

PROPOSAL OF AN EUROPEAN LETTER OF QUALITY ON ACTION-RESEARCH FAVORING TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CAENTI Work Package 5

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1. Introduction.

The present document is the result of the deliberations by CAENTI WP5 “Analysis of the application of the governance principles of sustainable development to territorial action-research”. Like all CAENTI WPs, WP5 is made up of a multidisciplinary and multi-sectorial work group with participating representatives from six universities (Alba Iulia University, Franche-Comté University, Huelva University, Liège University, Pécs University, Salerno University) and CAENTI’s seven territorial actors (VALDOCCO, ACCEM, OPTIMA, INTEGRA+, APAPEI, COCAGNE, BARANYA COUNTY).

Both the research groups and the actors involved have extensive experience in the field of action-research applied to the solving of socio-economic problems (the fight against forms of exclusion, social integration, local and community development, etc.) in very different contexts. Their common link consists, on the one hand, of the confidence the researchers and actors have in research as the driving force for social change, and on the other hand, of their defence of the multidimensional and territorial approach due to their conviction that socio-economic problems are due to multiple, entwined factors and dynamics and that the arena where they are to be tackled is the territory where these factors and dynamics take shape (where they fall).

Another important common link among CAENTI partners is considering the territory as a space with actors in which production and appropriation of resources occur (these issues are being discussing in CAENTI WP4). If, as stated by M. (Lévy, 1994), “knowledge is now infrastructure”, in the present knowledge society the first resource which must be necessarily the target of that production and appropriation is the existing knowledge across the whole territory, as well as the processes that take part in its creation. In particular, knowledge “of the territory” and of the “actions developed in the territory” is converted into knowledge of paramount importance for directing the action in favour of territorial development.

On the other hand, CAENTI concept of *territorial intelligence* refers to all knowledge relating to the understanding of territorial structures and dynamics, as well as the tools used by public and private actors to produce, use and share this knowledge in favour of sustainable territorial development. In this way, territorial intelligence, strongly strengthened by the resources offered by the information society (new information and communication technologies), involves the production of theories and tools to understand the territory, but also the way in which the members of a society as a whole produce and

take in the knowledge available and apply it to solving their problems. It is here where the link with the concept of *territorial governance* occurs, which refers to the vertical and horizontal coordination of decision making processes in the territory by public and private actors in relation to the needs of its population.

From this perspective, territorial intelligence is a tool for territorial governance; however both concepts have a complex relationship according to E. Morin (1992), since, in their turn, the evolution of territorial governance promotes the development of territorial intelligence. The driving force behind this feedback process is the participation of the actors. The intensity and quality of the *participation* is what determines the way in which both processes feed off each other.

The proposal of a quality charter presented here starts from a critical reflection by all CAENTI WP5 members during 2006 about their own research experience. From this analysis, the kind of research which can best contribute to strengthen this link between territorial intelligence and governance in favour of sustainable development in current knowledge society was jointly discussed. The study was completed with the debate of the ethical and methodological principles that should inspire research practices in order to achieve the already mentioned coordination between territorial intelligence and governance. The results of the present work are gathered in the document *Application of the governance principles of sustainable development to territorial action-research* (deliverable 40 of CAENTI, available on the Project Website www.territorial-intelligence.eu).

The result of this analysis and the formulation of principles showed the strengths in this context of the participatory action-research approach, defined as the type of research where researchers and territorial actors are involved, and performed with a double purpose: a scientific one, to improve knowledge on a specific aspect of the territorial structure and/or dynamic; and a practical one, to act on a specific problem of that territory. However, for the mentioned feedback between research and action to occur, with the subsequent positive impact on territorial governance, participation of actors and researchers must take place in a really effective way and be a real process of long-term collaboration.

