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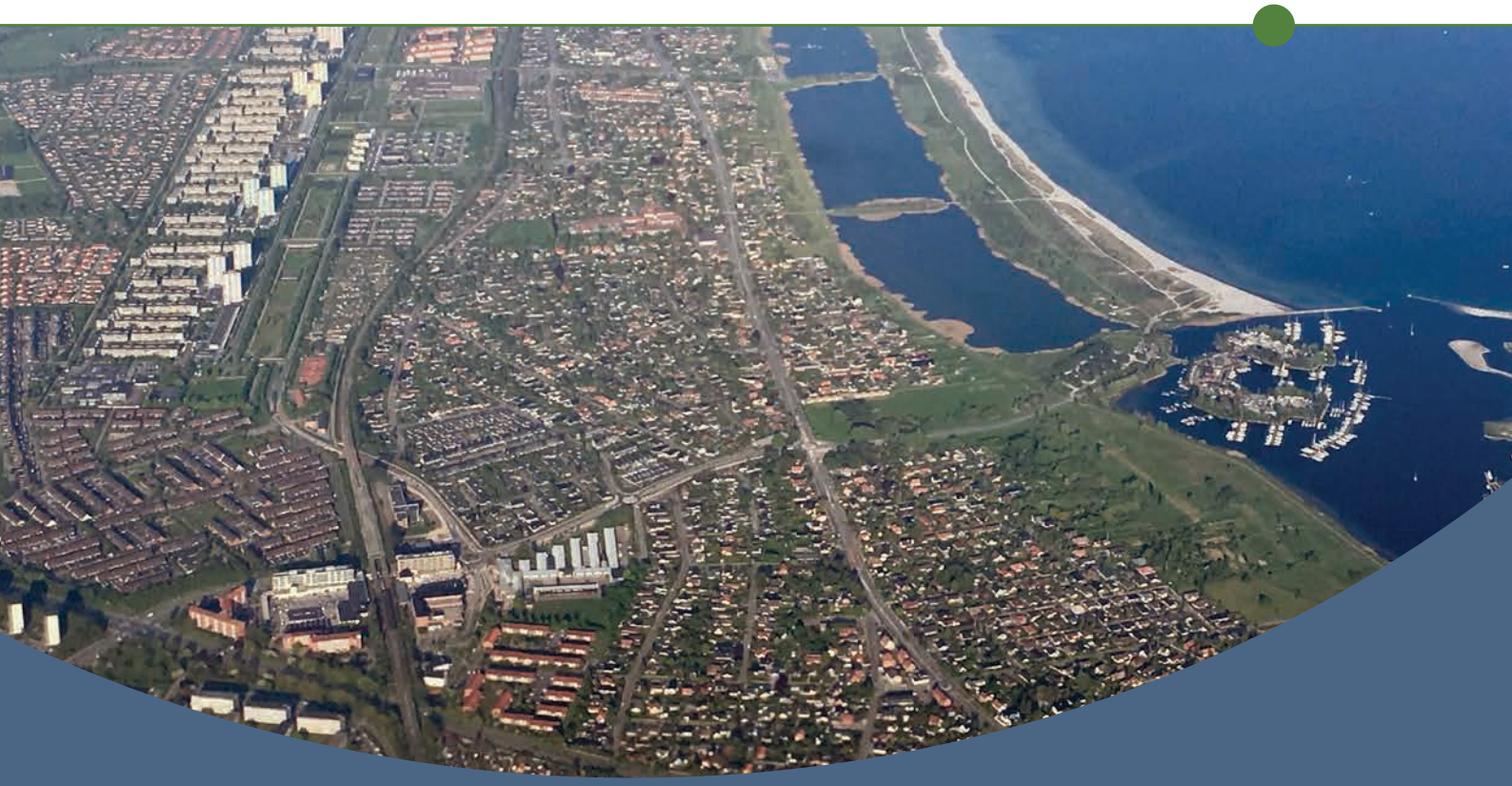

Functional Urban Regions in Nordic Countries:

– Cooperation for stainable success in spatial planning

Karina Sehested, Lisbeth Greve Harbo and Vesa Kanninen

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Summary

This report is a reprint of a report made in 2007 for a Danish Ministry paid by The Nordic Council. The report has valuable information and discussions about the development of specific Functional Urban Regions in Nordic countries.

The study of Functional Urban Region (FUR) cooperation and planning looks into the use of planning means and organisation in the FUR areas. It investigates how FUR planning evolves between hierarchy and network, how the FUR planning processes are organised and managed, what kinds of governance problems occurs, how different forms of meta-governance and regulation are exercised, and finally how FUR planning is anchored democratically.

As an additional layer, the notion of FUR itself is examined as the concept through which, and by the help of which, such cooperation may take place, develop, and gain in importance. The FUR concept is not only a description of the spatial extent of the cooperation, but a constituting part of the identity-building of the urban region. Therefore, the notion has the potential of becoming an important focal point for policies at all levels. Thus, perhaps the most important result of the project is the general recognition of FUR planning as a predominantly governance issue. The notion of FUR itself supports this idea. The study has also shown that the content of FUR spatial planning has mostly derived from the demands placed upon it by the legislative framework (or the lack of it) on the one hand, and the decisions made according to and within the governance settings in each case on the other. Therefore, while some issues do come up as "generic" in the contents of FUR planning, their analysis has been seen as secondary in comparison with the governance settings themselves.

In spatial FUR planning, inter-municipal cooperation and strategic planning are by far the most used planning means. The purpose is firstly to create common regional understandings and a common regional identity among the participants (new regional mind maps) and secondly to develop strategies for sustainable development in the FURs. In the cases, the FUR identity building is of greatest importance. The strategic planning concerns political visions and goals, division of responsibilities within the FUR, and specific issues for common action. In the chapter on planning a typical process for strategic planning is presented.

The general tendency found in the cases is that FUR planning is typically exercised outside or beside the formal planning system and is exercised in governance settings based on voluntarism, equality and consensus. FUR cooperation and planning can therefore be characterised as a bottom-up governance process in a fragmented and multi-centred political system.
FUR planning is without doubt a political project. Politicians are core actors and decisive for the successful FUR planning. Especially municipal politicians are becoming central regional actors either alone or in cooperation with regional politicians - in cooperation on equal, non-hierarchical terms. Municipal politicians want to actively influence core elements at the regional level, constituting the general conditions for local development. In this sense FUR planning illustrates an informal change in the institutional division of labour concerning regional development.

The strategic planning in FUR cooperation can also be interpreted as a "reinvention of government" through meta-governance - as an attempt to construct, structure, and influence the interaction in the fragmented policy and planning systems in the FUR areas. Meta-governance makes it possible for urban and regional politicians to regain political and public control and create some form of

coherence and integration of governance activities in the fragmented and multi-centred policy systems.

To gain any influence on FUR planning, the politicians (supported by administrators) have to become meta-governors which implicate to join the formal or informal FUR policy networks and organisations and govern:

- Through direct influence in the FUR cooperation
- Through developing network/cooperation design
- By setting up frameworks for activities in the FUR areas

These are typical indirect meta-governance means. The joint role of becoming a meta-governor is founded on equality between the actors in the FUR planning. Important lessons are learnt in the case studies about how to develop this principle.

Strategic planning is often expressed in a physical plan but further implementation strategies differ. One strategy is to leave further implementation to the municipals. Another is to make voluntary and consensus based plans for concrete action. A third strategy is to create joint administrative units for common tasks and a fourth is to combine strategic planning with land use regulation. Land use regulation is developed in two different forms: the soft intentional regulation (indirect meta-governance) and the hard binding regulation (a direct government mean in a governance situation). A precondition for the latter is a transfer of municipal decision-making power to FUR level. The land use planning is developed into a form acceptable for political thinking and action, and it differs according to the political circumstances in the FUR cooperation. Due to the voluntarism of the cooperation this is essential for municipal participation.

In the FUR planning cases, two different approaches towards planning are found. One is the focus on plans as the result of the process (the plan approach), the other is plans as a part of a process (the process approach). The closer the FUR cooperation is integrated into the formal planning system, the more focus there is on plans as the result. The process approach is an attempt to constantly change and model the FUR planning according to ever changing planning conditions in the FUR development. Land use planning is clearly not the first issue to bring up in a FUR cooperation – it requires a high degree of trust and commonness within the cooperation to make a hard binding land use plan.

Although strategic FUR cooperation and planning is an attempt to create some form of coherence and integration in the policy and planning of the FUR areas, these cooperations also contribute to the fragmentation of the planning at a higher level due to the operation outside or beside the formal planning system in new formal or informal institutions. This is a typical situation in the governance situations in the Nordic countries. Several policy actors take on the task of meta-governance and perform it side by side or in competition of being *the* meta-governor. In the case studies we find the obvious consequence of coordination problems between plans and strategies formed in different forums. In particular three problems of coordination and integration occur: one is between FUR planning and general regional planning; another is between general FUR planning and FUR business planning; and the third is a lack of cohesion between FUR planning and municipal land use planning. The solutions to these problems are not yet found and FUR planning has to cope with these problems in the future.

FUR planning is a political-administrative project and not a popular matter for ordinary citizens. Mayors from local and regional councils and chief executives are the core actors and they form strong policy communities on FUR development. From a democratic perspective this points to the importance of the democratic anchorage of FUR planning. The actors represent the top of the representative democracy and it is important to uphold a broad democratic legitimacy in the cooperation. In the case studies the conflicts between local and regional interests are felt by the politicians and they are difficult to handle within the FUR cooperation. This is why the democratic anchorage has to be strengthened in the FUR cooperation. However, this can be addressed in different ways. The solutions mentioned are: a strong relationship between politicians in the FUR cooperation and the local and regional formal councils, a strengthening of public accountability in the FUR planning process, and the internalisation of a common code of democratic conduct in the cooperation. The democratic anchorage of FUR activities is another important matter for the FUR cooperation's to handle in the future.

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1. Background

This report is a reprint of a report published in 2007 by a Danish Ministry and paid for by The Nordic Council. The report has valuable information and knowledge about the development in specific functional urban regions in Nordic countries and still valid discussions and conclusions about regional cooperation and organisation.

Recent social development has demonstrated the reorganisation in society's spatial logic and levels of activity. In general, the change of areas has been viewed as a change from Fordism to Post-Fordism or from Keynesian welfare state to Schumpeterian workfare state models. On the one hand, globalisation and the European level integration are emphasised, and regionalisation within countries and across borders on the other hand.

Following Jessop (1993), there are forces "hollowing out" the status of nation states in favour of stronger regional spatial development. At the regional level, the restructuring of local and regional *governance* is strengthening regional capabilities of carrying out tasks that were formerly governed by the nation state. Horizontal regional networks of power and a growing number of regional and pan-regional bodies are examples of policy networks as a new form of governance in society.

Within the discussion of the spatial frameworks for governance processes, the notion of urban regions has gained ground. While geographers and planners have argued for a city-region perspective for nearly a century, it has been the effects of globalisation, made visible by the perceived growing interdependence between the core city and the surrounding "functional area," that have really turned the attention of policies towards the urban region level. The concentration of growth in the urban areas has created a new set of problems that have a distinct regional character.

The urban regions are forced to struggle with the new "glocal" development preconditions of the flows: technology as such enables diffuse patterns of labour and production, but local conditions and agglomeration spill-over advantages have pushed development into polarising structures. Lowering and abolishing the barriers to international trade make room for further mobilising and out-sourcing of the production. This is exposing even the most peripheral locations to global evaluations of competition. This adds to the pressure on sustainability issues within the urban regions – on the one hand, short-term profit-seeking behaviour tends to undermine opportunities for the enhancement of sustainability across the spheres. On the other, aspirations for long-term competitiveness tend to take sustainability seriously.

Furthermore, it is less and less possible to explain regional differentiation by simple reference to changes in migration. Instead, the diverting reasons behind migration need clarification. The age-old relation between economic success and increase in jobs seems to have been starting to shatter. Areas of economic growth might suffer from high unemployment and/or net out-migration, and vice versa.

On the other hand, the regions with population increase seem to have many things in common in their institutional and economic foundations, namely a strong educational and informational level. The learning competence of the regional public and private actors considerably effects the development of an urban region. In order to be able to adopt new circumstances, an urban region has to possess an ability to refine learning experiences to meet the local socio- and physical-spatial framework.

The general tendency of polarisation of labour markets is placing urban regions in a novel situation. Cities that formerly were centres of their own local labour markets are becoming situated in the hinterland of a larger labour market or they are losing market shares to the larger cities. Another impact is that labour and housing markets are becoming independent from one another. This means that more and more people are living in one city and working in another. Especially, cities in the hinterland of the national and regional capitals are considering changing their strategic focus from business development to housing development.

It seems that globalisation is shifting not only political decision-making power, but also the responsibilities for welfare organising decisions into the domain of the urban regions. Thus, emphasising the regional sphere of action may be seen as a necessity for the urban regions in order to balance the globalisation trends and thus enable the urban regions to become less vulnerable in the face of global competition and local polarisation. One of the key questions in the knowledge-based economy is how regional economic policy-making can play a role in reducing the vulnerability of regional economies, societies and environments to external pressures, while promoting economic health and quality of life at the same time (Sotarauta and Srinivas 2006).

Indeed, an effective economy is often seen as a crucial precondition for sustainable development. The economy provides income for the citizens, which in turn enables people to satisfy their needs and desires. An increase in production consequently increases the opportunity to meet needs and desires, at least concerning goods and services. However, since the United Nations Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 the aims of sustainable development are not only to increase economic performance, to create more jobs, and to reduce environmental damage, but also to improve the social conditions and the quality of life for the whole population. Social sustainability should improve social cohesion and equity. It should also reduce social exclusion of particular groups of the population.

It can be said that the popularity of sustainability stems from the simple model called ‘the three pillar model’ or ‘the three circles model’: the triangle of environmental (conservation), economic (growth), and social (equity) dimensions. Development based on the principles of sustainability aims at maintaining ecological integrity, ensure economic security and provide conditions for social well-being. Mostly, sustainable development is modelled on these three pillars. Effective institutional change to bring these elements together is sometimes considered “the fourth dimension”.

Environmental sustainability
Sustainable human activities aim at protecting the environment to ensure that the environmental carrying capacity is not exceeded, that the environmental quality is not diminished, and that the resources are not depleted. The intention is to not deny the future generations of similar or better environmental conditions. Current issues include global warming, over-fishing, and deforestation with subsequent desertification.

Economic sustainability
Economic sustainability means profitability due to sound business practices, with measurable cost benefits due to strategic sustainability policies, activities, and product design. Sustainable economies also need to be competitive on the world market. Products that are too expensive to buy cannot be sustainable, even if they are

environmentally-friendly. Locally, this means creating wealth and providing as high a standard of living as possible, employment opportunities for people in the community, and new business development in the local economy.

Social sustainability
The needs of people must be met equally. Access to medical care, suitable housing, clean water, food, and sanitation are among the more basic needs. Opportunities for education, jobs, culture, and social reproduction (leisure) are also included. A sustainable standard of living must be achieved in an equitable manner. Sustainable development addresses these needs by promoting equality, education, and participation in local communities.

These three dimensions affect - and require - each another. Economic development interferes with the availability of environmental resources. Economic growth without taking the environmental quality into consideration is impossible on the long-term. Therefore, economic growth cannot be the only goal and can even be counterproductive in terms of quality of life. Additionally, social stability is important for economic growth. Economic development is the basis of the income development and allows a reallocation from the socially advantaged to the socially weak people.

Economic performance, i.e. wealth and the ability to develop the economy, has to be maintained. Social solidarity, i.e. the life and development of human beings in solidarity and well-being, should be made possible. At the same time the environmental responsibility for the conservation of the living space as well as for the use of natural resources has to be borne. Altogether, it becomes obvious that sustainable development cannot be reached without taking all three mutually interactive dimensions into account.

Most attempts to quantify sustainability within the three pillars of economy, environment, and society have shown that because of different opinions, a common evaluation of the sustainability level is very difficult. The possible changes in preferences of the future generations and the unknown potentials for regeneration of nature make it difficult to decide whether something is sustainable or not (Schoder, Amann et al. 2005). Likewise, it has been seen that the three pillars cannot be integrated without having to make trade-offs in favour of one and disadvantage the two other dimensions.

However, it has been suggested (Hargroves and Smith 2005) that integration can escape the seemingly inevitable trade-offs. There are widespread untapped potential productivity improvements to be made, and new eco-innovations make integrated approaches to sustainable development economically viable. Also, the new understanding of long-term competitiveness in firms has paved the way for wider views of sustainability. And since many positive environmental externalities are passed on to local, regional and national governments, sustainability strategies can provide benefits to the taxpayers in the long run.

In addition, there is a growing understanding of the multiple benefits of valuing social and natural capital, for both moral and economic reasons, and including them in measures of national well-being (Hargroves and Smith 2005). There is also evidence showing that a transition to a sustainable economy may even be beneficial to the businesses (Spangenberg, Omann et al. 2002).

* * *

The goal of the project has been to study and compare the ways in which the sustainable development of the urban regions, defined broadly as the simultaneous accounting of the three pillars of sustainability, has been supported via spatial planning. The aim has been to gain empirical information about the relationship between spatial planning instruments and urban regional development, which can then be utilised in the Nordic urban regions to strengthen their European and international competencies.

Two general questions have been investigated in the project:

- What kind of spatial planning instruments have been utilised in order to sustain the urban regional development, and which ones have proved to be best in supporting sustainable urban regional development (the present)?

- How should these instruments be used in order for them to function properly, efficiently and successfully and how can spatial planning of cities, urban regions and urban networks best prepare them for future changes in the roles of the urban regions without losing the sustainability dimensions (the future)?

In this project, 12 cases from 4 Nordic countries have been analysed. In order to get hold of the relationship between spatial planning and urban regional development the study has tackled the issues of (1) how the meaning of urban regions has been recognised in spatial planning and (2) how spatial planning has been recognised as a central tool for urban regional development.

Since the Nordic countries are relatively small, cooperation between cities, within the urban region, and between the urban regions has a profound position in profiling the regions and strengthening their competitiveness. Cooperation calls for clear and strong roles of the actors. The most important study object is to which extent physical planning, including traffic solutions and issues of environmental quality, has been involved in fulfilling housing and business policies in the urban regions.

The recognition of (spatial) planning as a central tool for urban regional development has been investigated through a study of how it is manifested in the:

- Use of traditional physical (land use) planning instruments
- Use of other, broader, and/or new spatial planning instruments
- Relations between the different kinds of planning instruments

The project introduces comparable knowledge of the planning systems of the urban regions portrayed; an analysis of which instruments have been utilised in and for spatial planning, and how they have been used in order to achieve the expected results; an analysis of which types of instruments have proved most viable; which factors are of special significance for development, and which decisions have proved most decisive in the planning and decision-making process.

The results of the study include:

- Analysis of the practices in spatial planning influencing the urban regional development and its sustainability components in selected urban regions

- Analysis of the practices of official and voluntary cooperation in the field of spatial planning within the functional urban regions
- Exceptional cases – regions where the practises have been refined to cater for regional cooperation in spatial planning and sustainability of development
- Common grounds for a definition and a working scheme concerning functional urban regions including “the right questions to ask” in spatial planning of the regions
- Conclusions that underline the importance of the process of “good governance” in spatial planning for sustainable development
- Insights into the feasibility and transferability of the methods and practises used in the case study regions

2. Sustainable functional urban region development

The concept of the functional urban region

Background: what kind of functional regions?

In most studies, the concepts "functional urban area" (FUA) and "functional urban region" (FUR) are used interchangeably. However, at its core the two seem to possess slightly different meanings. First of all, the difference between "area" and "region" is that "region" carries with it a notion of historical, political, economic, or cultural cohesion that distinguishes it from other "regions". The same cannot be said about "area". Secondly, the definitions of "functional urban area" deal predominantly with measurement and analysis – statistical areas, typologies and comparability. "Functional urban region" is used more freely, to cover most of the former definitions, and some that clearly point to a more qualitative concept – such as "density of economic activities, social opportunities and interaction options" (Ciccone and Hall 1996), or "the [space] in which businesses operate" (Knapp 2001).

The concept of the functional urban area (FUA) in the "system-oriented" space of places –sense, means a geographically defined area with one or more cities as urban cores, delimited typically by the daily commuting patterns – an approach used in most countries for statistical and analytical purposes. The urban regions we are currently dealing with are in many ways not confined to the administratively bounded centre-periphery model that the commuting model presupposes. The true nature of the "functionality" is lost in that approach.

In the space of flows –approach, the emphasis is not on demarcating the region, but on emphasising the accessibility and attractiveness of the region on a supra-regional, or even global, scale. In this approach, functional urban regions (FUR) can be overlapping in some functions, hierarchical in others, and even geographical continuity can become more contingent than absolute. Concerning e.g. public services, the functionality is often predetermined in ways that create patterns, which are deviant from the macro-level functionality – municipal borders may play conclusive roles in where one must seek services from. Considering urban region transportation, the region may be quite sharply divided into three: the pedestrian/cycling nodes, the public transportation nodes-and-links with their corresponding pedestrian or feeder-line catchment areas, and the private car –oriented areas outside these. Image-based region-building efforts, as well as housing and business strategies, utilise the possibilities created by high-speed links and international networking on the one hand, and local or regional attractions on the other.

It is obvious that land use planning as such needs a defined physical area to function within, and for most practical purposes the regional "reach" should not be – at least constantly – contested. However, many of the novel practices derive their motivation from non-confinement as well as private and voluntary activity. Thus, there is a need for surveying the constitution of the functional urban region, the basis for spatial planning, in each such development scheme. In terms of regional analysis, it is necessary to utilise conventional administrative units such as municipalities or postal code areas for the purpose of statistical comparisons. A more "precise" and non-administrative view would be gathered using geographical grid data. In this respect, the delimitations by data could be coined "functional urban space(s)" (FUS). We shall not go into analysing this concept, but point to its usefulness as a tool for research and analysis purposes.

In this study, the absolute delimitation of the premises for defining the functional space, area or region is not the central issue. Rather, the question is how each issue can define the cooperation region so that it is beneficial for solving the task at hand. What this amounts to, is what the co-operation activities are facing: there is no simple or generic way of defining the FUR that should be the target of actions. Rather, the ease of definition varies with the fields of action.

Furthermore, the definition of the functional unit, the FUA or the FUR, is most often not central to the success of such interaction. The functionalities of the urban region do guide the respective efforts to embrace the essential actors, themes and geographic areas, but it is the quality and feasibility of cooperation design and management that will be of more importance in action.

Therefore, while the distinction of the terms is certainly necessary in order to be able to avoid conceptual confusion, and while the definitions of the terms are presented below, we shall concentrate on the concept of FUR, and how the interaction between the FUR and the cooperation is conceived, carried out, and perceived.

> Our hypothesis is, that the notion of FUR is conceptually "more" than the use of and mixing with the analytical FUA terminology leads us to expect. FUR is a governance oriented territorial concept that shares some qualities with FUA, but may be "used" in a political and policy context with more development-oriented goals than its more static predecessor. In addition, sustainability can best be linked to spatial planning at the level of FUR.

The most important questions to be investigated in order to discuss this hypothesis are:

> - How is FUA defined in the Nordic countries?
> - How does the FUR differ from FUA conceptually?
> - What is perceived as the most suitable territorial level for sustainable spatial planning?
> - What are the most important issues concerning sustainable development in the FUR context?

The Functional Urban Area (FUA) definition

An OECD study (OECD 2002) concerning the FUR/FUA definitions points out that while the national definitions – their study covers all Nordic countries – and parameters vary somewhat, and that they may be combined with other criteria, the underlying rationale remains the same, i.e. commuting conditions.

In the study, the "functional urban region" was defined as a "territorial unit resulting from the organisation of social and economic relations in that its boundaries do not reflect geographical particularities or historical events. It is thus a functional sub-division of territories. The most typical concept used in defining a functional region is that of labour markets".

Antikainen and Vartiainen (2002) also point out that the FUA is a useful concept because it explicitly enables distinguishing internal and external development dynamics. In its capacity to extend beyond administrative boundaries, the FUA concept enables a more coherent strategic planning approach (ESPON 2005). This already points to the application of the FUA concept towards a FUR definition.

The Nordic statistical definitions are based on commuting patterns (Sweden, Finland), central nodes (Denmark) and travel times (Norway). The level of "true" integration may vary both in density and true geographic distribution. A large geographical size of the municipality may mean incorporating remote, functionally excluded areas into the demarcation. For most administrative purposes, however, this will define FURs quite well.

The Swedish definition of a FUA is based on the idea of a "local labour market region" (LLM) (local arbetsmarknadsregion). Commuting patterns are the starting point. Firstly, the centre of a LLM must have 80% self-sufficiency in labour, meaning that the number of out-commuters must not exceed 20% of the work force. Secondly, the commuting to any individual municipality should not exceed 7,5%. All other municipalities are subordinate to the municipality that receives the most commuters from the municipality in question. Further linking into chains is allowed, too.

The LLMs formed this way will be changing as the commuting flows change, in correlation to changes in employment in the individual municipalities. Therefore, the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development (NUTEK) has created its own version of the LLMs, called "functional analysis regions" (funktionell analysregion) with the aim of producing a more normative and unchanging division to be used for analysis and comparison. The division is meant to remain unchanged for at least ten years at a time.

In Finland, the statistical FUA definition is basically similar to the Swedish LLM definition. Statistics Finland makes this analytical division (työssäkäyntialue) according to commuter flows.

There are also administratively defined sub-regions (seutukunta). The Ministry of the Interior uses this division, based on commuting patterns and cooperation activities, as the most detailed unit for regional policy measures. The division is verified by the Ministry every year. The sub-region boundary does not cross regional boundaries.

The Norwegian definition of FUA is a more complex one. Three types of so-called functional region divisions have been used over the last years: trade districts, forecast regions and economic regions. Trade districts are based on wholesale and retail trade statistics. Forecast regions are based on commuting statistics, and the idea is to construct continuous labour market regions. Economic regions, supposedly the main tool for FUA definition, take the former two as the starting point, but with a refined set of criteria for delimitation – such as size of the largest urban settlement, internal migration patterns, and market areas of newspapers.

In Denmark, FUA is defined in three ways. The Ministry of Environment uses the "commuter catchment basin" (pendlingsopland) definition. A commuter catchment basin centre is defined as a municipality in which the number of people, living and working in the area, is twice as large as the number of daily in-and out-commuters combined. Statistics Denmark has constructed "local labour markets" (LLM) according to the Swedish definition. The Ministry of Labour uses its own technique in compounding its own "local labour markets", which are distinguished from the first definition by the fact that they are not crossing the county boundaries, unlike the two other delimitations that recognise only the municipality as the administrative unit, or building block. The last definition is the only one used for functional purposes. The Ministry of Labour utilises these LLMs for its long-term planning.

However, it must also be noted that when we are discussing functional *urban* regions, it must be kept in mind that the commuting-based approach produces commuting or labour market areas regardless of the urban nature of the region. Therefore, the labour market based definition does not necessarily correspond with the FUR idea. However, in most cases the delineation between urban and rural is straightforward

The functional urban region (FUR) definition

As defined through the functionalities of an urban space, the concept "functional urban region" (FUR) refers to "municipalities or parts thereof, grouped together according to their functional orientation, in order to reflect the daily conditions of actors" (Knapp 2001). In most urban regions, municipal boundaries play only a limited role in the everyday activities. The municipalities surrounding the central city are either suburbs or sub-centres within the urban region. Commuting patterns reflect the regional structure of housing and workplaces. Especially, commercial services are sought from the whole region, irrespective of administrative boundaries. Also, more and more of the everyday practises are taking place within a suburb-suburb relation, or a "post-suburbian" model in which the place of the traditional centre is challenged by highly specialised nodes of interaction that are dispersed within the urban region. Furthermore, the patterns of leisure activities are even more dispersed, reaching targets well outside the statistical FUA definition areas.

More specifically, a functional urban region can be defined as the geographic space appropriate for the comparison of economic development in urban areas (Knapp 2001). It is the space within which the businesses enjoy access to a wide range of infrastructure and services including:

- Transport (roads, rail, airports, ports)
- Telecommunications
- Business premises
- Skilled labour force
- Educational institutions, research centres
- Banks, insurance companies
- Hotels, congress halls

However, which constellation of different dynamics and functions would best define the whole urban region on a functional basis is still open to interpretation.

The functional urban region defined by Denters and Rodenhuis (2005) "includes an urban agglomeration and its surrounding area, in which smaller villages and towns are located that are functionally closely related to the agglomeration. The relationship between those smaller villages and towns may imply daily commuting, moves of households and businesses, or the use of urban provisions, The functional urban area is therefore determined by regional patterns of housing, work and the use of (public or private) services."

Therefore, in an attempt to create a definition that would capture this ambiguity, several aspects should be taken into account, and the definition should include indications of e.g.:

- Population size of the urban area
- Dynamics of trade and industry
- Innovation and competitiveness

- Regional spatial structures
- Cooperation dynamics
- Governance structures

As Westholm (2003) notes: when the spatial formation of a cooperation is based on everyday practice or negotiations, it may have the ability to *create* a functional region. The actors can use the spatial flexibility for purposes of inclusion and exclusion. The dynamics of such "thin regions" may hold an adaptive capacity needed in the networking economy. The flexible character of the "thin regions" indicates a development towards operating in time and space specific "projects". The resulting functional regions are not mosaic or hierarchic, but overlapping and even contiguous. The existence of "thin regions" is connected to governance as a way of governing in which the interdependence of organisations is recognised (Stoker 1998).

A "triade" of intertwined spheres of regional development has been emphasised in many regions (e.g. Groth, Lang et al. 2005):

- Firstly, competent local governance paves the way for building the networks, collaborations and institutional relations that are prerequisites for effective strategic manoeuvring, integration of all relevant actors, and for motivating all participants to work for common ideas and goals.

- Secondly, the regional factors of competitiveness provide the framework for development options, whether priority is given to specialisation or variation of the business milieu.

- Thirdly, the local and regional development policies, together with the operational endeavours in the cities, provide the solutions which desirable development is aimed at.

This is evident e.g. according to case study findings on Danish, Swedish and Finnish medium sized cities (Groth and Kanninen 2004), where it is noted that cities of their own, i.e. cities outside the metropolitan regions, more often stick to business policies as the core element of development policies. Their possibility for gaining inhabitants lies within attracting businesses, since the cities themselves generally cannot offer such living environments that would be attractive enough for the potential immigrants. At the other end of the scale, cities situated in the hinterland of regional and national capitals, without their own "locomotive" of local economy and business climate, tend to suburbanise and hence to take up housing policies as a key element of development policies. The location policy is either labour-market area specific or commuting-specific.

Cities and regions are also increasingly prioritising development activities that make them attractive as residential areas and places of consumption rather than places for production purposes. Place marketing is about selling a region or a city on measurable and tangible qualities like physical infrastructure, location, natural assets, cultural beacons, public services, and the tax-level. Place branding goes a step further by being about promoting intangible qualities, e.g. the perceived values and the feeling of a place (Smidt-Jensen 2005).

In a functional urban region, cooperation concerning physical planning faces differences in planning cultures of the actors. Larger cities are capable of and used to handling even complex planning projects within the administration and often even within the planning office. In the smaller municipalities, the role of local politicians is much more pronounced and land use planning requires

genuine cross-sector cooperation. In relation to regional planning, large cities tend to distinguish themselves, whereas the smaller municipalities are more dependent on it.

Sustainable FUR development

The regional level is increasingly perceived as playing an important role in achieving sustainable development. With this new emphasis, the challenge facing regional decision-makers is how the general concept of sustainable development can be put into practice and applied productively at the regional level (Clement and Hansen 2001).

Sustainable regional development may be defined as integration of sustainability principles into regional development practises. It should include all activities and instruments that promote sustainable development within the region's agenda. Sustainable regional development should be about matching policy trends of the EU and of the national levels as well as raising awareness among development professionals (Clement, Hansen et al. 2003).

The different roles of regions also accounts for widely differing levels of activity in the field of regional sustainable development. Generally, the regions provide frameworks as well as direct support for regional initiatives. Supporting measures mainly consist of providing institutional frameworks for regional development, such as regional development agencies (RDAs) which, in some cases, are crucial for regional sustainable development. Other examples are institutions which provide know-how and advice to regional initiatives.

In the Nordic context, the notion of sustainable regional development (SRD) has been explicitly addressed by e.g. Clement, Hansen et al. 2003. Based on their case study evidence, they identified the main external factors contributing to the regional level's becoming the platform for sustainability solutions. In addition to the generic environmental pressures, a few economic, social, and governance-oriented factors were found to be of importance:

- Increased competition for small and medium sized enterprises SMEs on a European scale, loss of market shares especially in the tourism sector, and decline of the agricultural sector
- Demographic changes in the peripheral areas
- Need for creating a regional identity or image
- New procedures and instruments from the EU Structural Funds, with a requirement of integration of environmental issues into the main (economic) line of regional development programming
- Diffusion of municipal achievements in sustainability work to the regional level
- Global advances in developing sustainability strategies

The study found that many issues in favour of sustainable regional development is becoming more pronounced in the Nordic context, but pointed also to the scepticism towards the concept. However, it seems that the biggest obstacle in advancing SRD lies in the regional cooperation – how to initially identify the common issues, and how to persuade all parties to cooperate. In the study, the region was approached and understood according to the administrative demarcations. Since it has been argued above that the focus on common functionalities is indeed lost at the regional level, or that the functional urban region is the more feasible level and unit of integration, it is hardly surprising that cooperation is found to be the bottleneck. However, this does not mean that the FUR

level is unproblematic in this sense: while the common issues might present themselves more easily, cooperation faces the same basic challenges.

The interconnections between planning and sustainable development in the Nordic countries were approached by Bjarnadóttir and Bradley (2003) in a thorough study. They conclude, e.g. concerning the themes of sustainable planning (Fig. 1), as well as with overall considerations of the "planning for sustainability" concept and its level and style of application:

- The image of a sustainable community is found to be that of a compact, polycentric, and functionally mixed city with high standards of public transportation, green networks, high quality of the urban environment, and especially endogenous and unique competences, as well as cooperation within the functional urban region.

- While the municipal level is seen to be most appropriate for sustainability work, according to the Brundtland principles and the Agenda 21 definitions of sustainability, it is also a question of striking a balance between the "bottom-up" process - that is the social and empowerment-oriented heart of sustainability - on the one hand, and the apparent need to see a number of sustainability issues in a broader context than that of just a municipality, on the other. Alongside the municipal sovereignty in planning, the regional context of sustainability planning has been advanced through the guidance and regulation of the EU and the national level.

- The issue of government vs. governance is a question of how to approach sustainability work: should it be regulated and administered in a "top-down" fashion, with integration of sustainability into the planning regulations (the government-approach); or should it be based on local and regional initiatives coupled with voluntary cooperation (the governance-approach)? While the former provides better assurance of formal inclusion and is democratically well anchored through the municipal democratic processes, the latter is more in line with the general shifts in planning cultures and provides more leeway for local innovation.

The discussion on sustainability as a regional or a local level activity points clearly to two issues: firstly, the FUR is the intermediate level at which the approaches would seem to have the best chances for escaping the difficulties and producing concrete outcomes. Secondly, planning for sustainable FUR development is as much a question of governance as it is a question of the content of sustainability as such.

Table 1: Central themes for sustainable planning. Source: Bjarnadóttir and Hansen 2003.

Planning process	**Regional balance and transportation**	**Land Use**	**Tools and methods**
• Sectoral integration for increased comprehensiveness • Better coordination between planning levels • Clear division of responsibilities between national, regional, and municipal planning authorities • Increased citizen participation	• "Regional enlargement" as specialisation and division of labour between localities, to build functional regions • Polycentric settlement structures • Better interaction of different transportation modes • Improved public transportation • Coordination with economic tools • Cooperation between urban and rural	• Dense settlements • Re-use and complementation of existing settlement structures • Limiting development of large shopping facilities outside the settlement structures • Functionally mixed settlement structures • Ecological building • Mixed housing • Parallel protection and improvement of environments • Green networks and their accessibility	• Legislation • Environmental impact assessment • Strategic environmental assessment • EU directives and national policies • National, regional, and municipal strategies and operational programmes • Indicators for sustainable development and environmental goals

3. Spatial planning and governance

During the period of post-war industrialisation, spatial planning was focused on the regulation of growing cities. Key instruments were (1) zoning, (2) keeping industry, housing, and recreation areas separate from each other, (3) optimising access to public transport, (4) keeping local and transit traffic separated from each other, and other rational and functional principles. It was not questioned what the city or region was. The planning task was to provide functional order of the city and the region.

This form of spatial planning was performed within the organisation of government and the idea of rational or incremental planning. A government system is based on hierarchy and bureaucratic means, and its goal is to create a cohesive and integrated society with a central political management centre – the Government. The parliamentary chain of control is the centre of decision-making, and a large bureaucratic organisation provides the political system with specialised and scientific knowledge to make the best possible decisions. Especially during the 1960's, large specialised technical administrations were established in the Nordic countries populated by professionals (e.g. planners) with technical knowledge in order to plan, control, and regulate the urban and regional growth in that period. The rational planning idea dominated the understanding of planning, and the main purpose was to locate dysfunctions in physical and social environment and find technical and rational solutions to the problems (Rhodes 1997, Bogason 2000, Sehested 2002).

However, during the period of transition, generally since the 1980´s, cities and regions have changed, as mentioned above. We are now talking about functional urban regions where growth is no longer "more of the same". The functional urban regions are changing their role. Often they are searching for growth by attracting new (service) industry or citizens. Due to the enlargement of labour and housing markets, the urban regions have to compete, and planning strategies have become still more market orientated. The new wisdom is to grow on own assets and the uniqueness of the city. Thus, planning is changing its focus from function to symbolic representations of the unique qualities of the urban region.

Due to the slowdown of growth the demand for housing and new industrial areas has decreased. Urban regions no longer just respond to demands for urban development. Rather, they provide a supply of spectacular housing and industrial areas in order to attract companies and families. This is often done by developing new territorial concepts of life-style, housing, and industrial parks. Also, the urban and regional authorities work proactively towards private landowners and investors ("developers"), drawing up projects that visually and functionally would contribute to a better regional environment.

These strategies indicate a new understanding of both planning and government. Project planning in governance settings are new characteristics.

Project planning and governance in the shadow of hierarchy

Project planning renounces the belief that it is possible to plan and regulate a whole and cohesive development of society and cities – practice has shown its failure (Sandercock 1998, Healey 1997). In fact it is argued that too many regulations and control functions in large scale plans will hinder the ability of the cities to adjust to the complex and dynamic urban developments. Instead there is a

need for a more effective planning based on flexible projects and ad-hoc initiatives. The projects have to be developed in bottom-up organised processes with relevant public and private actors represented. The needs and preferences of individuals, businesses and organisations are developed during the planning process and "the proper" development is not decided from a hierarchical centre by politicians and planners but grows up from below in urban and regional areas involving citizens, businesses, local institutions, interests organisations etc. (Sandercock 1998). The interaction of actors from the public and the private sector in formulating strategies and projects are typically organised in policy network, e.g. partnerships. Planning in these networks is not only about competitive interest bargaining but also about collaborative consensus building and the building of a common culture in general (Healey 1997, Sager 1996).

This new form of interaction between the actors in urban regions is labelled governance, as mentioned above. Governance and policy networks indicate a new form and logic of organisation in contrast to the logic of the traditional hierarchy and bureaucracy in public organisations, and the logic of competition and exchange on the market. In planning processes based on governance the concern is not to make top-down decisions or to control the implementation but to find and develop a common understanding of problems and solutions and to utilise the synergy of combining resources in the urban region (Kooiman 1993, Rhodes 1997, Heffen et al. 2000). One-way management in planning from public to private actors changes to two-way management that considers problems, understandings, wishes etc. on both sides. Focus shifts from structure, form and formal rules to problems that must be solved and the possibilities to do so. The boundaries between and the responsibilities assigned to the public and the private actors become unclear and change character.

Studies of governance processes reveal that policy networks take many forms. Some are closed and elitist networks forming policy communities with the same actors for a long period, building up a high degree of trust, interdependency, and common understanding. Others are open and pluralistic with more and changing participants, and less consensus (Rhodes 1997, Heffen, Kickert and Thomassen 2000).

In table 2 the differences between hierarchical and project planning are described as follows:

Hierarchical planning	**Project planning**
Government institutions: the parliament and the political councils	Governance settings: formal and informal, open and closed networks
Hierarchy, rules, and bureaucracy as steering principles	Equality, interdependency, and common understanding as steering principles
Top-down policy formation by centre	Interactive and bottom-up policy-making in various policy networks
One-way management	Two-way management
Decision making and representation as essential	Process-making and direct participation as essential
Focus on structure and formal rules	Focus on common problems to be solved
Clear boundaries between public and private	Unclear boundaries between the public and the private

Plan as the end product	Common understandings and decisions as the end product

Project planning and governance are useful concepts when attempting to comprehend recent developments in Nordic planning; however, the developments in Nordic planning also unfold within unique contextual conditions that are important to understand in order to fully comprehend the planning development. The general development does *not* unambiguously move from Government to Governance and from Plans to Projects in the Nordic countries. Scharphf (1994: 41) has coined the expression "governance in the shadow of hierarchy" as a mean of characterising the general development in the public administration in several European countries. This is also a relevant description of the Nordic context. There is still a hierarchical planning system and plans in the Nordic countries and the representative democracy is still the dominating form of democracy. The belief is still primarily that the public can maintain the general sense of control over both society and urban regional areas, thereby creating a greater sense of cohesion and equality in the Nordic societal development. But the hierarchy has been loosened and new planning elements have been integrated in the formal systems (cf. chapter 4 for a description of the formal Nordic planning systems).

> A hypothesis in the research project is that FUR planning is developed in a very complex governing situation between hierarchy (government) and networks (governance). Planning projects are developed in the shadow of plans, political goals, and visions, and governance processes typically become integrated in the representative democracy.

The most important questions to be investigated to discuss this hypothesis are:

- How is FUR planning developed between hierarchy and network?
- How is the FUR planning organised and structured?
- Who participates and why?
- How does a FUR planning process typically proceed?
- How is FUR planning processes related to the formal planning and political system?
- What are the benefits and problems of FUR planning?

In the Nordic countries we find lots of similarities in the planning ideas and conduct of the urban regions – but there are also great varieties. These varieties are closely related to the options for change. Different starting points for strategic action may produce vastly different strategic compositions, and the subsequent programmatic tools and forms of organisation are likewise varied. In this report similarities of planning tendencies and practices will be studied as well as how the planning systems, ideas, and practices differ across the Nordic borders. It is important to locate the reasons for the similarities and differences if the experiences are to be useful across national borders.

Governance problems

The governance literature stress that all attempts to steer social relations has a potential for failure, and this also applies to the new governance form. Governance problems that might be relevant for the FUR cooperations can be characterised as follows:

- The principle of equality and communicative action in the policy networks are too idealistic and do not properly take into account the unequal power relations between individuals and institutions. In governance processes there is a need for strategies for how to handle conflicts and unequal power relations in the new policy networks, whether they are public, corporate, or citizen based (Jessop 1998, Hillier 2002).

- In government settings, coordination and integration are the core issues and institutions and procedures are developed to handle these issues. In the fragmented and multi-centred governance setting there are no such procedures or institutions to deal with the problem of coordination and integration across the many autonomous unities (policy networks and institutions) involved in the policy making /planning. Hence, we see problems with cooperation between relatively autonomous networks. There is a need to develop such procedures and institutions (Jessop 1998, Stoker 2000).

- A problem of legitimacy often occurs in the governance decision making. Politicians have their public legitimacy within certain policy areas and within certain geographical borders in the municipalities and regions, and the non-elected local actors, e.g. business actors and citizens, possess a vague position. The participants in a policy network may agree on a solution, but maybe actors outside the network do not accept the decision and will not implement it. There is a need to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the planning and policy making in governance processes (Stoker 2000, Lefevre 1998).

The governance problems are important for two reasons in the study of FUR planning: 1) It is important because FUR planning is an attempt to deal with problems of coordination and integration in a functional urban region with plenty of governance and government planning activities, 2) but it is also important because the FUR cooperation typically illustrate yet another policy network competing with or in cooperation with formal regional councils handling the task of coordination and integration in a certain area.

In this sense FUR cooperation can be interpreted as both an answer to the coordination problems in certain areas and a producer of more coordination problems in the general planning situation. This is especially true if the connection between the FUR cooperation and the formal planning institutions is weak. The important questions to investigate are:

- What kind of governance problems do FUR cooperation and planning respond to?
- What kind of governance problems do they produce?
- How is equality in governance relations secured and how are conflicts resolved?
- Which kinds of coordination and integration means are used?
- How are decisions in FUR cooperation and planning legitimised?
- What is the democratic anchorage of FUR cooperation and planning?

One response to governance problems is a withdrawal to traditional government institutions and procedures by restraining the governance activities. This response often creates conflicts and frustration in the planning processes. Another response is what we actually see in most of the FUR cooperations: the emergence of a new governing form called meta-governance combined with soft regulation. We will now look further into these concepts.

Meta-governance and soft regulation

Within the literature on urban and regional governance, we find a discussion about meta-governance as an alternative to the withdrawal to hierarchical and bureaucratic solutions. Different concepts are used to describe the new public role in a governance situation like facilitator, mediator, catalyst, process manager etc. They all indicate an indirect form of steering which we will label meta-governance. Meta-governance can be performed by several actors at different decision levels. In this report we focus on public actors as meta-governors. But an important question is: who of the public actors in the FUR planning perform meta-governance and how are different actors influenced by others performing meta-governance? The FUR cooperation typically consists of regional and local actors who perform meta-governance activities according to different activities in their urban functional area, but the national and the EU level also perform meta-governance to influence FUR cooperation and planning. This is a typical situation in a fragmented and multi-centred political system as the Nordic.

Meta-governance is an indirect form of regulating the self-regulating governance networks by shaping the conditions under which they operate. It is the attempts of politicians, administrators, or other governance actors to construct, structure and influence the interaction between and within particular networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2005, Sørensen 2006, Jessop 1998, Hajer 1995). Meta-governance focuses on influencing the governance processes more than the product. Meta-governance is developed in order to create some form of cohesion and integration in society in spite of the fragmentation and thus illustrates a renewed faith in some form of general public control with the development. Meta-governance is not an accurate concept, but as Sørensen argues (2006: 101) *"An umbrella concept for the plurality of toolkits for regulation of self-regulation"*. We can distinguish between different forms of meta-governance concerning the internal regulation of the activities within a policy network and the external regulation of network activities:

Network participation
The most frequently used form of meta-governance is to participate in policy networks and directly influence discussions and decisions; not as an authority person but as a participant like everybody else using arguments and dialogue as the mean for achieving influence. Politicians are mostly involved in important networks and the higher position of the participants the more important the networks become (e.g. the mayor effect). Regions and municipalities can influence governance activities by a strategic selection of the actors that participate in different policy networks.

Strategic network design
Network design concerns strategic policy network building and network support. Here the concepts of facilitator and mediator are often used. The purpose is to influence who is going to participate in the policy networks, how they are organised, and how they ought to function - not in details but in general terms. It illustrates an attempt to manage through construction of policy networks in different situations and influence their manner of functioning. Regions and municipalities have in recent years used this network management as a governing mean. Network support is less used. It concerns the support of network actors and networks in general to participate and interact on equal terms in a governance situation. Several empowerment tools can be used, e.g. provision of knowledge, resources and information to weak actors and networks, education of participants, and to help setting up procedures and rules that will achieve

equality (Fotel and Andersen 2003, Kickert et al. 1997, Sørensen 2006). This form of meta-governance can be exercised within the policy networks and from the outside as well. Regions and municipalities can influence FUR planning activities in different formal and informal policy networks and government institutions by strategic network design.

Network framing
Network framing is an external meta-governance form. Network framing can be exercised through political goals and visions, laws and rules, through allocation of finance and other resources, and through discursive framing and storytelling (Sørensen and Torfing 2005). Network framing makes it possible to influence structural and institutional frameworks. The most common type of network framing is to set political goals and make laws for the functioning of policy networks – still in general terms, and more regarding the process than the content. This is a top-down steering of bottom-up initiated project realisations (Engberg 2003). National programmes and experiments is one example, regional and local political goals is another, and planning laws and regulation (e.g. land use regulation) is a third example. A more radical network framing can be an attempt to change institutional power relations and the building of new institutions. Examples are the development of general empowerment strategies and new democratic institutions (Fotel and Andersen 2003, Bogason 2003). Special attention is paid to the construction of a common understanding and identity in network framing, and discursive frameworks and storytelling are the most used means to support identity building. Regions and municipalities can influence FUR planning by using these network framing activities.

