Empowering Regions and Communities: Case Stories in Territorial Approaches

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Content

Abbreviations

ABDA	Area Based Development Approach
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
APF	Area Physical Framework
BET region	Borkou, Ennedi, and Tibesti
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIRAD	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CLM	Climate-Sensitive Innovations for Land Management (case study Ethiopia)
COM-NORD	Integrated Municipal Development in Northern Chad (case study Chad)
CRS	Common Reporting Standard der OECD
DAC	Development Assistance Committee der OECD
EC DG INTPA	European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships
EU CAP	EU Common Agricultural Policy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability network
IDR	Initiative for Regional Development (case study Tunisia)
LMDP	Land Management and Decentralised Planning (case study Laos)
LPDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LUIS	Land Use Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Laos
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PALM	Participatory Agricultural Land Management

Pana Pana	Sustainable Natural Resource Management under Climate Aspects in Indigenous Territories in La Mosquitia (case study Honduras)
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Planning
PREDD	Regional Sustainable Development Plans (Tunisia)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDRA	Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas (case study Western Balkans)
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SWG RRD	Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in Southeastern Europe
TAR	Targeted Awareness Raising
TP4D Group	Territorial Perspective for Development
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WASH	Safe Drinking-water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHI	World Hunger Index

1. Introduction

Nowadays, movements of people, goods, services, and information are intensely interconnected. Once-clear demarcations between rural and urban territories are fading and give rise to complex spatial and social dynamics. A fusion that challenges traditional perspectives: single-sector growth strategies are outdated in a world demanding simultaneous attention to diverse social, economic, and ecological objectives. At the same time, increased mobility and new patterns of interaction contribute to a rapid transformation of rural and peri-urban regions. Additional challenges for rural areas include climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification, population growth, migration, limited access to essential services, and unemployment. In the light of these challenges, a more holistic development of rural areas, surpassing sector boundaries, moved into the focus of the international community. The Agenda 2030, the three Rio Conventions[1], the UN-Food Systems Summit and BMZ's "Sustainable Agri-Food Systems" strategy all pivot to a more comprehensive view of food systems and rural areas.

Against this background, territorial approaches emerge as crucially relevant. Offering a more refined framework to understand and address complex transformations in an interconnected world, they have gained significant traction among international organisations and development partners. Instead of focusing on isolated sectoral views, they underscore the multifaceted dynamics of rural areas and the interconnected needs of its population, prioritising solutions that balance socio-economic development with environmental sustainability.

GIZ already has long-standing experience with the implementation of place-based approaches to rural development. The collaboration with a group of like-minded partners, called "Territorial Perspective for Development" (TP4D) was essential for consolidating expertise and concepts concerning territorial approaches[2]. In 2018, the TP4D Group released a white paper[3] titled "Fostering Territorial Perspective for Development". In 2021, their comprehensive stocktaking[4] of territorial approaches presenting 14 case

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1   United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

2   TP4D includes the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), European Commission (EC DG INTPA), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UN-Habitat, the Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the Global Network of "Local Governments for Sustainability" (ICLEI), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and GIZ.

3   https://www.donorplatform.org/post/fostering-territorial-perspective-for-development/

4   GIZ (2021), Territorial Approaches for Sustainable Development, p. 8—9.
          https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2023-en-territorial-approaches-sustainable-development.pdf

studies across Asia, Africa, and Latin America provided actionable insights on aligning territorial approaches with global aims like alleviating poverty and preserving the environment. They emphasised a place-based perspective, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and multi-sector solutions and approached territorial development from seven thematic entry points. The findings were later enriched in the 2023 TP4D white paper "Territorial Approaches for Sustainable Development"[5] , introducing nine key components for the effective implementation of territorial approaches (↳ see chapter 2). These key components provide important guidance for this study and are outlined in chapter 2.

This publication builds and extends on the above-mentioned studies on territorial approaches, drawing from their accumulated experiences, recommendations, and lessons. It showcases six case studies on projects which were commissioned by BMZ and implemented by GIZ, each embodying territorial development strategies. The primary aim of this work is to provide practical insights into the implementation of territorial approaches for professionals, highlighting opportunities, tools and success factors. By sharing these experiences, we hope to contribute to more effective rural development practices that can foster sustainable growth, support the transformation of agri-food systems and contribute to achieve the SDGs.

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5   https://www.donorplatform.org/post/tp4d-territorial-approaches-for-sustainable-development/

2. About Territorial Approaches

Territorial approaches to development encompass a comprehensive and interconnected perspective that considers various scales and aspects of governance, economy, environment, and society. These approaches recognise the territory as a space where diverse human activities occur and are influenced by a community of stakeholders including rural people, smallholders, civil society, private sector as well as official institutions such as line ministries, sub-national authorities, municipalities, and local governments. At its core, a territorial approach integrates environmental, social, political, cultural, and economic assets; acknowledging their complex interrelations and the different development priorities they entail. It aims to align and strengthen sector-specific policies within a territory and encourages a shift from disconnected governance towards multi-stakeholder mechanisms across various government levels and multiple sectors. Such approaches build on administrative decentralisation and incorporate a systemic perspective that emphasises multi-level governance, integrated management and decision making across sectors. It simultaneously recognises social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of resource use and fosters coherent strategic solutions.

Territorial approaches are characterised by the following principles:

→ a **people-centred view**, recognising local identities, interests and rights;

→ a **multi-stakeholder view**, allowing for inclusive transformation;

→ a **place-based understanding**, identifying spatial interrelations, potential growth opportunities and priorities within a given region;

→ a **cross-sectoral strategy**, emphasising not just agriculture but broader rural development; and

→ a **multi-level approach**, connecting micro to macro levels.

Implementing a territorial approach requires a nuanced and well-coordinated strategy that synchronises various stakeholders, frameworks, and sectors. In line with the principles of a territorial approach mentioned above, the TP4D Group identified the key components following on the next page for successfully implementing territorial approaches.
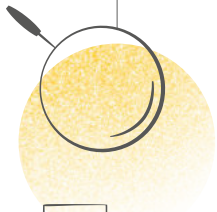
1 Institutionalising Territorial Diagnostics:
Successful territorial approaches benefit from integrating stakeholders and creating context-specific assessments. This entails exploring literature and data, acknowledging territorial assets and dynamics, and envisioning future scenarios.
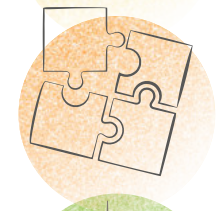
2 Empowering Authorities and Stakeholders:
Encouraging participation from authorities and stakeholders enhances inclusivity. This connects local authorities with civil society, the private sector, and marginalised groups.

3 Addressing Social Dynamics:
Balancing power dynamics is essential. Engaging diverse actors helps meet both rural and urban needs, giving emphasis to SDGs and ensuring diverse voices are heard.

4 Designing Inclusive Institutional Frameworks:
Adopting inclusive frameworks can help in navigating cross-sector challenges, pin-pointing trade-offs and inviting stakeholder involvement. Multi-sectorial platforms foster inclusive decision-making.
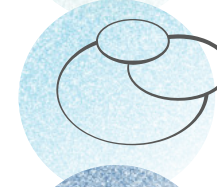
5 Transcending Administrative Boundaries:
Emphasising multi-level coordination and bridging administrative divides promotes policy integration and encourages dialogue across sectors, cultivating territorial synergies.

6 Adequate Financing and Unlocking Territorial Opportunities:
Sourcing appropriate financing is fundamental for territorial approaches, as it highlights local opportunities through sectorial interventions on the ground.

7 Incentivising Cross-Sectoral Investments:
Encouraging investments in infrastructure, services, agriculture, and more, driven by both local and national entities, can bolster territorial economic growth.

8 Evaluating Impact and Intensifying Research:
Implementing robust evaluation tools and flexible metrics can offer insights into the effectiveness of territorial approaches.

9 Nurturing Evidence-Based Policy Interfaces:
Merging various knowledge sources paves the way for more informed policies, ensuring territorial approaches remain responsive and effective in an evolving landscape.

