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Project Acronym: COHSMO (Former Hans Thor Andersen)

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Abstract:

The part of WP 4 that is being worked on at present focuses on how location matters in the relation between policies aimed at promoting economic growth and social well-being and the context of local territorial cohesion. It is based on the hypothesis that local conditions such as territorial cohesion here broken down to the elements of patterns of local attachment, collective efficacy and interaction between groups are often neglected conditions impacting on the way that policy programmes are able to alleviate inequalities and generate economic growth and social well-being. The claim guiding this part of the project is that the elements of territorial cohesion could impact both in a positive sense by boosting local innovation and ownership of forms of intervention, and in a more problematic sense by creating local inertia and resistance to local development and sustainable change. A cross-national comparison of territorial cohesion in different types of areas



and related to different scales (Rural, Suburban, Metropolitan) has been conducted in order to develop knowledge about these relations, which will form the basis of policy recommendations. It is central to explore how citizen involvement is a contribution to strategic development sustainable economic growth and how this relates to territorial cohesion. Hence, interviews with stakeholders, civil society representatives and citizens focused on the relation between local attachment and participation in policy programmes. This is based on the assumption that local experiences and complex relations between community relations and policy programmes have to be investigated by qualitative data. The data material consists of interviews in 21 localities. In each locality, 20 interviews have been conducted with stakeholders and engaged citizens focusing on firstly the themes of local attachment and cultural interaction at a local scale, secondly on experiences of policy programmes and strategies to create economic growth.

As a provisional conclusion, the preliminary analyses point to a variation of strengths and weaknesses related to the three types of case-locations. Rural locations appear to be small effective units with a high capacity to mobilize and to act. On the other hand, the rural locations seem to have a limited capacity to address all types of problems within the wide range of problems that these locations are facing. In the metropolitan municipalities, the capacity to address a wide range of problems is present and easy activate while communication, coordination and civic mobilizations is demanding and difficult. However, there is a pronounced difference between the COHSMO-partner countries when it comes to the degree of centralization and decentralization. This difference seems to be an important analytical dimension in terms of understanding the observed different forms of local leadership as well as different levels of local agency capacity. This may call for new conceptualizations of leadership that integrates the complex interrelations among stakeholders and engaged citizens sense of attachment, localizes cultural interactions and the level of local experiences with policy programmes aiming at stimulation economic growth.

Keyword list:

Case-locations, local leadership, collective efficacy, analyzing phases, territorial autonomy.

1 Introduction

Since Policy brief no.2, the COHSMO-project has selected 21 specific case-locations – one rural, one sub-urban and one metropolitan location in each of the participating countries. The theoretical framework pertaining to WP2 has been operationalized and interview guides for entrepreneurs and business actors, community actors and governance actors has been made. Almost all interviews has been conducted and the collection of qualitative data is about to end. The process of analyzing data is in an initial phase and therefore Policy brief no. 3 reports preliminary findings that will be further elaborated, tested and verified in the coming phases of the COHSMO-project.



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Territorial governance and local leadership seems to be influenced in very different ways by patterns of urbanization and patterns of demographic change.

The 21 COHSMO case-locations consist of seven rural, seven suburban and seven metropolitan locations and the preliminary findings from the ongoing first stage of analysis points to some interesting findings regarding local governmental structure and territorial government.

Decentralized governmental structure seem to foster/nurture/stimulate local leadership in rural case-locations that is based on a high degree of interlocking/interdependent relations between entrepreneurs, business stakeholders, community stakeholders, NGO's and local public authorities. Distances between all categories of local stakeholders are short and communication is easy and effective. In suburban case-locations, collaboration seem to happen more between government actors and much more limited with community stakeholders, NGO's and businesses. Distances between all types of stakeholders are longer and communication harder.

In metropolitan case-locations, the territorial governance is often not aligned with the functional region (that includes a larger area than the central city). Metropolitan

