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PROGRAMMING OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN POLISH REGIONS. CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND NEEDS

Abstract: The effectiveness of regional development management does not depend so much on the amount of funds as on the awareness among regional entities, *i.e.* regional governments in the case of Poland, of development goals and their proper programming, creating institutions, monitoring development and adjusting it to changing conditions in both the internal and external environment[1]. Such awareness is already widespread in Poland at all management levels, from the national to the local one. This does not necessarily entail, however, a universal high quality of these elements or their adequacy with the theoretical concepts both in terms of programming and institutionalization, cohesion and uniformity. Further on, I will describe the current state and needs of socio-economic development programming in Polish regions in the light of the above thesis.

Key words: Regional development management, regional programming, regional strategies.

1. Programming of the socio-economic development at the regional level in Poland is currently underway

Development programming is strictly related to regional development management and its basic instrument, *i.e.* strategic planning. In general, this field of knowledge is in some ways related to papers on strategic enterprise management and the works of M.E. Porter (*e.g.* 2006). Many authors in Poland evaluated development programming and suggested solutions to the problems it poses. Important contributions in this field include the works of T. Markowski, J. Szlachta, A. Klasik, J. Hausner, T. Kudłacz and K. Heffner.

The accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 was a significant turning point, marking the beginning of socio-economic development programming in Polish regions (voivodeships). From this point on, multiple programming documents began to be

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[1] The theoretical basis is discussed in greater detail in: Hausner, Bienio [1999]. The topic was broadly presented by Kudłacz [2008].

prepared, in a large part subordinate to the principles of the EU cohesion policy. Such documents (regional development strategies and land development plans) had been drawn up earlier as a result of the provisions of the Act on regional government and the Act on spatial planning and land development (the first edition of regional development strategies was prepared in the years 1999-2001). They had a rather experimental character and served as the basis for testing and discussion. These documents were to allow for preparations in order to meet EU standards rather than be from the start professional documents prepared according to the theoretical principles and subject to comprehensive social discussion and proceedings. The requirement to draw up such documents was stipulated in laws and other legal documents, regardless of whether they were necessary and with little regard to their hierarchy and relations. An important fact is that there was no institution indicated as the co-ordinator of the system of socio-economic development programming and monitoring of the implementation and validity of such documents adopted by national and local/regional government bodies. This was supposed to be the role of the Government Center for Strategic Studies (*Rządowe Centrum Studiów Strategicznych; RCSS*) established on 1 January 1997, but this national unit was quickly dissolved (2006) for political reasons. It was the Ministry of Regional Development that finally took up this role in 2007, pursuant to the Act on the principles of implementing development policy.

After that period, when Poland had become a member of the European Union, a review of the strategic and programming documents at the national level was conducted and presented in a proper document that was submitted to the Council of Ministers[2]. This evaluation showed that at the national level there was a chaotic multitude of programming and planning documents resulting from a chaotic multitude of regulations. 406 strategies and other strategic documents were adopted by the Council of Ministers since mid-1989 to the end of 2006. The assessment of these documents showed that 140 of them were no longer of use and should be repealed, 146 documents expired because of the time span indicated therein having had elapsed. Finally, 120 documents of various range, importance and level of detail were considered to be useful for application in various ways. The result of these studies was a decision of the cabinet to reduce the number of development strategies and policies from 42 binding documents of that type at that time to 9 new development strategies serving as a means to implement the medium- and long-term national development strategies.

These strategies are as follows:
1. Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy
2. Human Resources Development Strategy

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[2] Evaluation of strategic documents adopted in 1989-2006, MRD, 2007. The document was approved by the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers on 29 June 2007 and recommended to the cabinet as an information material. Document was forwarded to the members of the Council of Ministers on 18 July 2007. As a result on 27 April 2009 the cabinet approved the *Guidelines to the system of Polish development management*. Then *The plan of organizing the development strategies* was accepted by the Council of Ministers by the decision of 24 November 2009 and its later revisions of 10 March 2010 and 30 April 2011.

3. Transport Development Strategy
4. Energy Safety and Environment
5. Efficient State
6. Social Capital Development Strategy
7. National Strategy of Regional Development 2010-2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas
8. National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland
9. Strategy for Sustainable Development of Rural Areas and Agriculture.

