



THE STATE OF NATIONAL URBAN POLICY IN ESTONIA

Name of national urban policy	<i>Regional Development Strategy 2014-2020 (RDS)</i>
Date of national urban policy	2014
Explicit or partial	Partial
Legal status (e.g. act of the legislature, executive order, administrative guidance, etc.)	National development strategy
Previous/secondary policies	<i>Sustainable Estonia (2005); The Estonia 2020 (national competitiveness strategy); National Spatial Plan "Estonia 2030+ (2012)</i>
Stage of development	Implementation
How developed (e.g. through a participatory/stakeholder process, or act of parliament, etc.)	No information available
Implementing body	Ministry of Finance
Government system	Centralised
Type of national urban agency	Not applicable
Implementation mechanism (e.g. committee, involvement of multiple agencies, national-local co-ordination)	The Ministry of Finance is the main national body responsible for co-ordination of the implementation of the RDS. Also a monitoring committee of the implementation of the <i>National Regional Development Strategy 2014-2020</i> (represented by ministries and other relevant bodies)

Current national urban policy

Estonia does not have an explicit national urban policy *per se*. Urban development issues are addressed in the *Regional Development Strategy (Eesti regionaalarengu strateegia)* for 2014-2020 (RDS). A new RDS was approved in March 2014, providing the framework for national regional and urban development policies until 2020. The RDS responds to urban issues such as the concentration of the population in larger cities and the weakening of secondary cities. It features four strategic goals:

1. providing opportunities in both larger and smaller urban centres;
2. cities competing in the international economy through innovation and attractive living environments;
3. making the most of regional resources and specialisations; and
4. increasing connectedness and co-operation among regions.

The RDS distinguishes between larger urban areas (over 50 000 inhabitants, of which there are five in the country) and county centres (4 000 to 20 000 inhabitants), and foresees different roles for each type of region. The policies related to larger urban areas, on one hand focus on creating a sustainable and internationally competitive living environment. The RDS foresees investments in sustainable transport, childcare and revitalisation of

underused urban districts, as well as measures to attract foreign specialists and enhance their adaptation. The county centres are seen as providers of jobs and services to their hinterland regions. The RDS foresees strengthening the transportation connections between centres and their hinterland, development of educational and sports infrastructure serving the whole region, and the development of urban public space. The investments in public infrastructure of industrial and business areas are also mostly targeted at the county centres (OECD, 2015).

The policy aims for urban areas have not considerably changed compared to the previous RDS, though there is now a stronger emphasis on:

- co-operation, connections and joint planning within an urban area
- promoting county centres as engines for the development of their wider hinterlands, primarily through providing better jobs and services (OECD, 2015).

The national competitiveness strategy, *Estonia 2020 Action Plan 2016-2020* (2016), does not contain a specific goal or objective related to urban areas, but is addressed to a range of activities contributing distinctively to the development of urban areas. For instance: improving railway connections, implementing measures to attract foreign specialists and enhance their adaptation, and linking several actions to the EU Structural Fund measure of “sustainable development of urban areas” (Government of Estonia, 2016).

National Spatial Plan Estonia 2030+ (adopted in 2012) sets up the basis for national spatial development and planning, e.g. envisioning and targeting the development of general settlement structure; mobility, accessibility and transport infrastructure (also within and between urban areas); urban planning and living environment.

Previous national urban policy and developments

Estonia established its previous RDS for 2005-2015 in 2005. The main themes of that Strategy were regional balance to improve living standards and competitiveness throughout the country, and ensuring sustainable development of all regions, including the competitiveness of Tallinn and other urban areas. The 2005-2015 RDS included the goal of developing a national urban policy, but this has not yet been realised in the form of a distinct policy, besides the consistent regional policy framework. The European Regional Development Fund, which ended in 2013, did co-fund a “programme for the development of urban areas”. An evaluation of this programme was not located (UN-Habitat, 2015).

Areas covered by current urban policy

Sector	Sectoral representation in the <i>2014 Regional Development Strategy</i>
Economic development	Extensive
Spatial structure	Extensive
Human development	Low
Environmental sustainability	Moderate
Climate resilience	Low

Specific issues covered by current national urban policy

The *Regional Development Strategy 2014-2020* includes the following characteristics (based on Estonian Ministry of Finance, 2014):

Criteria for national urban policies	Appears in the policy
Responds to population dynamics	X
Promotes a territorial approach (in particular urban-rural linkages)	X
Addresses the urban systems (from large to medium and small cities) and the connectivity among cities	X
Prepares for infrastructure and services in cities (including public space)	X
Promotes urban land-use efficiency	
Enhances environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change	X
Develops effective urban governance systems (horizontal co-ordination and vertical alignment)	X
Promotes effective municipal finance systems	
Supports partnership and co-operation between urban actors	X
Safeguards inclusiveness and participation in the process and outcomes (inequity, segregation, safety, etc.)	
Ensures robust and comparable urban scale data	

Bibliography

- Estonian Ministry Finance (2016a), *Eesti regionaalarengu strateegia 2014-2020*, Ministry of Finance webpage, Tallinn, www.fin.ee/public/Regionaalareng_ia_poliitika/Eesti_regionaalarengu_strateegia_2014-20.pdf.
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