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**16. Међународна научна конференција** Промена парадигме

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**16. Međunarodna naučna konferencija** Promena paradigme u obrazovanju i nauci

**16<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference** Changing Paradigms IN EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

YHNBEP3NTET Y HOBOM CAĄY YYNTEЉCKN ФАКУЛТЕТ НА МАЂАРСКОМ НАСТАВНОМ ЈЕЗИКУ У СУБОТИЦИ Újvidéki Egyetem Magyar Tannyelvű tanítóképző kar, szabadka Sveučilište u novom sadu učiteljski fakultet na maðarskom nastavnom jeziku u subotici University of novi sad hungarian language teacher training faculty, subotica



## 16. Међународна научна конференција

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RICHÁRD KÓSZÓ Doctoral School of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary koszorichard955@gmail.com

Mentor: associate professor, Edit Soós

## DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENT APPROCHES IN THE FIELD OF HUNGARIAN REGIONAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

#### Abstract

The cohesion policy of the European Union provides resources to overcome the differences between the regional levels. However, the planning and distribution of resources is the responsibility of the member states.

Regarding domestic and international regional and urban development, two determining development approaches have spread. One of them is the "bottom-up" approach, which focuses on the local level instead of state redistribution. Its aim is to stimulate local interventions in order for communities to mobilize their untapped potential. In this case, the coordination of developments is characterized by horizontal cooperation and decentralization.

The other narrative is provided by the "top-down" development approach. In this case, the areas requiring intervention are usually determined centrally. In the case of the financing and the management of developments, centralization predominates and the sectoral approach is dominant.

Since 7 out of the 8 operational programs operating in Hungary (2021-2027) are sectoral and only 1 is regional, I hypothesize that the top-down development approach is the most decisive in the country.

The purpose of the study is to compare the "bottom-up" and "top-down" development approaches, as well as to examine their application in the field of Hungarian regional and urban development. The methodology for procession is based on a summary of the relevant literature published in the field of the subject. The application of the two approaches in Hungary is mainly approached from a theoretical point of view.

**Keywords:** *Hungary, developments, "top-down approach", "bottom-up approach", EU funds, allocation* 

### 1. From the use of EU funds to the development approach

In the member states of the European Union, the cohesion policy provides a common framework for the use of public funds for development purposes. The resources of policy provide a significant share of community expenditure. The intervention logic of EU support is based on the fact that, taking social needs into consideration, it defines economic-social-environmental goals, for which it provides means and support. The basic goal of creating a common cohesion policy on a European level was to promote balanced economic growth on the level of the EU member states. However, in order to achieve this goal, it is first necessary to equalize the development differences between the individual member states and their regions (Nyikos, 2013).

In accordance with Article 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (consolidated version of 2012), the European Commission prepares a cohesion report every three years, in which it describes the situation of economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012 consolidated version). The 8th Cohesion Report of the Commission was published on 4 February, 2022, which stated that the resources of the cohesion policy are more and more important, but the results are still not satisfactory. It is true that between the

2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods, the proportion of cohesion funding increased from 34% to 52%, but despite this fact, economic stagnation has occurred in many of the less developed regions of Eastern Europe. As a result, catching up failed (European Commission, 2022). So, the pace of development between regions is still not balanced. The report mentions "development-trapped regions", which have a low GDP per capita and, despite the use of a significant amount of EU support, have lagged behind, compared to other regions. The Committee of the Regions recommended examining the situation of regions getting into development trap (European Committee of the Regions, 2022). In my opinion, the revealed problem is complex, which can be traced back to several reasons. The development approach used in the given regions may also be false.

Examining the domestic development efforts of the past decades from the point of view of evening out the development differences, it can be concluded that the goal of the country to catch up with Europe has typically arose. This means the need for regional approach on a continental scale, not only in terms of narrower economic development, but also in terms of mentality or the operation of social institutions. This effort is one of the elements of overcoming regional inequalities. At the same time, we can also mention an effort in the narrower sense of regional development, the aim of which is to make European catch-up visible in the main settlement types of the country. The process must take place in a spatially balanced form (Nemes Nagy, Tagai, 2009). So the intention to develop and catch up in Hungary is unbroken.

Since the development of the country requires the use of EU and domestic "public finance", it is essential to build domestic institutions specialized in receiving support from the EU. EU finances are basically the means of the EU's cohesion policy, therefore the areas that can be supported, the development goals, the resources that can be used, the institutions and procedures that coordinate the resources are basically determined by the EU regulations created by the Council, the Parliament and the Commission. Legislation established by the institutions of the Union determine the basic principles of the development of management and control systems, as well as the "mandatory" persons of the institutional system and their essential tasks. In addition, the member states can develop the management system of the funds with extensive autonomy and designate the persons in the institutional system. The official opinion of the Union is that the specific, national management solutions of the member states can be more efficient and effective. The specific solution may reflect the features and traditions of the public administration system of the member state (Perge, 2009). Since the system for the distribution of EU funds is created and coordinated by the member states, they also play a major role in shaping the development approach based on the use of the funds.