3. Method of Analysis

In this chapter, we outline the methodology used to select and showcase the six projects foundational to our study. Rather than using a random sampling approach, we used a purposive selection process to ensure that projects with specific criteria were included. The targeted selection method was chosen because more systematic criteria, such as appropriate markers of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) or OECD Common Reporting Standards (CRS), were not available. The BMZ marker "Rural Development" and the CRS code 43040 "Rural Development" cover several of the selection criteria we needed for this study. However, both were considered too broad for the scope of this study. Many projects that have one of these two identifiers still do not fit the principles and/or key components that characterise territorial approaches.

Hence, the first step was to screen a long list of around 40 projects which demonstrated a spatial approach, cross-sectoral collaboration, involvement of public institutions, and participation of local stakeholders and communities – key criteria for the long list. After this initial assessment, the selection was narrowed down to a shortlist of 15 projects, which we contacted to gather more detailed information on their scope, objectives, and implementation strategies. The final selection of six projects was based on two criteria: a balanced regional coverage and a diverse thematic range. The thematic entry points identified in the 2021 stocktaking provided guidance for selecting the topics covered.[6]

The study now includes the following projects from Africa, Asia and Latin America, addressing issues such as natural resource management, climate change, decentralisation, community development, access to public services, income generation, employment promotion, land governance and tenure as well as watershed management:

1. **Ethiopia: "Climate-Sensitive Innovations for Land Management" (CLM)**: This project focuses on capacity development of actors in sustainable land management through policy and institutional advice, field-level coaching and advisory services, training, networking, piloting field activities as well as research and communications.

2. **Honduras: "Sustainable Natural Resource Management under Climate Aspects in Indigenous Territories in La Mosquitia" (Pana Pana)**: Focusing on indigenous territories in Honduras, this project addresses issues related to land rights and sustainable resource use and development by and for indigenous communities.

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6   Local economic development; integrated landscape and natural resource management; improved food and nutrition systems; inclusive access to public and private services; community-led strategies for strengthening rights of territorial actors; response to environmental and economic shocks; challenges arising from protracted crises, civil or armed conflict.

3. **Laos: "Land Management and Decentralised Planning" (LMDP):** This project involves developing comprehensive land use plans and capacities in Laos to ensure efficient and sustainable land utilisation.

4. **Western Balkans: "Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas" (SEDRA):** This project focuses on fostering economic integration, income promotion, and cooperation among countries in the Western Balkans region.

5. **Chad: "Integrated Municipal Development in Northern Chad" (COM-NORD):** Addressing local challenges, this project aims to promote integrated and sustainable municipal development in Chad.

6. **Tunisia: "Initiative for Regional Development" (IDR):** This project focuses on regional initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable growth and development in Tunisia.

The subsequent chapters provide an in-depth analysis structured as follows: The chapter "Context and Challenges" furnishes the background of the project. A foundation that paves the way for an exploration of the project's "implemented key components" of territorial approaches (↳ see chapter 2) together with applied "Tools and Practices". Each project section concludes by presenting the most important results and outcomes, as well as by identifying factors which supported successful implementation on the ground.

It is important to emphasise that the portrayal of the six selected projects does not strictly align with their original project logic, which might be based on specific goals like "biodiversity protection," "employment promotion," or similar. Instead, our depiction follows key components for the successful implementation of territorial approaches outlined in chapter 2. Evidently, for each project a different and individual mix of key components became visible. In other words: All key components are relevant for successful implementation – but not all are appropriate in every regional context.

Using this framework, built upon well-established concepts developed with international partners over the past years, allowed us to analyse the projects in a unified way. It allowed us to better understand the different key components' relevance for implementing territorial approaches.

4. Case Studies

4.1 Ethiopia: "Climate-Sensitive Innovations for Land Management" (CLM)

→ Through its multi-stakeholder engagement, place-based strategies, and cross-sectorial initiatives, the CLM project in Ethiopia exemplifies the principles of modern territorial approaches, offering a thematic lens into effective land management.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ **Policy advice based on research evidence**	→ Nationwide inventory of NRM-related policies, strategies, and guidelines
	→ Impact analysis on government-led 15-year flagship programs in NRM
	→ Study and advice on the development strategy on sustainable livestock management as well as on challenges faced by rural women
	→ Research-based advice on the reformulation process of the sector policy on natural resource management
→ **Empowering local communities through dialogue and modern technology**	→ Multi-stakeholder dialogue for community-driven land use and watershed development planning
	→ Promotion of social media tools and e-learning
	→ Provision of a digital exchange-platform for promoting community NRM knowledge exchange
	→ Training manual centred on community-based land management
	→ "Hackathon" for the development of a sophisticated systems model for the Lake Chamo landscape with activities steered by a consortium of the local community

→ Empowering farming communities and transcending administrative boundaries by modernising agricultural extension
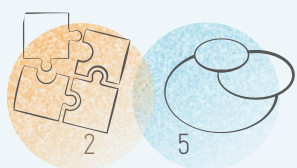
→ Contributing to the partner's 10-year road-map to digitalise agricultural extension

→ Promotion of e-learning

2   5

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ Systematic and data-driven approach through various studies and assessments, carried out mostly through local institutions.

→ People-centred perspective by promoting community-based planning, considering local and multi-stakeholder perspectives, including gender.

→ Multi-dimensional perspective, connecting different policy levels across sectors.

→ Multi-level approach with activities at federal, state, and local institutional level.

→ Use of modern (digital) technology and methodology, such as a e-learning or facilitation of a "hackathon".

4.1.1   Context and Challenges

Ethiopia's highlands are facing a crisis that involves land degradation, climate change impacts, rapid population growth and underemployment. Nearly 50 % of the highland agricultural land is eroding, resulting in an annual loss of 30,000 hectares of arable land, affecting the livelihoods of millions of people and threatening the economic functioning of development poles such as the Lake Chamo basin. Droughts exacerbate food insecurity and strain natural resources, while identity politics create competing claims to land and influence. Women and youth traditionally disadvantaged in terms of access to land and other resources, face greater poverty and food insecurity. The Ethiopian government, with strong support from key development partners, is implementing an overarching, long-term strategy to address soil erosion and other natural resource management issues, now reaching some five million households.

4.1.2 Project Description and Implemented Key Components

The overarching goal of the project is to support Ethiopia with the efficacy of its partner system for planning and implementing Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures. The initiative is an integral part of a longstanding series of BMZ-supported projects initiated around the year 2000, expected to continue as long as challenges such as soil erosion and natural resource depletion persist because they pose significant threats to a substantial portion of the population. Employing a multi-level approach, the CLM project carries out activities at federal, state, and local institutional levels across the country, excluding designated "lowlands". The project is part of the German Development Programme "Sustainable Land Management and Food Security in Ethiopia".

→ **Policy Advice Based on Research Evidence**

To achieve its goals, CLM firstly initiated a thorough, **nationwide inventory of NRM-related policies, strategies, and guidelines**, facilitating the identification of crucial policy gaps, sharing experiences, and building stakeholder coalitions on vital topics like community empowerment for NRM. Additionally, the project oversaw an **impact analysis of NRM measures spanning 15 years**, focusing on key bio-physical indicators such as soil coverage and quality, above-ground biomass, vegetation cover, and land use change. The findings underscored the impactful nature of NRM but highlighted critical constraints in upscaling and financial sustainability, emphasising the need for better consideration in future NRM programs. Conducted by local institutions, the study ensures institutional sustainability, while collaboration with the European university Wageningen guarantees a continuous transfer of knowledge on remote sensing of environmental data.

In another **study, the project assessed livestock management** in the highlands, proposing strategic transformations for sustainability with a focus on adapting to specific territories and livelihood systems. Simultaneously, **CLM advised on the re-formulation of the NRM sector policy** "Ethiopian Strategic Investment Framework for Land Management" (ESIF), engaging a diverse group of stakeholders. Addressing an additional critical aspect, the project, backed by empirical data, focused on the challenges faced by rural women at risk of being left behind in the gradual modernisation of rural life and smallholder agriculture. **A study aimed to provide a more holistic understanding of women's situation**, identifying best practices for women's empowerment, particularly concerning projects funded by development partners.