As a result, the design and construction of tools that contribute to the development of these participatory processes is necessary. For this purpose (as the work of CAENTI WP6 shows), the new information and communication technologies have a huge potential. On the other hand, it is also necessary that universities and research centres work to provide territorial actors with greater accessibility to the available knowledge and tools for territory analysis, so making the most of the nowadays underused systems for data treatment and analysis. Finally, from the institutional point of view, new game rules must be set up in order to establish specific protocols and regulations for the development of this systematic, really collaborative, and long-term participated work creating confidence networks, guaranteeing the transparency, critical distance and veracity of the results, and laying down basic rules for joint appropriation and exploitation of the results.

The work aimed by the CAENTI WP5 partners is precisely to start drawing up the regulatory framework as regards the action-research applied to economically, socially and environmentally sustainable territorial development.

The objective for the first year was to reach a consensus on the formulation of a series of *basic principles that the members think must be observed by the protocols of action-research applied to territorial development, in such a way that the processes and results of the research allow the promotion of good governance*. In this second year, the question of specific protocols has been tackled by drawing up the proposal of a *quality charter for action-research applied to territorial governance of sustainable development*.

The reference to quality shows the emphasis in the process, understanding that it will be the quality of the participatory (collaborative and lasting) dynamic what will allow better results of the action-research both from the scientific approach (better adaptation of theories and models to the evidence, and development of research methodologies better adapted to the studied problems), and from the action approach (appropriateness of the actions relating to the needs stated by the population, optimization of resources and sustainability).

The contents of this chart have been discussed by a reduced work group within WP5 and are presented at this Conference for consideration and discussion by all the participants of this meeting between researchers and territorial development actors.

2. Context of a reflection: social transformations and balance of the CAENTI experience.

As stated in the introduction, two elements have inspired the work group's reflections on the action-research quality.

On the one hand, the experience of the CAENTI members; on the other, the confirmation that the socioeconomic and political changes in the past decades are also demanding a different kind of research, better adapted to the characteristics of the knowledge society, that takes more advantage of the potentials of ICT and that can give an answer to the needs of territorial governance.

2.1. Political decentralisation and territorial governance.

As regards political changes, the decentralizing processes of the State, both in its territorial aspect (granting greater autonomy to regional and local authorities for the management or definition of public policies) and in its institutional aspect (providing a bigger political space to private actors, both in decision-making processes and in their participation in the provision of goods and services), have translated into greater consciousness of mutual dependence and of the need for cooperation among multiple actors and multiple levels to face territorial grave social and economic problems. From the concept of government, understood simultaneously as an exclusive agent and as the principal result of a *top-down* decision-making process, we pass to the idea of "**governance**" which makes *reference to the need for governments to make room for other agents in the decision-making processes and to the need for all levels and areas of governments to be involved in these processes*.

All this results in horizontal cooperation (among different agents and areas of government) and vertical cooperation (among different levels), which is much more vague (and even confusing) than the one produced in the traditional scheme. The result of this greater complexity is a reduction in the regulatory role of the state, with the network of *projects by various territorial actors* acquiring greater importance.

Territorial governance presents the challenge of seeing that “territorial engineering” (coordination of plans, programmes and projects in the territory) takes advantage of and effectively stimulates the “organisational capacity of the whole of the social organisation” in order to manage to provide appropriate answers to the democratically expressed needs of the citizens. But the fact that decentralization translates into more suitable solutions for the needs of sustainable territorial development, while at the same time strengthening democracy, depends on the actual form adopted by the processes involved in territorial governance in each case. These processes are affected by a number of factors, among which can be mentioned the territory’s position and form of involvement in the global economic and political context; the institutional fabric made up by the formal and informal networks in which the actors from different levels and sectors whose action affects the territory interact; the individual responsibilities, abilities and preferences of these actors, as well as the characteristics of the forums where these actors meet and the methods they use to debate and cooperate, especially as regards the processes of production and exchange of information relating to the territory.

