



METREX BENCHMARK

Addition to the METREX Practice Benchmark of
Effective Metropolitan Spatial Planning

Planning for urban and rural relationships

METREX
125 West Regent Street
GLASGOW G2 2SA
Scotland UK
T. +44 (0) 1292 317074
F. +44 (0) 1292 317074
secretariat@eurometrex.org
<http://www.eurometrex.org>

Addition to the METREX Practice Benchmark of Effective Metropolitan Spatial Planning

Capability for informed decision-making at the metropolitan level

Introduction – urban/rural relationships

Urban and rural areas have long had an interdependent relationship. At various stages urban areas will have attracted population from their surrounding areas, fuelling urban growth and perhaps contributing to rural decline, and then reversed the process with the urban population moving out to the more accessible parts of their surrounding areas to commute, retire, weekend or holiday.

Rural decline or growth

The result for rural areas can be a need to cope with a declining or growing population.

Rural decline – problems

- Selective out migration leaving an aging population
- Loss of tax revenues and spending power
- Loss of public sector services such as education, health and public transport
- Loss of private sector services such as retailing
- Loss of community activities such as leisure pursuits
- Loss of economic activity and employment opportunities
- Declining property values
- Perhaps empty buildings and vacant and derelict land
- Perhaps unused or underused agricultural land
- Perhaps a poorly maintained rural environment

Rural decline – opportunities

- Opportunities for low cost economic activities such as crafts or home working in design and IT
- Demand for telecommunications and internet services
- Agricultural opportunities to meet demand for local urban food supplies
- Second homes and local tourism
- Recreation including walking, cycling, riding and water sports
- Nature pursuits
- Health activities
- Renewable energy generation including wind, solar, hydro and biomass
- Water management and supply and waste water treatment and recycling

Rural growth – problems

- Pressure on infrastructure including roads and water services
- Pressure on the local property market
- Perhaps a loss of local character, identity and culture

Rural growth – opportunities

- As rural decline but with greater prospects of success
- In addition, employment opportunities in the public and private sectors
- In particular, employment opportunities in the building sector

Planning for urban and rural relationships

Planning responses to these various problems and opportunities will require co-operation between urban and rural authorities and “stakeholders” (those public and private interests with a role to play in the alleviation of rural decline or the realisation of rural opportunities). They will require both sectoral and geographic responses and an integrated approach.

They will also require a recognition by urban areas of their responsibilities in their rural areas of influence and, in particular, of the need for cooperation in the spheres of strategic planning, including spatial planning and development, infrastructure, energy, environmental and natural resource planning (including agribusiness and food supplies).

BENCHMARK

Planning for urban and rural relationships should normally include,

- 1 An analysis of urban and rural futures over the medium (10-15 years) and longer (25-30 years) term in metropolitan areas of influence and their wider metropolitan regions
- 2 An assessment of prospective changes in urban and rural relationships, particularly urban generated rural decline or growth
- 3 An assessment of the problems and opportunities likely to be associated with rural decline or growth
- 4 An assessment of the integrated sectoral and geographic rural strategies that will be required
- 5 In particular, integrated rural strategies for spatial planning and development, infrastructure, energy, environmental and natural resource planning
- 6 An assessment of the supporting social and economic initiatives that will be required to respond to rural decline or growth
- 7 An assessment of the necessary coordinated urban and rural responses to decline or growth
- 8 A Vision for the rural future in metropolitan areas of influence and their wider metropolitan regions
- 9 Supporting rural sectoral and geographic policies, programmes and projects

INDICATORS FOR THE BENCHMARK

- a Does the Spatial Plan for the metropolitan area of influence and its wider region include an analysis of urban and rural futures and assessments of their implications in terms of rural problems and opportunities?
- b Does the Spatial Plan include a Vision for the rural future and effective rural sectoral and geographic policies, programmes and projects?

The “metropolitan” dimension and urban/rural relationships

Europe has searched for an adequate term to describe the predominant urban form that has developed over the past 50-60 years. Urban areas have grown with suburbanisation to the extent that the Urban Audit shows that core cities now comprise only 50% of their Larger Urban Zone (LUZ or wider urbanised area). Such larger urban areas have been recognised as being “metropolitan” in character. Other comparable terms in use have included conurbations and agglomerations.

Metropolitan Areas (1 on the diagram)

Metropolitan areas can be surrounded by smaller cities, towns and villages, which look to them for higher level services and employment. These lie within the metropolitan “area of influence” or Functional Urban Area (FUA). Functional Urban Areas can include rural areas within which there is often a presumption against development to control urban sprawl. These are Metropolitan Areas. Very often, for example in the London/Paris/Rhine/Ruhr or Po Valley areas, metropolitan areas can overlap and share specialities and complementary functions.

