosperity. It has also been developed to reflect how concerns of citizens are met in a particular territory. The approach addresses basic concerns, such as citizens' ability for providing for a living, health, safety, personal development, and social contacts, but also wider value-driven concerns, such as the preservation of biodiversity. The approach also allows for comparing prosperity in different territories and for considering future prosperity (thus connecting the 'here and now, with 'elsewhere' and 'later'). The Regio Deal policy serves as a testing ground for the application of the approach under various conditions.<sup>51</sup>

**Case study research indicates growing recognition of the benefits of integrated, place-based sustainable transition measures.** These facilitate addressing complex socio-economic and environmental issues by combining sectors and issues through a territorial lens. Nevertheless, the challenges involved, and the implications this has for participatory instruments should be noted (see Box 13).

*Box 13: Integrating multiple sectors in sustainable transition measures – key issues.*

**An important argument in the place-based concept is that the quality of sustainable transition measures is improved where they recognise the need to address complex linkages and interactions between different sectoral issues in a given territory.** This is noticeable, for instance, in the implementation of sectoral measures that aim to combine broader headings of innovation or energy efficiency support with issues of social cohesion and sustainability that specific territories are facing.<sup>52</sup>

**However, until now, sustainability transition measures appear to mainly follow a domain-based approach (e.g., energy, water, etc.) and often do not explicitly consider the interlinkages between sectors.** There are significant challenges in taking this integrative approach in sustainable transition measures. Issues such as sectoral path dependencies,

<sup>50</sup> [Bevorderen van brede welvaart in de regio: keuzes voor beleid | PBL Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving](#)

<sup>51</sup> [PBL-onderzoeksprogramma Regio Deals voor de brede welvaart 2019-2021 | PBL Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving](#)

<sup>52</sup> Warbroek, B., Holmatov, B., Vinke-de Kruijf, J. *et al.* From sectoral to integrative action situations: an institutional perspective on the energy transition implementation in the Netherlands. *Sustain Sci* **18**, 97–114 (2023).

policy mismatches, institutional complexities and inconsistencies, uncertainties or tensions in the distribution of costs and benefits, and fragmentation across organisational boundaries are potentially the factors that hamper the integrative approaches. Moreover, integrating economic, social and environmental objectives into measures does not ensure that they are targeted and linked in way that can address the imbalances in existing socio-economic status.

**Integrating different sectors and issues in sustainable transition solutions can be positive and generate co-benefits or synergies but they can also be negative and give rise to conflicts, demanding trade-offs.**<sup>53</sup> The risk of such conflicts may make public authorities reluctant to open up the policy making process to participation.

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<sup>53</sup> Ayyoob Sharifi (2020) Trade-offs and conflicts between urban climate change mitigation and adaptation measures: A literature review, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Volume 276.

## 5. Identifying participatory practices

The second step in the case study research was to assess citizen/stakeholder participation in the sustainable transition measures identified in Step 1. Key to this was the identification and categorisation of participatory practices. In order to assess this systematically, the analysis built on Arnstein's classical ladder of citizen participation.<sup>54</sup> This classifies participatory practices into different types based on depth. Depth of participation is assessed on the basis of two interlinked characteristics (See Table 8):

- **Direction of interaction / communication mode.** This covers a range from one-way to multi-directional interaction between the authority commissioning or organising the participatory process and the targeted audience.<sup>55</sup> Building on existing literature that makes distinction between one and two-way interaction, and DUST case study research, this characteristic incorporates a gradation in how interactive and collaborative the communication approach is.
- **Ownership of the process.** This distinguished between participatory practices according to the balance of power/responsibility between the general public or stakeholders (understood as individuals with expertise in a particular policy domain, representatives of societal groups with an interest in an area affected by policy development) and organising institution, including in terms of shaping the outcome of the process and in implementing the proposed actions.<sup>56</sup>

Based on these characteristics, a typology consisting of five types of participatory processes is defined, according to depth of participation: (1) provision of information; (2) basic consultation; (3) dialogue; (4) engagement; (5) partnership. To further characterise the different categories of participation, Table 8 sets out the types of mechanisms associated with different participatory processes. These can be designed in different ways and are intended as prominent examples which are not necessarily unique to each category. Table 8 also describes the anticipated results of each type of participatory process. These characteristics are based on literature and informed by DUST case study research. The following analysis does not cover the very basic, one-way forms of participation due to project's focus on practices that include at least some form of interaction.

Table 8: Assessing depth of participation.

|   | Basic consultation   | Dialogue  | Engagement              | Partnership   |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|
| Depth of participation                        | Limited.   | Medium.   | Medium to high.         | High.   |
| Direction of interaction / communication mode | Two-way but limited interaction b/w government and participants. | Two-way with dialogue government and participants | Two-way, collaborative. | Multi-directional acknowledging equal standing b/w all parties; |

<sup>54</sup> Arnstein, Sherry R. (1969) A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35(4):216-24

<sup>55</sup> Leino, H., & Puumala, E. (2021). What can co-creation do for the citizens? Applying co-creation for the promotion of participation in cities. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39(4), 781-799.; Macintosh, A. (2004). Characterizing e-participation in policy-making. In *37th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2004. Proceedings of the* (pp. 10-pp). IEEE.

<sup>56</sup> Clarke, A., & Erfan, A. (2007). Regional Sustainability Strategies. *A Comparison of Eight Canadian Approaches. Plan Canada*, 47, 15-19. Macintosh, A. (2004). op.cit.



|                              |   |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Ownership of the process     | Public authorities/organisers define issues, set questions and manage process, participants contribute opinions.  | Public authorities/organisers define issues, provide information, set questions and manage process, while citizens/stakeholders are invited to contribute to discussion. | Public authorities/organisers lead but space for consensual decisions and solutions based on collaborative/bottom-up action. May involve certain sharing of powers between public authorities and citizens/stakeholders (e.g. shared voting rights). | Sharing responsibilities with citizens/stakeholders, joint working on developing the features of a policy, solutions, scenarios or visions and collaborative decision-making). |
| Mechanism                    | Certain forms of committees; comment periods; surveys; interviews; digital platforms  | Workshops; roundtable discussions;   | Committees; working groups; citizen assemblies, participatory budgeting; hackathons;   | Deliberative and vision/foresight-building processes via forums/workshops/panels; negotiations   |
| Product of the participation | views/opinions/feedback about a proposed policy, policy solution, project or service to a public institution (such as comments, perceptions, information, advice, experiences, ideas) expertise or technical advice, evidence | Similar to the previous but more detailed and opportunities for exchange.  | collective judgements or positions recommendations that take into account diversity of views broad consensus/decision on an issue concrete actions (e.g. proposals for funding)  | collective ideation, co-creation of policy, policy solutions, scenarios, visions collaborative decisions and actions incl. citizen-driven innovation                           |

## 5.1. Basic consultation

Basic consultation processes are prominent in the selected place-based policies for sustainability transition across case study regions, evident across all territories and all initiatives. Within this, there is a variation in the use of specific consultation mechanisms (see Box 14).

*Box 14: Basic consultation - key characteristics*

Basic consultation is characterised by two-way, limited, interaction. It typically involves on one side, a public authority that provides information on the policy initiative, and on the other **citizens/stakeholders who are invited to react** to the information, providing feedback/opinions on presented features of the initiative (e.g., on identified issues and needs or policy priorities) or their ideas/proposals. Compared to other types of practices, participation through basic consultation has **limited depth**. It offers **limited potential for exchanges** between the initiator of the participatory process and its participants. **Ownership of the process lies fully with the organising institution** which defines the issues for consultation, sets the questions and manages the process, while the targeted audience is invited to react to set requirements (Macintosh, A., 2004). **The anticipated outcomes of the process vary**. They can be general in terms of **broad views/opinions/feedback** about a proposed policy, policy solution, project or service (e.g., comments, perceptions, information, advice, experiences, ideas) or targeted and concrete inputs based on specific expertise or



knowledge, depending on what is sought by the organising institution and the target group (OECD, 2022). Mechanisms utilised in carrying out this type of participatory process include committees (e.g., expert committees) but they more often take the form of comment periods and surveys/questionnaires (incl. online); online or face-to-face interviews; and meetings, either open to the general public or targeting specific types of stakeholders. They are often single events, but several consultation rounds can be organised (e.g. if a dedicated structure such as an expert committee is involved).

### Comment periods

**Setting periods for open consultation of policy documents was a standard approach, often based on legal obligations** (see Table 9). For example, in the cases of Katowicki region, Belchatow area, Stara Zagora, Norrbotten and Gotland comment periods are established practice where citizens and stakeholders are invited to submit their ideas or provide their feedback on a proposed policy measure. Comment periods were used at different stages of the policy design and implementation process but in most cases were associated with initial drafting of strategies and plans. **Online formats for comment periods have made policy processes more transparent and opened up participation to the general public, although this does not ensure diversity and inclusion of specific groups of participants.** Although interaction is limited in basic consultation processes, there is also evidence that **digital tools can strengthen the quality of participation**, helping policymakers to collate a range of opinions and perspectives on the territorial implications of development processes. A notable example of this is the digital participatory mapping tool used in drafting Gotland's Regional Development Strategy where citizens were directly involved in highlighting the places they valued in their territory. In this case, the approach of 'sociotope' mapping has been used with the aim to explore public open space and to facilitate the identification of their multiple use values by citizens or groups.<sup>57</sup> This participatory tool aimed to help the participants imagine and think of close-by or more distant spaces, and how one uses them or would like to use them in the future. These can be places, ecosystem services, social services or other types of functions that can be spatially indicated.

Table 9: Comment periods – examples from case study regions

| Case study                          | Description   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Katowicki region and Belchatow area | <b>Official consultation</b> of the documents with collection of remarks (RDS; TJTP) The need to use this instrument results from legal provisions, according to which documents such as regional strategy, supra-local strategy, and local strategy are subject to consultations. Such consultations take place by making the document available online and providing a period of time for comments. |
| Stara Zagora                        | <b>Official consultation</b> (IDP of Stara Zagora Municipality; TJTP; NIS3) The consultation takes place by publishing the draft document online at a national portal for public consultations where all citizens and organisations can provide feedback and opinion within a given period.   |
| Norrbotten                          | <b>Online access to materials for comments</b> (RDS ECS) Sharing of drafts, supporting documents, and workshop materials on open access via regional website and social media. Citizens, private sector, civil society can comment.   |
| Gotland                             | <b>Early web-based consultation</b> (CSP for Gotland -2040; RDS) Feedback was collected using a digital map (via an ArcGIS online tool) in preparation of the revision of the Comprehensive Plan and in drafting the Regional Development Strategy. The purpose   |

<sup>57</sup> Ståhle, A. (2013). Sociotope mapping-exploring public open space and its multiple use values in urban and landscape planning practice. NA, 19(4).

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | was to collect opinions on how individuals wanted Gotland to develop. <sup>58</sup> Users could build their own maps in the digital map version. As part of the consultation, digital participatory mapping tool - “sociotope” mapping was used where citizens could be directly involved in pointing out valuable places in their area. |
|  | <b>Comment period</b> on the proposed document for a Regional Development Strategy was opened, inviting the public to submit opinions incl. via an e-service.  |
|  | <b>Public review</b> (TJTP) Digital draft of the plans made available online for review within a specified time frame.   |

## Surveys/Questionnaires

Survey based approaches allowed the aggregation of opinions and preferences of citizens or groups on sustainable transition initiatives. Evidence from the case study regions indicates that this process has provided the scope for a more targeted approach to identifying opinions and preferences of either individual citizens or of particular stakeholder groups (based on territorial and/or sectoral interests, see Table 10). This mechanism is most often associated with drafting stages of these initiatives where inputs on key challenges and priorities are sought (e.g., Katowicki region) but there is also scope for more iterative approaches where stakeholder networks are surveyed on a regular basis (e.g., Groningen). This mechanism predominantly takes place online, facilitating open access. However, ensuring commitment from citizens to the process remains a challenge, evidenced by the completion rate to the JTF questionnaire in the Rhenish case compared to the number of views.

Table 10: Surveys/questionnaires – examples from case study regions

| Case study               | Description   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Katowicki region         | <b>Questionnaire</b> addressed to public, private and third sectors (Silesia Development Strategy) The instrument used less frequently in the consultation process. Most often used in the process of developing significant documents programming territorial development, as in the case of the Development Strategy of the Silesia Voivodeship. The instrument used for diagnosing (and verifying analytical diagnoses), as well as identifying directions of regional development.  |
| Groningen                | <b>Questionnaires</b> to collect citizen ideas as part of local (sub-) programmes (National Programme Groningen)<br><b>Survey</b> (Regio Deal) Since 2021 the network of stakeholders is also involved in the process evaluation of the Regio Deal. There is an annual online survey among the stakeholders.  |
| Rhenish Lignite District | <b>Online questionnaire</b> giving the opportunity to the general public to comment on key statements of the JTF programme. The online questionnaire was viewed 2100 times, and 440 complete responses were collected. It was advertised through newsletters, social media & press release. Most of the respondents were from what was considered ‘target group – universities and research centres, municipalities and enterprises. An evaluation of the input resulted in conclusion that changes in the draft document were not necessary. |

## Consultation meetings

Meetings have provided another mechanism for providing information about sustainable transition initiatives to stakeholders and citizens and soliciting feedback. Along with comment periods, these are among the most typical participatory mechanisms used across case studies

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.gotland.se/113390>

(see Table 11). Meetings varied in size and composition (public consultation or stakeholder meetings) and different types were organised in regions both for providing information and collecting opinions (e.g., Belchatow area of transition). In the majority of cases, meetings were run as formal consultation exercises, used to provide information and obtain feedback from specific stakeholder groups, rather than participatory, interactive mechanisms to inform decision-making. For instance, targeted stakeholder meetings with trade unions in Silesia were part of a formal mechanism between authorities and representatives of that sector. A notable exception were meetings organised through the Mobile coffee cart in Groningen which targeted residents in smaller towns and villages and gathered residents' perspectives and ideas on local challenges to inform the Regio Deal initiative. In most cases, this mechanism has been organised face-to-face but was also convened in an online format during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Rhenish Lignite District.

Table 11: Consultation meetings – examples from case study regions

| Case study       | Description  |
|------------------|--|
| Katowicki region | <b>Information meetings</b> with public, private and third sectors (RDS; TJTP) An instrument commonly used in Polish regions to consult strategic documents. Its task is to inform about the proposed records of the document but also to collect comments from participants.  |
|                  | <b>Meetings with trade unions</b> (Social Agreement) The meetings help to inform about the proposed ideas, goals and records of the document or describe the difficult situation at the sectoral level, but also to collect first comments from participants. The mechanism includes social dialogue with trade unions in its weakest form – information. Trade unions representatives were invited to meetings and were informed about the process, its assumption and progress – with little interaction.              |
| Belchatow area   | <b>Information meetings</b> with public, private and third sectors (RDS; TJTP) The instrument commonly used in Polish regions to consult strategic documents, including the Development Strategy for the Lodzkie Voivodeship. Its task is to inform about the proposed records of the document (one way provision of information), but also to collect comments from meetings with participants.   |
|                  | <b>Meetings with trade unions</b> (Social Agreement) The instrument is well-known and used in the process of informing trade unions, describing the situation of companies or the governmental plans e.g. developing new strategies and preparing Social Agreement on the Energy Sector and the Lignite Mining Industry. The meeting concerned the vision and detailed provisions of the social contract addressed to all mine and energy workers and inhabitants of the Lodzkie voivodeship and another lignite region. |
| Stara Zagora     | <b>Stakeholders' discussions</b> (Integrated Development Plan of Stara Zagora Municipality). As this strategy is more region-focused, these discussions involved municipal representatives, business representatives, civil society and other key stakeholders in the region. It is unknown whether they were open to the general public, or they were closed.   |
|                  | <b>Stakeholder consultation events</b> (TJTP). These meetings are part of the official governmental procedure of stakeholder consultations. This includes both meetings organised by the consulting company hired to research region-specific characteristics as part of the TJTP and the national Ministry for Regional Development and Public Works.   |
|                  | <b>Stakeholder meetings</b> (NIS3). These meetings were conducted between business associations/representatives and academic representatives, municipal and governmental representatives, as well as other key stakeholders. It is unknown whether they were open to the general public, or they were closed.  |
| Groningen        | <b>Stakeholder meetings</b> (Regio Deal) During these meetings the organisers present the progress of the different projects and the plans for the coming year. The meetings may involve discussion but are intended mainly to inform the stakeholders about funded projects and the strategic development of the programme.   |

| Case study               | Description  |
|--------------------------|--|
|                          | <b>Mobile coffee cart</b> part of the participatory actions for an area-oriented approach (gebiedsgerichte aanpak) (Regio Deal) a mobile coffee cart was deployed, visiting villages for two days and inviting residents to share their perspectives and ideas. The information gathered through this initiative was used to identify and define local issues and challenges.  |
| Rhenish Lignite District | <p><b>Joint video conferences (JTTP)</b> A joint video-conference (in 2021) for the Rhenish mining area and the northern Ruhr area to present legal framework and territory of JTF plan. After the conference the participants had the opportunity to submit proposals for JTF measures to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Labour of NRW. A second video conference (2021) for the Rhenish mining area was organised, in which the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Labour of NRW presented a draft of the JTTP and possible JTF measures. No additional proposals were submitted following the event.</p> <p><b>Revier Tours (WSP)</b> were organised as information instruments - information stands at marketplaces and in front of shopping centres in the municipalities to inform citizens about WSP. The instrument was also used to hold discussions and collect feedback from citizens. Talks with a total of several hundred citizens took place as a result. Visuals and future-oriented questions were an important part of this, although they were not consistently applied as a method. The citizens' contributions collected during the tours were subsequently broken down according to the future fields identified in the WSP and summed up in the documentation.</p> |

## Interviews

Interviews were seldom employed as consultation processes in the case study regions. Silesia is the only region where this instrument was used extensively, with the aim of obtaining expert opinion on the broad assumptions and actions of the Regional Development Strategy (see Table 12). It provided the opportunity to gather more specific feedback and informed opinions on the sustainable transition initiative. Interviews are usually designed as unidirectional methods in which the participant provides information with limited scope for horizontal participant interaction or dialogue. This mechanism has facilitated expert rather than civic engagement (focusing on academics or others with experience or expertise of direct relevance to the sustainable transition initiative).

