

LOCAL TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Conceptual note*¹

Why is local territorial development important? To successfully compete in the global economy, countries increasingly need policies, programs and projects that support capacity-building in areas of key economic and developmental growth (metropolitan areas, export-based agricultural regions, mining regions, Silicon Valley-type industrial or service regions, tourist centres, etc). Furthermore, in the age of globalisation, the goods and services production chain can be fragmented among many territories and countries across the world. Indeed, drawing on innovation capacity and local knowledge, territories in any given country can connect directly to the world economy and culture. In fact, economic competitiveness is increasingly based on knowledge and the ability to innovate, and the transfer of knowledge is a prerequisite to transforming potential into growth and development.

Definition and Substance

“Local Development”, “Territorial Development” and other concepts regularly used in specialized literature are subject to various interpretations and are the object of debate. This conceptual note does not seek to find a definitive answer to the debate but rather to identify key issues in order to focus activities for the pilot project.

*Local territorial development is the sum of social, cultural and economic processes in any given territory (metropolitan area, urban center, region, province, municipality, etc) that fuel its economic growth and improve its residents' quality of life. In order to achieve territorial development, local institutions, professional organisations, community groups, businesses, government officials, administrators, etc., must possess quality, relevant information and knowledge, organize themselves and work together, drawing upon their potential material, institutional, political, and human resources. Together, the residents of a territory can define their priorities and capitalize on their inherent advantages to become competitive and actively participate in globalisation.*²

This definition highlights potential issues of interest such as:

- Technological development, market research and marketing
- Business administration and financial management
- Labour-market diversity and availability of qualified professionals
- Economic association capacity
- Links between industry and science
- Openness of society to innovation and evolution
- Information systems and communication means and mechanisms
- Ability to generate and implement political projects and development programs
- Ability to negotiate and understand local groups, associations, community networks and formal and informal authority structures
- Ability to generate initiatives in cooperation with local population
- Social security network capacity
- Cultural values and traditions

It also highlights the need to work with stakeholders such as:

- Political representatives and high-level government officials
- Program administrators and officials
- Businesspeople, whether company owners or administrators
- Scientists and technicians
- Workers in the cultural sector (educators, artists, journalists)
- Institutions (universities, churches, schools)
- Social organisations (unions, NGOs, professional associations, entrepreneurs associations)
- Ethnic organisations

¹ This conceptual note is based on the work of Sergio Boisier, *Desarrollo (Local): ¿De qué estamos hablando?*, Santiago de Chile, 1999; *Globalisation, integración supranacional y procesos territoriales locales: ¿Hay sincronía?*, Santiago de Chile, 2005 ; and *Desarrollo Local: Aspectos epistémicos, valóricos y de gestión*, <http://www.advocate-institute.com/partnerships/resources.htm>. Exhaustive discussion of the concept in the works cited.

² Buarque, S. *Metodología de Planejamento do Desenvolvimento Local e Municipal Sustentável*. IICA, Recife, Brasil. 1999: 23/25. Vázquez-Barquero, A. *Desarrollo local. Una estrategia de creación de empleo*. Pirámide publishers, Madrid, Spain. 1988: 129.