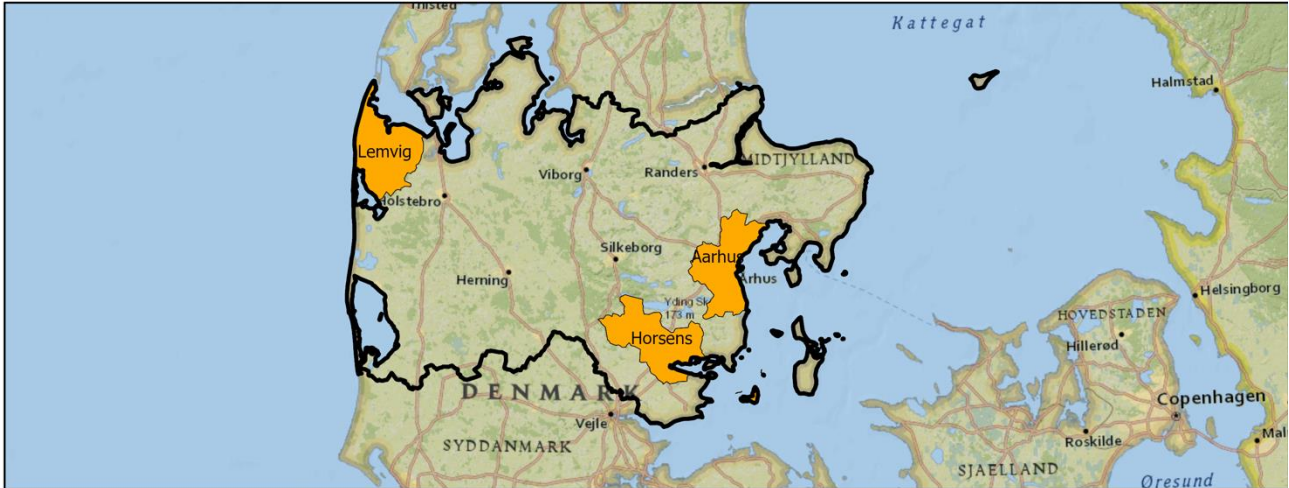
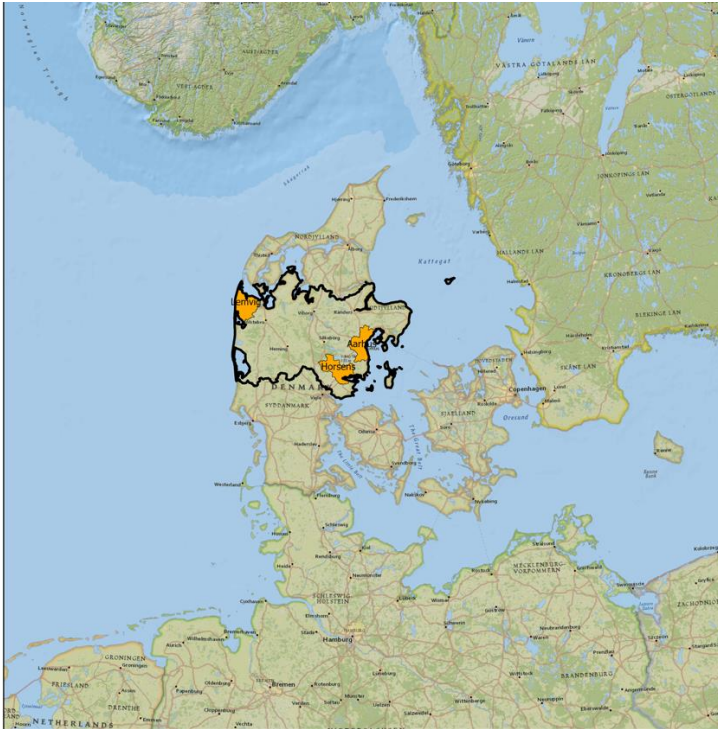
governance is in this way insufficient, fragmented though there seems to be strong traditions of collaborating horizontally across municipality and business.

As a provisional conclusion, the preliminary analyses points to a variation of strengths and weaknesses related to the three types of case-locations. Rural locations appears to be small effective units that has a high capacity to mobilize and to act but with a limited capacity to address all types of problems within the wide range of problems that these locations are facing. In the metropolitan municipalities, the capacity to address a wide range of problems is present and easy activate while communication, coordination and civic mobilization is demanding and difficult.

