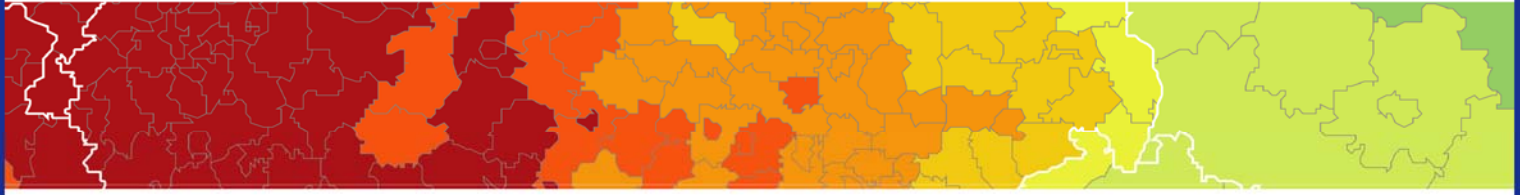


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



LinkPAs - Linking networks of protected areas to territorial development

Targeted Analysis

Executive Summary

Version 27/06/2018

This target analysis activity has been conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

Authors

Maria Prezioso, Maria Coronato, Angela D’Orazio, Michele Pigliucci, University of Rome “Tor Vergata” (Italy)

Massimo Sargolini, Maria Teresa Idone, Paolo Perna, Ilenia Pierantoni, University of Camerino (Italy)

Andrea Omizzolo, Luca Cetara, Thomas Streifeneder, Filippo Favilli, European Academy of Bozen-Bolzano – Eurac Research (Italy)

Michael Huber, Michael Jungmeier, Hanns Werner Kirchmeir, Institute of Ecology (Austria)

Andrieu Julien, Briche Elodie, Merad Myriam, Vignal Matthieu, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France)

Miglena Zhiyanski, Margarita Georgieva, Maria Glushkova, Rositsa Yaneva, Forest Research Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Bulgaria)

Advisory Group

ESPON EGTC: Michaela Gensheimer (Project Expert), Akos Szabo (Financial Exper), Ilona Raugze (Director), Piera Petruzzi (Outreach)

Information on ESPON and its projects can be found on www.espon.eu.

The most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects can be downloaded and examined from the website provided.

This delivery is available in an electronic version only.

© ESPON, 2018

Printing, reproduction or quoting is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and a copy is forwarded to the ESPON EGTC in Luxembourg.