Table 12: Interviews – examples from case study regions

| Case study       | Description   |
|------------------|---|
| Katowicki region | <b>In-depth interviews to collect expert opinion.</b> The instrument is used quite often to consult diagnostic assumptions, priorities, strategic goals, directions of action of strategic documents of the Silesian Voivodeship, such as the Development Strategy of the Silesia Voivodeship - Silesia 2030. |

Key findings emerging from the review of participatory mechanisms representing basic consultation are underlined in Box 15.

Box 15: Basic consultation - key issues

**Basic consultation processes were a common approach to participation across cases,** often driven by legal requirements in the majority of cases, participation through basic consultation and associated with conventional mechanisms that were well established in most regional contexts (comment periods, meetings, questionnaires and interviews).

**Although widespread, consultations entail the most limited form of participation,** particularly from the perspective of citizens and local communities.

It is important to note that **the research evidenced the employment of innovative approaches** as well, aiming to more actively seek input from targeted places and residents. This includes the use of so-called mobile coffee cart in Groningen under the Regio Deal Oost Groningen policy measure to **visit targeted neighbourhoods or rural areas** and invite their residents to share views and ideas.

Also notable in this respect is the case of Gotland which has taken steps to seize **opportunities provided by digital tools to collect ideas during consultation periods through participatory mapping.**

## 5.2. Dialogue

Participatory processes based on dialogue are incorporate diverse approaches across case studies and policy measures, but with common characteristics being the possibility to provide more detailed input due to the space for discussion, and the opportunity for everyone to hear the views of other participants (see Box 16).

### *Box 16: Dialogue - key characteristics*

Dialogue is characterised by a two-way interaction involving typically on one side a public authority that provides information on certain policy initiative and on the other **citizens/stakeholders who are invited not only to react but also to discuss with each other and with the public authority.** This type of participation is characterised with **medium depth.** The key difference with a basic consultation process is that dialogue intentionally offers **space for interaction** between the initiator of the participatory process and its participants. Mechanisms falling under this category seek to **gather more detailed stakeholder or expert inputs** and **create opportunities for exchange.** The **ownership of the process is still fully with the organising institution** which defines the issues for consultation, sets the questions and manages the process, while the targeted audience participates within the limit of set boundaries. What comes out of the process is similar to basic consultation, however, **input is provided in more depth / detail.** Most prominent mechanisms utilised in carrying out this type of participatory process include workshops; seminars; conferences; roundtable discussions; conversations and some forms of committees (e.g. steering committee).

### **Public dialogue**

Public dialogue denotes stronger interaction among participants and authorities beyond basic consultation within a public, institutional framework such as a town meeting or a community-wide planning meeting. Its public character has the advantage of promoting transparency and accountability through the visibility of the exchange processes. Public discussions and hearings were a common method of public participation in the case studies (see Table 13).

Table 13: Public dialogue – examples from case study regions

| Case study       | Description   |
|------------------|---|
| Katowicki region | The use of a <b>public hearing</b> as an approach to facilitate engagement in policy was used in the Silesia Voivodship for the first time during the works on the Territorial Just Transition Plan, initiated by NGO organizations (Polish Green Network) in cooperation with the regional government. The meeting was conducted in an online format and addressed a wide range of stakeholders in all coal subregions of the Silesian Voivodship. The instrument was used to verify - in front of a wider audience - the assumptions of TJTP Silesia i.e.: problems of transition of the voivodship, priorities and goals of transition, types of operations, key projects, etc. The organiser presented assumptions of TJP to the audience and moderated discussion on correctness of main values which should transition be focused, main priorities, main objectives and measures. |
| Groningen        | <b>Public conversations</b> organised by municipalities to collect citizen ideas as part of local (sub-) programmes (National Programme Groningen). The municipality of Oldambt, for instance, gathered insights into the needs and ideas of citizens to formulate focus themes that guide the allocation of the funds in its sub-programme. Seven hundred ideas were collected through physical conversations as well as questionnaires to determine the focus.  |
| Lusatia          | <b>Public discussions</b> (JTF, ERDF Programme Brandenburg 21-27) The events were set out to discuss the state government's strategic considerations with political representatives and administrations, including regional and local authorities, economic, social and environmental partners, and bodies promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of people with disabilities, gender equality and others. The meetings were accordingly subdivided to cover the respective policy objectives.  |
| Gotland          | <b>Dialogue-based events.</b> For the Energy and Climate Strategy, meetings and similar were held throughout the country to discuss regional conditions, needs and opportunities in the context of reaching energy and climate goals. These meetings were designed to inform Strategy targets, areas of intervention and implementation methods. Similarly for the Regional Development Strategy for Gotland 2040, <b>dialogue meetings</b> were held in local community houses throughout the island to hear what citizens thought the strategy should prioritise. A digital dialogue with youth of between 13-25 was organised before the approval of the final version.  |

### Stakeholder dialogue

Stakeholder dialogue refers to more structured interactions in public arenas with a selection of participants who represent the key individuals, groups and interests involved in the topic of discussion. Prominent examples of this were the social dialogues held in the two Polish case study regions between government authorities and representatives of trade unions in sectors affected by energy transition as part of the Social Agreement on the Energy Sector. Such dialogues have also been useful for bringing into the dialogue arena those people and interests that are often excluded or marginalized in society. For instance, in Norrbotten, direct discussions between public authorities and the Sami community on the drafting of the Territorial Just Transition Plan proposals have aimed to address criticism that policies and legislation to support the climate transition have paid limited attention to the needs of that community (see Table 14).

Table 14: Stakeholder dialogue – examples from case study regions

| Case study           | Description  |
|----------------------|--|
| Katowicki region and | <b>Social dialogue</b> (Social Agreement) Representatives of trade unions in the sectors concerned performed an intensive social dialogue on the shape of the social contract. |



| Case study                   | Description  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Belchatow area of transition | The meetings based on social dialogue concerned the vision and detailed provisions of the social contract addressed to all mine and energy workers and inhabitants of the Lodzkie voivodeship and another lignite region.  |
| Rhenish Lignite District     | <p><b>ERDF Strategy Conference "Shaping the Future Funding Period Together"</b> (JTF Programme) gathering around 500 experts from business, science, regional and municipal administrations as well as environmental and social partners. The aim has been to gather input which can contribute to the work of the ERDF Monitoring Committee.</p> <p><b>Talks</b> with regional development agencies and the beneficiaries of the measure <i>Regionalen</i> (JTF) aimed at better utilisation of their expertise in increasing the effectiveness of the use of development funds and decentralised responsibility. The <i>Regionalen</i> is the measure of the State government of NRW offering cities, districts and municipalities the opportunity to carry out groundbreaking joint projects promoting an inter-municipal cooperation.</p> <p><b>Mining Area Conference (Revierkonferenz)</b> (StStG/WSP) was organized twice a year by the Zukunftsagentur (ZRR) – a limited-liability company established for the implementation of StStG Pillar I. Interested parties can join online, via the homepage of ZRR as well as via Youtube and Facebook channels. The task of the conference is to provide public and private organisations with insight into existing projects, a preview of planned actions, as well as updates and strategic impulses about the processes of transformation. The participants were able to discuss proposals and contribute their own ideas to support the planning work of ZRR. Contributions to the conference, particularly about the processes of transformation, used some foresight / visioning instruments.</p> |
| Stara Zagora                 | <p>A <b>Social Policy Dialogue 'New energy mix'</b> (TJTP) was organised initially by the Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency as part of an Interreg Europe project in 2020. Since the first event, 2 additional editions were organised in 2021 &amp; 2022 with 4th edition forthcoming in 2024. Different themes have been covered as part of these dialogues including economic alternatives, socio-economic impacts, land restoration, renewable energy, youth involvement, false news, etc.</p> <p>Three <b>dialogue meetings</b> under the title "Future for Maritsa East Energy Complex - Prospects and Challenges" have taken place b/w July-October 2023 in Stara Zagora. These have been organised by the municipality of Stara Zagora, with key role of the city mayor and the trade unions. The dialogue meetings have attracted high political attention gathering representatives of National Ministries and Parliament, political representatives of the district government as well as local political leaders within the Stara Zagora district as well as of surrounding municipalities due to labour market linkages to coal mining activities. Energy experts, business representatives and civil society organisations have also attended the dialogue. While the focus of the discussions has been on how to preserve the Maritsa East Energy complex as a working segment of the economy, the events have been used to shed light on and discuss elements of yet not finalised TJTP of Stara Zagora, where leading institution is the national government.</p>   |
| Norrbotnen                   | <b>Dialogue with Sami community</b> (TJTP) Direct discussions ongoing between Government and Sami parliament on transition proposals, aiming to address existing criticism that policies and legislation to support the climate transition have so far not adequately reflected Sami community interests.  |

Key findings emerging from the review of participatory mechanisms representing dialogue are underlined in Box 17.

Photo: Third dialogue meeting in Stara Zagora under the title "Future for Maritsa East Energy Complex - Prospects and Challenges"



Source: [nbp.bg](http://nbp.bg)

*Box 17: Dialogue-based participation - key issue*

**Participatory processes based on dialogue were used extensively across case studies but with substantial variation in form.** In Sweden (Norrbotten and Gotland) as well as in Germany (Lusatia and the Rhenish districts) forms of dialogue were particularly prominent while in Stara Zagora and Belchatow area, such mechanisms were much less evident.

Some have been organised on a one-time basis (e.g., the public hearing in Upper Silesia on the TJTP), arguably limiting the scope for meaningful participation while others have been run in a more iterative way (e.g., physical conversations and citizen workshops in Groningen) and in series (e.g., dialogue meetings in Stara Zagora; public discussions in Lusatia).

It should be noted that **dialogue mechanisms vary in terms of the extent of interaction within them.** This depends largely on the capacity of participants and the tradition of such mechanisms in the region. It has been noted, for instance, that a public hearing format in upper Silesia (under TJTP) has been implemented for the first time, which differs from other more common instruments such as earlier-mentioned consultation meetings.

Although dialogue mechanisms may be limited in terms of citizen/stakeholder participation in decision-making, **they can have an important role in revealing preferences and tensions and contributing to the process of finding compromises across societal or sectoral interests.** This has been observed, for instance in the process of developing the Norrbotten's Climate and energy strategy, where different input revealed conflicting needs (citizens opposing the location of wind farms nearby despite support from others of the need for renewable energy sources and of companies interested in the land).

**Across policy measures, the dialogue approach has been more distinctively deployed under the development of the TJTPs** and programming of JTF, although it has also been used in other measures (e.g., in the Regio Deals and National Programme Groningen).



## 5.3. Engagement

Participatory processes based on engagement are associated with more significant interaction between public authorities and stakeholders than those based on dialogue. Engagement assumes that there is scope for the latter to exercise some authority over policy directions, albeit within parameters set by public authorities that are ultimately responsible for the policies (see Box 18).

### *Box 18: Engagement - key characteristics*

Engagement is characterised by **medium to high depth of participation**. The **ownership of the process largely lies with the organising institution**, but it provides more space for information to be generated from the ground, for **more consensual decisions** and solutions based on stimulating collaborative/bottom-up action. Participatory practices falling under the engagement category **exhibit some patterns of recasting the role of stakeholders in governance** processes and in some cases are designed to shift a degree of decision-making power (albeit often limited) to stakeholders impacted by or benefiting from a given policy measure. Outcomes of the process may include collective judgements or positions, recommendations that take into account diversity of views; broad consensus/decision on an issue; and concrete actions (e.g., proposals for funding). Engagement often involves committed or supportive organisational arrangements (committees/commissions; working groups; collaborative platforms; structured processes such as participatory budgeting, hackathons/academies, etc. These can support recurrent events (e.g., in regular meetings of committee or workshop structures) and there is evidence in the literature that this can trigger or reinforce an organisational culture in communities during the engagement process itself and facilitated the engagement process and the delivery of subsequent initiatives.<sup>59</sup>

### **Committees**

Committees provide a formal structure for deliberative processes. They involve representative of stakeholders and communities in the development and delivery of sustainable transition initiatives, offer the opportunity for group problem-solving and can be a forum for presenting multiple points of view. Within this, they may have different objectives – to provide collective recommendations, to build collective position, etc. When tasked with decision on project selection (e.g. Selection committee & Regional Development Council in Stara Zagora), they are guided by common evaluative criteria to reach decisions. In other cases, they need to weigh trade-offs and find common ground to reach a group decision (e.g. Steering or Monitoring committees in the regions of Katowicki, Belchatow area& Lusatia; Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment in Lusatia and Rhenish District). It can be assumed that these committees function on the basis of argumentative exchange, reciprocal reason giving, and on debates which precede decisions, which effectively makes them function on the basis of the deliberative democracy.<sup>60</sup> In the case study regions, prominent examples are found under EU Cohesion Policy, including EU-funded Just Transition Plans (see Table 15). Under its partnership principle, EU Cohesion Policy is required by regulation to engage with local governments and relevant stakeholders, through participation in monitoring and steering committees where decisions on programme priorities are discussed, implementation progress reviewed, criteria for project approval decided and in some cases resource allocations to projects approved. These structures offer arenas for engagement, although Member States implement the partnership

<sup>59</sup> Hatamian A, Pearmain D, Golden S (2012) *Outcomes of the Active at 60 Community Agent Programme*. London: DWP. Hatzidimitriadou, E., Mantovani, N., & Keating, F. (2012). Evaluation of co-production processes in a community-based mental health project in Wandsworth.;).

<sup>60</sup> Elstub, S., & Escobar, O. (2019). Defining and typologising democratic innovations. *Handbook of democratic innovation and governance*, 11-31.

principle in very different ways; and the engagement of partners can be restricted due to lack of time, a focus on regulatory compliance, relatively limited oversight capacities etc.). Nevertheless, they have a potentially important role in providing significant opportunities for learning, information exchange, expert input and networking.

Table 15: Committees and commissions – examples from case study regions

| Case study                          | Description  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Katowicki region and Belchatow area | <b>Steering committee</b> (RDS; TJTP) the instrument used to identify the voivodship's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats, development problems, formulate a development vision, priorities and strategic goals. Under TJTP, the instrument was used to verify the problems of transformation of the Voivodeship, transition priorities, objectives and types of operations, key projects, monitoring methods. The members of the Steering committee discussed questions concerning the challenges of transition and main values on which transition should be focused. The Steering committees recommended the approval of the final draft of TJTP/RDS to the regional authorities.   |
| Groningen                           | <b>Cohesion Policy Monitoring Committee</b> oversees the implementation of the JTF. Monitoring is centrally organized by the managing authority of the JTF. In addition to representatives of the governmental stakeholders involved (provinces, large municipalities, ministries) the monitoring committee includes representatives of economic and societal partners, including, for example, a youth organisation, environmental organisation, and an organisation for equal rights   |
| Rhenish Lignite District            | <b>Cohesion Policy Monitoring Committee [BGA Begleitausschuss]</b> (JTF/TJTP) The Monitoring Committee involves representatives of relevant partners according to Art.8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. State and nonstate actors are represented in the BGA with voting rights. The Committee is chaired by the State Secretary of NRW's Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Protection and Energy. The tasks of the Committee include reviewing and approving the selection criteria for projects, assessing the progress of the programme and the achievement of planned results, as well as reviewing and approving programme amendments.<br><br><b>Cohesion Policy Working Group</b> (JTF/TJTP) was operational at the stage of formulating the ERDF/JTF programme, through which the economic and social partners as well as the relevant organisations of civil society were involved in the process. The Working Group had ten meetings in 2020-21.  |
| Stara Zagora                        | <b>A Cohesion Policy Selection Committee</b> is involved in the project selection process as part of the implementation of the Municipal Integrated Development Plan. The Committee bring together the local public administration and local stakeholders (social partners, business representatives, NGOs, etc.) The main source of funding of the IDP implementation is the Cohesion programme Development of Regions 2021-27 and its territorial instrument under Priority 1, for which Stara Zagora is eligible. The Selection Committee is involved in pre-selection of projects to be financed by this instrument. This includes scoring the project proposals according to established criteria, approved by the Programmes' Monitoring Committee. Final choice on the selection of projects is made by the so-called Project selection unit which consists of representatives of the local public administration.<br><br><b>A Regional Development Council</b> is involved in the planning and implementation of the Regional Integrated Territorial Strategy of the Southeast region (NUTS2), including Stara Zagora. The Council brings together representatives of local and provincial ( <i>oblast</i> , NUTS3) authorities, national government, social partners, business representatives and NGOs. While non-governmental actors have only advisory vote in matters related to the overall planning and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy, they are given full voting rights, with a dedicated amendment of the Regional Development Act, when it comes to selecting projects to be funded via the Integrated Territorial Investment grant instrument supported by Cohesion Policy in 2021-27. |

## Workshops

The role of workshops in engagement can be broadly differentiated from committees in terms of function and outcome. While committees generally seek to monitor and review progress of initiatives and approve or decide specific interventions, workshops focus on specific issues and strive to develop detailed plans or solutions. Thus, these structures aim to engage stakeholders in developing proposals that can translate issues into objectives and into practical initiatives and projects. An example of this is the use of the workshop format to facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in developing strategic project ideas to be funded in the Territorial Just Transition Plan. Germany's Commission for Growth, Structural Change and Employment has provided a structure and space to build a consensus on the process of sustainable transition; identify opportunities for new jobs and investments in the affected territories; and discussing potential instruments and investments to support economic development, structural change, social cohesion and climate action. It had members representing a broad sample of the relevant social, political and economic actors, consisting of 28 to 31 representatives from the energy sector, lignite mining regions, industries, trade unions, environmental NGOs, the scientific community, citizen initiatives and the parliament. Following a period of deliberation, the Commission produced a report with a set of recommended measures. The Commission gathered organized interests and helped build buy-in amid what had been polarized discussions. As they focus on specific issues and solutions, workshops can emphasise the role of experts and organised sectoral interests (e.g., role of specialist working groups in Lusatia). There has been, however, some criticism of the Commission for Growth, Structural Change and Employment that it could have created more space for analysis and dialogue at the local level and included more representation of youth climate action perspectives.<sup>61</sup> In this context, it is important to note that workshops can also be organised to target specific local communities and citizens that might be other underrepresented. For example, under Regio Deal Oost Groningen, citizens were involved in workshops to discuss how the initiative could be used to address their specific needs. These workshops served as platforms for ongoing engagement and participation of residents in shaping the development and implementation of initiatives under the Regio Deal (see Table 16).

