

TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL INVESTMENTS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE IN THE FIELD

Mihaela PĂCEȘILĂ

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
mihaela.pacesila@man.ase.ro

Sofia-Elena COLESCA

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
sofia.colesca@man.ase.ro

Ruxandra-Irina POPESCU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
irina.popescu@man.ase.ro

Abstract: Integrated territorial investments represent the latest instrument of the cohesion policy introduced to solve the local problems, especially in urban and functional urban areas. The main objective of this article is to explore the content of research in the field of integrated territorial investments. In this regard, a review of the literature was carried out in order to collect, review, and synthesize 49 papers related to this concept published during 2014-2022. The publications were identified by using the selected keywords in the title or in the abstract, and the search was done in several databases (ISI Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics, Scopus, Sage, Springer, ScienceDirect, Emerald, JSTOR, ProQuest) set for the field of administrative sciences in accordance with the Romanian legislation in force. The overview of the literature revealed integrated territorial investments to be a promising new area of research, especially since the implementation of the mechanism continues in the programming period 2021-2027.

Keywords: integrated approach, integrated territorial strategy, database search, literature analysis

JEL Classification: H54, R42, R53.

DOI: 10.24818/ARAS/2022/3/3.04

1. INTRODUCTION

The provisions of the cohesion policy for the programming period 2014-2020 provided EU states with new opportunities as regards urban development, especially by using integrated territorial investments (ITI). ITI are particularly important in achieving the objective of a smart, sustainable, and inclusive Europe mentioned in the Europe 2020 strategy. In this context, the ITI mechanism was introduced while considering it an essential tool for the implementation of such strategies. Furthermore, it is an effective instrument of cohesion policy, while encouraging the focus on strategic and integrated dimensions, as well as giving a more targeted direction of structural funds. ITI becomes the solution for obtaining funding from distinct priority axes of one or more operational programs with the aim of implementing an integrated strategy for a certain territory. Therefore, the mechanism cannot be used adequately if the targeted area does not have an integrated intersectoral territorial strategy. The management and implementation of ITI operations falls within the competence of the authority managing the operational program, but intermediate bodies, territorial development bodies and NGOs can also be established in this regard. The way of managing this mechanism is different from one country to another, depending on the existing administrative components (Europa.eu, 2014).

The mechanism can be seen as a continuation of the activities aimed at an integrated approach carried out by the European Community in the 70s and 80s of the last century, leading to the introduction of the urban element

in the cohesion policy. Its introduction is based on three regulations adopted by the European Parliament and the EU Council in 2013 (Kociuba, 2018).

The ITI tool allows cities and their functional areas to access funds through the operational programs, as well as to develop and implement projects in accordance to their needs and priorities. Furthermore, the emphasis is placed on the cooperation of local administrations to solve problems by concluding institutionalized partnerships, thus contributing to unlocking the potential at the local level (Wyrwa et al., 2017).

ITI provides concrete solutions to the specific needs of the territories, contributing to increasing their attractiveness and the efficiency of public intervention. Due to its important role in eliminating inter-regional development imbalances, this instrument is also used in the new programming period 2021-2027, while it is included in the policy objective "a Europe closer to citizens", which is achieved by promoting sustainable and integrated development of all territories, as well as local initiatives (Buda, 2019).

2. KEY ASPECTS REGARDING INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL INVESTMENTS

The most important characteristics of ITI refer to the following (Ferry, 2019):

- a clearly established territory and a strategy aimed at integrated territorial development;

The implementation of ITI for developing the targeted area is conditioned by the elaboration of an integrated development strategy. In general, the ITI mechanism is applicable in geographical areas with certain characteristics, such as urban neighbourhoods, metropolitan areas, urban-rural, sub-regional or even interregional zones. In addition to these, independent geographical units enjoying similar characteristics within a region could benefit from this tool (van der Zwet, 2014).

It is not necessary that ITI cover all the territory within an administrative unit, but its use involves territorial cooperation at the European level. Moreover, any intermediate entity dealing with the implementation of this mechanism should be legally registered and designated by public authorities or public institutions belonging to at least two countries or from an EGTC (European Territorial Cooperation Group) (Europa.eu, 2014).

- several actions needing to be implemented

ITI activities are aimed at fulfilling the thematic objectives established within the relevant priority axes belonging to a program/operational programs, as well as at supporting the objectives mentioned in the territorial strategy. The financing comes from several European funds, without it being mandatory to use all the categories of funds. Moreover, the ITI instrument cannot influence the adoption of decisions regarding the investments made (Georgakopoulou, 2018).

There is also the possibility to finance additional actions intended for the same targeted area by resorting to the priority axes of an operational program/operational programs that are not involved in ITI financing. In fact, several investments contributing directly to developing the targeted geographic area may not be implemented by using ITI because there is no legal obligation in this regard. However, the recommendation is that the investments made should align with the objectives of the integrated territorial development strategy (Ferry, 2019).