Soft versus hard regulation

Different modes of regulation can be connected to the discussion of meta-governance. As mentioned above, the former spatial planning has to a large extent been based on hierarchical and legally binding laws and rules (e.g. the planning law, hierarchical plans, and detailed land use regulation). This way of governing can be characterised as *hard regulation*.

Hard regulation builds on binding regulations, directives, and formal decisions as legally binding for all actors, public as well as private in a FUR area. They provide detailed schemes, material standards, and rigid implementation modes with little room for self-regulation. They also include a fixed and non-context-dependent norm setting (Treib, Bärh and Falkner 2005). And usually sanctions and control methods are included in the hard regulation.

The new governance activities and meta-governance relates to more *soft regulation* means.

Soft regulation builds on soft legislative suggestions that the actors are encouraged to follow on a voluntarily basis. They provide policy and planning guidelines and have the character of non-binding recommendations. They leave room for the implementation actors to adapt the guidelines and recommendations to local circumstances and interests. They also provide a range of alternative options to choose from. Furthermore, soft regulation typically focuses on procedural issues and they are more "open-textured, revisable and integrated with other norms and policies" (Treib, Bärh and Falkner 2005: 8).

Put schematically the differences are:

Hard regulation	**Soft regulation**
Legally binding	Guidelines and recommendations
Material regulation	Procedural regulation
Fixed norms and standards	Malleable norms and standards
Rigid implementation rules	Flexible implementation rules
Sanctions and control	Trust and flexible evaluations

Although hard regulation is often connected to the "old" government system and soft regulation to the "new" modes of governance, it would be more relevant to use the different regulation categories as equally important analysing tools in the FUR planning. When the hypothesis is that FUR planning will develop between hierarchy and networks, it is likely that we will find both soft and hard regulation means in use in the FUR cooperation and planning.

In the study of FUR cooperation and planning we will investigate the different forms of meta-governance and regulation prevailing in the FUR cooperation. We will also discuss how they contribute to solving governance problems in FUR planning and which new problems they leave behind. Important questions are:

- Which types of planning cooperations are established in the urban regions; who participates, and why?
- How is network activities supported and regulated in the FUR planning processes?
- How are policy network and actors empowered to participate and how is equality secured?
- What kind of financial (or other) resources are allocated?
- What kinds of soft and hard regulation means do we find?
- Which political goals, strategies, and visions are developed?
- What is coordinated and integrated in the FUR planning
- How is a common identity achieved in the FUR cooperation?

These new forms of governance and meta-governance in planning are generally well-suited to the demands of flexible organisation, proactive/reflexive process management, and addressing questions of public acceptability, all inherent in the multi-faceted nature of planning for sustainability. Therefore, questions of governance and sustainability have a strong parallel. It is apparent that sustainability can be approached, achieved, and manifested in multiple ways and with a number of methods. However, as noted by e.g. Jenks et al. (1996), within aspirations lacking integration and flexibility lies a danger of creating "sustainable islands within seas of un-sustainability". To cater for the transformation of both institutional structures that govern the field of spatial planning, as well as social and technical conditions that affect structures and everyday activities, new concepts and methods for achieving sustainable development – such as adaptive strategies (van Vliet 2000) and locally specific management approaches (Crilly and Mannis 2000) – are becoming operational. Overall, it is important to emphasise the processes over the products and the objectives over the standards, in order to overcome the difficulties present in the rigidity of the end product- and standards-centred approaches (Williams et al. 2000). This helps sustainable development decision making adapt to the changing circumstances, address the complexities of the urban regional systems, and respond to the multiplicity of changes.

4. The Planning Systems of the Nordic Countries

The case studies are to be understood within their national context as the planning systems of the Nordic countries varies. Thus, this chapter is a short review of the structure of the national planning systems, and an identification of the strongest level of the planning hierarchy.

Denmark

As a result of the restructuring of the county and municipal administrative structure that came onto effect as of the 1st of January 2007, the counties have been abolished and thus, the planning system has been changed from a three-tier hierarchical planning structure to a two-level planning structure where the state and the municipalities are the important actors. Since most of the FUR cooperations in the Danish case studies were either carried out or commenced under the previous planning act, and the municipalities and regions were preparing for the reform in the period of the FUR cooperation, an overview of both planning structures is appropriate.

The former planning system

Prior to the 1st of January 2007 the Planning Act of 1992 laid down the planning responsibilities between the Department of the Environment (the Spatial planning department), the 12 regional authorities (11 counties and HUR: the Metropolitan development council), and 271 municipalities (275 before the 5 municipalities of Bornholm were merged). The Planning Act was based on a framework management principle which implies that all plans must be in compliance with the overriding planning. Thus, the planning system was a hierarchical system consisting of three levels of planning: the state, the county, and the municipal level.

The Planning Act required that the regional counties prevented the approval of municipal and local plans that conflicted with regional and national interests. The counties protected national interests by setting guidelines for the land use of the open land (i.e. areas outside of the urban zone) in order to maintain a sustainable balance between environmental protection and economic development. The regional plan was legally binding and an important tool for the establishment of these guidelines.

The Minister of Environment could specify binding regulations for the content of The Planning Act, the regional and the municipal plans, and thus allow for projects of national interest. In line with this, the minister could prevent the final approval of a regional plan if it conflicted with national interests.

The municipal plan was to outline the main policies for the development and land use of the municipality. Concurrently, the municipal plan was also the core tool for the spatial planning of housing, public service, retail areas, green areas etc. and it was legally binding. The municipal plans were often restrictive and not visionary since it contained prohibition notices and enforcement orders instead of possibilities and requests. The municipal plan was supplemented by the local plan - a legal document that regulated the land use in the small scale, e.g. zone status, or plot ratio for each area.

In year 2000 municipal planning strategies were introduced in the Planning Act. The content of the planning strategy was the municipal council's political strategy for the development of the

municipal. The planning strategies were introduced in order to ensure a greater political ownership of the municipal planning in general and more specifically of the strategic content of the municipal plans; to strengthen the dialogue with the citizens in the planning process; and to ensure a more coherent and forward-acting planning process by letting strategic considerations form the basis for revision of the municipal plans. The planning strategy was not legally binding.

The present planning system

The restructuring of the regional and municipal administrations has caused the former 271 municipalities to merge to 98 entities, and the counties have been abolished and replaced by 5 regions. The reform has been followed by an alteration of the Planning Act.

The main content of the Planning Act of 2006 is the following:

- The regional plans are abolished and the municipal plan is henceforth the principal plan for land use and development
- The new regions are obliged to draw up regional development plans
- The national planning is strengthened in order to assure overriding planning objectives in the now more decentralised planning process
- Separate regional planning for the metropolitan area

The national level
Also the national planning has been strengthened and in the future it will be the national and the municipal level that are to ensure quality in the land use planning.

The regional level
The regions are without the planning responsibilities of the former counties which implies that a number of tasks have been transferred from the counties to the municipalities and that the municipal plan henceforth will be the principal plan for development and land use in the municipality. The regional county has to draw up a regional development plan. The regional development plan differs from the former regional plan by being a visionary plan that can act as a tool for the growth and development of the region. A number of regional agencies are to develop plans and strategies for different sectors, e.g. business and labour market, and the regional development plan is to unite these plans and strategies in a coherent development perspective. The development initiatives of the regional council are nature and environment, including recreation; business, including tourism; employment, education, and culture. The regional development plan is to be developed in dialogue with the municipalities of the region and it is to form the basis for the municipal planning. According to the Planning Act, the municipal plan cannot counter the desired future development of the region as it is described in the regional development plan and the regional council can raise objections to proposals to the municipal plan.

However, the regional level is also present with a new statutory regional institution called Regional Growth Forum. The participants are public and private core actors in the region with the regional mayor as the chairman. The Growth Forum is to make a strategic business development plan and it has to be integrated in the regional development plan. This might prove to be a new important policy and planning institution.

The local level
The municipal plan is to be developed to contain aims and directions for both the strategic planning and the more concrete land use planning. The municipal plan is now the linking element between

the national planning and the detailed local plan. In addition to the former content of the municipal plan, the municipalities are also to cover the land use planning in the open land that the county used to be responsible for, e.g. protection of landscape and natural resources, regulation of the use of lakes and coastal areas, and designation of afforestation areas.

Henceforth, the municipalities are also responsible for regional coordination and they are encouraged to experiment with different varieties of trans-municipal cooperations. This new major responsibility for regional coordination has also provided the municipalities with the possibility of raising objections to the municipal planning of the neighbouring municipality. The content of the existing 12 regional plans are to be incorporated in the 98 new municipal plans within the next couple of years.

Figure 2 illustrates the new planning system in Denmark:

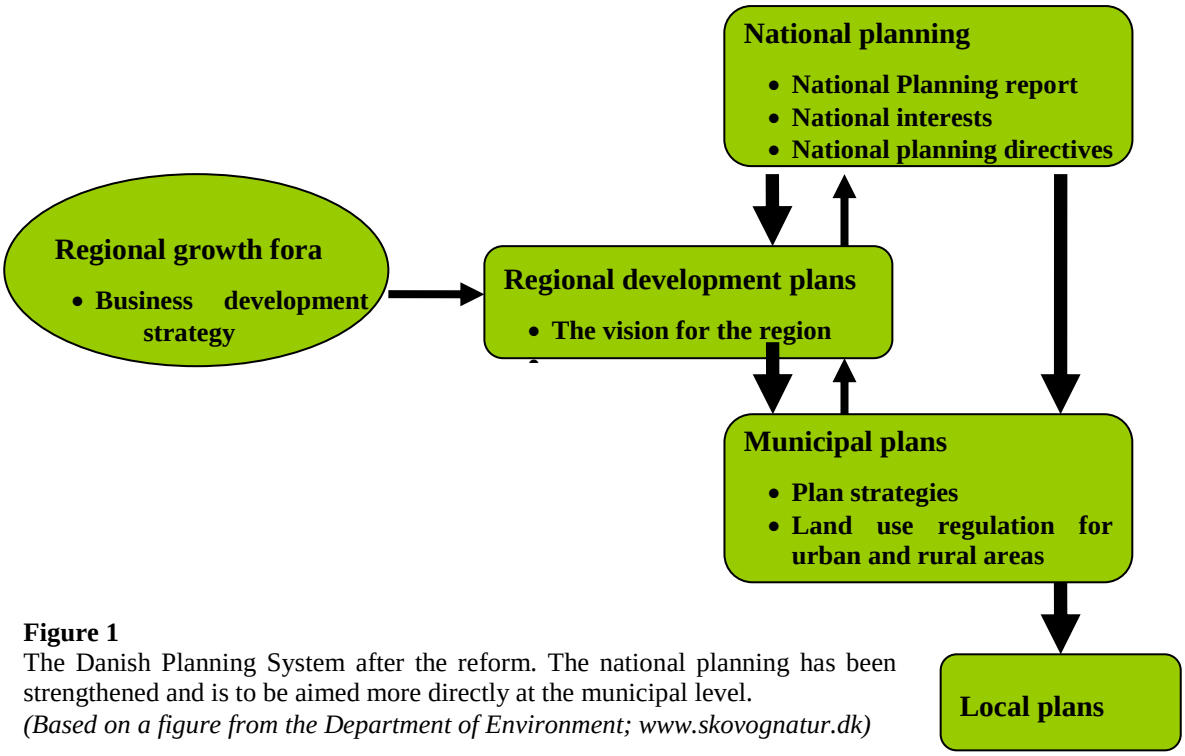


Figure 1
The Danish Planning System after the reform. The national planning has been strengthened and is to be aimed more directly at the municipal level.
(Based on a figure from the Department of Environment; www.skovognatur.dk)

Finland

In contrast to the other Nordic countries, Finland does not have an autonomous self-governing regional level which means that the municipal and the national level are jointly responsible for the regional development, but due to a number of regional bodies the spatial planning still takes place at both the national, the regional and the municipal level.

In principle the land use planning system is hierarchic: higher level planning steers lower levels. When a plan has legal power, it is binding. For example, a regional plan has legal power when the

Ministry of Environment has confirmed it, but the regional plan is not valid in areas where a legally binding local plan is in force.

The national level

The national responsibility for spatial planning is divided between two ministries: the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of the Interior. The former is responsible for land use planning and environmental issues and the latter is responsible for regional development. However, since no national spatial plan is being drawn up, the national influence is limited to legislation, policy statements, national policies, and national land use goals.

The legislation behind Finnish planning is the Land Use and Building Act and the Regional Development Act. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Environment develops guiding principles in vision programmes from time to time and although these are non-binding, they act as national guidelines for land use planning.

Another tool is the National land use goals which were introduced when the latest Land Use and Building Act came into force in year 2000. The national land use goals state the general aims of the Act and elaborate on the Act's requirements regarding the content of the plans. The goals cover fields like functional regional structures, high quality of living environment, cultural and natural resources, functional infrastructure networks, energy supply etc.

The regional level

As the self-governing regional level is absent, a number of other actors constitute the regional level with regards to spatial planning: state representatives, voluntary municipal co-operations, and statutory municipal co-operations.

The Regional Councils form the statutory municipal co-operation at the regional level. The Councils are sometimes referred to as provincial federations and they are common inter-municipal authorities that hold the statutory responsibility for regional development and planning according to the Regional Development Act, e.g. regional development funds are allocated from the Ministry of the Interior to the Regional Council.

The twenty Regional Councils are formed by the municipalities in a bottom-up process and since the council is comprised by municipal representatives, no Regional Council elections are held. The member municipalities also cover the costs of the Council; however they do receive a 20% subsidy from the state.

The Councils are responsible for the regional development, both in terms of physical land use planning and regional planning development, with an emphasis on visions and strategies. The work comprises the Regional Development Plan, Regional Land Use Plan and the Regional Development Programme.

Regional development work consists of a strategic regional plan, a regional plan, and a regional development programme. The emphasis in regional planning is on development visions and strategic issues. The strategic regional plan (maakuntakaava) is the key task of the Regional Councils as a fundamental document for the region's development. It defines the objectives of the long-term development of the region.

Furthermore, the Councils draw up regional development programmes. The plans and the programmes are drawn up in co-operation with the state and the local government and with businesses and organisations within the region.

The state representatives at the regional level are e.g. Regional Environment Centres, Employment and Economic Development Centres, and the County Administrative Boards. The County Administrative Boards are also sometimes referred to as the Provincial State Offices and they represent a common regional authority from seven ministries; however they do not hold the responsibility for regional development tasks and planning.

The voluntary municipal co-operation is joint municipal co-operations that vary greatly in size, content, and extent. These factors depend on the task to be solved and the decisions of the participating municipalities. According to the Finnish Local Government Act the municipalities are free to perform their functions jointly and co-operation within joint municipality boards eliminates a number of the problems faced by small municipalities when they can co-operate on e.g. health care, as is a frequent issue. The smaller co-operative bodies, referred to as local joint municipal boards or local federations of communes, act as restricted joint municipal federations, while the co-operative bodies covering larger areas are regional joint municipal boards. Since they are established on the initiative of and on behalf of the municipalities, the municipalities cover the expenses themselves.

The aims of the national regional policy and the measures taken to implement them are confirmed in the regional policy objective programme accepted by the Government. The Regional Development Act guides regional development by aiming at balanced regional development throughout the country. National regional policy aims at recognising regional diversities and different potentials of the regions. Programme-based regional policy includes e.g. the Centre of Expertise Programme, the Regional Centre Programme, sub-regional cooperation, and urban policy. The Regional Centre Programme aims at strengthening the existing regional centres. It supports the development of areas around the regional centres. To expand the positive development effects of the regional centres, networking between regional centres and their surrounding areas are to be made more efficient. Municipalities, businesses, educational facilities, and research units play a vital role in this cooperation.

The Centre of Expertise Programme is also expected to increase the regional impacts of universities and polytechnics. The programme will be used specifically to support the development of internationally competitive top expertise in welfare services, business and industry. Like in the Regional Centre Programme, centres of expertise are expected to boost the development also in areas outside these centres.

A specific sub-region project (SEUTU-hanke) set up by the Ministry of the Interior and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is aiming at a better organisation of services in the urban regions. The aims of the project are to develop methods of sub-regional co-operation, structures of decision-making, and to encourage municipal cooperation.

The local level

The municipalities are obliged to promote the welfare of their residents and to develop their territories in a sustainable manner. With regards to spatial planning, the municipalities are very strong actors since they are not just responsible for the planning at the municipal level but also form the regional level. Recently the Land Use and Building Act has entitled the local authorities with

more rights to make independent decisions in land use planning matters since the former requirement that the local land use plans should be approved by the Ministry of Environment has been abolished.

The municipalities are obliged to draw up two types of plans, namely a master plan and a detailed plan.
The master plan is to be approved by the municipal council and contains general guidelines for the land use and location of activities within the municipality. The purpose of the master plan is to solve local questions regarding the functionality of the community and it may cover the whole municipality or just parts of it and it can be either a general strategic plan or a more detailed plan containing concrete regulation of the constructions. This depends on the actual need.

The detailed plan is drawn up when physical alterations of the urban environment is planned, e.g. buildings or alterations of more extensive areas of the city. According to the Land Use and Building Act the existing building stock should be preserved if possible and special attention is to be paid to ensuring that the total amount of parks and recreational areas is sufficient. Without very good reason, the quality of the citizens' living environment cannot be lowered. The detailed plan is the only land use plan that is legally binding.

Local authorities are also allowed to draw joint comprehensive plans and to establish specific development areas.

Norway

The Norwegian planning system consists of three levels: a national, a regional and a municipal level. However, the physical planning is a municipal matter and there is no overriding national plan. Formally, the counties are responsible for an integrated regional planning but this responsibility has been devaluated and in practice the municipal level is the strong planning level.

The national level

In general, the Ministry of Environment is the ministry that has the overall responsibility of ensuring that the regional and local planning is carried out within the framework of the national priorities. However, the municipal sector matters are placed under the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, and the regional authorities, including the particular Norwegian phenomenon 'the county man' (fylkesmanden) who is the national government's representative in the county, are placed under the Ministry of Labour and Administration and thus, most matters concerning regional and municipal planning are divided between three municipalities.

No overall national spatial plan is being drafted. The role of the national level is to define national objectives while the regional and the municipal level develop the solutions on the basis of local circumstances. This follows a planning principle of decentralised planning where the planning is carried out as close to the area affected as possible.

Besides the Planning and Building Act that provides a framework for planning at all three levels with regard to land use and management of natural resources, the government issues National Policy Guidelines and National Policy Provisions that both influence the local and regional planning. The Guidelines sums up concrete policies that concern more than one ministry and can be used to focus on certain priorities within certain policy fields, e.g. coordination of transportation

and land use planning. The provisions provide the national government with the opportunity to define goals and frameworks for the physical, social, and economic development in the municipalities and the counties. The provisions are legally binding and thus, the regional and municipal planning must be in concordance with them.

The regional level

The administrative division of the regional level consists of 19 counties. Oslo is both a county and a municipality. The counties have elected county councils that are responsible for regional service provision and planning. The state administration at the county level is the state county commissioners with responsibility for regional state issues.

The intended purpose of the regional level with regard to planning issues was to act as the connecting link between the national level and the municipalities; both by carrying out regional planning on behalf of the national interests and also to solve and coordinate planning and development tasks that cross municipal borders. For a number of reasons the counties do not fill this role today but they do draw up two different plans that relate to regional planning: the County Plan and the Regional Development Programme.

The County Plan is drawn up at four-year intervals and is a policy document that sets the general framework for the development of the county in accordance with the Planning and Building Act. It coordinates the physical, social, economic, and cultural activities of the state, the county, and the municipals within the county borders. It consists of statements of the overriding goals, long-term guidelines, and an action plan that indicates how the goals are to be achieved. The plan is to be approved by the Ministry of Environment, but it is not legally binding - which causes the County Plan to be rather weak as a tool.

The Regional Development Programme is to be drawn up by the county council every year and describes the use of different types of regional development funding. These plans can be regarded as operative adaptations within the county plan and are to be approved by the Ministry of Local and Regional Development before allocations are made accessible.

The local level

The municipal implementation of the Planning and Building Act is the strongest aspects of spatial planning in Norway. The municipalities are fairly autonomous as long as they do not violate national interests and guidelines. According to the Planning and Building Act the municipalities are in charge of spatial planning within their own territory and this implies that they are to carry out land use planning as well as cross-sector societal planning. These plans regard the municipality itself and the regional and national activities carried out on the municipal territory. This autonomy of the municipalities also imply that the municipal plans need not to add up to or derive from any kind of national or regional plans.

The municipalities are responsible for the drawing up of three kinds of plans: the Master Plan, the Local Development Plans, and the Building Development Plans.

The Master Plan consists of a long-term and a short-term section. The long-term section describes the goals for the development of the municipality, sets the guidelines for sector planning, and describes the management of land use and other natural resources. The short-term section contains action programmes for the sector activities within the next couple of years. The master plan is thus

both presenting the political priorities and framework and stating more concrete plans for land use and nature management. The political aspect is not as such legally binding but the section regarding land use is. Once every four-year election period the Municipal council is obliged to evaluate the Master Plan and decide whether it is necessary to adjust the plan, redraw the plan, or continue with the current content. Before approval of the plan, any objections from either the county or the national level are to be taken into account.

The Local Development Plan is a plan that must be prepared if the Master Plan states that such a plan is necessary for a given area. This can be in relation to new construction sites, alterations of existing city districts etc.

The Master Plan or the Local Development Plan may state that a Building Development Plan is required. A Building Development Plan establishes land use and design of buildings and the immediate surrounding area. It may alter or supplement a Master Plan or a Local Development Plan with regards to land use.

Sweden

In the Swedish planning system, planning is to be understood mainly as and directed towards land use planning. The municipalities are the major actors with regard to the concrete spatial and physical planning. The national planning is divided into sectors and spatial planning at the regional level is almost non-existent.

The national level

The Ministry of the Environment is the responsible ministry regarding spatial planning. However, no overall national planning exists besides the fact that the municipalities are required to observe the legislation.

The legislation behind Swedish planning is the Environment Code which regulates the long-term use of resources and the coordination of various land uses for society's needs, e.g. significant natural resources, protected nature, and recreational areas. The overall aim of the Environment Code is stated in its' opening paragraph: "Land, water and other aspects of the physical environment are to be used in a way that promotes their good long-term utilisation from ecological, social and economic points of view" (www.sna.se). The areas that are of national interest are protected and any development that affects them is strictly regulated.

The Environment Code is an umbrella law that mainly operates through other laws, one of the most important ones with regard to planning being the Planning and Building Act. The Planning and Building Act is the legal framework for the detailed planning. It regulates how and by whom the planning process is organised, what type of plans should be drawn up etc. An important part of the Planning and Building Act is the demand specifying that the public should have a say in the planning process.

The regional level

Sweden is presently divided into 21 counties and the county administrative board is the regional authority that monitor the municipal planning and ensure that the national interest are taken into account in the municipal planning and that the national laws and directives are followed. It is the

responsibility of the county administration to implement regional development, and transport and environmental policies but the county administration is not obliged to carry out any active planning tasks itself. Physical planning at the regional level mainly takes the form of sector planning, e.g. with regards to infrastructure and public services. However, in the Planning and Building Act there is a provision that makes it possible to draw up a regional plan if an issue concerns more than on municipality, However, regional plans are voluntary and the plan is not legally binding. The regional plans act mainly as framework documents for cooperation. Development planning in the regions is, however, dealing with spatial planning issues as well, but it is not labelled spatial planning. The connection to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) goals is most visible in these plans.

One exception to the above is the metropolitan region of Stockholm where the County Council has an extraordinary obligation under the Planning and Building Act to act as a regional planning institution.

Regional development has shifted from focusing on supporting the weak regions to support all regions and focus on development potentials. Regional Growth Agreements and Programmes (Regionala Tillväxtavtal/-program) are the governance-oriented planning tools, the use of which should lead to better use of the region's own potentials for economic growth, or even "sustainable growth" with the broader focus of taking all three pillars of sustainability into account. Coordination, dialogue, and a cross-sectoral approach are the main issues that are dealt with in order to achieve the aims.

In the counties Skåne and Västra Götaland there are regional self-governing bodies (självstyrelseorgan). These regional bodies also act as disseminators of regional development funding. In other counties there are different types of regional co-operative bodies (samverkansorgan, kommunalförbund). The idea behind these is that regional development responsibilities are moved from the counties to the co-operative bodies. The regional co-operative bodies can also lead to co-operation outside regional policy, such as infrastructure planning and tourism. There are also indications that the environmental aspects of regional development planning are given more attention in the co-operative bodies than in the official planning system.

The local level

The Planning and Building Act stipulates that every municipality has a municipal Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan covers the whole municipality and is intended to present the current state of the municipality as well as more long-term development goals for land use and water management. It also needs to reflect how the national interests as stated in the Environmental Code are taken into consideration in the municipal planning. The comprehensive plan can be extended to cover a smaller area, e.g. a city district, if necessary.

It is not a legally binding document but it must be taken into account when deciding on the land use and water management. Thus, it acts as a guideline for the further development and is expected to contain an up-to-date overview of the planning status and the planning aims. Therefore, it must be renewed when necessary and at least once every four-yearly election period, the municipal council is required to evaluate the plan and decide whether it should be renewed or not. The content of the comprehensive plan cannot be appealed.

The legally binding plan of the Swedish planning system is the ‘detailed development plan’ that covers smaller parts of the municipality. These plans are drawn up when the projected development requires more than a building permit and as such the detailed development plan is decisive for building permits and a tool for caretaking of the built environment. The objectives of the detailed development plan is to ensure appropriate development with regards to suitable land use, considerations for the preservation of natural and cultural development, and to generally act on behalf of the public’s best interest and achieve balance between public and private interests. The detailed development plans can be appealed to a complaint board in the Ministry of the Environment.

5. Methodology and case selection

The study scheme may be described as a contextual case study approach, where the main systems and events under scrutiny are not only studied in their present situation, but the historical settings are also accounted for and e.g. backgrounds and motives of the actors are seen as constituents of the perceived settings. The case studies combine various data sources, such as policy and planning documents, evaluation reports, and interviews with the main actors. The acquired information is then arranged according to typologies and structures developed both from theory and from the course of the inquiry.

In this research project most of the data needed have been gathered from secondary sources, and validated as well as complemented by non-structured interviews of the key experts in each FUR-cooperation. The main focus was to describe novel spatial planning procedures and evaluate success in spatial planning. The study compares examples of functional urban regions where we find successful correlation between new forms of spatial planning and sustainable growth in the functional urban regions outside the capital regions and in four Nordic countries.

The study is not a comparative study of planning for functional urban regions in the Nordic countries. Rather, it is a study of new tendencies in Nordic spatial planning initiatives for sustainable growth. However, the analysis provides comparisons across the cases in the extent feasible. Thus, this type of study means that the cases present numerous details that cannot be understood outside the local context. Many aspects are more general, too, and they are studied in relation not only to the other cases, but also with reference to the conceptual frameworks.

In line with the tradition of qualitative case study procedures (cf. e.g. Lapintie 2002), the relation between "theory" and "empirical data" is not straightforward. Rather, the two have a reciprocal relation, where the conceptual starting points, while informing the choosing, collection, and analysis of the case study "data", do not represent the conclusive framework for analysis and conclusions. The case data itself creates new conceptual frameworks, as well as "opens" up for new concepts in the analysis - the case study data is seen through the conceptualisations and theories that are informed by the data itself. Furthermore, the end result is not universally applicable generalisations, but contextualisation that help to both understand the cases and to see the generalizable issues. The underlying rationale is to avoid too "thin" theorisations that bear no relation – and thus no applicability – to reality.

The cases have been chosen on the basic principle that they should cover as broad a range as possible; also across countries. The broad range regards geographical location as well as decision-making level, content of the cooperation, and the purpose of the cooperation.

With regards to geographical location, the selection should represent cases from the metropolitan areas, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. In addition to this, variations in the urban structure were sought so that both regions with polycentric and regions with mono-centric urban structures were represented.

To gain as broad a range as possible of different types of cooperation, the cases were selected to cover various compositions of decision-making levels: inter-municipality co-operations, pure county cooperations, and cooperations that involve both the municipal and the regional level.

In line with this, it was also sought to find cases that had a different out-set with regards to initiative: whether the cooperation was initiated on behalf of the region itself or whether it was onset on behalf of a request from the national level. This also influence whether the cooperation is more or less formal, and the variations of formal and informal cooperations are also to be found in the range of the case studies.

Finally, a variation in the goals for the cooperation was to be found across the case studies: whether the region had a specific problem to solve or if they 'just' wanted to initiate a strategic cooperation, and related to this: whether the aim was the approval of a formal plan or if it was the formation of a regional body that could form the basis for future planning.

This broad range of variations sought in the selected case studies is the reason why no comparison between the countries is carried out. Since only a selection of the variations is to be found in each country, it is not relevant to venture into cross-country comparisons.

In the following chapters we introduce the case study regions, and provide an overview based on comparisons at the Nordic level. We extract the basic foundation for this comparison from the statistical work done at Nordregio. The aim of the comparison is to see the context in which the case study regions operate and through that give the reader an outline of in which ways the cases are different and in which ways similar. Therefore, the comparisons are general, and the overview descriptive in nature. The actual case study descriptions follow in chapter 8.

6. The case study regions – an overview

North Jutland, Denmark

In North Jutland, a peripheral mono-centric region, the county has initiated the FUR planning. It is a case showing how traditional formal regional planning change towards network planning carried through by involving more actors than the county itself. The case illustrates how a redefinition of the urban and regional structure by various regional actors can be useful when making a new strategic plan for the region. The involvement of more public and private actors increases the political attention to strategic planning as well as expands the contents of the strategic plan. Furthermore a broad sense of ownership to the plan is gained. The result of the cooperation is a formal strategic regional plan that serves as a platform from which future planning initiatives can be initiated.

Triangle Area, Denmark

The Triangle Area is a case illustrating how an inter-municipal network in a polycentric and semi-peripheral area in competition with the metropolitan area can evolve from being a rather informal cooperation between a few municipalities from different counties, into an institutionalised regional actor - a regional actor that is thought of as the natural choice in preference to the concerned counties when drawing up more specified regional plans. The case also illustrates how the topics of FUR cooperation develop over time. The municipalities of the Triangle Area Cooperation initiated their work by cooperating on strategic business development and have just recently begun to think in terms of creating an attractive urban settlement area with high-quality living services. The outcome of the FUR cooperation has likewise evolved from strategic business plans over regional identity-building documents to the latest issue on the planning agenda where the involved municipalities have approved a common municipality plan that is to form the basis for the legally binding municipality plans in each municipality.

Holbæk, Denmark

This case illustrates a process perspective on sub-regional planning. It is a case regarding sub-regional identity building and strategic settlement planning in a sub-region in a metropolitan area. The main issue in the case has been to develop a sense of common destiny and coherence, both in a small and a larger sub-regional setting in order to influence the conditions for the sub-region. The shifting geographical scope of the cooperation also shows how the strategic planning takes place between varying administrative and political actors in the sub-region. Just because the initiatives are taken within one cooperation forum this does not mean that the work cannot be transferred to other forums that proves more suitable if the political and administrative structure changes and new opportunities shows. The governance setting is not fixed to a certain geographical area. Plans and strategic documents are not perceived as the end result of the cooperation, but the mean to achieve a common political understanding and initiative for further planning efforts.

Trøndelag, Norway

This case, situated in a semi-peripheral area, illustrates how a cooperation between two decision-making levels, namely two counties and the municipality of Trondheim, can be carried out with the common aim of creating a strong region that can compete with other functional urban areas in Norway and Europe. The aim of the cooperation was initially to create a sense of coherence and common destiny in the region – i.e. regional identity building. Furthermore the purpose was to "teach" the different decision-making levels of the involved counties and municipalities that in order to compete with other regions, regional coherence is necessary. These aims were supported by the establishment of a formal regional council: the Trøndelag Council. In this cooperation we find an example of how strategic planning can change the regional focus from influencing ongoing economic growth centres to creating innovation in a polycentric region based on culture and local advantages. During the course of the cooperation it became clear for the actors that it was beneficial for all in the area to focus on the development of Trondheim as the centre of a functional urban region. One result from the cooperation is a common strategic regional plan integrating programmes of action with plans for concrete projects and activities.

Rogaland-Jæren, Norway

This case illustrates how spatial regional planning in a monocentric FUR develops from strategic overall planning to more concrete planning initiatives and binding land use planning for certain areas. Although the county initiated the planning work, the municipalities have also been involved on equal terms and the case describes a successful cooperation between county and municipalities in FUR planning. The congestion of the functional urban area of Stavanger, Jæren, requires strategic planning for physical development with a long-term perspective. The case illustrates how land use planning and transport planning can be integrated in this long-term strategic regional cooperation for a fast-growing urban region. The result of the cooperation is a formal county land use plan as a binding platform for municipal planning.

Kristiansand, Norway

This case illustrates a cooperation of municipalities split between two counties around a large city in a semi-peripheral growth region. The case also illustrates how the cooperation on strategic economic development in the region develops into more concrete transport and land use planning as it becomes increasingly clear that the former is dependent on the latter. It also shows how the functional urban area is the onset for the planning since the attitude of the FUR cooperation is that planning within the FUR cooperation is a more direct way of planning than involving the counties. Results show faster and more efficient if the municipalities unite their efforts on an inter-municipal plan. The land use planning is developed without the involvement of the counties due to their sceptical attitude towards the project but the case also shows a change in attitude at the county level since they will integrate the sub-regional land use planning in the county plans. The result of the FUR cooperation will be a common land use plan with guidelines for the municipalities that can be further developed into a formal county plan for the region.

Gothenburg, Sweden

The case illustrates how spatial planning and sustainability work coincide and interconnect in a metropolitan regional context. The Gothenburg region has ample resources for regional

development planning when compared to the other cases. The work on spatial planning has been concentrated on defining the premises, alternatives, and concretisations of the regional planning tasks. The core of the process has been a political dialogue that has been carried out in three stages, with each stage building on the previous one. The case shows how spatial planning may be approached via a non-physical discussion. As a parallel process, work on sustainability has been carried out in the region via an informal network of authorities, and this work is more specifically geared towards issues such as the sustainable regional structure. Sustainability is seen as a function of e.g. lifestyle, which has been given a spatial form.

Umeå, Sweden

This case illustrates how a functional urban region can be seen as both the platform of cooperation activities, and as the subject of region-building activities. It is a case of informal spatial cooperation with specific aims and also limits. The main issue has been the cooperation itself, as it is seen to benefit the region through mutual trust and learning. The cooperation structure is simple and the cooperation is not a legal entity. Thus, the tasks of FUR cooperation are handled in practise by the individual municipalities. The cooperation is well anchored politically as well as in the administrations. The principle is that development in the FUR is a common benefit, regardless of in which municipality it occurs. Integration has also been developed through joint municipal services and administrative functions. Noteworthy is also the relatively weak reaction to national rail investment, at least in physical terms. However, the case also shows how the idea of "regional enlargement" may be seen to alter the functionalities in a long-term perspective.

Lahti, Finland

This case illustrates how physical planning can be used in a strategic way by showing future trends, locations of development, and even soft regulation through the connections to formal land use plans. The plan, called a structural model, is created in a formalised regional cooperation setting through a similar sub-regional cooperation project as in Oulu. The cooperation on spatial planning is special in that the town of Heinola, located outside the cooperation area and having its own FUA, is included in the work largely due to perceived future integration of the two and increased competition within the Helsinki metropolitan area. The work resulted in a structural plan that, despite being an informal document, has already proved to influence municipal planning as well as the regional plan.

Joensuu, Finland

The case of Joensuu shows how the cooperation on physical planning evolves through a mutual learning process. The setting is in a mixed relationship between local actors and regional organisations. The urban region of Joensuu wants to cater for its specific needs but also to cooperate with the regional actors due to feasibility of sharing resources and developing the region in unison. The rationale for the planning cooperation is to produce an inter-municipal comprehensive plan that will be binding for the municipalities and replace the municipal general plans. In some of the municipalities this will be the first general plan to cover the whole of the municipality. Transportation issues have been closely accompanying the planning work

Turku, Finland

This case illustrates how cooperation on spatial planning can take many - even, from some perspectives, rivalling - forms. The history of cooperation in the Turku region is not without twists and turns, and the ideas for cooperation on physical planning seem to be constantly evolving. The case presents the plan that has been produced by the regional council, representing 50+ municipalities, for the urban region of eight municipalities. The pivotal point in this cooperation, in relation to the other aspirations in the region, has been an informal group of planning chiefs that represents the most influential processes in the region. The achieved plan is regulative in nature. The core municipalities also integrate their planning efforts, and recent developments show that there might be two more processes in which FUR spatial planning will be discussed and developed. The case shows that the process of drawing up a plan that is to provide common grounds for development needs not only formal acceptance, but also locally grounded institutional support.

Oulu, Finland

This case illustrates how national and local initiatives may interact to provide the basis for cooperation on physical planning. A government project on sub-regional cooperation provides a platform for FUR cooperation in municipal services and sustainability work. In addition, and as the focus of this case study, physical planning in the form of a binding inter-municipal comprehensive plan has been carried out. The plan, while regulative in its formal nature, shows aspects of strategic thinking at the FUR level. In the larger region surrounding Oulu, there are also more general land use plans, e.g. the regional plan and a plan by a network of municipalities from two regions. The interaction between these physical plans provides a good account of how the plan hierarchy may be supplemented in the work process moving from the strategic to the detailed plan.

7. The case study regions in a Nordic context

The Nordic urban system is characterised more by national differences than by similarities. What is considered to be a city differs substantially from one Nordic country to another (Hanell 2006). The study of Hanell and Persson (2003) provides points of departure for seeing the 12 case study regions in a comparative framework. While the actual analysis is methodologically not fully comparative, this chapter presents the basis for the case selection in terms of how the case study regions differ from one another, and how their characteristics may be approached via the analytical tool developed by Hanell and Persson (2003).

After positioning the case study regions according to the typology, we complement the picture by adding functionalities that we have found to be of importance for the analysis – population, decision making level, purpose and content of the cooperation, and responsible actors.

Firstly, the case study regions are very different in territorial extent. The Trøndelag area that, in principle, covers two Norwegian counties is by far the largest in this respect. At the other end of the scale is the Holbæk area that, after the Danish municipal reform, covers the area of just one municipality. This shows how different starting points for cooperation the case studies present in spatial terms. It is also enlightening in this regard to observe how relatively small correspondence there is between the territory of the cooperation area and the type of cooperation is spatial terms. We find physical planning in all kinds of surroundings: sparsely populated (Joensuu), densely populated (Triangle Area), as well as in-between (Rogaland, Turku, Oulu, Lahti). In this respect, the metropolitan agglomeration of Gothenburg stands out.

The second interesting feature is how different the territories are in terms of population distribution. The Trøndelag, Umeå, and Joensuu regions show the most typical model of a dominant city surrounded by clearly rural hinterlands, albeit on slightly different scales. In contrast to this model, the Danish cases show polycentric urban regions to which the cooperation areas "attach" themselves at different territorial levels. Especially the Danish cases show that in dense polycentric areas, the "natural" functional demarcation according to e.g. Local Labour Market regions (LLMs) is one of several feasible ways to look at the cooperation setting, whereas in the peripheral regions the "choice", when viewed from this statistical perspective, is much more limited.

The administrative context of the cooperation territories provides another point of view. In four of the cases (North Jutland, Gothenburg, Trøndelag, Turku), the main actor in the planning process has been from the county or regional level. In these cases, it seems obvious that the cooperation area lies within the county/regional boundaries.

Of the other eight cases, two cooperation areas cross regional boundaries. In the Kristiansand area, the cooperation area includes municipalities from Vest-Agder and Aust-Agder counties. In the Gothenburg region, while 12 of the cooperation municipalities belong to the Västra Götaland county/region, one municipality is from Halland County. In the remaining six cases, the functional urban area(s) and cooperation areas are contained within an administrative region.

If we look at the LLM delimitations and the corresponding LLM level distribution of population, we find that the cases represent a wide range of urban regions, with population densities of over 100 inhabitants per km^2 in three case study areas (Gothenburg, Kristiansand, Turku), and less than 25

inhabitants/km^2 in two (Umeå, Joensuu). Trøndelag must be excluded from this account due to the large number of LLMs included in the cooperation area.

The correspondence between the FUA (defined here, for the sake of good comparability, according to the LLMs) and the FUR (defined as the cooperation area) is clearest in the cases of Umeå and Joensuu, where the two coincide completely. A good match is also found in the Gothenburg and Kristiansand regions, where only minor deviations are found. Furthermore, these are mostly explained by the differences in definitions of the LLMs and the analysed "cooperation functionalities" in the regions.

By cooperation functionalities we mean the basic perception or analysis of the urban region functions that are used to debate the cooperation area's sense of unity; i.e. the sense of belonging together. The statistical definitions do provide an effective and, from an everyday perspective, feasible way to argue for regional bonds. However, as the cases will show, the rationales for cooperation are often more complex, and sometimes the will or need to belong to the region becomes more important than e.g. the level of commuting.

The four abovementioned cases show good FUA/FUR correspondence. Of the others, the Rogaland, Oulu and Turku cases include areas smaller than the LLM, with the difference being most pronounced in the Turku case. In the Lahti and the Triangle Area cases the cooperation area roughly covers two LLMs. These are the best cases when it comes to showing the power of the cooperation functionalities in crossing LLM lines. The poorest matches are found in the North Jutland and the Trøndelag cases. However, these two have been included in the case selection to show how the cooperation activities are formed in a larger setting, where the urban areas have been in focus, even if the administrative demarcation of the cooperation area is a broader one. Holbæk is in this respect a special case, since it is contained within the LLM of Copenhagen. However, if we look at the local commuting figures only, it can be said that the area has the characteristics of a lower-tier commuting area.

The typology of Hanell and Persson calls LLMs "centres", following the idea that the urban core characterises the LLMs. The typology accounts for population, population density, inner structure and polycentricity in the surroundings of the LLM, as well as administrative status, and the existence of universities. This provides the first basis for a more comprehensive comparison of the cases. However, it must be noted that the match between the typology and the case study areas is not perfect – some cooperation areas comprise more than one Nordic centre according to the typology, namely the Triangle Area and the Trøndelag area.

In this respect, the cases are well spread along the upper categories of Hanell and Persson's typology. Three of the case study regions are metropolitan regions in polycentric surroundings (Gothenburg, North Jutland, and Turku). Another three are regional university centres in polycentric surroundings (Triangle Area, Rogaland, and Kristiansand). Yet another four are of the regional university centres in non-polycentric surroundings type – what might be called "peripheral" location in the Nordic context (Oulu, Umeå, Joensuu, and Trøndelag). The Lahti case study region is a non-university regional centre in polycentric surroundings (although in the case of Lahti the existence of university education may be contested, since it is a matter of definition if the university centre should constitute a university). Holbæk is not included in this typology, but it can be characterised as a local level centre.

It is also important to note that the municipalities, as well as the regions have different financial opportunities for carrying out development tasks. We have chosen the municipal tax base as a point of departure in this context. While the statistics on tax base do not provide the "final" truth about municipal finances, or regional resources in their multitude, they do point to the general level of endogenous resources in a comparative manner. Especially the factors of local and regional success and/or potential for competitiveness in the Nordic context gain ground from a solid local tax base. It is also interesting to compare the resources with the approaches in spatial planning: is there correlation between the regional resources, their distribution in the region, and the activities that take place?

It seems obvious that with greater resources, more possibilities for arranging cooperation in practise are open. On the other hand, it might not make sense to "use a sledgehammer to crack a nut", if the underlying rationale for cooperation does not demand resources on a grand scale.

However, it is more feasible to look at how resources correspond with the content of spatial planning. As noted already several times, the one issue that is evident in all cases is the emphasis on economic development. In this context the regional tax base may be seen as an approximation of not only the administrative resource-oriented capacity, but also of the regional overall resources of institutions and individuals as well. This point to the notion of regional competitiveness – at least it can be assumed that regional wealth accumulation goes hand in hand with regional competitiveness factors. The theories of regional competitiveness would summarise that competitiveness is a combination of mobilising regional resources, providing a good climate for business operation, educational and innovative facilities, and societal support in form of good natural as well as man-made (sic) environments, equitable society and cultural richness. These themes will be elaborated in the analysis chapter.

Looking at the resource bases, we find that there are more similarities than differences in the cases. The urban cores of each case region have good resources in a Nordic context. The Gothenburg region and the Holbæk area stand out as the two regions, where the resources are at a high level throughout the cooperation area. At the other end of the scale, the Joensuu region is, according to this definition, worst off with the lowest level of resources throughout the region. The Trøndelag and Oulu regions have the relatively highest gaps between the most and the least resourceful municipalities within the cooperation area.

Table 3: Distribution of resources in the case study areas.

Case study area	Urban resource base	Regional resource base	Distribution of resources
Trøndelag	Good	Below average	Uneven
Rogaland	Good	Average	Fairly even
Kristiansand	Good	Average	Fairly even
North Jutland	Good	Average	Fairly even
Triangle Area	Good	Average	Fairly even
Holbæk	Good	Good	Even
Gothenburg	Good	Good	Even
Umeå	Good	Average	Fairly even
Oulu	Good	Below average	Uneven
Joensuu	Average	Below average	Fairly even

Lahti	Good	Average	Fairly even
Turku	Good	Average	Fairly even

The final comparison concerns the multimodal potential accessibility of the case study areas. The differences in this respect are great. The Gothenburg, Holbæk and Turku regions enjoy the best accessibility. At the other end of the spectrum, the Joensuu, Oulu, Umeå and Trøndelag regions are the most peripherally located. However, it must be noted that the Nordic accessibility profiles are somewhat different from those at national and European level. The most favoured regions with regards to Nordic accessibility are situated in a zone covering most of southern Sweden and basically all of Denmark, and only the capital regions of Finland and Norway.

In conclusion, the variations in the case studies are presented in table 4:

Region	**Popula-tion**	**Surroun-ding**	**Resour-ces Accessibi-lity**	**Type of case**	**Local Labour Market region correspon-dence**	**Responsible actor(s)**
Gothenburg sub-region Sweden	879.000	Polycen-tric Metropo-litan	+ + + + +	• Strategic sub-regional planning • Regional sustainability planning • Spatial dialogues	1 out of 13 municipali-ties from outside, three of LLM not in coop.	Munici-palities through sub-regional authority
North Jutland region Denmark	495.000	Polycen-tric Metropo-litan	+ +	• Strategic regional & business planning • Restructu-ring urban pattern • Strategic county plan	Three LLMs	County
Rogaland area Norway	398.000	Polycen-tric Regional 1	+ + -	• Strategic regional planning • Integrated transport and land use planning • New strategic and land use	Jæren within one LLM	County

				county plan		
Turku sub-region Finland	276.000	Polycen-tric Regional 1	+ +	• Sub-regional land use planning • Interlaced transporta-tion and land use planning	Within one LLM, central municipali-ties	Regional Council
Triangle Area Denmark	230.000	Polycen-tric Regional 1	+ + +	• Strategic business planning • Strategic regional planning • Inter-municipal strategic plan	Parts of two strongly integrated LLMs	Municipali-ties
Kristiansan d region Norway	119.000	Polycen-tric Regional 1	+ + -	• Strategic sub-regional planning • Integration of transporta-tion and land use planning • General land use plan	One LLM municipality outside coop.	Municipali-ties through sub-regional authority
Trøndelag region Norway	394.000	Monocen-tric Regional 1	+ - - -	• Regional identity-building • Regional strategic plan	19 LLMs, some partially	Counties and one city municipality
Oulu sub-region Finland	205.000	Monocen-tric Regional 1	+ - -	• Strategic physical planning • Inter-municipal comprehen-sive plan • Interlaced transporta-tion and land use	Within one LLM, central municipali-ties	Municipali-ties through sub-regional authority
Umeå sub-region Sweden	142.000	Monocen-tric Regional 1	+ -	• Strategic service planning • Region-building	Same as LLM	Municipali-ties

				• Regional identity-building		
Joensuu sub-region Finland	109.000	Monocen-tric Regional 1	+ - -	• Structural spatial planning • Inter-municipal comprehen-sive plan • Integration of transporta-tion and land use	Two strongly integrated LLMs	Municipali-ties through sub-regional contract
Lahti sub-region Finland	178.000	Polycen-tric Regional 2	+ + -	• Structural spatial planning • Interlaced transporta-tion and land use	Two LLMs, one municipality not in cooperation	Municipali-ties through sub-regional authority
Holbæk sub-region Denmark	81.000	Polycen-tric Local	+ + + +	• Sub-regional identity-building • Strategic settlement planning • Process planning and political planning	Part of Copenhagen LLM	Municipali-ties

Table 4: Variations in the case studies.