Table 16: Workshops – examples from case study regions

| Case study                         | Description  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Katowicki region                   | <b>Workshops organised to develop project proposals under the TJTP</b> with participation of public, private and third sectors. Workshops involved direct engagement with participants in three rounds and covered the development and assessment of project plans and stakeholder present their projects (and the level of their advancement). The main goal of the workshops was to motivate stakeholders to prepare good quality TJTP projects.   |
| Groningen                          | <b>Citizen workshops</b> (Regio Deals) were organised as part of the participatory actions for an area-oriented approach ( <i>gebiedsgerichte aanpak</i> ). Citizens were involved in workshop meetings, organised by each eligible municipality, to discuss progress made in developing a place-based programme for physical and social improvement and to gather feedback.   |
| Lusatia & Rhenish Lignite District | <b>Commission</b> on Growth, Structural Change and Employment (StStG). The Commission was established by the Federal government with representation from range of stakeholders to build a consensus on the phase-out of coal and promote a just transition. The Commission concluded its work by publishing its final report in 2019, recommending Germany to entirely phase out and shut down the remaining coal-fired power plants on its territory by 2038. Simultaneously it developed a plan with |

<sup>61</sup> World Resources Institute (2021) Germany's "Coal Commission": Guiding an Inclusive Coal Phase-Out, Snapshot, April 2021

| Case study               | Description   |
|--------------------------|---|
|                          | <p>recommendations that have informed new legislation, including a 40 billion euros commitment for investments in coal regions. Commission's work was structured in 15 sessions (including visits and sessions in mining regions).</p> <p><b>Thematic workshops.</b> Thematic workshops take place under the STARK<sup>62</sup> programme – a grant-based instrument devised for the implementation of StStG objectives. While STARK is a federal funding programme, state and regional level, as well as different stakeholders are involved in the evaluation and assessment of project proposals both in Lusatian and Rhenish lignite district. In Lusatia the regional development company WRL takes care of project applications. It organizes five different thematic workshops that hold their meetings separately (spanning from economic development and innovation to culture). These workshops, involving stakeholders at the regional (b/w the State and municipal) level, need to build consensus on recommending projects for funding based on their relevance to the structural transformation in the given territory. After being recommended by the workshops the project proposals are handed over to an inter-ministerial body (IMAG) for the final determination of its eligibility for funding. After a positive vote by IMAG, the initiator can submit a project application to the Investment Bank of the State of Brandenburg. In the Rhenish Lignite District, however, while the regional development company <i>Zukunftsagentur</i> plays a central role in steering the transformation processes, it is not responsible for the STARK programme. The evaluation process appears less open to participation as actors who wish to propose a project submit their proposals directly to the public authority - the Cologne District Government - and after positive assessment by this body, the project application needs to be approved by the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA).</p>   |
| Rhenish Lignite District | <p>Seven <b>regional thematic groups</b> (<i>Revierknoten</i>) (WSP) - energy, industry, infrastructure and mobility; innovation and education; resources and agricultural business; spatial planning, international architecture and technology exhibition - were formed involving experts and relevant regional stakeholders and aligned with the thematic fields identified in WSP.<sup>63</sup> The aim of these groups has been to pool expertise in one place and develop ideas during the stage of programming the WSP. Some of the groups specifically focused on spatial design and dimensions of physical space, with the use of instruments of visual representation. The work of the groups provided the content base of the WSP.</p> <p><b>Citizens' vision workshop</b> (<i>Bürgervisionswerkstatt</i>) (WSP), organised as a whole-day event (in 2022), aimed to discuss the visions of citizens for the spatial development of the Rhenish district and to gather their expertise. The Workshop was formally organised in the process of formulating the Spatial strategy (<i>Raumstrategie</i>) 2038, which was developed by one of the above mentioned regional thematic groups – the one on spatial planning. This highlights the importance of spatial planning in the process of structural transformation in the Rhenish District.</p> <p>Two <b>Workshops</b> (<i>Revierwerkstätten</i>) were organised in 2020 to discuss and revise the drafts of WSP programme. Participants were asked to identify the most significant fields of action. The workshops also contributed to the development of the so-called citizen participation charter (<i>Revier Charta</i>), which defines guidelines for civil society participation in the run-up to formal planning procedures for various projects in the lignite district.</p> <p><b>A Track group</b> (<i>Spurgruppe</i>) has played and is to play an important role in enhancing civil society participation under the WSP. The group is formed by the ZRR and consist of 20 citizens selected in a random procedure (open application and a lottery procedure) and four appointed members (who had been involved in previous processes). The group's task is to give impetus to citizen participation. It accompanies and monitors the participation processes (organised by ZRR and presented to the group). Some of the</p> |

<sup>62</sup> STARK - Strengthening the transformation dynamics and new beginnings in the districts and at the coal-fired power plant locations. <https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMWi/stark.html>

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.rheinisches-revier.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/191211\\_making\\_of\\_fachkonf\\_revierknoten\\_klein.pdf](https://www.rheinisches-revier.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/191211_making_of_fachkonf_revierknoten_klein.pdf)

| Case study | Description  |
|------------|--|
|            | groups' meetings took place online due to Covid-19. The group was responsible for the development of the so-called Participation Charter. The Charter consists of guidelines and quality criteria for civil society participation. The Charter was informed by different participatory mechanisms including at a dedicated Digital Forum ( <i>Digitales Revierforum zur Revier-Charta</i> ) with around 60 participants. |

### Networking / project-building platforms

Some structures explicitly aim to support the development and maintenance of networks as a means of strengthening the engagement of stakeholders or citizens in policies and plans. Such networks can be useful tools to connect relevant actors or groups with each other and to public authorities to exchange good practices, facilitate the sharing of resources and experiences and to increase the scope for engagement in relevant policies. This can involve informal or formal groups that gather virtually or in-person, on a regular or ad-hoc basis. Two examples can be highlighted from the case study research. In Lusatia, a networking initiative under the Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions involved the establishment of a website that provides information, including a digital newsletter, and a form for citizens with a track record of social engagement to get involved (see Table 17). The website publicises conferences, round tables and other events aimed at discussing and promoting citizen engagement. The goal is to connect engaged citizens and provide them with the required competences and mechanisms to consolidate networks and promote initiatives, as well as provide space to discuss the transition process in the region and local history and culture. An initiative in Stara Zagora aims specifically at engaging entrepreneurs from more deprived communities in business networks in support of the National Innovation Strategy. The Business Academy for Starting Entrepreneurs (BASE) is a training programme that supports the engagement of entrepreneurs from communities with limited access to business support to engage in the National Innovation Strategy. The programme connects them with mentors who have substantial business experience in developing a business plan in line with the priorities of the National Innovation Strategy and helps them become a part of a network with stronger capacity to engage in the Strategy.

Table 17: Networking platforms – examples from case study regions

| Case study   | Description   |
|--------------|---|
| Lusatia      | <b>A Citizen-led platform Bürgerregion Lusatia (StStG)</b> has been established to network and engage the publics of the Lusatia and enhance their engagement in the transition process. The instrument primarily addresses citizens' organised interests, and engages participants with project experience, diverse professional expertise, good networks and personal relationships. The goal is to advise, encourage cooperation and advocate for the interests of civil society in committees. It connects citizens, municipalities and state institutions. In addition to this, it maintains contacts in neighbouring regions in other countries in order to strengthen Lusatia's bridging function. |
| Stara Zagora | <b>BASE Business Academy</b> for startup entrepreneurs to promote engagement (NIS3) The academy aims to encourage future entrepreneurs to develop their own ideas, turning them into successful business ventures. It is organised by IT Stara Zagora, an association focused on the development of the digital and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district.  |

Key findings emerging from the review of participatory mechanisms representing engagement are underlined in Box 19.

#### Box 19: Engagement-based participation – key issues



**There is a variety of structures and platforms to support engagement of citizens and stakeholders in more collaborative participation in sustainable transition measures.** This has involved collaboration in the identification of solutions to pressing issues related to the transition process and to some extent in decision-making based on stimulating collaborative/bottom-up action.

**Committees have provided arenas for stakeholders and civil society organisations** to feed into processes of issue identification, resource allocation and monitoring the progress of initiatives.

**The monitoring and steering committees associated with Cohesion Policy's partnership principle have been prominent in this,** although the scope for strong participation from stakeholders can be limited by different procedural and regulatory constraints.

**Workshops increase the scope for more intense engagement as they often focus on specific themes and issues and seek to develop practical solutions and measures.** A critique of these has been the focus on participants with technical and sectoral knowledge but there are examples where citizens and communities have been targeted to contribute from their territorial perspectives.

**Some engagement processes lay specific emphasis on the creation and consolidation of networks and linkages** as a means to facilitate long-term engagement between different groups in policies and strategies.

## 5.4. Partnership

Partnership represents the highest degree of participation, including empowerment of numerous stakeholders.<sup>64</sup> It entails a collaborative approach in devising policies/instruments/projects, and collective decision-making on the final set of policy options/projects and commitments to invest in collective goals and distributed actions (see Box 20).

*Box 20: Partnership - key characteristics*

Defining principles under this heading include **agreement that tasks and responsibilities are shared and a commitment to ongoing or iterative collaboration.** Partnership acknowledges equal standing for citizens/stakeholders in setting the agenda for participatory processes and an understanding that these actors will have a role as '(co-) creators' or '(co-) producers' rather than only 'consumers' of policy. In practice, this means avoiding top-down or bottom-up dynamics with multi-directional relationships based on shared powers in defining the features of a policy measure, its budget, final decisions etc.<sup>65</sup> This requires higher time & (human) resource commitment in the participatory process but also over time in terms of implementation of the final decisions.

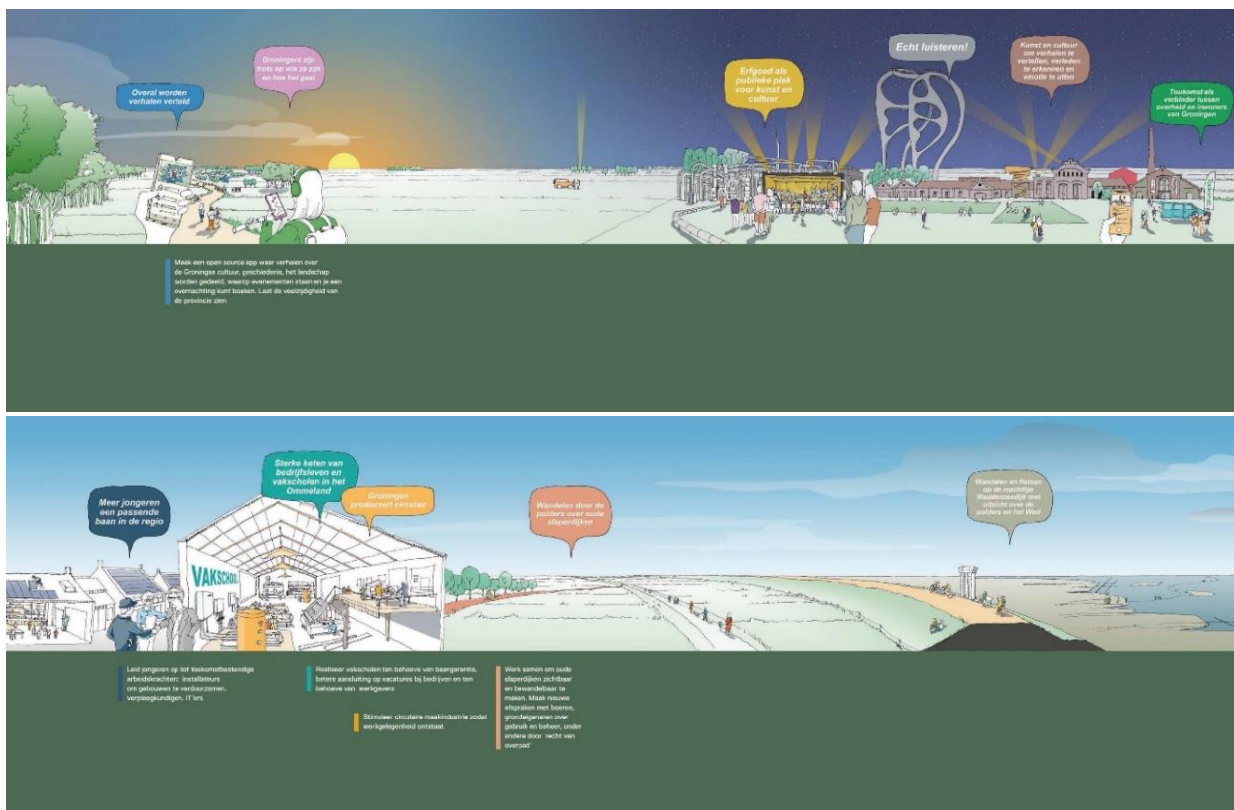
Applications of 'partnership' participatory mechanisms in the policy measures assessed across the eight case study regions are limited (see Table 18). They are evident in two cases, where participatory mechanisms feature *shared responsibility* between state and non-state actors and a *collaboration dynamic* that spans across stages of the policy making process. A mix of

<sup>64</sup> Clarke, A., & Erfan, A. (2007). op cit.

<sup>65</sup> Leino, H., & Puumala, E. (2021). op.cit

participatory mechanisms have been combined to support co-creation and co-production of sustainable transition measures between public authorities, stakeholders and citizens. In Groningen, citizen participation is key to *Toukomst* sub-programme as part of the National Program Groningen, the national investment programme for the province. *Toukomst* has been focused on promoting residential initiatives in Groningen to contribute to developing projects for the programme. Notably, EUR 100 million from the NPG fund was reserved for the development of project proposals submitted by citizens. In addition, a citizens' panel was established to assess the project ideas and advise on their financing. The ideas submitted by citizens also serve as a basis for the 'Future Vision', the vision of the future that should serve as a guideline for other NPG sub-programmes and projects (see Figure 5). The participatory process was managed and carried out by an urban design and landscape company (West 8). Collected evidence indicate that public authorities have not been involved in the process to ensure its independence. In the Lusatian case, the approach to drafting the Development Strategy has been innovative as it was entrusted to 50 volunteer authors from the region representing business, science, civil society and public administration from different levels of government. This process was informed by multiple participatory mechanisms that were deployed under the project 'Workshop for Future Lusatia between 2017 and 2020. The strategy aimed to ensure that it is created "from below", including participatory instruments targeted at particular communities such as youth and ethnic minorities.<sup>66</sup> The draft of the strategy was subjected to a multi-stage vote by around 100 regional representatives, district administrations, mayors and representatives of institutions.

Figure 7: Two of the multiple panoramas that illustrate future development in the Groningen region.



Source: [Toukomstbeeld \(nationaalprogrammagoningen.nl\)](https://www.toukomstbeeld.nl)

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.goerlitz.de/uploads/03-Wirtschaft-Dokumente/Entwicklungsstrategie-Lausitz-2050.pdf>

Table 18: Participation as a partnership – examples from case study regions

| Case study                                      | Description   |
|---|---|
| Groningen                                       | At the first round of participation in <i>Toukomst</i> , citizens were invited in spring 2020 to develop project ideas for the National Programme Groningen to strengthen the vitality, economy and quality of life in the province (through an online platform, physical events and a game process in schools). The collected 900 project ideas were then clustered into larger strategic projects through online and physical meetings of citizens and other stakeholders in the region. A team of specialists advised on aspects such as feasibility and budget. The bundling step in the <i>Toukomst</i> process indicated a strong public involvement. A citizen panel consisted of 20 randomly selected members and additional representatives of specific professions (e.g. police, health care) assessed 59 clustered projects, supported by a ‘visioning’ process which translated citizens ideas into a policy programme. The panel took place between September 2020 and January 2021. By 2021, the first nine projects, which the panel advised on selecting, had been approved by the NPG. The approval process followed the same procedures as in the case of projects submitted by the government.   |
| Lusatia   | The Lusatia Development Strategy 2050 centred on the work of approximately 50 volunteer authors from Lusatia who were involved in 4 writing workshops. They were drawn from business, science, civil society, public administration at different levels (from municipal to the state level). The involved authors were asked to compose the development strategy based on a series of inputs and results from participatory processes. Some of these activities - booths at 50 places in the region and citizen dialogue (five physical and one online) – were organised by the project ‘Workshop for Future Lausitz’, feeding at the same time into the Lusatia Programme 2038. These participatory instruments were complimented with a participatory activity called ‘Lusatian treasures’ promoting conversations about places or projects with more than 5000 Lusatians (and 1200 inputs collected). Further to that, seven participatory workshops were organised, engaging children and youth (under the tiles ‘Future bus’/ <i>Zukunftsbus</i> ) to develop their own ideas about the future of the region and put them into models. Engagement with the minority group of Sorbs/Wends was organised through the project ‘Innovation through tradition’. |
| Katowicki region & Belchatow area of transition | The two Social Agreements in the Polish context can be seen, to an extent, as a form of partnership due to the intensive negotiation activities they were based on, including collective bargaining between the national government and trade unions related to different provisions of the document (mines closure, new technologies for energy production, supporting mechanisms required in the transition, etc.).   |





Source: Lusatia Development Strategy 2050, <https://www.goerlitz.de/uploads/03-Wirtschaft-Dokumente/Entwicklungsstrategie-LausitzLusatiadf>

#### Box 21: Partnership-based participation - key issues

**Participatory processes based on partnership (with genuine co-creation and co-production of outputs for sustainable transition measures between citizens, stakeholders and public authorities) is limited in the case studies.** This is relative novel approaches, and it requires high level of capacity, time and resources from all partners involved.