From the above it can be deduced that the success of the territorial governance will depend on the capacity of the territory to produce a comprehensive, forward-looking vision of the territory’s dynamic in the global context (with new paradigms, theories and models relating to territorial dynamics), but also on the territory’s capacity to create institutional agencies and networks for territorial management such as “territorial partnerships” and new coordination and communication tools which will allow the coherence of strategies and projects to be maintained throughout time.

2.2. Knowledge Society as a Learning Society: the role of Action-Research.

On the other hand, this knowledge society is the breeding ground in which all these transformations are produced. A society in which, paraphrasing P. Lévy, “knowledge is everywhere” (despite the “knowledge gap”) and where intelligence is universally distributed (no one has all the knowledge and everyone has some): the knowledge society is conceived as a society which is nourished by diversity and ability. One aspect of capital importance here is that people’s abilities are not static, but dynamic, and that the development of knowledge is a matter of favouring strategies in which people are protagonists in the changes in knowledge (bringing into play their capacities for diversity, participating in the building of collective intelligence) and not mere adapters of a state of global knowledge, which in any case is vast and permanently evolving. It is precisely with regard to this last point, the need to promote the ability of individuals to be protagonists in the creation and evolution of knowledge, what points towards the concept of territorial intelligence.

As regards research, these changes show the need for new knowledge and a new way of producing and sharing it. However, the understanding of territorial dynamics is presented as an extraordinarily complex issue, and their analysis requires the cross-sectional intervention of a number of disciplines. In these cases, the uncertainty associated with causal chains established by models, often due to a lack of information, causes the scientific results to be open to multiple interpretations. For this reason, today's society makes two clear demands with regard to the way in which the research is carried out:

- In the first place, the demand is for participatory research, both from the point of view of intervention from different disciplines, and from the point of view of forming teams comprising other professionals and actors from the public sector or civil society. The presence of the latter is indispensable, because although they are not specialised in research their experience can contribute by supplying or producing information and different points of view to help establish working hypotheses and procedures for assessing the veracity of the results.
- Secondly, society is also demanding greater transparency as regards the dissemination of the results, especially in aspects which substantially affect human life and which have ethical implications, so that the best informed public debate possible can be produced.

Obviously, this cooperative way of tackling research may not make any sense in the field of basic or fundamental research, where results are not immediately applicable, or in topics intended for critical reflection regarding nature and humanity, which try to produce theories with a high level of abstraction. However, this type of collaboration between research and actors directly involved in the subjects under investigation proves very advantageous for both parties in most applied fields in the following ways:

- In one way, the researchers will have more sources of information available to them and a greater variety of points of view to focus the problems; this affects the quality of the results in terms of relevance, rigour and veracity (as they say “a science that examines all arguments is always more and not less rigorous”).
- On the other hand, for non-scientific actors involved, participation in the research will have the advantage of training in scientific methods and values and the ability to establish greater critical distance in relation to the problems posed, enriching their knowledge of the topics which concern them most and improving their action and evaluation capabilities in the global context.

But the principal value of participation is not only that the territorial actors produce in the course of carrying out their actions, very valuable information for producing theories and models relating to territorial dynamics, nor even that their knowledge is paramount for the interpretation of the results. The fundamental contribution of participatory dynamics is that, when it achieves the complete involvement of territorial actors in the process of converting information into knowledge, and even manages to incorporate research activity into its courses of action, there is a direct impact on the actors' capacity for learning from their own experience, and their possibility of adapting to change, stimulating their individual intelligence and improving their capacity for action on the territory.

Additionally, insofar as the territorial knowledge required is comprehensive knowledge, the research must not only involve researchers from different disciplines, but actors from different sectors should also take part (Girardot, 2005). However, this is a much more complex matter, as it requires the research to be developed within the framework of partnerships of territorial actors who should act on the same problems.

The difficulty lies in the fact that there are many obstacles to the correct functioning of partnership actions on territory. These are both institutional in nature, including a lack of confidence, and technical, for example limitations in the abilities of actors to work together³ (OECD, 2005). Hence the results in terms of territorial governance are not as efficient and democratic as would be hoped.

