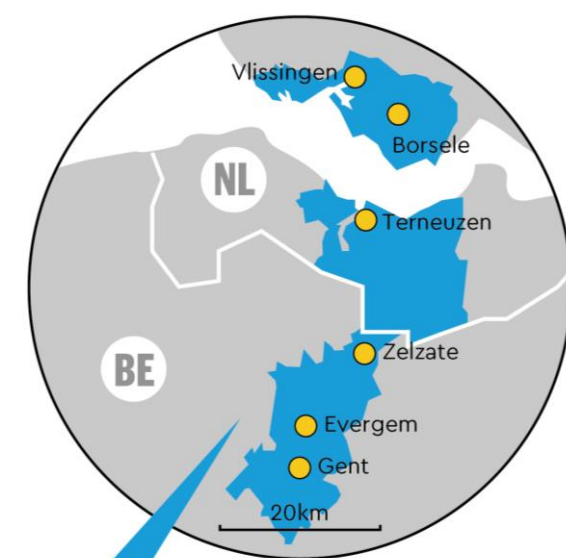


Developing a cross-border housing monitor for sustainable urban planning policy



BE/NL - North Sea Port District BGTC

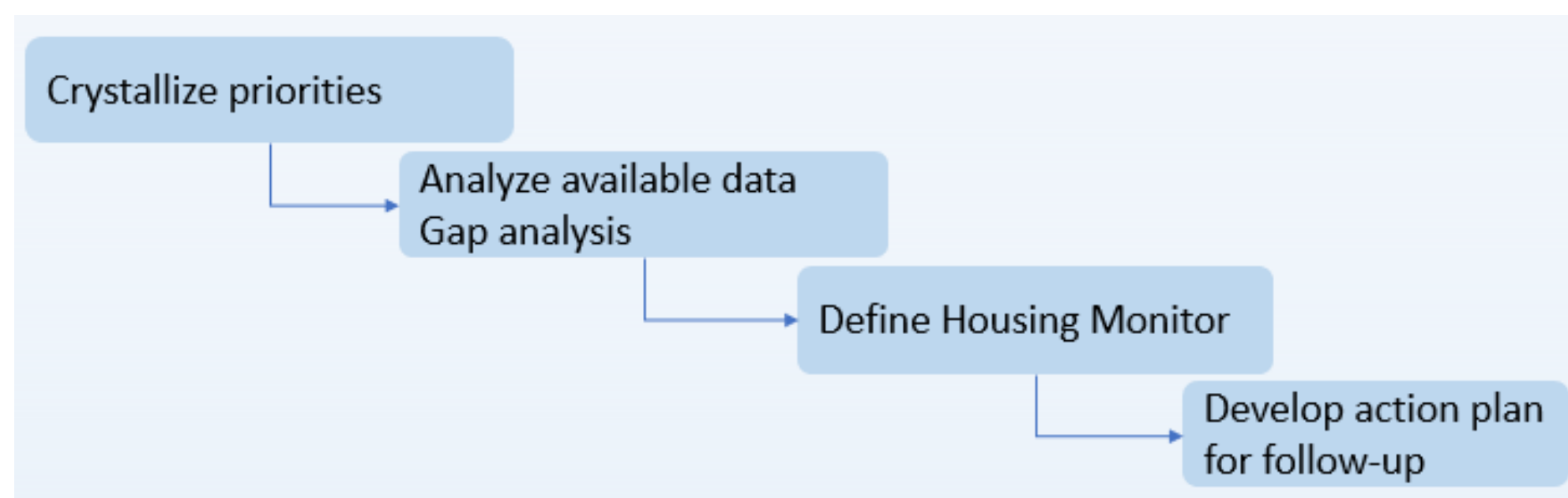
BELGIUM /
THE NETHERLANDS

PARTNER(S)

BGTS North Sea Port District



SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH



OBJECTIVES

To design a cross-border housing monitor for North Sea Port District (NSPD) and to develop a strategy for implementation of the tool. This includes gathering and analysing existing datasets, identifying data gaps, and preparing a technical roadmap for deploying the monitoring tool.

RESULTS

- **Conceptual framework** synthesising the expectations of NSPD stakeholders regarding the NSPD Housing Monitor.
- **Balances as core indicators** for the NSPD region and its municipalities: these balances assess to what extent the NSPD region as a whole and its constituent municipalities are quantitatively and qualitatively in equilibrium with regard to housing demand/supply, labour demand/supply, spatial demand/supply, service demand/supply, and demography and finances. The balances make policy challenges and their interdependencies visible. They rank indicators at different levels to enable prioritisation and allow for a gradual rollout if needed. Each level at which indicators are available increases the sensitivity, policy relevance, and steering capacity of the balances.
- **Data structure for future scenarios.**
- **Heuristic for a harmonisation analysis**, enabling step-by-step identification and documentation of potential cross-border data inconsistencies.
- **Overview of available data and possible alternatives** per balance, and evaluation of similarities and discrepancies between required and available data on both sides of the border in terms of availability, definitional compatibility, time series, aggregation levels, and potential technical issues. Based on this evaluation, specific recommendations were formulated for each balance to help bring comparable data within reach.
- **Clarification regarding the existence and accessibility of data on migration flows and cross-border commuting** per municipality in the NSPD region.
- **Initiation of exchanges and linkages** between relevant data platforms in the Netherlands and Belgium.

KEY LESSONS

- **Making data accessible in a shared format and language** lowers the barrier for policymakers to use it effectively. Cross-border and region-wide datasets foster a shared sense of urgency and strengthen stakeholder engagement in regional housing policy. A territorial monitor can also serve as a catalyst for identifying and unlocking missing data.
- **Beyond the initial request for a monitor**, the need for a simulation tool quickly became apparent. Policymakers are less interested in retrospective analysis and more focused on exploring the potential impact of policy choices on future housing supply and demand.
- **While the ambition for a comprehensive, cross-domain monitor** is policy-wise well justified, it also risks becoming overly complex. Achieving tangible results requires setting clear priorities and intermediate objectives with direct policy relevance. Maintaining stakeholder support depends on transparent communication about challenges and obstacles encountered along the way.
- **Even when data are incomplete or not fully comparable across borders**, unlocking what is available can already provide meaningful insights. Despite imperfections, these datasets offer a valuable compass for policy decisions—much preferable to navigating blindly in the absence of data.

CONTACT

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