

Four Types of Regions

Field of application	<p>The Four Types of Regions workshop could also be defined as Four Types of Different Local Realities workshop. Fields of application can be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To reflect with students on their business plans in relation to their target markets or target areas• To reflect with businesses from the local area (e.g. the area of the university's location) on different strategies for improving business opportunities• To work with development organisations responsible for the promotion of businesses and regions on the identification of different intervention strategies for strengthening the local economy
Resume / Brief description	<p>The Four Types of Regions workshop differentiates between four economic and dynamic realities in locations, suburbs and regions. It helps to identify declining, marginalised, emerging and dynamic spaces (in a city or in a region) and defines typical characteristics of these spaces with the participants. Based on the differentiation of a location along these four realities, it provides the chance to define and reflect on business models, network initiatives and concrete support interventions to support the development of these spaces according to their conditions and development dynamics. The key message of the method can be framed as "Context matters and requires differentiated interventions or business models". In detail, the method helps to identify different strategies accordingly.</p>
Target group	<p>Students Lecturers Consultants Development agencies Businesses</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To define business and intervention models according to different contexts and dynamics in local areas.• To promote reflection on target markets or regions for a business and identify new market opportunities.• To realise that different regions are driven by different dynamics. These dynamics also shape the business landscape and the opportunities to develop this place in a sustainable way.



Requirements

Application

- A workshop format can be used with students, businesses or development organisations. The number of participants should not extend 20 persons.

Material

- 1 pin board
- 1 flipchart
- Markers
- Moderation cards

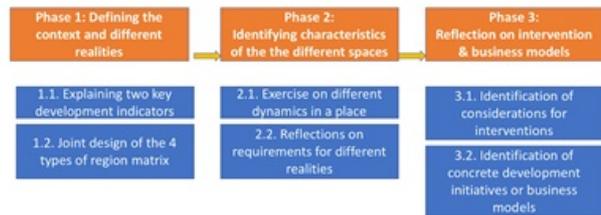
Time

- The the workshop requires 2-3 hours time.

Implementation - Overview

The activity is realised in 3 phases .

Four Types of Regions



1. Defining context and different realities

1.1. Explaining two key development indicators

The 4 types of Regiony matrix emerged out of observations from geography and local development experience. It uses two key critical factors that shape the development of a location or space:

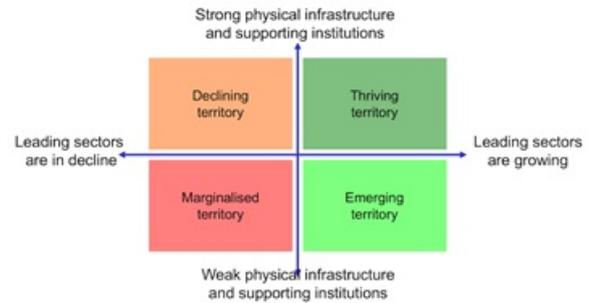


1. The development of its physical and institutional infrastructure, and
2. The dynamics of the leading business sectors. Institutional infrastructure involves regulations, values, and norms but also the availability and quality of support organisations and services.

The first step of reflection with businesses and other participants focuses on the question: "What are key success factors for a region to keep a dynamic development path?"

1.2. Design and explanation of the 4 types of region matrix

The facilitator presents the two critical factors and has prepared two opposing expressions for them with which the matrix is created on a pin board.



The facilitator then asks the participants for each quadrant: "How would you call this place under these circumstances?" The differentiation between declining, marginalised, emerging and thriving territories, or regions is explained to them. The quadrants are named with cards (see example below).

2. Identifying different dynamics in a place

2.1. Exercise on different dynamics and characteristics in a place

Students or other participants reflect on which quadrant best describes their birthplace (declining, emerging, marginalized, dynamic?) when they were born.

After a short reflection on the results, they are then asked to reflect on which quadrant best describes the same place today.

What becomes obvious is that the development dynamics of a place are changing over time. Very dynamic regions can fall into crisis, declining ones can newly emerge. Being aware of changing dynamics and about the logic of the matrix is key in this exercise.

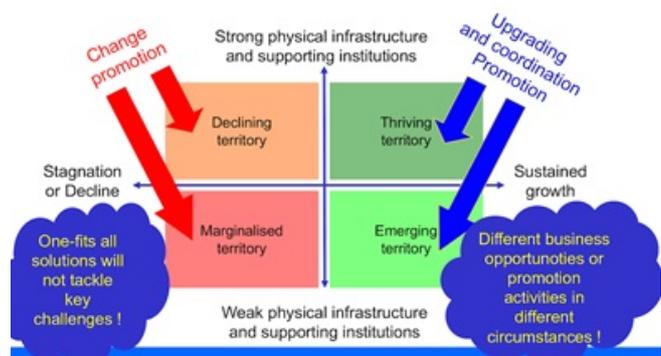
After this first reflection the participants are asked to define in groups the main characteristics of the Four Types of Regions. In the four groups, each participant writes on moderation cards the main characteristics of one of the regions (one group for identifying the main characteristics of a declining region, one group for identifying the main characteristics of a marginalised region, and so on).