#### 2. Development approaches within a theoretical framework

2.1. The "top-down" development approach

Along with the use of EU funds in member countries, it has become a fundamental question which decision can be made on which hierarchical level, and which level should carry out the development and implementation of the strategy. The two defining levels created in the region are the state management, i.e. the upper level, and the regulatory subsystem of the regional system, which represents the lower level (Rechnitzer, Smahó, 2006).

From the 2000s onwards, development approaches became the centre of interest of more and more domestic and international authors. In their report of 2006, Andy Pike, Adrés Rodriquez-Pose and John Tomaney already defined a "**top-down**" development approach. According to them, when applying the approach, the regions requiring intervention are determined centrally. Developments are financed centrally, and their management mostly takes place with the participation of decentralized bodies. The sectoral approach becomes dominant (Pike, Pose, Tomaney, 2016). The realization of the central development ideas can be achieved with the cooperation of decentralized public administration bodies in individual regional units (Kabai, Szabó, 2016).

During the practical realization of the approach, it is typical to ignore the planning of developments, the application of an integrated approach is omitted, and there is less room for local initiatives (Somlyódyné, 2020). The top-down idea is based on a centralized model of state management, that is, it strengthens the decision-making centre (Rechnitzer, Smahó, 2006). The development approach, the direction of development and innovation are established in the decision-making centre. Development usually starts from the centres, as innovation is created in them. After

that, they reach the peripheries following a hierarchical order. The path of innovation is directed from above (Éva G. Fekete, 2001).

This development approach is typical of centralized or state-centred countries. Partnerships are dominated here by public operators. Based on researches analysing partnership models, it can be concluded that the role of local communities often fades in community participation managed by public operators, as they are unable to enforce their own interests (Pálné Kovács, 2021).

Some governments can play a major role in dampening bottom-up approach, as they play a dominant role in determining development directions, thereby they can further strengthen centralized power (Rechnitzer, 1998).

The opinion of the authors is divided in the assessment of the application of the approach. According to Éva G. Fekete's idea, if the "top-down" approach dominates, higher-level plans are mandatory for lower levels. In many cases, the involvement of the lower level and society is only apparent (Éva G. Fekete, 2013). On the other hand, József Nagy Nemes drew attention to the fact that the implementation of the "top-down" approach is not necessarily bad. According to him, this process can also have a positive outcome if it does not hinder development from below, but helps to break down centralized social functioning (Nemes Nagy, 2009).

On the whole, it can be said that the "top-down" development approach has different characteristic features. Among other things, it is characterized by the failure to plan developments, the centralization of funding, the participation of decentralized organizations in their distribution, the central management and the lack of the involvement of lower levels. In my opinion, the reduction of regional differences cannot be achieved by the exclusive application of this approach.

## 2.2. The "bottom-up" development approach

In addition to the "top-down" development approach, the "bottom-up" approach is gaining popularity in Europe. The term appeared in the United States of America already in the 1960s, but its European adaptation occurred much later (Winnick, 1966). Its strong European influence can be connected with the Barca report. In 2008, Danuta Hübner, the commissioner responsible for regional policy at that time, commissioned the Italian economist Fabrizio Barca to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the situation, challenges and possible reform of cohesion policy. The report prepared by Barca pointed out that the place-based approach is hardly present in the cohesion policy, even though this could increase the effectiveness of the policy. In addition, he emphasized that, in addition to economic and social cohesion, a greater role should be attributed to regional cohesion. With this, Fabrizio Barca created the basis for the spread of the bottom-up development approach (Barca, 2009).

The goal of bottom-up development is to achieve the reduction of regional differences by activating the resources of the region. An important element of the activation process is the exploration of endogenous resources and the promotion of their interregional flow. In addition, the disconnection of the periphery from the centre and its protection from its absorbing effect plays a significant role (Rechnitzer, Smahó, 2006).

When implementing place-based development, the principle of subsidiarity and multi-level governance must be taken into consideration in which decision-making competencies are shared by supranational, national, regional, and local governments and national governments are no longer provide the sole interface between supranational and subnational arenas(Hooghe and Marks 2001).