8. The case studies

North Jutland Region

Fast facts box

Population: 495 000 inhabitants
Region: the area of the former county of North Jutland
Urban structure: one major city (Aalborg), several smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: strategic regional and business planning, redefinition of the urban pattern, a new strategic county plan

The functional urban region

The region of North Jutland is identical to the previously political area of the former North Jutland County. It covers the most northern part of the Jutland peninsula and although it was the largest county in Denmark, the region has a relatively low population. While the investigated project was undertaken, the county consisted of 27 municipalities:

Table 5: Population of the 27 municipalities in North Jutland County. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**	**Municipality**	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Arden	**8.534**	Løkken-Vrå	**8.814**
Brovst	**8.281**	Nibe	**8.368**
Brønderslev	**20.104**	Nørager	**5.564**
Dronninglund	**15.209**	Pandrup	**10.612**
Farsø	**8.047**	Sejlflod	**9.510**
Fjerritslev	**8.421**	Sindal	**9.430**
Frederikshavn	**33.651**	Skagen	**11.488**
Hadsund	**10.989**	Skørping	**9.799**
Hals	**11.699**	Støvring	**13.083**
Hirtshals	**13.940**	Sæby	**17.945**
Hjørring	**35.296**	Aabybro	**11.390**
Hobro	**15.320**	Aalborg	**163.952**
Læsø	**2.091**	Aars	**13.350**
Løgstør	**10.203**	**North Jutland County**	**495.090**

These municipalities differ not only considerably in size and population mass but also with regard to the number of urban functions and location-specific characteristics. For instance, the major city in the region, Aalborg, is the fourth largest city in Denmark and besides being the main city of its municipality it was also the administrative centre of the county. As such it holds a number of administrative, industrial and service related functions. In contrast, the small municipality of Læsø is a minor island, where tourism is the main business.

The Region North Jutland that has been implemented under the Danish Municipal Reform on the 1st of January 2007, consists of the previous North Jutland County and parts of the county of Viborg (the former municipalities of Aalestrup, Hanstholm, Morsø, Sydthy and Thisted) and the

western half of the former Mariager municipality (previously in Århus County). One result is an approximately 16% increase in population and a 30% increase in area (from 6.173 km2 to 8.020 km2). Since the municipalities have also been merging into larger units, the Region North Jutland now consists of 11 municipalities:

Table 6: Population of the existing 11 municipalities in the Region North Jutland. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**	**Municipality**	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Aalborg	193.529	Mariagerfjord	42.139
Brønderslev-Dronninglund	35.313	Morsø	22.333
Frederikshavn	63.084	Rebild	28.348
Hjørring	67.480	Thisted	45.910
Jammerbugt	38.704	Vesthimmerland	37.871
Læsø	2.091	**Region North Jutland**	**576.802**

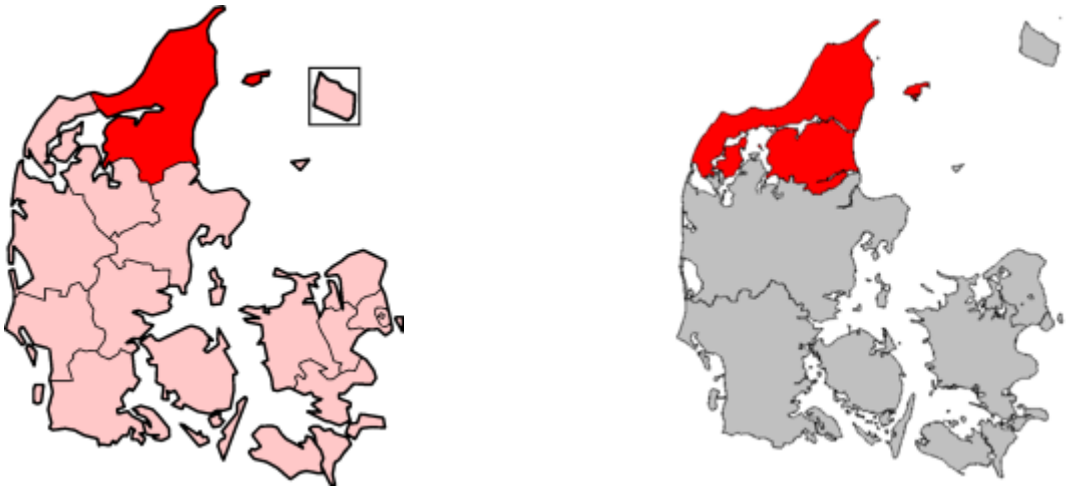


Figure 2: Left: The former North Jutland County (red). Right: The current Region North Jutland (red).

From the following table of selected commuting percentages from the smaller towns, it is evident that Aalborg is the major regional centre attracting a large proportion of commuters; with Hjørring and Frederikshavn as secondary city centres:

Table 7: Commuting percentages from the smaller towns to the regional centres. Source: Danmarks Statistik 2006.

FROM / TO	Aalborg	Hjørring	Frederikshavn
Arden	**10,0 %**		
Brovst	**15,2 %**		
Brønderslev	**16,2 %**	**7,4 %**	
Dronninglund	**25,1 %**		
Hirtshals		**15,4 %**	
Løkken-Vrå	**7,4 %**	**21,2 %**	

Nibe	**32,1 %**		
Nørager	**7,7 %**		
Pandrup	**20,4 %**		
Sejlflod	**51,6 %**		
Sindal		**26,0 %**	**11,7 %**
Skørping	**30,6 %**		
Støvring	**34,9 %**		
Sæby	**8,0 %**		**16,6 %**
Aabybro	**40,9 %**		
Aars	**7,1 %**		

Table 8: Job distribution by occupational sector. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

	North Jutland county 1998	**North Jutland county 2004**	**Denmark 1998**	**Denmark 2004**
Farming, fishing etc.	6,0 %	5,0 %	4,0 %	3,3 %
Industry etc.	19,6 %	17,4 %	17,4 %	15,6 %
Construction	6,5 %	7,3 %	5,9 %	6,7 %
Trade, restaurants, hotels	17,6 %	18,1 %	17,9 %	18,1 %
Transport companies	5,3 %	5,5 %	6,5 %	6,3 %
Finance	9,4 %	2,1 %	12,2 %	2,7 %
Service	35,5 %	44,1 %	36,1 %	46,8 %
Unknown	0,0 %	0,5 %	0,0 %	0,5 %
Total	99,9 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

The area of the former North Jutland County is characterised by a slightly higher proportion of the work force employed within the primary and secondary sector than Denmark as a whole, which corresponds to the fact that the work force in North Jutland is less educated than average. Reflecting the relatively large amount of jobs within the primary and the secondary sector, less people than average work in the service sector which includes the public sector.

Apart from the work force being less educated, the North Jutland County is also characterised by a high level of unemployment:

Table 9: Level of unemployment in North Jutland County and Denmark generally. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

	1998	2000	2002	2004
North Jutland County	8,2 %	7,2 %	6,8 %	8,7 %
Denmark	6,6 %	5,4 %	5,2 %	6,4 %

Like other peripheral areas North Jutland is also experiencing a decrease in the relative proportion of young people (18-26 years). In 1993, the young formed more than 16% percent of the population and by 2003 this number had decreased to 14% while decreasing even more rapidly to only 10% in 2006.

The county planners find that the recent county in actual practise operated as one functional urban region: Aalborg with its university is the main urban centre, the infrastructure binds the region together, and there is a strong common cultural identity in the region. Especially the common culture is very important. In the new larger region the common culture will still be the most important foundation for the cooperation, Aalborg city is still the main urban centre and Aalborg University still the main actor in promoting and developing the small and medium sized local businesses in the area. The new region will become the smallest in Denmark and they have to build on their long tradition for cooperation between public and private partners to be successful in the future development. However, the new region includes new areas south of the former county border which in practise are not part of the functional urban region. They are oriented towards cities south and west of Aalborg, e.g. via their infrastructure. Thus, a challenge in the new planning agenda is how to integrate these parts of the formal region in the existing functional urban region, e.g. in the cooperation between the university and small private businesses and through changes and developments in infrastructure.

Regional cooperation and governance structures

The cooperation in North Jutland operated within the formal political and administrative county borders. The regional cooperation was initiated by the county administration within the framework of the regional plan, and cooperation between the county administration, the university and private businesses (e.g. RUBIN) has been taking place through several years. The reasons for cooperation have been (1) the problems of being a peripheral region: unemployment and the loss of traditional industry, many low-income families, low education level etc. combined with (2) the possibility of obtaining EU grants to the development in these peripheral regions.

Content of spatial planning

In 2002, the planning department in the county administration initiated the project 'RUBIN' (Regional Udvikling af By og Infrastruktur in Nordjylland/ Regional Development of City and Infrastructure in North Jutland) after objections to the regional plan of both 1997 and 2001. The aim was to revise the foundation for the strategic planning of the urban development and thus contribute to the development of the regional plan by revising its chapters on urban roles and the growth conditions for cities.
A major aspect of RUBIN was thus background analyses of the development of the region and a total of 7 background reports have been published as well as a discussion paper. The reports focus to a large degree on recent historical and future urban development. The headlines of the reports illustrate the content of the work:

Report no. 1	Development in North Jutland 1980-2002
Report no. 2	Framework for the future until 2025 in North Jutland
Report no. 3	Urban qualities and settlement in the cities of North Jutland. Appendix: Origin and history of the towns in North Jutland.
Report no. 4	Business location
Report no. 5	City and region: North Jutland in competition
Report no. 6	Draft for technical discussions at the municipal meetings June 2004
Report no. 7	50 cities in North Jutland – Data and inspection 2005

From the titles alone, it is evident that the scale of the analyses is the urban level. This level encompasses population development, business and employment development, industrial and housing construction, education, income and economy, and commuting patterns. The analysis´ focused in particular on mapping out the existing reality of the region, its characteristics and differences. This was to form a basis for political discussions on future development visions. However, the reports themselves also provide a number of perspectives and recommendations for the future.

The RUBIN project was completed in December 2005 by the approval of 'The Regional Plan 2005 for North Jutland'. However, the themes and strategies obtained within the RUBIN-framework have already been implemented in a draft paper for the North Jutland Regional Development Plan that is to be negotiated in the new Region North Jutland.

The drafting of The Regional Plan 2005 is the most concrete result of the RUBIN-cooperation, and it is a regional plan that differs from previous plans by being developed on the basis of a process that has investigated if regional planning could be thought through a different perspective. In the RUBIN project this perspective has been that of the roles and the terms of urban development, which is highly reflected in the regional recommendations in the Regional Plan:

- Base development on a cooperating city-network
- Make sure that Aalborg has the power to continue as a locomotive in the region
- Tie the sub-regions together and strengthen their different development potentials
- Maintain the power of the university and continue the cooperation between NOVI and the local businesses/industries
- Raise the general education level and create innovation everywhere
- Regard the coast line and the nature as the jewels and utilise them carefully
- Utilise the possibilities of the creative economy
- Create cultural beacons
- Strengthen the 'metropolitan' qualities of Aalborg and create better urban environments in the other towns
- Create a more modern profile without neglecting the history, and strengthen the marketing of the region

The concrete strategies written into the regional plan concerns three overall themes:

- Aims and visions
- City regions of North Jutland
- Tourism and recreation

The aims and visions regard the whole region of North Jutland and is based on the aforementioned regional recommendations. The concrete actions of the county is condensed to the statement of working towards the fulfilment of the aims and vision with regard to business development, stronger profiling of the region, strengthening the education level, and generally improving the development of natural resources, urban qualities, innovative climates etc.

The vision for the city regions of North Jutland is the development of broadly founded cities. Broadly founded cities have a differentiated business community, differentiated settlement qualities, and offer differentiated services, education, and recreational and cultural activities. The aim is to

develop a planned decentralised concentration of the urban functions that can counter the dominance of Aalborg. The county points to 4 other cities in the region that is to develop their urban role into that of a centre on the sub-regional level. It is the cities of Hjørring, Frederikshavn, Aars and Hobro, cf. the figure below.

Figure 3: Map showing the four cities within the region to develop their urban role into a centre on the sub-regional level. The cities of Hjørring, Frederikshavn, Aars, and Hobro are given by the blue dots.

With regards to tourism and recreation it is the county's aim that the management and development of these areas are to be undertaken at a sustainable and qualitatively very high level. Concrete initiatives for the development of tourism are construction of regional walking paths, undertaking conservation, developing city tourism, and promoting the less popular areas of North Jutland.
In the cooperation for sustaining the urban regional development the county has identified two problems. One has been the lack of overall strategic thinking for the regional development – the RUBIN project has focused almost solely on business development. This is partly due to the demands for getting EU grants. The other problem has been the lack of coherence between physical land use planning and strategic planning at the regional level. The business and labour market department was in charge of the cooperation and the regional planning department working with regional plans and physical planning was not directly involved. The strategic business planning followed one way of thinking without paying much attention to general and physical planning. There was made several initiatives to combine the two types of planning but it did not have much effect. The planning department perceives this as a major problem as the interests of private businesses often collide with the interests of other policy areas and the common interests in e.g. protecting the exceptional values of the nature in North Jutland.

However, the new Planning Act linked to the Danish Municipal Reform sustains cooperation between the municipalities, the new regions, and the private interests, and thus set up the framework for linkage between the strategic and the physical planning. Today the regional planning department is in charge of drafting the strategic regional plan ("RUP"). However, they must cooperate with the new Growth Forum (where both public and private regional actors participate) and also integrate the

Business Development Plan ("Erhvervsudviklingsplan") drafted by the Growth Forum into the Strategic Regional Plan. Strategic planning and land use planning has to be linked. This formal regulation of the cooperation and the responsibilities is found necessary to make it work. According to the Planning Act, strategic planning comes first and physical planning follows; and the regional planning department in North Jutland finds that this is the right combination of the two kinds of planning.

In the region of North Jutland sustainability is an important political issue. This regards the concept in the broad sense: economic and social sustainability, but also the environmental comprehension of the concept is considered. North Jutland has extensive coastal areas and other natural resources of great national value which implies that preservation is always an important issue in the regional development.

The problems so far has been the split between economic and social sustainability - which has been dealt with by some actors in the county - and the environmental sustainability that is dealt with by others actors in another department. The new Planning Act provides the option of the same actors working with all elements of sustainability, and requires that the Agenda 21 work has to be integrated into the new strategic plans. In the county they believe that environmental matters will become even more relevant in the coming years due to the new focus on health and wellness combined with ecological issues. One concrete initiative is the establishment of a system of paths in the open spaces. While fulfilling the population's need for recreational areas and open space, it limits most visitors' activities to the path system (bicycling, running, walking etc.) which protects the nature from wear.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

The planning work in the creation of a new line of thinking has involved politicians and administrators as well as public and private actors in the region. They have been cooperating in different project groups focusing on different planning issues.

This new form of cooperation and plan-making is based on consensus and dialogues. Everybody has to make an effort to work together and overcome prejudices about each other. They have to agree on a common plan and the municipalities have to commit themselves to follow the plan and convert it into physical planning. To make this happen there has to be close and confident relations between the actors. The experience is that the cooperation has to deal with practical issues that are important for the regional actors and not just symbolic issues. The plans have to make a difference in real life for the politicians to commit to the plans and this commitment of the politicians is essential.

There is great need for network management in the new planning situation. It is all about the management of network relations and about creating common understandings and interests between the various regional actors. In the regional department, they have developed some network management skills during the former cooperation but they have to develop these skills further and also use consultants to solve this new governing task. In the networks different power relations will prevail and it takes a very competent network manager to balance these power relations and to avoid that certain actors take control of the planning work.

The major obstacle for cooperation on planning issues is, if certain actors, e.g. the municipalities or private interest, believe that they can do everything by themselves and are in no need of others to

obtain good results, or if they do not want to bring anything into the cooperation but are just "free riding". Each of the actors in the region has to realise that they are dependent on each other to get increasingly better results for all of them, and thus they all need to bring something into the cooperation. Another obstacle is the cultural prejudices between particularly the public and the private actors. Often there is a cultural clash between public actors and private business actors and it takes a lot of effort to overcome these prejudices.

Results of the cooperation

The result of the planning cooperation has been the new solid knowledge-base for regional development that is assembled in the 7 reports, and the new regional plan for 2005 that was developed on behalf of several recommendations from the RUBIN projects.

Some of the recommendations have yet to be voiced in concrete new projects that emanate directly from the RUBIN project but they certainly strengthen the work that is already initiated in projects like the NOVI science park, the general cultural policies, the tourism and recreational policies, urban development plans, plans for future infrastructure development etc.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Focus on a specific topic (e.g. urban structure) as a new approach to the work with regional plans
- Thematic topics that cross the independent policy fields
- Thorough analysis of the existing reality and of the desired goal
- Creation of project groups with public and private actors in the region
- Publication of reports
- Discussion papers and public discussion of regional development perspectives
- Strategic development plans

Triangle Area

Fast facts box

Population: 231 000 inhabitants
Region: 8 municipalities from three different counties
Urban structure: three major cities (Kolding, Fredericia, Vejle), several medium-sized centers and smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: strategic business planning, strategic regional planning, inter-municipal strategic planning

The functional urban region

The Triangle Area is located roughly in the middle of Denmark; it covers the south-eastern part of Jutland and the very western tip of Funen. Highways and train connections from the northern, western and southern parts of Jutland intersect here with the connections to eastern Denmark – the islands of Funen and Zealand (Copenhagen is located on the eastern part of the latter). The Triangle Region is a growth area in terms of population and economic development.

Originally, the Triangle Area Cooperation consisted of eight municipalities of which three were dominated by a large city in the Danish city network: Fredericia, Kolding, and Vejle. Two municipalities consisted mainly of a medium-sized city and its surrounding area: Middelfart and Vejen, and three municipalities had more of a rural character: Børkop, Lunderskov, and Vamdrup.

Thus, population-wise the municipalities varied in size between rather small ones (5.574 in Lunderskov) to rather large ones (63.751 in Kolding):

Table 10: Population of the municipalities in the Triangle Area Cooperation. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Børkop	11,125
Fredericia	49,252
Kolding	63,751
Lunderskov	5,574
Middelfart	20,599
Vamdrup	7,566
Vejen	17,081
Vejle	56,117
The Triangle Area in total	**231,722**

The municipalities, and thus the Triangle Area Cooperation, were of course subject to the restructuring of the municipal level in Denmark which came into effect the 1st of January 2007.

The result of this process was that the number of the original municipalities in the Triangle Area was reduced to five municipalities. However, since they have not only merged between themselves but also with municipalities that previously surrounded the Triangle Area, the population mass of the participating municipalities have increased. In addition, the municipality of New Billund has

joined the Triangle Area Cooperation, and all in all the population has thus increased by approximately 48%:

Table 11: Population of the municipalities after the restructuring of the municipal level in Denmark. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-07)**
Billund	26,133
Fredericia	49,252
Kolding	86,468
Middelfart	36,417
Vejen	41,551
Vejle	103,027
The Triangle Area in total	**342,848**

The functional urban area of the Triangle Area is very much a three-polar region, with the cities of Fredericia, Kolding, and Vejle serving as the major urban centres that draw commuters from the surrounding municipalities

Table 12: Communting percentages between the cities. Source: Danmarks Statistik 2007.

Communters to/from	**Fredericia**	**Kolding**	**Vejle**
Middelfart	**13 %**	**4 %**	**3 %**
Vejen	**2 %**	**9 %**	**1 %**
Børkop	**17 %**	**4 %**	**26 %**
Fredericia	**-**	**6 %**	**5 %**
Kolding	**4 %**	**-**	**3 %**
Lunderskov	**2 %**	**31 %**	**3 %**
Vamdrup	**2 %**	**25 %**	**1 %**
Vejle	**3 %**	**4 %**	**-**

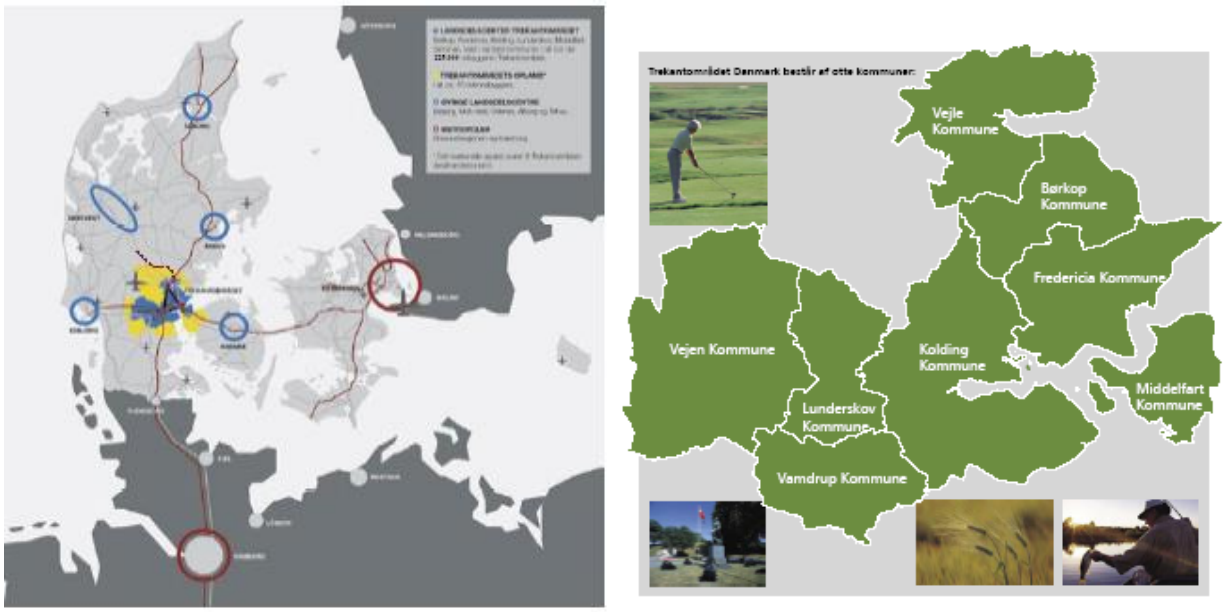


Figure 4: The map to the left illustrates the location of the Triangle Area in Jytland in Denmark with the yellow and blue colour. The map to the right shows the municipalities involved in the cooperation.

The initial idea of the cooperation was to develop a common understanding of the cities and the municipalities as being part of a functional urban region that could serve as an alternative arena for development compared to the regions of Copenhagen and Århus. The cities in the area were functionally connected and could - if they cooperated instead of competed - perform a strong regional leadership. The 'old' cooperation constituted in fact a functional urban region.

But since the restructuring of the municipal level in 2007 the cooperation has been extended to include more new cities/towns and more rural areas. Weak areas are now also included. It has become a very large region that formally stretches beyond the functional urban region. It is seen as a new challenge for the regional cooperation to include the new cities, the weak areas, and the rural areas in the cooperation. The urban planners now have to include rural areas and open landscapes in their strategies and they have to think about traffic and mobility in new terms since the distances have increased. It could become more difficult to create the sense of common destiny between the regional actors.

Regional cooperation and governance structure

The regional cooperation is a formalised cooperation between independent municipalities that voluntarily have organised themselves in the *Triangle Area Cooperation*.

The participating municipalities have cooperated for almost 15 years since the Triangle Area Cooperation was initially set up in 1992 as an informal cooperation for local business development by the mayors of six of the participating municipalities. The cooperation gradually merged into at more formalised cooperation via various national programmes ('Eksempelprojekterne' and 'Bycirkel-samarbejdet'), which led to the establishment of the Secretariat of the Triangle Area Cooperation in 1994. The secretariat has since December 2006 been headed by a director and employs a secretariat manager and currently seven project managers.

The structural organisation of the Triangle Area Cooperation is that of an 'umbrella-organisation' that binds the municipal councils into an inter-regional board. The mayors are the board members of the cooperation and they take turn in being the chairman. Until January 2007 the city managers constituted the board of management, but this board has now been abandoned and is replaced by an employed director. If a project is not agreed upon in one municipality it cannot be implemented. However, one municipality can decide to withdraw from a project (e.g. due to a lack of resources) and let the others proceed.

The aim of the Triangle Area Cooperation is to increase the regional strength and the quality of life in the region. The focus should be on initiatives that would be carried out better and more efficiently by uniting the regional development potential than if the municipalities were handling the issues individually.

Content of spatial planning

Taking its starting point in business development, this area is still the main focus of the cooperation. However, in 1999 the municipalities agreed upon the following six areas as the target areas for the regional cooperation:

- Business
- Marketing
- Culture - sport - leisure
- Education
- Waste handling - urban development - environment
- Inter-municipal cooperation

The strategic planning is seen as the most important issue in regional planning today. Physical planning understood as land use planning is not a strong or important issue in this planning cooperation. One result of the cooperation has been a common municipality plan with priorities and declarations of intents for land use in the region. It included the designation of areas to specific purposes but covers only very few areas that are intended to underpin the most important strategic elements and for marketing purposes.

This common municipal plan can be characterised as a weak form of land use regulation due to the intentional and legally non-binding character. Political agreement in the regional cooperation could be achieved at the strategic level but not at the level for concrete land use regulation in the municipalities. Formally binding land use planning is not the mean to regulate land use in the area; as one of the project managers from the secretariat says: "We have to realise that physical planning can also consists of pointing to the optimal possibilities for development of the functional region". The task of the planner is to explore and point to the most favourable solutions, initiate the projects that the municipalities will support and then eventually let the municipal politicians make the final decisions. This is the only option for land use planning in order to maintain the cooperation and the political commitment, since a stronger element of formal and legally binding land use regulation would make the politicians withdraw from the cooperation.

In the strategic plan sustainability is included in its broad interpretation with clear goals and plenty of environmental issues, especially when it comes to traffic. In practise however, it is the economical sustainability that has been promoted as it became the key element when developing projects. One example is the transportation and traffic projects where the main aim is economic

development, and in these projects sustainability in environmental terms is not integrated unless if demanded by legislation. In the coming planning work with infrastructure it is still unknown if the environmental matters will be included. However, public transportation is an issue in the master plan so it may have been acknowledged that the traffic congestion in the area diminishes the image of being a green, urban region. Another positive initiative is the common waste-handling-plan where the focus is on cooperation in order to obtain a better environment, better working conditions, and general efficiency improvements.

Social sustainability has also been left out of the cooperation so far and is mostly dealt with independently by the municipalities. But a new issue on the cooperation agenda is the promotion of "the good life" in the region. This includes good living conditions for families and thus the planning focus has to change from system, functions, and structures to the individual level: the region have to set up the framework that can aid the individuals in creating a good (family) life (no stress, less commuting, more time at home, nice surroundings, healthy living etc.). The cooperation has to change from business matters to citizen matters and the concept of a large open and green urban area has to be viewed from the perspective of the individual and the families. This is a major challenge for the actors involved in the regional planning.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

The main goals of the cooperation were to build an image of a functional urban region and to enhance development in the area. The secretariat was established in order to generate faster and more efficient decision-making processes. It is a private institution with a board of politicians, set up to correspond to the structure of the municipalities. After the structural reform, its composition has to be changed accordingly to reflect the new cities and municipalities involved in the new region. In many activities and projects, actors from outside the region are invited, e.g. large companies with interests in the area.

The secretariat has acted as a catalyst for addressing new trends, problems and tasks in the area both in terms of closely following the development of different policy areas, and in practise. The secretariat is a very important part of the cooperation because they have the resources to create overview, and to initiate and coordinate activities. Typically they get the ideas, bring the partners together ("somebody has to bring them together") and perform network management to make the cooperation work. But the responsibility for the implementation of the projects is placed with the participating partners. The secretariat also acts as mediators in political and other conflicts. They seek to deal with conflicts in advance in the standard political system, and only raise issues in the cooperation that they know everybody will and can engage in, and they help to find compromises and possible solutions. The planners also take responsibility for bringing regional matters into the local councils to widen the public dialogues and consensus on regional matters. They have to follow the "political spirit" not only in the cooperation between the mayors, but also in the local councils.

Political leadership is important and the mayors have to be the core members. They do not quarrel much in each project because the secretariat clarifies the opinions beforehand. The politicians have developed a clear sense of commonness and sometimes they agree on matters that are rejected in their municipality. They have to find the right balance between being a regional and a local actor.

It is essential for success that the politicians understand and appreciate the advantages of the cooperation. This sense of coherence needs to be ceaselessly confirmed; otherwise the municipalities will withdraw from the cooperation. Thus, coherence is a task that needs to be

followed up in every project. The municipalities are basically selfish and this aspect is the major obstacle for the cooperation. They need to be reminded of the advantages - and this is the task of the secretariat.

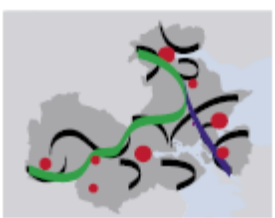
It is very important to have the right organisation and the right organisational resources to make the cooperation work. An administrative actor concentrating only on the functional urban regional matters is a necessity. The secretariat has been vital for the cooperation in the Triangle Area and they have developed analytic and network management competences during the years. Analyses and network management are their core tasks, and competences in these fields are necessary to bring both projects and the cooperation forward.

This cooperation has not in general involved citizens as a broad category. It is an elitist project for mayors and there are no citizen meetings. The manager of the secretariat is uncertain if it would be possible at all to make this kind of cooperation as a bottom-up process. He does not see the regional matters as interesting for citizens – they focus mainly on more local matters. The implementation of regional projects is probably better dealt with using top-down strategies involving relevant regional actors from both private and public institutions.

Results of the cooperation

A major achievement of the Triangle Area Cooperation is that they in 2004 succeeded in the development of a first common master plan for the development of all municipalities in the region ("Fælles hovedstruktur for Trekantsområdet 2003-2014"). In 2002 they agreed on a common 'Strategy for the Triangle Area' and the master plan is drawn on the basis of this strategy. Following the master plan, the municipalities are to develop the framework of the master plan into the local plans.

The regional master plan is centred on the vision of developing the Triangle Area into one coherent green city with metropolitan characteristics. The Triangle metropolitan area is envisioned to consist of several urban areas that functionally will form a coherent city with a broad range of the options (in terms of housing, business, education, culture, recreation, and public service) that are present in bigger cities.



The vision of the open, green metropolis is based in an idea of lively city environments (1 – red dots) surrounded by valuable landscape 'ribbons' (2 – black lines) and these urban areas are on a more overall scale tied by wide-ranging, consistent green ribbons and a well-developed infrastructure (3 – the green and blue lines), cf. the adjacent figure 5.

Thus, the master plan is particularly based on the themes of settlement and infrastructure. The urban qualities are to derivate from a varied housing structure, differentiated business and education possibilities, and a broad range of cultural and recreational activities.

The infrastructure theme is two-fold. A well-functioning public transportation system is needed and the existing train and bus options are to be further developed by more stations on the lines between the major cities in the region (Kolding, Fredericia and Vejle) and increased frequency for both trains and busses. Also the road connections are to be

developed, especially with regards to road safety. However, the aim is to decrease the use of cars in the region which is to be obtained by careful planning of the urban functions.

Thus the aim of creating an open, green, urban region is to be followed up by detailed strategies for settlement, business, traffic, landscape, and city life. In the master plan, these aims and strategies are put into action by appointing concrete areas and principles for e.g. housing construction, localisation of businesses, and transportation. Particularly the transportation issue is most clearly stated in the plan with clear goals and plans.

After the municipal restructuring, the master plan from 2004 is to be revised by the new municipalities in the Triangle Area. This work is in progress and a new master plan is expected to be passed before 2009.

Looking to the implementation of the plan we find the most successful results in the regional business and marketing development. During the years the majority of resources have been put into these issues. Large businesses found it important to be located in the Triangle Area and due to their regional orientation, the cooperation succeeded in making the area "a new functional business area" besides the capitol area. Large companies within the area and from outside the area started to cooperate with each other and with other important institutions in the area to promote economic development. A wide range of business projects have been implemented on that account. The cooperation consists of development of common projects with like-minded businesses, clusters, education, management etc.

Traffic and infrastructure is another important factor in the development the region. The municipalities have worked with the issue, but the politicians want to see more concrete results in the coming years. They are not satisfied with the results so far and want the traffic issue to be central in the new planning process for the next regional plan.

Housing and settlement is still to a large degree a matter for the individual municipalities and they have their own individual interests. However, according to the regional plans it should be a regional matter, including the environmental matter, in order to make good and green living conditions, but so far it has remained a local matter.

The goal of making a green open large urban area has been dealt with within the single projects and is not singled out as *a* certain project. However, a "Green network" that will look closer into environmental issues has been created in cooperation with the county and the municipalities.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Creation and coordination of the cooperation, including the establishment of the secretariat
- Creation of a strong regional image
- Regional agreement towards e.g. the national level
- Strategic plans for business development, including trade clusters
- The regional master plan

Holbæk sub-regional area

Fast facts box

Population: 81 000 inhabitants
Region: 6 municipalities from one county
Urban structure: one major city (Holbæk), several smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: regional identity-building, strategic planning, spatial policy documents

The functional urban region

The small sub-region of Holbæk area is located in the north-western part of Zealand, approximately 50 kilometres north-west of Copenhagen. Initially, the cooperation was a sub-region of five smaller municipalities: Svinninge, Tornved, Jernløse, Tølløse and Holbæk. After the establishment, the municipality of Dragsholm joined the cooperation. Before the municipal restructuring, all municipalities were located in the West Zealand County.

Table 13: Population of the municipalities of the Holbæk subregion. Source: Danmarks Statistik.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Dragsholm	13,882
Holbæk	35,907
Jernløse	6,010
Svinninge	6,615
Tornved	9,133
Tølløse	9,956
The Holbæk subregion in total	**81,503**

The municipalities consist mainly of medium sized towns and their surrounding areas. Though, the city of Holbæk is considerably larger than the other towns.

Due to a commuting distance of approximately one hour to Copenhagen the sub-region functions to a certain degree as residential municipalities for commuters to Copenhagen and this number is increasing. A couple of the municipalities are characterized by a high proportion of holiday houses (particularly Dragsholm).

During the cooperation process, the cooperation was extended to a larger share of the municipalities in the north-western part of Zealand. 13 municipalities joined up in a dialogue project on the creation of new and mutual strategies for the larger sub-regional development in the North West Zealand including two other important cities in the larger sub-region: Kalundborg and Nykøbing Sjælland. The cooperation in the small sub-region was transferred to and integrated in the planning work within the larger area.
Commuting from the municipalities of the Holbæk sub-regional area to the surrounding counties (2005):

Table 14: Commuting percentages from the municipalities to the surrounding counties. Source: Danmarks Statistik 2005.

	Dragsholm	Holbæk	Jernløse	Svinninge	Tornved	Tølløse
Copenhagen County	11,4 %	18,3 %	20,2 %	12,8 %	15,6 %	26,3 %
Roskilde County	3,1 %	7,3 %	8,7 %	4,5 %	5,5 %	15,6 %
Frederiksborg County	1,1 %	2,4 %	2,3 %	1,6 %	1,5 %	2,4 %
West Zealand County (minus own municipality)	32,5 %	14,8 %	42 %	44,5 %	37,2 %	21,1 %

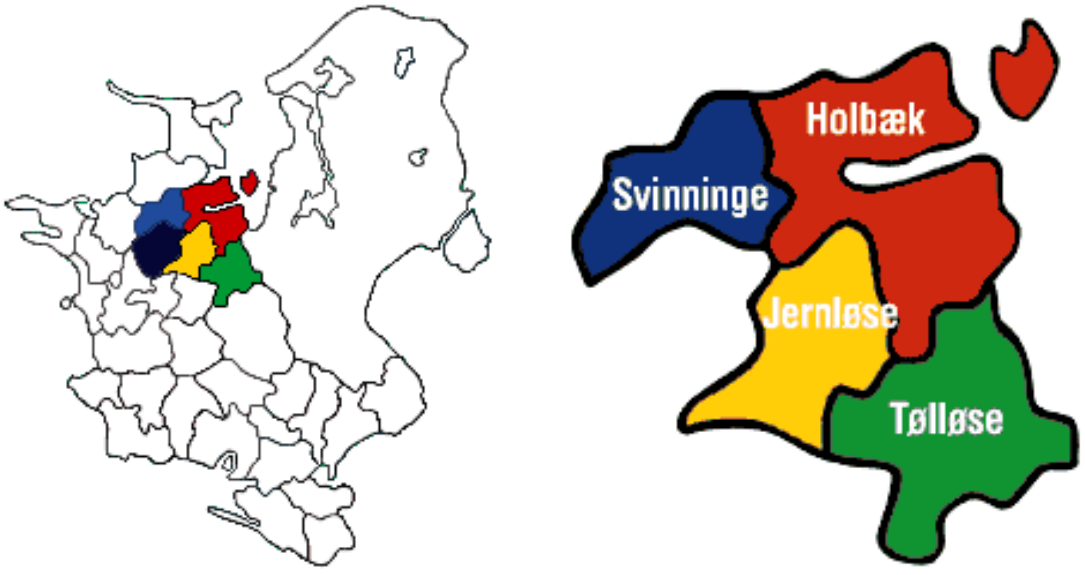


Figure 6: The map to the left illustrates the location of the Holbæk sub-region at Zealand and the map to the right shows the municipalities involved.

In the larger sub-region there was still a sense of commonness as a sub-region due to the infrastructural relation to the capital area. In the area the commuting traffic is concentrated towards Copenhagen and the large cities in the area: Holbæk and Kalundborg. The area south of the sub-region has limited connections to North West Zealand and in the Holbæk area they have no interest in common planning cooperation with this area. Actually North Zealand and Mid-South Zealand compete on being the most important centre in the sub-region of Region Zealand – the new regional structure of the area after the restructuring.

Commuting to Holbæk from municipalities within the sub-regional cooperation area:

Table 14: Commuting percentages from the municipalities to Holbæk. Source: Danmarks Statistik 2005.

Dragsholm	**Jernløse**	**Svinninge**	**Tornved**	**Tølløse**
11 %	22 %	18 %	11 %	10 %

From the commuter statistics it is clear that the county of Copenhagen is the major centre with regards to jobs outside of the former county of West Zealand. However, commuting within the former county borders is extensive. The major part of this inter-county commuting is to Holbæk, which as the largest city in the regional cooperation plays a significant role in the commuting pattern.

Before the cooperation especially Kalundborg and Holbæk, as medium sized cities, competed for industry, education, and settlement. They were both sub-regional centres of the surrounding areas and they both had harbours. Nykøbing Sjælland is a minor city compared to the other two but is located in a large summer housing area which makes tourism an important economic factor. The infrastructure, both public and private binds the cities together and connects them to the capital area.

The planning cooperation regarded a change in this sub-regional development due to the new urban and industrial development in the region.

The initial small Holbæk sub-regional area is not actually a functional urban area. The municipalities decided to unite their resources in order to create a sub-region that could differentiate itself from the bigger cities south of the region and build a common identity based on their relationship to the capital area. Building this unity was a political choice.

When this small sub-regional cooperation expanded to a larger cooperation of all municipalities in North West Zealand, it is more proper to label this cooperation a sub-regional cooperation using the infrastructure and the commuting patterns as parameters for definition.

If viewed in a broader perspective the small Holbæk sub-regional area and the larger sub-region of North West Zealand is part of the greater functional urban region of Copenhagen. The cooperation in the smaller areas can be interpreted as a way of creating an identity not just as an “appendix” to the capital area but as an active manager of own development and destiny.

Regional cooperation and governance structures

In 2002 the initial five – and later six - municipalities in the Holbæk area initiated a sub-regional cooperation concerning coordinated municipal and regional planning. The aim was to create a regional awareness that could distance the sub-region from the regions surrounding the bigger cities

of Kalundborg (to the west) and Slagelse (to the south). The Holbæk sub-regional area wanted to emphasise its sense of coherence with the capital region of Copenhagen. This sense of coherence regards particularly the region's functional coherence with Copenhagen as settlement municipalities for commuters.

Content of spatial planning

The result of the small sub-regional cooperation was the drafting of an inter-municipal strategic development plan ("Egnsplan for Holbæk-egnen") in 2004 where the participating municipalities agreed on a common framework for the future planning and cooperation. It is not a sub-regional plan as such but an initiative that is to strengthen the regional coherence and the basis for closer cooperation. The themes of this plan were settlement strategies in general and strategies for municipal services, leisure activities, and a good traffic infrastructure that will make the region even more attractive for commuters to Copenhagen.

The aim of the plan was to obtain the highest possible degree of coordination. This coordination comprises both a common regional stand to external partners and authorities and an internal cooperation, especially with regard to the core municipal service areas. In this regard it has been important to formulate the basis for a closer cooperation more than actually effectuate the performance goals. Also, the latter has not yet been possible within the frames of the cooperation, both with regards to the elapsed time and the allocated resources.

In the plan, the municipalities stated 10 projects that should to put the sub-regional plan into practise. The content of these 10 project show that the cooperation was very much related to the establishment of a cooperation base from which future cooperation initiatives could develop within the policy areas of elderly, children, business and education, integration of immigrants and refugees, tourism etc. The exceptions to this focus on common policy areas are the projects regarding the settlement strategy and traffic/infrastructure, where the aim is to stand united in attracting possible new inhabitants and in influencing the external authorities (at the state and the regional level) that impact the opportunities for infrastructure development.

This document has to be seen in relation to another sub-regional cooperation at the same time. In 2003 the cooperation caused the Holbæk area cooperation to be included in a project called "Dialogues Projects" initiated by the Ministry of the Environment. The project had the intention of making the municipalities discuss common regional matters concerning business development, settlement, tourism, and education. The municipalities within the Holbæk area cooperation joined in with seven other municipalities in North West Zealand and continued their work within the larger group.

The participants in the cooperation in the small and the larger sub-regional areas were mayors and administrative executives. One purpose was to trigger the mayors of the smaller municipalities to think more strategically in terms of regional characteristics and possibilities instead of just focusing on their own local interests. There was, as mentioned above, no previous tradition for cooperation in the area. The cooperation, both in the small and the larger area, had the intention of introducing a strategic cooperation for the common benefit with an outset in physical planning. At first the politicians were reluctant towards this but soon they discovered the benefits for everyone in this kind of common planning strategies.

The larger sub-regional cooperation finished up in another political planning document in the form of a strategic plan for division of labour in the larger sub-region. The document was called "Focus for North Western Zealand 2004" and the most important decision made in this document was a division of urban functions between the major urban centres in the sub-region. In the first small sub-regional cooperation, the participants had already agreed that the strategic focus for the Holbæk area should be on the role as a commuting area for Copenhagen, and in the dialogue project the 13 municipalities agreed on a strategic division of focus areas in the region. The city of Kalundborg already represented a strong focus on heavy industry and was to take over the activities of the former Holbæk Harbour. Thus, a continued strategic focus on industrial development seemed apparent, whereas the municipalities in Odsherred to the north should continue their focus on tourism and culture. This leaves service, education, and particularly settlement to be the obvious focus areas for the Holbæk Area. To make this division of functions between the cities clear was an important part of the planning work in the dialogue project, and it created the foundation for further planning in the Holbæk area.

The vision of the document 'Focus for North Western Zealand 2004' is a forward-acting and strategic cooperation between the involved municipalities that aims at making north-western Zealand able to offer its citizens, businesses, and visitors a range of possibilities for development potentials, experiences, and challenges. The document focuses on four themes: business development, settlement, tourism, and health and preventive measures. These themes have been analysed through a 'function analysis' and four strategies have been developed. These strategies involve common settlement policies, infrastructure development, political attention to business development, development of ecological tourism, and common health policies, and the aforementioned assignment of focus areas to each major city is the major locational/geographical outcome of the document. In the cooperation it was acknowledged that culture should be an issue for future cooperation and thus, this is to be included later.

The time period of the work on the large sub-regional cooperation in the dialogue project was rather tense for the politicians because of the fusion process going on at the same time. The politicians were watching each other: who would join with whom in the new larger municipalities? The earlier cooperation and common documents from the small sub-regional cooperation of Holbæk did constitute the platform for some of the municipalities to merge into New Holbæk municipality. It was rather easy for the participants to make a common vision for the new municipality during the negotiation phase and the strategic vision was published in the paper: Hos os er der højt til loftet…" (≈ "In our area there is a lot of possibilities and room for diversity"). This paper became the main structure for the New Holbæk municipality although it was not a traditional formal plan. After the municipal restructuring, the municipality of New Holbæk encompasses most of the municipalities from the small sub-regional cooperation - except for the municipality of Dragsholm which now belongs to the municipality of Odsherred. Thus, the inter-municipal planning cooperation became the outset for a fusion between these municipalities and the planning work is now formalised within the new administrative structure.

The document accepted by the politicians describes a vision for the New Holbæk municipality based on more and better welfare for everybody, more democracy, better public service, more housing etc. All issues relates to the development as a commuter and settlement municipality. An important decision made in the vision paper regards the new main structure of New Holbæk municipality where it is envisioned that Holbæk shall function as the main urban centre surrounded by 17 independent sustainable communities - each with their own public service delivery.

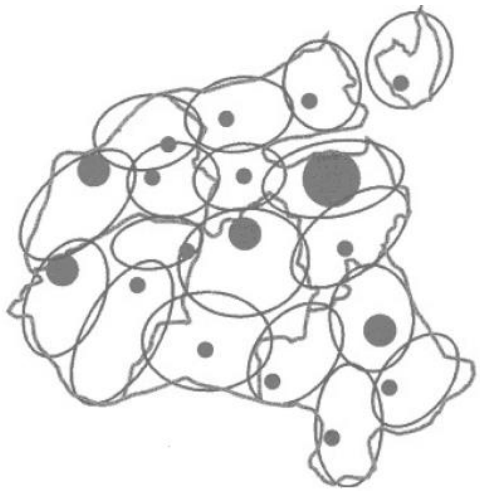


Figure 7: The new vision for New Holbæk municipality: 17 independent sustainable communities. The paper: Hos os er der højt til loftet…"

The new urban structure is of great importance for allocation of growth and finance in the new municipality, e.g. housing and growth has to be spread between the 17 centres, and the document constitutes the political framework for further planning.

The informal documents of the small and the larger sub-regional cooperation did also form the starting point for one of the most important political planning documents in the ongoing planning process of the New Holbæk municipality. This document was drawn up in 2005 and is a more concrete strategic plan for visions and status in the New Holbæk municipality. It is called "the green booklet" within the administration. This booklet includes the decisions from the small and the larger sub-regional cooperation and transforms it into guidelines for the development of the New Holbæk municipality. Again, this is not a formal law-binding plan. It is a planning strategy that does not follow the sequences in the formal planning process and it is informal compared to the traditional municipal plan. But it is still seen as the most important planning mean in the new municipality.

'The green booklet' is a document describing the vision for the development of the New Holbæk municipality. The main vision is to 'create better conditions and frameworks for the good life in a development-orientated cooperation for the benefit of the individual'. The good life is the main theme and as the regional development perspective is that of being an attractive settlement region, this is vital. The good life is to be attained by developing the accessibility of the region by improving the regional and national infrastructural connections (roads as well as rail lines) and by improving the settlement qualities of the cities in the region. Thus, the smaller municipalities are to function as self-sustained entities in the region where Holbæk is the regional centre. The focus is on the quality of the public services, and on the open land that is a vital draw when attracting new inhabitants. This challenges the balance between the usage and the protection of the natural resources, and in the future municipal planning this will be an important issue.

The politicians of New Holbæk municipality also still join a larger sub-regional cooperation with the two other large municipalities in North West Zealand. After the restructuring the whole region of North West Zealand consists of only three large municipalities and they still have the same common interests. However, the fusion takes up a lot of energy in the new municipalities and does not leave much time for the larger cooperation. For the time being, the common interest regards infrastructure and new rounds of meetings have been set off. These meetings are to develop

common political ideas and consensus about the need and the demands for further development in the region. The government has established an Infrastructure Commission for the whole country and the sub-regional area of North West Zealand has decided to deliver mutual political requests for their region. The decisions made in the former dialogue project still constitute the foundation source for the further cooperation, and the decision taken to demand improvements in public transportation before improvements for car traffic is still valid.

Concurrently the three new large municipalities are included in the New Region Zealand where they have to participate in making the Regional Development Plan, and in the Growth Forum where the task is to make a common business development plan. Thus, most effort concerning regional cooperation is now put into this new regional structure and its formal cooperation.