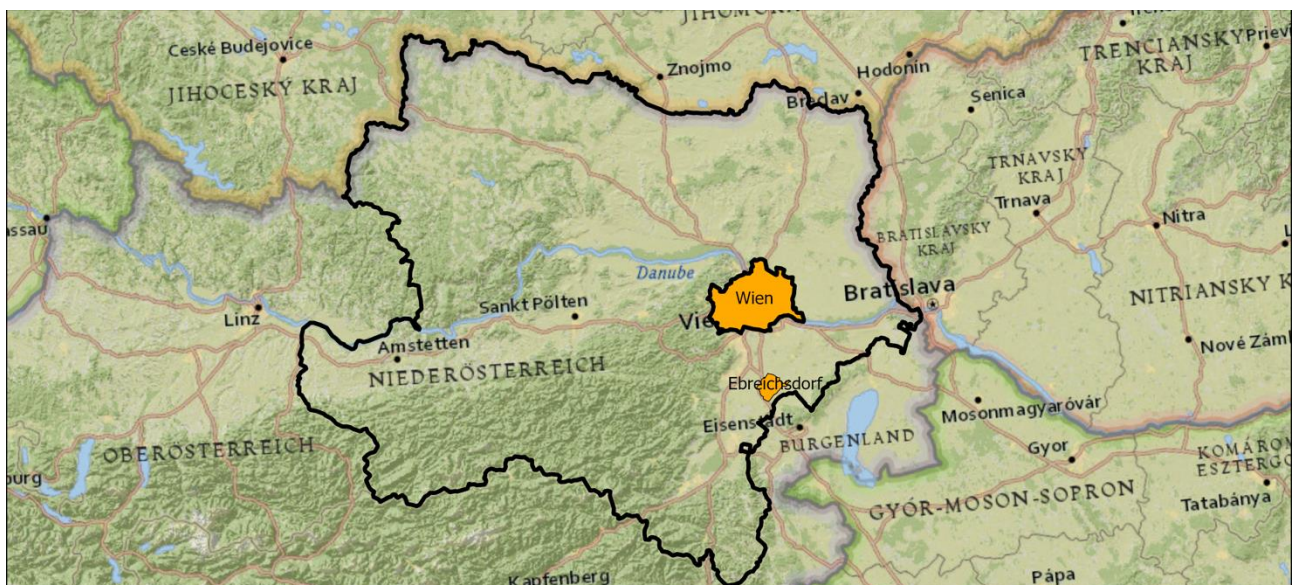
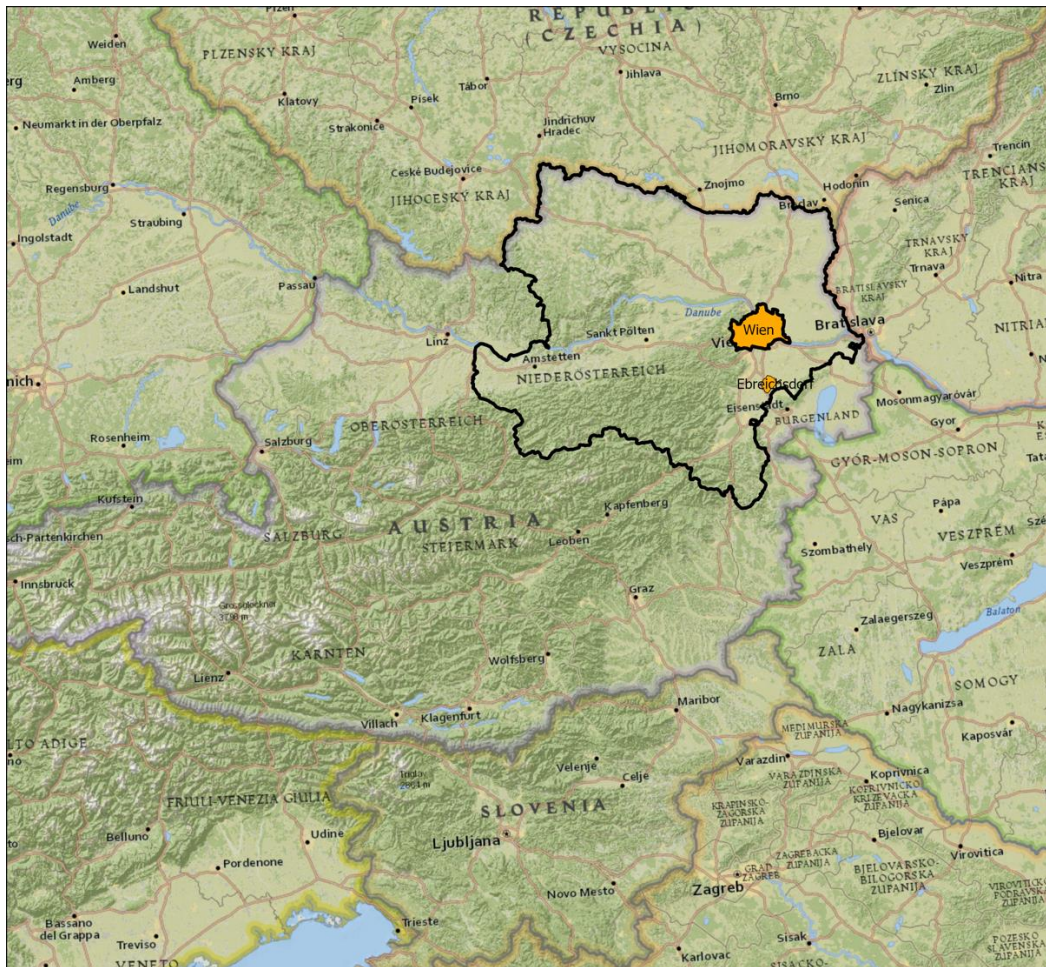
There is a pronounced difference between the COHSMO-partner countries when it comes to the degree of centralization and decentralization and this difference seem to be an important analytical dimension in terms of understanding observed different forms of local leadership as well as different levels of local agency capacity. In countries with a decentralized structure, a high degree of political autonomy, and a system for distribution and territorial equalization of tax revenues, rural locations seem to act more effectively and to be able to overcome the threads of being marginalized than is the case in countries with a high degree of governmental centralization, a low degree of autonomy and a low degree of territorial distribution of the tax-revenues. This may call for a new conceptualization of leadership that integrates the complex interrelations among stakeholder's and engaged citizen's sense of attachment, localized cultural interactions, and the level of local experiences with policy programmes aiming at stimulating economic growth.

