

Territorial instruments Cohesion Policy (ERDF/CF/JTF) 2025 evaluation package

Good Practice Webinar – Rural Pact Support Office
22 April 2026

European Commission, DG REGIO

Davide Ceccanti - Policy Development and Evaluation Unit



Cohesion policy has worked in the last decade: ERDF, CF, JTF evaluations

***Ex post* evaluation 2014-20, REACT-EU Report and mid-term evaluation 2021-27 are distinct exercises with a shared message:**

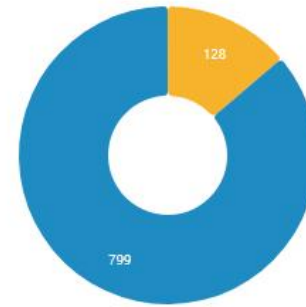
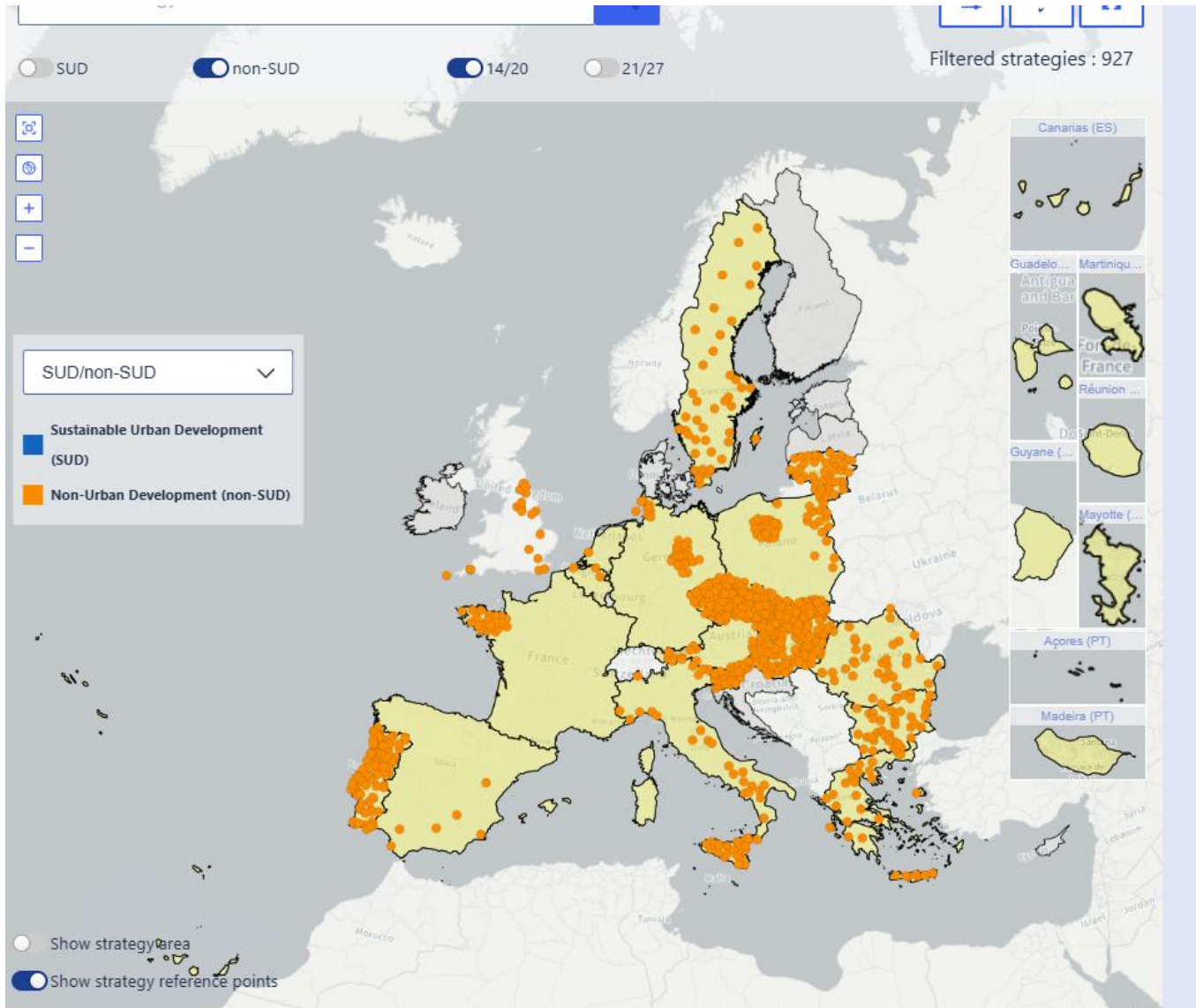
Cohesion policy through ERDF, CF and JTF has delivered sustainable development for all territories and reduced inequalities between regions.