Based on these, first it is necessary to horizontally integrate the sectoral policies, and in parallel, to vertically integrate public policies, in a regional approach. The developments of the bottom-up development approach must fit the needs of the given region and the needs of the people living there. Its application assumes two main elements, the social, cultural and institutional character of the region and the new knowledge and ideas appearing in policy interventions (Somlyódyné, 2020). Barca and his co-authors formulated the essence of the approach as follows: "Who knows what should be done, where and when?" (Barca, McCann, Rodríguez-Poze, 2012). The idea can be traced back to the dimension of subsidiarity, according to which any task that can be solved on the lower level, should be solved locally, regionally or on a lower level. State management should be secondary in solving regional issues (Soós, 2006).

In contrast to "bottom-up" developments, the region to be developed here is not established on the upper level, but on a lower level based on endogenous needs. According to this, horizontal cooperation

and decentralization are decisive in the coordination of developments, either within the framework of local or regional development policy (Kabai, Szabó, 2016).

Based on the regional-power interpretation of the emerging decentralization, not only a division of power, but also a division of labour is created between the central and local organization (Döbrönte, Vida, 2004). The concept of decentralization and how it manifests itself in the development approach of a given country can be differentiated. Only one common feature can be established in the forms of decentralization, namely, that public authority competences start from the centre downwards, but there may be differences in what exactly these competences are, in the direction of which regional persons and with which tool system is used. Based on a theoretical approach, a sharp separation can be drawn between three pure decentralization models. The first is the administrative deconcentration. In this model, the tasks within the state administration system move downwards. The second is the financial decentralization. Here, there is a change in the proportions of resource distribution in the direction of local bodies. The third is the democratic decentralization or devolution. In this model, the actual division of power is realized between different levels of elected representatives. The decentralization effect of the three models is different. The political advantages of decentralization, a more direct participation, proximity to citizens and transparency occur only in the case of the third model (Pálné Kovács, 2014).

The perspective of bottom-up development has gained more and more popularity in recent decades. This is due to the fact that civil society opinions can highlight many aspects that make the development and realization of the strategy more effective. In addition, the fact that with its application the social legitimacy of the regional development program is also strong cannot be neglected, since the residents themselves played a role in the development of the concept. As a result, their interests also prevail (Jóna, 2014).

The two development approaches are not mutually exclusive, they can exist side by side, and even their elements can be combined with each other (Crescenzi, Rodriquez-Pose, 2011). The role, relationship and effectiveness of the two perspectives may differ. These factors are determined by the organization and organizational structure of the applying state (Kabai, Szabó, 2016).

Based on these, it can be concluded that several features of the "bottom-up" development approach try to adapt to local needs. Its developments are based on the activation of endogenous resources, local needs and the involvement of lower levels. The effect of decentralization can increase the efficiency of developments. In my opinion, this development approach is actually suitable for eliminating regional differences. Not only with using purely "bottom-up" elements can the difference between the regional levels be reduced to some extent. However, the use of "top-down" elements reduces efficiency.

## 3. The development approach applied by Hungary in practice

## 3.1. Development approach in the design of operational programs

In order to learn about the development practice of Hungary, it is necessary to compare and analyse the individual development areas, as well as to examine whether they reflect the characteristic features of a "top-down" or a "bottom-up" approach. The study focuses on regional and urban development among the areas to be developed with EU funds. As a starting point, I will examine the structure of Hungary's National Development Plans.

15 operational programs provided a framework for the implementation of The New Hungary Development Plan of the 2007-2013 programming period and the New Széchenyi Plan, which replaced it. The operational programs determined the target areas in which the country will use the resources of the European Structural and Investment Funds during the 7-year period. Of the 15 operational programs, 8 were sectoral and 7 were regional (Nyikos, 2017) (Table No. 1).

Economic development OP	A sustainable economy in the long term
Transport OP	Quality and sustainable transport
Social Renewal OP	Increasing labour market activity, improving the quality of human resources
Social Infrastructure OP	Development of educational and health infrastructure
Environment and Energy OP	Achieving more efficient energy use and sustainability

Table No. 1: Hungarian operative programs and their objectives for the 2007-2013 budget period

State reform OP	Building a competitive public administration
Electronic public administration OP	Improving the performance of public administration
Realization OP	Effective realization of operational programs
South Great Plain OP South Transdanubia OP North Hungary OP North Great Plain OP Central Transdanubia OP Central Hungary OP West Transdanubia OP	Regional economic development; tourism-related developments,development of local transport infrastructure, urban development actions, human infrastructure developments

Source: Own construction

Among the operational programs that distribute EU funds, the seven regional operational programs, which are smaller regional units compared to the sectoral operational programs, aimed at the development of the regions. Within the framework of the regional operational programs, the local infrastructural developments of local governments with a lack of resources were mainly supported (Péti, 2011). So here, the focus on the region appears significantly in addition to the sectoral operational programs.