The COHSMO-case-locations are:

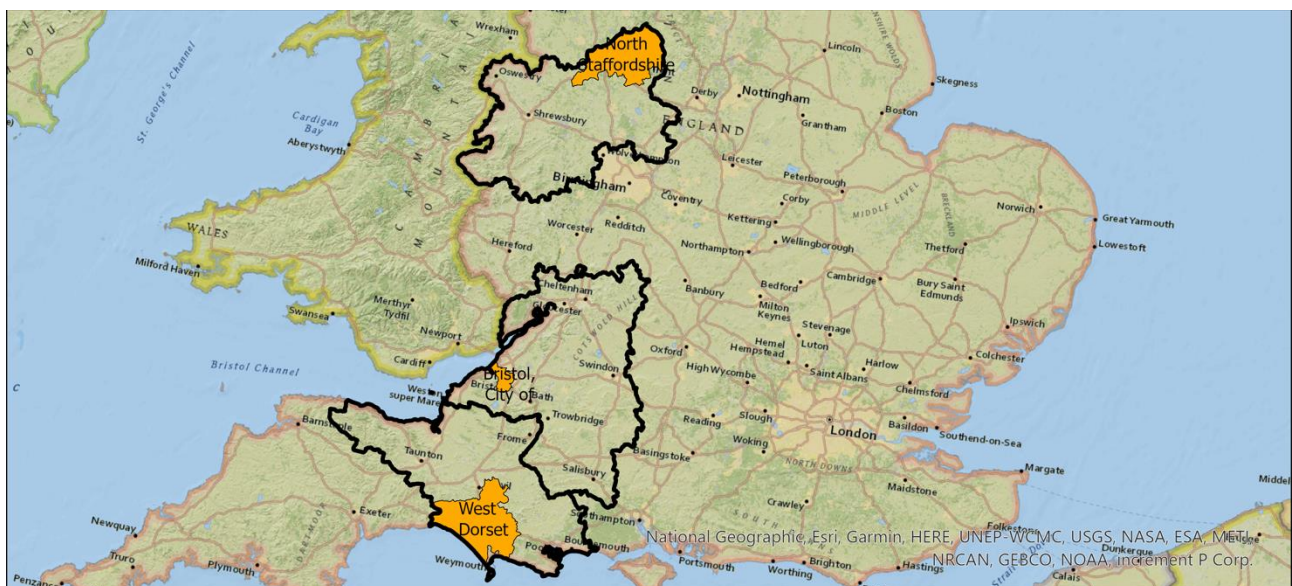
Denmark – Aarhus, Horsens and Lemvig



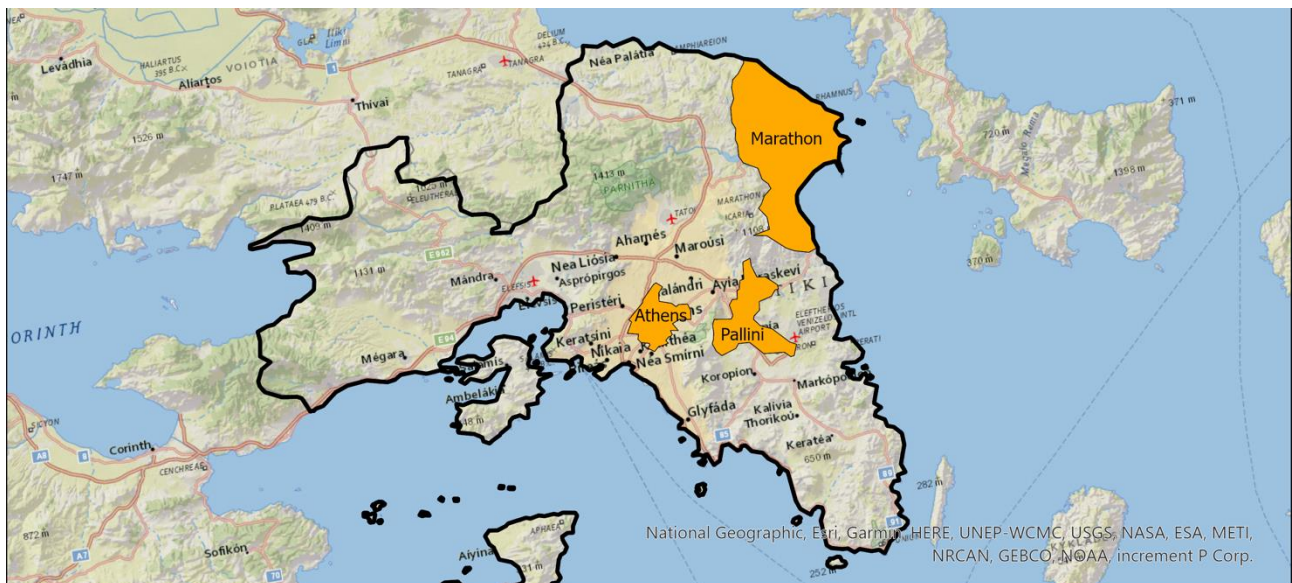