Metropolitan Regions (2 on the diagram)

Beyond such polycentric European core areas, metropolitan areas can have much wider, but less intensive, areas of influence containing larger rural areas. These are Metropolitan Regions. They can generate relationships that are based less on the strong ties of interdependence that exist within Metropolitan Areas, for example commuting, and more on complementarity, for example, the provision of food, water, energy and leisure resources. Within outer rural areas in Metropolitan Regions there may be a presumption in favour of development to help sustain their viability and vitality.

Metropolitan governance and urban/rural relationships

“Governance” means the competence to take and implement strategic decisions at the metropolitan level, whether by consensus or through statutory powers.

Metropolitan governance is required within Metropolitan Regions and Areas if the problems that exist or are foreseen are to be addressed effectively and the opportunities that are in prospect are to be realised successfully. Without effective governance the metropolitan community is unable to secure the future that it aspires to. It is disenfranchised from key decisions on its future well-being and prosperity.

The formal geographic definition of Europe’s 100 or so recognised metropolitan areas, with populations of 500,000 or more, has not been achieved because the existing NUT’s areas do not correspond to the FUA involved. In these circumstances it is important that metropolitan areas and regions should lie within the nearest available administrative boundaries so that the most effective governance mechanisms can be arranged.

Planning for urban and rural relationships

Analyses

Urban and rural futures
Changes in urban and rural relationships

Assessments

Rural decline or growth
Rural problems and opportunities

Integrated rural responses

Sectoral and geographic

Spatial planning and development

- Infrastructure
- Energy
- Environment
- Natural resources

Supporting social and economic initiatives

Coordinated urban/rural responses

Sectoral and geographic

Spatial planning and development

Supporting social and economic initiatives

Vision for the rural future in metropolitan areas and regions

Sectoral and geographic

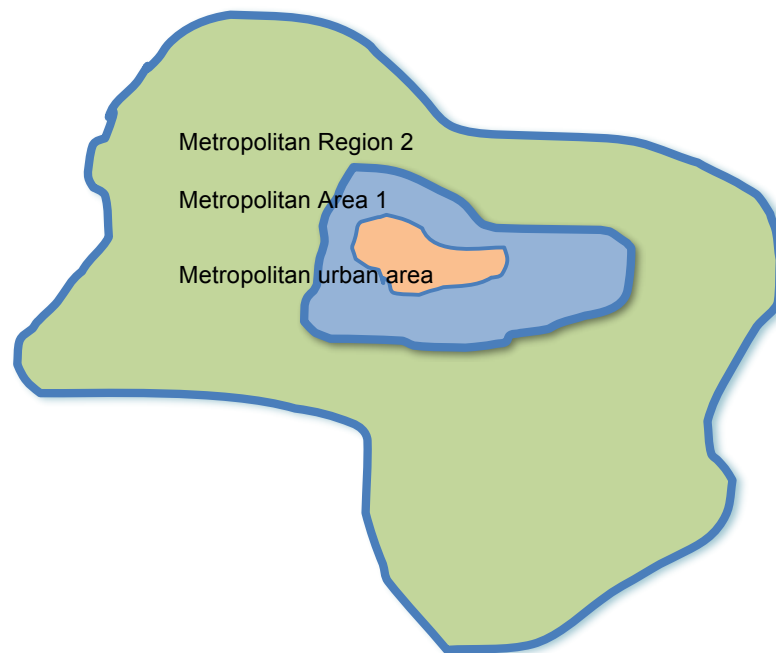
- Strategies
- Policies
- Programmes
- Projects

Metropolitan governance

Statutory or voluntary

- Metropolitan area
- Metropolitan region

Clarification of terms



Metropolitan Area

- Functional Urban Area (ESPON) or metropolitan area and its area of influence
- Within which lies a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ – Urban Audit and a core city (or polycentric cities)
- Rural/Urban policy issues within Metropolitan Areas include urban sprawl and the merging of cities, towns and villages
- Rural/Urban policy measures responses can include greenbelts, green wedges and urban fringe management

Metropolitan Region

- Less intensive urban/rural relationships (day tourism, recreation and leisure)
- Complementarity of functions (urban services/rural resources)
- This is the Cohesion policy area for RURBAN and the focus for URMA
- The foundation is socio-economic solidarity (Responsible Amsterdam) and rural resource use and development for mutual benefit (food, energy, water and health)