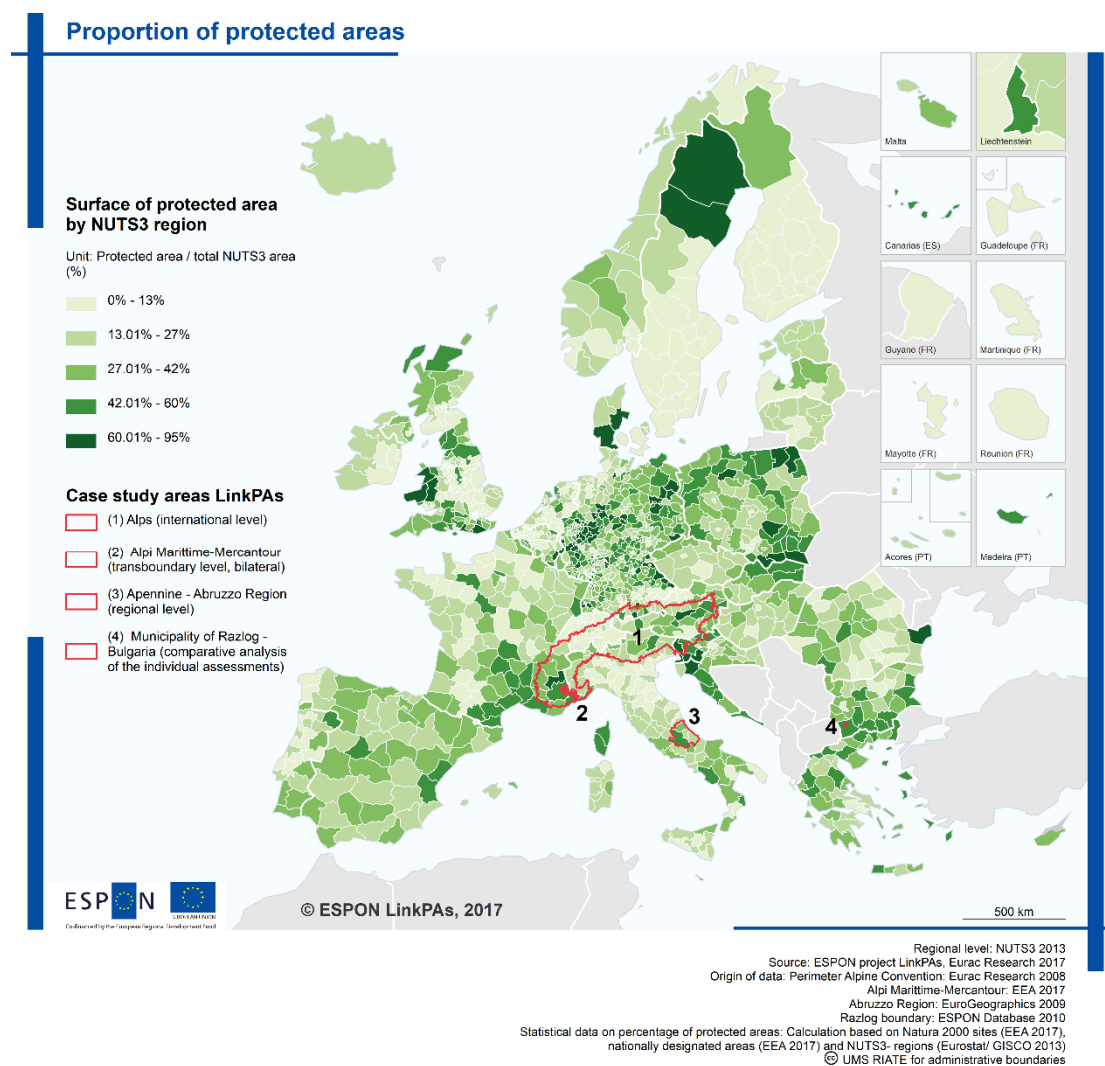
Contact: info@espon.eu

LinkPAs - Linking networks of protected areas to territorial development

From Protect Areas (PAs) to Network of Protected Areas (NPAs): a soft governance mechanism to implement territorial development

Countries and regions have different ways of identifying and designating Protected Areas. PAs in Europe (Map. 1) are legally established in order to achieve different management objectives strictly linked to nature and biodiversity conservation.

Map 1: Proportion of protected areas



PAs are increasingly being designated and managed as systems, rejecting the traditional view that regards protected areas as ‘islands of nature’, fenced off from the dangerous outside world. The objectives of biological and cultural diversity are integrated by social and economic aims, e.g. the provision of ecosystem services for settlements and human well-being. The recent new Action Plan of the EU Commission (Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy, EC 2017), devoted to reaching the EU 2020 goals on biodiversity, identifies the following as its priority: “ensuring better coherence of biodiversity conservation with broader socio-economic

objectives". In order to achieve this aim, in many cases Networks of PAs (NPAs) emerged as a governance instrument in the framework of territorial sustainable development.

NPAs are formed by PAs. The areas are considered the basic element in the planning rationale as the target of specific rule as well as the elements of envisaged spatial structure. On the other hand, NPAs can also be considered as collective actors in the planning domain when they play as a territorial organization formed by managing authority of single PAs. Therefore, NPAs can be considered passive or active actors in territorial development strategies. In addition, NPA management and sector development strategies are generally integrated through planning instruments (according to national/regional legislation), which enable an NPA to adopt shared mitigation measures and policies so as to mainly facilitate climate change adaptation, particularly in the mountain areas. These strategies are also able to help biodiversity conservation across Europe, since they respect the specific characteristics of each area and its local identity. NPAs need to be politically supported at European and national/regional level in order to encourage the local stakeholders' action in dealing with the challenges they currently face.

Understanding NPAs to integrate them into territorial policies

In the framework of European NPAs, LinkPAs has investigated Protected Areas (PAs) within four stakeholder regions: Alpine Region - ALPARC, Alpi-Marittime Mercantour (IT-FR); Abruzzo Region (IT), Razlog Municipality (BG). These regions have joined different NPAs according to their specific *territorial characteristics* (e.g. PAs typologies, biodiversity, cultural heritage and tourism, ecoservices, etc.), *institutional structure* (e.g. legal status, governance models), *geographical specificity and diversity* (e.g. mountain with low accessibility, the population, poor services of general interest) and *geographical location* (within the scope of application of an international treaty).