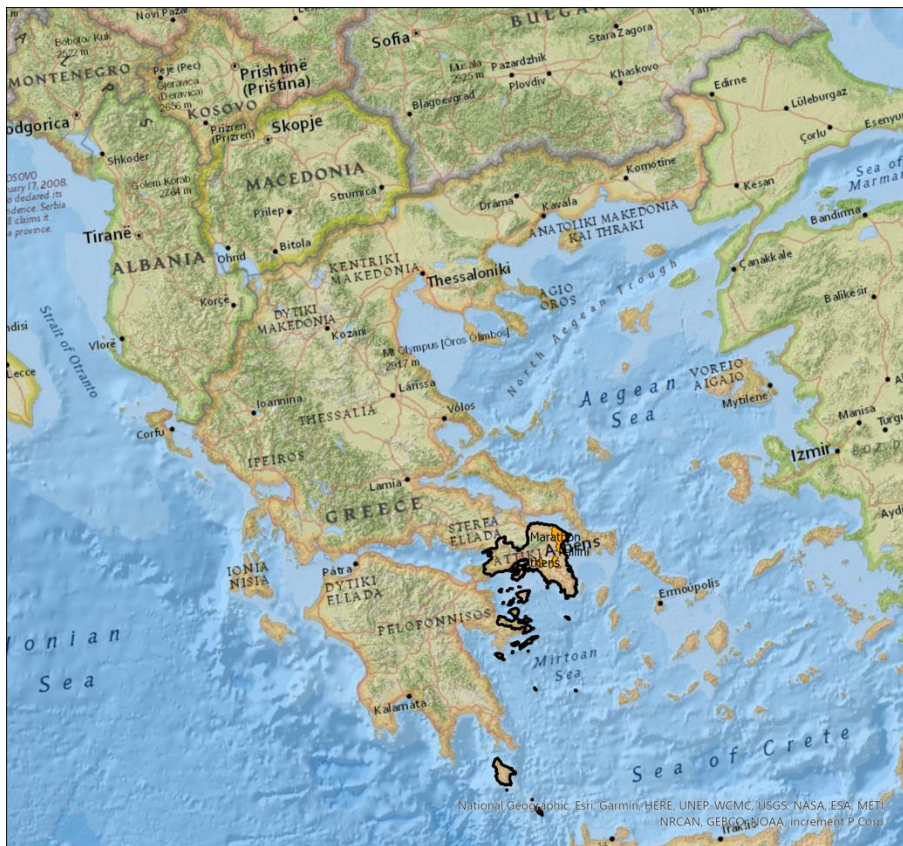
Austria – Vienna, Ebreichsdorf (Kleinregion Ebreichsdorf), Kleinregion Waldviertler Kernland