In some territories and thematic areas, it has worked better than in others and we identified areas for improvement.

- Territoriality: Place-based, adapted to regional needs
- EU Added value: Strategic and funding continuity
- Relevance: Keeping with EU objectives
- Simplification: Modest costs, room for streamlining
- Capacity building: Uneven, improvement needed

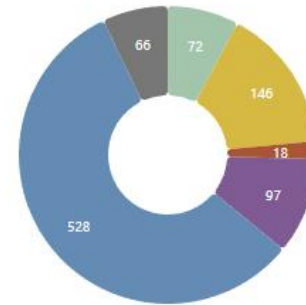


Non-urban territorial tools 2014-2020(23)



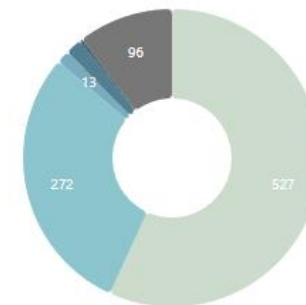
Territorial delivery mechanism

- SUD (art. 7) Operational Programme
- SUD (art. 7) Priority Axis
- Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)
- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)
- Not defined



Territorial focus

- Area within city/town
- City, town or suburb
- Functional urban area
- City network
- Region
- Other functional territory
- Not defined



Population covered per strategy

- <50K
- 50K-250K
- 250K-500K
- 500L-2.5MI
- >2.5MI
- ND



Ex post 14-20 – key findings

ITI and CLLD achieved results that traditional planning could not

- Social capital, trust, and cooperative culture
- Integration over administrative silos (cross-departments and cross-funds)
- Local needs and ownership, marginalized rural groups and bottom-up agency

Main challenges

- Slow start: many strategies took 2/3 years for approval
- Administrative gold-plating, e.g. audit requirements for small rural municipalities
- Lack of integration: ITIs were heavily dominated by cities (SUD) due to the 5% urban earmark, while CLLDs rural and local (based on rural LAGs from LEADER)
- Coordination: combining ERDF, ESF, and EAFRD legally and technically difficult