**Important examples can be identified from the case studies.** Although these differ in terms of form and content, they share some key characteristics. They represent the culmination of a mixture of preceding participatory processes (consultation, dialogue etc.) and they linked the process to tangible outcomes (objectives to be realised in strategies and plans, with associated projects).

**Some of these partnership-based participatory practices have sought the use of more interactive tools to facilitate participation including foresight and visioning methods.** The application of these tools has been productive when it comes to diagnosing the current state of regional development or understand current perceptions, as well as to identify potentials, transformation pathways and a common future vision for the region.

**In one case (Groningen), a more consistent use of mixed digital and face-to-face participation approaches has been applied.**

## 6. Analysing characteristics of identified participatory processes.

The report so far shows that public authorities use a diverse range of mechanisms to support participation in sustainability transition measures. These mechanisms differ in terms of their purpose, design, and institutionalisation. Thus, further analysis is needed to better understand the extent to which they impact policy and create more inclusive participation. The analysed characteristics of participatory mechanisms/instruments are based on literature review<sup>67</sup> in terms of participatory arenas, stage of the policy making process, actors and outcome of participation.

### 6.1. Arenas where participation takes place.

As discussed earlier, an added-value of place-based sustainability transition measures is in combining bottom-up and top-down inputs. Place-based measures require multiple administrations to coordinate and cooperate with each other in order to ensure that strategic objectives and regulations set at national level provide a suitable framework for each place to proactively shape its transition according to its needs and potentials. This often means a cascade of interdependent procedures within a policy measure that take place at different administrative levels (national; regional<sup>68</sup> and local) and span over different stages of policy making (from issue identification to evaluation). **The question that emerges is how open each of these governmental levels is to participation and if place-based policies stimulate the opening up of (new) participatory arenas closer to citizens.** Are joint participatory fora, organised by multiple tiers of government, emerging to open up more effective channels of communication and deliberation between the state and the stakeholders affected in different territories?

Participatory processes in the DUST regions' place-based policies have often involved more than one level of government, introducing new configurations of actors into the participatory sphere. **However, within policy measures, one particular level has often assumed the role of an initiator/organisier while other levels have been invited as participants.** Distinguishing the level at which a participatory arena is opened up is important in analysing the dynamics of participatory processes because it impacts citizens/stakeholders' attitudes and level of trust in the process itself as well as towards roles played by other actors. Participatory processes at different tiers of government are characterised with different dynamics of power, with the local level considered to be closest to citizens and at which people are considered most capable to 'construct their own voice'.<sup>69</sup>

A comparison between DUST case studies can only be partial as different regions have selected different types of measures (strategy/regulatory-related or contractual) and at different levels of government.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, based on the selective choice of measures, several observations can be made. **First, the evidence indicates that the most meaningful and active arenas for participation in a policy measure corresponds with the governmental level which holds the**

<sup>67</sup> see DUST Deliverable 1.1: Theoretical and conceptual framework.

<sup>68</sup> To unify terminology, 'regional' level here corresponds to the State (*Land*) level in Germany, to the provincial level in the Netherlands, to the NUTS 2 statistical level in Bulgaria and to the *Voivodship* level in Poland.

<sup>69</sup> Gaventa, J. (2006). Finding the spaces for change: a power analysis. *IDS bulletin*, 37(6), 23-33.

<sup>70</sup> The analysis in this section shall also be comprehended while having in mind that compared regions come from countries with different administrative traditions and styles of policy making.

**main decision-making powers.** For some case studies, this has been predominantly the regional level (e.g. in Katowicki coal region; Belchatow area of transition; Norrbotten; Gotland). In cases where the sustainability transition policy measure includes a range of actions in a multi-level governance system, powers have been dispersed from national to local arenas, depending on the action involved (Lusatia; Rhenish District; Stara Zagora). It is important to note a third category, where measures cover a functional area that cuts across administrative boundaries. Here, the key participatory arena combines regional and municipal public administrations, bringing together participation organised between the national or municipal level (Groningen). Overall, **national transition measures are associated with arenas solely at that level, with limited openness to participatory arenas at lower tiers of government.** In this context, regional and local arenas of participation are often subsequently used in relation to measures that implement national-level measures. However, such sub-national arenas for translating national policies into regional or local action are not used under some of the analysed policies – e.g. in Stara Zagora (National Innovation Strategy); in the Polish Social Agreements, which leaves the national arena as the main space where participation takes place. **Policy measures at the regional level make more active efforts to involve the sub-regional participatory arena.** Different approaches can be observed, which imply different power dynamics. In some cases, a separate entity at the level of a functional territory has been created to take over the initiation of joint participatory instruments, essentially forming a new participatory arena (Lusatia, Rhenish District, Groningen). In other cases, participatory instruments at the local level have been organised by the regional authority or another structure at that level (Katowicki coal region; Belchatow area of transition; Stara Zagora, Norrbotten; Gotland). Yet, the participatory arena in some regional measures appear limited to the regional level (e.g. TJTPs in the German case studies; Regional Development Strategies in the Polish case studies).

**Of particular relevance to the DUST research is the evidence that sustainability transition initiatives are in some cases associated with new participatory arenas, based on cooperation between different governmental levels and that these have the potential to create new democratic spaces.** Policies for sustainability transition often required to serve functional rather than administratively defined areas. Such need is evident in many of the DUST case studies where transition-related restructuring of economic activities, (in)direct employment and industrial value chains span across the boundaries of existing administrative regions/districts. In the cases of Groningen, Lusatia and the Rhenish district, sustainability transition measures have driven the formation of new participatory arenas to manage the interface between policy and stakeholders at this ‘functional region’ level. A notable example is the creation of a limited liability company – *Economic Region Lusatia (Wirtschaftsregion Lausitz)* - set up by equal-standing shareholders at the State level (State Brandenburg) and the district level (seven districts of the States Brandenburg and Saxony) covering the historic Lusatia coal region. The company has had a key role in organising participatory processes during the policy formulation of the Lusatia Programme 2038 & the Development Strate<sup>71</sup>, and the implementation of a regional programme (STARK) funded by the Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions. **In essence, the activities that the entity has been tasked with facilitate the shaping of a newly institutionalised space for cooperation, planning and public engagement at the functional regional level, which, in the German planning system, is predominantly informal.** Similar role has been played by the already mentioned *Zukunftsagentur (ZRR)* established in the Rhenish District. The benefit of such a structure according to practitioners is not only in ensuring control over project development by an entity familiar with the coal region but also in its **high level of identification of stakeholders with that functional space. This has supported ‘regional acceptance’<sup>72</sup>**, which can play an important role when organising participatory activities.

<sup>71</sup> Notably, the project ‘Workshop for Future Lusatia’

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.goerlitz.de/uploads/03-Wirtschaft-Dokumente/Entwicklungsstrategie-Lausitz-2050.pdf>

**The creation of new structures for participation, however, has been recognised to be only one element in achieving greater inclusion in policy making.**<sup>73</sup> The extent of inclusion and intensity of participation **also depends on the power relations which surround and permeate these new structures or processes. Emerging joint structures may exhibit a top-down approach or control, which consequently may limit their potential to create a truly democratic and inclusive participatory arena.** Such risks are evident in the workings of the Regional Development Council established under the Integrated Regional Territorial Development Strategy, involving the Stara Zagora district in Bulgaria. This structure, linking district (NUTS3) and municipal level administrations (LAU2) at a NUTS2 level, as well as social partners and non-governmental organisations, has been set up in an attempt to support policy implementation and engagement at regional level, which is otherwise absent in the Bulgarian administrative-territorial system. However, a top-down dynamic is evident in the definition of the administrative borders, which have been set on the basis of previously existing statistical regions as well as in the key role of the national level in providing administrative and organisational support (incl. staff and budget). The new Regional Development Council has been tasked with stimulating a participatory arena at regional level that engages different local areas to cooperate on the basis of diverse functional linkages. However, the Council is in its infancy and implementation actions are only getting underway. Given the limited experience and capacities of the Regional Development Council in relation to the national level there are significant challenges in establishing a genuinely participatory arena at this level (e.g. in relation to coordinating different territorial interests, balancing the power-dynamics inherent to administrative entities of different sizes).

**Furthermore, the arrangement of power relations depends not only on the balance between levels of public administration but between partners from public and non-public spheres.** In institutionalised forms of participation, government agencies are traditionally assumed to be initiators of participatory mechanisms.<sup>74</sup> This is essentially valid for the majority of participatory instruments identified and analysed in the DUST case studies. This arena is often referred to in literature as ‘invited space’, an arena where citizens and their representatives are invited to by different authorities.<sup>75</sup> Alongside these spaces, the literature also distinguishes ‘created’ spaces, which are claimed by less powerful actors. These could be created by non-state institutions (e.g. by church) or civil society organisations (incl. NGOs or grassroots organisations) and gather participants on the basis of common concerns or identifications.<sup>76</sup> Efforts to create such participatory arenas are also evident in several DUST case studies. These have been driven by objectives to create a participatory sphere at a lower or functional territorial level (Stara Zagora, TJTP, NIS3; Lusatia, StStG) to supplement a predominantly national arena that may not be as accessible to partners outside of public authorities and where top-down power dynamics are stronger. Another driver has been to complement otherwise formal (and often more restricted) participatory mechanisms (Katowicki coal region, TJTP) or to provide instruments targeted at specific social groups (Lusatia Strategy 2050). Challenges to such actions relate to how to promote vertical links connecting input and actors at local, regional and national (and even international) level and to the capacities of non-governmental actors to impact policy at an upper scale.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Gaventa, J. (2006). op.cit.

<sup>74</sup> Hofer, K., & Kaufmann, D. (2022). Actors, arenas and aims: A conceptual framework for public participation. *Planning Theory*, 14730952221139587.

<sup>75</sup> Cornwall, A., & Coelho, V. S. (Eds.). (2007). *Spaces for change? the politics of citizen participation in new democratic arenas* (Vol. 4). Zed Books.

<sup>76</sup> Gaventa, J. (2006). op.cit.

<sup>77</sup> Gaventa, J. (2006). op.cit.

Attempts to create a notion of a more accessible or equal participatory arena may also be linked to the physical space where participatory arrangements take place. In Gotland, the Energy Centre (hub for information and co-ordination b/w stakeholders in the field of climate and energy transition, owned by Region Gotland) is such an example. Although undertaken activities have been mostly in the form of information provision, they have taken place at potentially more accessible, open and inspiring places for local communities such as museums. The role of museums has been in fact recognised in the wider European context as a public space and lifelong learning establishment able to offer education, cultural and social opportunities for different groups.<sup>78</sup>

#### *Box 22: Arenas of participation – key issues*

The level of openness to participation differs across levels of government. Policy measures where decision-making is held at the national level evidence limited openness to participatory arenas located at lower tiers of government.

More active efforts to engage the sub-regional participatory arenas are made in policy measures devised at the regional level. Yet, approaches to engage these lower-level arenas differ as some of them offer more equal standing between levels while others exhibit top-down dynamics, diminishing the opportunity for more inclusive participatory sphere.

Place-based policies have promoted the emergence of new participatory arenas around functional areas, bringing together different levels of government. Whether these arenas can play a role of new democratic spaces for participation depends on efforts to promote the identification of local communities with these new participatory arenas.

While participation mostly occurs in ‘invited spaces’ via institutionalised participatory processes, spaces for participation are also ‘created’ by nonstate actors on the basis of common concerns or identifications. These are predominantly driven by perception that other (institutionalised) participatory arenas have been more restricted (e.g. in Stara Zagora, Lusatia, Katowicki coal region) or to expand the participation to specific social groups (e.g. in Lusatia). These created spaces for participation, however, face challenges to impact policy processes at an upper-level of government (e.g. in Stara Zagora).

## 6.2. Stages of the policymaking process open to participation

**Analyses of participatory instruments must also recognise that policy-making is a complex process that involves multiple stages, and that the scope and intensity of participation can vary across these phases.** While policy development is often not a linear process that follows subsequent steps, multiple models have emerged in attempt to structure this process in manageable units of analysis.<sup>79</sup> A broad typology to describe the chronology of a policy process includes: agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision making, implementation, and evaluation has become ‘the conventional way’.<sup>80</sup> Applying this model in analysing participation in DUST case

<sup>78</sup> <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/local-community-engagement-museumss-programs-practices-experiences-and-challenges>

<sup>79</sup> Althaus, C., Ball, S., Bridgman, P., Davis, G., & Threlfall, D. (2022). *The Australian policy handbook: A practical guide to the policymaking process*. Taylor & Francis.

<sup>80</sup> Howlett, M., & Giest, S. (2015) Policy Cycle in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition)*,



study regions has the benefit of helping explore whether different stages of policy development are equally accessible to citizen/stakeholder participation and if there are any patterns linking certain types of participatory instruments with certain stages.

Prior to setting out this analysis, two caveats should be noted. First, in this report the policy cycle model has been applied to diverse measures that represent strategies, plans, and programmes/initiatives with their own specific combinations of stages. In the Dutch case in particular, some policy measures consist of multiple thematic and territorial sub-programmes that function relatively independently. Some of these are assessed here as individual measures in order to gain concrete insights. This is the case of the *Toukomst* sub-programme under the National Programme Groningen. The initiative has been designed via its own decision-making process, within a broad framework of criteria and budget allocation set by the National Programme. Similarly, under the Regio Deal, municipalities had the space to develop their own programmes with initiatives for physical and social improvement of the local environment. These have also been assessed in this section as a separate measure. The difference between a policy measure and a programme measure, however, should be noted as the latter is more directly linked to identifying and designing concrete actions/projects. A second caveat to note is that, across the analysed policy measures, there is a mix of established and more recently adopted measures. The latter includes the majority of case studies, with Groningen being an outlier as it exhibits a more balanced distribution.

While building on previous sections, the analysis below explores the uptake of participatory process at each stage of the policy cycle. This includes the following stages: issue identification and policy formulation; decision making; implementation; and, monitoring and evaluation. Results are summarised in Table 19, while more detail is available in Annex 1.

**Issue identification and policy formulation** are described in literature as two consecutive stages at the start of the policy development. Issue identification precedes any drafting of a policy document and its functions are linked to raising awareness on problems and needs, which require policy attention and this process informs the decision to set a policy measure in response (i.e. who will deal with the problem and in what form).<sup>81</sup> Policy formulation broadly involves an analysis of the policy issue at hand, informing the process of developing specific policy options/solutions to the issue and the selection of the most feasible solutions and actions, laying them down in a law/policy document/strategy/plan/programme to be implemented in a next stage.<sup>82</sup> **Applying this conceptualisation to the place-based policy measures in DUST, indicates that these two stages are closely connected.** Collected data demonstrate that the process of identifying challenges and needs (issues identification) often comes after a decision to formulate a policy measure has been made. Reasons relate to the fact that some of the measures are cyclic and/or linked to requirements for receipt of EU funding. Literature also points to the fact that '[policy] processes do not evolve in a pattern of clear-cut sequences; instead, the stages are constantly meshed and entangled in an ongoing process'.<sup>83</sup> As a result, the issue identification stage appears closely linked to the policy formulation stage and can be seen as part of the analytical work to inform the design or choice of specific solutions and actions. This aligns well with the fact that the policy formulation stage is often iterative as a range of possible choices are being assessed, narrowed down or new ones considered. Thus, the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Howlett, M., & Giest, S. (2012). The policy-making process. In *Routledge handbook of public policy* (pp. 17-28). Routledge.

<sup>83</sup> Jann, W., & Wegrich, K. (2017). Theories of the policy cycle. In *Handbook of public policy analysis* (pp. 69-88). Routledge.

two stages have been explored in combination in this report, with some nuances being highlighted.

**The majority of identified participatory instruments in DUST case study regions fall under the issue identification and policy formulation stage.** In most case studies, there is a concentration of mechanisms in this stage, with some exceptions where the spread across stages is more even (Groningen). Within this, some mechanisms come closer to the stage of issue identification, with some variation in the type of input that has been sought. First, participatory mechanisms have been used to collect targeted knowledge and/or evidence related to territorial and sectoral context in order to identify the most pressing problems that need to be resolved. This is predominantly the focus in policy measures in Belchatow area of transition and the Katowicki region, Stara Zagora, Rhenish District, Norrbotten and Gotland. Second, participatory processes have sought to identify broad public needs and challenges and to gather ideas how to tackle these from bottom-up. This rationale is more extensively observed in mechanisms deployed in Groningen and Lusatia, with more limited use, but yet also evident in Gotland.