The cards are then presented on the pin board and pinned on the different quadrants. Further characteristics are discussed and added in the plenary.

2.2. Reflections on requirements for different realities

The facilitator asks the participants: "If you look at the different dynamics and characteristics in the regions, what comes to your mind? What is required to change the regions on the left and on the right side?"

After this reflection the facilitator presents two main observations.



Implementation - Guidelines



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One of the key observations that the facilitator is pointing out is that the regions on the left side require change initiatives. They also ask for new business models that provide support to these changes and that offer new products in demand. Places on the right side are rather requiring further upgrading and coordination to improve continuously the institutional and physical infrastructure. This involves also the creation of innovative networks of businesses and support organisations.

3. Reflection on intervention and business models

3.1. Identification of key considerations and influential factors

Depending on the target group the facilitator asks the participants about where they want to start their business and their business to be located (with students, businesses) or where they want to promote economic development (with support organisations, such as development agencies or clusters)

Then the group reflects on the different influences that local conditions have on their intervention or business model.

3.2. Identification of concrete business model or intervention initiatives

The final step of the workshop is oriented towards identifying concrete activities according to the participant's group. This can include developing new business opportunities in the different regions according to relevant context requirements, adjusting or innovating business models or reflecting on development initiatives (e.g. skills development, business network initiatives or service provision) to promote the development of these locations.

The initiatives that come out of this process can be substantiated through action plans to move forward.

Description of the context

The Four Types of Regions workshop was used in a setting with representatives of development organisations that wanted to identify more differentiated interventions within different locations and their different contexts. The workshop was held during an academy on local economic development organised by Mesopartner.

Starting point



The participants reflected on critical success factors that define the dynamics of a region. Based on these factors the facilitators presented the Four Types of Regions on the panel (see the image of the basic matrix above).

Sensitisation on the logic of the matrix

The following two photos show two SEPT seminars on regional competitiveness in a Master's course in Vietnam. In this case the matrix was designed with tape on the floor and the students had to position themselves first in the quadrant where their birthplace was located when they were born and then where this place finds itself today in its development. It showed the dynamics of Vietnam as an emerging country in the rural and city areas. Most of the locations where students were born moved from a declining or marginalised place towards an emerging and dynamic place within the last 20 years.



Example of application:

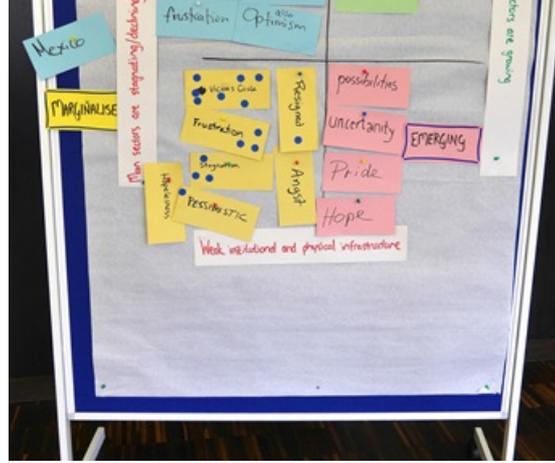
Identification of characteristics

The identification of characteristics of the different locations was the next step in the process. The following pin board demonstrates the results of local development agency representatives that reflected on characteristics of a region in Mexico.



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Some examples of results included:

- Declining regions were characterised by uncertainty, frustration, holding to the past, an expectation of improvement, unbalanced situation, traditional thinking, traditional infrastructure, and strong traditional lobby groups.
- Marginalised regions were characterised by hopelessness, angst, pessimism, resignation, vicious circle, and stagnation.
- Emerging regions were characterised by positive uncertainty, mentality to try out, new possibilities emerging, and the hope of progress. Moreover, the organisation of businesses and stakeholders was starting.
- Dynamic regions were characterised by modern organisations, strong networking, and continuous adjustment of professional organisations.

Identification of development initiatives

As a final step, the participants reflected on first possible initiatives, some of which are mentioned in the following:

- Declining regions: Reorientation services for transitional businesses, promotion of new start-ups in potential sectors, promotion of the organisation of new business networks with progressive businesses.
- Marginalised regions: Basic entrepreneurship trainings, life quality improvement, working with the willing and younger generation, improving the attractiveness of the locations.
- Emerging regions: Promotion of organisations of networks and newly demanded services, promotion of new business models, improvement of regional actors, such as infrastructure, network governance and platforms for business meetings.
- Dynamic regions: Cluster promotion, specialisation of businesses and services.

Templates, graphics for download

Handouts for a Four Types of Regions workshop (with focus on the development of regions) are available at:

[Handout 4 Types of Regions.pdf](#)

[AR2018_ENG_Art2.pdf](#)

Additional format/references

Reading

Mesopartner (2018): Typology of regions and meso organisations, Mesopartner Annual Reflections 2018, p.12.

https://www.mesopartner.com/fileadmin/media_center/Annual_Reflections/AR_2018_ENG.pdf



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