

Living territories



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Report compiled for the 2017 Paris International Agricultural Fair.

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Context and issues

At a time when the ever-faster changes on our planet, particularly urbanization, are raising many issues, rural territories have come under renewed scrutiny, CIRAD is looking into the capacity of such territories to contribute, both locally and globally, to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past thirty years, "territory" has become an unavoidable term, not only in the multitude of publications about the topic, but also within public action: territories are laboratories in which new types of governance are being invented and tested. They are a force for sustainable development, and should enable the emergence of alternative, multiple development models that run counter to the current dominance of a single model.

What is a territory?

It is a geographical area within which there is "a set of social, economic, cultural and political processes that include systems of local or locally-involved players" (Vanier, 2009). However, given the diversity of situations, researchers also use other similar notions, such as that of landscape. Likewise, the way in which territories are studied varies, and a wide range of analyses may be conducted depending on the discipline concerned.



From clearly defined outlines... Territories are sometimes contained within political and administrative borders: those of local authorities (protected areas, irrigation schemes, forestry concessions, etc).

Territorial boundaries may also correspond to the precise outlines of biophysical phenomena, such as catchment areas. They may also be associated with the lifestyle, or cultural identity of their inhabitants.



... to fuzzy, shifting edges. Territories may also have fuzzy, shifting edges, depending on the processes under consideration: sanitary management of production operations, control of invasive organisms, mastery of agro-ecological processes, stabilization of pioneer fronts within forests, waste recycling, etc.

They may be linked to migration or movements, for instance urbanization processes, which trigger exchanges between urban areas and the rural areas from which their inhabitants came.

A framework for innovation, coordination and regulation



Innovation. Territories provide a framework for individual or collective social, technical, organizational and institutional innovation. The promotion of "terroir" or origin-linked products is a striking example.

Stakeholder networks and governance lie at the very heart of this capacity for innovation: access to land, work, production and exchanges fit into a local system of social relations and forms of power, the original combination of which may foster (or on the contrary hamper) cooperation, coordination and information dynamics. In return, innovations transform territories.



Coordination and regulation. When faced with a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be seized, territories are frameworks for collective action within which communities of interest and of action take shape. In particular, they are an interface between institutional development projects and local initiatives.

Territories therefore now have a vital role to play in regulating industrial products such as palm oil and rubber, by paving the way for the necessary compromise between economic and commercial dynamics on the one hand and sustainable development issues on the other.

This will allow territories to prove their capacity to play an active role in reducing imbalances and tensions, by overcoming the inconsistencies between individual, collective and public initiatives.

Territories are therefore a prime area for applying new governance processes situated somewhere between collective action and public action, and at the interface between the State and markets (E. Ostrom, 2011).

What's CIRAD doing?

For CIRAD, territories are major areas of experimentation and technical, organizational and political innovation. As a result, they are a force for change in the aim of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Researchers are working to develop participatory methods and tools to help development operators and stakeholders in territories put sustainable development into practice. The aim is to build on collective dynamics and territorial riches in order to structure agricultural production and manage land, water, grazing and forest resources and ecological and health risks.

Methods and tools

Spatial information plays a central role in participatory approaches, notably for mind maps, stakeholder-led zoning, role play, simulation games, companion modelling and observatories. Identifying and interpreting controversies, and sometimes conflicts, is an essential part of such observation and analysis structures.



Creating **territorial observatories** has many benefits, notably for planning, implementing and monitoring interventions.

Rethinking the notion of performance and its multidisciplinary assessment



The SDGs mean a total rethink of how the performance of agricultural activities is measured: jobs created or lost, carbon capture and long-term risks of conflict, including in the distant future, have to be assessed, along with services or "disservices" rendered, etc. They raise major methodological and ethnic questions. The challenge of assessment requires much greater use of interdisciplinary studies, involving the life sciences, engineering sciences and human and social sciences.

Understanding and boosting the regulatory potential of territories

Coordinating agri-chains and territories is vital in order to take account of environmental and social issues, and raises questions as to the local insertion of stakeholders, be they macro-players or small- and medium-sized enterprises.



Towns have close links with rural areas, and any work on territories must include re-establishing relations between these worlds that are so often opposed. More generally, the forms and impacts of decentralization, public land planning policies and how food systems are organized on a regional level must all be considered. The regulatory potential of territories is a throwback to

the connection between the local and global scales: territories connect players and processes on various scales.