**A number of participatory instruments have also been arranged to serve multiple purposes that come closer to the stage of policy formulation.** It is evident that some of these mechanisms had the broad purpose of collecting views on already identified challenges, needs, opportunities, threats, etc. and revising initial selection of priorities. A number of these mechanisms that come under policy formulation took place at a point when a draft policy document was already in place. Therefore, **it is arguable that their main purpose was to approve decisions on policy directions that had already been taken.** Only in limited cases, the analysis captures an actual collaborative formulation of the measures. Across case studies and policy measures, the following intentions of deploying participatory instruments can be distinguished:

- **To gauge opinion on the draft policy document opening it up for citizens/stakeholders' comments or suggestions for change.** This has predominantly been done via digital platforms and/or in-person meetings (e.g. consultation meetings, and comment periods in all case study regions).
- **To supplement the analysis of the policy issue or enhance quality of already proposed solutions** (assess consequences; advantages and disadvantages) by drawing on multidisciplinary expertise. Examples include participatory instruments such as interviews, questionnaires, stakeholder meetings.
- **To collaboratively produce a draft policy/legislation.** This is evident in mechanisms in the Polish regions organised around the Social Agreement which were tasked to prepare and/or negotiate operational programmes for each mine, rules related to reduction of production, social protection measures, etc.
- **To engage stakeholders in developing projects** (workshops/meetings to develop (key) transition projects under Katowicki TJTP)
- **To create space for stakeholders/citizens to contribute to collaborative design of projects** (e.g. Toukomst instrument under the National Programme Groningen)

**It should be noted that there is significant variation across cases in intensity of participation at these stages, even within countries.** In the Katowicki region, participatory processes at the stages of issue identification and policy formulation have been more



comprehensive than in Belchatow area of transition, arguably reflecting varied experience and capacities between the regions. In particular, a key distinction is in the mechanisms to develop transition projects/project fiches and in carrying out public hearing in the process of preparing the TJTP, which were organised only in the case of Katowicki region.

**Decision-making** is the stage at which decisions are made regarding the selection of strategic policy priorities and provisions to be implemented, budget to be allocated or projects to be selected. Unlike the previous stage, involvement of stakeholders during the decision-making stage is not widely evident. Under this stage, it is worthwhile to make a **distinction between the types of actions that are being decided on.**

- **Participation in decision-making can relate to deciding on provisions of strategic frameworks or plans.** A clear example in the two Polish cases are the negotiation activities under the Social Agreement which were based on collective bargaining between the national government and trade unions related to different provisions of the document (mines closure, new technologies for energy production, supporting mechanisms required in the transition, etc.). The Lusatian Development Strategies where the provisions of the strategy have been decided on by the participants in the four writing workshops is another example.
- **Participation in decision-making can also refer to more specific choices on resource allocation to specific actions.** This could be through engagement of stakeholders in Cohesion Policy and JTF monitoring and steering committees where specific criteria for project selection are approved or projects are selected. A prominent example is the allocation of decision-making responsibilities to the Regional Development Council for selection of projects under the ITI instrument, linked to the implementation of the Territorial Development Strategy of the Southeast region in Bulgaria. Examples outside Cohesion Policy include the role of the citizen panel involved in assessing projects in the Toukomst initiative in Groningen, the specialist workshops in Lusatia and regional thematic groups in Rhenish District assessing projects for funding under the STARK programme (implementing StStG).

Yet, it is also important to appreciate **how binding the decisions made in participatory processes are.**

- The decisions made in some participatory mechanisms need to be approved by representative institutions to legitimise them. This is the case of the writing workshops preparing Lusatia Regional Development Strategy and of STARK's specialist workshops, as well as of Groningen's Toukomst citizen panel. This indicates that even when participatory mechanisms offer extensive ownership and co-creation opportunities as part of the process, they might not share fully the powers to make final decisions.
- In more limited cases, decision-making powers have been equally shared. These include Social Agreements in the two Polish cases, and the Regional Development Council in Stara Zagora, where, however, citizens have not been directly involved.

During the **implementation stage**, decisions made in the previous step are put into effect. This stage is considered essential as the actions undertaken during implementation and the decisions associated with them ultimately determine the policy's effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>84</sup>

**Evidence from the DUST case study regions suggests that the implementation phase**

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<sup>84</sup> Kachule, R. N., & Chilongo, T. M. (2007). Malawi input voucher study: a literature review on agricultural marketing and input voucher systems.

**allows limited space for citizen/stakeholder participation. There is relatively little uptake of participatory instruments utilised during this phase.** This is valid for all case study regions, with the two Swedish cases exhibiting absence of such mechanisms. Partial explanation could be that a number of analysed policy measures have been recently introduced, and this has limited the scope for analysis related to implementation (and evaluation) stage.<sup>85</sup> It is evident, for instance, that in Norrbotten, the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Climate and Energy Strategy make reference to citizen participation activities they intend to implement during the strategies' lifespan. Across analysed participatory mechanisms undertaken in the stage of implementation, **two rationales for using them can be distinguished.**

- **A key role is to contribute to efforts to coordinate implementation activities in order to optimise their effect.** This includes ensuring consistency with policy priorities and expectations and potentially identification of synergies between actions. Based on available data, it is evident that a key mechanism to pursue this role has been via a governance *structure*. Examples can be found in the two Polish case study regions (steering committees) and in Groningen (steering committee; expert committee). In Gotland, the objective is to facilitate exchange of experiences via reoccurring conferences, while with similar purpose in Groningen annual stakeholder meetings are arranged.
- **Less prominent but nevertheless evident is the role of instruments in this stage to engage citizens/stakeholders in the design of projects** (Groningen; Stara Zagora).

**Monitoring and evaluating policy measures** regarding their effectiveness and consequences are an important part of the policy cycle that allows to assess how the policy measure operates and whether it achieves the results it initially targeted (e.g. is the policy achieving the desired impact among certain communities or across certain sector or territory; are there unintended outcomes). **The analysis indicates that uptake of participatory instruments in this policy stage is constrained, with very limited number of instruments being identified.** As mentioned above, an explanation can be the recent adoption of some of the reviewed policy measures. **Most prominent mechanism is in the form of monitoring committees** (Groningen; Lusatia; Rhenish District), representing formal participatory structures focused on monitoring how policy measures have been operating during their life cycle. **Only in one case (in Groningen), a participatory structure - annual stakeholder meeting - has been used as a platform to collect evidence that feeds into the evaluation process.** This participatory arena has been limited to selected individuals, who concretely benefit from the policy initiative.

Table 19: Uptake and role of participatory processes across sages of policy/decision making.

| Stage  | Role of participatory process                          | Case study region  | Policy measure   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Stage 1: Issue identification and policy formulation<br>(closer to issue identification) | collect <i>targeted</i> knowledge; expertise, evidence | Katowicki coal region; Belchatow area of transition; Stara Zagora; Norrbotten; Gotland, Lusatia, Rhenish district, | RDS; SA (Katowicki coal region)<br>SA (Belchatow are of transition)<br>ITDS (Stara Zagora)<br>RDS; CSP; ECS (Norrbotten & Gotland)<br>StStG; RDS (Lusatia) |

<sup>85</sup> It shall also be noted that desk research has limitations and may have revealed partial information. The analysis of this report will be further supplemented with interviews and focus groups at the next stage of the project.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | Identify public needs and gather public ideas how to tackle problems  | Lusatia; Groningen; Gotland   | RDS (Lusatia); Regio Deal; Toukomst (Groningen) Comprehensive Strategic Plan (Gotland)  |
| Stage 1: Issue identification and policy formulation (closer to policy formulation) | supplement the analysis of the policy issue or enhance quality of the policy by drawing on multidisciplinary expertise                            | Lusatia; Rhenish District; Katowicki coal region; Belchatow area of transition Stara Zagora   | Lusatia Programme 2038/Development Strategy; TJTP (Lusatia) JTF OP; WSP (Rhenish District) RDS; TJTP; SA (Katowicki region; Belchatow area of transition) NIS3; TJTP (Stara Zagora) |
|   | bring in comments or suggestions for changes to draft policy documents via digital platforms and/or in-person meetings                            | Comment periods/consultations across all regions and majority of measures                     |   |
|   | collaboratively draft a policy/legislation  | Katowicki region; Belchatow area of transition; Lusatia                                       | Social Agreements (in the two Polish cases) Lusatia Development Strategy  |
|   | engage institutional stakeholders in developing projects  | Katowicki region  | TJTP  |
|   | create space for citizens to collaboratively design projects  | Groningen   | Toukomst  |
|   |   |   |   |
| Stage 2: Decision-making  | collectively decide on strategic priorities and measures for transition   | Katowicki region; Belchatow area of transition, Lusatia                                       | Social Agreements (in the two Polish cases) Lusatia Dev Strategy  |
|   | collectively decide on concrete actions and projects to be implemented  | Groningen; Lusatia, Zagora  | Toukomst (Groningen) STARK funding instrument under StStG (Lusatia;) Integrated Territorial Development Strategy at NUTS2 (Stara Zagora)  |
| Stage 3: Implementation   | engage citizens/stakeholders in the design of projects  | Groningen; Stara Zagora   | TJTP (Groningen); Integrated Territorial Development Strategy at NUTS2 (Stara Zagora)   |
|   | coordinate implementation with different stakeholders / facilitate consistency with (different) priorities / create synergies with other measures | Groningen; Katowicki region; Belchatow area of transition, Gotland; Lusatia; Rhenish District | RDS; TJTP (two Polish cases) Regio Deal; TJTP (Groningen) TJTP/JTF (Lusatia; Rhenish District)  |
| Stage 4: Monitoring and Evaluation  | monitor the implementation process against set objectives and feed into evaluation process  | Lusatia; Rhenish District Groningen   | Groningen (Region Deal) TJTP/JTF (Lusatia; Rhenish District)  |

*Box 23: Participation across stages of the policy making process - key issues.*

**Participatory mechanisms are particularly evident at the initial stages of policy making**, supporting the process of collecting evidence, facts and knowledge to identify key challenges and priorities. Most of the participatory mechanisms undertaken at this stage target sectoral knowledge, via organised interests, rather than broader public knowledge, including, for instance lived experiences, public's needs or fears. This is more evident in certain case studies, while in others the picture is more mixed.

Participatory instruments utilised at the stage of policy formulation exhibit different purposes. Some aim to gauge opinion on what seems to have largely been decided on. Others appear to provide opportunities to discuss and debate alternative suggestions and ideas among representatives of different interests. Some of these mechanisms are organised around concrete themes that have been formulated in initial drafts and presented as the headings of one or more discussion 'threads. While such an approach allows for more iterative discussions, it also represents a risk of fragmentation, if participants attend solely to their 'piece' of the overall problem. **In limited cases, participatory mechanisms appear to pursue the collective intelligence to co-create solutions, and this is even more evident when it comes to solutions to broad public challenges**, triggered by the transition processes.

**Participation in decision-making processes - be that on the general measure or within the associated to it sub-programmes and projects – is more limited.** Setting aside, participatory processes that mostly involve signing off on the measure, identified **participation in decision-making concerns either the goals and provisions of strategic frameworks or the concrete solutions and investments to be supported under devised implementation programmes.** It is the partnership-based participatory processes that are particularly evident in this stage of the policy cycle. However, it becomes apparent that even this type of participatory mechanisms may not offer completely binding decision-making and final approval by a governmental body is necessitated in some cases.

**At the implementation stage, participatory mechanisms aim predominantly to ensure/improve effectiveness**, via coordination or exchange structures involving state and nonstate actors, potentially across different levels. The extent to which these mechanisms are inclusive can be questionable as they seem prone to reproduce structures set at the policy formulation stage (where the latter may as well not be inclusive). **Very limited are the cases where citizens are involved in participatory processes aiming to deploy collectively concrete solutions (projects).** These processes are potentially crucial for involving different social groups, and consequently, implementing actions suited to different social contexts.

**Participatory instruments in policy monitoring and evaluation are rarely used. This indicates missed opportunity to learn from different groups** about, for instance, unintended policy effects, unfair distribution of costs and benefits across social groups, and consequently inform needs for policy adaptation.

## 6.3. Identifying communities and their involvement in participatory processes

**A fundamental issue in assessing participatory processes in sustainability transition policies is the extent to which they include diverse groups, which are affected in different way and extent, and reach out to marginalised constituencies in particular.** A common

criticism of participatory processes in public policy is that they tend to involve established interests, experienced partners and the ‘usual suspects’ rather than those who struggle to have their voice heard in public arenas. To set the basis for any insights into the types of relevant communities that may be excluded from participatory processes in sustainability transition policies, quantitative data can shed light on the presence and ‘weight’ of different communities in the DUST case study regions (see Table 20). It shall be noted, however, that data are not always available for certain groups (e.g. for Sami community in Sweden) or at the scale of the case study region (e.g. at the functional regional scale in Germany and at NUTS3 level in Poland). The list of ‘communities’ in the table is also not exhaustive but rather focuses on those where data could be identified across case studies.

Table 20: Total population in case study areas and percentage ratio of different communities

| Communities   | Silesia Voivodship                                  | Lodzkie Voivodeship   | Groningen  | Stara Zagora | Norrbottn               | Gotland                             | Lusatia district                                   | Rhenish District   |
|---|---|---|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Total population  | 4.4m of which 730,000 live in Katowicki coal region | 2.4m of which 515,000 live in Belchatow area of transition                                | 596,000  | 307,140      | 249,404                 | 61 173 (2022)                       | c. 600,000 (2018)                                  | 2,449,000 (2018)   |
| Immigrant population <sup>86</sup>  | about 4.5% of Ukrainian emigrants                   | c. 4.2%-6.3% of Ukrainian emigrants   | 17% <sup>87</sup>  | n/a          | 12.4%                   | 7.9% women and 8.8% men             | 4.1% (2016)  |  |
| Working population in mining activity or other carbon intensive industry that is being phased out | 10% (% share out of population in Katowicki region) | 1% (mining and conventional energy sectors) (% share out of population in Belchatow area) | 0.3% (jobs in the company exploiting the Groningen gas fields (NAM)) | c. 5%        | 1.4% in mining industry | 16.2% in the whole industry segment | 2.1% of employed population <sup>88</sup>          | 9,000 direct jobs from lignite production <sup>89</sup>    |
| Working population in supporting sectors to the sector above                                      | rough estimations: b/w 2.3 -9.1%                    |   | Between 1.2%-3.4% <sup>90</sup>                                      | c. 5%        |                         |                                     | 1.24% of employed population (4,900) <sup>91</sup> | 15,000 indirect jobs from lignite production <sup>92</sup> |

<sup>86</sup> This can refer to foreign born/ foreign born parents or without citizenship of the country.

<sup>87</sup> In 2022 17% of the inhabitants of the province of Groningen had at least one parent who was not born in the Netherlands.

<sup>88</sup> Country Report Germany 2020 (2020). European Commission. Annex D: Investment Guidance on Just Transition Fund 2021-2027 for Germany (p.77).

<sup>89</sup> Wirtschafts - und Strukturprogramm 1.1 für das Rheinische Zukunftsrevier (p.180).

<sup>90</sup> Different estimations exist in the TJTP and other sources.

<sup>91</sup> This is the percentage of employed population that could be indirectly affected by structural change. Country Report Germany 2020 (2020). European Commission. Annex D: Investment Guidance on Just Transition Fund 2021-2027 for Germany (p.77).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

| Communities   | Silesia Voivodship   | Lodzkie Voivodeship | Groningen             | Stara Zagora                             | Norrbottnen                              | Gotland                                 | Lusatia district                  | Rhenish District             |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Population between the ages of 15 and 24 (youth)                            | 9%                   | 9,3%                | 15.1%                 | 8.4% <sup>93</sup>                       | 10% <sup>94</sup>                        | 10,4 % (2022) <sup>95</sup>             | 8.3% in Brandenburg               | 23,37% (for age group 15-35) |
| Population ≥64  | 20.4%                | 21.6%               | 20.8%                 | 29.9%                                    | 24.9% <sup>96</sup>                      | 26.8%                                   | 28.5% <sup>97</sup>               |                              |
| Female population   | 51,9%                | 52,3%               | 50%                   | 49.3%                                    | 48.8%                                    | 50.2% <sup>98</sup>                     | 51% <sup>99</sup>                 |                              |
| Low-income population/<br>population at risk of poverty or social exclusion | 12.2% <sup>100</sup> | 17% <sup>101</sup>  | 22.9 % <sup>102</sup> | 29.7% men and 37.8% women <sup>103</sup> | 12.9% <sup>104</sup>                     | 15.1% <sup>105</sup>                    | 17% <sup>106</sup> in Brandenburg |                              |
| Indigenous population   | n/a                  | n/a                 | n/a                   | n/a                                      | Sámi population (total number in Sweden) | Sámi population (total number unknown). | n/a                               | n/a                          |

<sup>93</sup> All data are provided for 2022 by the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.regionfakta.com/norrbottnens-lan/befolkning-och-hushall/befolkning/folkmangd-31-december-alder/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.regionfakta.com/gotland-lan/befolkning-och-hushall/befolkning/befolkningsstruktur/>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.regionfakta.com/norrbottnens-lan/befolkning-och-hushall/befolkning/andel-65-ar-och-alldre-av-befolkningen/>

<sup>97</sup> Results of Burgerdialog Zukunftswerkstatt Lusatia – p.5

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.regionfakta.com/gotland-lan/befolkning-och-hushall/befolkning/befolkningsstruktur/>

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>101</sup> Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>102</sup> Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>103</sup> Proportion of the poor relative to the poverty line for the district by sex

<sup>104</sup> [https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START\\_HE\\_HE0110\\_HE0110F/TabVX1DisplnkN/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_HE_HE0110_HE0110F/TabVX1DisplnkN/table/tableViewLayout1/)

<sup>105</sup> [https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START\\_HE\\_HE0110\\_HE0110F/TabVX1DisplnkN/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_HE_HE0110_HE0110F/TabVX1DisplnkN/table/tableViewLayout1/)

<sup>106</sup> Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_PEPS11/default/table?lang=en)



| Communities   | Silesia Voivodship  | Lodzkie Voivodeship  | Groningen   | Stara Zagora                                     | Norrbottn   | Gotland  | Lusatia district                | Rhenish District |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
|   |   |  |   |  | 20,000-40,000) <sup>107</sup>                                   |  |                                 |                  |
| Population part of ethnic minorities                            | n/a   | n/a  | n/a   | Roma population (number unknown)                 | Population of Finnish, Sami & Norwegian origin (number unknown) | Sámi, Tornedalings, Swedish Finns, Roma and Jews (number unknown).   | 7% (Sorbs/Wends) <sup>108</sup> | n/a              |
| Other (specified by each region based on their characteristics) | 20% (percentage out of 1.5 million total members in trade unions in Poland) | 6.6% (percentage out of 1.5 million total members in trade unions in Poland) | 24% between 15 and 74 with low level of education <sup>109</sup><br><br>3.9% unemployed of working age population <sup>110</sup><br><br>14% of households affected by energy poverty <sup>111</sup> | 1.9% unemployed of working age population (2021) |   | 3.2 % unemployed (16-64 years old, 2022, annual average). <sup>112</sup><br><br>36,5% live in a rural area (ca. 34 % is national average). <sup>113</sup><br><br>76 % of the employed in the region (excl. full time students) are union members (2022). | n/a                             | n/a              |

<sup>107</sup> While Sami live throughout Sweden, most live in the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, along the main mountain ranges. <https://sanningskommissionensamer.se/en/about-the-indigenous-sami/#:~:text=Sami%20live%20throughout%20the%20country,in%20the%20Sami%20parliamentary%20election.>

<sup>108</sup> Ludwig Elle: *Territorium, Bevölkerung, demografische Prozesse im deutsch-sorbischen Gebiet*. Projekat Rastko – Lužica; [https://www.rastko.rs/rastko-lu/uvod/lle-territorium\\_ger.html](https://www.rastko.rs/rastko-lu/uvod/lle-territorium_ger.html)

<sup>109</sup> <https://allecijfers.nl/provincie/groningen/>. Level of education is used as a proxy for income levels.