→ Empowering Local Communities through Dialogue and Modern Technology

Another key component of the CLM project was building capacity for decentralised, bottom-up land use planning and land use management. The above-mentioned studies confirmed community empowerment as key determinants for the effectiveness, efficiency, broad impact, and sustainability of NRM programs in Ethiopia. Based on a **multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue with about seventy cooperatives**, comprehensive land use and watershed development plans were established, emphasising aspects like the management of livestock grazing, the development of forage, and the equitable distribution of benefits among diverse social groups (e.g. women and landless youth). To reach out to a broad number of community members, **modern methods like e-learning and social media** were used: a **social media platform promoting community NRM knowledge exchange** was launched, including more than a hundred active participants and a rich repository of best practices and case examples. In addition, a novel **training manual centred on community-based land management** was developed and field-tested to also augment the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture's existing NRM expert training.

One success story of territorial development is the place-based and multidimensional approach for sustainability of Lake Chamo: A **comprehensive systems model for the lake's landscape** was developed, that allowed to identify vital intervention areas in the lake's catchment and build them into a strategic, long-term approach. In a "hackathon" event, 35 professionals from various fields created additional strategies to safeguard the lake's ecosystem: climate-resilient agriculture is now promoted, green corridors and buffer zones are created, alternative energy solutions are emphasised, livelihood diversification is encouraged, and indigenous practices of natural resource preservation are promoted. The success of these initiatives is anchored in collaboration. A consortium of the heads of two primary zones and ten districts is steering the major activities. Moreover, a knowledge exchange platform for 150 professionals from the ten districts around Lake Chamo was established, again leveraging social-media groups for effective communication.

→ Empowering Farming Communities and Transcending Administrative Boundaries by Modernising Agricultural Extension
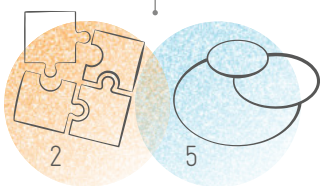
The primary objective of this key component was to strengthen and modernise the Agricultural Extension Service. At a national level, the CLM project **advised the Ministry of Agriculture on the development of a strategic roadmap to digitally transform agricultural extension services**. Extant and approved training materials were digitalised, insights from the private sector were incorporated and user-centric designs were locally created. For example, an application with diverse training resources

available to extension agents across four regions, allowing streamlined tracking of training engagement, is now available. In the case of Lake Chomo e-learning content about how to form watershed user cooperatives is today benefiting 500+ extension workers across five regions.

Through a CLM-funded collaboration between the NGO REDI School in Germany and the commercial InfoMind in Ethiopia, a **structure for local e-learning course production emerged** to foster local talents in e-learning tool development and utilisation and create job opportunities in the sector.

4.1.3   Results and Success Factors

The CLM project addresses immense challenges, from soil degradation and climate change impacts to societal pressures amplifying them. Its multi-pronged strategy became a beacon of success and a lesson in strategic planning.
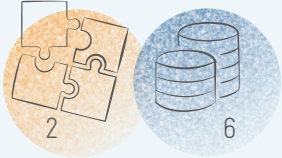
Central to CLM's achievements was a systematic and data-driven approach, carried out with mostly local research institutions, to understanding and addressing challenges, underscored by a **flexible project set-up** with a strong **focus on evidence-based solutions**. For example, the project capitalised on 15 years of NRM data, leading to a national database with essential metrics and a compilation of regional NRM policies. A **people-centred and multi-dimensional perspective**, inter alia recognising local identities and interests, stood at the forefront of the project's

activities. Community integration through modern (digital) tools like e-learning and social media, embracing gender inclusivity and cutting-edge learning methodologies, underscored the project's commitment to **inclusive frameworks** and **multi-stakeholder engagement**. The approach to Lake Chamo's territorial development and tools like the "Leadership Coordination Platform" facilitated genuine dialogue and collaboration. Community tailored land use and watershed plans are now addressing specific needs, emphasising fair resource distribution.

Value-driven partnerships aiming for **synergies**, domestically and internationally, were additionally vital for successful implementation and scaling.

4.2 Honduras: "Sustainable NRM under Climate Aspects in Indigenous Territories in La Mosquitia" (Pana Pana)

→ Harnessing people-centred perspectives, place-based understanding, multi-stakeholder engagement, the "Pana Pana" project in La Mosquitia serves as a paradigm of the territorial approach, weaving indigenous values with sustainable resilience against climate challenge.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ Improve conditions and competencies for effective self-governance and co-ordination in indigenous communities	→ Advice on both national and regional policies that safeguard indigenous rights → Capacity building for self-governance, clarification of roles and coordination between state and indigenous entities → Analysis to pinpoint inconsistencies in the legal framework → Pilot activities from indigenous development plans ("Planes de Vida") → Training program for the youth to bolster socio-political participation and leadership → Facilitation of dialogue between neighbouring indigenous territorial councils and within the indigenous communities
→ Unlocking territorial opportunities by improving capacities of the indigenous population for climate-adapted food production and improved access to adequate sanitation infrastructure	→ Advice to producer organisations → Capacity development for local communities for improved productivity and diversity of home gardens → Capacity building of community members in construction of drilling equipment, water pumps and well drilling → Provision of villages and schools with facilities for drinking water and sanitation

→ Capacity building for educators, health workers, and volunteers in partnership with the Ministries of Education, Health, and Environment.

→ Provision of material and building of a market hall

→ South-South exchange

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ Prior analysis for the identification of inconsistencies in the legal framework governing indigenous territories.

→ Field staff almost exclusively from Miskito culture, rooting the project within local communities.

→ People-centred approach, identifying the most pressing community issues in open and transparent dialogues, taking enough time, promoting project ownership.

→ Clarification of roles between state and indigenous entities, fortification governance structures within indigenous territorial councils, multi-stakeholder methodology to develop capacities.

4.2.1   Context and Challenges

The Mosquitia region in Central America boasts rich biodiversity, forming part of the Central American bio corridor and acting as a carbon sink, largely due to its mangroves. Indigenous communities like the Miskito maintain traditions that help conserve the area's biodiversity. Yet, this remote region grapples with challenges: a reliance on subsistence farming, exacerbated by climate change, and sparse economic avenues due to limited infrastructure result in widespread food insecurity. Women face added hurdles, including language and societal barriers, deepening poverty.

The lack of comprehensive development strategies and institutional capacity means indigenous land and resource rights are often overridden, notably by unchecked deforestation by non-indigenous cattle producers. Climate change and insecure land rights heighten conflict risks. By 2014, twelve indigenous territorial councils formed, adhering to Honduran law and the International Labour Organisation's Article 169, marking progress towards self-governance. Yet, these councils grapple with financial and representation constraints.

4.2.2   Project Description and Implemented Key Components

The overall aim of the project was to promote nutrition-oriented and climate-resilient resource management for improved food security and increased income opportunities for indigenous groups. The project was ongoing between January 2020 and December 2023 and called "Pana Pana". It was jointly implemented by GIZ and the consortia GOPA-GOAL, a local NGO. Using a multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder, community-centric and cross-sectoral approach, the project advocated for ecosystem-based strategies in agriculture and forestry and emphasised sustainable land use that respects indigenous rights and ecological needs in the Mosquitia region.

To achieve its goals, the Pana Pana implemented the following key components:

→ Improve Conditions and Competencies for Effective Self-governance and Coordination in Indigenous Communities

A pivotal component of Pana Pana was **advising on both national and regional policies that safeguard indigenous rights** concerning the use of resources, also ensuring they were gender-inclusive and sustainable. To realise this, Pana Pana **strengthened organisational competencies for self-governance, advised on the revision of the statutes of territorial and village councils.** It also facilitated **clarification of roles between state and indigenous entities** and **coordination between five indigenous territorial councils**. A thorough **analysis to pinpoint inconsistencies in the legal framework** governing indigenous territories was conducted. At the transition from policy formulation and planning to implementation, Pana Pana was also proactive in piloting activities derived from indigenous development plans, known as "Planes de Vida". To further bolster socio-political participation and leadership within the indigenous communities, a **six-month training program for the youth** was orchestrated, facilitated by the University of Mosquitia of Nicaragua.