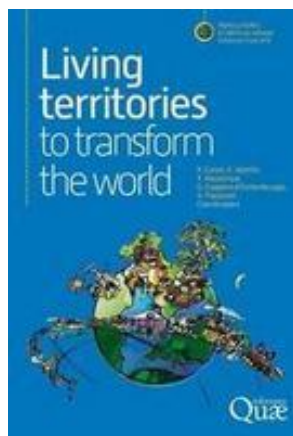


Inasmuch as they connect public and collective actions, territories are a vital factor in coordinating local, national and international action and play the leading role in multi-scale engineering of sustainable development.

Banking on the regulatory role of territories is a promising way of ensuring consistency and peace. Rediscovering the local level and using it to rebuild the global world is another political ambition.

Resources

Books and documents



- [Fostering territorial perspective for development. Towards a wider alliance](#), 2018.
- [Living territories to transform the world](#), P. Caron, E. Valette, T. Wassenaar, G. Coppens d'Eeckenbrugge, V. Papazian, (ed.), Quæ, 2017.
- [Sustainable development and tropical agri-chains](#), Estelle Biénabe, Alain Rival, Denis Loeillet (ed.), Springer, 2017.
- [A new emerging rural world: An overview of rural change in Africa](#) (Second, revised and supplemented edition), D. Pesche, B. Losch, J. Imbernon (eds), NEPAD-CIRAD, 2016.
- [Agrimonde-Terra: Foresight land use and Food security in 2050](#), INRA-CIRAD, 2016.
- [La sécurisation foncière en Afrique](#), E. Le Roy, A. Karsenty, A. Bertrand, Karthala, 2016.
- [Les services écosystémiques : repenser les relations nature et société](#), P. Méral, D. Pesche (ed.), Quæ, 2016.
- [Production et circulation des normes pour l'action publique territoriale](#), P. Bonnal, P. Chevalier, M. Dedeire, J.M. Sourisseau (ed.), Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2016.
- [International land deals for agriculture: Fresh insights from the land matrix](#) (Analytical report II), K. Nolte, W. Chamberlain, M. Giger, CDE-CIRAD- GIGA-University of Pretoria, 2016.
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- [Emergence de maladies infectieuses](#), M. Figuié, S. Morand (ed.), Quæ, 2016.
- [La prochaine peste. Une histoire globale des maladies infectieuses](#), S. Morand, Fayard, 2016.
- [La Nouvelle-Calédonie face à son destin : quel bilan à la veille de la consultation sur la pleine souveraineté ?](#) S. Bouard, J.M. Sourisseau, V. Geronimi, S. Blaise, L. Roi (ed.), Karthala, 2016
- [Voies lactées : dynamique des bassins laitiers entre globalisation et territorialisation](#), M. Napoléone, C. Corniaux, B. Leclerc, Cardère, 2015.
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- [Trajectoires innovantes des jeunes ruraux dans l'agriculture irriguée au Maghreb](#), *Cahiers Agricultures*, Special issue, 24, 2015.
- [L'avenir des forêts ? Comprendre vite et mieux](#), S. Guéneau, I. Biagiotti, Belin-Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, 2015
- [Family Farming and the Worlds to Come](#), J.M. Sourisseau (ed.), Springer, 2014.
- [Développement territorial : contribution des disciplines agronomiques](#), *Cahiers Agricultures*, Special issue, 23, 2014.
- [Family farming, to deal with the challenges of sustainable development \(executive summary\)](#), J.F. Bélières, P. Bonnal, P.M. Bosc, B. Losch, J. Marzin, J.M. Sourisseau, AFD-CIRAD, 2014.
- [ACV sociales : effets socio-économiques des chaînes de valeurs](#), C. Macombe (ed.), Fruitrop Thema, 2013.
- [Agir en situation d'incertitude en agriculture : regards pluridisciplinaires au Nord et au Sud](#), V. Ancey, I. Avelange, B. Dedieu (ed.), Peter Lang, 2013.
- [Voyage en Afrique rentière : une lecture géographique des trajectoires du développement](#), G. Magrin, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013.

Scientific websites

- [Scientific websites on territorial development](#)
- [Land Matrix](#)
- [Tropical Managed Forests Observatory](#)
- [World Agriculture Watch](#)
- [Living Territories](#). International conference, Montpellier, 2018
- [Des territoires ruraux vivants pour transformer le monde](#), Paris, SIA, 2017

Science for all

- [Resources for the general public](#) (Reports, brochures, etc.)
- [TerriStories](#): a participatory management game, Bioviva (Web).