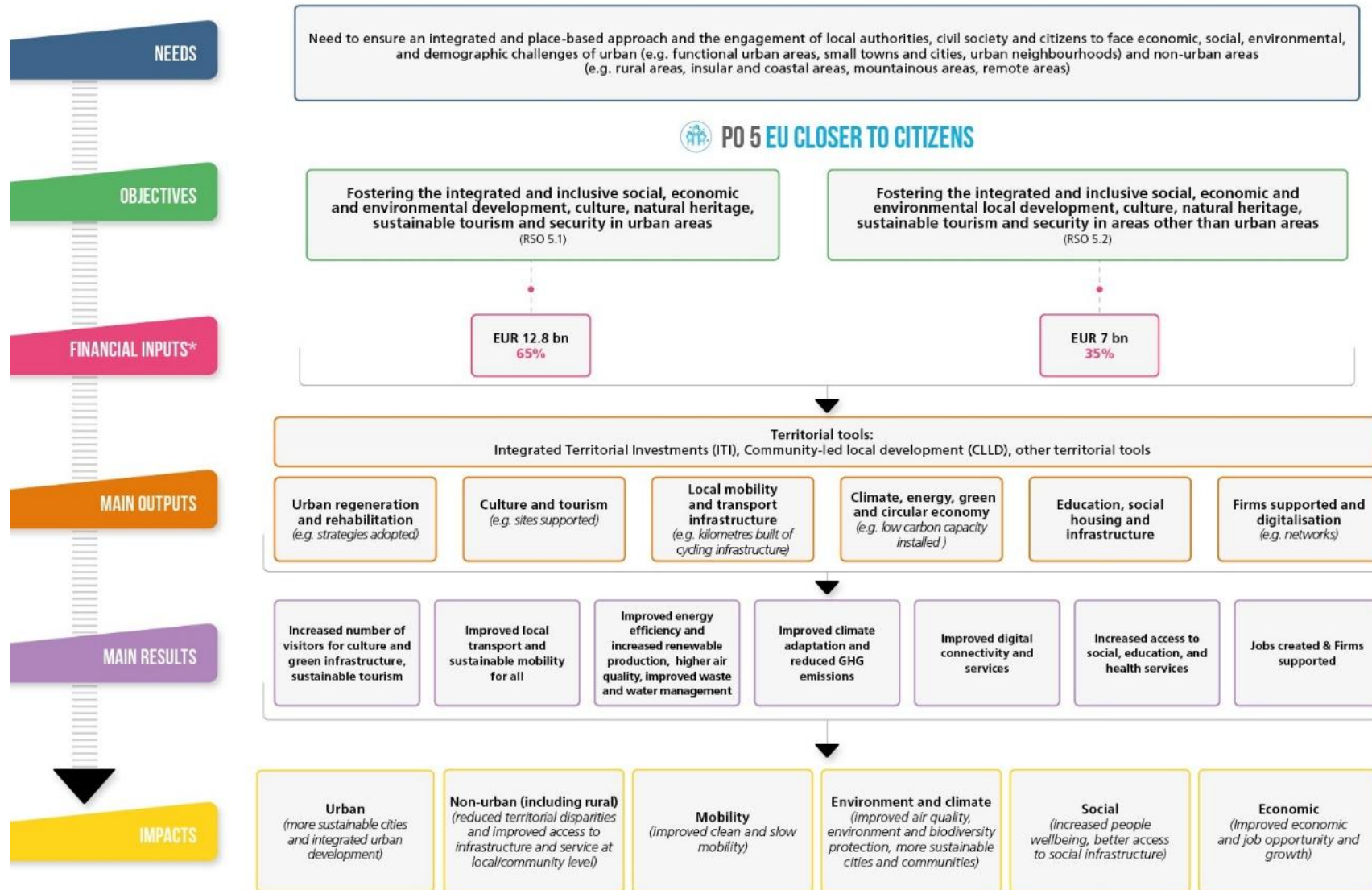
Mid-term 21-27 – novelties

Main novelties

- **ITI:** large-scale, cross-sectoral transitions that include a rural dimension
- **CLLD:** “Lead-fund principle” for greater integration, no double-reporting
- **Other Territorial Tools:** MS can use their own national/regional territorial models
- **Dedicated PO5:** explicit preparation of strategies to tackle slow start and planning
- **Functional areas** for integration + **simplified rules** to reduce gold-plating, e.g. SCOs
- **Other:** JTF and renew Interreg



