Discover the OECD Trento Centre for Local Development

OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities
About the OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. Our goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all. We draw on almost 60 years of experience and insights to better prepare the world of tomorrow. Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, we work on establishing international norms and finding evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, we provide a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and global standard-setting.

More: www.oecd.org

About the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

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

More: www.oecd.org/cfe

About the OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme

Since 1982, the mission of LEED is to contribute to the creation of more and better quality jobs through more effective policy implementation, innovative practices, stronger capacities and integrated strategies for local employment and economic development.

More: www.oecd.org/cfe/leed

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The OECD Trento Centre for Local Development

The OECD Trento Centre for Local Development was established by the OECD, the Italian Government and the Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy) in 2003. It is an integral part of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities.

The mission of the Trento Centre is to provide policy advice and develop policy makers and practitioners’ capacities for the effective design and implementation of policies that are tailored to local needs, focusing on the key drivers of local economic growth and communities’ well-being in OECD and non-OECD countries.

Global challenges, including climate change, geopolitical tensions and public health crises, alongside societal shifts such as ageing populations, digital transformation and changing labour markets, are testing the limits of current policy strategies in many OECD countries. These pressures are obstructing worldwide prosperity and growth, signalling the necessity for profound adjustments that will impact individuals, communities and businesses in different ways. The Trento Centre commits to national and sub-national governments to build their capacity to design and pilot innovative economic policies and frameworks that support a sustainable and resilient development paradigm.

The Trento Centre works “from data to practice” to provide strategic advice and capacity building to enhance local policy implementation. Building on the granular analysis of its Spatial Productivity Lab and leveraging Trento and other communities as “living labs”, the Trento Centre has been developing innovative and effective approaches to local development for over 20 years.

The activities of the Trento Centre support the work programme of the OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme. Additionally, it also serves the OECD Committee on Regional Development Policy and the OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship.

The three main pillars of work

- **Data analysis and research (Spatial Productivity Lab)**
  Today, OECD countries face two major productivity challenges: decreasing growth and increasing inequality. How can regional, rural and urban policy help develop a more inclusive and dynamic system for economic growth?

- **Place-based policy analysis and advice**
  Analysing the impact of public policies at subnational level is essential for informing place-based development agendas. How can knowledge of local employment and economic development policies and practices be improved?

- **Capacity building for local practitioners on a global scale**
  Capacity building is about creating, developing and strengthening the ability of organisations, communities and individuals to meet challenges and achieve goals. How can we work together across institutional boundaries and policy silos and develop synergies?
Data analysis and research (Spatial Productivity Lab)

The Spatial Productivity Lab at the Trento Centre is a dedicated research laboratory that helps policymakers promote economic growth in their region through custom analyses, peer-learning exchanges, and specific policy recommendations.

Economies that are more productive generate greater ability to support and enhance wellbeing of their citizens via higher incomes, better infrastructure, more services and improved sustainability of welfare systems.

Productivity levels vary widely within countries, because many sources of productivity growth are locally defined or are increasingly sensitive to regional and local conditions. While productivity levels are converging across countries, within-country productivity differences are stubbornly persistent. An explicit focus on subnational drivers is needed to devise policy solutions that boost productivity in all types of places and reduce inequalities.

All regions can unlock productivity growth, supported by interventions tailored to their specific strengths and needs. Recent success stories show that each area, regardless of its current economic status, has unique resources that can be boosted by the right policies.

The Spatial Productivity Lab (SPL) at the OECD Trento Centre, created in 2018, focuses on mechanisms that support the catching up of regions and cities that are lagging behind the productivity frontier, such as skill development, internationalisation, innovation and knowledge diffusion. We assess to what extent national productivity can be raised through national, regional and local policy measures.

What can we offer?

We work with local and global partners to:

- Reinforce and widen the evidence base for more effective regional policies, uncovering the roots and causes of regional productivity differentials and identifying the strengths of each region.
- Create exchange and peer-learning opportunities among local stakeholders, researchers and policy makers – as well as across OECD regions facing common challenges.
- Develop concrete policy recommendations to local and national policy makers, tailored to the specific conditions of each region.

All reports and events: https://oe.cd/spl

"It is critical for policy makers, researchers and the public to have access to timely quantitative and qualitative data on key trends at place based level, applying the latest analytical and visual techniques. At The Productivity Institute we are pleased to have partnered with the Spatial Productivity Lab at the OECD Trento Centre for Local Development to collaborate on providing user-friendly information on the various dimension of productivity at regional and local level."

Professor Bart van Ark
Managing Director, The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Place-based policy analysis and advice

Subnational governments are at the forefront of addressing global challenges. The Trento Centre works in partnership with them, providing the analysis and strategic advice that is essential for fostering adaptive, place-based policy responses.