- governance systems for managing ITI

The responsibility for managing the ITI mechanism falls to the authority involved in managing the operational program. However, the latter could nominate intermediate bodies at the local or territorial level or even non-governmental entities in order to carry out some activities or all activities regarding the management and implementation of ITI. This situation is different depending on the administrative systems of the state in question or of the region. Certainly, if the ITI mechanism aims at integrated actions to ensure sustainable urban development, at least the activities related to selecting the operation should be the responsibility of the urban authorities (Europa. Eu, 2014).

In the previous programming period 2014-2020, 19 EU member states implemented the ITI mechanism. However, its use has been different from one state to another, depending on funding possibilities, geographic

zones, and thematic areas. In 14 countries, the instrument was implemented in order to ensure sustainable development at the urban level (Ladaru and Marin, 2016). Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia were interested in implementing ITI in functional urban areas, while Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany focused on specific regions. There were also differences between states regarding the number of territories allocated to ITI. Thus, in countries such as Romania, the implementation was valid only for one area, namely the Danube Delta (Profiroiu et al., 2021).

The decision to use this mechanism varies depending on the country. In Poland and the Czech Republic the decision was taken by the government at the central level, while in other countries the ITI implementation was done under the pressure of the municipalities. However, the efficient use of ITI requires increasing the institutional capacity of local authorities, as well as greater involvement of citizens (van der Zwet et al., 2017).

In the programming period 2014-2020, ITI received funds worth 13.8 billion euros, with Poland enjoying the largest amount of money, namely EUR 3.8 billion. In some countries, the funds came from 5 sources (Romania), while in others from three sources (Spain and the Czech Republic) (Ladaru and Marin, 2016; Marin, 2017).

ITI provides flexibility in its use and does not require fulfilling many conditions by the EU member states involved, which makes it possible to apply it in several fields. Moreover, it contributes substantially to the development of local policies through the incentives offered (Szokolai, 2012; Ferry et al., 2018). However, there are also negative aspects related to this instrument, which was criticized due to the lack of guidelines regarding its use that should have been made available by the European Commission. This situation has generated several difficulties in developing guidelines to help the actors involved in its implementation (van der Zwet et al., 2014).

Other problems are related to the excessive regulation that could affect the use of this tool while making its implementation difficult, as well as the lack of management capacity of local actors and management authorities that could jeopardize the approval period of projects submitted for accessing the funds (Ferry et al., 2018).

In this context, an European working group was created to provide explanations regarding the ITI implementation, taking into account the specificities of each member state. Furthermore, the European Commission decided to create a guide to facilitate the understanding of the use of this tool by authorities within the territories involved (CEC, 2014).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research is to determine the interest in the area of scientific research in the field of integrated territorial investments and to explain its evolution starting from the publication of the first paper to the most recently published one. In this regard, in order to evaluate the level of scientific interest in the field and to determine its evolution, an analysis of the papers published on this topic was carried out.

In order to gain a comprehensive analysis of the literature, the search used the keywords "*integrated territorial investment/s*" that were found either in the title or in the abstract. The data for this study were collected from both academic databases with registered access (ISI Web of science/Clarivate Analytics, Scopus, Sage, Springer, ScienceDirect, Emerald, JSTOR, and ProQuest) and from open access databases (CEEOL, DOAJ, RePEc). The research was carried out in most databases set for the field of administrative sciences in accordance with the Romanian legislation in force. The reason for using several databases was to obtain as much information as possible. Therefore, the relevant articles generating an overall understanding of the field of integrated territorial investment have been identified.

A synthesis of the results was given in Tables 1 and 2 presented below:

- The list of papers from databases with registered access contains 41 articles, 1 review, 19 proceedings papers, and 5 book chapters.
- The list of papers from open access databases includes 31 articles and 6 proceedings papers.

Table 1. The study of integrated territorial investments in the literature - databases accessed within the Anelis Plus project

| Database | Period | Relevant publications | Key word |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|---|
| Clarivate (Web of Science) | 1975-2022 | 10 articles, 10 proceedings papers, 1 book chapter | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| Emerald | 1898-2022 | - | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| JSTOR | 1910-2022 | 2 articles | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| ProQuest | 1930-2022 | 14 articles, 3 proceedings papers | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| Sage | 1847-2022 | - | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| Science Direct | 1925-2022 | 1 article | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| Scopus, Elsevier | 1971-2022 | 13 articles, 1 review, 4 proceedings papers, 3 book chapters | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| Springer | 1967-2022 | 1 article, 2 proceedings paper, 1 book chapter | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |

Table 2. The study of integrated territorial investments in the literature - open access databases

| Database | Period | Relevant publications | Key word |
|----------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|
| CEEOL | 1950-2022 | 11 articles | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| DOAJ | - | 12 articles, 1 proceedings paper | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |
| RePEc | - | 8 articles, 5 proceedings papers | Integrated Territorial Investment/Investments |

The main objective of the paper is to identify the relevant articles to gain an overall understanding of the field of the integrated territorial investments. To achieve this objective, two research questions have been addressed:

1: How important is the research field as regards the following elements: number of articles, citations, distribution around journals and countries, distribution per year, classification of journals, collaboration in the field of research between specialists?