It is here that participatory research dynamics can produce a greater impact, since the fact of compiling, producing, analysing information and interpreting the results collectively, on the one hand increases the individual capacities of the actors, mobilising the potential ability to produce and process knowledge about the field of action, and on the other hand, can contribute to favouring consensus as to diagnoses of the principal problems, or at least a common base of information and knowledge on which to discuss the discrepancies. All this makes possible the proposal for joint comprehensive solutions, which is the first step towards coherence and coordination of action on territory. On this point, it is important to clarify that for this connection between research and action to be effective, *the dynamic has to involve actors who really have more direct contact with the field*, as it is their contribution of systems of knowledge of the effects and determinants of their actions that can have a greater effect on territorial action in the long term (learning), regardless of whether the involvement of those in charge at an institutional level is indispensable for reaching agreements to establish the appropriate synergies.

In this way, participatory research proves to be a basic premise of territorial intelligence and hence of territorial governance. However, perhaps the main reason that these projects are not extended further is due to the fact that the dynamic of carrying out research and action together (researchers and actors working multidisciplinarily and multisectorially) is really very complicated, due essentially to the lack of tools to promote and facilitate cooperative learning in the long term.

3. Action-Research principles for the development of territorial governance.

Starting from the previous premises, the CAENTI WP5 members drew up in 2006 a list of principles which have to be observed by the action-research processes as applied to sustainable development for the promotion of good territorial governance:

- *Transformation*: this is a principle which serves as a premise for all the others proposed below and which consists of explicit recognition of the transforming effect research can have on reality, especially when carried out in relation to social problems.

³ For a reasonably detailed analysis of these obstacles see OECD (2005).

- *Multidimensionality*: the objectives of action-research are to focus multidimensionally and multisectorially, trying to ensure in any case that the participation of the disciplines and sectors involved is balanced, corresponds to the characteristics of the problem in hand and helps to achieve a global vision.
- *Partnership*: the action-research processes must include among their objectives the involvement of territorial partnerships which may be concerned with the question under analysis, or else promote the creation and development of them whenever these partnerships do not exist.
- *Participation*: the process must also be designed in such a way that the participation of local actors is produced effectively at all levels, from institutional decision-makers to those actors most directly facing the needs of the field, and of course, the population affected.
- *Sustainability*: the *action-research* processes must be long-term propositions, so that evolutionary knowledge of the problems that affect the territories can be produced. The theories, models and databanks produced in this way will allow the long-term dynamics, and therefore the determining factors of sustainability of the development model to be understood and monitored.
- *Transparency*: the action-research processes must also have as their objective an increase in the transparency of the results, both of the research and the action, facilitating decision-making and contributing to this becoming more democratic.
- *Co-responsibility*: in the action-research process, the “actor-investigators” and the “investigator-actors” are equally responsible for the progress of the project and the results reached and this must be reflected in the distribution of the work.
- *Co-evaluation*: the objectives of the action-research are to include systematic assessment of the process to allow feedback and the redirection of the objectives in line with transformation of the initial context.
- *Co-learning*: the action-research processes must facilitate the cooperative learning of all the participants, improving the capacity of the whole system of territorial actors to find solutions to their problems by making best use of their past experience. In other words, action-research must promote and strengthen the development of territorial intelligence.

The analysis of the results of the experience compiled in the catalogues put together by the universities participating in CAENTI allows us to outline some positive aspects of the application of an approach that follows these principles.

First of all, in general terms, this type of research, by encouraging actors to share their information and knowledge of the territory, would make possible better adaptation of actions to the needs of the territory, greater coordination and coherence of actions and policies and improved allocation of resources. In turn, to the extent that it can be translated into an improvement in transparency and an increase in the mutual confidence among

actors, it could greatly strengthen social capital and promote its distribution in society as a whole.

