imajINE Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing
Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe

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D10.3 Innovation Management Plan

Version 1.2

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	Aberystwyth University
DG-REGIO	European Commission Directorate-General for Regions
EU	European Union
JRC	Joint Research Centre
NUI GALWAY	National University of Ireland Galway
USTIRLING	University of Stirling
WP	Work Package

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1. Introduction

This Innovation Management Plan (D10.3) summarises the approach of the IMAJINE project to the exploitation of results to promote innovation, following the EU definition of Innovation Management as:

> "a process which requires an understanding of both market and technical problems, with a goal of successfully implementing appropriate creative ideas. A new or improved product, service or process is its typical output. " (H2020 Research and Innovation Actions Proposals Template).

IMAJINE is focused on **social innovation** through the formulation of new integrative policy mechanisms for addressing territorial inequalities and promoting spatial justice, and through the development and testing of new methods for policy-making and evaluation, notable participatory scenario building and policy scenario testing. In particular, IMAJINE aims to:

- Identify effective approaches to tacking inequalities and approaching spatial justice by critically reviewing current and previous EU policies on territorial cohesion and socio-economic wellbeing, and their impacts.
- Enhance models for policy-making by critically examining how national and territorial governments manage social cohesion policies - for example by generating a shared sense of the best way to 'operationalise' vague policies to reduce inequalities – and assessing the extent to which governments are able to mitigate the effects of socio-economic inequalities through fiscal redistribution and the delivery of public services.
- Inform the development of effective institutional structures for promoting social justice by, for example, assessing how the size of administrative units or degree of decision-making autonomy affects indicators and perceptions of territorial inequalities.
- Promote policy learning between governance actors in different regions and at different scales, by comparing experiences, identifying good practice and assessing factors that aid or inhibit meaningful policy learning.
- Produce scenarios for policy innovation and development through the synthesis of evidence from empirical research and analysis, and through participatory scenario building exercises involving governance actors and civil society groups in various regions.
- Test policy scenarios in cooperation with selected regional and local governments and civil society organizations, who will simulate the implementation of suggested policy changes and initiatives within their organization to identify and evaluation likely impacts and outcomes.
- Establish a network of local and regional scale governance bodies and civil society groups as a continuing forum for consultation, dialogue and scenario-building to enable spatial justice to remain as a guiding principle underpinning public policy.

The successful delivery of these innovation goals requires effective innovation management, which will be the responsibility of the Coordinating Group, working closely with the Work Package leaders for WP8 and WP9.

This document covers the identification of opportunities for innovation, target users (in this case policymakers at EU, national and regional scales), strategies for developing and disseminating innovation, potential obstacles and risks, and issues concerning intellectual property.

2. Types of Innovation

IMAJINE is intended to promote **social innovation** by informing the development and implementation of *new or improved policies and policy processes to address territorial inequalities and promote spatial justice*. IMAJINE will support and facilitate policy innovation by generating as outcomes of the project: recommendations for policies and policy implementation; tested models and scenarios for new policy approaches; and an expanded evidence to support and inform policy-making.

IMAJINE is not anticipated to lead to technical innovations in the form of new or improved products or services; and is not anticipated to produce commercially exploitable innovations.

3. Assessment of Opportunities

The promotion of social, economic and territorial cohesion are key objectives of the European Union, with social and economic cohesion embedded in the Treaty of Rome, and territorial cohesion more recently added in the Lisbon Treaty. The concept of 'territorial cohesion' was proposed by the Assembly of European Regions in 1995, and while initially intended as 'the coordination of sectoral policies with unintended spatial impacts', subsequently assumed a wider variety of meanings as it was developed through various policy debates and papers before formal adoption in the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (2008), the *Fifth Cohesion Report* (2010) and the *Territorial Agenda* (2011).

As incorporated into EU strategy and policy, the objective of territorial cohesion has been defined as helping to 'achieve a more balanced development by reducing existing disparities, preventing territorial imbalances and making both sectoral policies, which have a spatial impact, and regional policy more coherent' (CEC 2004: 27), and as building 'bridges between economic effectiveness, social cohesion and ecological balance, putting sustainable development at the heart of policy design' (CEC 2008). Policies and strategies to promote territorial cohesion – and thus implicitly to address territorial inequalities – have primarily been delivered through regional policy, and particularly the programmes and mechanisms of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and associated Structural Funds. This approach has targeted funding and resources towards 'lagging' regions, and with eligibility determined on the basis of regional GDP relative to the EU mean, has tended to support macroeconomic measures of territorial inequality and to emphasize infrastructure, business creation and economic development.