2: What are the main aspects emerging from the literature analysis regarding the ITI tool?

4. RESULTS

The total data-set, after the elimination of duplicates, included 49 publications: 32 articles, 1 review, 13 proceedings papers, and 3 book chapters. All the papers selected for the analysis are published during 2014- 2022 and focus on studying the implementation of the integrated territorial investment mechanism. 43 articles are written in English, 4 articles (Kozak, 2016; Kociuba, 2017; Kostalova and Bednarikova, 2019; Zawora and Kowalska, 2021) are written in Polish, while the other two are in French (Lamenie, 2019, Geppert and Affaticati, 2020).

Table 3. The list of selected articles

| No. | Articles | Document type | C1 | C2 | D | E | J | P | R | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | Country (region) | Citations | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|--|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Web of Science | Scopus | Google Scholar |
| | Key words: integrated territorial investment/investments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Buhociu F.M., 2014 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Tulcea county) | 0 | - | 1 |
| 2. | Szafrank E., 2014 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | - | - | 2 |
| 3. | Tomanek R., 2014 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Upper Silesia) | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 4. | Van der Zwet A., 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | | | Belgium (Limburg) and Finland (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Oulu, Tampere and Turku) | - | - | 2 |
| 5. | Caraman M., 2015 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 0 |
| 6. | Gaman F., Luca O., Burduja S.I., Aldea M., Iacoboaia C., Petrescu F., Șercăianu M., 2015 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 8 |
| 7. | Kozak M.W., 2016 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | - | 4 | 14 |
| 8. | Ladaru G.R. and Marin F., 2016 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 3 |
| 9. | Marin F., 2016 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. | Panaiteșcu M. and Trandafir M., 2016 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 1 |
| 11. | Tomanek R., 2016 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Upper Silesia) | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 12. | Tosics I., 2016 | Book chapter | | | | | | | | | | | | Not specified | - | 9 | 33 |
| 13. | Glinka K., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Lower Silesia: Wrocław, Wałbrzych, Legnica and Jelenia Góra) | 6 | - | 15 |
| 14. | Isola F., Leone F., Pira C., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Italy (Sardinia) | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| 15. | Kaczmarek T. and Kociuba D., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Poznań and Lublin) | 11 | 12 | 27 |

| No. | Articles | Document type | C1 | C2 | D | E | J | P | R | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | Country (region) | Citations | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Web of Science | Scopus | Google Scholar |
| 16. | Kamrowska-Zaluska D. and Obracht-Prondzynska H., 2017 | Book chapter | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| 17. | Katsavounidou G., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Greece (Region of Central Macedonia) | 1 | - | 2 |
| 18. | Kociuba D., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | - | 4 | 17 |
| 19. | Kowalska I., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Kalisz-Ostrów) | - | - | 4 |
| 20. | Krukowska J. and Lackowska M., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | 12 | - | 33 |
| 21. | Marin F., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Tulcea county) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22. | Wyrwa J., Barska A., Jędrzejczak-Gas J., 2017 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | - | 2 | 3 |
| 23. | Antonopoulos E., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Greece (Patras) | - | - | 5 |
| 24. | Chrisidu-Budnik A., 2018 | Book chapter | | | | | | | | | | | | Not specified | - | 0 | 0 |
| 25. | Feřtřova M., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | The Czech Republic (Brno metropolitan area) | - | - | 2 |
| 26. | Ferry M. and Borkowska-Waszak S., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Katowice and Lublin) | - | - | 12 |
| 27. | Florowska L., Bryt-Nitarska I., 2018 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Upper Silesian Coal Basin) | - | 3 | 4 |
| 28. | Garcia-Ayllon S., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Spain (Mar Menor) | 22 | 24 | 37 |
| 29. | Havlik V., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | The Czech Republic and Slovakia | 7 | 7 | 11 |
| 30. | Kociuba D., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | 4 | 5 | 18 |
| 31. | Miller S. and van der Zwet A., 2018 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | U.K. (London and Cornwall) | - | - | 3 |
| 32. | Delitheou V. and Georgakopoulou S., 2019 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Greece (Piraeus municipality) | - | 3 | 5 |
| 33. | Kogut-Jaworska M., 2019 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | 0 | - | 0 |
| 34. | Kostalova J. and Bednarikova M., 2019 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | The Czech Republic | 0 | - | 1 |