<sup>110</sup> [https://regiodealoostgroningen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/nulmeting-indicatoren-Regio-Deal\\_november-2021.pdf](https://regiodealoostgroningen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/nulmeting-indicatoren-Regio-Deal_november-2021.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> [https://regiodealoostgroningen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/nulmeting-indicatoren-Regio-Deal\\_november-2021.pdf](https://regiodealoostgroningen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/nulmeting-indicatoren-Regio-Deal_november-2021.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.regionfakta.com/gotlandslan/arbete/oppet-arbetslosa/>

<sup>113</sup> <https://kommunsiffror.scb.se/?id1=0980&id2=null>

To assess the extent to which each of these communities has been present or represented at participatory processes this section explores which types of actors (public authorities, private sector; social partners; professional associations; NGOs/civil society organisations; individuals) have been involved in participatory processes across analysed transition policies.

It can be assumed that public authorities target particular types of actors for participation largely on the basis of the type of input that they are interested in obtaining. Different types of actors have different types of knowledge. This includes:

- tacit knowledge based on everyday experience that is possessed by individuals,
- contextual community-based knowledge of social networks/civil society,
- contextual technical or political knowledge belonging to sector professionals and political networks, or
- (scientifically) codified knowledge possessed for instance by experts.<sup>114</sup>

**Desk research on the involvement of different types of actors in sustainable transition measures across DUST case studies has yielded only partial insights as data are not always publicly accessible.** In some cases, more nuanced evidence has been available, distinguishing for instance between NGOs or between small from large companies. In other cases, only broad categorisation could be identified. It is, nevertheless, evident that policy making for sustainability transition takes place through networks of actors, opening it up to different types of knowledge within and across participatory processes (see Table 21). Collected evidence brings out overall strong involvement of multiple levels of government, social partners and professional associations, business representatives, civil society organisations and academia, across majority of the policy measures. Experts, who have previously played a lead role in policy making, are still seen to dominate certain participatory processes, however that is balanced with other mechanisms bringing in a mix of contextual political, technical and community-based knowledge, as well as tacit knowledge. In some cases, these networks are thicker and involve larger diversity of players. This is evident in the German case studies where a proliferation of professional associations and networks of citizens associations get involved in participatory mechanisms.

**While various sources and types of knowledge are being recognized, the weight given to them (and to the actors that possess it) varies within and across measures.** In the majority of participatory processes, involved actors represent organised interest and their selection has been based upon a recognised capacity (role) of ‘stakeholders’ (interested or affected party incl. governmental or non-governmental institutions and organisations, who can be also potential beneficiaries<sup>115</sup>). Within this wide framework, some participatory measures have incorporated selection criteria in their recruitment processes to ensure the participation of particular types of actors and/or representatives of social groups with certain characteristics. Formal participatory mechanisms, organised in the framework of EU Cohesion policy programmes, in particular, need to comply with EU partnership and multi-level governance principles set in regulations. Such criteria require the involvement of diverse set of partners – economic and social, research/universities, organisations representing civil society, which may include different spheres such as environmental, social inclusion, fundamental rights, rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality and non-discrimination. Across DUST case study partners, the application of these criteria can be observed in setting up committee-like structures associated with JTF or regional development programmes. The calls for participation in such structures are

<sup>114</sup> Baud, I. S. A., Pfeffer, K., Sydenstricker, J., & Scott, D. (2011). Developing participatory ‘spatial’ knowledge models in metropolitan governance networks for sustainable development. *Literature Review. Bonn: EADI, Change2Sustain.*

<sup>115</sup> José, S. R. (2021). Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions. Catching up the deliberative wave

usually disseminated via invitations but are also announced publicly on the webpages of the responsible authorities and on social media. Domestic requirements are also enforced, albeit in more limited cases. For instance, Swedish law requires formal policy measures to pay special attention to certain cross-cutting dimensions such as rights of children, gender equality and urban-rural linkages.

**It is worthwhile to note that while opening up the political sphere to stakeholders is a recognised way to ensure a representation of key actors from different domains, these extended participatory configurations may still be characterised by uneven representation of social groups.**<sup>116</sup> DUST research demonstrates that in some cases, participation in policies concerned with laying out the strategic decisions for coal phase-out, labour market and energy transition, is still dominated by the input of experts and sector professionals. Both in the Polish (Social Agreements) and the Bulgarian (JTTP) case studies a strong role of trade unions (representing coal mine workers), private sector and experts, can be observed, with weaker or no participation of actors representing the citizens or communities such as civil society organisations/NGOs. Further to that, the involvement of professional associations along trade unions under the category of social partners appears rather weak in these cases. In Sweden, a risk has also been recognised of the JTTP planning process to be captured by the private interest<sup>117</sup>, while research under DUST highlights the stronger emphasis on involving sectoral NGOs (e.g. environmental, energy-related). Sectoral NGOs are, in fact, the most prominent type of NGOs that have been recognised in case study research to engage in policy measures across case studies. On the contrary, presence of civil society organisations/NGOs focused on ethnic minorities and gender equality are overall the least evident. In the case studies where more detailed information on CSOs/NGOs involvement has been available, it is also noticeable that involved CSOs/NGOs represent differing social groups across policy measures. This can be observed, for instance, in Lusatia, where there has been much stronger attention to engaging with NGOs representing ethnic groups and youth (via dedicated participatory mechanisms) in the regional development strategy compared to the JTF.

**There could be several reasons why discussed participatory mechanisms are characterised by uneven representation of social groups.** One of the critical questions when opening up policy making to actors on the basis of their role as ‘stakeholders’ or ‘beneficiaries’ is how the policy decides on who the most affected and eligible sectors and communities for its support are. This question is found problematic in the Regulation for the JTF, for instance. Literature points to a particular tension in the goal of ‘leaving no one behind’ stemming from the imbalance of targeting actors on the basis of being directly affected by the scope of the policy (coal and energy intensive industries and their employees) and addressing the existing regional characteristics and socio-economic statuses (i.e. groups that are already in marginalised position).<sup>118</sup> Another factor for uneven representation, especially under participatory structures based on voluntary applications, is that they may predominantly attract the already ‘privileged’ organisations, which proactively search and express their voice via different channels. Finally, it should be recognised that the variety and capacity of organised civil society and professional associations vary across regions, while strong capacities are particularly necessary in context where existing or new mechanisms for participation are prone to be captured by entrenched interests.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> José, S. R. (2021). op.cit.

<sup>117</sup> See, for instance, Moodie, J., Tapia, C., Löfving, L., Gassen, N. S., & Cedergren, E. (2021). Towards a territorially just climate transition—Assessing the Swedish EU territorial just transition plan development process. *Sustainability*, 13(13), 7505.

<sup>118</sup> Sarkki, S., Ludvig, A., Nijnik, M., & Kopiy, S. (2022). Embracing policy paradoxes: EU’s Just Transition Fund and the aim “to leave no one behind”. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 22(4), 761-792.

<sup>119</sup> Gaventa, J. (2006). op cit.

Table 21: Type of actors and involvement in place-based policies. Note that in case (some) participatory mechanisms did not indicate full data about type of NGOs or business partners, participation is marked for general actor type (NGO / business partners). Where data were available then the latter are marked in the table.<sup>120</sup>

| Type of Actors                              | Norrbotten (SE) |     |      | Gotland (SE) |          |          |      | Groningen (NL) |    |      | Belchatow Area (PL) |    |      | Katowicki region (PL) |    |      | Laustiz (DE) |    |     |      | Rhenish Lignite (DE) |      |     |      | Stara Zagora (BG) |      |      |      |   |
|---|-----------------|-----|------|--------------|----------|----------|------|----------------|----|------|---------------------|----|------|-----------------------|----|------|--------------|----|-----|------|----------------------|------|-----|------|-------------------|------|------|------|---|
| Measure                                     | ECS             | RDS | TJTP | ECS          | CSP 2040 | RDS 2040 | TJTP | NPG            | RD | TJTP | RDS                 | SA | TJTP | RDS                   | SA | TJTP | StStG        | LP | RDS | TJTP | StStG                | WS P | JTF | TJTP | IDP               | ITDS | NIS3 | TJTP |   |
| Governments                                 |                 |     |      |              |          |          |      |                |    |      |                     |    |      |                       |    |      |              |    |     |      |                      |      |     |      |                   |      |      |      |   |
| - National level                            |                 |     | X    | X            | X        | X        | X    |                |    | X    |                     | X  |      |                       | X  |      |              |    |     |      |                      |      |     |      |                   |      | X    | X    |   |
| - Regional level <sup>121</sup>             | X               | X   | X    | X            | X        | X        | X    |                | X  | X    | X                   | X  | X    | X                     | X  | X    | X            | X  | X   | X    | X                    | X    |     | X    |                   | X    | X    | X    | X |
| - Local level                               | X               | X   |      |              | X        | X        |      |                | X  | X    | X                   |    | X    | X                     | X  | X    |              | X  | X   |      | X                    |      |     |      | X                 | X    | X    | X    |   |
| Social partners & professional associations | X               | X   | X    |              | X        |          | X    | X              | X  |      | X                   | X  | X    | X                     | X  | X    | X            | X  |     | X    |                      |      |     | X    | X                 | X    | X    | X    |   |
| Academia / Scientific community             | X               |     | X    | X            | X        |          | X    |                |    | X    | X                   | X  | X    | X                     | X  | X    | X            | X  | X   | X    | X                    |      |     | X    | X                 | X    | X    | X    |   |
| Business partners                           | X               |     | X    | X            | X        |          | X    |                |    |      |                     | X  |      |                       | X  |      | X            |    | X   |      | X                    |      |     | X    | X                 |      |      |      |   |
| - Large companies                           |                 |     |      |              |          |          |      |                |    | X    | X                   |    | X    | X                     |    | X    |              |    |     |      | X                    |      |     |      |                   | X    | X    | X    | X |
| - SMEs                                      |                 |     |      |              |          |          |      |                | X  | X    | X                   |    | X    | X                     |    | X    |              |    |     | X    |                      |      |     |      |                   | X    | X    | X    | X |
| NGOs  | X               | X   | X    |              |          | X        | X    |                | X  | X    |                     |    |      |                       |    |      |              |    |     |      | X                    |      |     |      |                   | X    | X    | X    | X |
| - Gender equality                           |                 |     |      |              |          |          |      |                |    |      |                     |    |      |                       |    |      | X            |    |     | X    |                      |      |     | X    |                   |      |      |      |   |
| - Youth                                     |                 | X   |      |              | X        | X        |      |                |    | X    |                     |    |      |                       |    |      | X            | X  | X   | X    |                      |      |     |      |                   |      |      |      |   |
| - Sectoral (environment; energy; etc.)      |                 |     |      | X            | X        |          |      |                |    | X    | X                   |    | X    |                       |    | X    | X            | X  |     | X    | X                    |      |     | X    | X                 |      |      | X    |   |
| - (Local) development                       |                 |     |      | X            |          |          |      |                |    |      |                     |    |      |                       |    |      |              |    |     | X    |                      |      | X   |      |                   |      |      | X    |   |
| - Ethnic groups                             |                 |     |      |              |          |          | X    |                |    |      |                     |    |      |                       |    |      |              | X  | X   |      |                      |      |     |      |                   |      |      |      |   |
| - Social (poverty, inclusion, etc.)         |                 |     |      |              | X        |          |      |                |    | X    | X                   |    | X    |                       |    | X    | X            |    | X   | X    |                      |      | X   | X    |                   |      |      |      |   |
| Individual citizens                         | X               | X   |      |              | X        | X        |      | X              | X  |      | X                   |    | X    | X                     |    | X    |              |    | X   |      |                      | X    |     |      | X                 | X    | X    | X    |   |

<sup>120</sup> Note that the table aims to summarise data that have been collected via case studies' desk research. Thus, it may not include all potentially relevant communities falling under each type of stakeholder. This is evident, for instance, under the NGOs stakeholder type.

<sup>121</sup> Regional level refers to State level in Germany, 'Oblast' level in Bulgaria (NUTS3) and 'Voivodship' level in Poland (NUTS2)

**While policy making in DUST case studies has been increasingly opening up to a network of actors representing different organised interest, direct involvement of citizens is a more recent and yet not as widespread approach.** In Sweden, for instance, the mechanisms that involve directly citizens are clearly distinguished (under the overarching title *medborgardialog* (citizen dialogue) from processes that target formal and non-formal organisations and interest groups (known as *samverkan* (cooperation)). Opening up the political sphere to direct citizen participation has been a recent process across Sweden. *Samverkan* is the dominating mechanism to ensure public participation in the Swedish highly institutionalised representative democracy system. *Medborgardialog* has been only formally introduced in the last 15 years in response, in part, to declining membership in political parties, lower voter turnout and diminished trust in politicians.

**Citizens can be brought into the participatory sphere along with other stakeholders representing organised interest or be the sole target of the participatory process** (referred hereafter as public participation) (see Table 22). Mechanisms in the first configuration are predominantly in the form of comment periods. Such processes are usually required by law and are perceived to have limited effectiveness in terms of impact over policy making, which can explain why studies find them unable to incorporate a broad spectrum of the public.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, DUST case studies observed that such mechanisms rarely collected citizen inputs. One difference is in Gotland where an online interactive GIS map was used to collect input which made it potentially more attractive to participate). It is also worth highlighting that **participatory mechanisms involving both organisations/experts and citizens may suffer from imbalanced power dynamics, which are played out through the use of technical language.** Such imbalance becomes especially experienced in processes that aim at interaction and collaboration between participants (i.e. processes with medium or high depth of participation). This can be one reason why case studies have observed limited participation of individual citizens in participatory mechanisms open to such mixed composition (e.g. in the public hearing organised in the development of the TJTP in the Katowice case study). Empirical research has, indeed, noted that individuals and institutions/organisations may not require the same conditions to participate (e.g. in terms of time, information and resources).<sup>123</sup>

**Public participation mechanisms involving citizens have been undertaken to a limited extent across DUST cases but are noted in Groningen, Lusatia, the Rhenish district and Gotland.** While in Groningen these occurred in the process of shaping and implementing residential or municipal initiatives, in Lusatia this has taken place in the process of developing strategy-oriented regional measures. In the Rhenish district, a public participation instrument has been involved in assessing the planning of formal participatory mechanisms. These mechanisms have often made use of selection criteria to ensure a representative sample. The Citizen Dialogue in Lusatia was organised in collaboration with the 235 municipalities in the region with objective to invite around 5,000 people directly to events via a weighted random selection along the lines of the census of the two federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony. In the case of the *Toukomst* citizen panel, quotas by age, gender, and postal code have been set. This random sample has been complimented with members selected on the basis of their professional occupation (education, health, police, etc.).<sup>124</sup> Achieving desired sample size, however, can be problematic, as in the Lusatia case, where the low response rate led to opening up participation to anyone interested via additional calls in the press and on social media. Sustaining citizens' interest over consecutive stages of a participatory process can also be challenging, as evidenced by *Toukomst* in Groningen.

<sup>122</sup> Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning theory & practice*, 5(4), 419-436.

<sup>123</sup> José, S. R. (2021). op.cit.

