

Enhanced Strategic Planning

at Regional and
Local Levels
in Croatia



WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (MRDEUF) of Croatia is working to strengthen the governance capacity of regional and local actors to best implement the National Development Strategy: Croatia 2030. To support this objective, the MRDEUF collaborated with the OECD on a two-year project to enhance strategic planning at the regional and local levels in Croatia.

The project, implemented between May 2022 and April 2024 aimed to strengthen the capacity of regional and local actors to design and implement evidence-based development strategies. These strategies will contribute to the National Development Strategy Croatia 2030, and will guide the integrated investments to address development needs at regional and local level. The project also aimed to support the MRDEUF reinforce the strategic governance of integrated investment for territorial development. Moreover, through these actions, the OECD and MRDEUF sought to boost regional competitiveness and resilience across Croatia.

The OECD provided analysis and policy recommendations, as well as different capacity-building actions, together with MRDEUF and other stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels.



WHY THIS PROJECT?

The MRDEUF and the OECD undertook this project to:

STRATEGY: *To support regional and local public bodies to design effective development strategies*

An effective regional or local development strategy builds on a robust identification of local needs and capacities and is aligned to national-level priorities. It presents coherent development goals and serves as a framework for policy-making and public investment. In particular, it can help policy actors make informed decisions on where efforts and resources are best spent to achieve their goals.

This project aimed to build the capacity of regional and local bodies to design and implement evidence-based strategies to optimise the mobilisation and use of public and private resources. This capacity is particularly crucial in the COVID-19 recovery context as regional and local actors face short- and medium-term challenges such as business recovery, while pursuing complex long-term development goals including boosting regional competitiveness and resilience.

IMPLEMENTATION: *To design and implement integrated investments in regions and municipalities*

To maximise the potential of public investment in realising development goals, governments at all levels need to offer incentives for integrated investment, set up the right mechanisms to foster coordination and cooperation, build partnerships among actors, and closely monitor the results of integrated investment. This project aimed to identify practical tools and good practices that Croatia can use to implement subnational development strategies and reinforce integrated investment.

CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION:

To ensure a place-based and bottom-up approach for regional development

The effective implementation of the National Development Strategy at the subnational level should follow a place-based and bottom-up approach. This implies building strong and visible linkages among the Strategy and regional and local development needs, policies, and capacities. The implementation of this approach requires effective coordination mechanisms and an appropriate governance system. This project explored multi-level governance arrangements that Croatia can adopt to ensure that national, regional and local actors have the incentives, tools and capacities to foster these linkages, build partnerships and networks, and collectively pursue the development goals detailed in the National Development Strategy 2030.





WHAT DO WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE?

- Strategic partnerships and functional networks developed within and among regions to achieve the goals associated with the National Development Strategy 2030, and Croatia's Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- Improved horizontal and vertical coordination for regional development planning and investment.
- Improved Regional Development Plans, in terms of feasibility, sustainability, impact and contribution to the National Development Strategy 2030.
- Improved ability to design implementation mechanisms and integrated investment projects for regional development that support the National Development Strategy 2030 at the national, regional and local levels.
- Improved linkages, governance and use of public investment funding among levels of government.
- Fostering a culture of dialogue for effective policy and decision-making.

What did we deliver?



Three knowledge sharing fora for Croatian national and subnational government representatives, including regional development agencies

Forum 1 - Reinforcing Performance Measurement for Better Regional Development Policy Outcomes



Download the [issues paper](#) and [summary report](#)

Forum 2 - Towards Sustainable Financial Mechanisms for Regional Development in Croatia



Download the [issues paper](#) and [summary report](#)

Forum 3 - Towards Regional Resilience to Demographic Change in Croatia



Download the [issues paper](#) and [summary report](#)



Five one-day training modules for Croatia's regional development agencies

The training provided participants with practical tools and examples of good practices that they can adopt or adapt to their local contexts to better contribute to the agencies' objectives of supporting balanced regional development and increasing regional attractiveness

Module 1 - Futures thinking, foresight and vision setting

Module 2 - Stakeholder engagement for regional development

Module 3 - Monitoring and evaluating regional development plans

Module 4 - Implementing regional development plans

Module 5 - Funding and financing regional development plans

What did we deliver?



Two study visits for Croatia's regional development agencies and Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds

The study visits helped the regional development agencies identify actions and tools they can use to further support integrated regional development.

Study tour 1 - To Andalucía, Spain

Study tour 2 - To Wallonia, Belgium



One training of trainers workshop for staff from Croatia's Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds

The 2-day workshop helped to further strengthen the skills of MRDEUF staff involved in providing training to subnational governments to design, deliver and evaluate training activities for subnational governments.



One multi-level governance report *Towards Balanced Regional Development in Croatia. From Strategy Design to Implementation*



[Download the report](#)

For more information of the project, please contact:

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About OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, the OECD provides a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, good-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and international standard-setting.

About CFE

The OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) provides comparative statistics, analysis and capacity building for local and national actors to work together to unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boost local job creation, and support sound tourism policies.



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