Another meaningful expected effect of this kind of action-research processes is actors' appropriation of scientific methods and tools for analysing, managing, and evaluating territorial projects. This is the case because an essential part of these processes consists of adapting these methods and tools to the specific needs of the field. All this can contribute to extending a culture of evaluation of territory allowing actors more systematic learning from their experiences. The consequence of all the effects mentioned, on the whole, is empowerment of actors, which, in turn, can contribute in large measure to improving their capacity to undertake action.

The benefits for research, as the CAENTI researchers have emphasised, are obvious as well. Processes of this kind provide much more pertinent information and allow the research results to be compared more directly.

Unfortunately, however, the formulation of these principles does not mean their automatic application. In fact, as the members' practical experience shows, reflected in their experience catalogues, their application is quite complex and places certain limits on carrying out action-research processes which have been developed from this standpoint. The principal obstacles in this sense relate to the institutional context in which these experiences are produced. Some of these are raised in the following paragraphs.

As regards research, although the need for development of multidisciplinary approaches to be carried out in partnerships is widely recognised, neither research funding systems nor means of scientific dissemination, nor the structure of academic merits promote this type of project, especially in the field of the social sciences.

In terms of action, there are also several factors limiting the applicability and extension of action-research practices: the urgency of territorial needs which do not allow for the use of time and resources in research, the imposed "management by projects" system which has the effect of fragmenting public policies and actions, on many occasions territorial actors lack the necessary expertise to appropriate and internalize research methods and tools properly, incorporating them into their daily management and, of course, the willingness of actors to take part in genuine, long-term participatory processes does not always materialise and does not normally occur automatically.

Therefore, generation of positive results is by no means automatic. In addition, the development of a culture of participation which favours the development of territorial intelligence is not a linear process. There are so many variables involved that advances can often be followed by significant setbacks with strong adverse effects (institutional confidence failures, for example). This is the reason why it is so important to determine the possible methodological and ethical rules which might lead to better results.

The advances performed by the group regarding this matter are presented in the next section.

4. Durable collaborative participation of researchers and territorial actors as quality key factor.

4.1. Process-centred quality.

Taking into account the link that the work group has established between action-research, territorial intelligence and territorial governance, the reflection on the criteria which should be used to measure quality has taken as its starting point the objectives of a quality sustainable development territorial governance, namely: to make sure that the solutions adopted mobilise the resources effectively, by providing relevant answers to territorial needs, both in the short and long terms, that is, sustainably; and to ensure that the processes by means of which the solutions are proposed, debated and finally accepted contribute to the development of democracy, in a more complex context in which the traditional systems of representative democracy prove insufficient.

From this perspective, the quality of a action-research project could be considered according to two other basic criteria:

On the one hand, from the point of view of the results, the project quality would rest on two complementary aspects:

- First, the action-research project ability to generate knowledge of territorial dynamics (theories, models, indicators) better adapted to the actual conditions, and its ability to develop research methods that are more suitable for the characteristics and dynamics of the studied object.
- Second, on the same level of importance, quality would be related to the action-research project ability to generate a more suitable territorial action facing the real needs of the population.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the process, the project quality would be found in:

- its ability to generate a permanent learning and co-learning environment to guarantee mobilisation and mutualisation of competences among the territorial actors involved in the territorial development processes (included the research teams and, of course, the population itself) on the long term, which could be translated into territorial intelligence development. This exchange refers to the researchers making their knowledge (included analysis tools) more accessible to territorial actors and the latter sharing with the former their proximity knowledge, but also, it mainly implies the joint production of both theoretical and applied new knowledge.

As a last resort, the process quality could be synthesized in its ability to generate empowerment of the territory's population regarding the decisions relative to the definition and solving of the problems that concern them most directly. On the one hand, by providing them more useful knowledge that allows them to better understand territorial challenges; and on the other, by developing the capacities of the actors involved in sustainable territorial development.