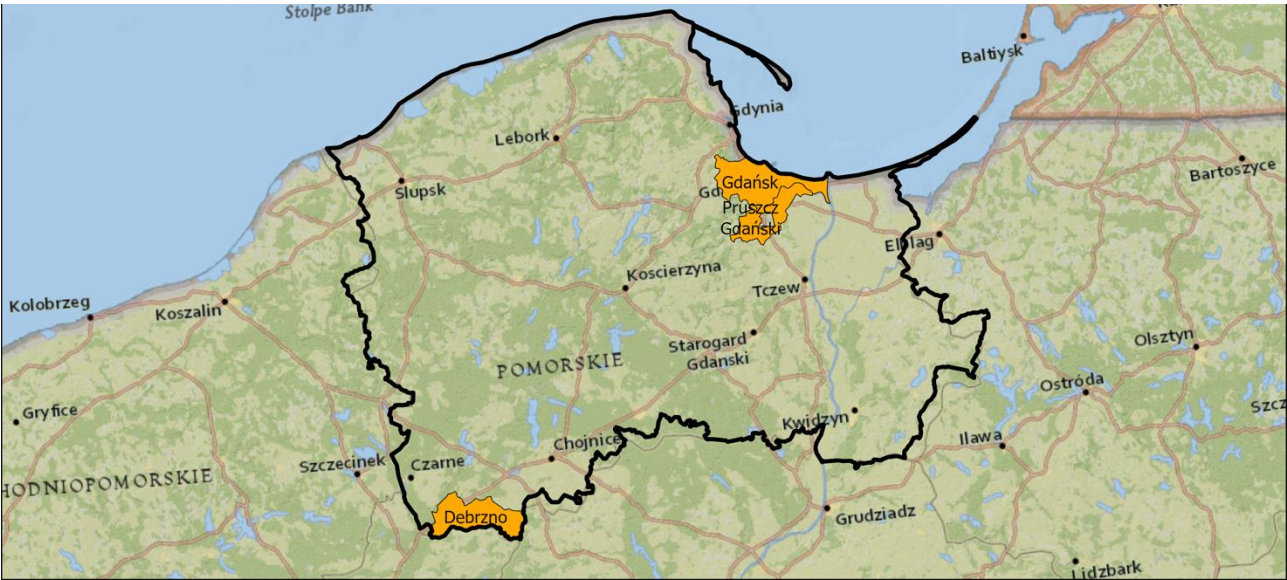
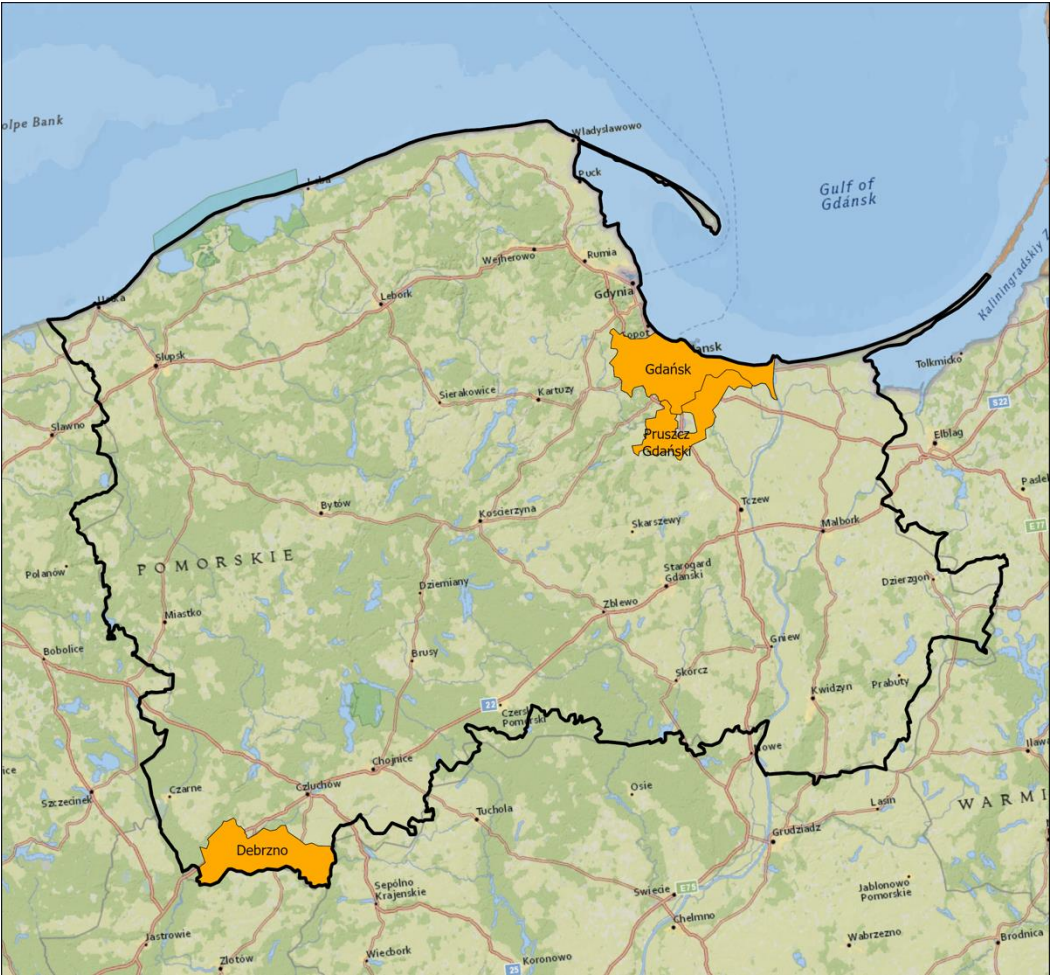
United Kingdom – Bristol, North Staffordshire, West Dorset



