



Progress of territorial economic development policies in Chile: Main initiatives ¹

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Executive Summary

This article is based on the belief that improvement of competitiveness and the economic development of the country requires a change in development strategy, via the adoption of public policies and programmes that aim to improve the competitiveness of high-potential value chains, so taking advantage of the synergies, attributes and assets found in territories. In accordance with this premise, the article revises and analyses the main initiatives that have aimed to incorporate territorial focus within public-sector initiatives linked with the promotion of production development and competitiveness.

The review concludes that all the initiatives so far implemented have been aimed in the right direction and that when analysed as a whole and over time, underline a process of change in public policies and programmes. However, it is also noted that these initiatives have not formed part of either a model or strategy understood and shared by the actors involved, or have received leadership at the highest level in concurrence with the decentralisation strategy adopted by the country.

Taking into account the level of progress reached as regards the diversity and level of development and maturity of the initiatives implemented, the author

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underlines her concern that if the highest levels of government fail to take responsibility for the challenges involved in moving from a sectoral focus to one that is territorial in order to promote the country's economic development, there is a risk of neutralising and reversing the efforts and progress that have been achieved. The creating and development of an understood and shared strategy by the actors involved, that takes into account the conditioning institutional factors, and which allows the follow-up and evaluation of the whole process, the clear identification of the results obtained, as well as the improvements and adjustments required, are necessary in order to ensure that the objectives of a public policy to support and promote the country's economic growth and development are obtained.

The article concludes by underlining that the objective is not institutional transformation, or decision-making processes and resource allocation, or the promotion of greater participation and agreements between public and private actors, or decentralisation: the objective is the development of the country and its territories, and it is on the basis of achieving this objective that the model, strategy and projects being implemented should be evaluated.