The opinion, both in the Holbæk area cooperation and in the dialogue project in the larger sub-regional area, was that regional visions and strategic plans must come first, and then be followed by physical planning carried out in each of the municipalities. In the Holbæk sub-regional area it was found that a new kind of physical planning is developing: they do not only manage the land use but have to address core questions related to the service functions also. This requires a broader perspective and some future aims: what kind of service functions do we want and how do we get them? Thus, the strategic planning is the leading plan. However, the physical planning is needed in order to ensure the relation between aim and e.g. demographic development. Physical planning is also used to follow-up on the visions in the strategic plan in the local areas.

After the administrative restructuring, physical planning has to a much higher degree become the task of the municipalities than before where the counties also had their role in the planning process. Within the Holbæk sub-regional cooperation they do not find it acceptable to bring in formal land use regulation at the regional level in this new situation - and they do not find it important either. If the politicians obtain political ownership to both the planning decisions and the political framework for planning, it is unproblematic to make e.g. land use regulation plans afterwards. What is important though is that the physical planning issues in the strategic documents develop into intentions, guidelines, and "soft" regulation in order to increase political support and ownership. Too strong regulations in regional physical planning would make the politicians withdraw their commitment - especially in a situation where the administrative restructuring has assigned more regulative power in physical planning to the municipalities.

In the planning cooperation sustainability is first and foremost interpreted as important in relation to creating sustainable local communities, i.e. to create functional settlement with the relevant service functions and a social sustainable structure.

Sustainability in environmental terms is mentioned in the regional plan but in actual policy it is more unclear how it is fulfilled. Environmental sustainability has been a major issue in the planning process for several years. Currently it is not dealt with as a specific issue but as an integrated part of planning within different policy areas: transportation, housing, culture etc. The claim is that planning is already carried out in a reasonable manner in this respect. Environment is not an issue that needs special attention in the cooperations. A larger challenge present in today's planning work is to create sustainable social service in local areas.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

The overall aim of the cooperation has been to create a sense of 'common destiny' in the participating municipalities, based on their particular functional and geographical coherence with Copenhagen. It was a clear political choice that the mayors and the city managers should be the target group and get to know each other and develop a policy community. The politicians and the administrative executives each had a forum for debate.

In the initial phases of the cooperation, it was not the aim to create specific plans but to create this sense of coherence and teach the politicians to think regionally and strategically. Therefore the cooperation is mainly a political cooperation and the planning work is seen as a matter for public actors. The cooperation does not have a secretariat but the administrators are involved as sparring partners and in order to integrate solid knowledge in the cooperation. The administrators also facilitate the working processes.

The cooperation is based on solid knowledge of regional development. The 'old' analytic system with prognoses, reports, and maps on different development issues is of major importance in this kind of cooperation. It is the solid knowledge and political will that make the planning work possible.

The involvement of other actors takes primarily place as involvement of the citizens in the municipalities. In the further planning work in New Holbæk municipality, bottom-up processes is the desired process and the aim is to create new planning agendas based on dialogue with the 17 local areas. In this planning work the broad support from citizens is seen as essential to make the plan work in practise.

The regional cooperation is not seen as a popular matter for the citizens. It is claimed that it is too difficult to get the citizens involved and interested in regional matters - they tend to concentrate on local matters. Therefore the democratic anchorage of the regional cooperation has to be the representative politicians from the municipalities. These politicians have to create a close relation to the municipal council in order to anchor the regional decisions as broadly as possible among the local politicians. Regional planning is in this sense a matter for the politicians and not the people.

The outset for the political cooperation was physical planning. Therefore the mayors from the participating municipalities created a strong relationship in the administrative and political system between the finance committees and the technical committees in the municipals. It strengthened the coherence in the political leadership of planning.

In 2007 the new structures of regions and larger municipalities, places this regional cooperation in a new context. The regions are starting to make regional development plans and the Growth Forums (consisting of public and private actors in the regions) have to make business development plans. In the Holbæk area cooperation they have assured that there is an overlap of individuals between the "local" regional cooperation, the new region, and the Growth Forum. Certain individuals among the politicians and administrators have been asked to create coherence between the planning processes in the various policy arenas.

The political leadership is decisive for making a cooperation work. If the politicians do not acquire ownership of the planning work, it will have no practical influence.

Equality is another decisive element in a cooperation based on free will. The mayor of Holbæk had the ability to step back and let other mayors from smaller municipalities enter the arena even though Holbæk was the largest municipality in the initial cooperation. The representation outwards of the small cooperation and into the dialogue project was not carried out by the mayor of Holbæk but by a major from one of the smaller municipalities. This was very important since a dominating leader could make the cooperation fall apart. The stronger politicians managed to make room for and listen to the needs and ideas from smaller municipalities. It is important to establish a cooperation of actors that are of equal importance and act on equal terms.

Enthusiasm is also very important. The participants have to put a lot of energy into the cooperation; otherwise it will soon become meaningless. Everybody has to give some input to the cooperation in form of ideas, new knowledge, political commitment etc. There is no room for free-wheelers.

Results of the cooperation

Several political planning documents are the results of the planning cooperation. They are not formal plans but the result of political decisions, made by several municipalities in order to reinterpret the regional and urban development in the area. The most important result is the strategic division of urban functions both within the larger and the smaller sub-regional area. The strategic division of urban functions and the drafting of the new urban pattern affect the allocation of finances and investment, and the service distribution in the area. It also affects the development in infrastructure. The drafted plans constitute the political framework for municipal planning in the sub-region and for the sub-regions participation in the further regional cooperation on a larger scale.

The different plans and visions are to be seen as step stones that help to continue the regional way of thinking and the cooperation - they are not the end result. One major achievement of the cooperation has been to raise awareness among the mayors in the regional area on the matter that they have to think regionally in order to develop their own municipalities. They can obtain better results if they cooperate within the region in the creation of attractive residential municipalities.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Creation of regional awareness – creation of a regional 'spirit' that contrast the surrounding regions to the south and the west
- Conduction of seminars regarding strategy drafting
- Creation of forums for dialogue between politicians and administrators
- Strategic development plans
- Allocation of focus areas and creation of a new urban division of labour in a larger and smaller sub-regional area followed by new allocation of money, service, housing etc.
- A continuous production of political planning documents - building "on top of each other" from various regional cooperations
- Creating a continuous process of region-building according to changing circumstances and tasks

Trøndelag Region

Fast facts box

Population: 393 000 inhabitants
Region: the county of Sør-Trøndelag, the county of Nord-Trøndelag and the municipality of Trondheim
Urban structure: one major city (Trondheim) and several smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: regional identity-building; strategic planning, common county plan

The functional urban region

The region of Trøndelag is the area that divides the North from the rest of Norway. It consists of the two counties of Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag which are two of the most important agricultural counties in Norway. The counties are sub-divided into 25 (Sør-Trøndelag) and 24 (Nord-Trøndelag) municipalities.

Sør-Trøndelag covers an area of 18.832 km^2 and has a population of 266,323 (2002-figures). The administrative centre is Trondheim, which is the third largest city of Norway with 159,931 inhabitants (pr. 01.07.06). Nord-Trøndelag covers an area of 22.396 km^2 and has a population of 127.457 which gives the Trøndelag region a total population of 393.780 (2002-figures).

Figure 8: Map of the Trøndelag region. Fleximap 2007.

Commuting percentages within the Trøndelag region, from selected surrounding municipalities to the municipality of Trondheim:

Table 15: Commuting percentages within the Trøndelag-region to the municipality of Trondheim. Source: Statistis sentralbyråd 2006.

Municipality	
Agdenes	9,8 %
Rissa	15,0 %
Orkdal	13,3 %
Midtre Gau	14,4 %
Melhus	45,7 %
Skaun	45,8 %
Klæbu	60,9 %
Malvik	58,6 %
Selbu	13,8 %
Stjørdal	18,3 %
Leksvik	12,6 %

Commuting to Trondheim is of course strongest from the immediate surrounding municipalities where Trondheim is clearly the major centre. Further afield commuting decreases drastically which is probably linked to the agricultural profile of these municipalities.

The Trøndelag cooperation builds on former regional cooperation and planning measures initiated by the state in the drafting of the regional plan. The concept of a functional urban region with Trondheim as the urban centre and the wider area surrounding the city as an integrated part of a larger urban area was already expressed in the 60's and 70's; indicated by the establishment of the Trøndelag Committee. At that time the Trøndelag plan pointed to the need for a 'decentralised concentration' by creating a few other growth centres besides Trondheim in the region. The outset for the new cooperation in the region is different.

Trondheim is now seen as the only urban growth centre containing the most important functions in the region and the planning effort should focus on the advantages of the urban region when compared to other regions in Norway in order to take a strong position in the competition between functional urban areas. This cooperation is initiated by the region itself and it illustrates a wish for autonomy in the regional government. It is in line with the thinking in the EU and in the national states about regional policymaking and leadership based on partnerships as a mean to create regional growth.

In Trøndelag the human resources and the specific cultural identity in the region are considered as the main assets. The former regional plan dealt with growth centres and patterns of enlargement in the region, but the new common plan for the region concentrates on creativity, competences, and coordinated action. In the former plan focus was on how to *influence* the ongoing economic growth with physical-economical means. In the new plan focus is on *creating* innovation based on culture and local advantages.

This is a major change in the understanding of how to sustain the development of a functional urban region. The concrete projects also show this change. Most of them regard creating new innovative projects and there is no clear tendency in the projects to strengthen certain centres or local areas.

Several projects are not located in a certain location, they are widespread in the region, and most projects effects the whole region. This is especially true for some of the projects in Trondheim. In the planning cooperation it has been accentuated to create projects with a widespread effect and to avoid concentration of projects in Trondheim.

The regional cooperation and governance structures

The Trøndelag Region Cooperation is a political cooperation between the counties of Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag, and the municipality of Trondheim.

The cooperation is organised in the Trøndelag Council (Trøndelagsrådet) which is to work on behalf of the Trøndelag Region, co-ordinate activities, and promote cooperation between interested parties.

The Trøndelag Council consists of 13 members: five members from each county council and three members from the city council of Trondheim. The chairmanship is conducted alternately by the head of one of the county councils in intervals of two years. The administration of the Trøndelag Council alternates every second year between the administrations of the counties. It follows the chairmanship; thus in 2006 the administration is handled by the Sør-Trøndelag County.

The Trøndelag Council is a consensus body and as such either one of the counties or the municipality of Trondheim can veto any decision, they might disagree on.

Content of spatial planning

In 2004 the councils of Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag and the municipal council of Trondheim agreed on a common county plan "Felles Fylkesplan 2005-2008" that is to promote common regional policies for the whole of the Trøndelag Region. It is the first step towards the development of a common policy that can be the foundation for more specific strategies. The plan is to be followed by programmes of coordinated action that will be more specific on the concrete initiatives within the different strategies of the county plan.

The slogan of the council plan is 'Creative Trøndelag. Everything is possible – regardless' and it encompasses themes that are related to the strengths and distinctive features of the region:

- The people as Trøndelag's most important resource
- A strong focus on value production and innovation
- Coordination of research and education politics
- The food of Trøndelag as a potential asset
- A future-orientated focus on energy
- A need-orientated extension of infrastructure
- Trøndelag as a good place to live

The council plan indicates that the development of the Trøndelag Region should be focused within these four fields:

- The Trøndelag Region shall provide a meaningful life and a good society for its most important resource – its inhabitants
- Art and the cultural aspect shall be integrated in all parts of the development of society
- The Trøndelag Region shall be the most creative region in Europe

- A better correlation between the districts, the towns, and Trondheim shall make Trøndelag stronger and contribute to a more balanced development in the whole region

Regional politics and planning is not seen as a matter of public government and control but as a collective process where all relevant actors in the region join in the addressing of problems and solutions in the region. One step is to formulate goals, visions, and strategies in a common plan and the other is to initiate projects that implement the strategies. The common plan is more of a political program for the region and not the final product. The plan is part of a longer ongoing planning process where communication and mobilisation of regional actors are the most important issue. The visions and strategies can change before being fully implemented if the conditions and priorities change in the process. There is now a clear division between plan and implementation. The coordinated action plans are altered every year.

The plan deals not with all issues in the region but with the issues most relevant for the participating actors, and the issues that the actors could agree on. The plan does not include physical planning aspects because it is not seen as the most important factor in planning today. Strategies and visions comes first and physical regulation later. Physical planning aspects are addressed in other (sub-) documents.

In the regional planning cooperation of Trøndelag sustainability is interpreted as the broad understanding of the concept sustainability. The emphasis is on sustainability as the concept of creating good living conditions and sustaining the specific cultural identity in the region (cultural sustainability). Environmental matters are often part of the projects in the sense that the specific history, culture, and environment of the region should constitute the foundation for the good living conditions in the region. Preservation of natural values is seen as an integrated part of "Trøndelag in our hearts" - the headline of the common plan.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

The cooperation was initiated by regional actors in order to promote the region in the new competition between urban centres. The key actors are the politicians (the mayors) of the two counties and the one city, organised as the narrow internal partnership. The formal Trøndelag Council (with a secretariat) constitutes the broader partnership, including other actors as well. The politicians' commitment and common understanding of the need for cooperation is seen as essential for a successful cooperation. But the cooperation also illustrates external partnerships with a large variety of participants from the public and the private sector. Most partnerships make formal agreements and contracts on their activities and purpose. Besides, there are various actors organised in working groups and projects. Also when seminars and conferences are held, a wider group of actors participate. The broad participation and commitment of regional actors are crucial for implementing the strategies and visions. However, there seems to be a tendency for certain institutions to become the core actors from both the public and the private sector. They can all be characterised as innovation actors.

All planning initiatives are initiated through the programmes of coordinated action and based on cooperation between several actors and institutions. No single actor or institution dominates the initiatives or projects.

The Trøndelag council has the political responsibility for the plan but the responsibility for the implementation of the projects is to be found in the networks actually working with the projects. In

most cases it is unclear where the responsibility is actually placed due to the many participants and limited formal rules for cooperation.

The concept of partnership is used to specify most of the cooperation activities. But most of the partnerships are diffuse in their expression. Some of the cooperation activities have a long history but are now called partnership, and some are loose networks of participants without any clear purpose and no common understanding of their work. Several are initiated because of new possibilities for funding. Some seem without much influence whereas others become permanent and influential: like the administrative body Innovationteam Trøndelag and RIS Trøndelag (an EU project on creating innovative arenas), Tenkeloft Trøndersk Agriculture, Gassforum Trøndelag, and Cooperationforum for Intercommunication in Mid-Norway.

In the cooperation a lot of differences were present that could have hindered the cooperation.

Being two counties and a municipality, the actors have a different legislative basis and thus different fields of operation, but the regional cooperation presume that all actors work on the whole range of the development. The political-administrative organisation varies also. In contrast to the municipality of Trondheim and the county of Sør-Trøndelag – which is governed by a presidency model – the county of Nord-Trøndelag is constituted by a parliamentary model which is more operative in the cooperation.

Based on the type of organisation, the geography, and the political history, the culture of the three organisations is also different. Roughly speaking, the municipality of Trondheim has an operational culture, the county of Sør-Trøndelag has a planning culture, and the county of Nord-Trøndelag has a culture much more based on initiative. Also the economic resources are unlike between the two participating counties: Nord-Trøndelag has more development funds than Sør-Trøndelag.

As for the reasons to join the cooperation, the motivation was clearly different from the beginning. Sør-Trøndelag wanted a union of the two counties, whereas Nord-Trøndelag wanted to show that cooperation was an alternative to unification. A related issue is the argument of 'Trondheim as the locomotive' for the region. More peripheral areas of the region have worried that the end result would have been 'Trondheim as a vacuum cleaner' where the resources of the region is only directed to Trondheim, leaving the peripheral areas worse off.

Thus, the cooperation is a cooperation of inner tensions where the conflict potential has been evident during the whole planning process. However, the process was not altered because several factors favoured and promoted the cooperation.

First of all, the political leadership in all organisations has after the latest election been of the same party colour. Secondly, when choosing visions, meeting places, and activities the actors have been careful to engage symbolic resources that stress the unity and cohesion of the region, e.g. historical traditions. The general development of the importance of Trondheim has also provided for a successful cooperation. The reach of the labour market, housing market, and services of Trondheim has increasingly extended across county borders and this has provided a better understanding for the importance of allocating resources to Trondheim for the benefit of the whole region. Finally, national and international discussions of regionalisation and the subsequent focus on the importance of regional cooperation improved the understanding of the magnitude of the Trøndelag cooperation.

There are several points of criticism from the regional actors. One point is that private business is too absent in the planning process and mostly symbolic represented. Thus, the public actors are too influential. Another point is the lack of administrative resources that is needed to make the cooperation function effectively. More administrative and management resources and competences are needed in order to gain firmer control with the partnerships and projects and to coordinate and anchor the projects.

Results of the cooperation

The drafting of the common county plan has catalyzed the collective ability for action. The work with the drafting process has created new networks as well as contracted existing networks, and thus, the planning activity has created a better basis for regional development in Trøndelag. This is due to the following results of the process:

Firstly, the participating institutions have been through a learning process where the awareness of the importance of the county plans has been raised. The politicians have to a much higher degree obtained a regional focus on their policy decisions and the relations between the political and the administrative level have become closer.

Secondly, the actors in Trøndelagsrådet have managed to agree on priorities and important issues in the region. This has partly been achieved because they have avoided issues on which they disagree significantly but the cooperation has been characterised by an increased degree of openness and trust. By joining forces, they have also been able to present themselves as a stronger party to external authorities, and being a stronger political assembly, the Trøndelagsråd can be an important arena for the education of county politicians.

Related to the stronger political assembly is the fact that the planning cooperation has further developed the contacts and the cooperation with external actors. The cooperation is a platform on and from which information and ideas can be exchanged. The regular meetings provide the actors with the opportunity to see their individual initiatives in a regional perspective which can increase coordination and enhance their effect. Also, the planning cooperation provide the politicians with the possibility of taking on a role as a regional leader who can then set the regional agenda, act as network nodes etc. The coordination across sectors and policy areas has been improved.

Finally, the planning cooperation and the associated activities and initiatives have increased the awareness of the development of Trøndelag. The future of the region has gained more attention in the media and in non-political fora. This raises the regional awareness and increases the chances of more actors becoming involved in the development of the region.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- The establishment of the Trøndelag Council and the formalisation of the regional cooperation
- Kick-off conference
- The establishment of working groups, common seminars: arenas for discussion and dialogues
- A common plan for the whole Trøndelag Region: visions and strategies
- Hearings and discussions at youth conferences, seminars, and other meetings designed for the specific group of actors.
- Programmes of coordinated actions: projects and initiatives – revised every year
- Implementation of projects

Rogaland Area

Fast facts box

Population: 397 000 inhabitants
Region: the county of Rogaland consisting of 26 municipalities
Urban structure: one major city (Stavanger), several smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: strategic planning, integrated transport and land use planning, strategic land use plan, identity building

The functional urban region

The county of Rogaland is located on the west coast of Norway. It is a region with a varied landscape: fiords, mountains, forests, agricultural land, and a number of cities of which the largest is Stavanger. The total population of the county is approximately 400.000 and it covers an area of 9.325 km^2.

The county consists of 26 municipalities which vary greatly in size, population, and functional status. The largest is by far the municipality of Stavanger with its 115000 inhabitants, app. 29% of the total population of the region. This is also the major city of the region. In the other end of the spectre is the municipality of Utsira with only 209 inhabitants – 0,05 % of the population of the county. These variations in municipality sizes are due to the fact that several of the municipalities are minor islands which depend on the functions of the larger cities and towns.

Table 16: Population in the municipalities of the Rogaland Area. Source: Statistisk sentralbyrå.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**	**Municipality**	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Eigersund	**13,418**	Forsand	**1,092**
Sandnes	**58,947**	Strand	**10,566**
Stavanger	**115,157**	Hjelmeland	**2,723**
Haugesund	**31,738**	Suldal	**3,883**
Sokndal	**3,301**	Sauda	**4,769**
Lund	**3,098**	Finnøy	**2,729**
Bjerkreim	**2,475**	Rennesøy	**3,412**
Hå	**14,883**	Kvitsøy	**521**
Klepp	**14,832**	Bokn	**770**
Time	**14,807**	Tysvær	**9,349**
Gjesdal	**9,426**	Karmøy	**37,928**
Sola	**20,138**	Utsira	**209**
Randaberg	**9,304**	Vindafjord	**8,119**
The Rogaland Area in total			**397,594**

The business community is dominated by the industries related to the oil and gas industry of Norway. The oil companies and their sub-suppliers employ more than 30.000 in the county of Rogaland. This is 20% of the labour force in the county and approximately 50% of the labour employed in the oil industry within all of Norway.

Rogaland is also an important producer of electricity and has a rather large industrial production, primarily within the traditional industries. 25% of the Norwegian meat production originates in Rogaland and approximately 8000 people in the county are employed in the agricultural sector. Egernsund is an important fishery harbour and large fish farming operations are located in the region.

More than 11.000 people are employed within tourism in the Rogaland region. This is an important sector not only for the region as a whole but in particular for the smaller communities on the islands. Approximately 42.500 are employed in the public sector, which according to the county itself is a little less than the Norwegian average. This corresponds to 25% of the actual labour force. (Source: www.rogfk.no)

Commuting percentages within the Rogaland region, from selected surrounding municipalities to the municipality of Stavanger:

Table 17: Commuting percentages within the Rogaland region to the municipality of Stavanger. Source: Statistisk sentralbyrå 2006..

The municipality of	
Sandnes	**30,1 %**
Klepp	**15,4 %**
Time	**14,6 %**
Gjesdal	**17,8 %**
Sola	**37,3 %**
Randaberg	**45,7 %**
Forsand	**9,7 %**
Strand	**18,0 %**
Finnøy	**10,3 %**
Rennesøy	**29,0 %**
Kvitsøy	**24,5 %**

The area is defined by Stavanger as the central city and other locations as commuting areas within 15-60 minutes of transportation time. It is a small functional urban region when it comes to labour market and commuting. They have made solid analyses to document the regional functional perspective as essential for common planning.

Regional cooperation and governance structures

The regional planning is based at the administrational level of the county. It is organised as a number of planning documents that are subject to the overall strategic planning of the 'County Plan' ("Fylkesplan for Rogaland").

In 1989 they started a cooperation concerning transportation initiated by the state. In the area they agreed on common initiatives and they were related to national goals. The cooperation was based on political and administrative actors. The first common plan on transportation was drawn in 1991.

The first cooperation consisted of only four municipalities in the North Jæren, later on more neighbouring municipalities joined (four more) and for the Jæren plan 10 municipalities joined up. They now cover the urban functional region surrounding Stavanger city. Another four municipalities join the regional committee for business development but they are more or less peripheral in relation to Stavanger city.

During the 1990s the cooperation continued and the discussion regarding the development of a common strategy for land use in the region was initiated. Several municipalities were reluctant – especially Stavanger, who did not want a regional authority to decide about their matters. The consequence was that the next plans to be agreed on in the cooperation dealt with general strategies with no formal status.

However, in 1996/97 the Ministry of Environment decided that municipalities could not expect approval of their plans unless they were anchored in common solutions for a larger urban area. This became an important incentive for the municipalities to put more effort into the regional cooperation – also concerning a strategy for land use. Later on it has proved much easier to get the municipality plans accepted by the state due to the foundation in the common regional land use plan.

Furthermore, the municipalities in this area had experienced a lot of conflicts in the process of municipal planning due to a very strong interest group called Jordvärn: any new use of land became a major issue with the opposition from the Jordvärn group. This was another incentive for joining the common planning work.

The regional county has the right to demand a common plan for land use regarding cross border issues, but they do not have a tradition of exercising this authority – they prefer accept from the municipalities. They had the same outset for the drawing of the Jæren fylkesplan and this influenced the organisation of the work
It was found very important to have a strong political leadership and ownership to the cooperation. Therefore a political steering group was formed with representatives from the municipalities and the county. The idea was that the planning work should be concentrated around political acceptable issues and not go further than the politicians wanted. This was seen as necessary to make the plan function effectively afterwards. In the political steering group it was also found decisive to get a broad political representation from different political parties in the municipalities. Due to changes in political leadership over time it was important for the plan to be anchored in more than political parties so the plan could survive a change in political leadership in the municipalities.

Beside the political steering group a project group was established with central administrators in the municipalities, in the county, and in other important institutions related to the planning of the area. This group made all the background planning work and initiated numerous working groups with administrators from different policy areas.

To ensure this process, consultants with expertise in project management and network/process governance were hired. In the county some of these essential competences were also developed.

The process was based on making decisions in the political steering group based on consensus. If consensus could not be obtained on an issue, it was not included in the plan. It was possible to obtain this consensus due to a long history of cooperation in the area. A cooperation culture had

developed over many years on e.g. transportation, harbour facilities, and business policy. The politicians are involved in several of these cooperation activities and therefore they know each other. And as mentioned above, the politicians had several incentives to make a common strategy and land use plan.

In general, the municipalities and the county have put considerable administrative resources into the project. A secretariat carrying out all the coordination and management tasks had to be established. The larger municipalities have had to realise that they have to put most effort and resources into the cooperation. The county finds it necessary that central administrators in the different policy areas bring in resources and knowledge to make it work. Everybody has to take the planning work serious and give it high priority in their daily work. Otherwise it will not lead to a professional and substantial planning work.

Content of spatial planning

The County Plan is the superior strategic guiding document and subsequently a number of 'County Subplans' have been drafted within specific themes of high priority. These are more concrete and action-oriented programmes that are to follow up on the aims of the County Plan. The themes include land use, transportation, recreational activities, protection of nature and culture, management of coastal areas, management of the mountain areas, and strategic plans for education.

Furthermore a 'Regional Development Programme' (RUP) is drafted which is an action programme with the aim of supporting partnership projects for regional development.

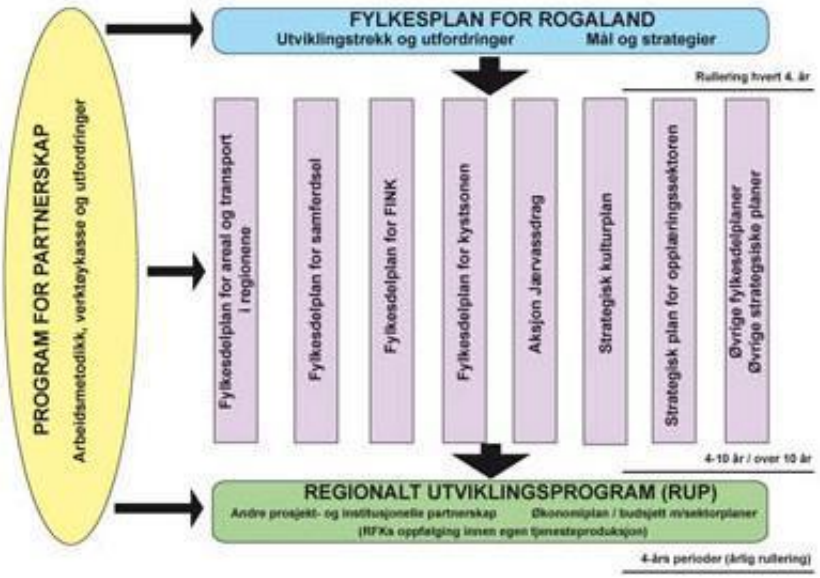


Figure 9: The process of planning and the relation between plans in the Rogaland case.

The County Plan is based on 4 prime focus areas:

- Competitiveness

- Competence
- Communication
- Quality

Competitiveness is understood as a strengthening of the businesses' – and thus the regions' – abilities to compete on the world market and this is to be obtained through innovation and strengthening of Rogalands core areas: innovation, the energy sector, maritime businesses, the food sector, tourism, and cultural businesses.

Competence is to ensure that the inhabitants are competent since this contributes to the social life, and the cultural and economic development of the region. This is sought via: entrepreneurship and competence development, entrepreneurship in education, improvement of the educational level, higher education, and research and development.

Communication is to develop a safe, environmentally sustainable, and effective transportation network in all parts of the county: traffic safety, public transportation, environmentally sustainable urban development, focus on pedestrians and bicyclists, a well-connected region, a coastal road without ferries, 'Motorway of the Sea', an effective and international harbour structure well-connected to the coastal road, increased capacity at the airports, better facilities for tourism, reduction of the environmental impact of transportation, and master plan of the development.

Quality relates to the well-being of the inhabitants: good health, a sense of life quality, increased satisfaction and sense of security in their everyday life, and to the management of the great and varied natural and cultural resources in the county. This includes: sustainable regional development via cooperation, health improving initiatives, physical activities, nature and culture based activities, nature and culture based businesses, and protection and management of natural and cultural resources.

County Subplan for the Long-term Urban Development of Jæren
One of the more extensive and land use relevant County Subplans are the development plan for long-term urban development on the peninsula of Jæren ("Fylkesdelplan for langsiktig byutvikling på Jæren). It is founded in the need for a strategic development plan due to increased strain on the available land, the green areas, the infrastructure, and the existing housing areas due to population growth. The population increase is expected to continue in the future wherefore a long-term perspective that reached beyond the present need is required.

The cooperation on the Jæren plan began in 1997 and the plan was finished in 2001. The starting point for the development plan was the need for a restructuring of the transport plan as well as a political agenda regarding the need to improve the sustainability of the transport structure.

The aim of the subplan is to integrate the attention to sustainable development in a plan process where land use, transportation needs, and environment protection is viewed together and in a long-term perspective for the whole region.

Through very thorough cost-benefit analyses of urban development scenarios, environmental strain, quantitative traffic parameters, and conflicts between different types of land use, a number of perspectives and solutions have been presented. Four long-term development areas have been selected and of these four it is the intention to develop one or two in the short-term perspective in

order to maintain as sustainable (environmental, economical, and urban quality-wise) an urban development as possible.

The first planning cooperation in the region concerned the composing of common strategies for the development of the functional urban region. In this process the participants got to know each other and got used to think within cooperation and common issues. But during the years a need for more concrete results in relation to the overall strategies occurred and the need for more firm land use strategies arose. It was realised that the value of strategic documents is low without clear tools. In the county the planners conclude, that the success of the Jæren plan today is explained mostly by the concrete solutions in land use.

The plan is legally binding, although the land use authority still lies with the municipalities, and they have to deal with it in praxis. This is a very strong governing mean because it has been decided by the government and a royal resolution. In the municipalities it is used in a similar way as a legally binding municipal plan and everybody do follow the plan in their local planning work.

The main content of the plan deals with 5 themes:

- Good living and growing-up environment – regional green structures, recreational areas, aesthetics
- Protection of non-renewable spatial resources – inter-municipal cooperation, land use outside the built-up areas, land use economy in the built-up areas
- Combined land use and transport planning – public transportation, cycling networks, location policy, restrictions to car use
- Effective land use – effective urban structure, high densities in building areas, densification in existing settlements, energy use
- Strengthening the centres of towns and settlements – defining the centre structure, development principles for centres, services, and regional goals for limiting the centre areas, as well as for shopping centres

The Nord-Jæren FUR plan starts from the assumption that the most pressing issues for a sustainable (or environmentally friendly) urban region structure deal with transportation. The relation between density and energy use in the region is recognised for both housing and transportation. The future development of transportation volumes is seen to be possible to tackle by land use planning via overall densification, but also – importantly – by the physical structure of the region, both as a whole and in details. The analyses showed that by choosing to develop the urban structure by concentrations along the main axes of public transportation and main routes, expected rise in traffic volumes could be approximately halved, from the trend-scenario's forecasted 65% to a range between 25 to 40%.

Therefore, the planning principles include:

- New development and densification of areas based on extended bus line and rail corridors
- An idea of walking, biking and public transportation zones in the regional structure
- Long-term development with new rail infrastructure
- Localisation of business activities into nodal points in infrastructure
- Restrictions in car use

These principles form only part of the plan specification - the other principals include a good living environment, protection of non-renewable resources, effective land use, and development of city

and town centres - but the principles depict the central elements of the discussion within the field of integrated transport and land use planning.

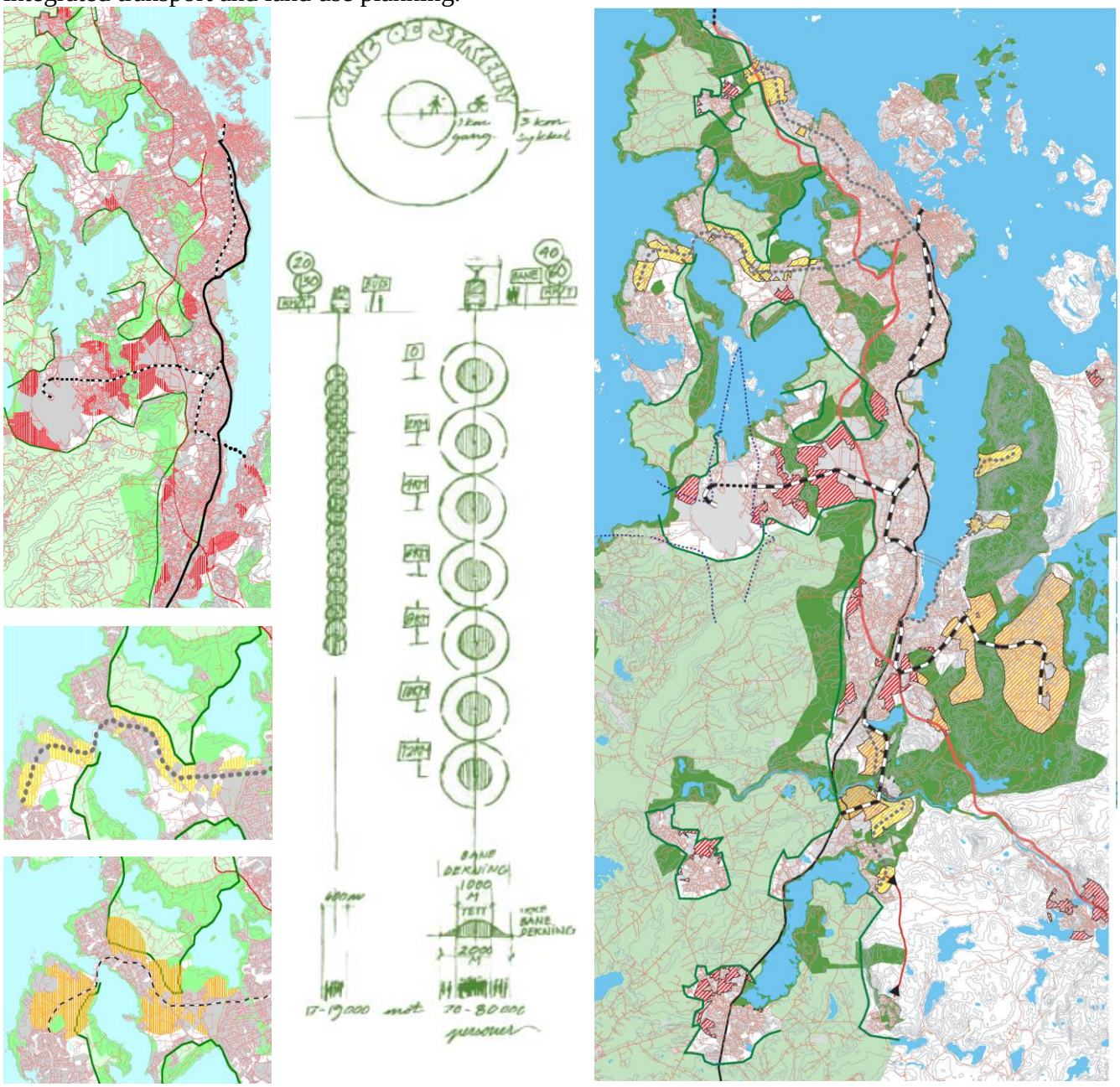


Figure 10: Principles and planning solutions for transport-oriented land use development planning. On the left, the urban ribbon area with additional development areas; centre, principal scheme for transport planning; on the right, the plan document (excerpt). Source: Plan for long-term development in North Jæren

Sustainability is essentially in the process of the Jæren plan. It was the outset for making a common land use strategy for the whole area and the concept is understood in its broadest sense.

The most important issue has been the development of agricultural areas and preservation of important nature areas. The Jæren area is small and limited by the sea and Stavanger city. The urban sprawl is in the plan restricted to certain localities and a green structure is made. Another main issue

in the plan is transportation that is made more sustainable by decisions to emphasise public transportation and a transportation system that will benefit all areas in the region. The general idea is to sustain the compact city and avoid uncontrolled urban sprawl. This idea and the plan elements are developed in accordance with the ongoing work in the regional committee for business development where the same politicians are represented. Actually the upcoming work in developing the Jæren plan will be the work on dealing with business localisation in cooperation with the before mentioned committee.

The social and cultural sustainability is the weakest element in the plan. It has to be dealt with by the municipalities.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

If certain sectors and branches in the area try to get control of and "sit on a high horse" compared to others, it will hinder the cooperation. No one can expect to make their own policy without compromises – neither the state nor businesses. Especially state sector planning can be a great hinder for regional cooperation. The lack of competences for cooperation is the major hindering factor. The participants got to have the capacity to cooperate across borders and sectors and take other's demands and needs into consideration.

As mentioned the political leadership is essential and in order to create ownership to the plan from all politicians there has to be 'something' in the plan for everybody. The initiatives in the plan should not benefit only a few participants, but all participants in the region. The state also has to be represented (the fylkesman) and their wishes included in the plan. The fylkesman has to be strongly engaged and oriented towards common solutions.

It is furthermore important that the plan has a status that makes everybody obliged to follow it, and that it releases resources to carry out the work in practise. It has to be long-term and predictable – it has to be believed in, in order to have an effect on e.g. investment in the region.

Results of the cooperation

The plan has just been evaluated on a large seminar and the conclusion was that the plan has worked well and integrated some important initiatives and land use regulations for the actual development since its implementation. Nobody had a wish or need for major changes. In fact the municipal planning showed a result far beyond the ambition in the Jæren plan, e.g. in housing and business location, in high density building, no uncontrolled sprawl, preservation of nature areas etc.

Two problems were mentioned, and they have to be dealt with in the coming planning work. One is the plans for public transportation which are not yet fulfilled. Private car transport still has a major influence on local planning. The other problem is the lack of good social and healthy local environment in the cities due to the high density building and compact city ideas. The building has been too high and dense in certain areas on the account of adjacent local environment values. They also have to work with this issue in the planning process.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Thorough background analysis of the existing reality
- Prognosis for future development
- The use of scenarios
- Impact assessment
- A coherent public transportation plan and land use plan for future development
- Establishment of a political and administrative organisation
- Development of a strategic plan
- Project groups and working groups

Kristiansand region

Fast facts box

Population: 119 000 inhabitants
Region: 7 municipalities
Urban structure: one major city (Kristiansand), several smaller towns
Content of spatial planning: strategic spatial planning, integration of transportation and land use planning, general land use plan

The functional urban region

The Kristiansand region consists of seven municipalities with a total population of 119 000. The region is dominated by the city of Kristiansand with about 77 000 inhabitants. The central city thus contains almost 65% of the total population. In comparison, the smallest municipality, Iveland, with 1170 inhabitants, is only 1,5% of the size of Kristiansand and has less than 1% of the total regional population.

Table 18: Population in the municipalities of the Kristiansand Area. Source: Statistics Norway.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Kristiansand	76 917
Vennesla	12 513
Lillesand	9 030
Søgne	9 609
Birkenes	4 387
Songdalen	5 621
Iveland	1 170
Kristiansand Area in total	**119 247**

The characteristic feature of the cooperation region is that it is split between two counties. The municipalities of Lillesand, Birkenes and Iveland belong to the Aust-Agder county, and the Kristiansand, Vennesla, Songdalen, and Søgne municipalities to the Vest-Agder county.

The region has enjoyed a strong demographic development over a long period. Population-wise, it has been one of the most rapidly growing urban regions in Norway. However, in the latest decade the population growth has been slowing down somewhat, with most favourable development taking place in the suburban municipality of Søgne.

The municipalities that are located closest to Kristiansand are especially integrated in a common labour market, to the extent that over half of the workforce commutes to the central municipality.

Table 19: Commuting percentages to Kristiansand (Hidle et al. 2005).

Commuting to Kristiansand (selected municipalities) Proportion of workforce in the municipality	
Vennesla	79 %
Søgne	71 %

Songdalen	71 %
Lillesand	51 %

The Kristiansand region, or the Nodepoint cooperation area, corresponds well with the local perceptions of the functional urban region. The municipal plan of Kristiansand sees the regional issue as many-faceted: where the cultural region is built on joint identity and values, the administrative region has boundaries set according to geography, and the industrial region is based on the industrial structure; the functional urban region is predominantly a cooperation area that can be adjusted according to regional needs. It is specifically stated that a mutual idea of a region will make the region more functional.

It is evident that the size differences of the municipalities within the region mean that the greatest expectations concerning cooperation are placed on the city of Kristiansand. In its municipal plan Kristiansand shows the importance of the regional cooperation by making regional development a top priority among the objectives. The most important regional cooperation takes place within the "Knutepunkt Sörlandet".

Some of the municipalities surrounding the cooperation area would be willing to join the cooperation, but the area extent is thought to be feasible at the moment. However, the "traditional" cooperation axis along the coastline is also important and there are municipalities along that zone that might be considered included at some point.

The geography of the area is strongly directing land use. In the start phases of the land use cooperation, there was discussion about the relations between the different sized municipalities. It was feared that the city of Kristiansand would dominate the project and "grab" the best of the development opportunities. However, political discussions led to an agreement of principles that satisfied all of the municipalities.

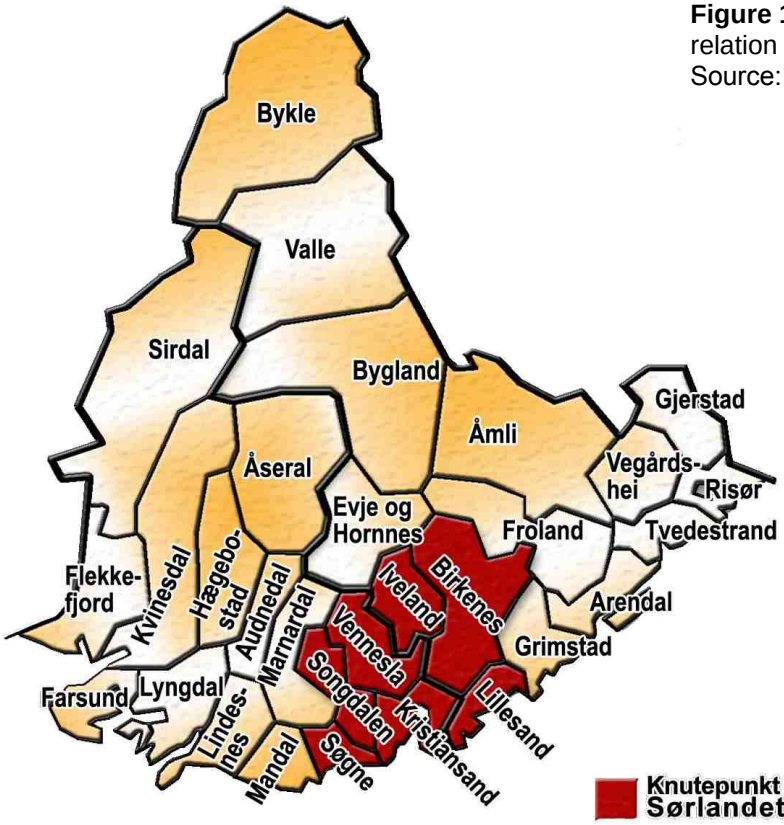


Figure 11: Cooperation area in relation to the counties.
Source: ATP:project's website

Regional cooperation and governance structure

Regional cooperation is taking place within the urban region's cooperation authority Nodepoint Sørlandet (Knutepunkt Sørland) as a project. The Nodepoint was set up in 1990 in order to advance joint economic development issues. In 1996, the cooperation was formalised as a legal subject. The cooperation has been arranged through projects in which one of the municipalities is the responsible project "leader".

In the beginning of 2006, the contract defining the cooperation was altered to better enable cooperation in the region. The municipality of Iveland also joined the cooperation. The cooperation is steered by the Nodepoint steering committee, consisting of the heads of the municipal councils. Eight thematic committees handle issues within their fields.

The main cooperation areas are economic development, transportation and land use planning, public health, crime, and IT-cooperation. All cooperation activities are integrated into the municipal planning and administrations.

Cooperation on land use started formally in 2005. The whole transportation and land use project is a cooperation project between the municipalities in the Kristiansand region (Kristiansand, Vennesla, Iveland, Birkenes, Songdalen, Lillesand, and Søgne), the two counties (Vest-Agder, Aust-Agder) and state authorities (road and rail administrations, the state authorities in the counties). It can be considered as a governance project for land use and transportation issues (Areal- og transport-forvaltningsprosjektet i Kristiansandsregionen). The initiative came from the steering committee of the Nodepoint, and the transportation part of the project was initiated by the National Department of Transportation as a transportation governance project, starting at the beginning of 2004. The land use project was formalised during the autumn of 2005. The objective of the land use project is to produce a mutual general land use plan for the area of the participating municipalities.

For political steering of the projects, a new authority called "the ATP board" (ATP-utvalget) has been established. It consists of the central politicians in the region. Both projects have a project manager. The land use project also has an administrative steering group that consists of the county planners and the planning chiefs of the municipalities.

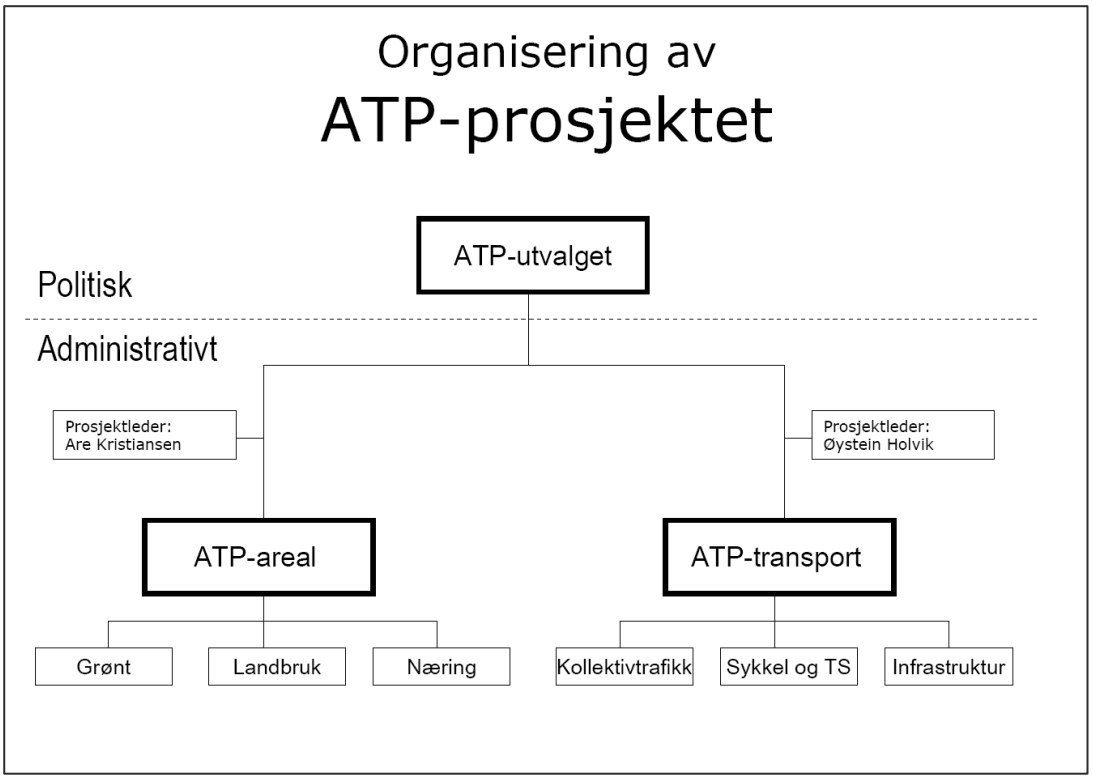


Figure 12: Organisation of the ATP-project. Source: ATP-project

The actual cooperation practises happen through projects in which one municipality "hosts" the activities. The cooperation idea is that while the aim is to create mutual projects, the project cooperation should not be hindered if one or a few municipalities do not want to participate.

The planning and the decision-making processes are taking place concurrently. Each step is separately approved by the board, and subsequently in the municipalities. This approach is time consuming, but it also means that generally everyone is well informed and the tasks that are given to the administrative personnel are concise, thus enabling a feeling of progress from one political meeting to another.