Examining 16 of the networks available across Europe has highlighted that:

1. *NPAs are the main tool for implementation of Green Infrastructures (GI) as they often include stepstones and nodes within the GI-networks. NPAs are able to play a key role in GI implementation policy at European, national and regional level.*

A clear definition of the role, mandate and function of NPAs is crucial for transcending their boundaries in influencing territorial sustainable development. GI policy can strengthen the role of PAs, and the formal involvement of NPAs as observer, as working group leader, in the implementation of macroregional and regional strategies is crucial to improve PAs' strategic frameworks. A possible way could be looking the NPAs as assigned observers, recognition these as stakeholder or by statutes dedicated where the NPA rule is well delined.

2. *NPAs make use of joint projects to create their own identity and build new partnerships within other policy sectors*

If NPAs are recognised as part of public administration structures, they may be entitled to establishing advisory boards involving regional stakeholders (at local or regional level). This can be an effective means to improve communication among policy sectors.

3. *NPAs should strengthen their role as agents to promote sustainable/green economic sectors, particularly their core sectors, i.e. ecological connectivity and knowledge exchange.* NPAs can play an important role in defining common standards for tourism, hiking, green labels, Natura 2000 management. Stakeholder territories should make use of their NPAs to create strong sustainable and regional tourism brands in line with their own territorial objectives.

Trans/International EU funded projects are among the most efficient instrument for NPAs implementation projects, particularly within transnational and transregional areas. Programmes with an intersectoral focus, explicitly addressing NPAs or addressing specific natural spaces (e.g. forests, wetlands) would strengthen NPAs substantially. Related calls could also be linked with the macroregional strategies (e.g. EUSALP, EUSDR).

In transboundary areas with similar natural challenges, NPAs are a promising tool to overcome administrative boundaries and often the only option to develop joint transboundary standards.

How to integrate the management of NPAs into sectoral development strategies

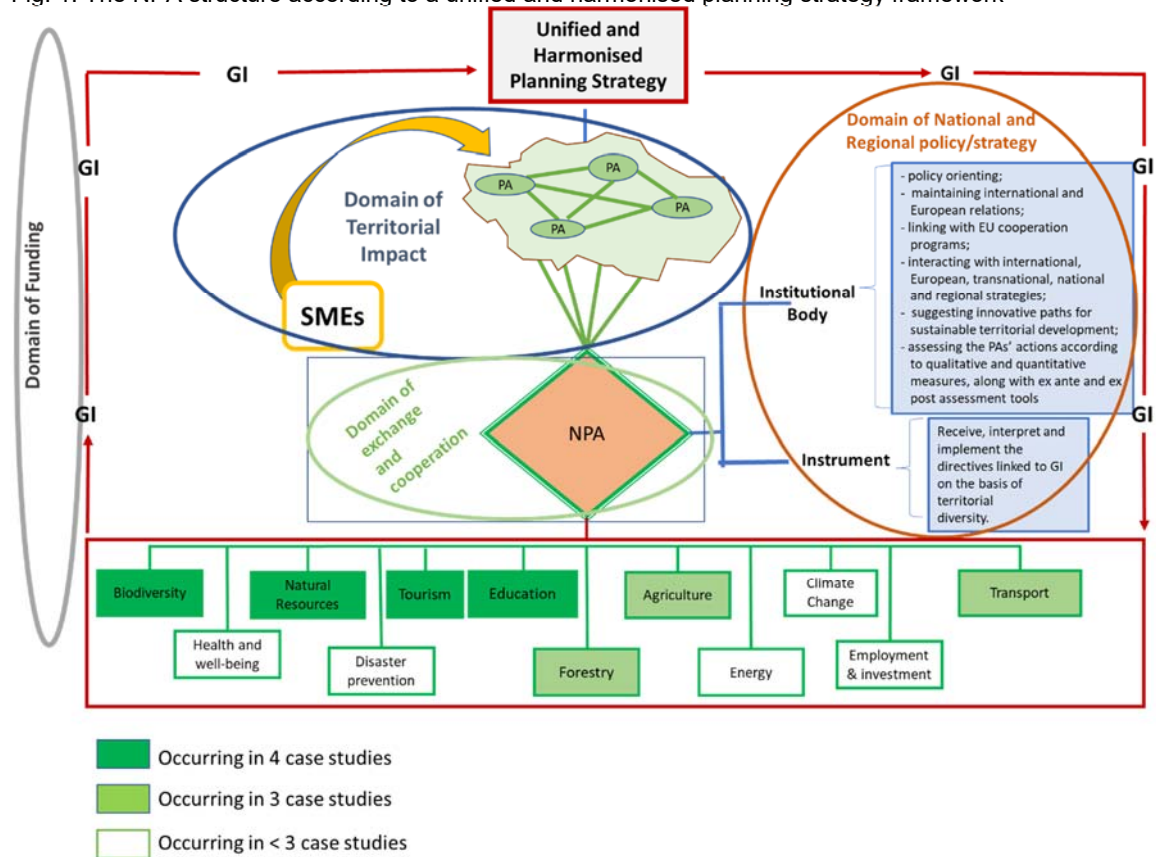
The LinkPAs Project has analysed the existing NPAs within different case studies by considering the following common domains: **territorial impact; policy and strategy; cooperation and exchange; funding.** The objectives of the GI strategy can be better achieved if the NPAs become fully involved in decision-making processes; however, this may be possible only if NPAs are recognised as institutional bodies that can work to implement government policies (Fig. 1).