It is a feedback process. The improvement of the territorial actors' capacities (for example in the use of territorial intelligence tools) will generate, through exchange among the actors, a better knowledge of territorial dynamics and this better understanding may lead to better quality action in the territory, which would favour a better understanding of the processes that affect it and, again, an improvement in the territorial actors' capacities.

But for this feedback process to work, it is essential that participation processes in action-research projects produce a really effective collaboration (otherwise it would be a demagogic exercise), and that they turn into a long-term dynamic. It is important to stress that the action-research project durability in time is a necessary condition, since the dynamics of sustainable territorial development occur in the long term, as well as the translation of learning into actions, and actions into evaluations that allow the redirection of plans.

As a result, the work group has suggested the quality of the participatory process of a action-research project as the starting point from which the project quality can be evaluated. Therefore, the quality of a action-research would depend on its ability to implement and promote participatory processes involving a community of actors (and not only those in charge of institutions): for this purpose, it must be solidly interwoven with a specific territorial reality and be able to mobilise effectively the available resources, especially communication and information technologies (ICT), to promote participation of the actors and the project dynamic.

4.2. The four pillars of the quality of participation in Action-Research processes.

Starting from the nine ethical and methodological principles of action-research, formulated after the analysis of the partners' experience, and taking into account that the quality of the action-research processes depends on their ability to build a participatory process, in which a long-term effective collaboration takes place, the WP5 work group has defined what they think are the four pillars supporting the quality of the action-research aimed at promoting sustainable territorial governance and development. These pillars take the previous principles as their basis, and can be summarized as follows:

1. Mobilisation of a territory's resources.
2. Mutualisation of knowledge and competences.
3. Responsibility of all the participants.
4. Common property of the results.

They are complementary and interdependent. Indeed, it is very useful to mobilise all the human resources of a territory in a action-research project, provided this mobilisation is not articulated with the definition of formalised responsibilities, assigning each of the involved entities a specific role (with goals to be achieved). On the other hand, it is useless to mutualise multiple competences, favouring co-learning processes among researchers and actors, if all the efforts invested in the drawing up of collective work protocols are not accompanied by an overview of the actual and measurable impact of the project on the target territory. It is in the dialectics inherent to these four pillars where success of the

action-research is based, as inferred from the analysis of the CAENTI catalogue of experiences.

To clarify the proposal, a couple of objectives to be achieved and a number of activities (or means) to help achieve them have been defined for each of these four pillars.

1. Mobilisation of the territory's resources:

- 1a. Investigation of the target territory's resources.
- 1b. Organization of actors/researchers partnerships.

2. Mutualisation of the whole of competences and knowledge:

- 2a. Mutidimensionality of the researchaction.
- 2b. Co-learning.

3. Responsibility of all the participants and institutions involved.

- 3a. Organisation of a collaborative management of the Project.
- 3b. Deontology and autonomy of participants.

4. Common property of the results.

- 4a. Evaluation of the action-research impact on the territory.
- 4b. Durability of the performed actions.

The notion of added value should be emphasized in this section, since it justifies the choice of all the defined objectives and the means to be implemented. The action-research partnerships built on these pillars modify lastingly the relationships between university students and territorial actors in a given territory. There are very different ways in which these projects can take shape, but within CAENTI they are generally called territorial observatories. This mutation of the borders between the research universe and that of territorial action is fundamental. On the one hand, it allows territorial actors to mobilise in a useful way scientific knowledge and analysis tools in their decision making processes. Also, a shared project dynamics is generated within the territorial observatories, allowing researchers and actors to know that they can participate jointly and efficiently in the sustainable development of their territory, and by means of this partnership, gain a predominant role in decision making processes, both in the fields of research and action.