The *National Strategy of Regional Development 2010-2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas* is of crucial importance. The nine strategies listed above have become an element of a proposed concept of a strategic programming subsystem in Poland. The system of strategic documents would consist of the four following levels [*Założenia...* 2009, p. 25]:

1. The first level of strategic programming consists of long-term horizontal strategies with a minimum 15-year long implementation perspective.
2. The second level of strategic programming consists of horizontal medium-term strategies with a 4-10-year long implementation period.
3. The third level of strategic programming consists of other development strategies. In the case of strategies prepared by the central government, the documents have a 4-10-year long implementation period. However, the timeframe must not exceed the implementation period of the currently valid medium-term national development strategy, unless a longer period is required by the specific character of a given area. The strategies devised by regional and local governments may adopt a different timeframe, but should include a clearly defined period which does not exceed that of the current medium-term national development strategy.
4. The fourth level of strategic programming consists of programs with an implementation period ranging from one to several years, but not longer than the implementation period of the relevant development strategy.

The Ministry has also presented the concept of programming levels and the basic categorisation of strategic documents in the form of Table 1:

As the above table indicates, such a classification does little to introduce order to the system of programming documents since a document may be treated as a strategy regardless of its timeframe (with the exception of the fourth level of programming which refers to operational programs). In order to adjust this proposition, or rather the already functioning system, to the model that should be built, it should correspond to the categorization presented in Figure 1.

The national development strategy as the basic document, which should be enacted by the Parliament, would involve a long timeframe of at least 15 years. It would contain the principal objectives and development directions in terms of economy, society and territory. It would be the basis for elaborating the sectoral/thematic area strategies for the most important sectors/thematic area in the range of economy, society and space in the same timeframe. These documents should include more precise

Table 1

Programming levels and categories of strategic documents

Programming level	Document category	Timeframe	Document name
I	Long-term strategies	Minimum 15 years	Long-term national development strategy
II	Medium-term strategies	4-10 years	Medium-term national development strategy
			The national regional development strategy
			National cohesion policy
III	Other development strategies	Strategies prepared by the central government administration for 4-10 years, but not longer than the implementation period of currently valid medium-term national development strategy, unless a longer period is required by the specific character of a given area, *e.g.* transport, protection of the natural environment, *etc.* (thematic, sectoral and supraregional strategies) Strategies prepared by local and regional governments – the specified timeframe, should not exceed the current medium-term national development strategy (incl. regional/ voivodeship strategies)	Documents which reflect the priorities included in the medium-term national development strategy
IV	National and operational programs	One or a few years, but not longer than the medium-term national development strategy or the adequate development strategy	Documents that serve as tools in the implementation of adequate development strategies

Source: [Założenia… 2009], p. 25].

objectives and development directions, as well as the means by which they are to be accomplished, obligatory for the sector/field/branch and enacted by the cabinet. The lack of implementation or any changes to the strategy would always require a permission in the form of a resolution by the Council of Ministers. Such changes could be introduced only when justified by important causes and the appropriate minister should be personally responsible for the progress of implementation of the strategy and achieving the development indicators included therein.

The methods of implementing the sectoral/thematic/field strategies would be indicated in appropriate programs which would also present the strategy in greater de-
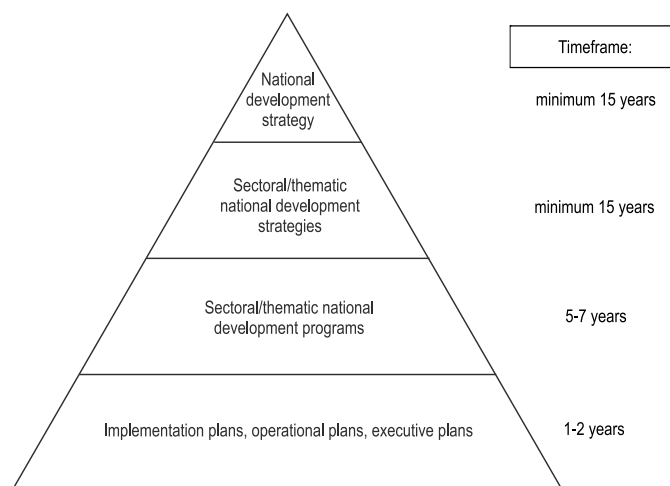
Figure 1. Theoretical structure of strategic planning documents at the national level

Source: Own work.

tail. Moreover, they would indicate the sources and amount of program funding, the entities responsible for its implementation and the indicators of strategy implementation. The last, operational level of programming would be connected to the implementation plans, operational plans or executive plans, implementing an appropriate development program (sectoral/thematic/field) and it would include specific projects, their funding and the persons/entities responsible (usually by name), the implementation schedule, the expected results and the way to achieve the program indicators.