Content of spatial planning

The starting point for the land use project has been clear. The region is a commuting area divided into two counties. There has been a steady growth in the region and the interrelations between the municipalities are described as "interdependent". Services are already being sought from all over the region with little correspondence to the municipal borders; hence the need and the mutual will to develop common land use planning. In addition, the national guidelines concerning harmonisation and regional cooperation in land use planning are also in line with the idea of cooperation in the Kristiansand region.

The unique feature of the land use project is that it is, according to the project leader, most likely the only project aiming at a legally binding land use plan, in which the initiative has come from the local actors. The counties take part in the project and support it through data provision and participating in the planner meetings. In Norway the county level is responsible for making

strategic plans. It is really an exception when the county, as in this project, is involved in more detailed land use planning.

The main issue, that the land use planning project will attempt to solve, is the overall structure of the region in a long-term perspective. The region is characterised by a hilly landscape, in which the agricultural land is located in the valleys, crossed by the main roads. The settlements are squeezed in between the agricultural land and the hilltops.

Agricultural land is protected from development by Norwegian law and national policies to an extent that hinders local development. This means that while there is, in absolute terms, open landscape and seemingly undeveloped land, it cannot be planned for urban uses. Therefore, the structure of the region is in danger of becoming more scattered. This, in turn, could have the consequence that the possibilities for serving the structure by means of public transportation would not be promising.

However, the policy on developing urban structures enables utilisation of agricultural land in cases where such action has regional or national importance. The land use project was seen as a means to show the regional importance of developing the regional structure into a more unified direction.

At the beginning of the project, it was decided that the resulting planning document should either be included in the municipal plans as "common guidelines", or be developed into a county plan for the region (Fylkesdelplan). To enable the latter, the planning process has been designed according to the ordinances of the Planning and Building Act. However, this has not been taken as a duty to eventually produce and submit an official county planning document.

The overall objective has been set up as a mutual land use policy, and through this policy a route for sustainable development and balanced growth of the region is sketched out. Both the need for transportation as well as use of land area should be minimised. Transportation should both be more environmentally friendly and more secure than now. Also the health of the population should be addressed. The main stated goals of the project are:

- Better mutual land use and transportation policies
- Good preconditions for regional economic development
- Good preconditions for recreation
- Grounds for enabling access to a variety of commercial services and jobs for the whole population of the region
- More unified practises concerning land use questions
- Good preconditions for population growth in the whole region

The most important concrete outcome of the cooperation project will be the land use plan document for the region. The plan will include mutual plans for:

- Housing and building
- Commercial areas
- Green structures
- Long-term limits for growth into green and agricultural areas
- Regional urban structures (centres)
- A strategy for regional development areas

The regional plan should cater for new developments to provide possibilities for incorporating 50,000 new inhabitants. The new building activity should be situated so that travel distances are reduced regionally, and public transportation is made possible, especially to reach services which are often needed or are otherwise popular among the public. Overall use of land per housing unit should be reduced, compared with the present situation. The demands of accessibility by public transportation should be treated differently in the rural areas than in the urban cores, so the possibilities to create new housing developments also in the peripheral areas of the region are increased. Concerning development of the coastal zone, the plan will be to keep the coast open to recreation, as well as providing operational possibilities for economic activities that derive their income from the sea.

Structurally, the plan will strengthen the service provision possibilities and the overall quality of the municipal centres and the sub-centres within, in order to avoid creation of more regional automobile-dependent shopping centres outside the urban fabric. The centre of Kristiansand will be developed as a county-level centre.

It is held important that the plan should be regional, e.g. by not taking municipal borders into account, and at the same time be able to account for the different practises of the central and peripheral parts of the region. As one part of the solution, the project is cooperating with and being partly financed by an Interreg IIIB project "URBAL". URBAL is tackling the issue of how to maintain balance in development between the urban and the rural parts of a functional region. In the NodePoint, the project cooperation has been utilised as the development of the use of broadband within especially the social services, in order to provide service for the public on a regional basis.

Another important issue brought forward in the initial phase of the land use project was that of the quality in physical planning for transportation and land use. This was especially emphasised as the task of the centre areas. The issue of how to affect the modal choice and the shopping behaviours was addressed as a question of the quality standard of the urban space and the transport nodes.

In the continuation of the cooperation, issues such as the regional characteristics and values should be addressed, and a regional "brand" should be developed. Furthermore, the land use planning efforts should be combined with the development of a strategic economic plan in cooperation with different sectors of economic life. In this respect, an important issue concerns the allocation of commercial land in the region. Kristiansand has been a winner in the competition for workplaces, and the smaller municipalities would like to see some development in their territories as well. This issue is being discussed in connection with the land use project. While the immediate dialogue is focusing on having adequate and suitable sites for commercial developments of different kinds, as well as on whether or not to support clustering of certain (and which) branches in the municipalities and in the region, perhaps the most interesting idea to be developed is the establishment of a joint company for administering the commercial spaces in the region, thus enabling all municipalities to profit from commercial development anywhere in the region. This kind of decision should put off the pressure to allocate commercial areas in the more remote municipalities in excess of the real needs.

Sustainable development is well embedded in the activities of the ATP project. Kristiansand has a long history of advanced thinking within sustainability issues. The city took part in the "Environmental City" (Miljöby) project between 1993 and 2000, setting national and international standards for sustainability in practise. Among other things, the bus service in the urban area was

developed into a metropolitan standard along the main routes, and coupled with the aims of developing a dense urban structure along those routes. Kristiansand is also the initiator of a local project that became a national programme, the "Environmental Beacon" (Miljöfyrtårn). The programme aims at rising environmental standards within the small and medium sized enterprises by branch-specific measures.

Today, the ATP-project is also part of the sustainability work in Kristianstad – the project secretariat and its leader are located in the environmental department and the whole ATP-project originates from the idea of creating a binding regional land use policy for sustainable development and balanced growth.

More specifically, the connection between the URBAL and the ATP projects is producing concrete outcomes that advance sustainability in transportation in the region. The main activity of this project has been the establishment of inter-modal stations in the urban area.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

Cooperation is conclusively based on the dialogue between the politicians. The administrative groups function as discussion forums where issues are prepared for decision making. The political board then discusses the issue further. As in many regions with limited personnel in the specific tasks of land use planning, the cooperation also relies on the personal qualities of the people participating. The success of the land use project, in terms of how the idea has been put through in the regional political board, and subsequently in the municipalities, has been largely influenced by the enthusiasm of the participants.

The functioning of the cooperation "Knutepunktet Sörlandet" has been mostly criticised from the point of view of representativeness of the political leadership. In this respect, a self-evaluation proved that a new political organisation of the cooperation is needed. The proposal is to enlarge the steering board in order to better include representation according to the political and geographical relations in the region. Therefore, in addition to representation based on population, a set amount of representatives from each municipality would be chosen.

Since the ATP-board basically consists of the county representatives and the top politicians of the municipalities, the decisions made at the board might not translate well to the municipal politics. While there have been hints at some initial friction between the regional point of view and the will of some of the municipalities this slight discomfort in the municipalities has been alleviated through communication between the project personnel and each municipality.

Results of the cooperation

The central themes for the cooperation within the Knutepunkt Sörlandet have been economic cooperation, public transportation, and inter-municipal services. The main projects deal with joint buying of services, developing joint IT systems for administration, and transportation and land use (the ATP-project and the URBAL Interreg project). The cooperation has resulted in many joint service networks, namely within public health, geographic information systems (GIS), IT, employer networking, municipal purchasing, and criminal issues. Each of the themes has a working group, and the groups meet several times each year, some even monthly, not only for discussions but also to develop joint programmes and plans within the themes.

In the last two years, the cooperation in transportation and land use planning has become thematically more important. The transportation project has dealt with three main issues: the public transportation system, sustainable transportation planning, and toll system renewal. The transportation steering group even gives advice to the national government on spending in transportation. The GIS board has unified the mapping systems of the participating municipalities on a general level.

Regarding the overall progress in a regional context, the planning cooperation has already proved productive. Initially, the fact that the planning area covers territory in the two counties raised some questions on the regional level. However, since the planning project has taken off, the attitude of the county administrations has been positive. Both counties are keen on integrating the results of the planning cooperation into their respective county plans.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Establishment of the urban region cooperation authority 'Knutepunkt Sorlandet' (Nodepoint Sorlandet)
- A project for integrating transportation and land use planning 'Arealprosjektet'
- A regional planning programme
- A GIS-based mapping system for the region as a tool for land use planning cooperation
- The regional master plan

Gothenburg region

Fast facts box

Population: 880,000 inhabitants
Region: the urban region planning authority consisting of 13 municipalities
Urban structure: one major city (Gothenburg), several smaller suburban towns, polycentric suburban structures
Content of spatial planning: spatial structures as strategic development issues

The functional urban region

The Gothenburg region comprises 13 municipalities (cf. table below) in the west of Sweden. The population of these municipalities totals 880,000. The region is mainly a part of the Västra Götaland county and region, with one municipality belonging to Halland county. Västra Götaland Region is one of Sweden's pilot regions in regional self-government, with responsibilities in regional development planning as well as distribution of regional development funding.

Geographically, the region is characterised by the south shores of the axis Götaälv-Säveån rivers with the corridor along that axis holding the majority of population, 550,000, whereas the north shore only comprises 330,000, despite its somewhat larger spatial extent.

Table 20: Population in the municipalities of the Gothenburg Region.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/1-06)**
Gothenburg	484 942
Ale	26 405
Alingsås	36 010
Härryda	32 049
Kungsbacka	69 817
Kungälv	38 703
Lerum	36 506
Lilla Edet	12 889
Mölndal	58 234
Partille	33 543
Stenungsund	22 947
Tjörn	15 022
Öckerö	12 231
Gothenburg Region total	**879 298**

The Gothenburg region cooperation area is roughly equivalent to the labour market area surrounding Gothenburg, but not exactly. Around year 1970, the commuting area corresponded to the Gothenburg Region cooperation area, but since then it has expanded somewhat. At present, one municipality in the Gothenburg Region cooperation is not a part of the local labour market area. Four municipalities that belong to the LLM are not part of the cooperation. However, there is an "outer zone" that is becoming more attached to the Gothenburg region, consisting of large parts of the close-by areas of Västrä Götaland and Halland counties.

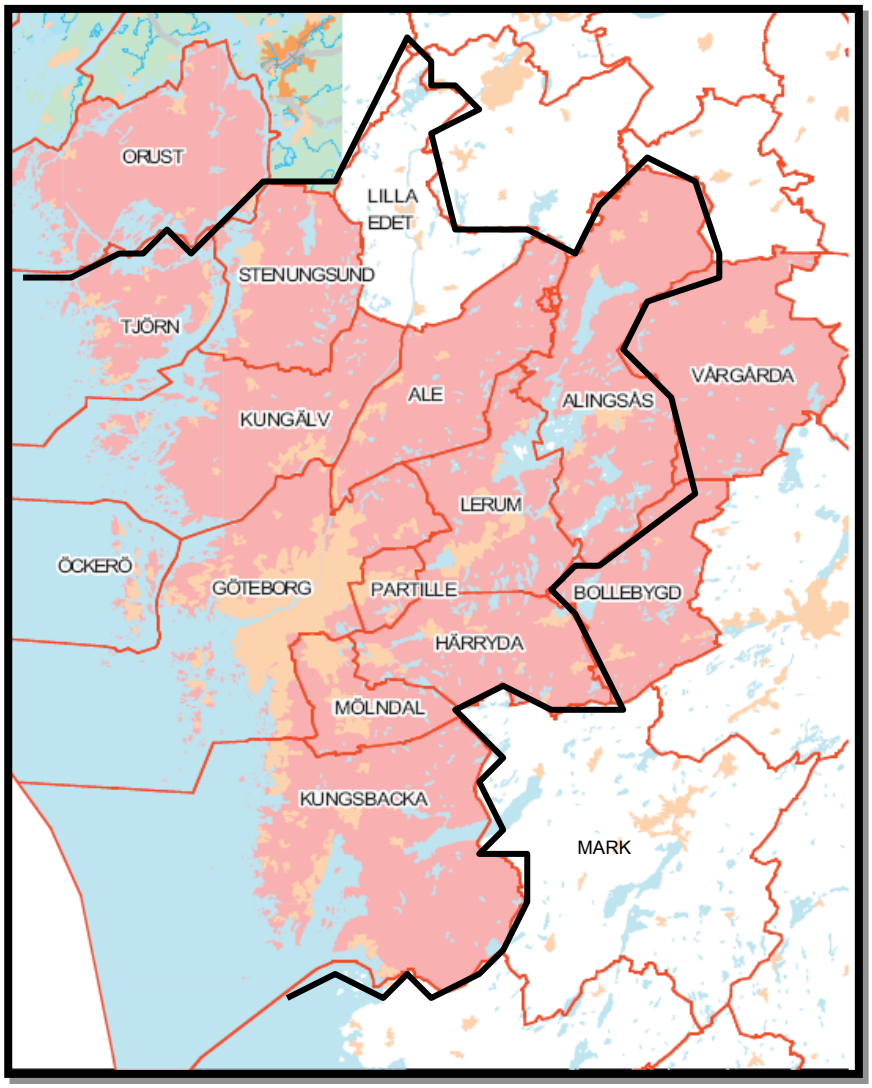


Figure 13: Gothenburg labour market area (the pink area) and Göteborgsregion cooperation area (the black line)
Source: GR Planering (2005), HUR 2050 (2006)

Regional cooperation and governance structures

The Göteborg Region Association of Local Authorities (GR) is a co-operative organisation of thirteen municipalities. It was founded in its present form in 1995, when the former regional administration and the administration of the Gothenburg's suburban areas amalgamated into GR. The task of the association is to promote co-operation across municipal borders and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences within the region. GR focuses on issues such as: regional planning, environment, traffic, job market, welfare and social services, competence development, education, and research. GR works closely with Business Region Göteborg, which is the common resource for trade and commerce issues in the Gothenburg region, and is organised as a "sister organisation" for GR. Other central cooperation partners are Västra Götaland Region, County administrations in Västra Götalans and Halland, state highway and railway authorities, as well as the business communities in the region.

The GR delegation has 91 members and its board of directors has 22 representatives. The chairman and three vice chairmen make up the presidium of the board of directors. The board appoints management groups for different areas of activity within GR. These areas are:

- Regional development
- Education
- Regional planning
- Labour market
- Social issues
- Leaders of the future

The management groups are the steering tool for the political preparation of issues concerning the cooperation areas for the board of directors. In addition, there are several working groups of civil servants for handling concrete issues and projects to complement the political steering.

The cooperation within GR comprises several fields of action: regional planning, environment, traffic, labour market, welfare and social services, competence development, education and research. The administration of GR, with personnel of 75 (2005), is divided into four departments: planning, competence, education, and R&D in the social sector.

The goal-setting within the regional cooperation has since 2002 taken place within a "consultation process"; in its starting points this is "a broad and unprejudiced as well as constructive" dialogue about and around regional cooperation. Included in this dialogue are politicians from GR and other politicians from the partner municipalities. In practise, the process has been carried out as "rounds" of discussions in the partner municipalities.

GR is financed partly through annual membership fees from the member municipalities and partly through income from conference and training arrangements, investigations, and other joint-user ship savings for the member municipalities. In the first round in 2002-2003 the discussions were initiated by an invitation by the GR planning department.

Content of spatial planning

GR is by Swedish law a regional planning organisation, but has not chosen to implement regional land use planning. Instead, spatial planning has been given a form of strategic planning via the GR organisational structures. Also, spatial planning is carried out in cooperation with the Västra Götaland Region and the three other inter-municipal organisations within Västra Götaland.

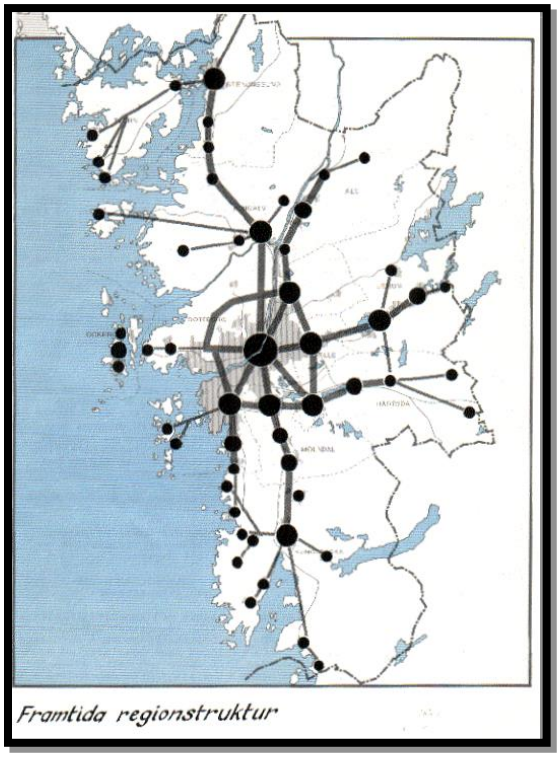


Figure 14: Planned future regional structure in the 1982 regional plan.
Source: GR planering, Regionplan Göteborgsregionen 82.

The content of spatial planning within GR has been developed in the "consultation process". In the first round, the starting point was to discuss whether a simple development model derived from the three pillars of sustainability could be used for regional development planning.

The idea was to discuss the possibility for using competitiveness, or development of the business sector (konkurrenskraft) as a tool for increasing the social capital or the quality of life of the inhabitants, (medborgarkraft) - this being the overall goal for regional development - within a frame of carrying capacity, or the importance of the environment for the present and future generations (bärkraft). This principle was adopted for the future work. The first round produced six thematic areas for further discussion: social structure, physical structure, regional enlargement, housing production, public transportation, and education.

The physical structure was taken up in the second round of dialogue in 2004. The proposition called for discussion on how to mutually develop a structure that is both transport effective (congestion-free and accessibility providing) and public transportation friendly (concentrated and dense). The answer was presented in form of the idea of decentralised concentration, in practise a planned polycentric urban region. Other related issues concerned polarisation of the housing market into high-rise low-income suburbs and single-family-house areas with high incomes. This was seen to cause segregation also in the sense of travel behaviour, with the ones "forced" to use public transportation having to spend extra time in transit. Also regional enlargement was mentioned but no viewpoints presented.

In the second round of dialogue it was accepted that public transportation should be an important part when planning new residential areas, in order to enhance everyday accessibility but also because that could be one way to influence travel behaviour and transit mode choice. It was also accepted that good infrastructure is a precondition for not only regional development per se, but also for developing good public transportation.

Concerning polarisation of housing, it was agreed that planning with a strong will and direction is needed in order to provide for sustainable development in all dimensions. However, it was also noted that differences between municipalities must be accepted to a certain degree. A need for common planning was agreed upon. Active land acquisition policy was also pointed at and planning for the border areas between the municipalities was considered to be most important.

In 2006, a third round of dialogue has been taking place. As a result of this dialogue, the idea is to focus on the most pressing issues based on the work of the previous rounds. The resulting strategy is further focused into three issues: infrastructure, settlement structure, and green structure. The work is titled "Sustained Growth – goal and strategies with focus on sustainable regional structure".

Based on the strategy above, GR aims at starting to work on a structural model - or vision – of the Gothenburg region. The starting point is the recognition of the need to steer regional land use in order to achieve the ambitious goals set in the previous years – growth in jobs and inhabitants coupled with "regional enlargement" resulting in the local labour market reaching 1,5 million inhabitants in 2020; quality living environments with improved access to the coast, sea, forests, and lakes, urban environments that cater for the "good life", as well as diminishing pollution and thereby securing fresh air and clean waters for everyone; and providing an attractive and feasible public transportation system and infrastructure to enable 40% of the journeys to be done by such means in 2025.

The structural starting points are:

- Development of the region based on a strong centre and a few strong sub-regional centres along the main transportation corridors
- Strengthening the regional centre, the central parts of Gothenburg with 40,000 new jobs and 30,000 inhabitants within 15 years. This means that the sub-regional centres should gain 40,000 jobs and 90,000 inhabitants in the respective timeframe
- In the long-term, a geographical balance of inhabitants should be reached, based on a central axis of Götaälv and Säveån rivers

Other regional visions

The Västra Götaland Region has prepared, in cooperation with Gothenburg Region and three other inter-municipal organisations within the county region, a vision document "Vision Västra Götaland". This is described as a predominantly "bottom-up" initiative of the regional actors (GR 2006), and it is also centred of the concept of "the good life". The vision is divided into three sections: sustainable development (the three pillars), general perspectives (cohesive region, equality, integration, and internationalisation), and focus areas (trade & industry, competence & knowledge, infrastructure & communications, culture, health).

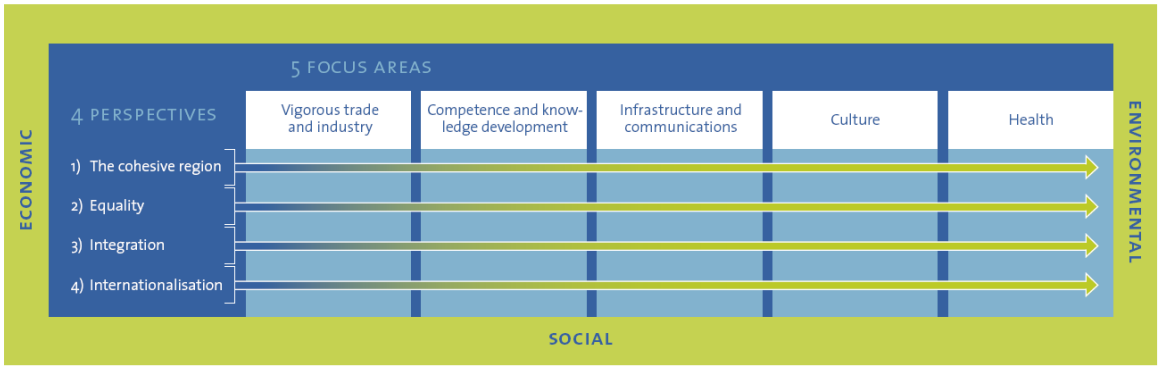


Figure 15: Vision Västra Götaland. Source: Västra Götalandsregionen (2005).

The most directly spatial perspective is "the cohesive region". The vision states that the aim is to develop a closely connected region that provides scope for actions, with "larger labour markets […] providing greater accessibility" (Västra Götalandsregionen 2005). The elements of the cohesion vision are:

- Shorter distances
- Interaction between different development aspects
- Positive long-term population trend
- Full use of individual resources of the population

HUR 2050 is a network of the local state administration and the regional and local administrations producing visions of a sustainable future for the region. The work is titled "Challenges of the Future –developing a sustainable region together". The work began in 2002, and the vision document was created in 2006. The main achievements have been the development of an idea of sustainability that is operational in strategic planning, and to progress from infrastructure planning to regional planning in a broader sense, with approaches that deal with the economic geography (regional enlargement) and the physical structure of the region.

The concept of sustainability focuses on the main goal, "the good life" – social sustainability as seen from the point of view of living in a region. "The good life" means primarily to provide for physical health, but also to deal with fast changes in social and cultural settings. While the physically demanding jobs are disappearing, the demands for productivity and effectiveness create pressures for accelerating the pace of not only work but life in general – time is considered to be in short supply, and subsequently free time is seen as a waste. This also has effects on physical and mental health issues. Therefore, a question of how to slow down the pace of life has been set high on the agenda.

The regional structure has been approached through work on structural alternatives that are built on two dimensions: structure of growth (dispersed throughout the region vs. concentrated in nodal points) and lifestyle (globally directed fast paced vs. locally anchored slow paced).

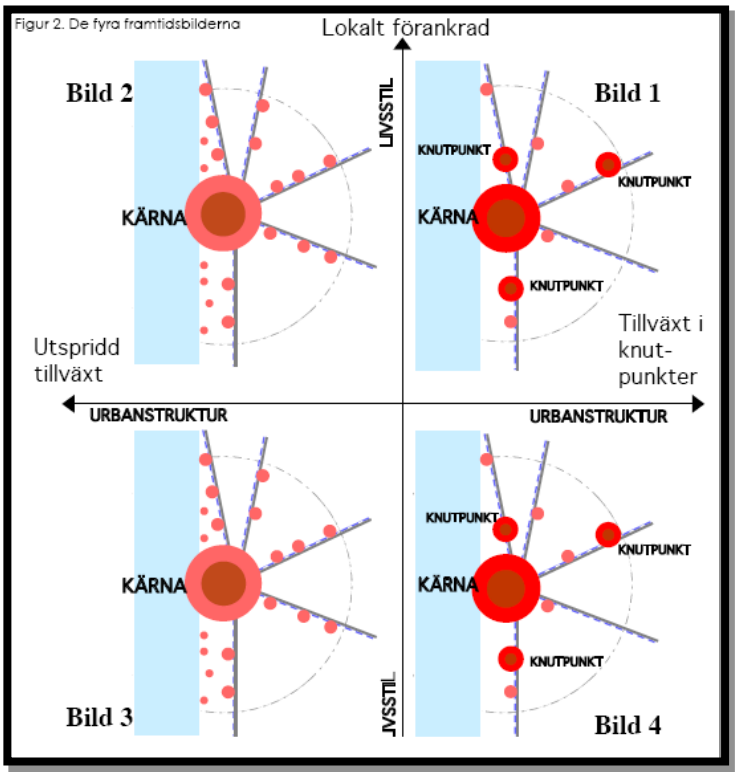


Figure 16: Structural alternatives in the HUR 2050 work of Göteborgsregionen. Source: GR planering

The analysis of the structural alternatives showed that concerning traffic volumes, the difference between the regional structure models could amount to over 20% in per capita total kilometres by private car, whereas the impact of lifestyle was estimated to be around 10%. The impact of lifestyle could result in a more pronounced figure if the changes in remote work and delivery services that might accompany the locally anchored lifestyle would be successful beyond the low expectations of the analysis.

The result is similar to that of the GR planning suggestions: a regional structure of a strong centre and development in a few strong sub-regional centres, good communications, a dense built-up area, and subsequently accessible green structure.

In the "HUR 2050" process, the functional urban region was seen from a long-term development perspective. Initially, the work concentrated on the Gothenburg Region as such, but in the latter phase this was supplemented by recognition of what is called "the larger functional region". This is defined as the area around Gothenburg with a travel time of less than one hour to the centre. This was seen necessary in the light of the regional enlargement tendencies that have been discussed during the process via e.g. the concepts of New Economic Geography. With such delimitation, the statistical labour market area is enlarged to include e.g. Borås, Varberg, Uddevalla, and Trollhättan. The regional expansion was seen to create polycentric regional structures with densification taking place around a few strong centres.

In the discussion concerning the enlarged functional area, it was seen that the trend of regional enlargement, while providing impetus for positive economic development, does also produce unwanted environmental effects via increased travel. ICT was seen as one possible "solution" to this, in the form of distance work and "office hotels" close to residential concentrations.

There is an inherent conflict, or weakness, in the visions of regional structural development in the Gothenburg/Västra Götaland regions. While the emphasis is asserted to producing "the good life" with focus on "slowing down" the tempo of living in general, there is little to connect the idea of slow living to other aspects of the development vision. Regional enlargement admittedly increases traffic and makes commuting an even more dominant daily activity than before. Thus far, this development has also meant polarisation of services, and especially daily shopping for groceries has been characterised by the distances to the stores growing longer. Unrestricted, the development, and its support by what may be called the "suburban lifestyle", may dwarf any efforts made in regional planning.

Regional enlargement has, however, two facets. One is the geographical expansion of the labour market region, demanding, as well as resulting from, improved infrastructure links between localities. The other is expansion of the population in the functional urban region, resulting from densification of the settlement structure. Both facets provide starting points for sustainable and unsustainable development. The main issue is integrated planning and implementation of transportation and settlements. Sustainable urban region development calls for a well-organised public transportation system and a concentrated settlement structure that provides accessibility through public transportation systems.

For this, the "answer" in the Gothenburg region is to create a better connection between (the regionally and nationally led) transportation infrastructure planning and (the municipally decided) land use development for housing. The structural model, even with its general "non land use" approach, should be the main tool for continued dialogue to reach this goal.

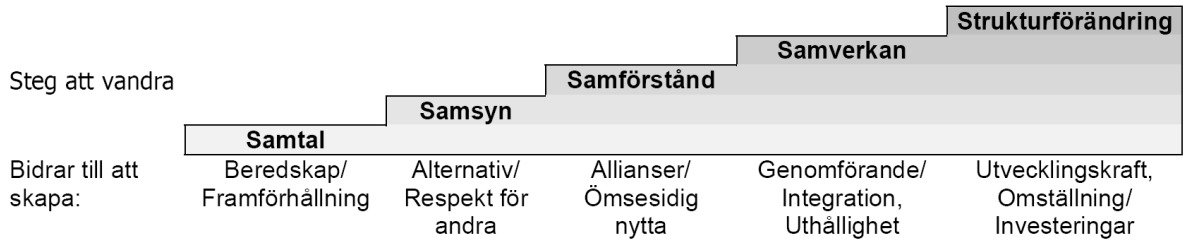
Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

Regional planning in the Gothenburg Region has been built around the "consultation process". The process is based on a series of meetings for broad political discussions regarding how to cooperate and which issues to handle in the cooperation. The process is facilitated by the GR organisation via production of basic background material and a special invitation document, which sets the starting points for the discussion. So far, three rounds of discussions have been held. After the first round, a focused document was prepared for further discussions in the second round. The second and third rounds further specified this content. The inputs for each round have been a cross-compilation of the themes deemed most important in the previous round, and the themes considered central by the regional council of GR.

In the regional development work in the Västra Götaland Region, there is a process-oriented working model called "the cooperation stairway" (samverkanstrappan). This model describes the basis for regional development work cooperation as a process to be developed step by step, in order to build upon the achieved common understanding and relations. The steps in the Götaland model are:

- *Dialogue* of perceptions - preconditions for cooperation
- *Common vision* of mutual respect - creation of alternatives
- *Common understanding* of mutual advantages - building of alliances
- *Common action* with integration and persistence – implementation
- *Structural change* producing development resources – reconversion and investments

Figure 16: The process-oriented working model called "the cooperation stairway".



The building of political trustworthiness is seen as a decisive factor in the long term cooperation. This has taken a long time to develop but the results are visible at present. Voting is a rare thing in the GR decision making.

The GR municipalities are, through their agency in the regional council, the most important actors in the collaboration. The cooperation activities take place within the networks and the working groups, and also external actors (e.g. county administration, state authorities) are invited if necessary. The leadership of the regional cooperation consists of strong, regionally minded politicians that have the enthusiasm and power to take regional issues forward. This can also be, at times, a drawback, when the cooperation is too centred on the personalities of the leaders – that may block the initiatives of others, perhaps even involuntarily.

The regional approach is sometimes difficult to maintain in the cooperation. Often, the politicians do not see the regional issue and attach themselves to the municipal points of view. But it is also difficult for the regionally inclined politicians to go back to the municipal level and interpret the regional discussions there.

The cooperation is more centred on creating a common vision and a common understanding of the regional development preconditions than on concrete actions. However, the regional discussions on housing issues are placing demands for land use planning in a strategic manner. Also, the municipalities have started to notice their dependency of the functional region, and this is reflected in municipal land use planning. The municipalities are defining the interdependencies in their general plans, and that is also further uniting the region.

Results of the cooperation

The regional planning authorities themselves do not see the cooperation as very result-oriented in nature. The cooperation is more about creating a common vision on the need of cooperation in order to "achieve" a good regional structure. The main results of the work in the sense of spatial planning are:

- Increased knowledge and an idea of a common functional region
- The latest general plans in the municipalities have more emphasis on viewing the municipality as a part of the region, and on defining the demands of the municipality vis-à-vis the region
- A common understanding of regional citizenship

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Organised political dialogue to produce the focus and content of strategic spatial planning
- Cooperation networks according to planning tasks, inclusion of “outside” actors
- Established political and administrative organisations
- Development of strategic plans

Umeå region

Fast facts box

Population: 140 000 inhabitants

Region: Cooperation area "Umeåregionen" consisting of 6 municipalities
Urban structure: one major city (Umeå), several smaller municipalities
Content of spatial planning: joint service planning, regional marketing

The functional urban region

The Umeå Region is situated 600 kilometres north of Stockholm in Sweden. The region consists of six municipalities: Bjurholm, Nordmaling, Robertsfors, Umeå, Vindeln, and Vännäs. The region has over 140,000 inhabitants.

The urban region is dominated by the city of Umeå, with more than 75% of the population of the region. The other municipalities are small in comparison to the city of Umeå but also in national comparison.

Table 21: Population in the municipalities of the Umeå Region.

Municipality	**Population (per 1/11-05)**
Umeå	110 705
Bjurholm	2 573
Nordmaling	7 493
Robertsfors	7 044
Vindeln	5 757
Vännäs	8 436
The Umeå Region in total	**142 008**

The Umeå Region is considered by the regional actors to be a functional region, especially in relation to commuting - around 5 000 people commute every day to and from jobs and homes within the region. The region is also statistically a local labour market area.

As a consequence of governmental action concerning the building of a new railway line, "Botniabanan", along the coast from Kramfors via Örnsköldvik to Umeå, the regional picture is perceived to be changing in the future. Travel times along the rail corridor will approximately be halved when the line is finished around year 2010. The Örnsköldvik labour market area will be more closely connected to the Umeå region.

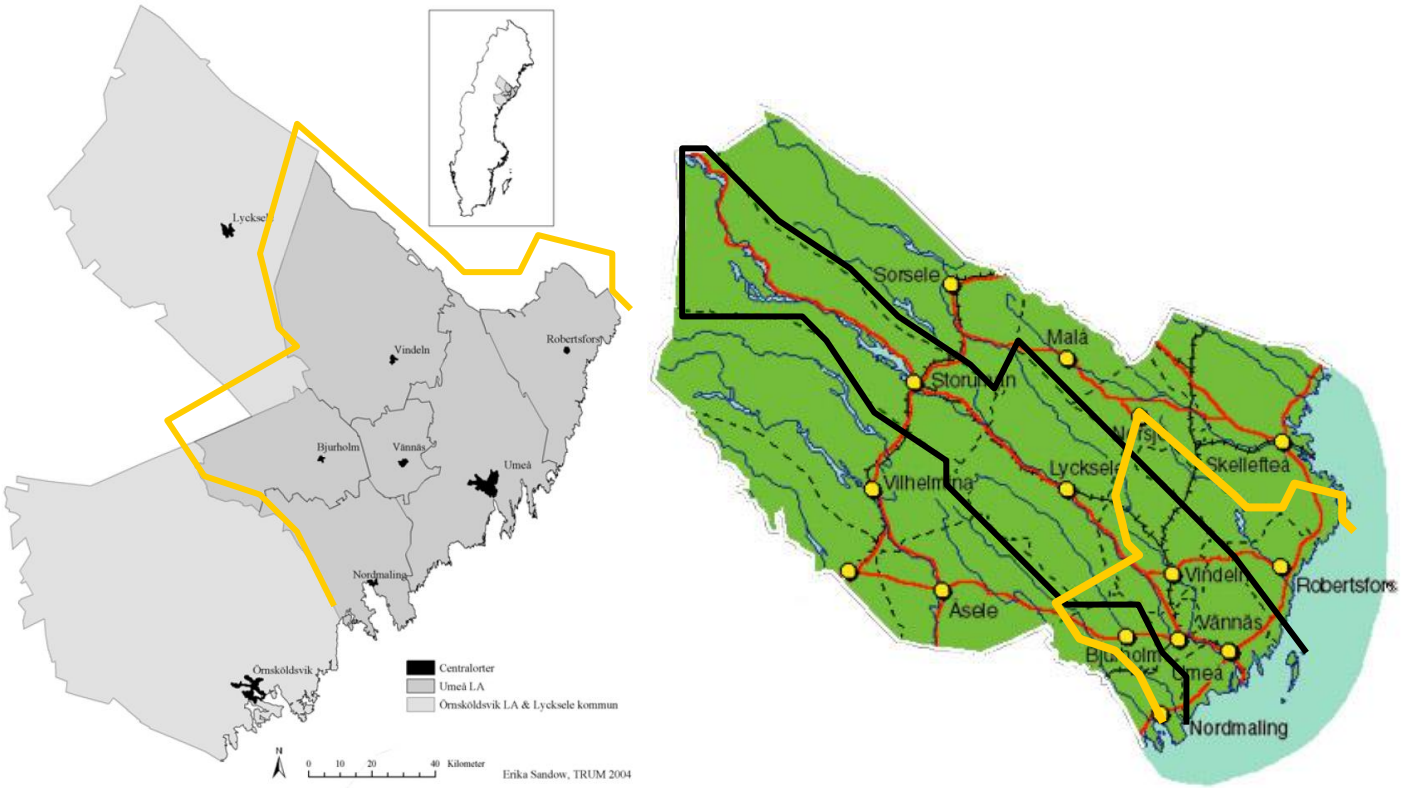
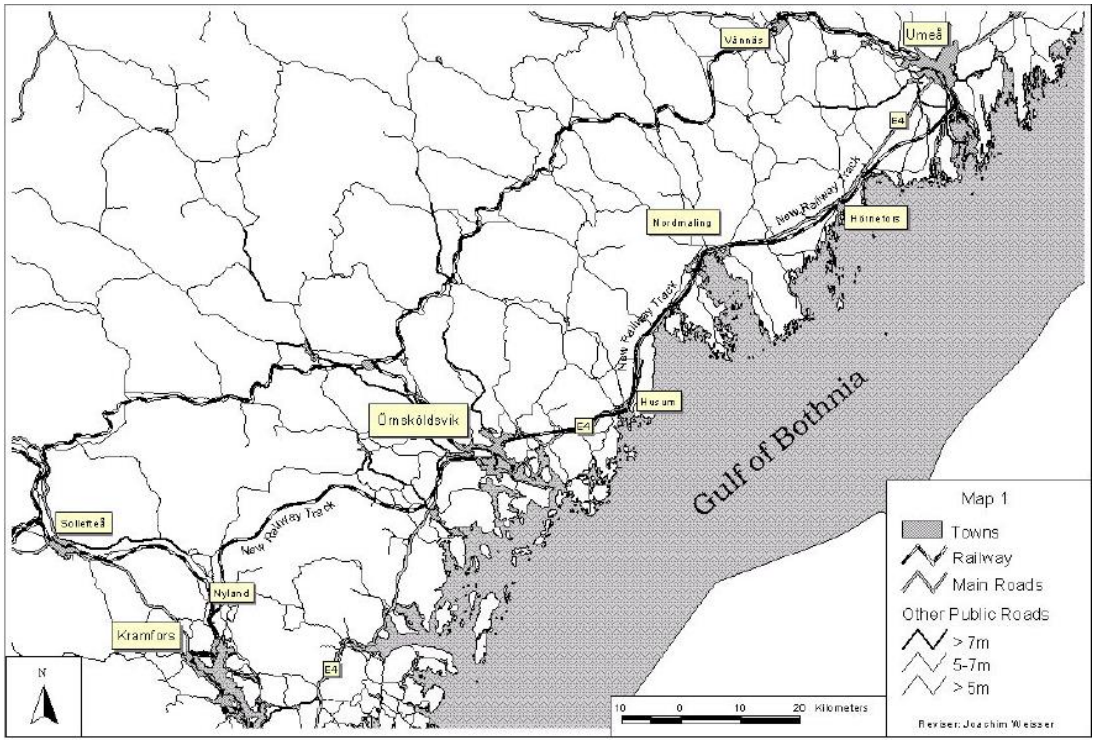


Figure 17: The Umeåregionen cooperation/functional urban region (yellow border), neighbouring Lycksele and Örnsköldsvik labour market areas (above left) (Sandow and Westin 2005); the E12 Alliansen area (black border, above right) (source: www.umearegionen.se); the railway line Botniabanan Kramfors-Umeå (below) (Weisser 2003).



Regional cooperation and governance structures

Notable emphasis is on the cooperation activity "Umeåregionen" (the Umeå Region). For the urban region, this is the cooperation that best corresponds with the functional urban area, and it is also producing the common functionalities within its area.

The Umeå Region cooperation is taking place in unofficial form, as the six municipalities are developing common strategies on a "cooperate-when-needed" basis. The cooperation goals have been defined as making the municipal interaction more efficient through harmonisation of activities, having an active role in the development of the region, and developing a democratically anchored organisation for steering the cooperating neighbouring municipalities.

The cooperation started in 1992 as an informal dialogue between the municipalities. In 1993 the six municipalities made a mutual agreement that was given a kind of declaration of intent by the municipal councils, thereby keeping the informal nature of the cooperation but stating the interest from the highest decision-making municipal level. The main declarations stated that:

- Positive development for one municipality is a positive development for all parts
- Establishment of new companies should be carried out without conflicts
- Job opportunities should be spread throughout the region
- Increased freedom of choice and better services to inhabitants
- Joint development strategies

The regional cooperation is organised on three levels: the political (regional council), the municipality executive (operative steering committee), and the operational (committees) level.

The council of the region meets four times a year and consists of the local government commissioners. They draw up the strategic plans of the region. The operative steering committee consists of the heads of the municipalities and meets monthly. The administrative director prepares the agendas, carries out decisions, and is responsible for the finances and the administration. There are 17 committees, assigned by municipal activities, in which representatives from every municipality are participating.

The central aims of the organisation are:

- Better efficiency in the public sector through co-ordination
- Working together for the development of the region

In 2005, the regional council accepted a strategy for growth in the region. The strategy includes five points of departure:

- Competence acquisition
- Infrastructure as a growth factor
- Cooperation between schools and businesses
- Administration as development power, and
- Strengthening the attractiveness of the region

The six municipalities also have joint EU-projects in several development fields, such as tourism, local development, and promotion of the new Botniabanan railway line as a growth factor for the region. The "Botniabanan AB" joint venture is mainly an organisation for building the railway line

and supporting regional traffic on the line for the 15 years following the opening, but it has a promotional aspect as well. The company is commissioned by the government to build the line. While the government owns 91% of the company, 9% is shared between the municipalities of Kramfors, Örnsköldsvik, Nordmaling and Umeå. The main responsibility of the municipalities is to enable building the line in the land use planning, as well as financing, building, and managing travel centres.

A third cooperation activity in the region is the "Blå Vägen/E12 Alliansen", a union of a NGO and an informal inter-municipal cooperation. The E12 Alliansen started as two consecutive EU-projects with the idea of enhancing the opportunities for development along the road corridor of E12 - from Umeå in the South-East to the Norwegian border in the North-West. The municipalities along the highway, Umeå, Vännäs, Vindeln, Lycksele and Storuman, participated in the projects. After these projects ended, the municipalities continued the cooperation with smaller mutual projects under the same title "E12 Alliansen". In the year 2003, these municipalities formed an NGO "Blå Vägen" (the Blue Highway) in connection with an international project of the same name, with a goal of promoting the highway connection, from Pudosh in Russian Karelia to Traena in Norway, as a tourist attraction. Norway, Finland, and Russia have similar NGOs in this agenda. In 2004, the two Swedish operations formed a union.

The network "E12 Alliansen" deals with developing the municipalities within the E12 corridor between Umeå and Tärnaby. The cooperation network comprises five municipalities. The work of the network includes not only transportation and infrastructure issues, but also the interconnections of business development, tourism, and culture. International perspectives are included, reflecting the ESDP. This perspective is also taken up in the Umeå Region, especially in relation to strengthening the weight of the regional dimension and taking the three pillars of sustainable development into consideration.

In relation to regional development, the business marketing initiative "the Growth Alliance" (Tillväxtalliansen) of the Umeå Region municipalities, Umeå University, the County government, and businesses in the region must be mentioned. The cooperation is organised through a steering group and an operational office, assisted by an informal working group. The main objectives are ensuring long-term growth in the region and developing growth prerequisites through deepening the cooperation in a "triple helix" model network.

Content of spatial planning

The Umeå Region is a growth region due to the fact that the city of Umeå is a strong regional growth area. However, the rest of the municipalities in the cooperation are losing population.

Table 22: Population change in the Umeå Region municipalities 1995-2005.

Municipality	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**
Bjurholm	2 854	2 695	2 573
Nordmaling	8 104	7 663	7 493
Robertsfors	7 707	7 307	7 044
Umeå	101 337	104 512	110 705
Vindeln	6 451	6 074	5 757
Vännäs	8 780	8 532	8 436

In this light, the need for regional *physical* planning is reduced. However, one of the starting points for the cooperation has been to view development from the perspective of the urban region. The latest draft for the strategic plan for cooperation in the Umeå Region (2006), which was approved by the Regional Council in November 2006, states that one of the three "legs" for continued cooperation is "to develop a region", in addition to developing cooperation between the municipalities.

"Spatial planning" means in this case the creation and the strengthening of the region as a functional region. The cooperation activities create functionalities that serve to:

- Unify practises in administration
- Unify service provision to citizens of the region
- Create improved access to improved services in all cooperating municipalities

In this context, the improvement of the physical infrastructure of the region is being handled by the group of business directors of the municipalities, as one of the mutually agreed actions for creating better preconditions for growth in the region. Other work on infrastructure includes improving the main commuting roads and, as a regional question, the promotion of a bridge connection over the Bothnian Gulf to Finland.

Regional spatial development is also dealt with in several projects in which the regional cooperation organisation is involved. Three examples are pointed out here. "City and country" (Stad och land) is a regional development project, partly EU-financed, with an objective to create growth in the region through support for innovative projects with a regional or a local focus. The project has in three years financed over 130 micro-projects.

"Regional branch development" (also an Objective 1 project) handles growth factors in the small municipalities in the region, with the general objective of making the whole region (rather than just the city of Umeå) more attractive for businesses, prospective new inhabitants, as well as visitors. The development responsibilities are divided among the municipalities: tourism in Nordmaling and Bjurholm, transportation in Vännäs, and industries in Robertsfors and Vindeln.

In 2004, the Umeå Region municipalities decided to apply for EU funding for an interregional project dealing with regional general planning in the "Kvarken" area, consisting of the Umeå-Skellefteå regions and the Vaasa-Kokkola regions in Finland. The idea was to produce a framework for general development-oriented physical planning in a regional context, by facilitating learning and cooperation across the Bothnian gulf. However, the application was rejected and the idea of joint physical planning was put aside for the time being.

The inter-regional infrastructure project Botniabanan is a new railway connection along the coast line. It is calculated to halve travel times between the major urban nodes (Örnsköldsvik, Umeå, Skellefteå) in the region. Up till now, the decision has been made for the track to be built as far as Umeå, but plans to continue onto Skellefteå (Norrbotniabanan) are also under preparation, although the decision to extend the line from Umeå has not yet been made. Construction is progressing, and the line is expected to be operational around 2010.

Botniabanan is also estimated to have measurable, although not radical, effects on the attractiveness and accessibility of the region, but at present the specific measures taken are local in nature. Travel centres are planned, but considerations for the regional or the municipal structure (especially in

Umeå) are not yet in preparation. This is due to the long-term time period in which the actual positive development is seen to take place – there is time to adjust when the event approaches. Whether or not this is a feasible strategy remains to be witnessed.

The upcoming new rail connection is, however, utilised heavily in marketing, both to attract new business opportunities and to promote the general attractiveness of the region. "Botniabanan [railway] as a growth factor" (Botniabanan som tillväxtfaktor) (also an Objective 1 project) has brought out questions regarding the future enlargement of the region as a unified labour and housing market. Enlargement is believed to take place towards Örnsköldsvik.

Studies show (cf. e.g. Weisser 2003) that it is likely that the region will start suffering from a deficit of labour in many branches within 5 to 10 years, in spite of the positive population development. Therefore, improved access to labour force will become a crucial factor for the development of the region. Since the neighbouring labour market areas are different in the structure of labour, they will complement rather than compete with each other in the case of being drawn together by the railway connection.

The improved railway system with subsequently improved transportation will, according to experiences from other regions in Sweden, increase the popularity of rail transportation in other parts of the railway system as well. Therefore, the existing lines will contribute to improved accessibility in the region as well. In this respect, the new railway line will offer new possibilities for the other municipalities along the existing rail network (Vännäs, Vindeln, and outside the Umeå Region: Lycksele and Storuman).

Regional actors (the municipalities along the rail line, together with the county traffic administration) have taken the responsibility of arranging public transportation on the line for 15 years after its completion. The feasibility of the transportation scheme is underlined in the municipal plans – the travel centres along the line are to be developed as final destinations and nodal points for modal change.

The business development initiative "Growth Alliance" is in fact the operator of the "Bothnia railway as a growth factor" project, but uses the growth alliance–tag for marketing purposes, and to differentiate between the initiative as a process, and the project.