| No. | Articles | Document type | C1 | C2 | D | E | J | P | R | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | Country (region) | Citations | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Web of Science | Scopus | Google Scholar |
| 35. | Lamenie B., 2019 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | France (Île-de-France) | - | 1 | 1 |
| 36. | Noworól A., 2019 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Kraków) | - | - | 0 |
| 37. | Pietrowski W., 2019 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Kielce) | - | - | 2 |
| 38. | Profiroiu C.M. and Caraman M., 2019 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania and the Czech Republic | 0 | - | 0 |
| 39. | Anghelută L.D., and Stanciu S., 2020 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 0 |
| 40. | Busłowska A., 2020 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Białystok) | - | - | 1 |
| 41. | Dumitrache (Serbanescu) A.M., Oprisan O., Condrea E., 2020 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | - | - | 0 |
| 42. | Geppert A. and Affaticati C., 2020 | Review | | | | | | | | | | | | France (Île-de-France) | - | 0 | 0 |
| 43. | Iharos B. and Careva K., 2020 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Croatia | 0 | - | 0 |
| 44. | Kogut-Jaworska M. and Zawora J., 2020 | Proceedings paper | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | 0 | - | 0 |
| 45. | Truskolaski T., 2020 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland (Białystok) | - | - | 3 |
| 46. | Katuric I. and Simov S., 2021 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Croatia (Zagreb and Zadar) | 0 | - | 0 |
| 47. | Profiroiu A.G., Nastacă C.C., Caraman (Pufleanu) M., 2021 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania (Danube Delta) | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 48. | Zawora J. and Kowalska I., 2021 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Poland | - | - | 0 |
| 49. | Păceșilă M., Colesca S.E., Popescu R.I., Burcea S.G., 2022 | Article | | | | | | | | | | | | Romania | - | 0 | 0 |
| Total: 454 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 75 | 83 | 298 |

Legend: C1-CEEOL; C2-Clarivate Analytics (Web of science); D-DOAJ; E-Emerald; J-JSTOR; P-ProQuest; R-RePEc; S1-Sage; S2-ScienceDirect; S3-Scopus; S4-Springer.

The 32 papers (31 articles and 1 review) out of the total number of 49 selected publications are distributed in 25 different journals from various subject areas as follows in Table 4. The classification of the journals was carried out in accordance with the classification of the Iasi Web of Science/Clarivat Analytics and Scopus databases. The journals that are not indexed in the two aforementioned databases were included in a certain field depending on their title and the topic addressed.

According to the information presented in Table 4, certain journals fall into two or three areas. It is also interesting that the publications selected for the research come from numerous fields, which could be explained by the various investment priorities that this mechanism refers to.

As for journals' indexation, 12 journals are indexed in one database, while the other 13 journals are indexed in two or more databases, which ensures them a greater visibility among the scientific community. The journals with the highest visibility are *Quaestiones Geographicae*, as well as *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* because they are indexed in 5 databases.

The main journal in the field is *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal* (5 articles) followed by *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, *Quaestiones Geographicae* and *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* (2 articles each). The first two journals mentioned above are included in one subject area, namely general social sciences, while the third is included in two subject areas, namely geography as well as general earth and planetary sciences, and the last is included both in the field of geography and urban studies. Each of the other 22 journals has published one article on the topic showing that the field of study is in line with the aim of many journals.

Table 4. Subject area of journals containing the papers taken into account in the research

| No. | Subject area | Journals |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Architecture (1 journal) | <i>Prostor</i> |
| 2. | Business (1 journal) | <i>Quality-Access to Success</i> |
| 3. | Economics (5 journals) | <i>Economics and Applied Informatics; Optimum. Economic Studies; Regional Studies, Regional Science; Economic and Environmental Studies; Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny</i> |
| 4. | Environmental studies (2 journals) | <i>European Planning Studies; Economic and Environmental Studies</i> |
| 5. | General Earth and Planetary Sciences (2 journals) | <i>Quaestiones Geographicae; Belgeo. Revue Belge de Geographie</i> |
| 6. | General social sciences (6 journals) | <i>Studia Regionalne i Lokalne; Economic and Regional Studies/Studia Ekonomiczne i Regionalne; Journal of Danubian Studies and Research; European Structural and Investment Funds Journal; Studia Miejskie; European Research Studies</i> |
| 7. | Geography (8 journals) | <i>Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management; Geocarrefour; European Planning Studies; Regional Studies, Regional Science; European Spatial Research and Policy; Quaestiones Geographicae; Raumforschung und Raumordnung; Belgeo. Revue Belge de Geographie</i> |
| 8. | Management (3 journals) | <i>Ocean & Coastal Management; Quality-Access to Success; Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences</i> |
| 9. | Oceanography (1 journal) | <i>Ocean & Coastal Management</i> |
| 10. | Public administration (2 journals) | <i>Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences; Public Policy and Administration</i> |
| 11. | Political science (1 journal) | <i>Public Policy and Administration</i> |
| 12. | Sociology (1 journal) | <i>Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny</i> |
| 13. | Transportation Science & Technology (1 journal) | <i>Scientific Journal of Silesian University of Technology-Series Transport</i> |
| 14. | Urban Studies (4 journals) | <i>Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management; Geocarrefour; European Planning Studies; Tema - Journal of Land Use Mobility and Environment;</i> |

All the papers generated by the database search are published during 2014-2022. The publications are recent because the ITI mechanism is a new financial instrument introduced by the European Commission and implemented in 19 EU member states for the 2014-2020 programming period in order to stimulate integrated territorial development (Profiroiu et al., 2021). Regarding the number of publications, the most important year is 2017 (10 papers), followed by 2018 (9 papers) as well as 2019 and 2020 (7 papers each) and 2016 (6 papers). As we approach the end of the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020, the number of papers decreases. Thus, a single paper was published in 2022 which analyzed the implementation of ITI in Romania. Moreover, in this country the use of this mechanism will continue in the programming period 2021-2027, not only for the Danube Delta area, but also for other areas.