When comparing the proposed model of programming levels to the theoretical model of such a system, it is worth mentioning that despite the limiting of the number of existing documents and introduction of 9 strategies to implement the medium- and long-term national development strategies, no coherent and consistent national model of social/economic/spatial programming has been created. This is probably a consequence of the lack of possibility to codify the existing law from this point of view, starting from the acts of parliament and ending with cabinet regulations. It may also be the result of abandoning this stage of structuring of the legal system. This drawback is not mitigated by the proposal of three strategic planning fields resulting from the documents' subject range, as the proposed documents can be divided into three areas of programming: socio-economic, territorial and spatial, as shown in the diagram below (Figure 2). Some doubts arise when comparing the current state of affairs to the theoretical model and the timelines of the proposed documents in the main programming fields. First, there is a need to prepare the medium-term national development strategy, as it is the document supposed to serve as a national development program. Second, the national spatial development plan is problematic as a long-term document without any decision-making power. It has remained in its current state,
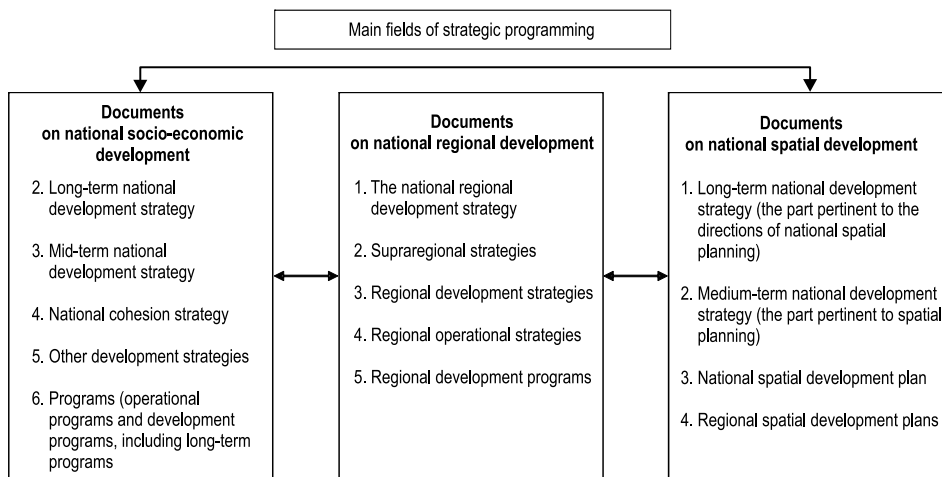
Figure 2. Main fields of strategic programming
Source: As in Table 1.

i.e. the National Spatial Development Concept 2030, a study, a document analytic in nature. It is, therefore, likely that despite the attempts to introduce order into the system, what should be called *a program* will still be known as *a strategy* (it is even
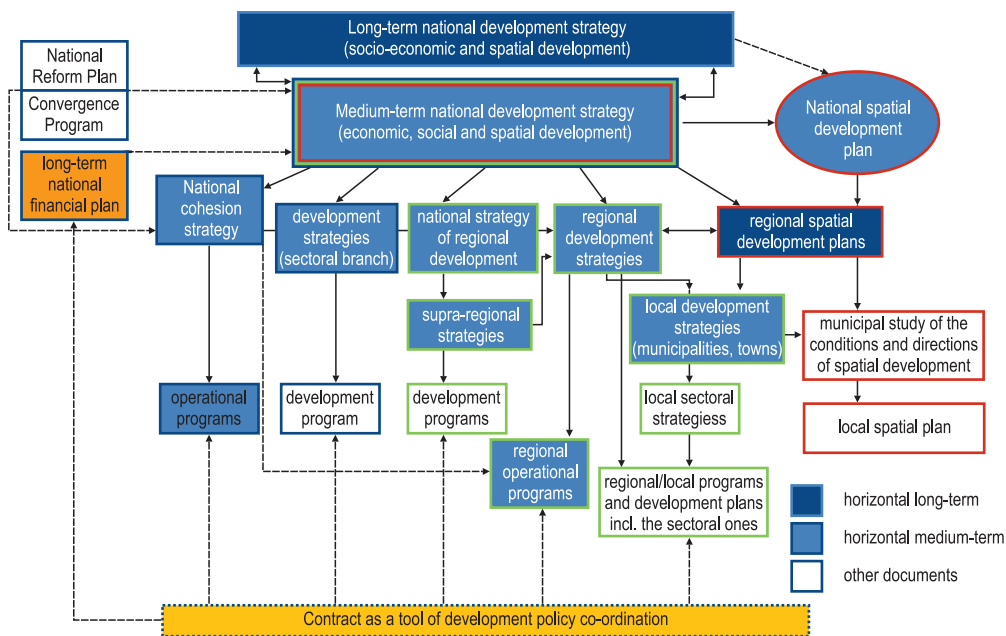