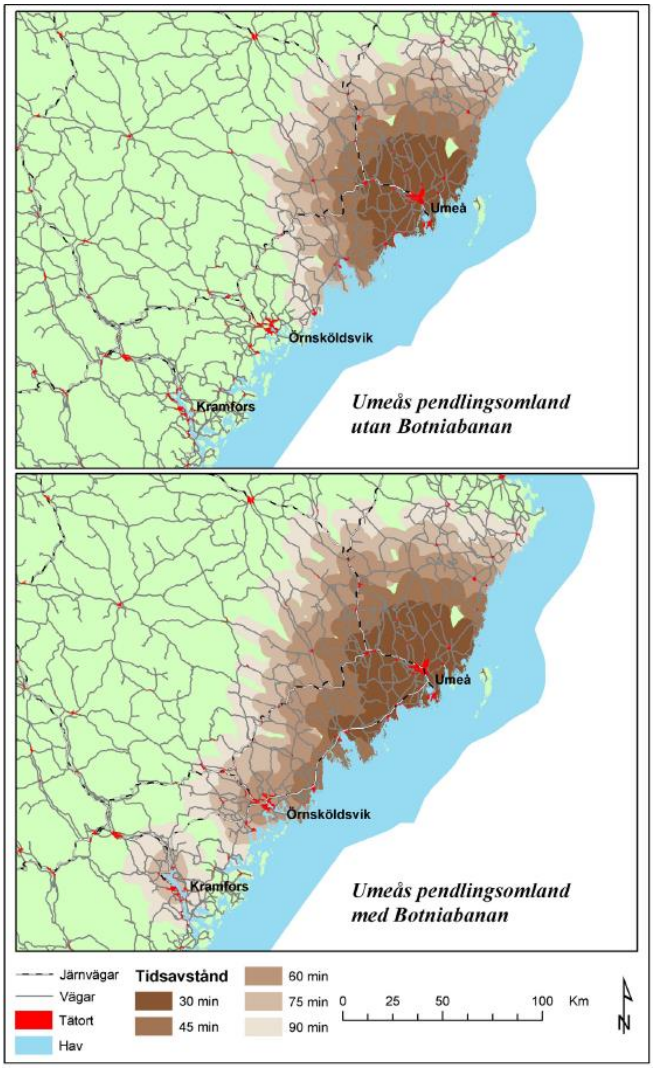


Figure 18: The commuting zones surrounding Umeå without and with Botniabanan (Weisser 2003).

With respect to sustainable development, the Umeå Region has several projects and processes that define sustainable development in the region. The general plan of Umeå (1998) took sustainability as its first framing principle. The Agenda 21 work in Umeå has been continued since the 1990s. One interesting detail is the "Green Zone", an environmentally designed service centre for cars and drivers.

In the future, the region is looking to capitalise on a pilot project of one of its municipalities. "Sustainable Robertsfors" is a five-year project that was started in August 2001 and will, by the end of 2006, lay the foundation for sustainable development in the municipality of Robertsfors. The project is financed by European Union structural funds, the municipality of Robertsfors, and by the administrative board and county council of Västerbotten.

A central task for the project is creating a plan for sustainable development, but also to develop methods and *a model* for other municipalities wishing to work efficiently with sustainable development. This is done by:

- Spreading knowledge of sustainability
- Increasing the means by which citizens can participate

- Increasing the means by which sustainability can be an integral part of community development
- Developing and working closely in, with, and through networks
- Ensuring that there is process leadership for the project

The Robertsfors model for sustainable development has been developed in two directions: a theoretical and a practical. The theoretical model is based on the Natural Step Framework developed in Sweden in the late 1980s. The framework consists of three interrelated spheres: the "funnel" of pressure on sustainability, the system conditions for sustainability that must be met, and implementation methods.

The system conditions concern utilisation of concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust, concentrations of substances produced by society, degradation of nature by physical means, and subjecting people to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs. The illustration below shows the operationalisation principles for sustainable development, according to the framework.

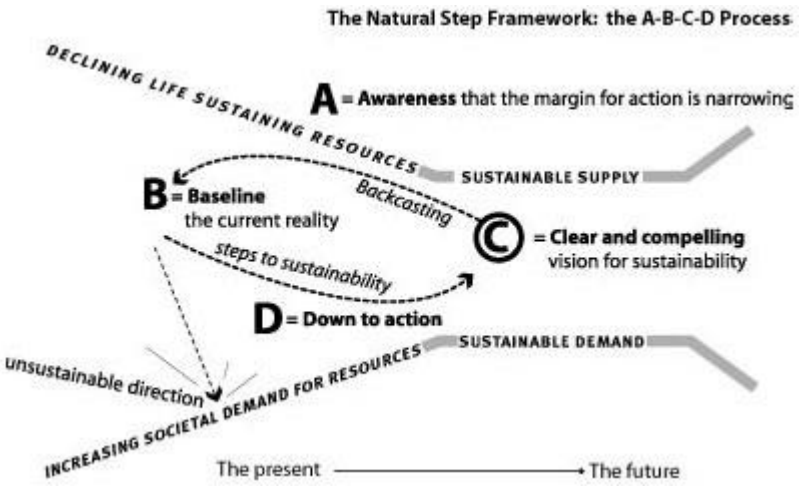


Figure 19: the sustainability funnel. Source: Robertsfors municipality

The project began by educating citizens, through meetings, discussions, trainings, workshops, and seminars. This included public meetings, business education programs, trainings for municipal employees, and seminars for community groups such as educators at local schools and the youth forum.

Assessment of the current conditions was made through a SWOT analysis process that was led by the group leaders. An action plan for sustainable development in Robertsfors is being created through the structure of subprograms.

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

According to the Umeå Region organisation itself, there is an atmosphere of mutual trust and an open and frank dialogue. The anchorage of the cooperation in three levels of municipal activities (political, chief executive, and civil servant) makes the co-operation firmly established and not affected by changes in personnel. Over the years, exchange of knowledge and experience between

politicians and public officials has resulted in diminishing the effects of municipal borders in everyday life of the citizens as well as the administrations.

This trust and cooperation has also had an effect on the creation of the functional urban region, not only as a more unified service area, but also by creating a sense of togetherness; a sense of being a common region. Every cooperation activity enhances this idea.

Results of the cooperation

The results of the cooperation may be classified into three categories, according to the cooperation actors themselves. First and most important, the cooperation network itself possesses a structure, informal but yet influential. Secondly, the joint projects mean better life for the citizens of the area. Thirdly, the joint administrative activities make every day work and cooperation easy for the civil servants.

The most important activities have been the general joint planning by creating common practises such as a joint salary system, joint leadership within the rescue service, joint organisation of tourism, joint planning of upper secondary schools, joint switchboard, joint IT-platform, joint library system, regional digital mapping system, unified guidelines for land use and for long-term resource care, development of the road network, common work on health, waste and national environmental goals, pilot project on sustainability, and business cooperation, common marketing and information service.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- An informal but politically as well as administratively well anchored cooperation model
- Project ownership in the individual municipality
- Development of a strategic plan
- Project groups and working groups
- The use of “Umeåregionen” as a concept, with the region serving as an actor in several cooperation endeavours in the functional region as well as at the county and national levels
- Administrative cooperation and mutual administrative projects to create common practises and unified services

Lahti region

Fast facts box

Population: 180 000 inhabitants
Region: the urban region of Lahti consisting of 6 municipalities
Urban structure: one major city (Lahti), several large municipalities
Content of spatial planning: strategic spatial planning, structural model

The functional urban region

The Lahti urban region is situated in Southern Finland, approximately 100 km northeast of the capital of Helsinki. Geographically, the region is sited on the Salpausselkä ridge formation, with a lake district north of the ridge and a coastal plain south of it. The northern part has attractive lakes in abundance, and is subsequently a major area of weekend cottages. The southern part is mostly agricultural land, with much less pronounced natural forms.

Logistically, the region is characterised by its location along the main railway and road connections. Lahti is traditionally a strong business city, and lately there has been an emphasis on capitalising on the logistically strong position. Furthermore, education has been seen as an important factor in development. The Lahti University Consortium is a network university that was established by four Finnish universities and that offers services provided by departments of these universities.

Table 23: Population of the municipalities within the Lahti Region.

Municipality	**Population (per 31/12-05)**
Lahti	98 413
Nastola	14 790
Hollola	21 199
Asikkala	8 560
Orimattila	14 614
Heinola	20 729
The Lahti Region in total	178 305

The Regional Council area comprises 12 municipalities (cf. fig 20). At present, the question of how to define the urban region is very relevant in the Lahti region. According to the national definitions, the urban region is perceived to include either eight municipalities (the YKR-definition of the continuously built-up area by the Environmental Centre of Finland, "Urban Network and Urban Regions" by the Ministry of the Interior) or seven municipalities (Governmental project for municipal and service structure renewal "Paras"), which is also in line with the statistical delimitation of the local labour market area (LLM). The sub-regional voluntary cooperation covers the five most centrally located municipalities. For creating a common structural model for land use in the urban region, the sub-regional cooperation area was enlarged with the town of Heinola.

The regional cooperation has included the central parts of the urban region. In the land use cooperation, the aspects of how to define the region were influenced by several factors. The most important is the inclusion of the city of Heinola in the cooperation for a structural model.
Heinola is located 35 kilometres northeast of Lahti. It forms its own statistical labour market area, and it is also in another sub-region within the area of the Päijät-Häme regional council. Therefore, it has not been a part of the Lahti urban region cooperation. However, in the year 2002 an alliance of the regional councils in Southern Finland started a joint work on the spatial structure of the southernmost Finland, covering the area south of the latitude of Lahti. Due to borders of the regional councils, the northernmost tip of the area is the Heinola sub-region. Whether it is functionally a part of the area is debatable, but also the functionality, unity, or feasibility of this large east-west area can be questioned. In the structural vision of this work, the connection from Helsinki to Lahti was complemented with an additional corridor leading through Heinola towards the central parts of the country. Another influential document that led to the inclusion of Heinola was OECD's territorial review on the metropolitan region of Helsinki (2003). In that document, Heinola was included in the Greater Helsinki Region.

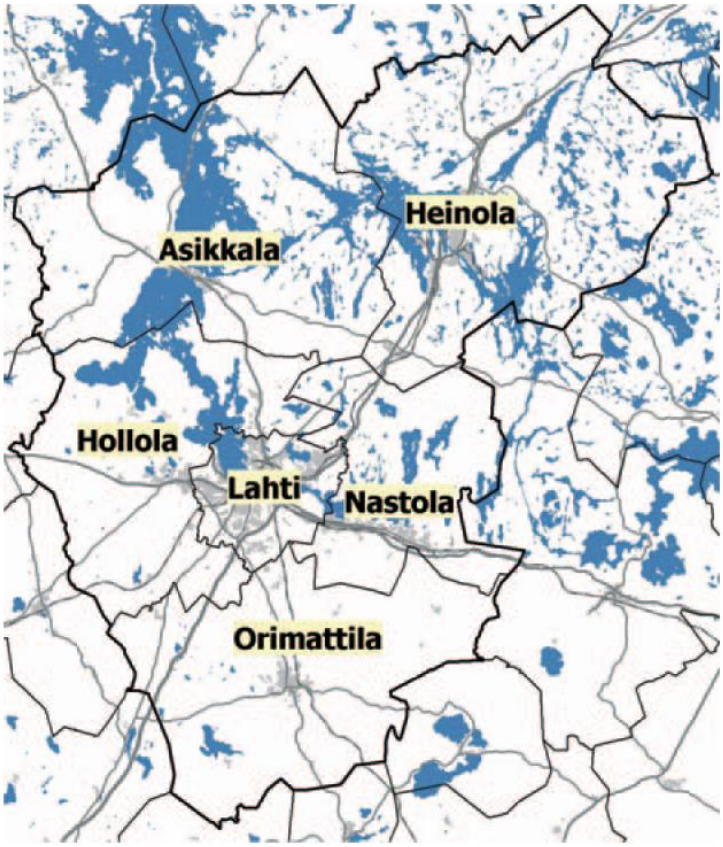


Figure 20: The Lahti region cooperation/functional urban region

This development of mainly an imagery of regional unity was paired with the fact that the motorway leading from Helsinki northbound through Lahti was being continued to Heinola, and this was expected to bring the two cities closer together.

Regional cooperation and governance structures

In the Lahti urban region, cooperation between the municipalities dates back to the 1960s. Formal cooperation started in 1973, at first between three municipalities (Lahti, Hollola, and Nastola). The administrative organ consisted of the directorates of the municipal councils and boards (as a joint cooperation committee), and the chief executives (the urban region executive group). In 1990 the municipality of Asikkala and the city of Orimattila joined the cooperation.

At the end of the 1990s a third group was formed: an expanded executive group, including heads of the councils and boards. Until the year 1997, the city of Lahti handled the administrative tasks without compensation. At that point in time, the cooperation organisation got a budget of its own.

In the year 2000 the Finnish Ministry of the Interior initiated a national project with the aim of supporting sub-regional cooperation between municipalities. Eight sub-regions were chosen, and the Lahti urban region was one of them. The sub-regions were given, by a pilot law in 2002, the possibility to create a formal public administrative organ, to which the municipalities can shift their decision-making power in certain cases. In 2004 the law was revised and it was extended until 2012. This law enables direct election of sub-regional councils.

In the Lahti urban region, the Sub-region Council is formed from the members of the municipal councils, with a pre-set number of seats for each municipality. The council elects a seven-member board. In addition, the former executive group now functions as a "working committee". The office of the cooperation employs five people, and is managed by the Chief Executive of the sub-region.

The cooperation activities include mutual land use planning, public transportation issues, health and social affairs, as well as sub-regional marketing, and development of settlement structures and infrastructures in general.

Cooperation on general land use planning has also been taking place since the 1960s. The cooperation has been carried out through a production of Structural Models. The structural model is a non-binding general land use plan that is not recognised in the Land Use and Planning Act. The model acts as a support tool for municipal and regional planning.

The work on the structural model has been organised as a project, partly funded by the local and the regional administrations, partly by the EU. The project was initiated by the sub-regional executive group, organised firstly through setting up a working group for the structural model, later complemented by the actual planning by a consultant.

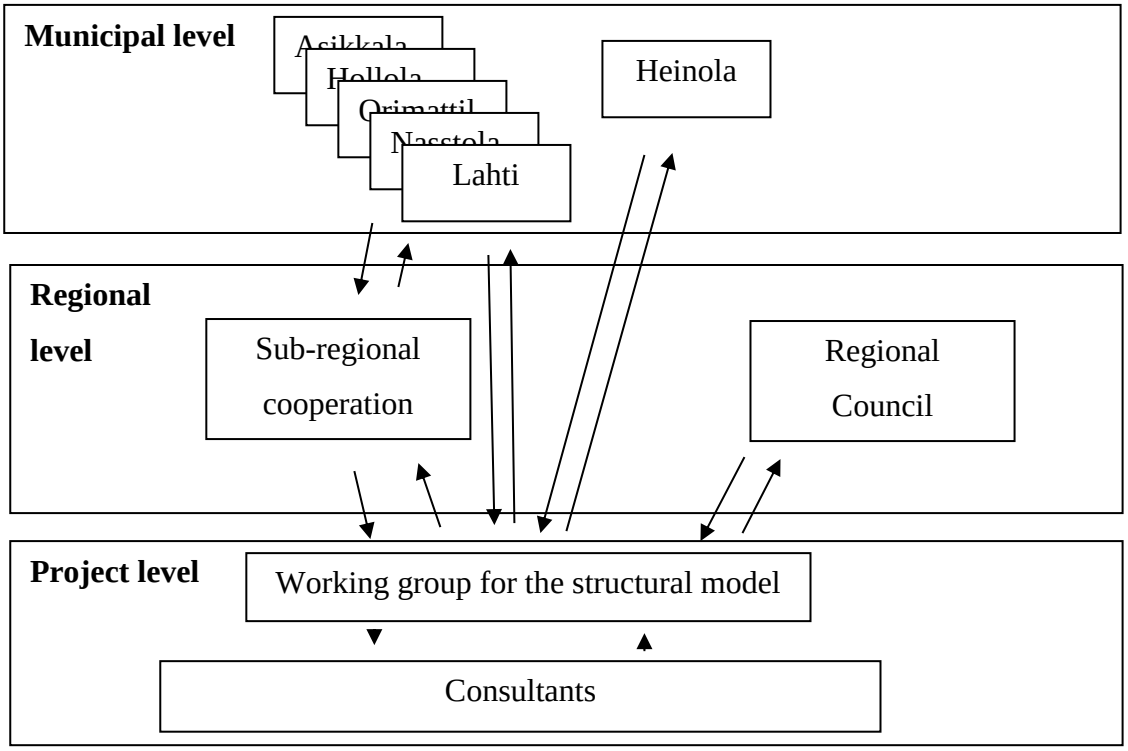


Figure 21: organisation of the work in the Lahti Urban Region structural model.

Content of spatial planning

The first structural model covering three municipalities (Lahti, Nastola, and Hollola) was made in 1968. The central theme was to test different urban structural alternatives. At that time, the population projection for the region in year 2000 was 205 000 inhabitants. Further testing and development was done during the 1970s. In 1979, the next structural model followed the previous one, but the population projection for year 2000 was reduced to 165 000. In 1990-93 the focus of the structural model was changed to creating common principles for development, especially concerning sustainable development. Two more municipalities (Asikkala, Orimattila) joined the work.

The main results of the 1993 structural model work were a joint vision of a feasible sustainable structure for the urban region, as well as a nearly total agreement on issues concerning the regional plan. The population projection for year 2030 was set at 175 000.

The latest structural model covers yet a larger urban region, since the town of Heinola has been included. The main issues in the current model are a renewed vision of the land use structure of the functional urban region, with a view to strengthening the role of the growth corridor from Helsinki via Lahti to Heinola.

There were several reasons to start new work on the structural model, even if the latest regional plan was only a few years old and the new one was being prepared. The situation in the Lahti urban region had developed in the previous years. The latest regional plan was from the year 1999, but the

regional situation had started to change rapidly. The motorway from Helsinki had been completed in the mid-90s, and a new railway line along the same axis was being realised as well. Regionally, growth had started to put increasing pressure on land use, and it was seen that there was a danger of development being shifted to an unsustainable path. The decision about the new railway line had been taken after the previous planning round, so there was also need to ensure that the line could be fully utilised in terms of providing the necessary allocations for related land use.

The model is intended to address the question of densification of the existing urban structures, and new development should be confined to locations where the preconditions for relying on current services or feasibly creating new ones exist.

The setting of the objectives for the structural model was carried out on a seminar in which a large group of representatives from municipal, regional and state administrations participated. Two main points of departure were developed:

- The main principles for developing land use in the sub-region
- The goals of planning according to the principles of sustainable development

The main principles for developing land use in the sub-region include three main sub-sections: anticipation of regional growth, aiming at a unified and functional urban structure, and emphasising cooperation.

Anticipating growth denotes mainly that there must be developed a clear vision of how and where new developments should take place, as well as reflections on the demands of projected population growth via producing ideas of attractive and economically viable structures of housing, workplaces, and services.

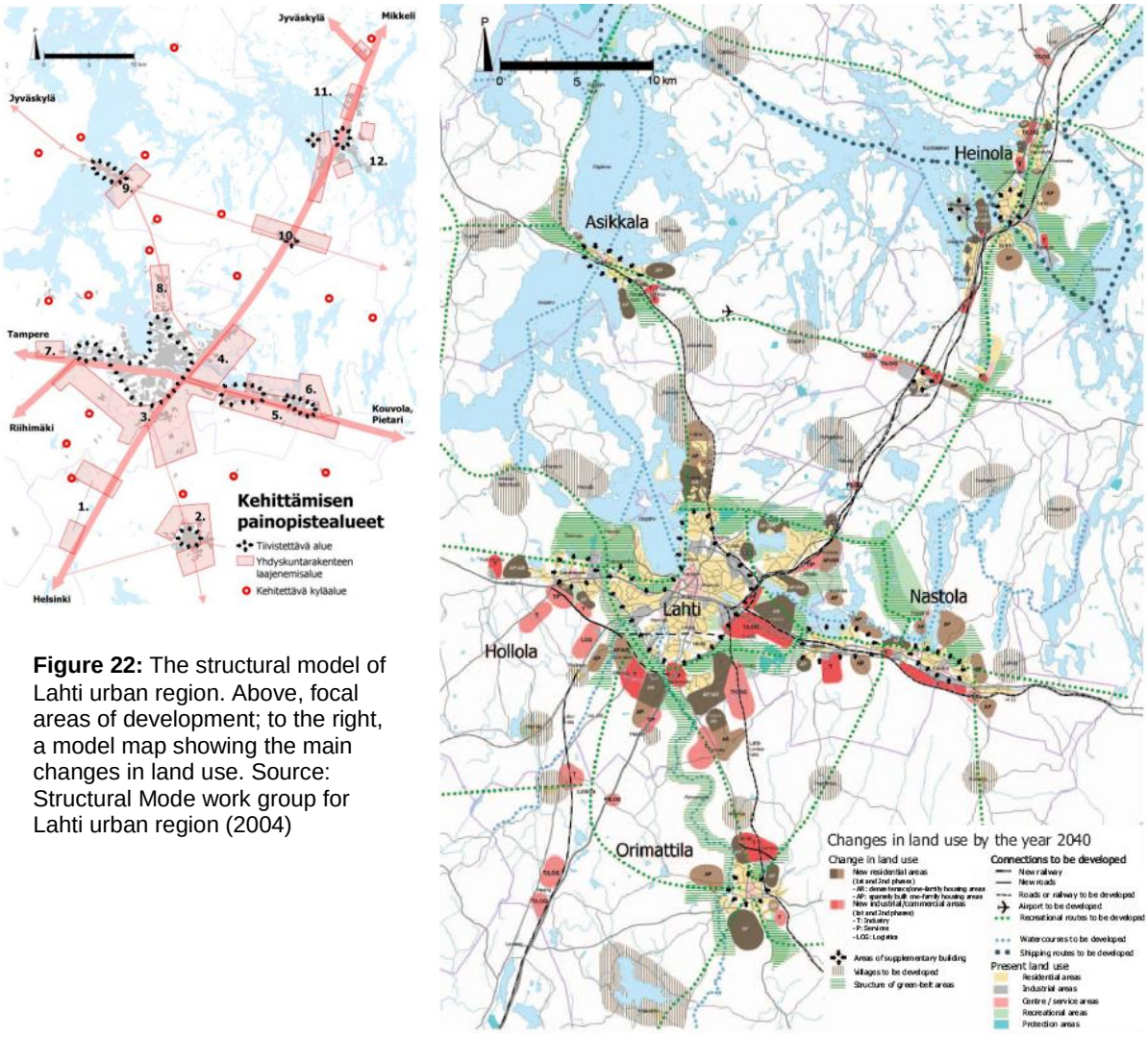


Figure 22: The structural model of Lahti urban region. Above, focal areas of development; to the right, a model map showing the main changes in land use. Source: Structural Mode work group for Lahti urban region (2004)

Aiming at a unified and functional structure means, most importantly, assessing the urban structures via three-fold criteria:

- Areas based on pedestrian and other light traffic
- Areas relying on public transportation
- Areas dependent on the use of private automobiles

The emphasis on cooperation is based on a commitment from the actors to work for the aims and goals of the structural model, working without paying attention to municipal borders, creating a clear division of labour between the municipalities, as well as finding land use solutions that enable further sub-regional cooperation.

An important point of view is that of competence structures. Centres of competence (educational institutions, high-tech clusters, and other concentrations of competences) have been mapped, their structural relations and new potential development areas identified.

Other regional visions

The regional plan of the Päijät-Häme regional council, the preparation of which started in 2002, has been approved regionally, and is currently under approval in the Ministry of the Environment. The solutions in the plan are meant to cater for the development of the whole region, even though the emphasis is on the land use of the urban and the most rural areas.

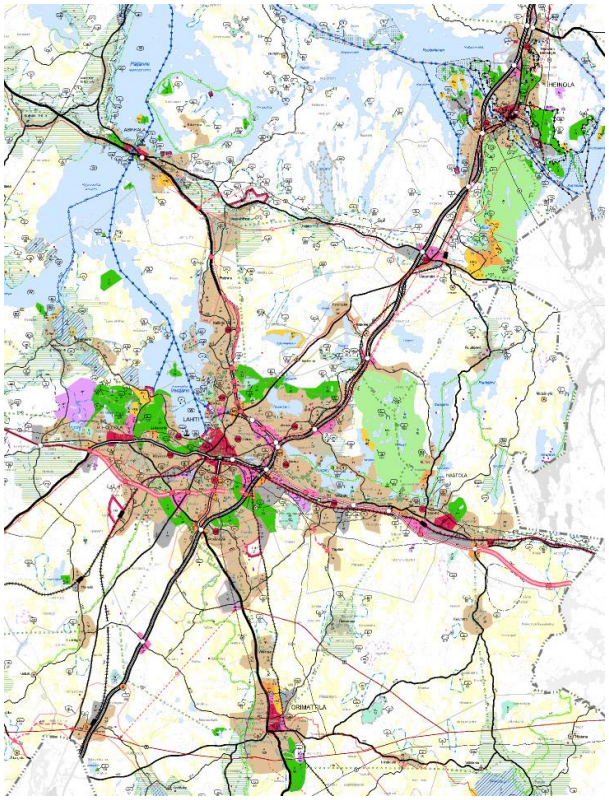


Figure 23: The Regional Plan proposal (2006) of the Päijät-Häme regional council, an excerpt for the area similar to the Lahti urban region structural model.Source:www.paijat-hame.fi/maka/fmaka.html

In the regional plan, the land use development of the urban areas of Lahti and Heinola is handled in conjunction with the ideas of the structural model. The work processes in the two plans have been parallel, there has been tight cooperation between the planners, and mutual resources have been utilised e.g. in provision of background analysis and data. In the beginning of the regional plan process, the work on the structural model was to be included as a part of the plan process, but as the regional planning process was taken forward with a faster-than-planned speed, the direct connection was broken. However, the structural model is seen as a part of the regional plan preparation.

In the Lahti urban region and the Päijät-Häme Region, the work on sustainability has been carried out in projects throughout the last decade. The strategy of the regional council places sustainability as one of the most important general principles according to which development is to be framed, and the actual content of the strategy gives environmental issues top priority in the desired development. The strategy states that the region aims at “being the most successful combination of responsible care and utilisation of the environment in Europe”. This is backed up in the strategy by prioritising competencies in environmental technologies in the development of the knowledge base of the region.

In the realm of the urban region, sustainability work started in year 2000 with a regional local agenda 21–project. The urban region programme for sustainable development defines sustainable development as economically possible (eco-efficient commodities and services), socially equal (welfare for all), and environmentally respectful (sustainable use of nature). The three pillars of sustainable development are operationalised mainly through practical principles: ecological sustainability is seen to start from commitment to sustainability, changes in production and consumption, preservation and added use of renewable energy; social sustainability, respectively, from responsibility of firms, provision of jobs, basic services and education, opportunities to participate, as well as generally improve equity; economic sustainability means connecting the goals of commerce, development and environment in a positive way, strengthening the ethical activity of business life, and improve possibilities for locally rooted businesses in "cities and villages".

In the sub-regional cooperation work on land use planning, sustainability has been taken as directing the planning work on a wide variety of points of departure. The sustainability objectives have been listed in the planning document, and they provide thematic content focus to the plan, along with the development-oriented objectives (cf. below). The objectives have been approved by the sub-regional council as well as the municipalities.

Planning objectives according to the dimensions of sustainable development in the Lahti Urban Region

Ecological objectives	• natural values as a resource and factor of attractiveness • recognition and protection of unified and ecologically valuable areas • creation of a dense settlement structure in a way that saves natural areas, lessens the need to travel, and lessens automobile dependency • adapting the use and development of shorelines into environmental and milieu factors
Economic objectives	• utilisation of the existing settlement structure • unification of centres by additional building sites within • developing urban structures based on public transportation • situating workplaces in optimal locations, forgetting municipal borders • locating shopping centres so that centres are not deprived
Social objectives	• sufficient supply of a variety of housing areas to cater for different needs and situations • securing basic services on all densely built areas • reserving recreational areas and providing connections between them
Cultural objectives	• developing the urban region as providing experiences and containing various local strengths • taking historically valuable sites into account • preserving regionally typical scenery and built heritage • internationalisation of the urban region in its key

competencies

Promoting and hindering regional cooperation

One of the most important outcomes of the work on spatial planning has been the building of trust on two levels:

- Political trust via contracts that set the framework for land use planning actions
- Administrative trust through inter-personal relationships

The organisation of spatial planning for the sub-region is based on the empowerment of the sub-regional council to handle sub-regional land use issues. The project organisation, however, is based on the representation of the municipalities and the regional council in the working group that directed the practical project work carried out by the consultants.

The approval procedures were therefore quite variable. Through the sub-regional council, the five participating municipalities took part indirectly (sub-regional decision-making approvals) as well as directly (through individual municipal commenting to the sub-region). The city of Heinola approved the plan separately. The regional council approved the plan unofficially, accepting it as part of the regional plan background materials.

As a direct consequence of the cooperation for creating the structural model, the planning officials have become accustomed to dealing with regional issues between themselves. After the project, the group has met regularly and communicated on sub-regional land use issues, mostly concerning adaptation of general plans in the municipal boundary areas.

In addition, the involvement of the regional council in the work with the structural model has also meant that it has been easy to see the connections between municipal and regional planning issues. This has led the planners to commit themselves to the project. It has also meant that the will of the municipalities is well communicated to the regional level of planning through the structural model and the cooperation practises.

The sub-regional cooperation on spatial planning has, however, not been without setbacks. First and foremost, the cooperation had ambitions to develop a point of view concerning the location policy of the large shopping concentrations, but the analysis that was commissioned proved disappointing, which in turn caused a drop in the quality of the discussions on the subject. However, the regional council took on the task and produced, as a part of the regional plan work, a thorough analysis of development and prospects of retail of daily consumables and other products. Secondly, not all municipalities have been totally like-minded about the areas of physical development. This has led to some minor compromises in the finished structural model, if viewed from the perspective of the main principles set for the work,

Results of the cooperation

In relation to the sub-regional cooperation, the importance of the structural model reaches beyond its influence in land use planning. The model supports, as a tool for defining the "cooperation functionality" (i.e. the regional delimitation within which the cooperation takes place most

efficiently, in a functionally, politically and cooperatively viable territorial context), further integration of activities.

According to the local perspective, regarding business development the municipal boundaries "have been left behind a long time ago". At present, the sub-regional cooperation includes e.g. a mutual building and maintenance of municipal streets, other public areas as well as green spaces, together with water and sewage provision. Environmental protection and monitoring has been not only unified, but a mutual organisation has been set up, in which civil servants from the municipal environmental services were assembled in order to enable a better functioning of the environmental affairs that are becoming more demanding over time.

The next round of the structural model work is expected to focus more on the structures of competence. It will imply both working on the creation of the necessary connections and structural preconditions that enable development of new competence structures and networking, as well as looking at the structural development from the point of view of building competencies. Whereas the first approach emphasises network connections, accessibility and communications, the second looks at the whole structure, including municipal services, housing areas, recreation facilities, and holiday dwellings, as components that may support development of new competencies in the urban region.

Tools applied to the regional cooperation

- Inter-municipal contract giving decision-making power in sub-regional planning to the sub-regional council
- Establishment of a political and administrative organisation
- Enduring planner work group for the structural model and other cooperation
- A coherent public transportation plan and strategic land use plan for future development
- Open-ended content in tendering for consultants, demand for personal commitment of the consultants

9. Cross-case analysis

There are several new tendencies in the Nordic countries in the relationship between the state, the regional level, and the local municipalities. One trend is that the lower levels get more tasks and competences in order to reflect local variations and needs in the decision making. This trend sustains a fragmented and autonomous political system – the governance system. This calls for more voluntary bottom-up cooperation initiated by local actors and caused by internal "needs" within an area.

On the other hand there is a trend of "reinventing" government, illustrated by two elements. One element is the tendency to regulate by law in specific areas of great political importance (a traditional form of regulation). The other element is a new form of governance as an indirect form of governing relatively autonomous political unities without undermining the autonomy and the commitment. This can be exercised at all political levels and is an example of reinstating hierarchy in a new form. Reinventing government calls for more top-down approaches but in very different forms based on either authority and law or dialogues and voluntary action.

The regional level is - in all Nordic countries but to slightly different degrees - "squeezed" between the municipal and the state level. However, since the regionalising pressure concerning economic and social realities has been manifested in the creation and the strengthening of functional (urban) regions, the trends of local influence and renewed state presence come together in cooperations that are motivated by perceived mutual interest within a "functional region", not by the administrative task setting within an "administrative region".

Spatial planning on the level of the urban region is voluntary in all Nordic countries. Examples of successful activities are quite varied, but common to all is the will of the urban region actors to take initiative. In addition, the cases reflect how the national ordinances and legal frameworks do influence how the regions tackle their "common destiny". The enabling and stimulating factors of national programmes, planning acts, and regional planning pave way for urban region cooperation, and the focus of such incentives directs the local frame of thinking. Resources are always scarce for the combination of fixed and foreseen tasks – hence also the inclination to eventually bind the actions to existing legal and financially viable frameworks.

The studied cooperation activities stem from a variety of needs concerning regional development issues. In many cases, the motive for planning cooperation corresponding to the functionalities rather than the regional boundaries has come from the need or the will to breach with the content or the goals of regional plans. Most often the administrative region does not correspond with the solution that is being sought, causing not an opposition to the regional planning, but rather a supplementary level or an additional network to complement more overall tasks assigned to regional planning. On the other hand, in most cases the regional spatial planning has become more inclusive of regional development issues, also bringing the questions of functionalities into the regional planning processes.

The cooperation activities take several forms. A simple classification recognises two dimensions of the activities: first, the framing of the cooperation rationale points mainly to how the activities are positioned in reference to the municipal processes; secondly, the broadness of the cooperation activities addresses how focused or visionary, as well as how concrete the activities are.

- Unification refers to such cooperation activities that attempt to create, in unison, new singular, binding and administratively stable plans or processes for the region. This type of cooperation aims at a vision and operationalisation of common spatial themes, with an idea of binding spatial planning to regional development planning.

- Harmonisation means cooperation where the aim is to envision, initiate, carry out, and steer cooperation issues of spatial planning within the urban region, but leaving the final responsibility of operationalisation to the partner municipalities within their own spatial planning practises.

- Either a narrow spectrum of themes or a spatially limited yet regional physical area defines the thematically focused cooperation. This type of cooperation often includes only some sectors of the municipal administration. These types of cooperation may go deep into the specific questions concerning the focal theme(s), but are at the same time prone to not integrating the issues into the urban region's overall development policies.

- Strategically oriented cooperation is often visionary, starting from broad themes and subsequently facing the challenge of clarifying and operationalising the themes into action. It is often based on a will to tie the municipalities to the common regional development policy work, with the idea that spatial planning should contribute to the overall development, be more attached to the economic development policies, and that regional (land use oriented) solutions should become more binding for the municipalities.

The first analysis section deals with the question of how the concept of "Functional Urban Region" (FUR) is evident in the case studies, as differentiated from the statistical/analytical concept of FUA. The second section then highlights some content themes. Overall, for the purposes of this study, it has not been central to study plans or spatial development through their content. We perceive this to be largely beyond the scope of this project. Specific contents are included where they define or show the innovative aspects of planning cooperation. In some cases, there are innovative solutions concerning actual tools for planning, but in planning cooperation, the most important "tools" deal with the processes of governance - the ways in which the cooperation is made possible, operational, and "successful". This is the subject matter of the third section of the analysis. In this respect we shall concentrate on which methods are employed, how the activities are carried out, who are the central actors, and by which means the cooperation itself is able to succeed.

The underlying rationale for the selection of "content" originates on one hand in the case study composition and on the other in the results of the earlier studies. In comparison with the original themes, table 24 shows how the fields of regional balance and transportation, and land use have a similar content in the cases as in the more general Nordic context (Bjarnadóttir and Hansen 2003). This study finds its specific foci in the two "ends" of the scope of spatial planning. When the cases were being selected, the central themes that were explored dealt with FUR scope of cooperation and the spatiality of the planning cooperation. As the selection was made qualitatively in a way that was meant to catch a wide variety of different approaches along these "axes", the content of the plans was expected to vary according to the theoretical delineation "strategic to regulative". The content of the cooperation was recognized, according to the preconception, as consisting of the cooperation activity as "content" in itself, and the actual plan content as the outcome or "application" of the spatial planning cooperation. The first "content" is the main issue approached in this study, and it will be dealt with in the section on governance.

Table 24: Central themes for sustainable spatial planning in the case study regions. The italicised themes correspond with the governance aspects of this study. The other themes correspond with those of the 2003 study by Bjarnadóttir and Hansen that have appeared in the cases in some form.

Planning process	**Regional balance and transportation**	**Land Use**	**Tools and methods**
• *Building the idea of functional urban region* • *Creating regional (spatial) policy processes* • *Creation of FUR planning mechanisms* • *Adoption of new partners into the planning process* • Sectoral integration for increased comprehensive-ness	• Polycentric settlement structures • Coordination with economic tools • Better interaction of different transportation modes • Regional enlargement as specialisation and division of labour between localities to build functional regions • Improved public transportation • Cooperation between urban and rural	• Dense settlements • Re-use and complementation of existing settlement structures • Parallel protection and improvement of environments • Green networks and their accessibility • Limiting development of large shopping facilities outside the settlement structures	• National, regional and municipal strategies and operational programmes • Legislation • SEA, EIA • *Regional development networks, organisations* • *Informal networking* • *Flexible FUR cooperation strategies* • *Governance and meta-governance techniques*

Whereas the themes that correspond to the governance approach of this study are covered in the third section of analysis, the content-oriented themes have not been taken into the analysis as such. Rather, the central themes in this respect have been "selected" through looking at the themes from the point of view of concepts of integrated approach to sustainable urban (region) development.

Seminal work in such an integrated approach has been carried out by Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy over the two last decades (cf. e.g. Newman and Kenworthy 1989, 1999). While their approach has often been described as transportation-oriented, their argument for the interrelations between urban structures, transportation, planning, decision making, and sustainability provides a conceptual model for understanding the inter-linkages. Kenworthy (2006) sees the dimensions of sustainable development of the urban region (the city region) in relation to the planning processes and decision-making procedures. Planning for overarching sustainability must, in his view, be based on a visionary "debate and decide" model of communicative planning, as opposed to the "predict and provide" model of modernistic planning. Another starting point is in decision making within an integrated sustainability framework covering four aspects of sustainability: social, economic, environmental and cultural.

- The economic performance and employment creation should be maximised through "innovation, creativity, uniqueness of the local environment, culture and history, as well as high environmental and social quality of the city's public environments". Extensive use of

environmental technologies in energy and water management should lead to closed loop systems.

- The urban structure should be compact, with a mixed-use urban form, efficient land use, and simultaneous protection of the natural environment, biodiversity, and food-producing areas. The natural environment should be present in the city's spaces and "embrace" the city. A good deal of the food-production for the city should take place in the vicinity of the city itself.

- The transportation systems should be favouring transit, walking, and cycling infrastructure over car-oriented infrastructure, with a special emphasis on rail transit. Preconditions for minimising car use should be provided. Centres within the city should have human scale and design, be oriented to walking, cycling, and transit, and provide for a high proportion of employment and residential growth.

- The city should also have an overall high-quality public realm that includes the entire transit system and all the environments associated with it. Furthermore, the public environments should be "highly legible, permeable, robust, varied, rich, visually appropriate", and tailored for human needs.

The applications in the cases translated to four of the most interesting aspects of "content": (1) how economic development issues have been interpreted in terms of spatial planning, (2) how the spatial structure of the region has been approached in a number of cases, (3) what is the state-of-art of application of the principles of integrated transportation and land use planning in those cases that have the most pronounced land use planning, and (4) how the notion of quality has been incorporated in the planning agenda.

The functional urban region as a concept and a platform for spatial planning

The chosen cases were meant to highlight different aspects of spatial planning within the (broad) context of a functional urban region, and also point to how the concept of FUR is relevant in different situations and concerning different regional development needs.

In analysing the concept of the functional urban region, we follow the idea of regional identity and study how the different aspects and "depths" of cooperation work for building the region and its identity. The analysis does not pay attention to the territorially most specific notion of FUA that was presented in the theoretical discussion. The cases indicated that the basis for delimiting the cooperation had only limited connection to the analytical FUA concept, even if several cooperation activities are corresponding to the territorial extent of the FUA, and even if the local actors themselves thought that the functionalities did indeed matter in the composition of cooperating municipalities. The connection to the FUA territory was, however, found to be much more complex than just "choosing" the FUA area. In fact, the network composition proved to be highly political, and the evolution of cooperation over time proved that while existing administrative borders affect the cooperation area, the FUA concept only approximated the most feasible cooperation area for planning mutual functionalities.

In the following sections, we explore in more detail the idea of FUR as a practical and political concept.

Functional urban region and renewed planning ideas

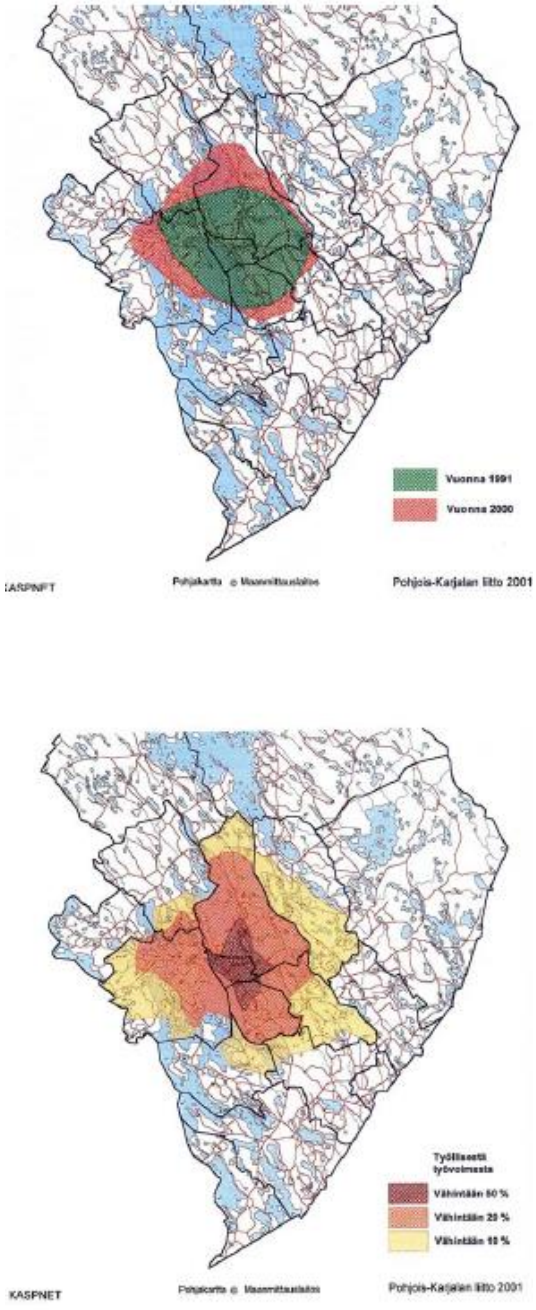


Figure 24: Analysis of the functional region in the Joensuu area: the illustration shows the expansion of the zones of daily influence of the centre of the city (above) and the travel-to-work area (below). Source: background material for General Plan of Joensuu Region 2020

Historically, the medium sized urban regions have become structurally more polarised, with development taking place - as a rough rule - in the main urban nodes of the core areas. Simultaneously, the hinterlands of the central urban centres in the FUAs have expanded due to improved access to the centre, resulting in longer commutes and subsequently, enlargement of the local labour market areas. Furthermore, the urban centres have, in most of the cases, seen a suburbanisation development that has caused expansion of the continuously built-up area into the surrounding municipalities.

These trends have shaped the urban regions over the last decades in such a way that local administrations have seen the need and the benefits of cooperation rise gradually. This has led to gradual increases in cooperation between the municipalities. This cooperation has developed in steps, through specific activities that have paved way for new ones. The cooperation has not always taken place in circumstances that the local actors control – on the contrary, while many cooperation activities rise from common development needs and perceived mutual problems in the urban region, the settings in which these issues arise are often characterised by outside pressures of several kinds.

The Danish territory differs from the rest of the Nordic countries by being a dense, mainly polycentric space where the FUAs are “squeezed” against each other by means of overlapping commuting patterns, high population densities, and short distances between the urban centres. In the sparsely populated areas the “natural” FUA boundaries are distinctly limiting the everyday sphere of activities, but in Denmark as a whole it is much easier to cross these lines. Therefore, the concept of FUR becomes even more appropriate for explaining the composition of the cooperation activities.

The restructuring of the Danish municipal and regional level placed emphasis on municipal service provision, but its relation to the questions of everyday functionalities is unclear, but also more irrelevant. Hence, the idea of FUR as a cooperation territory finds an easy correspondence with the apparent lack of need to pursue FUA focused policies. In addition, due to the above mentioned territorial features, the municipal reform may well be in line with the FUAs in many places, but the nature of the reform itself is

more inclined to the FUR idea. The municipalities themselves negotiated the composition of the new municipalities. Albeit being under threat of governmental intervention, the municipalities had some say in choosing their cooperation partners for the future.

Thus, the cases show that the conceptual definition of the functional urban region as the reflection of joint activities of the local (administrative) actors, and as the realisation of application of a range of policies from all levels of policy making, is well grounded.

FUR as a reflection of regional consciousness

As a reflection of daily activities within the urban region, the FUR concept gains ground from a wide range of issues that have been dealt with in the cases. As the first "reflection" of the local reality, this point of view is closest to the idea of a functional urban area, FUA. The FUR cases show not only approximation to the FUA, but the cooperation actors are well aware about the nature of "true" functionalities in the urban region. Therefore, it has been natural and convenient to build cooperation activities within an area that is perceived to be the common ground for the most relevant functionalities, irrespective of the statistical FUA area delimitation. This is also the most common reason for deviation from the statistical functional area, since the cooperation has in some instances "required" a slightly different approach to the issue of functionalities. For example, in the case of the Lahti urban region, the combination of improved accessibility on the national scale on one hand, as well as development of internal regional dynamics and expectations on the other, has contributed to expansion of the cooperation region.

Secondly, as a reflection of the joint activities within the urban region, the FUR concept deals with the historic development of cooperation. Many cases show that pre-existing cooperation activities, the reasons for cooperation, or the outside impetus showing new possibilities for cooperation, have the power to shape the perceived functionalities – or rather, to create a meaningful way of looking at coherence between the actors. Various projects that have had the same combination of actors from the region is often a good way to introduce cooperation in the first place. For example, the land use planning cooperation in the Joensuu urban region has an important starting point in a minor joint land use planning venture nearly a decade earlier. This project showed not only the importance of inter-municipal cooperation in land use planning of regionally important areas as such, but laid ground for increased trust and understanding between the actors; showed that such cooperation can be possible and produce mutually agreeable results; and pointed to the need for inter-municipal decision making in land use planning as well.

In the cases, the primary urban region issues to be undertaken jointly have dealt with business support and integration of municipal services. Issues of regional marketing, (public) transportation, and land use are increasingly being put on the agenda at present. To complement these rather artificial categories, a multitude of projects have appeared as a direct consequence of parallel regionalisation of the national and international (especially EU) policies and internationalisation of regional competition, cooperation, as well as issues of competencies and competitiveness. For example, in several of the cases, the EUs European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) projects have played a crucial role in advancing the cooperation. These projects have resulted in an input of resources, a need for commitment for the local actors, as well as regional, interregional, and international interplay between the actors, and influx of new insights from actors external to the urban region. The Kristiansand region, for example, has gained resources for the work on transportation and land use planning through their involvement in the URBAL project; the North Jutland cooperation within the RUBIN project has resulted in new connections between the pivotal

actors; the Turku urban region deepened the cooperation between the core actors and provided concrete continuation of the joint planning cooperation through the 5E5 project; and the Umeå region utilises several projects, hosted by the cooperating municipalities, in defining the future orientations of the regional cooperation and regional development alike.

The third reflection - that of common interests - is an issue of positive impetus for cooperation. While at its origin akin to the others, this reflection deals dominantly with the intended regionalisation of issues within the FUR-to-come, so to speak. This aspect of FUR definition means the active building of activities on the pre-existing "buds" of common interest. The underlying rationale is creating a more coherent region. This can be approached from two directions. First, the common interests may point to regional efficiency, "reason" in the sense that the region shares a need for certain activities to be handled in unison, jointly or via a mutual organisation. For example the Triangle Area Cooperation has taken a strategic starting point in developing a common spatial policy, in the form of a strategic land use plan, for a polycentric region where the actors share a vision of a need to be a more coherent FUR in the future. Also the case of Gothenburg urban region exemplifies how common interests are built through the realisation of the development trends that are perceived to have a more profound effect on the region in the future. On the other hand, the realisation of common interests, a common destiny, can be a more strategic issue internal to the region. In the Holbæk urban region case, the aim of the cooperation has initially been explicitly to improve the sense of belonging together, as seen to be challenged from regional as well as metropolitan contexts. The idea has been to first create the functional urban region in the minds of the decision makers through highlighting the advantages of cooperation as a whole, and then proceeding with the cooperation in the issues and themes that need regional attention.