Table 5. The distribution of papers per year

| No. | Year | Total number of articles | Type of papers |
|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | 2014 | 4 | 2 article, 2 proceedings papers |
| 2. | 2015 | 2 | 2 proceedings papers |
| 3. | 2016 | 6 | 2 articles, 3 proceedings papers, 1 book chapter |
| 4. | 2017 | 10 | 9 articles, 1 book chapter |
| 5. | 2018 | 9 | 7 articles, 1 proceedings paper, 1 book chapter |
| 6. | 2019 | 7 | 4 articles, 3 proceedings papers |
| 7. | 2020 | 7 | 4 articles, 1 review, 2 proceedings papers |
| 8. | 2021 | 3 | 3 articles |
| 9. | 2022 | 1 | 1 article |
| Total 2014 - 2022 | | | 49 |

As for the countries where ITI implementation is analyzed, 12 countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Croatia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and the U.K.) are included in the sample. Most research is done in Poland (21 articles) and Romania (12 articles). The ITI implementation in the Czech Republic is found in 4 articles, in Greece in 3 articles, while France and Croatia are analyzed in 2 articles each. As regards Belgium, Finland, Italy, Spain, and the U.K., there is a single article dedicated to each of them.

Except for a few articles comparatively analyzing the ITI implementation in Romania and another country or focusing on analyzing the territorial dimension of integrated investments, as well as the financial capacity of Tulcea County, all other papers selected for the research examine the ITI implementation in the Danube Delta area for which this instrument was created during 2014-2020. The articles dedicated to the other countries focus on analyzing several ITI territories depending on the areas or regions where the mechanism is implemented.

When analyzing the level of scientific interest in the field, it is important to take into account the citations received by the articles selected for the research. The analysis of citations is useful in evaluating the academic impact of a paper. Regarding the citations of the articles under review, most citations were recorded in Google Scholar (298), which is almost 4 times greater than in Scopus (75) and more than 3.5 times greater than in Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics. A possible explanation of this situation is that 28 publications out of 49 are not indexed in Web of Science Clarivate Analytics, while 28 publications out of 49 are not indexed in Scopus. Moreover, many of the citations in Google Scholar also come from other sources such as websites, reports, doctoral theses, etc. Only one article out of the three published in 2021 received few citations because the analysis is carried out until mid-November 2022 and not enough time has passed to receive more citations. This situation is also valid for the article published in November 2022 which has no citation.

Considering that the ITI mechanism targets many countries and areas in the EU and not just a certain country or area, a collaboration in the field of research between specialists, researchers, professors from academic institutions or from the private environment should be developed (Pătărlăgeanu et al., 2020). The collaboration between the socio-professional categories aforementioned is essential for highlighting the implementation of this mechanism from multiple perspectives, especially since there are specific peculiarities regarding its application depending on the country or area.

In this regard, an analysis of the authors of the papers selected for research was carried out by taking into account the organization to which they belong. 26 publications out of 49 have been eliminated from the analysis because they have a single author each. Even if 16 publications have two or more authors, they come from the same organization; that is why they were not seen as relevant. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that only 7 papers with two or three authors coming from different universities or organizations within the same country should be considered:

- *Dumitrache (Serbanescu) et al., 2020: Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania versus University Ovidius from Constanta, Constanta, Romania;*
- *Gaman et al., 2015: Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, Department of Urban Engineering and Regional Development, Bucharest, Romania versus C.A.E.S.A.R. Foundation, Romania;*
- *Geppert and Affaticati, 2020: Sorbonne Université, Paris, France versus Direction des Affaires Européennes, Région Île-de-France, France;*
- *Kaczmarek and Kociuba, 2017: Adam Mickiewicz University, Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Poznań, Poland versus Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Department of Spatial Policy and Planning, Lublin, Poland;*
- *Kogut-Jaworska and Zawora, 2020: University of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland versus University of Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland;*
- *Miller and van der Zwet, 2018: Ecorys UK, Birmingham versus University of the West of Scotland, School of Media, Culture & Society and University of Strathclyde, European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow, U.K.;*
- *Zawora and Kowalska, 2021: Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Warszawa, Poland versus University of Rzeszow, Rzeszów, Poland.*

When analyzing the literature in the field, the following aspects emerge:

