

Foreword

Governments need reliable and comparable data to underpin policies that promote regional growth. The OECD has developed a unique database of sub-national statistics that allow policymakers to analyse trends both domestically and across countries. The use of internationally comparable data has been a critical input in reforming the objectives and tools of regional development policy in OECD countries. By providing measures of regional performance and identifying factors that increase the competitive edge of a region and the well-being of its current and future population, OECD data has encouraged a shift from a subsidy-based, compensatory approach to regional policy to one that focuses on enhancing regional potential. *OECD Regions at a Glance* reflects continuous effort by the OECD Working Party on Territorial Indicators in collaboration with the OECD Secretariat to improve the evidence base at regional and local levels.

In line with OECD's broad based approach to policy – better policies for better lives – this fourth edition of *OECD Regions at a Glance* examines trends across an even wider range of policy fields – demography and migration, economic growth, employment and productivity, knowledge-based activities, education, health care, income, environmental outputs and includes comparisons with regional development dynamics in emerging economies. The scope and time period covered by *OECD Regions at a Glance* give policy makers a tool to understand the contribution of each region to aggregate development, and clues as to how that contribution could be increased.

Disparities both across and within countries have widened in the aftermath of the 2008-09 economic crisis. This observation seems to suggest that in the interest of maintaining national growth levels, a differentiated approach is needed for different typologies of regions. As OECD countries search for a path to economic recovery that leads to more sustainable forms of development, sound statistics that encompass a richer definition of development and quality of life will be essential. The local availability of high-quality services, access to opportunity for marginal or vulnerable groups, the institutional capacity of sub-national governments, levels of civic participation are all relevant elements for more inclusive and sustainable policies that need to incorporate and be understood at the local level.

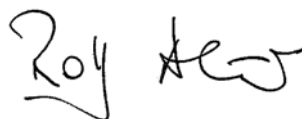
This new development model is mapped into the structure of this edition of *OECD Regions at a Glance*; within each section, a number of statistics showcase the contribution of regions to build stronger, fairer and cleaner economies. New measures of quality of life in regions are presented for the first time, such as, among others, income of households and regional disparities in the access of key public goods, estimates of air quality and carbon emissions in regions comparable across countries. The size of the regional difference in these measures points to the importance of improving the availability of sound information at detailed territorial levels to inform both the political debate and communities wanting to better understand the quality of life of the places they live in.

The development of internationally comparable indicators on environmental sustainability and social inclusion at regional and urban levels is still at the beginning and much needs to be done in the years to come. The OECD will continue to expand the use and integration of new sources of data and to explore areas where advancement in the conceptual framework is needed. For example, work is currently underway to produce internationally comparable estimates of carbon emissions of

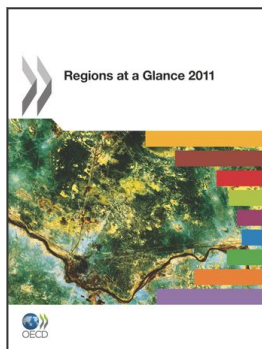
metropolitan areas. This edition of OECD Regions at a Glance already shows that such progress is possible and suggests areas in which evidence and policy needs can be strengthened.

OECD Regions at a Glance was co-ordinated by Monica Brezzi and prepared by Monica Brezzi, Mario Piacentini, Konstantin Rosina, Vicente Ruiz and Daniel Sanchez-Serra, under the responsibility of Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Head of the Regional Development Policy Division. Mauro Migotto contributed to the statistical data (innovation) required for the publication. Delegates of the OECD Working Party on Territorial Indicators (WPTI) offered guidance on the statistical tools to measure regional economies and commented on the draft.

Rolf Alter

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rolf Alter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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