The second element to be emphasized is the determining role that Information and Communication Technologies play in this model of participatory territorial observatories. It is not only a question of stating the analytical and pedagogical advantages of territorial intelligence tools that will enable processing and drawing up the information out of the data collected from territorial diagnoses. The new technologies open new possibilities which are still underdeveloped in terms of collaborative project drawing, especially due to the relationship process they imply. First, because they favour frequency and quality of communication among a project's partners, allowing accessibility systems for consultation and updating of changing data, differentiated according to the kind of partnership established. Second, because they enhance the quality of personal involvement regardless

of institutional membership. This allows a more pragmatic management of the project, which is thus based on a more real and lasting involvement of each of the participants, and on a more efficient communication among work sub-groups during the project implementation.

4.3. Objectives of the quality of participation and means to achieve them, their added value and the role of ICT.

The following tables gather together the 4 pillars with their respective objectives, means to be performed, added value and ICT specific role. In this way we hope to justify the choice taken in the drawing up of this “quality charter” proposal, being aware that its content focuses on promoting the participation quality of action-research projects. These are instructions to turn participation into real effective and lasting cooperation processes. Therefore, the focus is on the process quality, taking into account that the added values associated to the achievement of each objective can also generate a better quality of the results, especially if they are measured regarding their ability to generate knowledge that is better adapted to the territorial needs, and to favour learning and empowerment of the territorial actors and the population regarding issues that affect their life quality.

Pillar 1. Mobilisation of the territory's resources.

	Objectives	Means	Added Value	ICT Role
1.a.	Investigation of the target territory's resources.	Compilation and analysis of existing documents and data (scientific and technical, political, legal, etc.) on the studied issues.	Possibility of settling the project issues on an exhaustive state of the art. Availability of all knowledge to all participants from the beginning. The action-research objectives should be defined out of this knowledge.	Ease of investigation. Immediate accessibility to collected data. Possibility of structuring the collected data in virtual work spaces.
		Account of existing bodies and actions linked to the general subject of the project. Drawing up of a map of territorial actors involved and of the logics of existing networks.	Possibility of knowing the representativity of the action-research in the target territory. Sharing of project with all actors and partners interested in the target issue.	Ease of investigation. Possibility of providing wider information to all networks in the territory and of calling for participation.
1.b.	Organization of actors/researchers partnerships.	Organisation of work meetings with researchers and actors which can be potentially involved in the action-research at the beginning of the project.	Confidence relationship. Feeling of involvement. Regard of the involved institutions' expectations from the very beginning of the project.	Ease of communication. Immediate accessibility to meeting agendas and minutes. Possibility of encouraging and follow discussions for dissemination.
		Preparation of work subjects with all the participants. Organisation of work sub-groups, gathering researchers, representatives of the involved institutions, and actors in the territory according to the defined subjects.	Confidence relationship. Feeling of involvement. Possibility of including expectations of territorial actors in the project objectives.	Ease of communication. Immediate accessibility to meeting agendas and minutes. Possibility of encouraging and follow discussions for dissemination.

Pillar 2. Mutualisation of the whole of competences and knowledge.

	Objectives	Means	Added Value	ICT Role
2.a.	Multidimensionality of the action-research.	Involvement of research teams of different fields or multidisciplinary research teams and actors of different sectors.	Improved knowledge of territorial dynamics complexity. Improved knowledge of existing actor networks.	Multidimensional analysis tools. Improved accessibility and visibility of the results due the information structure in virtual work spaces.
		Drawing up of multidisciplinary diagnoses articulating quantitative and qualitative methods which deal with a holistic notion of territory (historical, geographical, economical, sociological aspects, etc.)	Improved knowledge of the complexity of social facts in the concerned territory.	Ease of communication. Possibility of virtual work spaces.
		Drawing up of a synthesis of documents and data (state of the art) accessible to all participants.	Possibility for all participants to access a summary of available knowledge.	Possibility of structuring the collected data in virtual work spaces.
2.b.	Co-learning.	Training and awareness-raising by researchers of territorial actors in research methods and tools.	Better understanding of the basic principles of university research. Developing greater capability of critical distance regarding the studied issues.	Pedagogical communication medium.
		Training and awareness-raising by territorial actors of researchers on specific features of the project target territory and population.	Improved knowledge of historical-political aspects and of legal and institutional realities in which the territorial actors perform their action.	Pedagogical communication medium.
		Collaborative participation of researchers and territorial actors in the implementation and development of the investigation.	Improved data accessibility due to territorial actor networks. Improved data collection and research analysis procedures due to researchers' competences. Development of a common language capable of favouring exchanges in the work groups.	Possibility of using collaborative work spaces allowing all participants to exchange solutions taken into account and achieved objectives throughout the implementation of surveys on the target issue.