- Emphasizing the usefulness of this cohesion policy tool. Although several difficulties appeared in its implementation in the member states, the mechanism contributed to developing the areas to which it was intended.
- Providing an overview of ITI implementation in different countries. ITI could become an important element of strategic planning while contributing to increasing cooperation between cities and nearby areas, as well as to improving governance capacity at the local level.
- Providing solutions to various local problems. Its implementation could be successfully achieved if the local authorities agree on their interests and improve their experience and operational capacity to conduct projects, to administer budget funds, and to access European funds.
- Presenting comparative analyses between countries or regions/territories within the same country regarding the ITI implementation. Several aspects related to the application of the mechanism are provided as well as recommendations resulting from the implementation experience.
- Highlighting the advantages and disadvantages generated by using this mechanism. On the one hand, an essential feature of this tool is the flexibility in its application, as well as the reduced number of conditions imposed on the member states while facilitating its contribution to the development of several fields. On the other hand, the limited scope of possible intervention due to the thematic objectives could be considered a challenge of ITI implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

This article provides an overview of ITI concept by pointing out the main findings identified in the literature. In order to understand the ITI tool, two research questions were set, while a review of the literature in the field

was used to answer these questions. The review included 48 papers published between 2014 and 2022 offering a clear view of the concept.

Several issues related to publications in the field, citations received, distribution of articles in scientific journals, classification of journals according to field of study, countries analyzed within the papers identified, distribution of publications by year, collaboration of specialists in the research field were highlighted and examined. Moreover, many elements resulting from using ITI in different countries were pointed out, such as contributing to developing different areas, promoting the cooperation of local actors, improving local governance capacity, improving local authorities' abilities to access European funds, etc.

The analysis of current publications on the ITI instrument could serve as a mental map which facilitates the knowledge of the field, while the effort could be overall useful both for the academic environment and for practitioners. Considering the novelty of this field of study, this article can be a starting point for new research that can later contribute to a better use of the tool.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by a grant of Bucharest University of Economic Studies for institutional projects, project title „Urban planning analysis of Bucharest Municipality from the perspective of sustainable development goals/Analiza planificării urbane la nivelul Municipiului București din perspectiva obiectivelor de dezvoltare durabilă (APUDD)”.

REFERENCES

- Angheluță L.D., and Stanciu S. (2020). Integrated Territorial Investments - Current and Future Solutions for Sustainable Development. *Economics and Applied Informatics*, 2, 200-206.
- Antonopoulos E. (2018). Sustainable Urban Development in Greece using Integrated Territorial Investments, *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, 6(1), 28-34
- Buda D. (2019). Simplificarea politicii de coeziune a Uniunii Europene. Instrumente și provocări. [Simplifying the Cohesion Policy of the European Union. Instruments and Challenges]. *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative*. 1(44), 3-16.
- Buhociu F. M. (2014). *Territorial dimension of integrated investments*, Proceedings of the 8th International Management Conference: Management Challenges for Sustainable Development, 8(1), 1113-1119.
- Busłowska A. (2020). Integrated territorial investments and the improvement of transport mobility and accessibility of urban functional areas – the example of the Białystok Functional Area. *Optimum. Economic Studies*, 99(1), 144-154.
- Caraman M. (2015). *Strategic sustainable development planning in local communities. Experience of integrated territorial investments (ITI) Danube Delta*. Proceedings of Administration and Public Management International Conference, 11(1), 127-135.
- CEC. (2014). *Scenarios for integrated territorial investments*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/it/information/publications/reports/2015/scenarios-for-integrated-territorial-investments
- Chrisidu-Budnik A. (2018). *Trust in an integrated territorial investment*. In Kożuch B., Magala S.J., Paliszkiwicz J., Managing Public Trust, Berlin: Springer, 209-221.
- Delitheou V. and Georgakopoulou S. (2019). Integrated territorial investments as a tool for sustainable urban development. The case of Piraeus municipality, *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management*, 14(3), 22-40.