One of the project's exemplary initiatives also involved **facilitation of dialogue between neighbouring territorial councils**. Such facilitation had a dual benefit: it imparted vital **skills to the youth through training in boundary demarcation** using geo-referenced points and it spurred inter-territorial conversations about the implications of these boundaries, both locally and in the broader societal context.
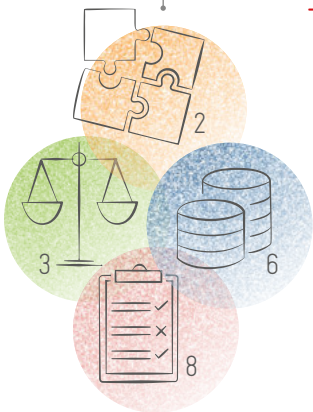
→ Unlocking Territorial Opportunities by Improving Capacities of the Indigenous Population for Climate-adapted Food Production and Improved Access to Adequate Sanitation Infrastructure
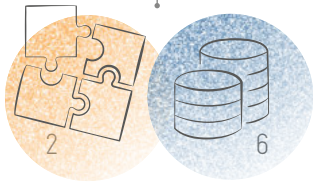
Aiming to enhance food security in the Mosquitia region, the project used a comprehensive approach that intertwined sustainable resource management with income generation opportunities. The project implemented **capacity development measures** to improve productivity and diversity in home gardens. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, efforts were made to distribute seeds and seedlings.

To drive local commerce, **producer/village cooperatives were advised, processing equipment as well as a market hall were strategically positioned**. That boosted local sales, increased and diversified income. Additionally, women's groups were galvanised to craft an array of organic items, ranging from palm oil to honey, facilitated by a rotation fund maintained by the women's organisation MIMAT. This empowerment aimed to bridge the market demand with supply while emphasising sustainable practices.

Pivoting towards a broader spectrum, the Congress of Knowledge in Agriculture and Rural Development became a melting pot for **South-South exchange** among stakeholders. The spotlight was cast on indigenous agricultural methodologies, revealing how ancestral techniques could serve as a bulwark against the challenges posed by climate change. Discussions gave birth to a committee tasked with distilling the insights into a concrete work plan for better resilience.

To improve access to sanitation and hygiene with positive implications for the community's nutritional status, the project also enabled the **training** of well diggers, installation of multiple wells, and the commencement of a latrine program. Additionally, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, volunteers from various villages were trained in basic health and hygiene, supplemented by an awareness campaign.

4.2.3   Results and Success Factors

Despite setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic and 2020's tropical storms, the project, initiated in June 2020, has achieved significant progress. Its primary strength lied in its **community-based and people-centred approach**, emphasising the importance of local identities and interests.
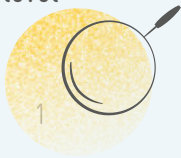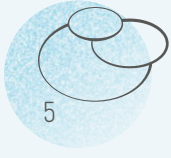
By employing mostly national staff from Miskito culture, working together with locally respected NGOs, and incorporating technical insights on Miskito culture, the project rooted its objectives within local communities. It also facilitated extensive **multi-stakeholder dialogue** on which activi-

ties were implemented and prioritised, thus promoting project ownership. The engagement led to high participation levels and recognition from political decision-makers. Activities implemented were hence diverse, **across different sectors**, representing the local populations´ most pressing needs in the territory. A collaborative spirit was palpable, as central state actors and indigenous administrations jointly tackled challenges, fostering mutual understanding, **overcoming administrative boundaries**. This cooperation, hailed as exemplary at the national level, now serves as a template for other interventions in the region.

4.3 Laos: "Land Management and Decentralised Planning" (LMDP)

→ Deploying participative diagnostics, technological tools, and integrated territorial frameworks, LMDP in Laos represents a progressive territorial approach that synergises indigenous wisdom with contemporary spatial tools to ensure sustainable land management amidst complex socio-economic challenges.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ Institutionalising territorial diagnostics focusing on strategic spatial planning and the mediation of land conflicts at provincial and district level	→ Digital cadastre for land registration ("LaoLandReg") → Land Use Information System ("LUIS") → Framework for Land Zonation ("Area Physical Framework"; APF) → Targeted Awareness Raising (TAR)
→ Empowering authorities and stakeholders through capacity building and designing an inclusive institutional framework	→ Participatory Land Use Planning and Agricultural Land Management (PLUP/PALM) → Land Allocation Planning for zonation and land categorisation at district level. → Individual capacity building of public servants
→ Transcending administrative boundaries through support to and coordination among relevant government partners	→ Support in drafting and improving Lao land policy, formulation of secondary legislation including decrees, guidelines and manuals → Support to government partners with land use and agricultural land management planning at village and household level. → Facilitation of coordination and cooperation between relevant ministries in the land sector and other donors → Support to interoperability of tools and applications

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ All tools are custom-designed and evidence-based for Laos land management and planning; most of them were adopted and integrated into official Lao government workflows (e.g. LaoLandReg).

→ Qualification measures were anchored in national administrative and academic structures, resulting in highly committed and well-trained public servants with clear tasks and responsibilities across different levels and ministries (e.g. on the use of spatial planning tools like GIS, UAV-drones and as trainers for land management tools).

→ Inter-ministerial coordination improves policy coherence and leverages synergies.

→ World Bank and KfW will use LaoLandReg for nationwide land registration.

4.3.1 Context and Challenges

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic PDR) agriculture is crucial for many, primarily as a subsistence means. Yet, weak land administration and law enforcement, coupled with unprotected land rights perpetuate rural poverty. This particularly impacts small-scale farmers, especially ethnic minority women facing barriers in accessing and asserting land rights. Safeguarding rural inhabitants' land rights and ensuring sustainable land investments are challenging.

Current government planning focuses on socio-economic and sector-specific objectives but often lacks the necessary spatial data and targets for effective management. Public institutions frequently fail to engage the community meaningfully. Competencies between ministries in Laos are unclear, causing overlaps and potential mismanagement. The responsibilities for land use are fragmented across several ministries, leading to potential conflicts and resource misallocation. Essential land use data, vital for resolving land conflicts, is often absent. Economic pressures, both domestic and international, high public debts and reduced revenues further compound these challenges.

In essence, for Laos to ensure sustainable development and protect its rural community, a unified approach to land management is imperative.

## 4.3.2 Project Description and Implemented Key Components

The overall aim of the project is to capacitate responsible authorities at all levels in Laos so that they use planning instruments to manage natural resources, as well as to solve and prevent conflicts over land and resources. In its third phase between October 2019 to December 2025 the core of the LMDP strategy is anchoring and scaling developed and tested procedures and instruments into the administrative system in close coordination with projects supported by World Bank and KfW. The long-term goal is to establish the successfully tested spatial planning procedures as nationwide standard and integrate them into the implementing partners' work processes The LMPD project is using a multi-sectoral approach and implements activities at the level of national, provincial, district and village level. The project is part of the German Development Programme "Poverty-Oriented Rural Development in Laos".

To achieve its goals, the LMPD project implements the following three key components with different emphasis over the course of its three phases:

→ Institutionalising Territorial Diagnostics Focusing on Strategic Spatial Planning and the Mediation of Land Conflicts at Provincial and District Level
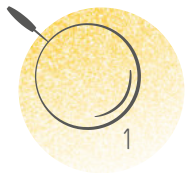
Since the beginning of the now three-phased project, LMDP developed and piloted custom-designed tools and methods focusing on strategic spatial planning and the prevention and mediation of land conflicts at provincial and district level, e.g. APF, LaoLandReg, and LUIS. These tools were further honed by integrating gender sensitivity measures to ensure equitable representation and protection of women's land rights. The tools are continuously improved through revisions and adapted to the needs of the ministries.