The fourth reflection deals with the common "foreign policy" of the actors within the urban region. In light of the increased competition between regions in national and international contexts, let alone the emerging European level regionalities, a single municipality is more often considered to be a too isolated, too small, and too un-cooperative actor for successfully coping in the race. On the other hand, there is also a growing gain in cooperating as a FUR, through national incentives and also through the competition for growth on the European and global scales.

A common foreign policy can be a question of becoming more attractive, as in the case of the Umeå region where the regional marketing cooperation has utilised the future rail connection, the university as a growth factor, and e.g. the joint library system created in the regional cooperation context, as signs of coherence and subsequently of regional attractiveness. Or it can be of a more structural nature, as exemplified by the Lahti case where e.g. the idea of spatial structures of logistics and competence building deal with creating a coherent and efficient structure that utilises the regional capacities in an optimal way. Similar examples are the common ABC location policy of the Triangle Area and the Oulu urban region quality corridor – where development in certain regional hot-spots are seen as creating regional coherence and division of labour.

A yet further aspect of common foreign policy is well visible in the strategic spatial planning cooperation activities in several cases, namely the national and international positioning of the region. Umeå region deals with the E12 international development zone and has participated in the Bothnian Arc cooperation, with an idea of becoming more important and recognised in the international sphere of activities. The same can be said about the Turku urban region with its emphasis on developing the idea of a trans-national E18 axis.

FUR as a realisation of policies

As a realisation of policies created at different levels, the analysis of the FUR concept is complementary to the above insights. Also, this approach shows the relation of FUR to the levels of administration and territorial governance more clearly than the earlier aspects. In the light of the policy setting levels, the FUR is surprisingly evenly attached to application of spatial development policies originating at all major levels.

The EU level policies have, in general, been judged as lacking explicit territorial focus, let alone focus on the level of the FUR. The main policies that deal with the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, while not explicit in territoriality, do imply need for strong territorial outlook in regards to implementation of the strategies. The implementation, or application, of these strategies is more and more seen to be determined by economic forces that are increasingly localised and territorially specific. Also, many EU policies have strong territorial consequences, and some policies do deal with territorial issues, view the regional sphere through city regions, and address the relationships between the urban and the rural (e.g. LEADER, URBAN, Cohesion Policy, and Transport and Energy Networks Guidance). The city has been an integral policy focus in EU for a number of years, but the territoriality of other policies and strategies has lagged behind.

The European level of spatial development policy is best represented by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). For implementing the ESDP, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is the one most directly linked with territorial questions, covering both competitiveness and sustainability issues. ERDF resources are mainly used for co-financing investment leading to the creation or maintenance of jobs, infrastructure, and local development initiatives and business activities of small and medium-sized enterprises Especially the Interreg community initiative is the focal instrument concerning the aims of the ESDP. While the influence of the ESDP for any specific Interreg project is indirect, the influence on the measures defining the framework of Interreg is more direct. The project approval procedure with its emphasis on EU policy goal adherence, and hence adherence to the ESDP focus as well, produces a more direct application in the project level as well. The most direct implications to ESDP were found in the Umeå region, where the ESDP goals were explicitly cited in several of the studied planning documents, and the importance of the Interreg projects was brought forward as a matter of territorial development. Likewise, in the Kristiansand, Jæren (Rogaland) and Lahti regions, the incorporation of Interreg projects in the spatial planning process was an essential part of the development work.

Lately, the EU has been increasingly interested in an explicit territorial agenda. While it is still in the making, the agenda will include a focus on the urban region level. The agenda will set "innovative and cooperative urban development" as the first priority. While two of the priorities (3 & 4) take the European level as their focus (through emphasis on Trans-European issues), three may be seen as concentrating on the functional urban region level (albeit with varying scales from metropolitan core areas to rural hinterlands and their small towns). The most directly FUR oriented is the second priority on the new forms of partnership and territorial governance between rural and urban areas. It states explicitly that the idea of a competitive and sustainable Europe of regions includes (in addition to the large urban areas) the small and medium-sized cities, together with their rural areas as equal partners, identifying and developing their common potentials and development strategies to lay the foundations for private investments. In addition, the ecological and cultural resources are seen as a new approach to development in territorial terms (priority 5).

Regional policies have different foci in the Nordic countries, when it comes to supporting the FUR level or directing activities to the FUR level. In general terms, it can be said that the cases show how the regional policies are reflecting the urban region level, although as much through implicit as explicit findings.

The Finnish regional policies at large offer most support to the FUR level activities. The government programmes and projects (Regional Centre Programme, Centre of Expertise Programme, SEUTU sub-region project, PARAS municipal and service structure project) have adopted the FUA, in slightly varying degrees, as the starting point for developing the urban areas, their competences and cooperation. The underlying rationale seems to be to create "sticks and carrots" in the form of offering some benefits for FUR cooperation, and simultaneously also demanding cooperation at FUR level, especially in the large urban regions.

All Finnish cases show some relevance to these policy programmes and projects. The most obvious connection is through the Oulu and Lahti cases' inclusion in the sub-regional project, with cooperation gaining impetus from the formalised institutional setting. It seems that this has led to the relatively easy inclusion of spatial and physical planning in the cooperation activities. All Finnish case study areas are also part of the Regional Centre Programme, and this largely influences the cooperation activities within the urban region as a whole. However, the spatial implications of this programme, while certainly existing and in the case of Turku even explicated, fall short in comparison to the other, planning-law oriented physical planning activities initiated in the cases. As for the municipal and service structure project, the effects will be tangible, since the municipalities must cooperate with a given cooperation partnership and on a given timetable, but at this point it remains to be seen how each urban region will realise the demands, since there is some room for manoeuvre. In the Joensuu case, the most important rationale for FUR physical planning coincides with the urban region planning needs as such.

The relative lack of a FUR level policy focus in Norway is visible in the Kristiansand case, where the cooperation has initially been in opposition to the regional planning. However, the local actors did see FUR cooperation as a possibility to gain importance in a national setting and enable certain land use decisions, by giving the issues a wider importance than the municipal level would imply. Furthermore, the governmental programme and policies for the largest urban areas are advancing cooperation within the case urban regions, since all case study regions are included in the group. This policy focus does encourage cooperation in spatial planning (integrated land use and transportation planning) within the FURs, and places emphasis on cooperation between the urban regions and the county level. This is, in fact, the description of the case of Rogaland/Jæren. In addition, the city of Kristiansand was one of the five cities in the national "Miljøbyprogrammet" in the years 1993-2000.

As in Denmark, in Sweden, the policy support for FUR planning seems at best indirect. While the central government does not explicitly talk about FUR level planning as such, the recent shift in emphasis towards labour market areas in analytical terms, as well as the growing political focus on the issue of "regional enlargement" that eventually entails the recognition of the FUA as the basis for meaningful economic cooperation. As far as spatial planning within the FUR context is concerned, the case of Gothenburg shows how the national policy that asserts physical planning solely as the responsibility of the individual municipalities (albeit with possibilities for inter-municipal planning, should the partners be willing to impose the legislative framework on the FUR cooperation), together with the governance approach that emphasises strategic spatial content and

regional dialogue over regulation and implementation of spatial plans, may produce FUR cooperation that works towards the same functional issues than the directly FUR-oriented approach. On the other hand, the Umeå case portrays the combination of different levels of policy responses: the national issue of the rail connection has been set high on the agenda in economic development terms, but the response in spatial terms has been relatively unnoticeable on the FUR level. However, the projections as well as the vision of the future show that such infrastructure development must be thought of as providing possibilities in a long-term perspective, and that the factual physical implications in this particular case will not call for any immediate structural re-visioning within the FUR. Rather, it is seen as a municipal affair to begin with – the actual physical planning required has been framed already, and the practical work will be carried out as needed.

Sustainability in FUR development

Issues of sustainability are approached in all cases, but with very different practical meanings and solutions. These reflect in part national settings and planning legislation - insofar as they steer or influence the contents of the planning documents and planning practises in general – as well as local history of sustainability thinking, and in part regionally chosen development principles.

Sustainability can be seen as an attempt to study the interrelations and organisation of nature, society, and economy. One of the central themes is the appearance of long-term perspectives. From another point of view, sustainability represents a contemporary interpretation of manifesting the "common good" or common responsibility. As a political term, sustainability is defined through morals, values, and practical implications. In practise, it is often seen as an attempt to connect the economic idea of development and the carrying capacity of the environment in a way that enables inter-generation equity.

The relation between sustainability and competitiveness becomes most urgent in the urban setting. Traditionally, the city has been noted to be the most "unsustainable" environment, e.g. when considering its "ecological footprint" or social situation. However, the city also provides most means for promoting the three pillars of sustainability in action.

Camagni and Capello et al. (2001) have approached the question of urban sustainability in relation to the three pillars model. They propose a model in which the three main pillars, stemming from the physical, social, and economical environments, are seen as the basic structure in which positive and negative effects are created through positive cross-externalities (such as the environmental quality increasing the attractiveness of a location to investors, or economic development allows for environmental protection and welfare provision) and decreasing returns or bottlenecks (such as rising costs, or congestion, lack of qualified labour, conflicts). More interesting - and dynamic - is, however, their view of the relations between the main components of the three pillars: between pure ecology and pure profitability there is a field of "*long-term allocative efficiency*"; between pure profitability and pure equity a field of *"distributive efficiency*"; and between pure equity and pure ecology a field of "*intra- and intergenerational environmental equity*" (Camagni and Capello et al. 2001).

Long-term allocative efficiency means basically "taking care of the possible long-term impacts of decreasing environmental quality on the efficiency and attractiveness of the city". This could be achieved through development of business practices that take care of environmental respect, taking account of the full environmental costs of economic activities within those activities, and adoption of long-term perspectives in relation to resource allocation and profitability.

Distributive efficiency means "taking care of the long-term viability of equitable social systems". In this respect, sustainability requires redistributive mechanisms as well as accessibility to all societal functions that take care of the subsistence and regeneration of the creative, informational, knowledge-oriented, and professional foundations of a place.

Environmental equity, in turn, means "taking care of the negative distributional effects of environmental policies assessed in mainly economic terms". This is a question of both how environmental assets could be secured, and how socially and culturally fair access to environmental assets could be ensured.

In conclusion, long-term allocative efficiency should work in the direction of a "good market" in which environmental considerations would be present equally with considerations of working conditions and wage levels. When distributive efficiency and environmental equity are functioning in unison, and both their principles are followed, then it would be possible to attain a "good city" where the ecological aspects are sustained while progressive change is permitted.

Those cases, where the planning approach is strategic rather than physical, show a clear tendency: sustainability is very important in the written plans and other texts and it is interpreted in the broad sense of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. But in practise it is especially the social and economic sustainability that are central. The environmental part is almost non-existing in this kind of cooperation – it is often the other actors in the region who work with this issue. This corresponds well with the notion of distributive efficiency.

On the other hand, the cases with a physical planning orientation show more aspects of economic and environmental sustainability, while social sustainability is less pronounced. This points towards the long-term allocative efficiency –approach.

Also the approach concerning intra- and intergenerational environmental equity is seen in the cases. In their process of developing principles for sustainable development in the Gothenburg region, the regional cooperation council and the regional planning organisation at the county level have a decade-long history of producing ideas and practical solutions for sustainable regional development. The latest phase documentation of "HUR 2050" emphasises the need to move from "merely" the physical planning of infrastructure as the basis for a sustainable regional structure, into a wider spatial planning and land use perspective.

The way in which sustainability is understood is as follows:

- *Ecological sustainability is seen as the framing of all other sustainability activities.* This means that development needs to happen without depleting important resources or diminishing environmental values. In practise the most important action is cutting carbon dioxide emissions.
- *Economic sustainability is seen as the tool for ensuring the possibilities for sustainable regional development*. This means development that includes a varied and growing business life, flexibility, and a high education level of the work force. In practise this means looking at the local labour market and its extent, in the perspective that enlargement of the labour market area is a positive thing, only if the increased commuting and other long-distance traffic increase can be handled with public transportation.

- *Social sustainability is seen as the overall goal of sustainable regional development.* The strategy takes the notion of "a good life" as the objective. The good life means diminished social division, and equality and social cohesion.

The Lahti case exemplifies how the principles of sustainable development may be incorporated into spatial planning work. The relation between the strongly framing sustainability principles and the model features is explicated in the planning document through both its structure and the evaluation of the model vis-à-vis the practical applications of the sustainability principles.

Overall, judging the cases by their planning approaches (spatial vs. physical planning), it seems that with the spatial planning approach the integration of sustainability means incorporating the environmental framing principles (possibilities and restraints of preservation, environment, accessibility, transportation infrastructure and land use) into the policies and practises of economic development, and taking social prerequisites as a further framing principle.

With the physical planning approach, integration means building ideas for land use development according to the environmental framing principles and taking economic development prerequisites as a further framing principle.

Social sustainability is difficult to address directly in physical plans, but in practise issues such as equity in accessing services, good public transportation and an efficient infrastructure, quality in and distribution of housing etc. work towards social solutions as well.

Spatial planning and its practical applications in the FURs

Economic development and spatial planning

In addition to being considered as functional areas, urban regions are now also regarded as nodes in flows. The role of urban regions in relation to these flows is also important: cities establish linkages to their local clients as well as to the national and international levels. Flows can be considered as facilitators of investments and labour both in the private and the public spheres. As has been noted (cf. e.g. Tewdwr-Jones 2003), the new ideas of spatial planning replace the space of places (inherent in traditional land use planning) by the space of flows (implicit in strategic planning).

This is also evident in the cases through the emphasis on economic development issues that are approached from several angles when it comes to their correspondence to spatial planning. Especially the cases, in which the cooperation on spatial issues is handled by the same authority that handles economic planning, it seems to be easier to take issues such as regional business marketing into a regional focus. The Trøndelag case shows how economic strategies are building the regional consciousness. For the Umeå region, the mutual business marketing under the "Umeåregionen" brand originates from the idea that the region as a whole, and not just the individual municipality, benefits from the development that occurs in its member municipalities.

Urban regions are indeed seen as increasingly important bases of economic coordination and governance at the meso-level between the national and the local (cluster or firms): the urban region is the basic level at which innovation is produced. This happens through regional networks of innovators, local clusters, and the "cross-fertilising effects" of research institutions (Lundvall and Borras 1997, cited in Asheim and Coenen 2004).

The urban region is most often seen as the most potential regional territory for agglomerating factors of competitiveness. In the cases, competitiveness is stressed in basically two ways in the planning documents: in most cases as the building block of the "good life" for the citizens, but in some as a result in itself.

Competitive regional economies create two types of potential advantages: enhanced business formation and flexible specialisation. Enhanced business formation refers to bringing together the resources of firms, higher education institutions and (local) governments to accelerate the development of technologies that can help make small and medium sized businesses competitive. This is often referred to as the "triple helix" model. The coordination of actions of the different actors is evident in the interest in competitiveness and education as factors of regional development. The North Jutland case shows how the triple helix model, comprising businesses, regional administration, and university actors, provides linkages from the economic to the spatial structures in a strategic way. The Umeå region also has a strong connection to the university, and the development planning shows how the university can be not only a factor of competitiveness through its existence, but also by contributing to the regional cooperation by means of urban design, regionally oriented research, and inclusion in the region-building cooperation.

Likewise, an "innovative region" is one where novel goods and services are generated, and where clear and mutually reinforcing roles exist for government, universities, firms, and other actors (Sotarauta and Srinivas 2006). The role of government is increasingly catalytic instead of implementing (Leydesdorff 2000). The case of North Jutland is an excellent example in this respect as well.

Flexible specialisation means that within a locality and within an industry, various players of different size and areas of competency cooperate in order to produce highly specialised, even customized goods (Boschma 2004). This is evident even in regional strategic planning: the Trøndelag plan stresses the importance of food production, in Kristiansand the issue of industrial clusters is on the agenda, and the Oulu region "quality corridor" is a spatial expression of agglomeration economy.

Collaborations between local businesses, specialisation, and "soft" location factors have been emphasised in the new views that have appeared since the 1980s (Turok 2004). Currently, regional competitiveness is considered to benefit especially from the soft factors such as environmental quality, human capital, education, or cultural knowledge and creativity. The basic presupposition is that human capital, while not guaranteeing it, predicts success "because high skilled people in high skilled industries may come up with more new ideas" (Glaeser 2003). Concerning the soft factors, the case studies present the most important issues: the overall emphasis is on the sustainability of environmental development, found most elaborated in the Gothenburg case but present in all. The Holbæk case shows how tangible issues of landscape and environmental quality may be addressed in spatial terms.

All but two of the case study areas have university cities at their core, and Lahti has a university centre that provides university education from three universities. It is evident that these FURs enjoy good starting points for providing the soft factors for development in this respect. In the cases with more strategic spatial planning than physical spatial planning, the educational aspects are covered in the regional context in the development planning work. However, the emphasis on higher education

is for the most part less pronounced in the spatial planning. In the Umeå case, the university connection seems to have the best potential for FUR development, but is at the same time somewhat unutilised in the cooperation. The case of Oulu provides hints of spatial strategies that can include the educational competitiveness issues in physical terms.

The showcase example, in spite of the incomplete nature of this part of the regional physical planning work, is Lahti with its idea of competence structures. The idea of competence structures involves thoughts into the locational relations of the soft factors through simple mapping of the factors, and by attempting to provide links between different factors (education, R&D, firms, quality housing sites, and recreation facilities) in order to provide an innovative and creative urban environment. Florida (2002) even suggests that creativity is more needed for competitiveness than technology is. In this reasoning, it is the creative enterprises that can turn ideas into sustainable business models. Aesthetic, cultural, and political creativity are also necessary for sustainable economic growth. In Lahti, the underlying ideas is to first map, or spatially locate, the existing competence creating institutions, and then follow this by an analysis of present networking activities, which can be translated into flows of knowledge, people, and commodities. In the Helsinki region, this concept has even been developed into a public transportation line that physically ties central competence-creating institutions physically closer to each other's.

Regional structure

Concerning the physical nature of the regional structures, there seems to be a unanimous approval of the idea that the most effective way to improve the sustainability of the urban structure is on one hand through densification and filling in the gaps in the existing structure, with due attention to green structures and the quality of development, and on the other by structuring the urban functional region so that accessibility to services and work are maximised and the need to travel minimised simultaneously.

This means creation of a polycentric region with division of labour between the urban centres as well as the blend of functions within the settlements. Following these principles, the existing spatial resources are to be most fully utilised. However, as the theoretical discussion pointed out, the notion of a "compact city" is all but accepted as the most sustainable option for the urban region's spatial development. Furthermore, it is evident that an urban region cannot, at least in present municipal contexts, equate one city, but is a partnership of several municipalities, and thus has to possess a constant inter-relational nature between its parts. This means that the issue of compacting the urban structure is by necessity a case of multi-nodal development within the urban region. These trends are all visible in the physical planning documents from the cases that encompass actual physical planning, but are also referred to in the cases that have a more strategic approach.

In strategic planning, issues of regional structures are also approached in several ways. The regional structures are seen more as an abstraction than a physical structure. As such, the concept can be used to translate the central aims – the good life and regional competitiveness – into strategically oriented discussions about the region as a territory. Aiming to keep the issue of regional structure on a strategic level as far as possible – perhaps partly in order not to conflict with potentially delicate municipal physical planning issues – means keeping the issue "open" within a continued dialogue. The structural modelling may, but needs not contain clear physical form to the structures. Instead, the formation of the regional structure may then be hoped to emerge from the municipal plans as a result of the regionalising of the issue through the dialogue. This indirect way of spatial

planning has actually proved to influence municipal plans, as can be witnessed in the Gothenburg case.

"Building" the regional structure in physical terms is (even more) prone to political dialogue of conflicts on the FUR scale. In this respect, the cases that show the clearest result in physical terms, namely the Lahti, Joensuu, Oulu and Jæren (Rogaland) regions, have adopted quite similar approaches to building the common idea of the regional structure. This entails a step-wise progress with structural alternatives that show the differences in the results when choosing one general line of development over another. In addition, the process needs to build on a mutual idea of overall development being for the good of the whole region. This requires the achievement of trust within the FUR cooperation, in order to see past the apparent short term winners and losers in territorial terms. The case of Lahti exemplifies how the process of developing the regional structure itself has been developed over a long time period. The changing projections of the future become visible in the span of 30+ years. The altering visions deal with the changes in local, national and global development and the changing drivers of these developments. In the Lahti case, also the next step is already becoming visible: further integration with the national urban core area will mean yet unforeseen changes that certainly need to be addressed within another few years.

As a generic physical planning issue, the questions of how to "repair" the existing weaknesses comes up in many of the cases. The issue of densification is coupled with a more inclusive development perspective that recognizes the need to not only make the structures more efficient, but also to look at the whole spectrum of the existing physical features. The notion of "supplementary community planning," meaning "extensive development of resources and living conditions in communities based on wide co-operation" (e.g. Riipinen et al. 2003) is based on the ideas of attaching future development to the existing structures, paying attention to issues of spatial quality, and creating sustainable public transportation -oriented regional structures.

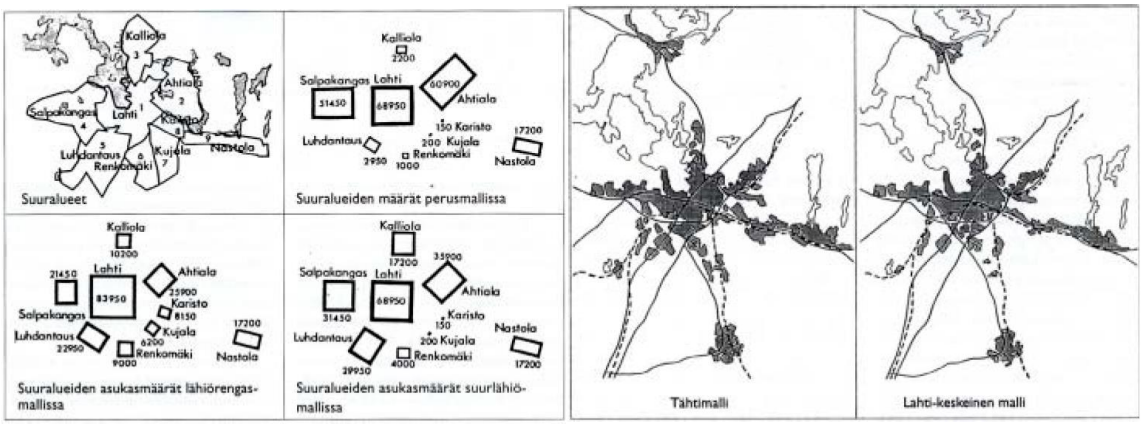
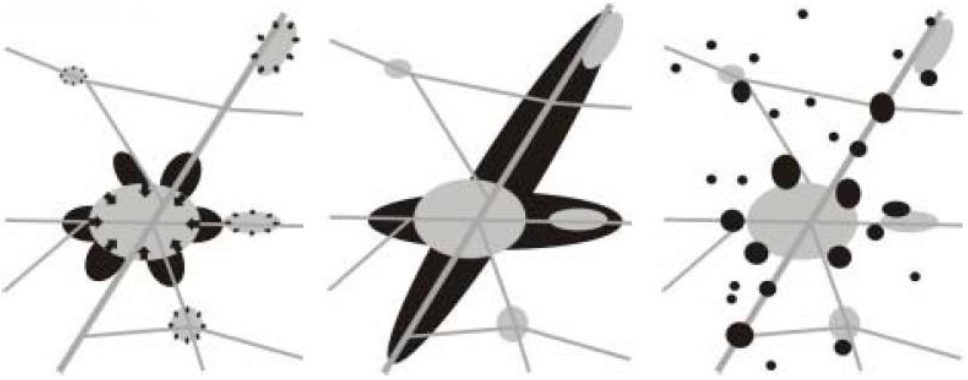


Figure 25: Development of structural modelling in the Lahti urban region. Above left, the alternatives for the model of 1969; above right, those of 1993, and below, the principal ideas for the alternatives of the latest modelling work in 2004.
Source: Structural Model work group for Lahti urban region (2004).



Integrated transport and land use planning

In planning discussions over the last decades, the integration of traffic and transportation planning, and land use planning has been one of the key issues. The results of that discussion are visible in e.g. national planning guidances, but until now the actual planning practises have, in general, taken rather conservative approaches that take the main traffic problems, such as growth of overall traffic volumes, modal splits, and the rise of mobility in favour of the private car, as a given framework to be recognised and dealt with in land use planning.

However, this decade has shown that this integration has increased in regional and municipal planning, albeit quite sporadically – depending on several factors: city size, regional circumstances, individual preferences of the planning personnel, demands, motivation and incentives from the national level, and especially the increased awareness of regionalisation of urban traffic and transportation problems.

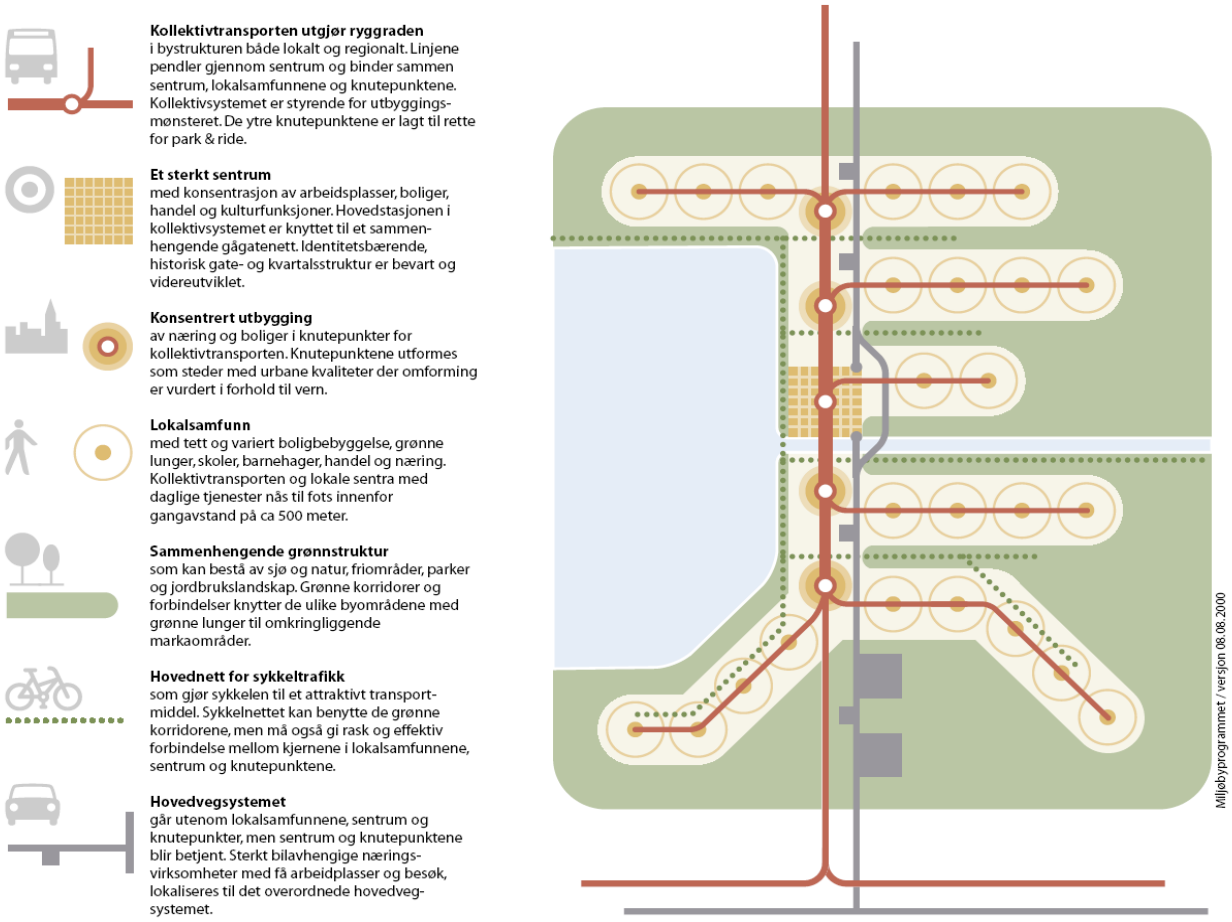


Figure 26: Planning principles based on the ”Miljöby” project, 1993-2000.
Source: Miljöverndepartment (2002)

The basis for integrated transport and land use planning in the cases, from the point of view of an integrated approach concerning equally the alleviation of the consequences of increased traffic in the urban regions, as well as reducing the dependency of the urban region on the use of the private cars, includes four points of view:

- First, the idea of creating urban and humane environments suited to all transportation modes
- Second, quality alternatives to the private car
- The third aspect concerns multimodal centres with mixed, dense land use, resulting in:
  - Internal reduction in need to travel
  - External interconnectedness
- Fourth, and the spatially most pressing aspect, deals with the prevention of urban sprawl

Some of the cases show that this integration can be approached in a manner that sets the planning of land use in context with what are considered sustainable transportation trends, as a principle for land use planning throughout the region. This is well illustrated by the Triangle Area plan, in which the basis for the overall development has been approached by “tying” the region into a functional urban region via a careful consideration of how different functions co-operate with the transportation networks and systems.

The central theme in an urban region's physical planning for sustainability is integrating the transport issues in the main line of land use planning. In *parallel processes of transportation system planning and land use planning*, the processes feed each other. In the Joensuu region, maintaining sustainable transportation calls for focusing land use in the main urban corridor. In *integration of transportation in the land use principles*, the transport issues form a framework for locating land use. In the Rogaland region, the FUR spatial planning took its starting point in an already existing process for transportation planning, and the principles set in the then-recent "Miljöbyen" project were applied very directly.

This approach can be seen as a direct application of the principles of the "transit city" on an urban region scale. By the notion of transit city is understood taking the transit system as the starting point for land use development. This means that the new developments are planned, as far as possible, along the existing transit routes. Special attention is given to the accessibility to the transit stops of different kinds. This also means creating dense neighbourhoods in the immediate vicinity of the stops and stations, with distance criteria for pedestrian, cycling, transit, and automobile access to the nodes. This is coupled with concentrating service provision within the nodes to the highest feasible degree. Further development is planned as extensions that rely on the transit systems – bus routes in the medium time span, and rail connections in the long-term perspective.

The method of "transportation zones" means that the new urban structures are planned along transportation lines with densities varying according to the distance from the transportation hubs (bus stop, train station). The areas within walking or bicycling distance from the transportation hubs form the core of new development. The underlying innovation in this method is that it provides principles for strategic planning as well as land allocation, especially when combined with the ABC principle. However, the densification has been perceived, in some cases, as potentially diminishing the quality of urban environments. To ensure high-quality settlements, careful detailed planning is also needed.

The principles for locating major land use according to transportation networks are exemplified by the use of the ABC-principle, meaning that business locations are categorised according to the traffic connections, and businesses are categorised according to their transportation activities and land use. The Triangle Area plan emphasises this approach in connection with other, more or less spatially specific transportation issues. While the outset of the first applications of this approach date back more than a decade, and the success of the method has been doubted, it still provides clear principles for spatial planning. It is in any case more of a strategic "planning" principle than a practical "zoning" method.

One issue that has been approached in the cases but remains unsolved is the continuing trend of growing automobile dependency. It is relatively most pressing in the Finnish urban regions, since there are hardly any politically feasible possibilities to stop scattering housing development around the urban fringes. In all cases the issue of enlargement of the catchment basis of certain functions means that more and more of the transportation needs are most easily satisfied by the use of private cars.

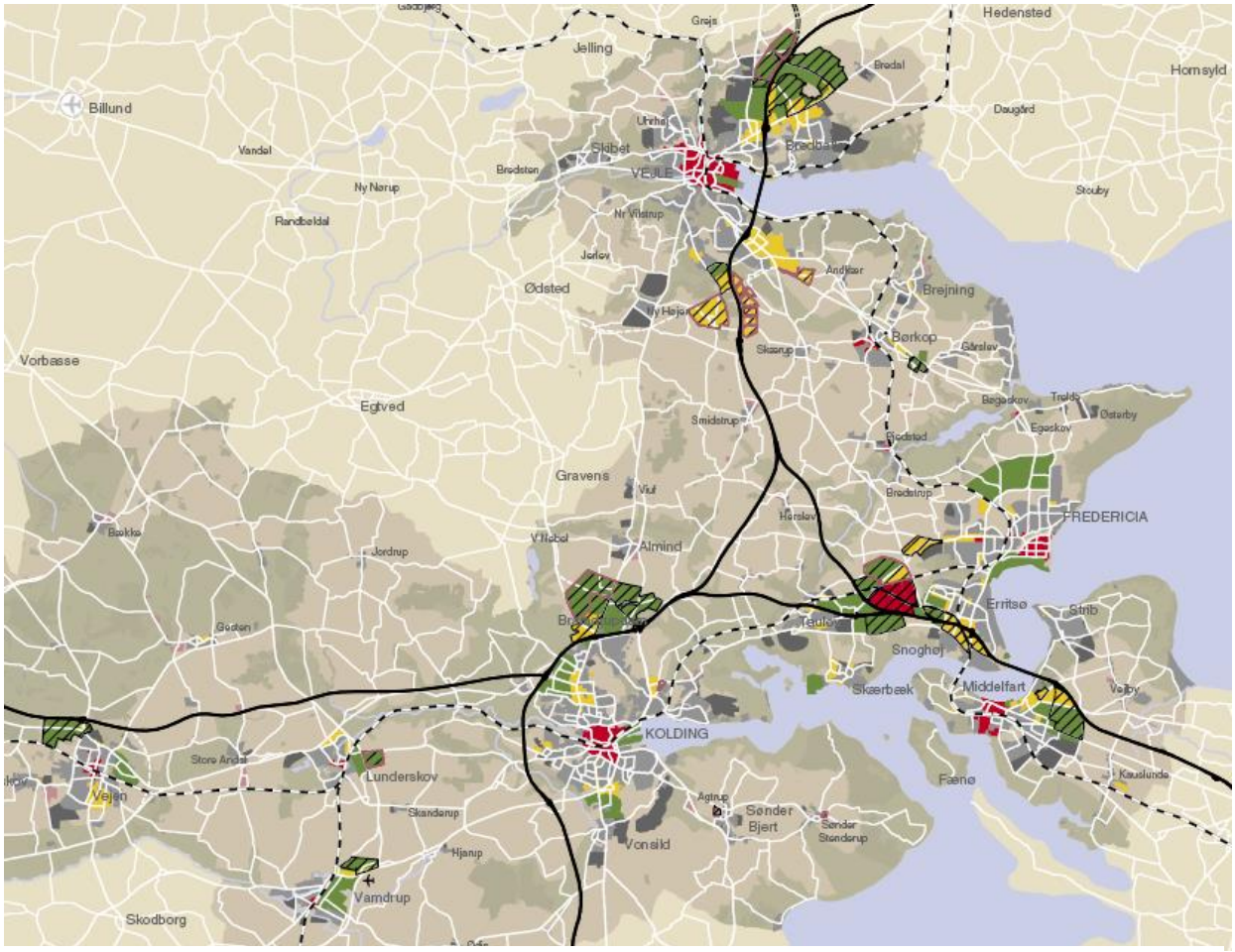


Figure 27: The ABC principle in FUR context as applied in the Triangle Area planning.

Source: Trekantområdet 2003.

"Quality" as a concept in FUR planning

Multiple notions of quality are becoming operational in FUR level planning. As a content of spatial planning, the concept of quality provides another abstraction to work with on the strategic level, and is yet transferable even in the regional scale to the concrete level of physical planning where deemed preferential.

The objective of "the good life", for example, has been approached in several of the cases not only as an end product, but as an abstraction and "an image" of how the qualities of the region can be enhanced in order to provide for the sustained and improved living conditions. In the Gothenburg

region this has been given a more spatial yet strategic form through integration of physical, structural, and *lifestyle* issues, with the most sustainable outcomes combining dense structures and a locally oriented "slow" lifestyle.

However, as a generic strategic concept, quality seems to have limited appeal for planning purposes. While the abstraction might enable sustained dialogue on the subject, it must be given a more concrete form and content in order for it to become operational in spatial development and physical planning.

Among these more concrete notions are *quality corridors*, like in the Oulu region, where specific emphasis is on producing the best conceivable transportation, land use, and urban design solutions in the central urban region to cater for a variety of businesses. This idea of corridor thinking is widely used in regional planning, so its integration into the level of a FUR is commonsense. However, the idea of combining the corridor thinking as a networking and clustering concept mostly dealing with economic development, and the quality aspect of design orientation make the quality corridor fitting to strategic planning at the FUR level. This is also a question of how to make the strategies more concrete in the regional reality. In the Kristiansand and Joensuu regions, the idea of quality corridor deals with public transportation along the main arterial routes in the region, with specific stops and planned interchange nodes. In this respect, the quality is intended to enhance the image of the public transportation system, thereby improving the possibilities for achieving a more transit-oriented urban region.

Furthermore, quality is linked to the idea of *competence structures* in the Lahti region, where regional competences (knowledge production, R&D structures, ITC, etc.) are developed and structured in space, with linkages to high-quality services, housing, and recreation. The Lahti case, however, emphasised the future needs of the competence creators, the knowledge workers, by looking at how the qualities of the urban region could provide more attractiveness. The idea of the region as a meeting place for the competent was brought up.

It can be said that the basic starting point in Lahti is to integrate the spatial expression of a triple helix model with regional "markets" for quality living environments. While the work was left unfinished in the structural model project, it shows potential for expanding the traditional scope of physical planning by incorporating development concepts, which have implications for spatial structures that became relevant when studied in parallel. It must also be noted that this aspect of the structural model work is not very pronounced, but it has been considered to be one of the most interesting issues to be developed in the future.

Also the green structures that have been emphasised in several cases can be seen as an aspect of quality. The case of the Triangle Area exemplifies this. In the joint general plan, the green structures are seen in a similar manner to that of the famous Randstadt planning principles – by providing the "green heart" for the metropolis. Thus, the region even calls itself "the green metropolis." The green structures are dealing with both recreational uses and landscape issues.

Also, quality is approached as a concept that enables linking the strategic goals with the physical development activities. The quality of the urban structure may be interpreted through its efficiency and sustainability on one hand, and through identification of regional hot-spots where quality must be addressed in concrete terms and is seen to be crucial for regional development goals on the other. In the cases, the idea of quality is most pronounced in the more detailed aspects of the planning.

Settlement planning principles are handled e.g. in the Triangle Area plan. Likewise, the Holbæk region planning is much geared towards developing high quality settlements as an issue of regional competitiveness. In the case of Turku, the regional cooperation in spatial planning resulted in a concretisation of the idea of quality by organising an architectural competition for five locations throughout the region, through which new ideas for sustainable quality in the region were sought.

Planning means in functional urban development

Looking across the case studies, two conclusions become clear about new planning means:

- One is that spatial planning embraces several important planning issues in order to succeed: Strategic planning creating common regional understanding and land use planning concerned with the allocation of land.
- Another conclusion is that cooperation and organisation becomes important planning means: The manner in which regional cooperation and planning is organised influences the result of the cooperation.

This section describes how traditional spatial and physical planning in the regions and municipalities in the Nordic countries has been characterised by formal hierarchical plans with a strict land use planning as an important planning tool. The ordering of plans made top-down in the hierarchical planning was supported by allocation of land as one of the most important means to regulate the physical development in urban and rural areas and constrain unwanted development. It was a mean to control the access to land use for different interests groups in society. Furthermore planning was a matter for public actors creating the framework for private actors in the cities and regional areas. Although this description might not quite match the former practices in regional and municipal planning, it illustrates the general idea and understanding in the official planning systems on how to make proper urban and regional spatial planning.

The case studies show that spatial planning has changed, both in practice and in terms of the idea of the proper planning processes for sustainable development in functional urban regions. The spatial FUR planning has developed into two different regulation forms. The one most used in the case studies is strategic planning and the other is – utilised in some of the cases - land use planning in different forms. But both are based on the foundation of equality and consensus, and hierarchy and voting as in the traditional system. The first one is about creating a common understanding of regional development in the urban and regional areas, and the other is still about allocation of land. In the cases strategic planning is the most dominating planning tool at the regional level. However, land use regulation is used as a supplementing tool in several cases but in both a soft and a hard regulating version.

Most of the planning for FURs is produced outside the traditional hierarchical planning system and its bureaucratic procedures, but in some cases also in some form of cooperation with the formal system. In the case studies, informal and formal strategic planning network are made across municipal boarders and across government levels. The outset for FUR planning is the planning problem to be solved in a certain functional area, and network relations and new organisations are made to match the problem regardless of formal structures and responsibilities. The matter of organising the FUR planning process becomes an essential planning mean.

The spatial planning of the FURs is obviously a matter for politicians as the core actors. Spatial planning in the traditional form of hard land use planning has traditionally been a more technical matter brought forward by planners and built on professional planning knowledge and values. The spatial planning for FURs has developed differently. The focus on strategic planning as the most important planning mean in the FUR development has caused the politicians to enter the planning arena and place themselves in the centre of the process. By doing so the FUR planning has become a highly political matter. In the formal and hierarchical planning system, regional planning ought to be a matter for the regional politicians. In the FUR planning this is generally not the case. FUR planning has to a large extent become a matter for municipal politicians taking control of the planning arena in opposition to or in cooperation with regional politicians.

In the following sections, we will look further into these conclusions in order to document and discuss them. But first a short comment on, how to interpret the new development of spatial planning, is needed.

FUR spatial planning as meta-governance and soft regulation

Strategic planning and the way in which it is developed in the case studies is an example of a new governing mean called meta-governance. In chapter 3 the concept of meta-governance is introduced as a new political governing mean. Meta-governance is an indirect governing form that is being developed these years in order to regulate self-governance in various policy networks and institutions. We could say that meta-governance is a mean to create some form of coherence in a situation characterised by fragmented and multi-centred policy and planning in the FUR areas

In the description of FUR organisations below, it becomes evident that FUR planning is clearly characterised by a governance setting. Multiple actors and political organs from different geographical areas and government levels interact in formal or informal policy networks to make FUR and regional planning. The FUR planning is often exercised outside or beside the formal planning system because it is meant to regulate development of an area dissimilar to the formal political and administrative boundaries or because municipal actors want to take control of the development either in opposition to or in cooperation with regional politicians.

The consequence of the governance settings and the project planning is, as mentioned, a fragmented and multi-centred policy and planning system, recognized very clearly in the case studies. Strategic planning can be interpreted as one important attempt to construct some form of coherence, coordination, and integration in regional policy and planning in spite of the fragmented and multi-centred systems. In chapter 3 different meta-governance forms are described as network participation, network design, and network framing. Strategic planning belongs to the category of network framing and the organisation issues dealt with later belong to network participation and design. Below, these meta-governance means in the case studies will be presented and discussed.

Land use regulation as part of regional and municipal planning is traditionally a hierarchical bureaucratic planning mean using general rules and laws to regulate urban and regional behaviour. The rules and laws are typically decided top-down and cannot be negotiated or discussed to match local circumstances or needs. In chapter 3 it is characterised as a hard regulation form. Chapter 3 also presents a different form of rule and law making called soft regulation and negotiated law. Soft regulation and negotiated law match the governance development in the sense that rules and laws are made on the basis of context and consensus between involved partners. They negotiate common rules or laws for specific situations in a specific context based on a common understanding of

problems and solutions. The rules are not necessarily legally binding but could have the same effect in practise. Below, we will also present and discuss what kind of land use regulation is utilised in the case studies.

Strategic planning as network frameworks

Meta-governance as network framing is a hands-off regulation through political goals and framework, allocation of financial and other resources, discursive frameworks, and storytelling. The creation of a common understanding and identity is the purpose. Strategic planning in the case studies touches especially on the issues of political goals and vision, and discursive frameworks and storytelling.

In the case studies the creation of common understanding concerns different subjects. One is the creation of functional regional awareness and common identity, and another is basically a common understanding of the need for cooperation for the benefit of all regional actors. In most cases these subjects are the starting point for the cooperation and without a result in these, it is difficult to develop common understanding about strategies as a third subject.

In most of the case studies competition and opposition has been the traditional driving force in municipal politics and planning strategies. Self-interest in local municipal matters and a local political identity has been and still is regarded as essential for proper political leadership in the municipalities. Regional or national politicians had to take care of regional or national matters. There has been a tradition for a clear division of labour between different government institutions and elected politicians at different decision levels.

The case studies illustrate how the cooperation on FUR development comprehends *a shift in this institutional political division of labour*. Local politicians from the municipalities start to take responsibility for functional urban and regional development and they do so voluntarily. They become active regional actors. Sometimes, they cooperate with the formal regional government institutions while national actors are more absent or not very well integrated in the FUR planning work.

In the case studies a pattern evolves regarding strategic planning. Taking the experiences from the case studies into account, we can list the important elements in the process of strategic planning:

A strategic spatial planning process

- Making a common formal or informal organisation or network (forum for discussions)
- Guidelines and rules for cooperation and decision making
- Creating of a common understanding (FUR identity) through dialogue and discussion
- Using solid analyses and knowledge about FUR development as a starting point
- Taking controversial issues out of the cooperation
- Focusing on consensus issues for common action
- Making political visions and goals in strategic plans
- Interdependencies are stated in the plans and the planning issues are broadly defined
- Making structural urban and regional models – presentation of alternatives
- Division of responsibilities and tasks within the cooperation

- Action plans and programmes on specific issues
- Tying the strategic plan to other plans concerning the area (e.g. regional and national plans)

Not all case studies follow this process, but all the cases contain most of these elements in their strategic planning process, and in the interviews with the central planners, they stressed the importance of these process elements in strategic planning in order to make it successful. The cases of Holbæk area, Trøndelag, and Umeå are especially good to illustrate the regional identity building in strategic planning.

The purpose and goal of regional strategic planning is to create a common understanding on the regional and the specific development issues. The implementation of the goals is viewed differently from traditional physical planning where success of implementation is judged by changes in "physical" products. One could say that the purpose of strategic planning first and foremost is to implement a *new "mind map"* in the heads of especially politicians and administrators, but also of private actors in the region, on urban and regional development and on how to make politics regarding regional matters. When this new mind-map is implemented (e.g. when a FUR identity is achieved) and a new plan/strategy in the form of a written document with clear goals and visions is accepted by the politicians, the purpose of strategic planning is fulfilled. Goals and visions are not the start of a political process but the end, and hereafter a new process can begin.

However, in the case studies it varies whether the purpose of the strategic planning is to make one specific strategic plan, or make several plans and implementation strategies which change continuously according to changing circumstances in the urban and regional areas: whether *a plan is the result of the process or a mean among others in the planning process.* A tendency in the case studies is that the closer the strategic planning process is connected to the traditional planning system, the more plans (and not just strategies and political documents) become the purpose and the end result of the planning process (and not just one in a row of plans). North Jutland and Rogaland are examples hereof but they also include the other perspective to some extent.

In the case studies of e.g. Gothenburg and Holbæk area, the *process perspective* on FUR planning is especially dominant. Political planning documents with goals and strategies become the political framework for the planning processes and if conditions change during the implementation, the plans and documents are changed as well. Plans are just step stones for further plans and just one of many planning activities in ongoing planning processes. There is no clear division between plans and implementation. The planning processes can be interconnected and coordinated, as in the case of the Holbæk area, or they can compete and be uncoordinated as we see in e.g. the Turku case.

The main differences in the case studies are found when it comes to the *implementation strategies.* (1) One strategy is to leave the implementation of the plans to the municipalities, (2) another is to make common plans or programmes for implementation, (3) a third is establishment of common administrative functions, and (4) a fourth is to make common land use regulation to stress the strategies.

1. In only few of the case studies, the common planning work concerns plans for implementation of strategic planning in the municipalities. In most cases, FUR planning respect the municipal independency and leave the implementation to the municipalities. The

effect of the strategic plans then has to be measured in the municipal plans and activities. But in some cases the FUR cooperation also concerns the implementation issue.

2. Trøndelag and Rogaland are examples on making "Programmes of coordinated action" and "Concrete action plans". They organise relevant actors around different themes and decisions and make joint plans for how to realise a certain goal or strategy. They do so without undermining the municipal responsibility, and the programmes and action plans are still consensus based.