Figure 3. Strategic documents' order proposed by the Ministry of Regional Development
Source: As in Table 1, p. 29.

possible that plans will become strategies). There is an evident lack of a link consisting of national sectoral/thematic development strategies expanding on the national development strategy, since the medium-term national development strategy should in fact be (and bear the name of) a national development program. Such a document should in turn serve as the basis for national sectoral/thematic development plans. Hence, after some structuring, the Ministry of Regional Development's proposal of a strategic programming model (incl. the local level) can be presented as in Figure 3.

2. Programming documents have not been inventoried at the regional level and in many cases decisions regarding their expiration have not been made

The strategic documentation model proposed by the Ministry of Regional Development at the regional level puts forward 4 types of (already existing) strategic documents: regional development strategies, regional operational programs, regional development programs and regional spatial development plans. At the same time, other documents were being prepared at both the regional and national level as a result of requirements in relevant legal acts or out of individual programming incentive intended to allow various areas of activity to be pursued based on such documentation. In effect, regions possess numerous documents, not necessarily relating to each other, as each one deals with individual objectives and fields of activity of regional governments. I am not familiar with any national studies which would present data on the state of knowledge in this field or inventories of programming documents. Carrying out such wide-ranging research is beyond the possibilities of the author, since it would require an enormous amount of work and time and would be very costly. I hope that such work was done as part of the preparation for the new EU programming period. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the structure of programming documentation may be expected to be organized in an orderly way at the regional level of management. In theory, it should be identical with the national level (Figure 1) while referring to regional level. It should also be limited to three levels. The regional development strategy should serve as the basis for regional development management, covering a span of at least 15 years. This document should serve as the basis for development programs of up to 7 years' time span dealing with selected branches and sectors identified as crucial by the central or the regional government. These programs should be implemented by means of executive plans (implementation plans, operational plans, etc.) covering 1-2 years. Such a hierarchical system of strategic programming documentation would be concise and clear, while the documents prepared would result from the existing legislation codified from this perspective or from identified needs.

In my opinion, the inventory work carried out by the Mazovian regional authorities may serve to illustrate the current situation in the programming documentation

Mazovia's programming documents according to their timeframes,
validity and completeness according to the criteria identified
in the Act on the principles of implementing development policy