- Dumitrache (Serbanescu) A.M., Oprisan O., Condrea E. (2020). *Integrated Territorial Investments - ITI Danube Delta*. Lumen Proceedings Series, volume 14, International Conference Innovative Business Management & Global Entrepreneurship (IBMAGE 2020), 640-648.
- Europa.eu. (2014). *Politică de coeziune 2014-2020. Investiții Teritoriale Integrate*. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/iti_ro.pdf
- Ferry M. And Borkowska-Waszak S. (2018). Integrated Territorial Investments and New Governance Models in Poland. *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, 6(1), 35-50.
- Ferry M., Kah S., Bachtler J. (2018). *Integrated territorial development: new instruments – new results?* Delft, Netherlands: European Policies Research Centre Delft, Technical University Delft.
- Ferry M. (2019). *Integrated Territorial Investments as an Effective Tool of the Cohesion Policy*. Brussels: Policy Department on Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament
- Feřtrová M. (2018). Integrated Territorial Investments in the Czech Republic: A New Tool for Metropolitan Areas. *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, 6(1), 13-19.
- Florkowska L., Bryt-Nitarska I. (2018). *The requirements for implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for planning and implementing Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) in mining areas*. 4th Nationwide Scientific Conference on Engineering-Infrastructure-Mining, Krakow, 11-12 January, Article number: 01004.
- Gaman F., Luca O., Burduja S.I., Aldea M., Iacoboaea C., Petrescu F., Șercăianu M. (2015). *Integrated Territorial Investments: Challenges And Opportunities – Case Study Of Romania*. WIT Transactions on the Built Environment, Southampton, vol. 168, Southampton: WIT Press, 95-107.
- Garcia-Ayllon, S. (2018). The Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) of the Mar Menor as a model for the future in the comprehensive management of enclosed coastal seas. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 166, 82-97.
- Georgakopoulou S. (2018). *Integrated territorial investment as a development opportunity for Local Government: the case of the Municipality of Piraeus*. Retrieved November 11, 2019 from file:///C:/Users/loan/Downloads/8PMS_EFH_OIK_PER_ANA_GeorgakopoulouSt_-.pdf
- Geppert A. and Affaticati C. (2020). The political dimension to the cohesion policy of the European Union 2014-2020, between injunctions, reshaped definitions and territorialisation: The example of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) in the Ile-de-France region [La dimension urbaine de la politique de cohésion de l'Union européenne 2014-2020, entre injonctions, redéfinitions et territorialisation: l'exemple des Investissements Territoriaux Intégrés (ITI) franciliens]. *Geocarrefour*, 94(3).
- Glinka K. (2017). Integrated territorial investment as instrument for managing transport security in lower Silesia's largest cities. *Scientific Journal of Silesian University of Technology-Series Transport*, 94, 37-46.
- Havlik V. (2018). Competing discourses of territorial development: tensions between cities and regions as a result of the new regionalism. *European Planning Studies*, 26(10), 1999-2014.
- Iharos B. and Careva K. (2020). Sustainable urban development in the context of integrated territorial investments criteria, evaluation system and selection of public projects for EU funding. *Prostor*, 28(2), 426-437.
- Isola F., Leone F., Pira C. (2017). Towards a regional urban agenda: approaches and tools. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 4(1), 181-188.
- Kamrowska-Zaluska D. and Obracht-Prondzyska H. (2017). *Implementation of the integrated territorial investments*. In Medeiros E. *Uncovering the territorial dimension of European Union cohesion policy: cohesion, development, impact assessment and cooperation*, 114-126, London: Routledge.

- Katsavounidou G. (2017). Implementing ITI for urban development locally. *Tema - Journal of Land Use Mobility and Environment*, 10(3), 279-298.
- Katuric I. and Simov S. (2021). The opportunity to develop strategic spatial planning with the impulse of integrated territorial investments in Croatia. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 28(2), 147-163.
- Kaczmarek T. and Kociuba D. (2017). Models of governance in the urban functional areas: policy lessons from the implementation of integrated territorial investments (ITIs) in Poland. *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 36(4), 47-64.
- Kociuba D. (2017). Delimitation of functional urban areas of voivodeship centres in the implementation of integrated territorial investments: Theory vs. Practise [Delimitacja miejskich obszarów funkcjonalnych...ośrodków wojewódzkich w realizacji zintegrowanych inwestycji terytorialnych w Polsce - teoria versus praktyka]. *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, 69(3), 54-78.
- Kociuba D. (2018). Implementation of integrated territorial investments in Poland - rationale, results, and recommendations. *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 37(4), 81-98.
- Kogut-Jaworska M. (2019). *Integrated Territorial Investments as a New Tool of Co-Operation and Management of Development in Poland - Experiences and Conclusions*. Vision 2025: Education Excellence and Management of Innovations through Sustainable Economic Competitive Advantage, 11222-11232
- Kogut-Jaworska M. and Zawora J. (2020). *Integrated Territorial Investments as an Instrument for the development of Polish functional areas*. Education Excellence and Innovation Management: a 2025 Vision to Sustain Economic Development during Global Challenges, 3110-3119
- Kostalova J. and Bednarikova M. (2019). *Implementation of territorial dimension integrated tools in the programming period 2014-2020 [Implementace integrovaných nástrojů územní dimenze v programovém období 2014 – 2020]*. 22nd International Colloquium on Regional Sciences, 256-263.
- Kowalska I. (2017). Integrated Territorial Investments in the Formula of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. *Economic and Regional Studies/Studia Ekonomiczne i Regionalne*, 10(1), 36-50.
- Kozak M. W. (2016). Integrated territorial investments as an experiment [Zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne jako eksperyment]. *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, 65(3), 50-69.
- Krukowska J. and Lackowska M. (2017). Metropolitan Colours of Europeanization. Institutionalization of Integrated Territorial Investment Structures in the Context of Past Cooperation in Metropolitan Regions. *Raumforschung und Raumordnung*, 75(3), 275-289.
- Ladaru G.R. and Marin F. (2016). *ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment) - A New Tool for Local Development Financing in the Programming Period 2014-2020*. International Conference on Competitiveness of Agro-food and Environmental Economy Proceedings, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, vol. 5, 149-157.
- Lamenie B. (2019). The institutional impact of European funds transfer from the State to the regional government. The case of Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) in Ile de-France Region [Transfert des fonds européens et affirmation du pouvoir régional. L'exemple des investissements territoriaux intégrés (ITI) en Île-de-France]. *Belgeo. Revue Belge de Géographie*. 1-19.
- Marin F. (2016). *Approaches of Integrated Territorial Investment in Romania during the 2014-2020 Programming Period*. Vision 2020: Innovation Management, Development Sustainability, and Competitive Economic Growth, 2016, Vols I-VII, 2847-2857
- Marin F. (2017). Characteristics of the financial capacity of the administrative territorial units in Tulcea County. *Quality-Access to Success*, 18, 272-276.
- Miller S., and van der Zwet A. (2018). Integrated Territorial Investment in the UK: A Tale of Two Regions. *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, 6(1), 51-57.