> → The **Areal Physical Framework (APF)** provides a structure for land resource management tailored to the needs of local authorities. Using a participatory approach, the framework incorporates feedback from various stakeholders to determine land use, balancing both production and conservation. Central to the APF is the single map concept, which divides the landscape into five distinct zones. These zones encompass protected core zones, free from human disruption; restricted zones that lie around the protected areas with limited activities; controlled use zones where regulated activities like forest extraction and agroforestry are permitted; traditional use zones where communal lands are situated, accommodating some commercial agriculture and plantation activities; and multiple-use zones that can host a variety of activities including farming, industry, and infrastructure development.

Through its methodology, the APF systematically assesses the landscape to allocate land based on its suitability for various purposes. This not only helps in identifying regions for potential economic activities and investment but also zones for conservation and conflict mediation. Its sector-neutral nature means it can be applied across different sectors without conflicting with existing regulations, such as the Lao Land Law. By recognising status quo ante rights (customary tenure) of existing users and settled populations in all the zones, the APF exempts indigenous and ethnic groups and villages from the zonal policies. Their land rights are fully protected under the APF. APF is not a stand-alone tool, but is used in conjunction with other methods by government agencies, e.g. to prepare socio-economic development and land allocation plans.

→ The **digital land register "LaoLandReg"** is now in its improved seventh version. It was successfully piloted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) in the land office of the capital city. The scaling up to all land offices throughout the country is currently under preparation. It will replace the existing production version which is already used countrywide. In addition, a technical audit of the LaoLandReg was conducted by the World Bank. There were also studies undertaken with recommendations of gradual extensions and improvements of the system to support further digitalisation of land administration services and to integrate LaoLandReg in a wider Land Information System. This was done with the support of the World Bank and KfW.

→ The **Land Use Information System LUIS** can store and manage land use planning data in a standardised manner. It is an important component of the landrelated database systems in Laos which is now available in its third and improved version 3.0. It is linked to the nationwide cadastral system LaoLandReg and includes geospatial data such as village boundaries and land use zones, as well as maps and reports of completed land use planning processes at community level. The data is uploaded on a voluntary basis, and accessible to users. Between 2019 and 2021 more than 550 land use plans from about ten provinces were uploaded. Piloted by the MoNRE, an interministerial strategy with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) provides guidance for resolving unclear roles and responsibilities between institutions and for scaling LUIS across the country.

→ The project also supports government partners with land use and agricultural land management planning at village level in various provinces in Laos. For this purpose, the project developed the **Targeted Awareness Raising** (TAR) guidelines and methodology to foster local participation along the „Participa-

tory Land Use Planning and Participatory Agricultural Land Management Process" (PLUP/PALM). TAR comprises methods, tools and materials (manual, posters) that aim to disseminate important information and knowledge about participatory land use planning, land and forestry laws and gender aspects. It helps communities to better understand their individual and communal rights on land and promotes the active participation of villagers especially women and vulnerable groups by clarifying on the concrete role of villagers and village representatives within the different steps of the planning process.

→ Empowering Authorities and Stakeholders through Capacity Building and Designing Inclusive Institutional Framework

The ambition of this key component is to strengthen long-term technical and digital expertise, aptitude, and understanding of procedural issues of Laotian officials in land administration across different ministries (MAF, MoNRE, and the Ministry of Planning and Investment, MPI) and different administrative levels. The project's approach includes both individual capacity building as well as anchoring of qualification measures in national administrative and academic structures. Trainings for ministerial staff and competent authorities generally include the application of gender-sensitive planning procedures and instruments.

The **capacity building measures** enable government staff to adeptly wield the above-mentioned land use planning and spatial planning tools, support them in sector coordination and facilitation of optimal NRM, while also navigating and mitigating land and resource conflicts across multiple spheres. The aim is also to enable public authority staff to carry out trainings for partner ministries independently and thus to anchor gender-sensitive land management procedures and instruments in the partner structures in the long term.

For this purpose, the National University and the Polytechnical College are also supported in the development of study programmes with a focus on land management.

→ Transcending Administrative Boundaries through Support to and Coordination among Relevant Government Partners
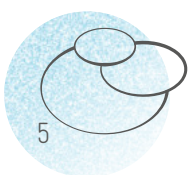
The project **supports the drafting and improvement of land policy**, primarily through developing sound recommendations for relevant sub-legislation under the Land Law 2019. Under this key component, the project also participated in the drafting of four secondary legislation rules through commentaries and the organisation of workshops and translations (e.g. ministerial decrees on land surveying and cadastral mapping, on the content and printing of land registers and land titles, a

ministerial instruction on land registration and titling, and a regulation on the registration of land transactions).

Additionally, LMDP **supports the different ministries in the development of guidelines**. These include a manual on the preparation of land allocation plans at the district level in cooperation with the MoNRE and a guide on the integration of spatial data into socio-economic development plans at the provincial level, which integrates the APF spatial planning process.

The project promotes horizontal **coordination and cooperation between the relevant ministries in the land sector**. To this end, the MoNRE is supported in organising regular working group meetings as well as meetings of the "Land Sub-sector Working Group" (LSSWG), an exchange forum between the ministries, donors and projects involved, chaired by the MoNRE and the Department of Land. Within this working group, the project chairs the sub-working group on land information systems, which intends to strategically link the different database systems in the land sector. For LUIS, an inter-ministerial "LUIS-team" and inter-ministerial strategy were developed and agreed with the MoNRE and the MAF. The strategy aims to clarify mandate issues and responsibilities between the two authorities involved.

Regarding interoperability, the **project supports the harmonisation of spatial data** between LLReg and LUIS within the sub-working group on land information systems of the LSSWG. Both are now used by different ministries at national level.

4.3.3   Results and Success Factors

LMDP put an emphasis on institutionalising territorial diagnostics, integrating tools like LaoLandReg digital cadastre into governance frameworks. This initiative, underlined by the government's ownership and the empowerment of local technical staff, demonstrated the paramount role of solid partnerships and innovative tools in developing a systematic approach to land management. It also highlighted the substantial impact of stakeholders' active and sustained involvement in refining land management practices.

Addressing **societal dynamics was integral**, with initiatives aimed at mediating land conflicts and integrating gender sensitivity, particularly through the incorporation of gender-specific data in LUIS, which proved pivotal. Emphasis on inclusivity and designing comprehensive institutional frameworks reinforced the **significance of grassroots involvement** in policy development and underscored the imperative of transcending administrative boundaries through integrated planning and execution.

Due to increased interventions by various donors and/or implementing agencies such as KfW, the importance of **sector and donor coordination** has grown. It proved to be necessary to harmonise interventions and to foster active participation from relevant ministries for a holistic involvement of all stakeholders. The efforts by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to decentralise resource allocation underscored the effectiveness of the LMDP project's decentralised approach in utilising funds efficiently at provincial and district levels.

The project's **multi-faceted approach**, combining technological integration, stakeholder engagement, and inter-agency collaborations, highlighted the intricate interplay between land management and broader economic strategies. In conclusion, the lessons learned from the LMDP project offer invaluable insights. In particular they emphasise balanced and coordinated strategies to successfully address land management challenges that ensure comprehensive stakeholder involvement and efficient resource utilisation in the land sector.

4.4   Southeast Europe: "Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas" (SEDRA)

→ Through place-based understanding, multi-stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral strategies, the SEDRA initiative uses a territorial approach to bridge six Southeastern European countries, promoting regional cooperation, economic diversification, and community-led growth amidst rural challenges.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ Designing inclusive institutional frameworks through policy dialogue at regional level	→ Provision of technical expertise → Facilitation of policy dialogue and strengthening of (regional) dialogue platforms → Capacity building for regional stakeholders
→ Empowering stakeholders, addressing social dynamics and designing inclusive institutional frameworks through community-led local development	→ Support to the implementation of LEADER approach → Capacity and institutional development of regional and national stakeholders
→ Incentivising cross-sectoral investment through integrated approaches of employment promotion in rural cross-border areas	→ Capacity building and training for micro, small and medium enterprises → Investment support through small grant scheme, local subsidies, and procurement

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ In depth assessment on the legislative, policy frameworks and institutional set-up.

