

Foreword

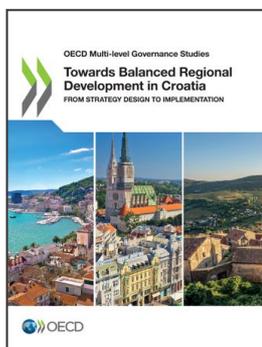
Building on Croatia's decade-long efforts to create a legislative, regulatory and governance framework that supports regional and local development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, Croatia adopted, in 2021, its National Development Strategy 2030 with the clear goal of delivering balanced regional development. To assist in meeting that objective, and in response to a request from the Government of Croatia and its Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (MRDEUF), this report reviews Croatia's multi-level governance and strategic planning arrangements supporting regional development. It is part of the "Enhanced Strategic Planning at Regional and Local Levels in Croatia" project, funded by Norway Grants.

The report starts by analysing Croatia's regional development trends, highlighting where territorial disparities have narrowed, stabilised or even widened across a broad range of areas over the past decade. From there, the report explores how Croatia's multi-level governance framework supporting regional development works in practice. Finally, it identifies a series of challenges that Croatia should address, in order to ensure that national and subnational governments have the necessary human and financial resources and tools to contribute to increased regional competitiveness and well-being across its territories.

The report builds on a number of activities undertaken as part of the project. First, the OECD and MRDEUF organised a series of knowledge-sharing fora bringing together representatives from Croatia's national and subnational governments to facilitate learning and peer-to-peer exchange on topics such as funding and financing, and monitoring and evaluating regional development plans. Second, the OECD organised capacity building events for staff from the MRDEUF and Croatia's 21 regional development agencies (RDAs), covering issues such as stakeholder engagement and vision-setting. Third, the OECD organised two study tours for MRDEUF and RDA staff to meet with regional development agencies in Andalucía, Spain and Wallonia, Belgium, in order to learn from international good practices.

This report was developed as part of the Programme of Work of the OECD's Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC), a leading international forum in the fields of regional, urban, and rural development policy and multi-level governance, which is served by the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE).

The RDPC emphasises the importance of multi-level governance and place-based approaches that are tailored to regional and local needs. To support the RDPC's leadership in this area, the OECD created the Multi-level Governance Studies series in 2016. This report contributes to the body of knowledge contained in this series. The report was approved by the RDPC through written procedure on 18 April 2024 (CFE/RDPC(2024)10).



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