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.toukomst.nl/toukomstpanel/>

Table 22: Types of participants across participatory mechanisms in case study regions

| Case study region  | Participants include only individual citizens.   |
|--|--|
| Groningen  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Workshops/Townhall meetings/Mobile Coffee Cart. Contribute to the area-oriented approach, deployed under the Regio Deal</li> <li>(2) Actions for generation of project ideas; budling of projects; pre-selection and evaluation of projects. Contribute to the <i>Toukomst</i> initiative deployed under the National Programme Groningen</li> <li>(3) Collection of citizen ideas via questionnaire and physical conversations. Contributes to local (sub-)programmes deployed under the National Programme Groningen</li> </ul> |
| Lusatia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Citizen dialogue (<i>Bürgerdialog</i>) as part of the Project 'Workshop for Future Lusatia'. Contributes to the Lusatia Programme 2038 and Lusatia Development Strategy 2050;</li> <li>(2) Future Bus (<i>Zukunftsbus</i>). Contributes to Lusatia Regional Development Strategy 2050;</li> <li>(3) Conversations 'Lusatian treasures'. Contributes to Lusatia Development Strategy 2050.</li> </ul>  |
| Rhenish district   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Citizens' vision workshop. Contributes to StStG</li> <li>(2) Online consultation 'Future through participation'. Contributes to WSP</li> <li>(3) Workshops. Contribute to WSP</li> <li>(4) Track group (<i>Spurgruppe</i>) Contributes to WSP</li> <li>(5) Mining area Tours (<i>Revier-Tour</i>). Contribute to WSP</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Participants include both individual citizens and governmental and non-governmental organisations</b> |  |
| Gotland  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Public consultation via participatory GIS mapping and consultation meetings. Contribute to the Comprehensive Strategic Plan 2040 &amp; Regional Development Strategy 2040 (<i>ratio between citizens-organised interest unknown</i>)</li> <li>(2) Comment period and Evening meetings. Contribute to the Regional Development Strategy 2040 (<i>ratio between citizens-organised interest unknown</i>)</li> </ul>   |
| Norrbotten   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Comment period. Contributes to the Regional Development Strategy &amp; Energy and Climate Strategy (<i>with majority of organised interest</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| Rhenish District   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Consultation questionnaire. Contributes to the ERDF-JTF OP (3.4 % responses from individual citizens)</li> </ul>  |
| Belchatow area of transition   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Comment period &amp; Information meetings. Contribute to the Regional Development Strategy (<i>citizens unlikely to participate</i>)</li> <li>(2) Comment period &amp; Information meetings. Contribute to the TJTP (<i>citizens unlikely to participate</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| Katowicki region   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Comment period &amp; Information meetings. Contribute to the Regional Development Strategy (<i>citizens unlikely to participate</i>)</li> <li>(2) Comment period, Information meetings, Public hearing. Contribute to the TJTP (<i>citizens unlikely to participate</i>)</li> </ul>   |
| Stara Zagora   | Stara Zagora   |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | (1) Comment periods. Contribute to all measures ( <i>citizens unlikely to participate</i> )   |
| <b>Participants include stakeholders representing governmental and non-governmental organisations or experts</b> |   |
| Groningen  | (1) All instruments under TJTP/Dutch JTF OP<br>(2) Instruments under the Regio Deal <u>except</u> the ones under the area-oriented approach   |
| Gotland  | (1) All instruments under Energy and Climate Strategy<br>(2) All instruments under the TJTP   |
| Norrbottnen  | (1) Instruments under Energy and Climate Strategy & Regional Development Strategy except comment periods<br>(2) All instruments under the TJTP ( <i>partial information available</i> )   |
| Lusatia  | (1) All instruments under TJTP/ JTF OP<br>(2) All instruments under StStG<br>(4) Expert studies, roundtable discussions and working meetings as part of the Project 'Workshop for Future Lusatia'. Contribute to the Lusatia Programme 2038 and Lusatia Development Strategy 2050;<br>(5) Writing workshops. Contribute to Lusatia Development Strategy 2050. |
| Rhenish District   | (1) All instruments under TJTP/ ERDF-JTF OP <u>except</u> comment period on ERDF-JTF OP<br>(2) All instruments under StStG <u>except</u> the Citizens 'vision workshop' <sup>125</sup>  |
| Belchatow area of transition   | (1) Information meetings and Steering Committee. Contribute to the Regional Development Strategy<br>(2) Steering Committee. Contributes to the TJTP<br>(3) All instruments under the Social Agreement   |
| Katowicki region   | (1) Questionnaire, Interviews, Steering Committee. Contribute to the Regional Development Strategy<br>(2) Workshops, Steering Committee. Contribute to the TJTP<br>(3) All instruments under the Social Agreement   |
| Stara Zagora   | (1) All instruments <u>except</u> comment periods undertaken under all assessed policy measures.  |

**One of the most substantial prerequisites to involve particularly marginalised and disengaged citizens/communities in public participation processes is building prior awareness.**<sup>126</sup> Such actions can support citizens to form a 'sense of their own right to claim rights' and express their voice, or to promote new forms of citizenship built within social movements and civil society organisations.<sup>127</sup> Across DUST case studies, such efforts are evident in some of the participatory processes targeted at citizens (see Table 23). The Citizen Dialogue in Lusatia, for instance, built on an initial 'activation' phase. Information about the dialogue and other participatory activities targeted at citizens under the project 'Workshop for Future Lusatia' was provided at over 50 information stands throughout the region. The aim was to sensitise people to the process and to arouse interest in taking part in the dialogue. Further

<sup>125</sup> It needs to be noted that while regional thematic groups under StStG invited participants according to expertise in certain thematic fields, they were not intended to represent specific organised interest.

<sup>126</sup> Baud, I. S. A., Pfeffer, K., Sydenstricker, J., & Scott, D. (2011). op.cit.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

efforts have been invested in strengthening civil society with the foundation of the Lusatian Citizens Region as a civil society transformation network.

Other approaches to enhance the outreach of participatory processes to specific groups, included engaging a representative of that group in the committees carrying out the participatory process. In Lusatia, representatives of the ethnic minority of Sorbs/ Wends have been included in the committee steering the 'Workshop of Future Lusatia', while in in Gotland, a seat in the steering committee of the Energy Centre is devoted to a citizen, which aims to bring the communication efforts closer to the broad public.

*Table 23: Methods to stimulate participation at participatory processes in DUST case studies.*

| Method   | Description  |
|--|--|
| Physical visits 'Toukomsttour' under the NP Groningen                  | A green Volkswagen van visited different places in the province to collect ideas and/or persuade people to think about ideas and submit them on the available online platform. Young people were one of the target groups with visits to e.g. youth centres, youth councils, a festival and a basketball club. There was also particular attention to the elderly, for example, by visiting the weekly market.   |
| Playful conversations as part of 'Toukomsttour' under the NP Groningen | A game developed for secondary school students promoted a conversation about the future of the province of Groningen. Through a series of scenario cards, the students determined the future of a fictional village. The format of the game aimed to challenge them to think about the future of Groningen and their own future: what consequences will the energy transition have for my environment; will there be enough work for me in the province; etc. The <i>Toukomsttour</i> visited a number of secondary schools with this game.  |
| Information stands, Lusatia Development Strategy                       | The citizens' dialogue began with a high-profile activation phase in June 2019. Information about the whole project 'Workshop for future Lusatia', including the citizen dialogue, and about structural change in general was provided at over 50 information stands throughout Lusatia. The aim was to talk to people, to sensitize them to the process and to arouse interest in taking part in the citizen dialogue. Along the activation phase, preparation for the dialogue phase began, the implementation of which was scheduled for autumn 2019. This took place in collaboration with the 235 municipalities in the region. |

*Box 24: Identifying participating communities and stakeholders - key issues*

Different types of actors and interests have been involved in sustainability transition measures across case studies, covering the domains of public authorities at different levels, private sector, social partners, academia and civil society.

**Experts and codified knowledge still play a key role in policy making and dominate certain participatory processes.** Their dominant role is, however, balanced with other mechanisms that bring in a mix of more contextual technical and community-based knowledge. The extent to which the latter interacts with the former and the extent to which the different types of knowledge have the same weight in policy-making remains an open question at this stage of the research and shall be further investigated.

**While criteria have been set to open up policy making and make it more representative, this may not be sufficient to ensure an even representation of relevant social groups.** Sustainability transition measures in some case studies are still dominated by narrow set of actor groups with weak or no involvement of civil society organisations or citizens.

There are different factors that may impact the inclusivity of participatory processes. One of the critical questions when opening up policy making to actors on the basis of their role as

‘stakeholders’ or ‘beneficiaries’ is how the policy decides on who the most affected and eligible sectors and communities for its support are. These initial definitions and presumptions in the policy formulation stage (particularly under TJTPs) appear to have led to the exclusion of certain social groups across DUST case studies.

**The diversity and capacity of organised civil society and professional associations, which can represent the interests of diverse social groups in the sustainability transition, vary across regions.** More dense networks, and presumably larger capacities, are evident in some cases (the German and Dutch regions). **Capacities of civil society seem to be lower where they are particularly necessary - in contexts where existing or new mechanisms for participation are prone to be captured by entrenched interests.**

**Sectoral NGOs (environment, energy, tourism etc.) are the most prominent type of NGOs** that have been recognised in case study research to engage in policy measures. On the contrary, **presence of civil society organisations/NGOs focused on ethnic minorities and gender equality are overall the least evident.**

**Public participation mechanisms (targeting citizens) have been undertaken to a limited extent.** In the cases where such mechanisms are applied, this is under domestic regional policy or contractual agreement measures rather than under Cohesion Policy/TJTP. It can be assumed that the complete absence of such mechanisms in some of the case studies (Polish and Bulgarian) indicate a lack of overall culture and/or capacity of how (and why) to engage citizens in policy more generally, and/or in contested fields such as sustainability transition policies.

## 7. Evaluation of the outcome of participation

Participation can be seen as a means in policy development, implementation or evaluation but also as an end on its own. In this line, its outcomes can be tangible (e.g. formulation of policies or actions are co-produced) or intangible (e.g. creating novel or stronger relationships or practices, improving policy legitimacy, etc.).<sup>128</sup> Turning first to tangible outcomes, these can be challenging to measure as the form of commitment in terms of how collected input is used in policy measures may be vaguely defined. Assessing tangible outcomes in participatory processes with lower depth of participation across DUST case studies has been generally difficult as they lack clear linkages between collected opinions and views and the choices made eventually in policy formulation or implementation. Moreover, due to the limited interaction they offer, they leave open a critical question as to what extent knowledge brought in by different actors has been recognised and reflected equally in policy thinking. In contrast, participatory processes with higher level of interaction and shared ownership classified in this report as dialogue and partnership have offered the opportunity of different sources of knowledge – community, technical, political and scientific – to ‘interact’ with each other. Thus, it can be assumed that these participatory mechanisms have been more successful, albeit to a different degree, in providing power to affected social groups to bring their visions forward and to create shared knowledge. Partnership-based participatory processes are most explicit as to how the results of the process link to the policy measure, not least because they have been part of the stage of decision-making.

**While assessing tangible outcomes can be challenging, a critical factor is the level of political commitment to the participatory process.** DUST case study research identifies different degree of political commitment across policy measures and participatory processes. This has been linked to the level of decision making, recognising that policies at municipal level (e.g. in Stara Zagora) evidence more explicit commitment to the input provided in participatory processes. Another factor that impacts the political commitment is how formal the process has been, indicating lower commitment to mechanisms seen as ‘additional’ to or driven from outside of the institutionalised state-driven participatory processes (e.g. in Stara Zagora and Katowice under TJTP).

Intangible outcomes are not clearly evident, not least due to the fact that the majority of participatory mechanisms analysed have been deployed more recently. **Nevertheless, it can be assumed that more structured participatory mechanisms that offer more than ‘one-off’ engagement have provided larger opportunity to enhance participatory culture.** At the same time, the extent to which the latter has been boosted in reality depends on whether participatory processes built on new or existing networks and partnerships. Some case studies recognise that new and more diverse configurations have been established (e.g. under the TJTP in Lusatia) while others observe that it has been mostly existing networks of actors that have been brought together (e.g. Katowicki region and Belchatow area)

**Participatory processes, especially those that have offered more co-creative and power-sharing approaches, have also contributed to a more explicit recognition of the importance**

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<sup>128</sup> Hofer, K., & Kaufmann, D. (2022). op.cit.

**of participation in steering transformation processes.** The implication of such recognition in Lusatia, following the ‘Workshop for Future Lusatia’ is the allocation of additional funds for similar activities such as the support to another instrument mentioned in the report - Burgerregion Lusatia – a platform for civil society organisations promoting participation.

**Another intangible benefit of participatory processes relates to the capacity of public authorities to engage nonstate actors in policy.** By evaluating performed participatory processes public authorities can collect participants’ views on the process and draw lessons about how the design of the instrument can be improved to overcome participatory barriers or how suitable the participatory instrument is to the purpose sought. DUST case study desk research indicates that participatory instruments rarely organise feedback sessions to systematically collect participants views. One example is the workshops organised as part of the WSP in the Rhenish District where Mentimeter was used at the end to collect feedback from participants and recommendations for improving future participatory activities. Similarly, commissioning studies to evaluate participatory instruments seem rather uncommon. One exception is the Toukomst’s citizen panel in Groningen, where an evaluation report has been prepared uncovering participants’ views on different characteristics of the process. The evaluation observes that the shared responsibility in the process stimulated participants’ commitment to it. This was facilitated by mutual trust between them. Another aspect related to the selection process. Participants perceived positively the set conditions of the selection to ensure a representative group. Potential barriers appear to relate to the substantive knowledge required; commitment of time and effort into the process; unease related to ensuring impartiality and perceived legitimacy; trust that decisions of the participatory process will be translated into policy action. The report also highlights the need for follow-up with participants as a way to increase their confidence that public administration acts upon their input.

## 8. Conclusions

This report has sought to assess if and how place-based measures are being used to help plan and implement sustainability transitions through facilitating the active, inclusive participation of citizens and communities, particularly structurally marginalised parts of society. It is based on two related assertions that are prominent in contemporary academic and practitioner discourses. The first is that, **in order to be effective, initiatives supporting sustainability transition must involve participation from communities with a direct stake in their design, implementation and results**. This assertion has different rationales:

- **instrumental** - participation improves the legitimacy of the decision-making process on transition measures, providing a social mandate and building trust between communities and public institutions);
- **substantive** - participation leads to better and fairer transition measures, increasing the breadth and quality of information available for policy-makers.
- **normative**: democratic ideals suggest those that are affected by a decision particularly those communities who will be negatively affected by transition should have the opportunity to influence it, thereby strengthening accountability, openness and transparency.

The second assertion is that **place-based sustainable transition measures offer valuable organising principles from the perspective of community participation**. In theory these types of measures can address mismatches between the transition issues being addressed, the institutional boundaries of the public authorities involved, and the communities with a direct stake in sustainable transition.

- They have an **explicit territorial focus** that can include functional (rather than purely administrative) areas, thus acknowledging that there are uneven territorial impacts of transition and that policy responses to it will have spatially differentiated impacts that must be taken into account.
- They include **objectives that apply multiple dimensions to the territory concerned**: economic, social, institutional, environmental with a range of integrated tools (investments, regulations, strategies) that combine support for the public, private and third sectors.
- They have a **multilevel architecture and multiple stakeholder involvement in governance** (so combining a top-down and bottom-up approach), giving upper levels of government the role of setting general framework for transition but with flexibility at local levels to progress according to specific needs and potentials.

**A general conclusion from the DUST research conducted thus far is that a range of place-based measures are being implemented that address transition issues.** Traditionally, measures addressing transition involved the top-down implementation of investments, subsidies and regulatory measures that mainly followed a domain-based or sectoral approach with limited scope for participation in design and implementation at regional or local levels. In contrast, contemporary responses to transition challenges include a range of initiatives that exhibit place-based characteristics. This includes the domains of EU Cohesion policy, national



regional development policies and regional-level strategies, innovation-oriented policies, and spatial planning.

The scope of these characteristics varies according to type of measure, with implications for the use of participatory instruments.

- **Spatial coverage of sustainable transition measures includes a range of scales** (e.g. in a city, a region or a neighbourhood), based on existing regional or local boundaries, functional relationships across territories, specific geographical features or the key objectives of the measure itself. Measures covering regional spaces (i.e. meso-level territories between local and national levels) are prominent. These offer **advantages in terms of opportunities to integrate municipalities in urban centres and regional hinterlands in transition processes that cut across specific locales**. In some cases, regional-level coverage ensures sufficient legal and administrative competences and capacities to support measures. **From the perspective of participation, there are a range of challenges stemming from territorial demarcation of transition measures**: the mapping of deliberative political arenas onto this spatial coverage, the involvement of local communities in the demarcation of these spaces; and, how participatory instruments can ensure the translation or upscaling of transition needs and potentials envisaged at local or micro territorial scales to broader regional or national visions.
- **One of the key features MLG is the scope to delegate and decentralise tasks in sustainable transition measures to regional or local levels and to territorial stakeholders and communities**. For proponents of the place-based concept, the dispersion of delivery responsibilities across levels is more flexible and efficient in responding to transition challenges at various territorial scales. The input of regional and local authorities is incentivised, also integrating inputs from territorial stakeholders and communities. This can be accompanied by new systems, structures and tools that maximise the input from partners and stakeholders. **However, there are differences in how countries apply existing distribution of policy competences and capacities across levels and types of stakeholder**. In centralised MS, national or regional authorities can be reluctant to delegate governance tasks to lower levels. Smaller and/or less experienced actors (both local authorities and other local stakeholders) may lack sufficient capacity, which is one reason why governance tasks may be retained at higher levels.
- **Coordination and communication systems offer arenas for participation but there are challenges of capacity and complexity**. Coordination boards, working groups, partnerships, informal networks, and conferences consisting of members from different and same governmental levels make up the variety of structures that provide coordination of acts toward sustainable transition in the framework of MLG. However, the emergence, forms, and power relations within the coordination schemes vary, and these variations inform local inputs into sustainability transitions. In addition to this, literature points out that an excessive number of committees and discussion groups can make MLG complicated, make lines of accountability opaque and act as a disincentive for participation by stakeholders, especially those with limited capacities.
- **An important argument in the place-based concept is that the quality of sustainable transition measures is improved where they recognise the need to address complex linkages and interactions between different sectoral issues in a given territory**. This

is noticeable, for instance, in the implementation of sectoral measures that aim to combine broader headings of innovation or energy efficiency support with issues of social cohesion and sustainability that specific territories are facing. There are significant challenges in taking this integrative approach in sustainable transition measures. Issues such as sectoral path dependencies, policy mismatches, and inconsistencies, uncertainties or tensions in the distribution of costs and benefits, hamper integrative approaches. Moreover, integrating economic, social and environmental objectives into measures does not ensure that they are targeted and linked in way that can address the imbalances in existing socio-economic status. From the perspective of participation, **integrating different sectors and issues in sustainable transition solutions can be positive and generate co-benefits or synergies by bringing different sectors and partners together across domains. However, the process can give rise to conflicts, demanding trade-offs.** These opportunities and challenges have implications for participatory instruments that seek to draw in different stakeholders from different domains in the design and implementation of measures.