The EU approach to territorial cohesion has been critiqued both from a theoretical perspective, with criticisms of 'territorialism' in its taking as given the structure of pre-existing bounded regions, and of the neoliberal character of its delivery instruments; and in relation to its results. The regional dispersion of GDP for NUTS3 regions across the EU-28 territory decreased overall between 2000 and 2007, indicating economic convergence, but with notable national variations, including significant

increases in regional dispersion of GDP in several eastern European countries (Eurostat, 2012). After 2007, however, the balance reversed, with 16 out of 26 countries with available data registering increases in the regional dispersion of GDP for NUTS3 regions between 2007 and 2011, including France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK (Eurostat, dataset nama_r_e0digdp).

The Seventh Cohesion Report in 2017 noted that regional disparities had started to decrease again and broadly supported the continuation of the EU's approach to territorial cohesion, but noted a number of issues, including the stagnation of middle-income regions that are not prioritised for support, coordination in border regions, and regional variations in the quality of governance. It recommended that EU Cohesion Policy post-2020 should continue to have a primary focus on less developed and border regions, but with fuller coverage than in previous framework periods, with more attention to post-industrial and rural regions and areas with high unemployment or urban deprivation. It also recommended more emphasis in EU investment on social inclusion, employment, innovation, energy and climate change and improving institutions and coordination, as well as noting the need for positive incentives for structural reform.

These recommendations have largely been carried forward into the priorities and principles for Cohesion Policy agreed by the European Council in 2018. These include a focus on five key investment pillars (Smarter Europe; Greener, Carbon Free Europe; Connected Europe; Social Europe; and a Europe Closer to Citizens); a more tailored approach to regional development; simplification of rules; a more flexible framework; strengthened links with the European Semester and the EU's economic governance; more opportunities for synergies within the EU toolbox; removing cross-border obstacles; reinforced rules for better performing EU investments; an increased use of financial instruments; more communication efforts to promote the visibility of Cohesion Policy. However, there continues to be debate within the Commission and among stakeholders on the details of implementation of these priorities and particularly the geographical targeting of assistance.

In debates around planning for the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission and agencies and stakeholders engaged in Cohesion Policy have therefore demonstrated an openness to reconsidering and improving aspects of its approach to territorial cohesion and tackling territorial inequalities.

Timing is a significant factor, and is not advantageous to IMAJINE. The key period of planning for the 2021-2027 period coincided with the early stages of IMAJINE, prior to the main part of data collection and analysis, and as such opportunities for IMAJINE to direct inform the core architecture and principles of the EU's approach to territorial cohesion in this period have been limited. However, there are ongoing opportunities to engage with and contribute to processes of determining the detail of policies and programmes and structures for implementation; as well as to contribute to the Mid Period Review.

There are further opportunities to contribute at national and regional scales to the implementation of EU programmes, and to national and regional government policies and programmes on territorial inequalities that complement EU policies. These include opportunities to contribute to the development of policies and programmes to address territorial inequalities in the United Kingdom following the expected withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

4. Target Users

The following groups have been identified as target users of IMAJINE project results and recommendations with the potential to enact or influence policy innovation:

- European Commission officials, especially DG-REGIO
- Members of the European Parliament
- National and regional government officials with responsibility for regional policy, inequality and related fields
- Members of national and regional parliaments
- Municipal and local authorities
- European civil society groups with interests in cohesion, regional policy and poverty and inequalities.
- Regional civil society groups, including regionalist and territorial autonomy movements

These users have been identified among the key target users for IMAJINE in the IMAJINE Dissemination Plan, with specified mechanisms for dissemination to and engagement with these groups. Specific mechanisms for promoting proposals for policy innovation to these user groups are detailed further below.

5. Strategies to Develop Innovation Potential

Innovation arising from IMAJINE depends on the translation of the results of data collection and analysis into recommendations and models for new policies and implementation methods that can be applied by policy-makers. This is the substative focus of WP8, coordinated by NUI GALWAY, but also involves elements in other work packages.

Specific activities in IMAJINE to develop recommendations and models for innovative policies and programmes include:

- Analysis of the potential contribution of regional authorities to promoting spatial justice, with identification of good practice examples and recommendations for policy (WP1).
- Evaluation of the impact of EU territorial cohesion policies on spatial patterns of inequality and economic development, with recommendations for policy (WP3).
- Development of a framework to understand how policymakers can identify: examples of international success in the adoption of particular governing arrangements and/ or public policies to address inequalities; the key relevant aspects of international experience; and, the extent to which they can emulate success in other regions. To be disseminated through a report for practitioners to guide meaningful learning (WP6).
- Organization of a one day conference with researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to discuss how policy-makers tackle 'wicked problems' in territorial inequalities (WP6).
- Collation and integration of evidence and results from individual WPs to draw out key lessons and examples for policy innovation (WP8).