PO5 intervention logic



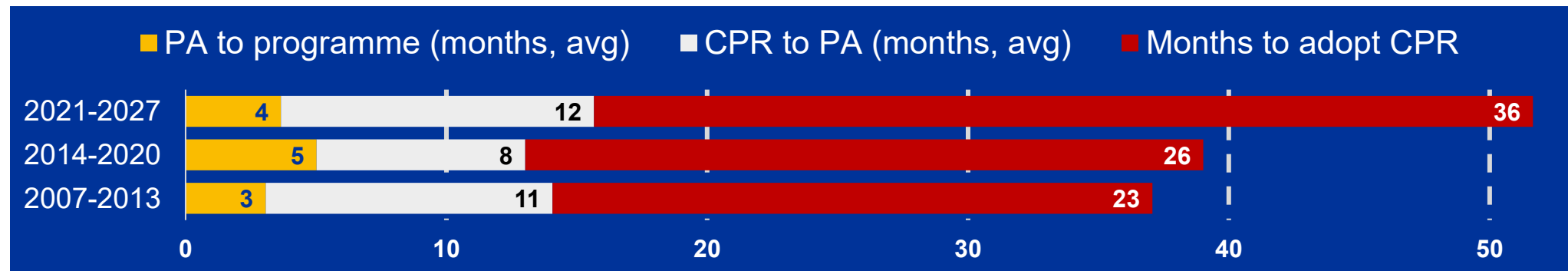
*EU amount current prices



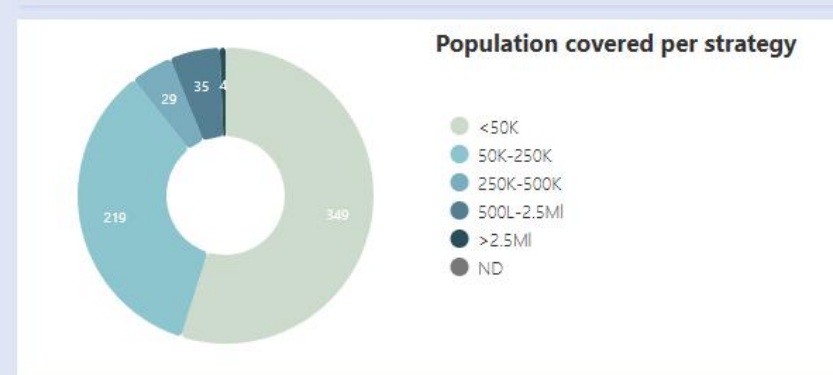
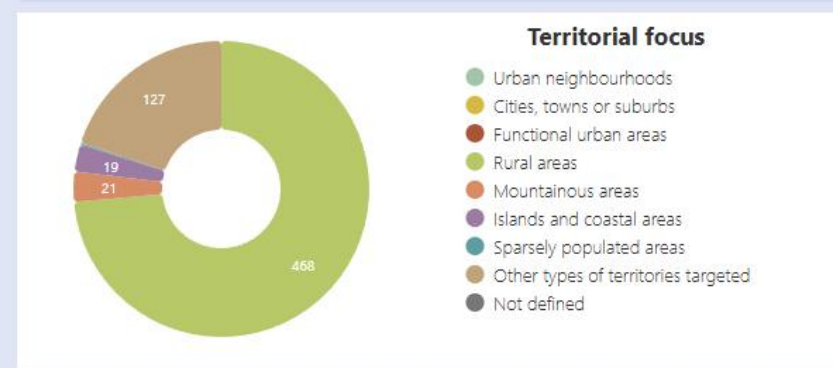
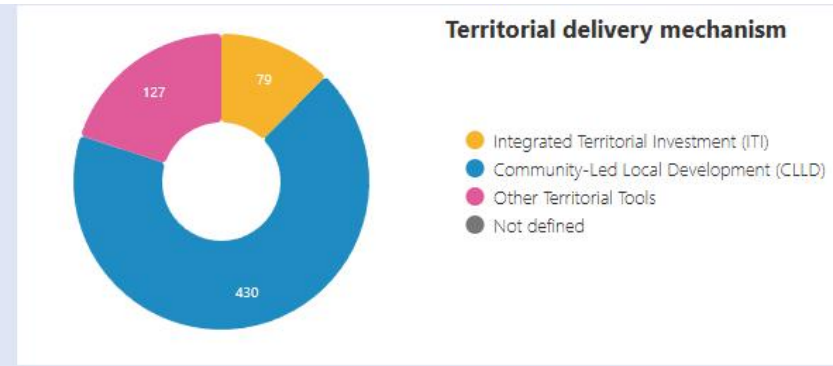
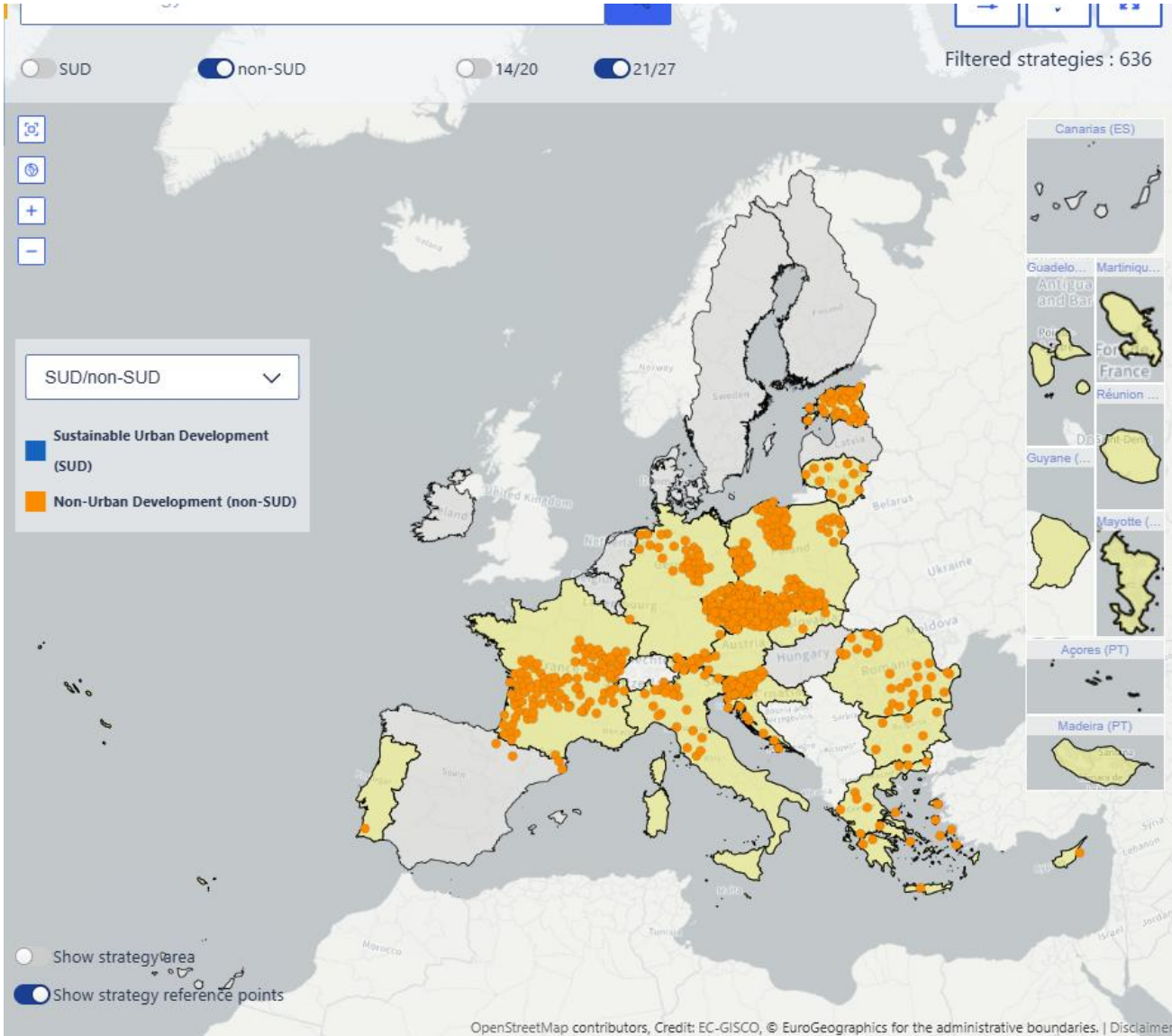
Mid-term 21-27 – key findings

Key findings

- **Top relative PO5 allocations:** BG 14%, HU 12%, LT 10%, CY 9%, HR 8%
- **PO5 greater rural focus:** 35% targets rural, mountainous, and island territories
- **Regional concentration:** LDR 10%, TR 9%, MDR 7% on average to PO5
- **Thematic focus:** physical regeneration and security of public spaces, cultural assets and services, tourism assets and services, nature and biodiversity
- **Effectiveness still conditional** on coherence with other funding instruments
- Positive perception of **novelties** and **faster** and **more integrated** programming



Non-urban territorial tools 2021-2027 (Aug 2025)



Where to access the relevant material?

1. [Ex post evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\) and the Cohesion Fund for the programming period 2014-2020](#)
2. [Work Package 13 'Territorial Instruments' 2014-2020](#)
3. [Mid-term evaluation of the cohesion policy programmes 2021-2027 financed by the European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\), the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund \(JTF\)](#)
4. [Fiche on Policy Objective 5 'A Europe Closer to Citizens' 2021-2027](#)
5. [STRAT-Board – state of play on territorial development tools](#)