3. A third strategy is to create joint administrative units to handle common tasks. In the case of Oulu we find e.g. the amalgamation of environmental services at sub-regional level, and in the case of Lahti several mutual organisations have been set up to handle common tasks like waste, sewage, protecting the environment etc. The municipalities transfer administrative competences and resources to the mutual organisations.

4. The fourth strategy is to make common land use regulation, and we will look further into this issue in the following section.

The issue of common land use plans and common administrative units as implementation strategies is an illustration of the use of the meta-governance form called: allocation of financial resources and other resources. In the case studies everybody agree that the plan- and strategy making has to be followed by allocation of resources but they disagree on who is going to decide on this allocation. Local self-government is the main issue in this debate.

The combination of strategic planning and land use planning

While strategic planning is a meta-governance mean with indirect and general steering capacity, land use planning is a direct and detailed planning mean. The question is how land use planning and strategic planning is combined in the cases? Do they conflict or can they supplement one another?

The conclusion is that they can *supplement* one another *if strategic planning comes first.* And in most cases *soft land use regulation is preferred*. However, hard land use regulation is used in some of the cases, and the conclusion is that it prevails on the background of a long term cooperation, a high level of trust, and a common identity in the FUR cooperation, and an obviously need for land use regulation in e.g. dense regional areas. This is not to say that if these conditions are present it will prevail. Rather the conclusion is that it is easier to develop hard FUR land use planning if these conditions are present.

T*wo different competing perspectives* are presented in the case studies concerning land use regulation:

1. One is the political perspective reluctant to regional hard land use regulation due to its tendency to constrain local development possibilities and interfere with municipal self-government. The politicians prefer soft land use regulation, if any, at the regional level.
2. The other is the planner's perspective arguing for strong and hard land use regulation in order to secure a proper sustainable development in the FUR area regardless of e.g. strong economic interests in local areas. During the interviews, the planners highlighted the lack of

coherence between strategic planning and strong land use planning. The planners do support more formal regional regulation of land use to help steer and control the FUR development.

This is a well-known conflict between perspectives within spatial planning.

Above and in chapter 3 is mentioned a hard and a soft form of regulation in governance settings. If we look at the case studies we find examples of both soft and hard versions of land use planning. Actually we find *three different forms of land use regulation*:

1. In several cases the political perspective dominates and leaves the land use regulation to the municipal level (e.g. Holbæk area, Gothenburg, and Trøndelag). Land use regulation is not a matter for the regional level and the regional cooperation concentrates on strategic plans and visions. *Land use regulation is a matter for local politicians* and local interests. General land use regulation is perceived as either too controversial at the regional level or as an interference in municipal self-government. It could be interpreted as a matter of *deregulation at the regional level* in a governance situation.

2. But the case studies also illustrate a compromise between the political and the planning perspective in introducing a development of *soft regulation* in general land use. Soft regulation is an example of negotiated rules and laws used as an *indirect meta-governance mean* and in the case studies it is expressed through:

    a. Non-binding strategies for land use
    b. Declarations of intents
    c. Common guidelines for land use

    They are meant as "support tools" for municipalities as presented in the cases of e.g. Triangle Area, Umeå, and Lahti. The soft regulation form is conceived as the only possible form of detailed regulation at the regional level in order not to undermine the self-government of municipalities and to get acceptance from local politicians.

3. Finally the case studies illustrate a form of *voluntary hard land use regulation* at the regional level. These are binding regulations as in the traditional planning, but made "outside" the formal planning system and voluntarily by the municipalities. This is *an integration of a government steering mean in a governance situation*. Kristiansand and Rogaland in Norway are examples where general land use plans are accepted by the government and the Ministry of the Environment but not as a part of the planning system. The regional level does not formally have the competences to regulate land use but the municipalities have voluntarily transferred decision power to the regional cooperation. In the cases of Oulu and Turku, we find also legally binding land use plans at the regional level. They are made in close cooperation between the municipalities and the regional authorities and relate to the notion of inter-municipal plans in the Planning Act. These general land use plans are all made in dense urban regional areas, where land use is of great importance for development and on the background of a long tradition for regional cooperation and a high level of trust.

The case studies clearly show that strong regional land use regulation is not the first issue to be brought up in voluntary cooperations for FUR development. It is too controversial to handle for

especially the local politicians before they have developed common regional awareness and identity, and trust within the cooperation. There is no doubt that strategic planning with the creation of common understanding and visions come first, and land use regulation second.

On the other hand land use planning seems to be integrated in the FUR spatial planning as times go by. The longer the cooperation and the stronger the common regional identity, the more land use issues are likely to occur in the cooperation - whether it is in a soft or a hard regulation form.

In the case studies there is no agreement on whether soft or hard land use regulation is to be preferred. The planners do support the hard versions and the strict formal regulation in order to restrain and control local interests and avoid unwanted and unplanned development. The politicians mostly prefer the soft intentional version in order to make room for a flexible and ever changing local development. Eventually, it becomes *a political issue* to decide upon different regulation means and values in the FUR planning process. If the political leadership and commitment has to be obtained in the FUR development, it is decisive that the *land use regulation develops into a form acceptable for politics* and politicians in a specific area. However, the political notion of land use regulation changes all the time and FUR planning is after all an arena for development of political ideas and meanings. The relationship between strategic planning and land use planning in different forms *can be influenced* in this construction site for FUR planning. The Kristiansand case is a good example.

Governance problems in spatial planning

All cases mention a common problem in the FUR cooperation. The problem regards coordination and integration within planning for FURs. In chapter 3 the problems of coordination and integration is mentioned as a general problem in governance settings. In the traditional government system specific institutions and procedures were developed to deal with the problem, but most of them built on bureaucratic regulation means and hierarchical positions. In the governance settings none of these coordination means are available and if they are used, they often involve conflicts.

The case studies illustrate several coordination and integration problems in spite of the use of strategic planning as some form of coordinating tool. The problem occurs because strategic planning for FUR development is made in several government institutions and governance settings and they are not always coordinated or integrated.

There are especially *three coordination and integration problems* in the cases:

1. Lack of coherence between FUR planning and the formal regional plans: In most instances the FUR strategic plans are developed besides the traditional regional plans. In some cases they are in opposition to the regional planning, like in the Joensuu case. In other cases they are sub-regional plans as an extra level of plans and strategies, like in the Holbæk area, Lahti, Oulu, and Rogaland case. They also form an alternative general organisation and plan for a larger area than covered by the formal regional councils, like in the Triangle Area, Gothenburg, and Trøndelag. The strategic FUR plans are not always very well integrated in the formal regional planning system, and in the interviews a need to create better cohesion and cooperation between the FUR planning activities and the formal regional planning activities was expressed. The need will increase if we take the new tendency in the Nordic Planning Acts to demand regional development plans (RUP's) into account.

2. Lack of coherence between general FUR planning and business planning in FURs: In most of the cases economic and business planning is carried out in one governance setting while the overall FUR planning is carried out in another. A general criticism in the interviews is that economic and business FUR strategies are not well integrated with general strategic planning. This is especially the case in the Triangle Area, Holbæk area, Joensuu, Kristiansand, and Rogaland. The values and cultures in business departments and planning departments are still very different and prejudices flourish about the other part. This influences the planning work in FUR activities.

3. Lack of coherence between FUR planning and land use planning: We have already mentioned the problem with integration of general FUR planning and land use planning in most of the cases. Especially the Rogaland case tries to solve the problem by making a general land use plan as part of a FUR strategic plan.

The interviewed planners stressed the need to cope with these coordination problems in the future. One solution found in the case studies was to make *network participants* - and not institutions or procedures – perform the coordination task. The connection between different planning networks and arenas is made by central administrative and/or political actors participating in several core networks. They enter the role as meta-governors. We will look further into this role in the following section.

Organisation as a planning mean: network participation and design

One of the causes for coordination problems is that FUR planning – as previously mentioned – is often carried out "outside" of the formal planning system. The FUR cooperation is formed voluntary by municipalities and other important regional actors across formal administrative, political, and geographical boarders. They join resources in order to solve a problem not solved (properly) in the formal political system. It becomes obvious looking at the case studies that the *municipal politicians* are the core actors in the cooperation. However, administrators do play an important supporting role. FUR planning is to a large extent seen as *a matter for public actors* but private regional actors are integrated when needed. One very important conclusion looking at the organisation aspect is that gaining influence in FUR development is clearly a matter of *network participation* in the FUR cooperation where the strategies are developed.

The case studies show a broad variety in the concrete organising of the FUR planning process, but in general there are some important similarities. Formal and informal *policy networks* across government levels and municipal borders are formed in the FUR cooperation. All cases except Holbæk area and Umeå, have built *formal network organisations* around the cooperation. Typically they started as informal cooperations and over time they are turned into a more formal organisation. Especially when the cooperation starts to handle specific common administrative tasks and development projects, a formal organisation is needed.

The most important principles for cooperation in the FUR cooperation are *interdependency, equality, and common understandings* – which is also the characteristics of policy networks. The equality between the participants is decisive for the municipalities to participate. If authority and hierarchy is introduced in the cooperation, the municipalities tend to withdraw from the cooperation.

Most of the policy networks in the case studies develop with an *inner circle* of core actors forming a policy community where the same actors meet during a long period of time, where the power relations are equalised, and where the actors respect and trust each another. The inner circle consists of politicians and administrative executives. In the *outer circle* other important regional actors participate – public as well as private. They are not involved in all matters and they do not agree in all matters. They are integrated in the planning work when needed and they typically join specific projects.

There is in general *no formal (detailed) legally binding regulation* of the FUR cooperation and most of the planning work is, as mentioned, carried out *outside* of the traditional hierarchical planning system. Only in a few cases, as e.g. North Jutland and Rogaland, is the FUR planning part of the formal planning process.

The governance development in FUR planning do *supplement* the formal hierarchical planning and is linked to the traditional representative democracy, especially in the municipalities due to the control of the FUR planning by representative local politicians. In some of the cases, the two planning processes live side by side without much relation (e.g. the Turku case) but mostly they are intertwined, when observing the cases over a longer time period (e.g. the Holbæk area). The FUR cooperation typically starts as a governance process outside and maybe in opposition to the formal regional planning system, led by the municipalities who try to avoid interference from the formal regional level. But as time passes the formal regional planning behaviour changes towards more cooperation and less use of authority, and this strengthens the relations between the formal regional actors and the municipalities in the common planning work for FURs. This cooperation process shows a very *complex picture* of FUR and regional planning, and there is no doubt that the organising of FUR planning can be characterised as *"policy FUR networks and planning in the shadow of hierarchy"* (the Planning Acts, regional plans, regional and municipals councils). The democratic issue will be dealt with below. And as mentioned above this complex planning situation creates coordination problems.

The case studies bring forward important information on how to organise and manage governance processes in FUR planning in order to make it succeed. The findings concern strategic network design as a meta-governance form. *Strategic network design* is described in chapter 3 as network construction (form and function) and network support through empowerment strategies for actors and networks in order to equalise power relations. Based on the findings in the case studies we can list the important elements in the *network and process design* used in the FUR planning processes:

Effective organising of FUR cooperation

- The establishment of a political steering group and political leadership (boards)
- Consensus decisions - veto right
- Change in leadership between municipalities
- The building of interpersonal trust between politicians and administrators
- Remove conflict issues from the cooperation to other councils
- Make decisions that benefit all in the cooperation
- No leading municipality: the largest make room for the smaller
- Administrative resources are needed
- Project based approaches: thematic groups, working groups
- Responsible master municipalities in the projects

- Contracts/agreements on common projects, responsibilities, and tasks
- Create projects that benefit all actors in the region
- The use of consultants to e.g. actual planning work and network management

We will elaborate on two of the overall most important elements: the role of the political actors and the need for administrative resources.

Municipal and regional politicians as regional meta-governors
The political leadership is essential for FUR cooperation. In only one case are the regional politicians in charge of the strategic FUR planning (North Jutland). In all other cases, the municipal politicians themselves, or in cooperation with regional politicians, carry the responsibility. The municipalities become active regional actors and through network participation, network design, and network frameworks in strategic planning, the municipal politicians become regional meta-governors. The role differs profoundly from the traditional role of a sovereign politician. In the table below, the difference between the two roles are sketched out:

Table 25: Differences between roles (Sørensen 2006).

The sovereign politician	**The meta-governor**
Decision making and allocation of resources in focus	Creating common understanding and integration in focus
Rule and law making	Goal and strategy setting
Concrete and detailed ruling (hands on)	General and indirect ruling (hands off)
Authoritarian policy	Interactive policy
Government ruler	Network participant
Ruling at a distance from the people	Ruling with the people
Citizens as incompetent and driven be self-interest	Citizens as competent co-rulers
Representative democracy preferred	Combination of democracy forms preferred

In the case studies the municipal and regional politicians involved in FUR cooperations move from the role of the sovereign politician to the meta-governor in most cases. Otherwise the cooperation does not succeed. The FUR planning is not exercised in a hierarchical setting but in an interactive policy and planning process where politicians participate on equal terms. No one has per se the highest authority to dictate the planning and the purpose is not to make detailed rules and laws that govern lower level actors and institutions. The purpose is to create some form of coherence in the general planning for a functional urban area as frameworks and guidelines for the municipal self-governance. Various political actors in the area are invited into the process as long as they follow the principles of interdependency and equality in the network cooperation.

In the case studies some lessons about *how to sustain equality* was learned. To make the FUR planning work, the strongest mayors (maybe according to municipal size and/or economic power) have to make room for the weaker mayors. The strongest ones have to step back and take most responsibility for the cooperation (since they have the most resources) but *not* the most power in the

cooperation. Otherwise politicians from smaller areas will withdraw from the cooperation. As soon as one mayor or another important stakeholder try to "sit on" and take control of the cooperation, the possibilities for trust and consensus are weakened and a result of the planning process is difficult to achieve. Different means to equalise the power relations are utilised: a mayor from a small municipality represent the cooperation in other policy relations, veto right, change in leadership from time to time, projects that benefit all etc. These are actually different kinds of empowerment strategies to equalise power relations in the FUR cooperation and they prove very successful in the case studies.

The meta-governor role is not without its *conflicts* for the municipal politicians. It is usually the municipal mayors that participate in the cooperation and they are elected to represent and attend to local municipal matters. In the case studies the local politicians often experience a conflict between regional and local matters, at least in a short-term perspective, and it becomes difficult for them to handle the situation. Most of the politicians in the case studies have experienced situations where they have made consensus-based decisions in the FUR cooperation that are not popular in their own municipal council. This is not an acceptable situation for a municipal mayor who wants to be re-elected. The principle of equality and veto is essential to maintain self-government in the municipalities and a major task in the FUR planning is to find the balance between local and regional interests. One way to deal with this issue is to take controversial issues out of the cooperation and move them to a political forum with a clear hierarchical decision structure.

The cases show clearly that FUR planning is a matter for the political elite and not a popular matter among the citizens. The mayors and the chief executives in the municipalities participate and among other regional actors making input to the planning process, we typically find representatives of interest organisation or state and regional agencies. *FUR planning is an elitist project* and there is almost no participation from the ordinary citizens. Regional planning matters are not seen as a popular subject among citizens. Citizen participation is limited to municipal and local planning.

From a democratic perspective this result from the case studies makes it important for the FUR planning to uphold a democratic anchorage of the planning in the representative democracy. Otherwise the FUR cooperation will be one of many policy networks dealing with important policy matters but operating outside and maybe undermining the representative democracy. In the case studies we find several means to strengthen the democratic anchorage of FUR planning. The most important is the *strong relationship between the mayors in the FUR cooperations and the rest of the politicians in regional and municipal councils*, which implies that the regional and municipal councils still form the democratic basis and legitimacy for the participation in the FUR cooperation. Sometimes the local councils block or constrain the planning made in the FUR cooperation due to competing interests in local and regional matters. But it is still the municipal or regional councils that have the legitimacy and formal right to make the final decisions. In some of the case studies this aspect has led the politicians and the administrators to spend plenty of time on informing about and discussing the regional matters in the local councils in order to secure local support to the FUR decisions (e.g. the Triangle Area).

Another mean to strengthen the democratic foundation and democratise the elitist FUR planning is to *strengthen public accountability* in the FUR policy and planning (Sørensen and Torfing 2005: 12-13). This requires at least transparency in the planning process, access to public dialogue with the FUR cooperation, and responsiveness from the FUR cooperation. The greatest threat against democracy from FUR planning is if it becomes a closed group of elitist politicians and

administrators that lead "secretive" negotiations about important regional decisions ("mahogany table meetings"). In the case studies it is not clear how this strengthening of public accountability and transparency is handled. But there is no doubt that it is an important task for politicians and administrators in the FUR cooperation.

A third mean to democratise the FUR planning is by *internalising democratic rules and norms* in the FUR networks – to develop rules for appropriate democratic behaviour in the networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2005: 13-14). Sørensen and Torfing talks about a democratic code of conduct on e.g. how to define and develop own interest (the municipals) into our interest (the FURs) into everybody's interest (in the larger region and society in general). The development of a democratic code of conduct is of course a political normative project and has to be developed by negotiation in the FUR cooperation. In some of the cases, elements of a democratic code of conduct have been formulated e.g. the veto right; the possibility to withdraw from certain projects; that decisions have to be made by negotiation and consensus etc. These rules are mostly related to the internal functioning of the cooperation (how to make decisions in the network) whereas a democratic conduct for the relationship between the FUR cooperation and other political arenas and the citizens are not that well developed. This is also an important task in order to strengthen the democratic anchorage of FUR cooperation.

Administrative resources are needed: facilitation, network management, and knowledge delivery.
In the case studies it is evident that an administrative backup is needed to make the FUR planning successful. Three administrative competences are of great importance:

- Expert knowledge about the functional urban region: statistical data and analyses of facts, development issues, and trends.
- Manager competences: politicians need administrative sparring and support to perform the role as meta-governors.
- Network management competences: it is typically the administrators who have to perform network facilitation and network management and they need the skills and competences to do so.

In some cases consultants are hired to provide FUR analyses and network facilitation but in most cases, the administrations try to develop these competences within the public administrations.

The administrative resources are integrated in the cooperation in different ways.

In some cases *a secretariat* is set up which is financed by the municipalities or others involved. The task of the secretariat is to initiate projects, create an overview, follow new tendencies, perform network management etc. In the cooperations with many concrete projects and common tasks these secretariats play a pivotal role in the administration of the projects and tasks.

In other cases the administrative resources are drawn from the *existing (changing) administration* in the municipalities. In these cases in particular, there is a wish for more administrative resources. It can be very difficult for administrators to find sufficient time to deal with the FUR planning on top of other tasks. The change in administration also hinders the continuous development of knowledge and experiences regarding FUR matters within one unit. On the other hand regional awareness is spread in the municipalities

In both types of cases we find problems. The first solution concentrates the regional knowledge and awareness in one unit outside the conventional administrations and hinders the spread of knowledge etc. to the regular regional and local administrators. The other solution hinders as mentioned the constant development of regional knowledge within an organisation – these contrasting problems represents a typical organisational dilemma.

In most cases a *project approach* is chosen as the organising principle in the FUR cooperation. Politicians, administrators, and other planning actors are organised in thematic project groups in order to handle specific issues. A blend of individuals from across administrative levels and municipal borders are preferred. This is conceived to be a mean to develop FUR understandings and maybe common planning practices.

10. Conclusions

Spatiality, regionality, and sustainability of FUR planning

The realisation of regionalisation of development issues has sparked off the cooperation activities presented in the cases. Where the issues and the consequent planning activities deal with the regional space in a meaningful way, we have coined them "spatial planning" as a wide category, mainly to distinguish it from "non-spatial" planning activities, such as budgetary planning.

This is of course a matter of definition, since almost all planning activities have at least some spatial consequences. However vague the distinction in some instances, the categorisation is meant to bring out the idea of how the planning cooperation within a functional urban region aims at developing regional structures in a way that affects the spatial distribution of functions. As a planned or unplanned "side-effect" these planning activities also affect the idea of the region itself.

By this definition it would seem that "spatial planning activities" within the cases would encompass a multitude of activities. While this is true in principle and also in the practises of the regions to a certain extent, we have chosen to focus on certain elements, processes, and projects. They bring out, when perceived as a part of the scope of all portrayed cases, aspects of spatial planning that complement each other and work to build a more comprehensive picture of this kind of activities.

On a conceptual level, it can be said that the differences in spatial planning approaches reflect the different meanings assigned to "planning" in the cases. At one corner are the strategic development planning cases, where the activities deal mostly with the ideas of regional development as a whole, with scarce explicit references to spatial or territorial distribution. At the second corner are the cases where spatiality is pronounced through the cooperation activities, the partnerships in the functional urban region context, or the will or need to match certain activities between the actors. The third corner is occupied by the cases where land use planning is the centrepiece of cooperation, or at least a strong aspect of it.

The distinction between "zoning" and "planning" (cf. e.g. Mäntysalo & Nyman 2001) regarding land use regulation and spatial development is a framework that helps in understanding how practises develop into different forms. "Planning" defined in generic terms as intentional organisation of future activities, and "spatial planning" as planning having a spatial aspect, is distinguished from "zoning" as a practise to fulfil legal regulatory duties. This insight is especially valuable when looking at the differences of the highlighted practises in different Nordic countries.

It is clear that the FURs that have land use planning in the regulative sense of "zoning" – especially the Finnish cases, but also two of the Norwegian ones – also have other "spatial planning" activities that may or may not be decisive in shaping the development of the physical structures in the region. The focus of this study, however, has been on the practises that are perceived to be most directly concerned with physical planning. However, also in the cases where the main line of spatial planning consists of "overall" activities with less pronounced connections to physical planning as such, the main arguments for cooperation have still been "spatial" or "territorial" in nature.

A corresponding issue is that of plan implementation or application. To see the plan as the end-product of a project called "planning" is in line with the notion of implementing the plan. The way in which the plans are taking place as parts of a process in which the planning itself evolves, the participating actors learn, and the idea of the preferred future development and how to realise it is being constantly re-evaluated, refers to the notion of application of the plan. Along this dividing line, the cases show overwhelming support to the idea of applying the plan. Only in a very strictly legal view the legally binding inter-municipal and regional plans are "implemented" as regulations. However, also these cases point to more strategic and process-oriented thinking occurring behind the plan.

Thus, the regulatory plan is only one, legally oriented document that works towards the strategic goals of the FUR cooperation. It might be that the land use planning work, in being both time consuming and politically flammable, easily gets more attention as a realised physical plan than as a part of the planning process. The notion of "zoning" and the relation of the FUR land use plans hereto should be pointed out again. The work – in all cases of land use planning where the plan is finalised – has included discussions and studies into structural alternatives, with evaluations of the alternatives from several points of view. Already this is a sign of a more strategic approach.

The cases in which the activities mainly consist of cooperation that aims at uniting the region through creation of mutual functionalities are interesting for two reasons: firstly, because planning of these activities is often not perceived as spatial planning in the sense that the term is used in this study.

The second interesting aspect is how these planning activities are building the functional urban region through the cooperation itself, and through the (spatial) consequences the activities produce. The region-unifying cooperation is also effective from two different angles. First, the inter-municipal organisation of the activities creates a sense of coherence for the participants of the cooperation, most often selected municipal civil servants, politicians, or other key persons. This mutuality is then transferred to the institutional level through formalisation of the activities – through resources, interaction between the cooperation organisation and the municipal decision making, as well as – in some cases - delegation of decision-making power to the cooperation. Secondly, the activity is necessarily communicated to a wider regional "audience". This means that even the act of planning for an activity may create a positive sense of territoriality for a larger group of individuals or organisations. Once the planned activity is realised, the new functionality becomes an indication of (a) shared reality, and (depending on the spatiality of the function) will further enhance the sense of belonging to the region.

This bipolar perception of the region corresponds to the ideas presented by Paasi (1986, 1990) concerning the creation of "regionality". Paasi identifies the concepts of "regional identity" and "regional consciousness" as two separate concepts. Regional identity is the set of features in a region that makes it different from all other regions. This is predominantly an analytical category, used in research and increasingly also in regional marketing. Regional consciousness on the other hand is the consciousness among the citizens of the uniqueness of their region. This is a combination of various facts and conceptions, not necessarily measurable but equally "true" to the people. The aspects of regional consciousness are often ideal for regional branding.

As already mentioned, spatial planning in FURs does consider the notion of "development" quite differently than a traditional, regulatory land use planning approach would imply. The "continuum"

from strategic a-spatial planning through spatial development planning and spatial planning of functions to physical planning illustrates well how the common future may be aimed for using different sets of tools. To aim for a certain "development" may mean vastly different things.

However, what is striking is that the rhetoric of the envisioned future share a degree of similarity in that they all aim at embracing the three pillars of sustainability in one way or another. While it seems that most development planning starts with economic growth as the main goal, a surprising number of cases also deal with social issues directly or more subtly. Regional environmental issues seem to most frequently be on a separate agenda, but in the land use planning cases the environmental sustainability issues are "explicitly embedded" in the plans. Whether or not this inclusion of sustainability rhetoric should be taken as a sign of sustainability is another matter. However, the explicated content of a plan is eventually intended to be realised, so the correspondence of sustainability rhetoric and its importance in the plan contents can at least be assumed. Furthermore, the evaluative practices such as SEA guarantee at least partial examinations of sustainability issues.

The proponents of the view that sustainable development in its full format should be the dictating starting point for policy development are not always thrilled about bringing sustainability onto the agendas. They note that many attempts at integrating sustainability into the economic policies have led to only marginal improvements in other fields of action than that of economy. At the same time such integration makes sustainable development as a catch-phrase a rhetorical component of all policies, making further structural work for achieving sustainability more difficult. Even if sustainable solutions could in principle be demanded due to rhetorical integration, in practice the difficulty of precisely defining sustainable outcomes provides excuses for its omission.

The holders of the view that economic development and growth are needed primarily in order to satisfy the preconditions for sustainable development, point out that as a result of the sustainability agenda being strongly present, many aspects of sustainability have been incorporated into the economic policies. Since achieving sustainability is long-term and incremental in nature, integration of sustainability principles into policies is important and will work towards changed attitudes of the decision makers, civil servants, and citizens alike. Since the age of community regulation is all but over and new forms of governance point at the increasing role of the soft, flexible, and voluntary steering, this is the only way in which sustainability can be brought into existence.

Many others share the view that while striking a balance between the two is a difficult task, it is not impossible to solve in practical situations. This is said to be evident in many activities at project and programme levels within the EU-funded actions.

Overall, while it seems that economic sustainability is the foremost and the most easily attributable sustainable development dimension, it must be noted that the dimensions also operate at different levels. Whereas social and economic sustainability are in need of regional emphasis, and ecological sustainability is indeed a "framing" principle at all levels, the classic environmental sustainability is already partly integrated in the more detailed municipal physical planning principles, partly overlooked at the regional level just because it may be inconveniently in conflict with economic sustainability. This is well portrayed in the discussion about enlarging labour market areas: when social sustainability is defined as the good life and it also encompasses ideas of quality living conditions in a physical sense, equality in housing, etc., and when economic sustainability means that longer commutes are tolerated, and due to demands of competitiveness, choice of quality

housing environments need to be available - meaning beautiful surroundings along the coastlines and in the countryside – then it seems inevitable that car-dependency will not be diminished.

Region-building and the FUR

In building the theoretical framework for the study, the concepts of functional urban area (FUA) and functional urban region (FUR) were at first treated as interchangeable. However, insights in both the theoretical literature and the cases clearly indicate the need to separate the two. Whereas the FUA is an analytical concept for comparison and delimitation, the FUR is a concept concentrating on strategic thinking in the region. It is both a starting point and the result of cooperation. The most important finding concerning the general correspondence between the perceived "functional urban region" and the territorial extent of the actual urban activities, the administrative delimitation, and the political concept, is that there needs to be, among the development actors of a functional region, an awareness of what is meant by each of them.

Concerning what the functional urban region is, it is evident that there is good everyday knowledge about the actual functionalities, especially in relation to what are perceived as the most important aspects: traffic, work and public services. Regional analyses that address the "true" functionalities (meaning how things are located in space, not how they are grouped statistically per municipality) are often carried out by the use of GIS. Also, the question of how to delimit the functional urban region is not problematic in terms of statistical analysis of the municipal level (such as delimiting LLMs, ABS-regions, FUAs). These statistics can typically be found within the administrative system, where this "factual" knowledge is developed and apprehended. It has to be communicated though, in an ongoing process to the politicians who tend to focus on local interests. The "urban regional consciousness" about actual functionalities has to be reproduced continuously in the political systems.

Based on the evidence from the cases, the functional urban region – defined through the cooperation composition – has proved to be a feasible way to define the cooperation area. In all FUR cases, the definition of the cooperation area is based on qualitative starting points, not on statistical analysis of the area or a pre-defined administrative unit. In some cases, the cooperation area approximates a clear-cut commuting area that may even transcend regional boundaries. In others, the polycentric urban structures or the influence of larger cities mean that the functionalities of the FUR are more open for interpretation.

In the cases, the rationales behind the studied FUR-wide cooperation activities vary slightly. While there is an inherent bottom-up nature in the concept of functional urban region, it is also subject to state policies and regional influence. The Danish municipal reform, for example, pays relatively little attention to commuting functionalities but puts emphasis on service provision functionalities. In Finland, the latest developments in legislation, concerning regional development and service provision, in fact creates functional (cooperation) regions by instituting the cooperation areas within the regional capitals' urban regions. Also the existing national cooperation programmes that emphasise FUA as the starting point for cooperation have strengthened urban region thinking.

In three cases the planning activities for the functional urban region are carried out within the framework of regional planning and are administered by regional authorities. However, in three other cases the functional urban region reaches beyond the regional administrative borders.

Whereas the cooperation area in all cases is defined in terms of the administrative boundaries of the municipalities (or, in two cases, regions), and in many cases correspond well with the statistical functional urban area, this is only a parallel way to look at the issue of delimiting the cooperation area. In reality, the ten (out of twelve) cases that correspond to the idea of the functional urban region (FUR) as a functional urban area (FUA) all have different functional foundations for delimiting the cooperation. Furthermore, it is obviously not a question of delimitation but one of creating partnerships for cooperation. The only exceptions to this are, concerning some of the cases, the historical situations or present aspirations in which state or regional authorities have made demands on the composition of the urban region cooperation.

The cases illustrate a continuum in terms of how the process of cooperation is carried out in different levels of regional integration within the FUR concept. As a starting point for cooperation, a realisation of common interests and issues already points to common functionalities. However, cooperation activities may also be geared to producing those functionalities, or defining the functional region – creating both new spatial applications for e.g. services, or a sense of coherence: *region-building*.

Yet further, the notion of a functional urban region can be used to create images of larger, more *competitive regional entitie*s for increased attraction in the inter-regional and the national competition for inhabitants, businesses, and even state institutions.

In conclusion, the cases show that a combination of solid and serious knowledge about the urban regional functionalities and the political will for common action are the most decisive factors for achieving results in form of e.g. common plans and visions. This means that traditional planning work in the form of analysis, statistics etc is still important, but not the only important element in the decision-making process.

The content of spatial planning

As mentioned earlier, the issues of plan content have not been pursued as broadly as those of territoriality and governance. However, it seems impossible not to conclude generally on some of our observations about how the content issues appear in the cases. In the analysis part, we recognised four basic elements of plan content that seem to elaborate the conceptual ideas of urban (region) sustainability in an integrated approach. These are:

- Linking economic policies with spatial development issues
- Developing a sustainable regional physical/spatial structure
- Developing quality outcomes of spatial and physical planning
- Integrating transportation planning into spatial/physical planning

The issue of how to link economic development policies to the policies and practices of spatial planning seems at first glance to be quite straightforward. The planning documents emphasise the importance of economic development in a multitude of ways. In the FUR context, the importance of the "triple helix" model, in a few cooperations as activities in practice and in more cases as a development objective for regional competitiveness and coherence, not only shows how the practice and concept of planning has changed, but also points to the necessity to perceive spatial development issues within a more pronounced economic framework. Space has started to matter again.

More concretely, the European discussion on the concepts of regional competitiveness, regional economies, and regional innovation systems, just to mention a few, have paved way for perceiving the region (and in many instances the FUR) as the basic territorial unit within which economic development takes place. And the importance of the "region" means unification against external competition as well as division of labour for internal efficiency. This has brought about the need to think in terms such as spatial economies, labour market areas, regional enlargement and the like, and this has, in turn, started to translate into spatial planning terms.

The sustainability of the regional physical structure and how it can be improved has come up in most of the cases. The structural questions have been addressed in both physical terms (regional models) and more general spatial approaches. The idea of a spatial structure as an abstraction without the physical mapping is appealing, especially in the light of planning legislation and physical planning cultures that emphasise the sovereignty of certain levels and institutions in the physical planning practices. However, in the circumstances of multi-level physical planning conventions, viable regional models have been developed to support or supplement (economic) development planning.

The notions of quality in FUR planning differ from case to case. The most promising aspects deal with transportation and land use corridors as "quality corridors", highlighting the competences of the region. Quality is in some cases also seen almost as a parallel concept to sustainability, in its ability to convey something that is "more", in a manner not necessarily resource-intensive, depletive, nor socially polarising.

The quest for integrated transport and land use planning has been continuing for decades. It has become more pronounced due to the increased environmental burden the private car is placing on the urban and regional space. It is not only a question of emissions, greenhouse gases and petroleum depletion. Increasingly it is becoming an issue of longer distances, more time spent in transit, excessive amounts of land used for transportation infrastructure, splintering green networks, diminishing the quality of the urban and the rural environments, landscapes and milieu, as well as an increased unnecessary economic burden on public and private sectors alike.

However, the integration has been anything but easy. The normative conceptualisations of the sustainable city seem in opposition to the economic rationale of the everyday business be it for the firm, the municipality or the inhabitant. Since the optimisation of the system has a different equilibrium that that of the individual actors, it has proved a difficult task to realise practical models of sustainable urban region transport.

In the medium sized cities of the case studies, transportation system planning is standard procedure. However, in a FUR context the situation is more complex. While certainly practiced in the cases, the depth of the transportation planning leaves some room for improvement, according to the cases. The level of real-life integration varies much in relation to the physical planning orientation – the more physical the approach, the clearer the connection. However, this alone tells very little about the content of transportation planning as such. Eventually, the sustainability of such planning and integration is dependent on the values and the strategic decisions that the work is based on. Therefore, the processes of governance become most relevant in this respect as well.

Spatial planning as meta-governance

Spatial planning has changed, not only concerning FUR cooperation, but more generally in both municipal and regional planning, and cannot be defined only as land use planning anymore.

Spatial planning in the FUR includes first and foremost strategic planning for FURs but in most cases combined with soft intentional land use planning. However, in a few cases the spatial planning is combined with hard land use planning but then it is founded on equality and consensus. The combination of strategic planning and some form of land use planning makes the FUR cooperation most successful.

Strategic planning has come to the forefront as an attempt to coordinate and control development in autonomous local and regional areas for the common benefit. Spatial strategic planning is an excellent example of a new steering form in public organisations that is emerging these years. Meta-governance is the new buzz word, and it is developed as an indirect governing form in order to construct, influence, and frame planning and development activities in a fragmented and multi-centred political system without undermining the self-government. It can be interpreted as a re-invention of government to create some form of cohesion and integration in spite of the fragmentation. Meta-governance is exercised in different forms in the case studies. One form is through frameworks for development and planning in certain areas. Another is through the design of cooperation and network processes, and a third is through direct participation in various planning activities and cooperations concerning planning. Firstly, we look into the spatial planning in combination with land use planning as the creation of frameworks.

The combination of strategic planning and land use planning

Strategic planning efforts are clearly a matter of creating network frameworks through discursive framing and storytelling (FUR identity) and through political goals and strategies. The combination with soft land use regulation matches this indirect form of governing. The integration of binding land use regulation is an attempt to integrate a direct government mean in the governance setting but still based on equality and consensus in the decision making.

The case studies present different approaches to strategic planning, but it is still possible to find similarities and describe an ideal process for strategic planning as made in the report. The most important components of strategic planning are:

- Creation of cooperation networks based on equality, consensus and dialogues
- Creation of a common identity and “destiny”
- Political visions and goals
- Division of responsibilities and development tasks within the FUR
- Specific issues for common action

This strategy is typically supplemented by either a physical plan or a more strategic structural model for the urban development and functionalities.

Strategic planning is in most cases combined with land use regulation in different forms. The case studies revealed three different strategies for the combinations:

1. One is to leave the land use planning to the municipal level

2. Another is a soft intentional land use regulation
3. A third is a hard binding regulation made by the FUR cooperation

The first one is typically used when the FUR cooperation is new and starts from scratch. It takes time and trust between politicians to enter the discussion of common binding land use planning in areas outside the formal planning system.

Soft regulation consists of land-use regulation as *declarations of intent* and guidelines for the municipalities. Solid expert knowledge is used *to point to the optimal possibilities for land-use.* This land-use planning is the most workable form for politicians – meaning that sometimes an agreement can be achieved on the strategies and the intentional land use regulation but not on the traditional hard binding land-use regulation. Soft regulation matches the indirect frame work setting in strategic planning.

The third form of land use regulation is the hard binding regulation where decision-making competences are transferred from the local and/or the regional councils to the FUR cooperation. Hard binding land use regulation is as mentioned a government mean used in governance settings and it could cause problems. But the integration is made in a form acceptable for the governance partners. It is made voluntarily based on dialogue, consensus, and veto rights.

An important conclusion on the combination of strategic planning and land use regulation is that land use regulation issues has to develop into a form acceptable for the autonomous political partners and the political thinking and acting in the FUR cooperation. Otherwise it does cause conflicts and the risk of collapse of the FUR cooperation is high.

The variations within the planning approaches related to the combination of strategic and land use planning can also be described as two different planning orientations:

1) The first orientation is that of strategic planning in the form of regional development strategies, programmes, and plans (e.g. RUPs). This orientation emphasises:

- Common strategic action to enhance regional competitiveness through a variety of measures, most of which have a spatial dimension.
- The end product of the process is a strategic development perspective.
- The process allows for a wide variety of options to be studied, documented, and followed up upon, according to how the regional development is envisaged.
- The transformation of development goals into spatial plans is always based on further focusing of the themes as needs arise.

This approach seems to rely on strong municipal physical planning, and the connection between development planning and physical planning is made only according to specific needs. Strategic planning orientation is often supplemented within the region by inter-municipal soft land use cooperation over individual municipal borders. The weakness of this approach is the weak connection between strategies and actual physical development in local areas.

2) The second orientation is the land use plan-oriented approach, in which the map, the land use plan, is seen as the basic end product of the process. What is common for the regional land use planning documents is:

- A FUR approach differentiating the plan from municipal and regional plans in the strategic approach, the level of detail, and the focal issues.
- A multi-scale approach (including relations to national level structures, as well as development strategies for the localities),
- Attention to the principles of sustainable regional development
- A vision of the desired structural aspects of the FUR
- Integration of, or at least a parallel process of, regional transportation planning
- Attention to the quality factors of FUR development
- A wide range of well-presented thematic analyses

For an innovative approach in physical planning, it is important to be able to map the thematic fields. This is not only for the sake of producing the planning document, but also for visualising the spatial relations and the extent of the different aspects (such as population by density, extent of the planned industrial areas, green structure by quality, etc.). It is especially important to provide concretisations of the principles of sustainable regional development.

This approach produces clear-cut physical planning documents, with specific studies, analyses, and other background materials that address the issue of how to transform regional development goals into land use planning language. In this respect the work is coherent as well as transparent, and the results are technically viable (provided that the background work is sufficient). The main problem of this approach is how the plan is linked in reality to the strategic development planning and its goals.

Creation of governance networks, process, and management

As mentioned, meta-governance in spatial planning is not only about making frameworks for planning in the FUR areas. Meta-governance can also be exercised by network participation and design. We will make some concluding remarks on these issues as well.

In the cases it becomes clear that organisation matters in FUR planning. It is evident that cooperation in itself and especially inter-municipal cooperation is not only a positive factor in the development of a common understanding between the actors within a functional urban region – it is a decisive factor. The same goes for the management of the governance processes.

A common history of interaction is a necessary prerequisite for successful cooperation on mutual development planning. Even if the history is riddled with confrontations, even failures, different-minded parties will at some point become "dear enemies". When mutual interests for developing the urban region become stronger, the attitudes of e.g. municipalities tend to change. The "war" between the municipalities, and a growing consciousness in the planning system regarding the need for cooperation to survive in the new geography, leads to cooperation.

According to the evidence from the cases, the process of FUR planning within the functional urban region can be conceptualised into four specific challenges or processes:

- Consciousness-building process
- Creation of political will and leadership
- Creation of focus and organisation
- Region-building and governance process

In practise, these "steps" are a description of a historical development in the case study regions. The processes take place partly in parallels, partly with specific instances marking the steps "up the ladder".

In order to enable the common perspectives that lead to the FUR as being thought of as a meaningful sphere of action, a process by which the mutual understanding is reached is necessary.

The process of *consciousness building is the first challenge* and it concerns developing a consciousness concerning the regional attributes or "wholeness": what are the external threats and how do they affect "us"; who are "we" and on what grounds is the 'we' based; what common problems do we have; what are our individual vs. our mutual strengths and resources; etc. This challenge is met by analyses of the urban region – showing what unites "us" and who is "within" the region (FUR). We have already mentioned this process several times.

The cases show that generally, actors in the urban region (private and/or public) proactively advance such cooperation. The starting points are common problems or common development needs, and the motivation is coupled with support from either the national or the regional level (possibilities of the law, matching state decisions, interplay and division of labour with regional planning activities) or with opposition to the higher authorities (the will to break apart from regional planning or national policy).

The second challenge regards the creation of motivation for mutual activities, based on the "sounding board" of the first challenge: the consciousness should provide the first "proof" that the region exists, that it is a coherent one, and that there is reason to act in unison. There needs to be an understanding that common action is needed, that it is more beneficial than not doing so, and that it can bring about measurable, visible, or envisioned positive changes to everyone in the region.

Sustaining the development of FURs is first and foremost a task for the politicians, typically the mayors, supported by administrative executives and planners in joint action. As in all development work, there is a need for a constant dialogue and reciprocal exchange of information as well as ideas between the civil servants (planners, experts, and administrators) and most importantly, the politicians in the region.

The *politicians* are the core actors in the FUR cooperations, and political commitment and participation are decisive factors for the cooperation. Especially municipal politicians become central actors as *regional meta-governors* (they exercise the meta-governance), sometimes in cooperation with regional politicians, but also on their own. The FUR cooperations are mostly developed as strong policy communities outside or beside the formal planning system and the essential steering principles are equality, interdependency, and voluntarism. These principles are clearly essential for success in the planning process. The consequence of this form of policy making is, that if local politicians want to be influential in FUR matters, they have to participate in these policy community networks and influence the network cooperation directly. Political network participation becomes an important meta-governance strategy.

The third challenge is creating the actual *substance* and *designing the form of cooperation*. Most often this, too, is a gradual process, where cooperation is initiated with one activity or a set of activities that is found both feasible and politically possible, and then more follows. We have

already mentioned the substance of the activities. The design of the networks and the organisations differs widely in the cases but we also find plenty of similarities which make it possible to describe an *effective organisation of FUR cooperation*. The most important components are the creation of a strong and committed political leadership, sustaining equality in leadership and power relations, the delivery of administrative support, and the use of project organisation.

The case studies also revealed the importance of a competent *network management* in the processes, performed by either the administration or consultants. In most of the cases the administrative units are about to strengthen their competences in this field of leadership in order to gain more control of and influence on the governance processes in FUR planning. The most important issue in network management is to govern the process without using hierarchy, orders and dictates.

The fourth challenge - here termed "region-building" in order to show the linkages to the discussion concerning the European efforts in region-building at a geographically more general level of "regions" - is the actual work that is the (continuous) effort in the cooperation. While the planning documents, programmed activities, and the organising work itself are the results of the cooperation as such, the underlying rationality is that the region must be established and re-established continuously in a process that emphasises regional unity, provides images and outcomes of regional coherence, quality and competitiveness, as well as slowly re-creating the region through the effects of the planning activities for regional functionalities. We have mentioned this issue earlier in the conclusion. The model below illustrates some of the issues.

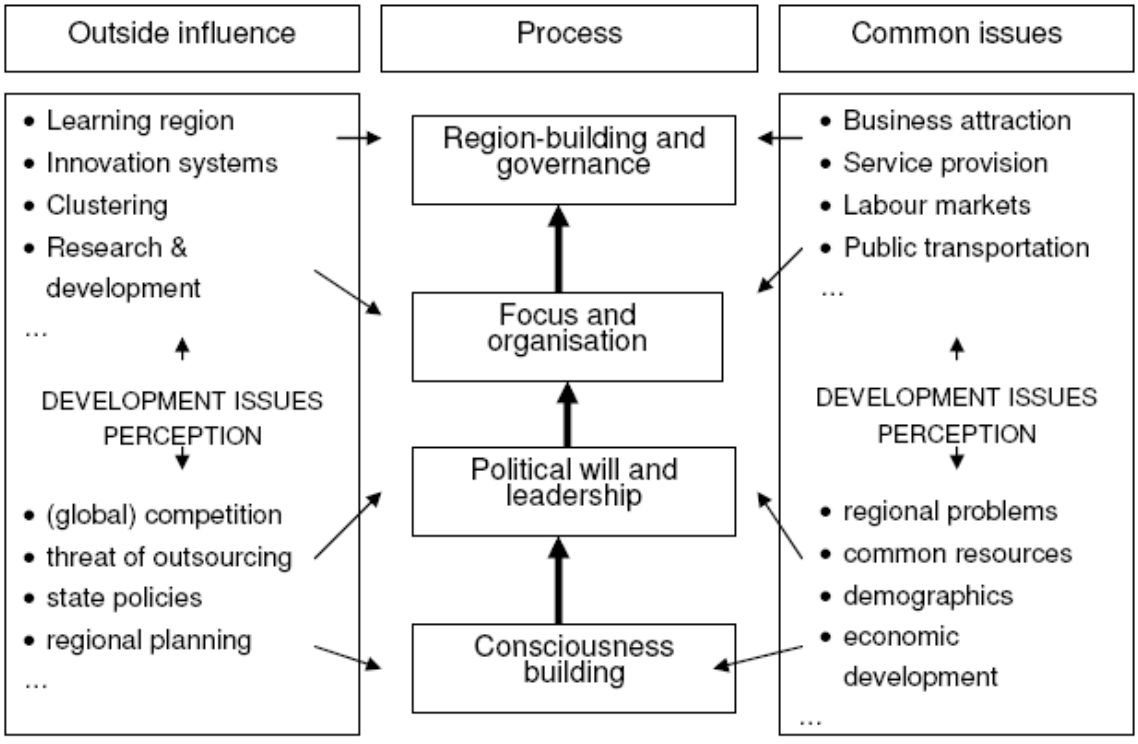


Figure 28: Model of issues related to challenges.

Governance problems in FUR planning

Although strategic FUR cooperation and planning is an attempt to create some form of coherence and integration in the policy and planning of the FURs, these cooperations also contribute to the fragmentation of planning at a higher level because it typically operates outside or beside the formal

planning system. This is a typical governance situation in the Nordic countries. Several policy actors take on the task of meta-governance and perform it side by side or in competition on being *the* meta-governor. In the case studies we find the obvious consequences in form of coordination problems between plans and strategies formed in different forums. Especially three problems of coordination and integration occur:

- One is between FUR planning and the general regional planning
- Another is between general FUR planning and FUR business planning
- The third is a lack of cohesion between FUR planning and municipal land use planning

The solutions to these problems are not yet found and FUR planning has to cope with these problems in the future.

The democratic anchorage of FUR planning

FUR planning is an elitist and not very popular matter for the ordinary citizens. Mayors from local and regional councils and administrative chief executives are the core actors and they form strong policy communities on FUR development. When municipal politicians become meta-governors we do see a major shift in the institutional division of labour regarding regional matters.

From a democratic perspective it points to the importance of the democratic anchorage of FUR planning. The actors represent the top of the representative democracy in regions and municipalities and this is decisive to uphold a broad democratic legitimacy of the cooperation. In the case studies conflicts between local and regional interests are felt by the local politicians and they are difficult to handle in the FUR cooperation. This is why the democratic anchorage needs to be strengthened in the FUR cooperation. It can be done in different ways. Three are mentioned in this report:

- A strong relationship between politicians in the FUR cooperation and the local and regional formal councils
- A strengthening of public accountability in the FUR planning process
- Internalisation of a common code of democratic conduct in the cooperation

The democratic anchorage of FUR activities is another important matter for the FUR cooperations to handle in the future.

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