→ Cross- sectoral and multi-level partnerships and policy dialogue platforms on national and regional level in Southeast Europe facilitated inclusive decision making.

→ National and regional road maps paved the paths for implementation of LEADER and CLLD[7] in Southeast Europe countries.

→ By prioritising community-led development and ensuring inclusive planning through mechanisms like LEADER, the initiative bridged the gap between authorities, civil society, and the private sector and catalysed economic progress across sectors.

→ The project adeptly tapped into EU funds, spotlighting the potential for territorial growth through mechanisms like LEADER.

4.4.1   Context and Challenges

In Southeast Europe, the contrast between vibrant urban centres and tranquil rural landscapes presents a complex scenario. While urban areas embrace modernisation, rural regions face pressing challenges crucial for the overall progress of Southeast European nations. A significant concern is the aging population in rural areas, exacerbated by the departure of the younger generation seeking opportunities in urban or foreign settings. This demographic shift not only depletes the labour force but also risks losing the innovative energy that youth bring to communities. High general unemployment compounds these issues, contributing to economic stagnation, particularly outside the agricultural sector.

Limited opportunities and the struggle to meet modern food safety standards further impede the success of small agricultural entities. Globalisation and competitive pricing intensify these challenges, diminishing the attractiveness of their produce in both local and international markets.

However, within these challenges lie opportunities. The rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of these regions offer potential for initiatives like eco-tourism, the revival of traditional crafts, and cultural tourism. Properly supported, these endeavours can act as economic catalysts, providing livelihoods while preserving the region's heritage. The EU Green Deal, emphasising

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7   LEADER is the French acronym for „Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale". LEADER is a bottom-up and cross-sectoral approach to the development of rural areas applied by the European Union. It emphasizes the participation of local actors in the design and implementation of place-based development strategies. In EU's programming period 2014 – 2020 LEADER was extended and renamed to "Community-Led Local Development" (CLLD).

sustainable growth and digital transformation, also provides hope. Aligned with this, the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans highlights the potential of sustainable rural development. By leveraging tools and frameworks from such initiatives, these countries can reshape their rural narrative, integrating technology, sustainability, and cultural richness into a cohesive growth story.

4.4.2   Project Description and Implemented Key Components

The SEDRA project is a comprehensive initiative that focuses on enhancing employment and income opportunities in the rural cross-border landscapes of Southeast European countries, specifically Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. This strategy weaves in economic diversification, promoting sustainable tourism, and leveraging short value chains in domains like tourism and agriculture. This mission is in synergy with the broader objectives of the EU approximation process and the Sofia Declaration on Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The project is jointly implemented by the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in Southeastern Europe (SWG RRD) and GIZ.

To achieve its goals, the SEDRA implements the following three key components with different emphasis over the course of its two phases from 2018 until 2024:

→ Designing Inclusive Institutional Frameworks through Policy Dialogue at Regional Level

SEDRA supports regional and national capacities through facilitating theme-specific policy dialogues central to rural economic diversification. It also **provides technical expertise** on issues related to rural economic diversification in Southeast European countries in their EU approximation process. Activities under this key component include further **strengthening of the regional platforms for political and policy dialogue** and mechanisms for more intensive and broader cooperation, **strengthening the regional stakeholders' capacity** and expertise related to the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Green Agenda, as well as further alignment of the national agriculture and rural development policies of these Southeast European countries to the EU CAP.

→ Empowering Stakeholders, Addressing Social Dynamics and Designing Inclusive Institutional Frameworks through Community-led Local Development

To advance rural development SEDRA amplifies the capacities of local, sub-regional entities, and fosters robust public-private collaborations. Grounded in the ethos of
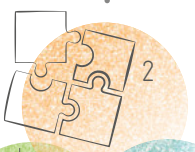
community-led growth, SEDRA draws crucial support from EU pre-accession assistance, which propels it towards its envisioned objectives.

At the heart of SEDRA is the **LEADER approach**, which on a regional cross-border level is considered as Area Based Development Approach (ABDA). ABDA targets distinct geographical zones, especially cross-border regions, plagued by intertwined developmental challenges. It champions a regional-local blueprint that prioritises sustainable evolution, especially in declining rural pockets bound by shared traditions and identities. Central to ABDA's strategy is the cultivation of grassroots development schemes. Such schemes empower local figures to have a say in shaping their community's future. Stakeholder groups on a regional level, analogous to Local Action Groups on a national level, underpin this initiative, facilitating local partnerships, spurring innovation, and offering solutions to perennial rural issues.

The emphasis on networking is pronounced, promoting collaboration amongst various stakeholders, rural locales, and entities vested in rural enhancement. Such alliances act as catalysts, propelling community initiatives and providing avenues to optimise local resources. Reflecting its significance, the LEADER approach now applies to all European Structural and Investment Funds, rebranded as Community Led Local Development (CLLD). Yet, its essence as "LEADER" remains intact, being an indispensable element in the EU-funded rural development agendas.

The core principles of this approach encompass:

→ Curating "local action plans" tailored for regions with populations ranging between 5,000 and 100,000. These plans, characterised by their strategic developmental goals, had a three-year operational timeline.

→ Local partnerships are entrusted with the design and enactment of these action plans, ensuring the plans encapsulate diverse developmental facets and are anchored in an overarching vision.

→ The initiative aligns with the European Structural Funds' programming logic, with either national or regional entities overseeing its implementation.

→ The inception of the LEADER Observatory solidified its commitment to global networking and skill enhancement, while also introducing transnational cooperation as a staple component.

This grassroots approach is defined by its inclusivity, fostering alliances across various sectors, including administration, civil society, and business sectors. It aims to har-

ness collective resources and energy to catalyse regional growth and assimilation. The strategy champions mutual learning, information exchange, and reinforces actors' abilities to realise a participatory rural development vision. Furthermore, it consciously addresses the aspirations of women and the youth, facilitating their full and equitable inclusion in decision-making processes at every level.

→ Incentivising Cross-sectoral Investments through Integrated Approaches of Employment Promotion in Rural Cross-border Areas

The project aims to implement an integrated approach to rural employment promotion in the Western Balkan countries, with a special focus on rural cross-border areas. The integrated approach strengthens the potential for economic diversification through the promotion of sustainable tourism and the valorisation of short value chains in the field of tourism, agriculture, and related sectors (e.g. beekeeping). This is geared towards generation inclusive growth and regional value creation. In this process, a special emphasis is placed on **sustainable and inclusive qualification and training measures for the micro, small and medium enterprises**, and the rural population. Dialogue, cooperation and networking between civil society, public and private sector are facilitated and strengthened through various activities.
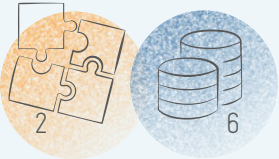
4.4.3   Results and Success Factors

SEDRA provides a rich tapestry of experiences and insights on the implementation of territorial approaches in the dynamic context of rural Southeast Europe. At the crux of SEDRA's success lies its strong commitment to a place-based understanding, seamlessly blending regional cooperation, policy tools, and practices. This commitment was manifested through its diligent facilitation of policy dialogue, harnessing technical expertise, and fortifying the capacities of regional stakeholders. A quintessential exemplar of a **people-centred** and **multi-stakeholder** approach, the project leveraged the LEADER para-

digm, highlighting the significance of community-led local development.

Further, the current and previous projects showcased a remarkable aptitude for addressing employment challenges, tapping into a plethora of tools like capacity building, financial support, subsidies, and fostering inter-personal events. These measures not only provided immediate relief but also instilled the frameworks for long-term growth, ensuring that the benefits of SEDRA percolated through multiple layers of the community.