In the wake of global health, economic and geopolitical crises, OECD countries are facing new transitions, including new forms of work and widening labour shortages, alongside ongoing megatrends such as digitalisation, climate change and population ageing. These changes are affecting people, places and firms in different ways, highlighting the need for future-proof development solutions, particularly in local labour markets.

To achieve maximum effectiveness, it is essential that policies are attuned to the diverse political, economic and social landscapes at the sub-national level, advocating tailored place-based policies rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Collaboration between different levels of government and the strengthening of local institutional capacity are also crucial. Such strategies are key to ensuring a rapid, inclusive and well-designed recovery that empowers communities to adapt and thrive amidst global change.

The Trento Centre works to enhance communities’ resilience and adaptability to global changes, with a focus on promoting local employment and economic development.

By drawing on the OECD’s global network of subnational governments and stakeholders, and providing context-specific analysis, we ensure that regional strategies are both informed by global insights and deeply rooted in local realities.

What can we offer?
We work with national, regional and local governments to:

- Provide insights on policy trends and challenges.
- Conduct analysis of local dynamics with global comparisons.
- Offer peer learning and access to international forums.
- Promote evidence-based policy reform.

All reports: https://oe.cd/policy-advice

“Our partnership with the OECD Trento Centre for Local Development has deepened our understanding of global policy trends and helped us effectively with the aim of addressing the address critical economic and employment challenges in our region. Through joint initiatives such as exploring remote working also to enhance job matching, conducting in-depth analyses of regional productivity bottlenecks, and hosting webinars on local labour shortages, the Centre has played a crucial role in fostering an exchange of innovative practices. Additionally, this collaboration has facilitated the sharing and amplification of our successful active labour policies on an international scale.”

Stefania Terlizzi
General Director, Labour Agency, Autonomous Province of Trento, Italy
Capacity building for local practitioners on a global scale

Fostering robust local capacity is essential for addressing emerging challenges in local development. The Trento Centre’s approach involves direct collaboration with community leaders to enhance their capabilities, enabling them to create more inclusive, sustainable and resilient communities.

Crafting and implementing local development strategies presents a complex challenge. Local leaders and organisations need specialised expertise to assess their local needs, coupled with supportive institutional frameworks and select the optimal combination of policies, programmes and financial tools. Additionally, effective coordination with local stakeholders and various levels of government demands a specific skillset. Gaps in these aspects can impede even the most well-conceived plan.

The Trento Centre works directly with local leaders to enhance their capacities and empower their communities to be more inclusive, sustainable and resilient. Leveraging more than two decades of experience, The Trento Centre has developed a distinctive and highly-interactive approach to capacity building that incorporates the latest OECD research into practical sessions.

In its academies, trainings, webinars, workshops and conferences, participants learn from international experts and speakers, supplemented by tangible examples and “field visits” to local initiatives. Participants also share their own knowledge of good practices, as breaking down institutional barriers and fostering peer-to-peer learning are crucial precursors to improving systems.

We bring OECD and international insights to thousands of local policy makers and practitioners, equipping them with the skills to translate research into tangible local development actions.

All capacity building activities: https://oe.cd/capacity-building

What can we offer?

We work with local leaders and organisations to:

- Design and delivery trainings and tailored activities to strengthen the skills needed to develop, manage and evaluate local development strategies.
- Offer peer-to-peer learning opportunities to learn from an international network of local development professionals.
- Provide support for developing vibrant community of practices and learning-enhancement tools.

Over the last 20 years, the Trento Centre has organised more than 355 capacity-building events, including specialised seminars, conferences, and workshops, along with 254 study visits. More than 32 000 regional development policy makers and practitioners from 105 countries have benefited from Trento Centre’s capacity-building activities.

An example of a capacity-building activity is the Summer Academy on Cultural and Creative Industries and Local Development, which recently celebrated its 6th edition. Hundreds of local development practitioners from the creative sectors attended the academy over the years. Other activities include the OECD-Eurada Winter School for Development Agencies and the International Summer School on Community and Local Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
How to engage with us

Spatial Productivity Lab
Interested countries, regions and cities can join the Spatial Productivity Lab and suggest relevant research centres and universities in their countries to lead specific topics.

Place-based policy analysis and advice
Interested countries, regions and cities can join our ongoing projects or seek for support to policy design, evaluation and implementation as well as insights into new policy trends and international practices to learn from.

Capacity building activities
Interested countries, regions and cities can join capacity-building activities as participants, provide their expertise, share their practices, host events and study visits. In particular, our capacity-building activities include capacity-building seminars, workshops and conferences organised at the Trento Centre or in the sponsoring country or remotely and addressed to practitioners, academia, representatives of the civil society and the private sector.

How to contact us

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