	Title	Obligatory	Currenly valid	Timeframe	Complete according to the Act
1	Regional development strategy	yes	yes[a]	2020	yes
2	Regional spatial development plan	yes	yes[b]	none	n/a
3	Long-term financial forecast	yes	yes (rolling document)	2034	no
4	Health problems counteraction program	yes	yes	2017	yes
5	Air protection program (Żyrardów, Radom, Warsaw)	yes	yes	2016	no
6	Domestic violence counteraction program	yes	yes	2016	no
7	Drug addiction counteraction program	yes	yes	2016	no
8	Alcoholism problem solving and prevention program	yes	yes	2015	no
9	Monument care program	yes	yes	2015	no
10	Psychological healthcare program	yes	yes	2015	no
11	Environmental protection program	yes	yes	2014 (+2015-2018)	yes
12	Regional operational program	yes	yes	2013	yes
13	Air protection program (benzopyrenes)	yes	yes	2013	no
14	Noise protection program (7 programs)	yes	yes	2013	yes
15	Social policy strategy	yes	yes	2013	no
16	Program for equal opportunities for the disabled	yes	yes	2013	no
17	Annual communication plan of the Regional operational program	yes	yes	2013	yes[c]
18	Yearly program for co-operation with NGOs	yes	yes	2012	no
19	Annual communication plan of the Rural development program	yes	yes	2012	no
20	Annual plan of information of activity of the Regional operational program	yes	yes	2012	no
21	Plan to increase employment	yes	yes	2012	no
22	Waste management plan	yes	no[d]	2011 (+2012-2015)	no
23	Air protection programs (8 programs)	yes	no[e]	2011	no
24	Air protection programs (7 programs)	yes	no[e]	2011	no
25	Air protection program (ozone)	yes	no	2010	no
26	Program to increase forest coverage	no	yes	2020	yes
27	Regional innovation strategy	no	yes	2015	no
28	Regional e-development strategy	no	yes	2013	yes
29	Small water retention program	no	yes	2015	no

	Title	Obligatory	Currenly valid	Timeframe	Complete according to the Act
30	Regional tourism development strategy	no	yes	2013	no
31	Regional promotion strategy	no	yes	2013	no
32	Regional government's action plan for agricultural development	no	yes	2013	no
33	Regional government action plan for the promotion of agricultural production groups	no	yes	2013	no
34	E-development strategy	no	yes	2013	yes
35	Psychiatric treatment development strategy	no	yes	2013	no
36	Regional scholarship program for particularly talented students	no	yes	2012/2013	no[f]
37	Sports infrastructure development program	no	yes	2012	no[f]
38	Regional government support program for voluntary fire brigades	no	yes	2012	no
39	Regional education support program for talented pupils and students	no	yes	none	no
40	Management strategy for the Mazovia brand	no	yes	none	no
41	Program for the possibilities of usage of renewable sources of energy	no	yes	none	no
42	Water resources protection and development program	no	yes	none	no[g]
43	Let's play for success	no	no	2011	no (system project)
44	Regional government program for financing development	no	no	2009	no[f]
45	Regional government instrument for supporting development	no	no	2009	no[f]
46	Restructuring program for specialized healthcare units	no	no	2007	no

a) formally valid, but it does not take into account the legislative amendments introduced after its enactment; b) valid, currently being updated; c) is not a program according to the bill; d) update in progress; e) update is not planned; f) executive document; g) study document.

Dates in parentheses indicate the timeframe within which the document sets frame goals, exceeding the validity period of the main part of the document.

Source: [Sulmicki, Wysocka 2012, pp. 64-65].

structure, which I suspect to be typical for Polish regions. Regional strategies and development programs are prepared by various institutions, depending on their subject matter. They refer to different timeframes and contain different amounts of detail. The dates of preparation also vary significantly – it is worth mentioning that a considerable number of documents had been prepared before the 2008 amendment to the Act on principles of implementing development policy which introduced the current definitions of strategies and development programs [Sulmicki, Wysocka 2012, p. 9]. A total of 65 strategic/programming documents were identified – as presented in Table 2.

As the Table 2 shows, 25 documents (out of 46 types, without breaking some of them down into individual analogical documents for local areas) are obligatory and their preparation is required by the law, while 18 were prepared by the regional government of its own accord. It may be stated that, even though some of the documents were prepared before the enactment of the Act on the principles of implementing development policy, the hierarchy of the regional obligatory documents fits into the model presented above: regional strategy – programs – plans. Only the regional spatial development plan is an exception to the rule, since the current regulations make it a strategic document, while it should be a program. The social policy strategy should be a program, the annual program for co-operation with NGOs should be a plan and the waste management plan should be a program. These changes are necessary due to the timeframe of the documents and their content. The changes I have indicated could be introduced through appropriate amendments to the existing legislation.