Given this mix of opportunities and challenges presented by place-based transition measures, it is important to assess how participatory processes map across the case studies in practice. One way to address this is to **assess the depth of participation.**

- **Basic consultation processes were widespread cases**, associated with well-established practices (comment periods, meetings, questionnaires and interviews). This represented **the most common but also the most limited form of participation**, particularly from the perspective of citizens and local communities although some **innovative approaches were identified, including the use of digital tools** to improve the reach of consultation and the quality of input received.
- **Participatory processes based on dialogue were also used extensively across case studies.** The dialogue approach has been distinctively deployed under the development of the Territorial Just Transition Plans which operate under Cohesion policy's partnership principle and in measures that involve contractual or 'deal-based' arrangements between partners at different levels. There was significant **variation in terms of the extent of interaction between policy-makers and stakeholders** within them, depending largely on the capacity of participants and the tradition of such mechanisms in the region. Although limited in terms of citizen/stakeholder participation in decision-making, in some cases they have played an important role in revealing preferences and tensions and contributing to the process of finding compromises across societal or sectoral interests.
- **Engagement provides more space for information to be generated from the ground, for more consensual decisions and solutions based on stimulating collaborative/bottom-up action.** Committees have provided arenas for stakeholders and civil society organisations to feed into processes of issue identification, resource allocation and monitoring the progress of initiatives. The monitoring and steering committees associated with Cohesion Policy's partnership principle have been prominent in this, although the scope for strong participation from stakeholders can be limited by different procedural and regulatory constraints. Workshops increase the scope for more intense engagement as they often focus on specific themes and issues and seek to develop practical solutions and measures. A critique of these has been the

focus on participants with technical and sectoral knowledge but there are examples where citizens and communities have been targeted to contribute from their territorial perspectives. Some engagement processes lay specific emphasis on the creation and consolidation of networks and linkages as a means to facilitate long-term engagement between different groups in policies and strategies.

- **Partnership represents the highest degree of participation, including empowerment of numerous stakeholders, co-creation and co-production of outputs for sustainable transition measures between citizens, stakeholders and public authorities but it is limited in the case studies.** This is unsurprising given the relative novelty of these approaches more broadly and the level of capacity, time and resources required of all partners. Nevertheless, important examples can be identified from the cases. Although these differ in terms of form and content, they share some key characteristics. They represent the culmination of a mixture of preceding participatory processes (consultation, dialogue etc.) and they linked the process to tangible outcomes (objectives to be realised in strategies and plans, with associated projects).

Alongside assessments of intensity, **the location or arenas of participatory processes** can also be explored.

- **More active participatory processes are evident in policy measures devised at sub-national levels.** This finding supports some key tenets in the concept of active subsidiarity that advocates a strong role for local and regional authorities as part of decentralised interactions with territorial communities and actors at levels closest to citizens. Policy measures where decision-making is held at the national level evidence limited openness to participatory arenas located at lower tiers of government. More active efforts to engage the sub-regional participatory arenas are made in policy measures devised at the regional level. Place-based policies have promoted the emergence of new participatory arenas around functional areas, bringing together different levels of government. Whether these arenas can play a role of new democratic spaces for participation depends on efforts to promote the identification of local communities with these new participatory arenas. While participation mostly occurs in ‘invited spaces’ via institutionalised participatory processes, spaces for participation are also ‘created’ by nonstate actors on the basis of common concerns or identifications. These are predominantly driven by perception that other (institutionalised) participatory arenas have been more or to expand the participation to specific social groups. These created spaces for participation, however, face challenges to impact policy processes, especially at higher government levels.

Participatory processes in transition initiatives can also be explored across **different stages in their design and delivery**.

- **The research found that participatory mechanisms are particularly evident at the initial stages of policy making,** supporting the process of collecting evidence, facts and knowledge to identify key challenges and priorities. Most of the participatory mechanisms undertaken at this stage target sectoral knowledge, via organised interests, rather than broader public knowledge, including, for instance lived experiences, public’s needs or fears.

- **An important distinction in assessment of participatory instruments utilised at the stage of policy formulation is their purpose in gauging opinion on previously decided issues or on opening up the debate to alternatives.** Another key issue is the thematic focus of these instruments. Frequently, they are organised around specific issues that have been formulated in initial drafts. This allows for more iterative and informed discussions but also represents a risk of fragmentation, if participants attend solely to their ‘piece’ of the overall problem. In limited cases, participatory mechanisms appear to pursue the collective intelligence to co-create solutions, and this is even more evident when it comes to solutions to broad public challenges, triggered by the transition processes.
- **Participation in decision-making processes is more limited** and associated with the partnership-based participatory processes that were only rarely identified across the case studies. Indeed, even this type of participatory mechanisms may not offer completely binding decision-making and final approval by a governmental body is frequently a subsequent stage.
- **At the implementation stage, participatory mechanisms aim predominantly to ensure/improve effectiveness,** through coordination or exchange structures involving state and nonstate actors, potentially across different levels. The extent to which these mechanisms are inclusive can be questionable as they seem prone to reproduce structures set at the policy formulation stage (where the latter may as well not be inclusive).
- **Instances where citizens are involved in participatory processes aiming to deploy collective decisions on resource allocation (to projects) are very limited.** These processes are potentially crucial for involving different social groups, and consequently, implementing actions suited to different social contexts.
- **Participatory instruments in policy monitoring and evaluation are rarely used. This is a missed opportunity to learn from different groups** about, for instance, unintended policy effects, unfair distribution of costs and benefits across social groups, and consequently inform needs for policy adaptation.

**All of these findings have implications for the involvement of marginalised or least engaged communities in participatory instruments associated with transition measures.** A common criticism of participatory processes in public policy is that they tend to involve established interests, experienced partners and the ‘usual suspects’ rather than those who struggle to have their voice heard in public arenas. Different types of actors and interests have been involved in sustainability transition measures across case studies, but covering the domains of public authorities at different levels, private sector, social partners, academia and civil society but some key messages emerge from the case study research:

- **Experts and sectoral knowledge still play a significant role in policy making and dominate certain participatory processes.** Their dominant role is, however, balanced with other mechanisms that bring in a mix of more contextual technical and community-based knowledge.

- **The diversity and capacity of organised civil society and professional associations, which can represent the interests of diverse social groups in the sustainability transition, vary across regions.** More dense networks, and presumably larger capacities, are evident in some cases (the German and Dutch regions). Capacities of civil society seem to be lower where they are particularly necessary - in contexts where existing or new mechanisms for participation are prone to be captured by entrenched interests.
- **Sectoral NGOs are the most active type of NGOs** engaging in policy measures across case studies. On the other hand, the civil society organisations/NGOs focused on ethnic minorities and gender equality are overall the least active in participatory processes.
- **Participatory mechanisms focused on local communities or citizens are evident to a limited extent.** In the cases where such mechanisms are applied, this is under domestic regional policy or contractual agreement measures rather than under Cohesion Policy/TJTP. It can be assumed that the absence of such mechanisms in some of the case studies indicate a lack of overall culture and/or capacity of how (and why) to engage citizens and communities in policy more generally, and/or in contested fields such as sustainability transition policies.

On the basis of this initial research, **emerging insights on the factors that facilitate or impede the involvement of marginalised or less engaged communities and citizens** in place-based transition initiatives can be identified:

- **The least engaged communities often do not lack interest but the capacity and resources for involvement.** The sustainability transitions, which are now at the heart of EU policies, raise concerns among communities as they relate to significant long-term change, with inter-related social, economic, and environmental elements.
- **The persistence of ‘top down’ dynamics.** The complexity, uncertainty and contentiousness of transition processes, the emphasis placed on sectoral priorities and concerns about limited capacities at local levels has often limited the delegation of policy responsibilities from national levels. The retention of decision-making power at higher levels of government impedes civic engagement in more intense participatory processes.
- **Related to this is the challenge for policy-makers in deciding who the key stakeholders and partners are.** One of the critical questions when opening up policy making to actors on the basis of their role as ‘stakeholders’ or ‘beneficiaries’ is how the policy decides on who the most affected and eligible sectors and communities for its support are. These initial definitions and presumptions in the policy formulation stage (particularly under TJTPs) appear to have led to the exclusion of certain social groups across DUST case studies. While criteria have been set to open up policy making and make it more representative, this may not be sufficient to ensure an even representation of relevant social groups. Sustainability transition measures in some case studies are still dominated by narrow set of actor groups with weak or no involvement of civil society organisations or citizens.

- **One of the most important prerequisites to involve the least engaged citizens/communities in public participation processes is building prior awareness.** Such actions can support citizens to form a ‘sense of their own right to claim rights’ and express their voice, or to new forms of citizenship built within social movements and civil society organisations.
- **Mapping transition geographies to institutional frameworks can complicate participatory approaches.** Citizen participation in place-based approaches is also constrained by institutionalised decision-making arenas whose concern with geographies often does not match the dedication of communities to the places they feel attached to. Attempts to boost democratic citizen engagement are particularly hindered at the scale of functional regions. These geographies stage the structural development of for instance new infrastructure, regional economies, and labour markets. They, however, remain abstract and distant from the communities and rarely host mature democratic institutions for articulating shared concerns and thus the strategic positioning of communities in deliberation on development.
- **Coordination and communication systems offer arenas for participation but there are challenges of capacity and complexity.** Place-based measures offer an array of arenas and processes for participation. Coordination boards, working groups, partnerships, informal networks, and conferences consisting of members from different and same governmental levels make up the variety of structures that provide coordination of acts toward sustainable transition in the framework of MLG. However, the emergence, forms, and power relations within the coordination schemes vary, and these variations inform local inputs into sustainability transitions. In addition to this, an excessive number of committees and discussion groups can make MLG complicated, make lines of accountability opaque and act as a disincentive for participation by stakeholders, especially those with limited capacities. Citizen participation in policy responses to crises usually maps against the distribution of social capital across regions, with areas that host richer and better educated groups seeing more activity. The complex deliberative governance practices further disempower the least engaged communities as they raise scepticism about tacit policy outcomes, impede awareness of engagement opportunities, and accelerate a lack of organisation, and capacity.
- **Political factors must also be taken into account.** DUST case study research identifies different degrees of political commitment across policy measures and their associated participatory processes. This is linked to proximity of participatory arenas to the level of decision making, recognising for example that policies at municipal level demonstrate more explicit commitment to the input provided in participatory processes. Another political factor concerns how formal the participatory process has been, where there is lower political commitment to mechanisms seen as ‘additional’ to or initiated from outside of the institutionalised state-driven participatory processes.
- **Cutting across these issues is the role of digital tools in participatory instruments.** DUST case study research has found substantial evidence of the use different digital tools at various stages and processes. These have improved the quality of information contributed during consultation processes (e.g. through participatory mapping) and through the creation of virtual spaces for dialogue between policy-makers and



stakeholders. Nevertheless, the research carried out thus far has identified important gaps and issues. First, there is limited evidence of the use of digital tools beyond these more basic or less intense forms of participation. Digital tools can support more intense participation, especially when combined with interactive visual tools. This can make the process more accessible and understandable to different communities and develop different scenarios informed by local needs and potentials. Second, the research has generated limited insights into how the use of digital tools can facilitate or impede the involvement of marginalised or less-engaged communities and actors in transition measures.

# Annex 1: Participatory mechanisms across stages of the policy cycle

|                             | Issue identification and Policy formulation   |   | Decision making  | Implementation   | Monitoring and Evaluation   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
|                             | Closer to issue Identification  | Closer to policy formulation  |  |  |   |
| <b>Katowice region (PL)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (RDS)</li> <li>• Meetings with trade unions (SA)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information meetings (RDS; TJTP)</li> <li>• Consultation period (RDS; TJTP)</li> <li>• Steering committee (RDS; TJTP)</li> <li>• Interviews (RDS)</li> <li>• Workshops/meetings to develop transition projects (TJTP)</li> <li>• Public hearing (TJTP)</li> <li>• Meetings with trade unions (SA)</li> <li>• Working groups (SA)</li> <li>• Meetings based on social dialogue (SA)</li> <li>• Negotiation meetings (SA)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee (Reg dev strategy; TJTP)</li> <li>• Negotiation meetings (SA)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee (RDS; TJTP)</li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>Belchatow area (PL)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with trade unions (SA)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation period (Reg dev strategy; TJTP)</li> <li>• Steering committee (Reg dev strategy; TJTP)</li> <li>• Working groups (SA)</li> <li>• Meetings based on social dialogue (SA)</li> <li>• Negotiation meetings (SA)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee (RDS; TJTP)</li> <li>• Negotiation meetings (SA)</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering committee (RDS; TJTP)</li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>Groningen (NL)</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile coffee cart (Regio Deal)</li> <li>• Consultation (TJTP)</li> <li>• Online platform and physical events to collect project ideas (Toukomst)</li> <li>• Public conversations &amp;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops/town hall meetings (Regio Deal)</li> <li>• Consultations (Regio Deal, JTF OP)</li> <li>• Online meetings to bundle project ideas into clusters (Toukomst)</li> <li>• Online and on-paper pre-evaluation of bundled project ideas (Toukomst)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen panel for selection of projects (Toukomst)</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual stakeholder meetings (Regio Deal)</li> <li>• Consultations (Regio Deal)</li> <li>• Expert committee (TJTP)</li> <li>• Collaborative instruments for</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring committee (TJTP)</li> <li>• Annual stakeholder meetings (Regio Deal)</li> </ul> |

|                          | questionnaires<br>(NPG)  |  |  | project building<br>(TJTP)  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Stara Zagora (BG)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Development Council (ITDSSR 21-27)</li> <li>Stakeholder meetings (TJTP; NIS3 21-27)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation period (all measures)</li> <li>Regional Development Council (ITDSSR 21-27)</li> <li>Dialogue meetings (TJTP)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection committee (IDP 21-27)</li> <li>Regional Development Council (ITDSSR 21-27)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings to build territorial concepts (ITDSSR 21-27)</li> <li>BASE Business academy (NIS3 21-27)</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Norrbotten (SE)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of dialogue-based events (ECS; RDS)</li> <li>Comment period (RDS; ECS)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of dialogue-based events (ECS; RDS)</li> <li>Dialogue meetings with Sami Parliament (TJTP)</li> </ul>  |  |   |  |
| <b>Gotland (SE)</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of dialogue-based events (ECS; CSP; RDS)</li> <li>Web-based consultation via sociotope mapping (CSP; RDS)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of dialogue-based events (ECS; CSP; RDS)</li> <li>Comment period (RDS; CSP; TJTP)</li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gotland Energy Dialogue (ECS)</li> <li>Collaboration groups (ECS)</li> </ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration groups (ECS)</li> </ul>           |
| <b>Lusatia (DE)</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of public events (ERDF BB 21-27)</li> <li>Commission on growth, structural change and employment (StStG)</li> <li>Expert studies; roundtables and working meetings as part of the Workshop for future Lusatia (LP 2038)</li> <li>Citizen dialogues (LP 2038; RDS 2050)</li> <li>Joint conferences (RDS 2050)</li> <li>Conversations 'Lusatian treasures' (RDS 2050)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working &amp; exchange meetings (TJTP)</li> <li>4 writing workshops (RDS 2050)</li> <li>Citizen dialogues (RDS 2050; LP 2038)</li> <li>Conversations 'Lusatian treasures' (RDS 2050)</li> <li>Future bus /fabmobil/ (RDS 2050)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring committee (ERDF BB 21-27)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thematic workshops (StStG)</li> <li>Platform 'Citizens' Region' Lusatia (StStG)</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring committee (ERDF BB 21-27)</li> </ul> |

|      |  |   |  |   |   |
|------|--|---|--|---|---|
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future bus /fabmobil/ (RDS 2050)</li> </ul>   |   |  |   |   |
| (DE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission on growth, structural change and employment (StStG)</li> <li>• Regional thematic groups (WSP)</li> <li>• Revier Tours (WSP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online questionnaire (TJTP)</li> <li>• Monitoring Committee (TJTP)</li> <li>• Working groups (JTF)</li> <li>• Regional thematic groups (WSP)</li> <li>• Workshops (WSP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Committee (JTF)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Committee (JTF/TJTP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Committee (JTF/TJTP)</li> </ul> |