Pillar 3. Responsibleness of participants and involved institutions.

	Objectives	Means	Added Value	ICT Role
3.a.	Organization of a collaborative management of the project.	Creation of a steering committee gathering the different active participants (researchers and actors) and of a work programme that defines interim objectives and impacts on the territory.	Institutionalization of an equal relationship between the research interests and the action interests. Assessing the actual involvement and work of participants at the expense of their institutional position.	Enhancement of collaborative work spaces, of work dynamic for each participant, in a way that institutional position can be improved, showing more clearly the most directly involved actors in the processes.
		Creation of an autonomous consultancy ethical council that guarantees a proper implementation of the project.	Guarantee of observance of the research and action objectives. Representativity of the different institutions involved in the project.	Ease of communication. Possibility of virtual work spaces.
		Evolving hierarchy of data access according to the degree of responsibility of each participant.	Formalization of the respective responsibilities of each participant, the different levels of data access according to the degree of involvement in the project, and rules of statistical secrecy.	Evolving levels of data accessibility (logins, passwords, etc.).
3.b.	Deontology and autonomy of participants.	Observation of deontological principles of research in Human and Social Sciences (anonymity of surveyed individuals, observation of rules on statistical secrecy, transparency of the investigation objectives, and autonomy of territorial actors from the funding bodies).	Possibility of establishing a confidence relationship with the surveyed population.	Possibility of virtual interaction spaces
		Setting up of a chart, accepted by all participants, that lays down the deontological principles, the collaborative organization of the work to be performed, the degree of autonomy of researchers and actors within the project framework with respect to the institutions for which they work, and transparent use of the results.	Confidence relationship by means of the guarantees set up in the Chart. Regulation of possible disagreements due to legitimization of collaborative organization of work modalities. Autonomy of the actors with respect to institutional supervision.	Possibility of virtual interaction spaces

Pillar 4. Common property of the results of the Action-Research.

	Objectives	Means	Added Value	ICT Role
4.a.	Regular evaluation of the impact on the territory.	Implementation of a "Quality Plan", with interim visible objectives to be achieved, allowing the regular measurement of the evolution and impact of the action-research.	Possibility of verifying at different stages of the project lifetime the conditions of its development and, if necessary, possibility of redefining the implemented work methods.	Opening of permanent constructive dialogue on the project action-research evolution within the framework of virtual work spaces.
		Communication at different stages of the action-research of interim reports to all participants and the concerned population.	Legitimation of the activities performed within the project framework in a given territory. Assessment of the beneficial impact of this approach for appropriate governance and sustainable development.	Possibility of virtual interaction spaces. Pedagogical communication medium.
		Observation of the impact of the developed decision making toolkit on the decisions taken in the whole territory. Observation of the dynamics followed by the population to take ownership of the results.	Legitimation of appropriateness of the tools developed in a given territory. Assessment of the beneficial impact of this approach for appropriate governance and sustainable development.	Use of measuring tools (mainly cartographic), that enable explaining the achieved impact.
4.b.	Durability of the implemented actions.	Implementation of a specific work group in charge of preparing the continuation of the action-research, both in terms of monitoring the developed actions and in terms of developing new action-research projects, on the basis of the work dynamic established within the work sub-groups.	Progressive implementation of a work dynamic within the community of participants.	Ease of communication. Collaborative work dynamic.

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