4.5 Chad: "Integrated Community Development in Northern Chad" (COM-NORD)

→ Using principles of place-based understanding, multi-stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral strategies, the COM-NORD project showcases the territorial approach in an emergency response context, aiming to unite Northern Chad by addressing complex development challenges, empowering local communities and promoting inclusive progress.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ Empowering authorities and stakeholders by strengthening capacities for participatory planning	→ Capacity building of communal development actors in terms of planning, implementation, financing and monitoring or coordination provision and maintenance of basic services across different levels and sectors
→ Incentivising cross-sectoral investment/adequate financing and unlocking territorial opportunities by supporting the implementation of priority measures to improve basic services	→ Support to local communities → Financial support (e.g. local subsidies) for micro-entrepreneurs and local groups

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ Implementing a holistic approach which emphasises on people and ensures that all interventions are relevant to the community's needs.

→ Increasing local acceptance through radical transparency.

→ Applying flexible project's design (based on character of emergency assistance project), that spans across sectors from water and sanitation to agriculture and health.

→ By focusing on both municipal and civil society actors and engaging various committees for monitoring, the project ensures that collaboration is not limited to administrative silos but extends across different levels and sectors.

→ Strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms with key community figures and stakeholders now employing nonviolent conflict resolution methods. This approach has ensured that communal tensions are managed effectively, paving the way for cooperative development efforts.

4.5.1 Context and Challenges

In the expansive Sahel region, Chad showcases the determination of its citizens despite considerable adversities. The country's geographical nuances, combined with its socio-economic dynamics, place it among the world's most challenged nations in terms of development. Evidencing this, the Gross National Income of 2020 indicates an average income of US $ 1.7 per day for Chadians. The United Nations Human Development Index 2019 ranks Chad 187th out of 189 countries, with a development score of 0.401, highlighting its substantial development hurdles. Another pressing concern is food security, as reflected by Chad's 113th ranking out of 116 countries on the World Hunger Index (WHI) 2021. A WHI score of 39.6 categorises its hunger situation as "very severe", with the underlying causes ranging from economic disruptions to environmental changes. The strain is especially felt by Chad´s Northern provinces (Borkou, Ennedi, and Tibesti, commonly known as the BET region) where basic amenities related to water, hygiene, health, and agriculture in BET's major centres – Faya-Largeau, Fada, and Bardai – are sparse or non-existent due to constrained resources and administrative inexperience. Factors like nomadic living, a dry climate, and landmine risks compound with a significant lack of basic resources. For instance, only 10 – 20 % of this region's inhabitants have access to clean water, while 60 – 88 % have to live without sanitation facilities.

## 4.5.2 Project Description and Implemented Key Components

The COM-NORD project is an emergency assistance project that aims to improve access to basic services in the areas of safe drinking-water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), reproductive health and agriculture in the BET region between November 2018 and May 2025. To achieve its goals, the COM-NORD implements the following two key areas:

→ Empowering Authorities and Stakeholders by Strengthening Capacities for Participatory Planning
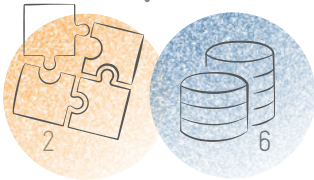
Key component 1 aims to create the conditions for participatory planning of priority interventions in the areas of drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, reproductive health, and agriculture. The municipalities are supported in the participatory concept of their municipal development plans *(Plans de Développement Communal)*, e.g. through **capacity development for planning, financing, and coordinating basic services**. The project also supports committees responsible for monitoring community development plans. These committees are composed of municipal representatives and local non-governmental stakeholders. The latter ones, both at community and regional levels, particularly those focusing on women and children's welfare, also receive training to improve their organisational capabilities and implement capacity development plans. The committees usually meet four times a year to review and approve grant applications submitted by the municipality and local NGOs. Selected key figures are taught nonviolent methods for resolving conflicts.

→ Incentivising Cross-sectoral Investment/Adequate Financing and Unlocking Territorial Opportunities by Supporting the Implementation of Priority Measures to Improve Basic Services

The COM-NORD aims to enhance basic services in drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, reproductive health, and agriculture. This enhancement is carried out in tight collaboration with community members and civil society participants. Approved projects, whether submitted by municipalities or local NGOs, receive (financial) backing. Additionally, micro-entrepreneurs and local collectives benefit from financial assistance.

4.5.3 Results and Success Factors

The COM-NORD project, initiated to address the significant challenges faced by Chad, particularly in the BET region, has shown notable progress. The project's success can be attributed to its holistic approach which **emphasises on people and ensures that all interventions are relevant to the community's needs**. With the project's emphasis on participatory planning and its efforts to implement priority measures, there's been a tangible improvement in the availability and quality of basic services in the BET region. This includes better access to clean drinking water, improved sanitation facilities, reproductive health services, and sustainable agricultural practices. The project's success is also rooted in its character as emergency assistance project which allows for its **flexible project's design**, spanning across sectors from water and

sanitation to agriculture and health. By integrating varied stakeholders and especially the target group in its planning and implementation, the project has promoted inclusivity and ensured that no group is left behind.
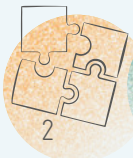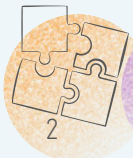
By **focusing on both municipal and civil society actors** (e.g. those centred on welfare of women and children) and engaging various committees for monitoring, the project ensures that collaboration is not limited to administrative silos but extends across different levels and sectors. Their **enhanced skills in planning, coordinating, and financing basic services** have ensured more streamlined and effective interventions. This enhancement has fostered a more robust execution of development plans and initiatives at both community and regional scales.

Conflict resolution mechanisms have been strengthened, with key community figures and stakeholders now employing nonviolent conflict resolution methods. This approach has ensured that communal tensions are managed effectively, paving the way for cooperative development efforts.

In conclusion, the COM-NORD project, through its integrated and inclusive approach, has been instrumental in bringing about significant developmental changes in Northern Chad. The lessons learned from this project can serve as a model for other regions facing similar challenges.

4.6   Tunisia: "Initiative for Regional Development" (IDR)

→ Incorporating territorial principles for Tunisia's growth, the IDR initiative showcases a participatory approach to regional development, fostering inclusivity, empowering communities, and enhancing healthcare and education.

IMPLEMENTED KEY COMPONENTS	TOOLS & PRACTICES
→ Unlocking territorial opportunities through collaborative project planning aligned with regional development plans	→ Capacity development for inclusive project design, management, and implementation → Financial contribution to project implementation, e.g. through direct procurement or integrated PPP → Design of public relations and citizen consultations → Introduction of a procedure's manual
→ Empowering authorities and stakeholders and transcending administrative boundaries through capacity development for steering regional development	→ Conducting intraregional discussions and learning events on regional economic development → Introduction of a process manual, including selection criteria for regional development projects → Capacity development on setting up and implementing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system → Advisory support for partners on public relations strategies for competitions

SUCCESS FACTORS

→ The Regional Sustainable Development Plans (PREDD) offer a clear, structured blueprint for regional development tailored to the characteristics and requirements of specific governorates.

→ The creation of multi-sectorial regional steering committees facilitating comprehensive, territorial development planning filled a gap for inter-ministerial collaboration.

→ Across its three phases, IDR consistently emphasised the importance of citizen partici-
pation, not just in project selection but also in its management. Societal groups some-
times marginalised, e.g. people with special needs and from remote areas, were actively
involved.

→ Collaborative methodology is applied, which involves stakeholders from regional direc-
torates, the regional council, and civil society.

→ Concrete, visible investments in social infrastructure and income-generating measures are
undertaken.

4.6.1   Context and Challenges

Tunisia showcases a dichotomy in its eco-
nomic landscape. Vibrant economic hubs
in Tunis and the Northern coasts stand
in sharp contrast to the quieter interior
regions with high rates of unemployment.
Historically, Tunisia's governance leaned
towards centralisation, often leading to
policies ill-suited for the interior's unique
needs. Development plans for these areas
lagged or faltered during implementation.
In response, the government sought decen-
tralisation to better tailor development to
local requirements. However, transitioning
from centralisation demands a real transfer
of power from the national to the regional
and communal level. It also demands re-
gional bodies to excel decision-making and
execution, inter-ministerial collaboration,
transparent operations, and active commu-
nity engagement. The 2013 constitution
signalled a strong move towards decentral-
isation. A key initiative was the Regional
Sustainable Development Plans (PREDD)

launched between 2013 and 2014. Devel-
oped with Swiss and German cooperation,
these plans covered several governorates
and employed a participatory approach, so-
liciting feedback from varied stakeholders.
This feedback shaped the national plan for
2016 – 2020, advocating a more intercon-
nected planning methodology.