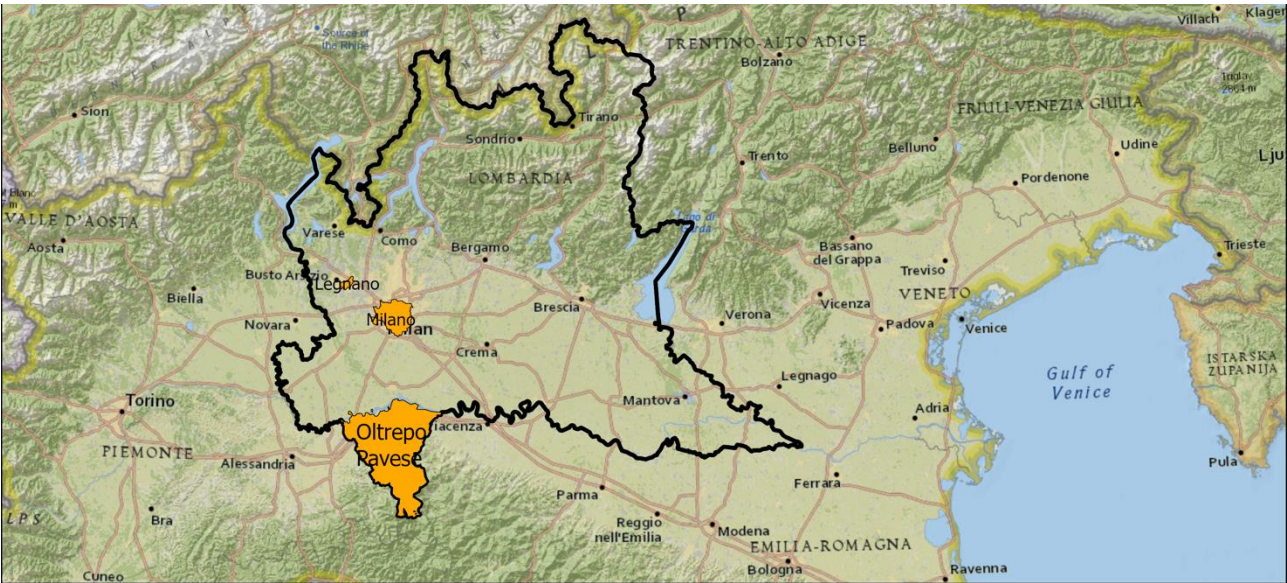
Greece – Athens, Pallini/Peania, Marathon