- Noworól A. (2019). Management of the Kraków Functional Urban Area, in Poland, using a European Union Instrument: Integrated Territorial. *Zarządzanie Publiczne*, 48, 26-36
- Panaitescu M. and Trandafir M. (2016). ITI - Financing Instrument of Inter-sectoral Integrated Management Strategies. Case Study the ITI Danube Delta. *Journal of Danubian Studies and Research*, 6(2), 267-259.
- Păceșilă M., Colesca S.E., Popescu R.I., Burcea S.G. (2022). Integrated territorial investments as a tool for sustainable development. Overview over the implementation in Romania. *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Romania*. 17(4), 5-21.
- Pătărlăgeanu S.R., Dinu M., Constantin M. (2020). Bibliometric analysis of the field of green public procurement. *Amfiteatru Economic*. 22-53, 71-81.
- Pietrowski W. (2019). Financial Progress of Integrated Territorial Investments – A Case Study of Kielce Functional Area, *Studia Miejskie*, 34, 115-127.
- Profiroiu C.M. and Caraman M. (2019). *Comparative analysis of the management of the integrated territorial investments (ITI): Romania and the Czech Republic*. Proceedings of the 13th International Management Conference: Management Strategies for High Performance, 256-273
- Profiroiu A.G., Nastacă C.C., Caraman (Pufleanu) M. (2021). Perceptions on the implementation of the Integrated Territorial Investment mechanism (ITI) and its impact on sustainable development and resilience. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, Special Issue, 104-126.
- Szafranek E. (2014). Integrated Territorial Investments as a tool of sustainable regional and local development. *Economic and Environmental Studies*, 4 (32), 485-495.
- Szokolai Z. (2012). *Integrated territorial development and their application to ETC in the cohesion policy 2014-2020*. European Commission DG for Regional Policy C.2 Urban development, territorial cohesion
- Tomanek R. (2014). *Telematics in the New EU Cohesion Policy on the Example of Integrated Territorial Investments Strategy*. International Conference on Transport Systems Telematics, vol. 471, 434-440.
- Tomanek R. (2016). *Intelligent Solutions in Sustainable Transport Upper Silesia Agglomeration*. International Conference on Transport Systems Telematics, vol. 640, 342-353.
- Tosics I. (2016). *Integrated territorial investment: A missed opportunity?* in Bachtler J., Berkowitz P., Hardy S., Muravska T. *EU Cohesion Policy: Reassessing Performance and Direction*. London: Routledge.
- Truskolaski T. (2020). Integrated Territorial Investments as an Instrument of Urban Policy: The Case of the Białystok Functional Area. *European Research Studies*, 23(3), 757-772.
- Van der Zwet A. (2014). Versatility and Ambiguity: First Experiences with the Integrated Territorial Investment Tool. *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, 2 (4), 319-326
- Van Der Zwet A., Miller S., Gross F. (2014). A First Stock Take: Integrated Territorial Approaches in Cohesion Policy 2014-20, *IQ-Net Thematic Paper*, 35(2), European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow
- Van der Zwet A., Bachtler J., Ferry M., McMaster I., Miller S. (2017). *Integrated territorial and urban strategies: how are ESIF adding value in 2014- 2020?* Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Unit 03 – Inclusive Growth. Urban and Territorial Development
- Wyrwa J., Barska A., Jędrzejczak-Gas J. (2017). Integrated territorial investments as a tool of building the capability of functional areas – Illustrated with an example of Poland. *Public Policy and Administration*, 16(4), 567 – 582.
- Zawora J. and Kowalska I. (2021). The evaluation of the implementation of new methods used in Poland for financing EU territorial cohesion policy [Bilans wdrożenia ZIT w Polsce – nowego instrumentu finansowania polityki spójności UE]. *Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny*, 83(3), 235-252.