Yet, as Tunisia progresses, regional entities
grapple with the ideals of decentralised
governance versus practical constraints like
limited expertise. Navigating this balance
is crucial. Decentralisation might pave
the way for holistic and inclusive national
growth, given that there is true political
will at the national level to cede power to
the regional and communal level. However,
recent political developments in Tunisia
suggest a shift back towards centralisation,
raising uncertainties about the sustainabili-
ty of past centralisation efforts.

4.6.2 Project Description and Implemented Key Components

IDR aims to bolster participatory methodologies in regional development. In its third phase between January 2015 to April 2024 IDR addresses regional imbalances characterised by significant disparities in development. It aims at improving public services, involving civil society organisations in decision-making processes. Through hands-on projects and visible investments in social infrastructure and income-generating measures, as well as through regional debates, the project contributes to confidence-building between the state and the population. Thus, it creates a conducive framework for reforms and the decentralisation process. Both are priorities that were also set by the Tunisian development plan for 2016 – 2020.

To achieve its goals, the Initiative for Regional Development implements the following two key components, with different emphasis over the course of its three project phases:

→ Unlocking Territorial Opportunities through Collaborative Project Planning Aligned with Regional Development Plans

Under this key component, IDR supported more than 40 individual projects across several governorates and sectors. All of them were anchored in plans developed in a highly participatory manner aiming to demonstrate a new approach to regional development in Tunisia. Support measures included **capacity development for inclusive project design, management, and implementation as well as financial contributions.** While in the early stages of IDR the projects supported focussed largely on health and education, incorporating non-governmental organisations in 2017 also led to a more diversified regional governance structure.

From 2018 onwards, the IDR's strategy underwent significant transformation. Projects were identified through in-depth consultations with specific demographic groups and were often co-conceptualised and co-executed with active members of civil society. This collaborative approach ensured that projects were highly tailored to meet the unique needs of the intended beneficiaries, including rural women, youth, and the disabled. A pivotal component of this initiative was the **introduction of a procedure's manual**, offering a detailed overview of the various stages of a regional development project, from its initiation to its monitoring and final assessment.

The mission was primarily driven by the Regional Steering Committees, multisectorial committees of members from regional directorates, the regional council, and the civil society. Projects supported made substantial contributions to the development of infrastructure and the provision of equipment, with a particular focus

on healthcare and education. Activities spanned from enhancing healthcare facilities to provisioning critical support for those with special needs.

→ Empowering Authorities and Stakeholders and Transcending Administrative Boundaries through Capacity Development for Steering Regional Development

After evaluations highlighted a lack of adequate engagement from partners in project follow-ups, the initiative amplified its focus on continuous monitoring, especially with the health sector authorities regarding equipment maintenance. To address these concerns, the project ramped up its engagement with partners and introduced **capacity development measures for improved monitoring and evaluation** (M&E). With this it emphasised the importance of consistent monitoring and insisted on rectifying previously evaluated projects. M&E was also at the heart of a workshop where plans were devised to revisit the enhancements needed for health sector projects in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and regional stakeholders. **Intra-regional discussions and learning events** on regional economic development were conducted.

Additionally, there was a heightened emphasis on understanding the local scenario during procurements to ensure that local staff was able to use and maintain the new equipment. Contractual processes were put down in a **process manual** and saw refinement. Contracts now encompass details like customer support, warranties, equipment initiation, and training, all aimed at buttressing the projects sustainability. Insights gleaned from these procurement and construction endeavours were captured in a comprehensive report, which was shared with partners. To further solidify partner commitment to equipment and infrastructure maintenance, training sessions were orchestrated in 2018 and 2019, leveraging a maintenance manual curated by the project. This manual, pivotal to the project's success, was translated into Arabic in 2020 and was distributed across Tunisian governmental departments.

4.6.3 Results and Success Factors

IDR has made significant strides towards fostering regional development through participatory methodologies. Not only has it achieved its core objectives but has set a precedent for future developmental projects in Tunisia. This is particularly evident in the **participatory approach** it adopted, with

numerous projects being co-conceptualised and co-executed in close collaboration with the target demographic group and active members of civil society.

The introduction of a procedures manual underlined the project's commitment to

transparency, consistency, and effectiveness, offering a detailed roadmap for all stages of project implementation. This was particularly instrumental for local stakeholders, ensuring clarity of purpose and operations. Furthermore, the project's **focus on vulnerable stakeholders** like rural women, youth, and the disabled, and its alignment with the "Leave no one behind" ethos of the 2030 Agenda, highlights its commitment to inclusivity and broader social development.

Also, on a practical level, the project's contribution to the enhancement of healthcare and educational facilities has been clearly visible. Communities not only witnessed an improvement in public services but also saw the establishment of new recreational and educational spaces. The success of this initiative is also evident in the increased

citizen participation in project management and decision-making processes, proving to be a truly participatory model of governance.

IDR also applied a proactive approach to problem-solving, addressing gaps in project implementation, and rectifying them in real-time. This was particularly evident when evaluations indicated possible areas of improvement, leading to enhanced training for health centre staff and refined procurement processes. In summary, the IDR has set a high benchmark for participatory regional development in Tunisia. It has demonstrated that with a clear vision, collaborative approach, and the right tools in place, regional disparities can be addressed effectively, leading to a more balanced and inclusive growth trajectory for the whole nation.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals a broad selection of territorial approaches in projects which operate in diverse thematic fields, such as biodiversity, climate change, in the provision of public services, management of natural resources, income opportunities or job creation. The exploration of these approaches in the six different countries validates the relevance of all the nine key components outlined in the TP4D White Paper of 2023 and may hence provide insights and guidance for rural development projects adopting place-based approaches worldwide. The territorial approaches presented promote development in rural areas in different contexts, offering a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional alternative to single-sector support efforts. They allow holistic development strategies based on evidence and modern tools – such as for territorial diagnosis and participatory planning processes. Flexibility, people-centredness, transparency, and inclusiveness emerge as critical success factors, highlighting the need for adaptability in navigating complex development challenges in rural areas.

Empowering authorities and stakeholders, and addressing social dynamics, were widely seen in the projects. In fact, all GIZ personnel interviewed strongly emphasised the importance of putting people and the environment at the heart of rural development projects, including their planning. Each implementation process began with a pre-diagnosis phase, involving an active and transparent communication with stakeholders in the target region (e.g. through multi-stakeholder dialogues) to understand their mindset, networks, values, and needs.

A participatory and inclusive approach not only encourages stakeholder collaboration and collective empowerment but also leverages past experiences to inform subsequent generations of programs, projects, and policies. Prioritising meaningful engagement with target communities, using national staff or partnering with respected local organisations significantly increased the success and buy-in of territorial initiatives. Nevertheless, a comprehensive examination of existing literature, policies, and data to understand territorial assets and socio-economic dynamics is still a requirement.

Building on this participatory approach, a concrete framework of action was developed, focusing on the most relevant scales and territories for intervention. By recognising past and present territorial dynamics, this phase facilitates the creation of plausible future scenarios. This includes identifying main drivers for change, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, and setting priorities for action.

Coordination and collaboration between stakeholders is consistently highlighted as essential to streamline efforts and maximise impact. Hence, an integral part of the planning stage is the establishment of robust governance structures such as collaborative platforms for information sharing, monitoring, and discussing essential adjustments for continuous success. Access to data, presented in an understandable manner for all stakeholders, further aids in decisive implementation.

In conclusion, implementing a territorial approach entails an ongoing cycle of planning, execution, monitoring, and learning, designed to stay effective, responsive and inclusive. This people-centred approach is echoed throughout our examples and its importance cannot be stressed enough.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development