The three Countries Park (3LP)

3LP is a polycentric cross-border region (BE-NL-DE) situated in the heart of the Euregio Maas-Rijn between the cities of Maastricht, Aachen, Hasselt, Heerlen and Liège. It’s a common garden for the 2 million inhabitants living in and around the 3LP with strong landscape assets. Development of transnational collaboration through a shared vision in various fields, including landscape.

Phase 1 - The European identity

European territorial dynamics affecting 3LP

For a landscape policy it is not only important to consider the past and its remnants perceivable in the landscape as a rich source of (European and cross-border) identity, rootedness, sense of place and cultural meaning, but also to consider on-going trends and potential future impacts.

Phase 2 - Landscape perspective

Unity and diversity, a landscape perspective for the Three Countries Park

The landscape perspective gives 13 guiding principles for landscape development in the 3LP. They aim to preserve or enhance the core qualities of the Park - diversified relief, abundance of water appearances, varied green character, polycentric settlement pattern and manifold cultural heritage.

The landscape perspective builds upon the main principles of unity, represented by a shared, cross-border set of objectives and diversity, opportunity to reflect cultural differences and to enable local place-based solutions.

Phase 3 - Policy recommendations for implementation

Thematic strategies for high-quality and innovative landscapes

The strategies provide different pathways of action for realizing the guiding principles in relation to EU policy.

1) Overarching strategy: cross-border landscape partnership

2) Green infrastructure / landscape framework / River Basin management

3) Agricultural quality production

4) Smart and small scale renewable energy

5) Cultural heritage and access

Conclusion

The LP3LP provides a scan of a broad width of EU policy instruments and is aligned with them (when meaningful) in its thematic strategies. Especially area-based-tools of cohesion policy may be further expanded to support integrated approaches to landscape development.

Other cross-border regions could develop a landscape policy inspired by this experience, but it is difficult to determine the relevancy of a direct transferability. Nevertheless, the project proposes to consider a nine-step approach to elaborate its own policy.

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