The NPAs management model presented here in Figure 1 considers how to integrate NPAs in regional and national policies/strategies (NPAs as institutional bodies and NPAs as instrument); moreover, it evaluates how to best integrate the SMEs (and local actors) within PAs into a mechanism of cooperation and change to implement those activities (sectors) that seek to foster territorial development.

The sectors where NPAs impact on are related to the GI insertion in mainstream policies. These policy areas include: Nature/Biodiversity; Spatial planning; Urban policy; Agriculture; Forestry; Tourism and leisure; Transport infrastructure; Energy; Water/flood management and disaster risk reduction; Marine and coastal policy and Climate change. Considering that the NPAs are the backbone of European and national ecological networks, the NPAs play a major role in the agriculture, forestry, soil conservation and water sectors, underscoring those functions that have increased tree cover on land, which can prevent erosion, and flooding, as well as the protection of water supplies. Some policy sectors, on which the NPAs seem to have a significant impact, within the stakeholder regions, emerge: Biodiversity; Conservation; Tourism and Recreation; and Education. In addition, close links can be found in relation to Agriculture and Forestry in order to promote multifunctional resilient agriculture and forestry. NPAs are also linked to investment and employment when it comes to promoting a better image of NPAs themselves; NPAs contribute to enhancing Transport by encouraging

sustainable travelling (e.g. multimodal links and integration of transport systems). Lastly, NPAs are connected to the ecoservices accounting in order to improve the territorial resilience.

Fig. 1: The NPA structure according to a unified and harmonised planning strategy framework

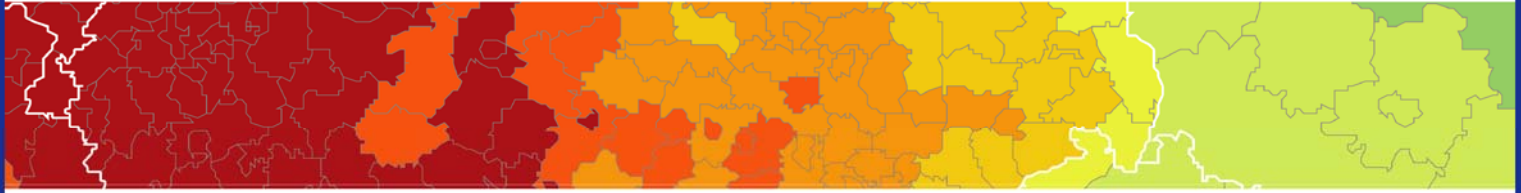


Source: ESPON LinkPAs project elaboration 2018

NPAs can influence policy-making processes in several ways and at different levels. Two major issues clearly emerge from the analysis of EU and stakeholders territories: *how to preserve territorial diversity* and *how to develop a common territorial policy (or policies)*.

NPA policies must always take into account the geographical diversity inherent to mountain regions and make sure to invest in it. Climate change adaptation policies have certainly contributed to this so far. NPAs seek support at the EU/national level for reinforcing social models by means of eco-services, reducing tax pressures on SMEs within the PAs, particularly in mountain areas. To achieve this goal, it is important to consider the role that SMEs can play in exploiting eco-technologies, which should be harnessed in order to enhance the quality of life and renewal of contiguous areas. NPAs should therefore help to design and implement policy instruments (Regulatory instruments (command & control), Economic instruments, Information) that can be used to involve the private sector, particularly SMEs related to policy sectors on which NPAs exert some influence.

The active role of PAs by NPAs implies moving towards a joint capitalization. In few words, NPAs should try to harmonise the currently fragmented situation affecting their territorial natural capital. To do this, it is necessary for the many existing actors to work together and commit to ensuring their full involvement in project development and planning.



ESPON 2020 – More information

ESPON EGTC

4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg - Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Phone: +352 20 600 280

Email: info@espon.eu

www.espon.eu, [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#)

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.