On the other hand, the second group of documents indicates a rather productive programming activity of the regional government units which identify in greater detail their areas of activity through the program documents. The nomenclature is in this case more varied, as is their relation to the theoretical model. If we assume that only one regional development strategy should be elaborated in each area and all the other documents should be programs and implementation plans, then in this group we can already identify 5 sectoral/thematic strategies, the long-term program to increase forest coverage with the same horizon as the strategy, two agricultural plans which are in fact closer to programs, and four documents which are plans in their substance, but are named differently. Changes in these documents, prepared of the regional authorities' own initiative and according to their own needs, may be implemented in a much simpler way that in the case of the first group, which requires amendments at the national level. The horizon for which some of the documents were prepared has expired, nevertheless, they should be cancelled through official decisions. However, such cases are rare in the Mazovian Region.

3. The programming system is characterized by terminological chaos

The analysis of strategic-programming documents from the point of view of uniformity of terms, categories, *etc.* is a task impossible to be carried out by one person alone. This is why I would like to present only one example of a domain connected to development and its directions. Social capital will serve as an example on which I will demonstrate the conclusions I have reached during my research on all the other regional development strategies [Strzelecki 2010].

First of all, I should indicate the variety of categories according to which the strategies are structured. Apart from the same "mission" and "vision", the remaining

elements constitute a plethora of categories. First of all, there are the categories: the goal may be "intermediate", "superior", "general" or "strategic" or simply a "priority". At the lower, implementation level, we have "operational goals", elsewhere "directions of activity", *etc.* Imposing a uniform structure on regional strategies would therefore require standardization with the possibility of including modules peculiar to a given region.

As it turns out, only in Mazovia has the development of social capital been identified as an intermediate goal of the strategy, placed at the highest level of the document's structure. The "social capital category" is mentioned in structural terms once in the strategies of the following regions: Lubelskie, Małopolskie and Wielkopolskie, and twice in Mazovia and Podkarpackie. However, despite this term having been introduced into the documentation structure at various levels, in many cases the proposed activities often boil down to actions related to human rather than social capital. The activities presented in the strategy of Lubelskie region may be for the most part classified as belonging to the category of social capital. The Wielkopolskie strategy in turn includes ones that go further, refer to the concept of social capital and are close to theoretical writings. However, it is the development strategy of the Małopolskie region which includes planned social capital activities which are the closest to the theory. The relevant references may be found in the seventh area of the main goal, *i.e.* in *Regional development management* as development policy direction 7.2 entitled *Shaping and developing civic activity and reinforcing social capital*. The following activities are planned within the framework of this policy direction [*Strategia…* 2010, p. 80]:
– shaping and reinforcing the regional identity, incl. family values;
– shaping, reinforcing and promoting civic activity and social participation of the inhabitants of the region, incl. civic education among children and youth;
– partnership and co-operation with local and regional media;
– an effective system for co-operation with the nongovernmental sector, which would consist primarily of:
  ● developing co-operation between different sectors in the field of regional and local development on the basis of agreed standards of public tasks implementation;
  ● supporting the institutional development, professionalization and sectoral integration of nongovernmental institutions;
  ● supporting and diffusing voluntary activities;
  ● diffusing public and social partnership and best practice promotion.

In the strategies of the remaining 11 regions, there are activities which can be classified to be in the area of social capital, but which have not been defined as such. They are placed among other goals, but their character corresponds to that of activities from this field. Even this cursory review shows that just one conceptual category causes problems with how it is understood in regional programming documents. The problem only gets more serious when we reach the level of specific operational activi-

ties. It is likely that a similar situation exists in various other elements contributing to the structure of regional strategies as well as programs.

Conclusion

This analysis, inevitably short due to the lack of space, demonstrates that the system of regional programming is still underway at both the regional and the national level. The central government's attempt to introduce order into the system of strategic-programming documents has reduced the number of strategies, but a significant chaos in documentation will continue until appropriate legislative regulations are introduced along with another stage of implementing order and coherence among the documents. The organising work and the legislative amendments should aim at achieving a coherent structure of strategic programming documents as close to the theoretical model as possible.

Another task to be carried out is the integration of spatial planning with socio-economic programming. These should not be two separate programming trends, but an integrated one, at both the national and regional level. There should, therefore, be strategies of socio-economic-spatial development, at both the national and regional level. The same rule should be applied accordingly to the sectoral/thematic strategies and development programs, at both the national and the regional level.

The third area where work should be carried out is the standardization of documents, of their structure, the categories applied, the understanding and definitions of terms. The research carried out on regional strategies shows that it would be impossible to create a single common document out of them.

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