- Participatory scenario building exercises, engaging key regional stakeholders and grassroots participants in coproducing visions of spatial justice and regional futures and formulating potential policy models and recommendations (WP8).
- Testing of policy scenarios through cooperation with regional and local government agencies and civil society groups who will simulate the implementation of policy proposals in their organisation to identify prospective impacts and outcomes (WP8).
- Synthesis of the above activities to produce a series of policy recommendations, with input from stakeholders (WP8).

6. Strategies to Achieve Innovation Uptake

Successful innovation outcomes further require the effective dissemination and communication of recommendations and models from IMAJINE to the target users identified in section 4 above, and the adoption by these target users of the recommendations and models.

The full dissemination strategy for IMAJINE is outlined in the Dissemination Plan and includes the following specific activities that are aimed at dissemination and communication with policy-makers, practitioners and policy-engaged stakeholders:

- Publication and distribution of an electronic *Policy Briefing* aimed at EU, national and local policy-makers and key stakeholders
- Organization of a *Policy Seminar* in Brussels with invited participants from EU institutions, national and regional government offices and EU civil society groups.
- *Presentations* to events including EU Open Days, European Week of Cities and Regions and similar events.
- Submissions to appropriate *policy consutation exercises* at EU, national and regional scales.
- Organization of a one day conference with policy-makers and praticioners to discuss approaches to 'wicked problems' in territorial inequalities.
- Creation of a European Spatial Justice Network with national, regional and local authorities and civil society groups to support meaningful learning, share good practice and advocate for policy innovation to tackle territorial inequalities and promote spatial justice.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the above engagements, a number of further actions and initiatives have been adopted:

- Seeking to make connections with officials in DG-REGIO to discuss their evidence needs and opportunities for engaging with the policy process.
- Working with the COHSMO and RELOCAL projects to coordinate policy engagement activites and, where appropriate, to integrate results and jointly formulate policy recommendations.
- Working with the EC Joint Research Centre to pilot application of their Skills Framework for Knowledge Management for Policy Impact, involving self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in relevant competences in the consortium and targeted training to develop weaker areas; building on previous collaboration between USTIRLING and the JRC.

7. Risks and Obstacles

The following potential risks and obstacles to effective policy innovation from the IMAJINE project have been identified and migitgation measures adopted.

Risks/Obstacles	Mitigation Measures
Timing of policy cycles and processes limits opportunities for contributions from IMAJINE project results.	Future planning and identification of opportunities for engagement with policy stakeholders and advisors; Adaptability to engage with opportunties at different scales and stages of policy development; Agility to respond to short-notice opportuntities.
Not able to get access to targeted user groups.	Build relationships with targeted users through course of project; Establish connections with prospective intermediaries.
IMAJINE recommendations overlooked in crowded field of proposals and submissions.	Build relationships with targeted users through course of project; Work with supportive agencies and civil society groups to create alliances and to obtain endorsement of proposals; Increase visibility of proposals through coordinated and multi-modal dissemination strategy.
Evidence base not sufficient to support innovative policy recommendations.	Integrate policy innovation objectives into planning and delivery of all WPs, achieved through regular interaction of WP8 team with other WPs and involvement in planning and analysis.
IMAJINE consortium members do not have the appropriate skills or competences for effective engagement with policy makers.	Implementation of the JRC Skills Framework for Knowledge Management for Policy Impact, with self-evaluation of competences and organization of targeted training.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

Members of the IMAJINE consortium retain intellectual property rights over data, outputs and ideas that are the product of their work, including ownership of data and the right to publish from the results. Policy recommendations, proposals and models will be published under a creative commons licence to enable their adoption and implementation by any organization in the public interest.

It is not anticipated that IMAJINE will generate commercially exploitable results.

Protocols for background and foreground intellectual property contributed to the consoritum by beneficiaries and mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts within the consortium concerning intellectual property are outlined in the Consortium Agreement.

9. Monitoring and Management

Innovation Management is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator, AU, working with consortium members, and especially with the WP8 Leader, NUI GALWAY and the Dissemination and Engagement Coordinator, IGSO-PAS. The delivery of the Innovation Management Plan will be monitored by the Coordinating Group and reported to meetings of the Steering Group and Consortium Meetings.

The Advisory Group will play an important role in innovation management, contributing expertise and advice on the 'market' for policy innovation, and on challenges to successful implementation and mitigation strategies.