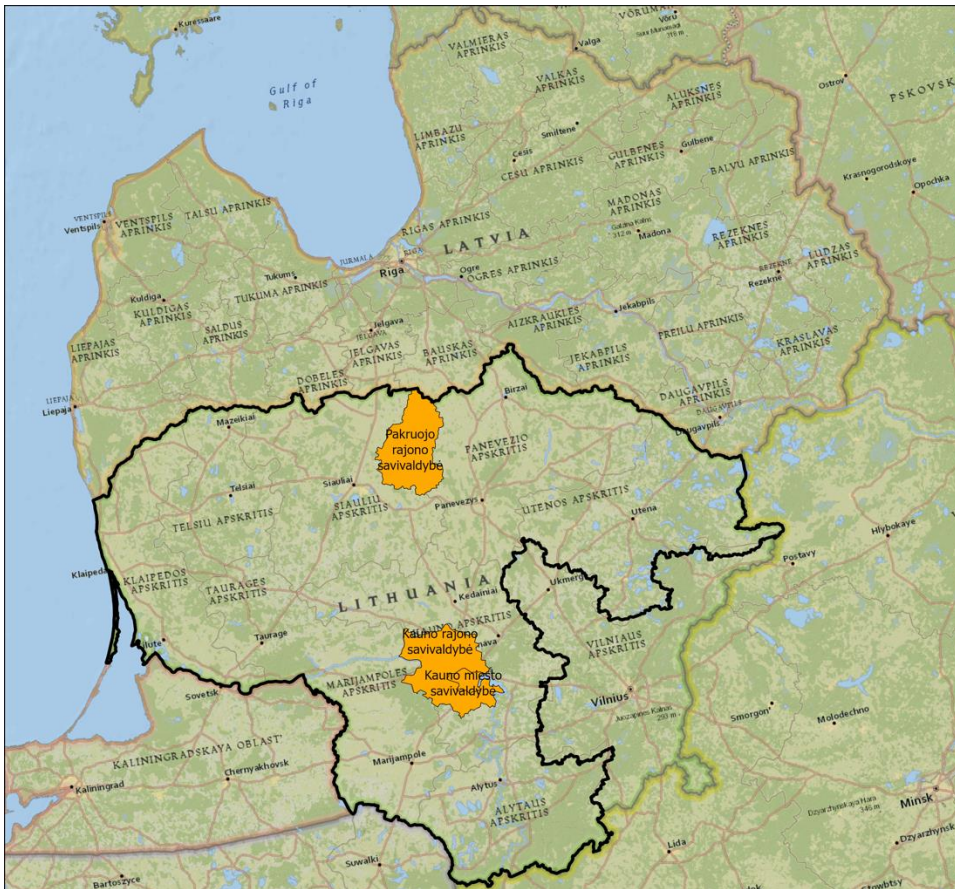
Poland – Gdansk (Urban), Pruszcz Gedanski (Suburban), Debrzno (rural)



Italy – Milan (Urban), Legnano (Sub-Urban), Oltrepo Pavese (Rural)



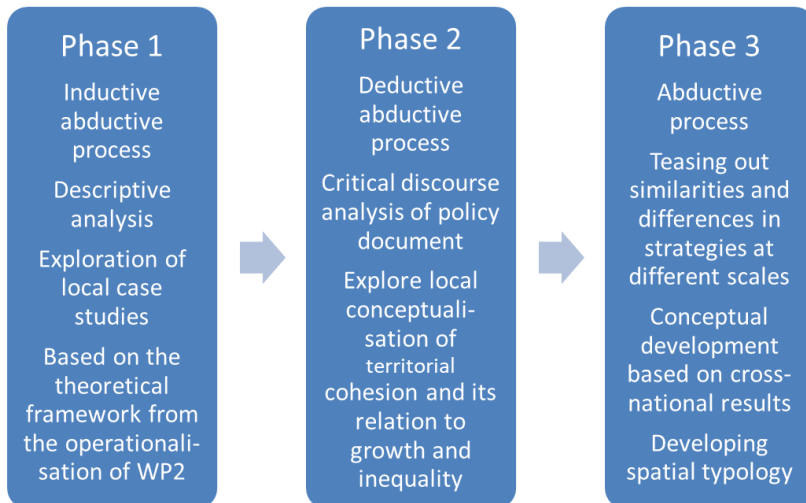
Lithuania – Kaunas (Urban), Kaunas District Municipality (Sub-urban), Pakruojis (Rural)



The process of analyzing is continuing...

Within short time, the collection of qualitative data related to the case-locations will end and the analytical process will move into a more systematic process of data crunching and interpretation in order to reach a framework of validated and empirically grounded conclusions. The analytical phases will be deductive and based on the theoretical clarifications from WP2 as well as inductive and data-driven aiming at establishing concepts grounded in the narratives from the field. The ultimate objective of this process is the construction of a location-sensitive typology.

Analytical phases in WP4:



Project Identity

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Project Name

COHSMO

Coordinator

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Consortium

AAU – Aalborg University, The Danish team (Leading COHSMO)

UW – Uniwersytet Warszawski, The Polish team

POLIMI – Politecnico di Milano, The Italian team

UWE – University of the West of England, Bristol, The British team

UNIVIE – Universität Wien, The Austrian team

VMU – Vytautas Magnus University, The Latvian team

HUA – Harokopio University, The Greek team

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