After that, territoriality is beginning to get into the background during the 2014-2020 programming period. The Széchenyi 2020 program defined 10 operational programs. Out of these, 8 programs were sectoral and only 2 were regional (Table no. 2). If we examine this change in a European context, it can be seen that there was no proportional distribution among the EU member states either. In Poland, for example, there were 21 operational programs, 16 of which only developed the voivodeship. In fact, a separate program developed Eastern Poland. By contrast, the number of regional operational programs in the Czech Republic is the similar as the number in Hungary. Out of the 7 programs they used, one developed the region of the centre and one developed the regions in general. However, there were also countries in which territoriality played a smaller role. In Slovakia, 1 out of 6 operational programs operated as a regional operational program, and in Romania, 1 out of 5 programs had a regional purpose. Overall, it can be concluded that Hungary hold the middle ground in terms of the establishment of regional operational programs in the period 2014-2020 (Józsa, Szabó, 2022).

Human Resource Development OP	Increasing human capital
Economic Development and Innovation OP	Development of small and medium-sized enterprises
Integrated Transport Development OP	Development of transport infrastructure
Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP	Achieving economic growth while taking long-term
	environmental effects into consideration
Public Administration and Public Service Development OP	Development of public administration and public services
Hungarian Fishery Management OP	Sustainable fish production
Supporting Persons in Need OP	Helping people living in poverty
Regional and Urban Development OP	Regional decentralized economic development
Competitive Central Hungary OP	Regional and sectoral developments
Rural Development Program	Development of rural areas

Table No. 2: Hungarian operative programs and their objectives for the 2014-2020 budget period

Source: Own construction

In addition to the structure of the operational programs, their implementation system should also be mentioned. In Hungary, management tasks related to EU funds are carried out by national ministries and other national central organizations. This means that decentralization is limited, i.e. the implementation model of operational programs is characterized by centralized execution (Nyikos, 2017).

The 2021-2027 budget cycle brought a new program structure. The Széchenyi Plan Plus distributes the EU funds among 8 operational programs. The division of sectoral and regional operational programs further narrowed. Currently, only 1 regional program is operating in addition to the 7 sectoral ones (Table no. 3). This happened despite the fact that the government which developed the programs declared on several occasions that overcoming regional differences was a priority national goal (Józsa, Szabó, 2022).

Digital Renewal OP Plus	Responding to global, technological, security and sustainability challenges
Human Resource Development OP Plus	Support for social catch-up
Hungarian Fishery Management OP Plus	Development of the domestic fishery sector
<b>Regional and Urban Development OP Plus</b>	Development of least developed regions and backward areas
Economic Development and Innovation OP Plus	Change of technology of Hungarian enterprises, strengthening their digitalization and innovation capabilities
Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP Plus	Renewable energy economy taking environmental aspects into consideration
Executive OP Plus	Carrying out tasks related to IT, partnership, communication and public relations

Table No. 3: Hungarian operative programs and their objectives for the 2021-2027 budget period

Source: Own construction

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the structure of operational programs has moved rather in the direction of centralization. The number of regional programs has fallen sharply in recent years. Central management has increased the proportion of sectoral operational programs, thereby shifting the country's development approach towards a "top-down" approach.

#### 3.2. Development approach in the more decisive regional operational programs

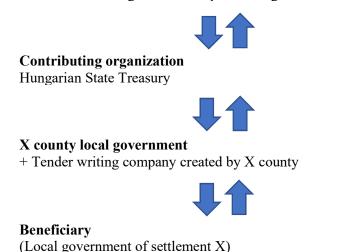
After the creation of the operational programs, the study examines the stylistic features of the "topdown" and "bottom-up" developments in the most decisive instruments of regional development, in the Regional and Urban Development Operative Program and the Regional and Urban Development Operative Program Plus. During the period 2021-2027, the task of the program called TOP Plus instead of TOP is to provide region-based developments for the least developed counties and backward regions. Beneficiaries are the settlements. In the previous chapter it was already mentioned that the performance of management tasks related to resources is usually the responsibility of a national ministry, however, TOP Plus is currently the only regional program, so the examination of its centralization/decentralization in the field of realization is extremely important.

During the 2014-2020 period, the local governments of the counties and cities with county rights participated in the planning and implementation of the TOP. In the 2021-2027 period, however, only the local governments of the counties were present as regional operators in the development of the regional evaluation aspects of the TOP Plus tenders and in the preparation of decisions (Perge, 2022).

Territoriality already appears in the name of the operational program, so it could be assumed that several regional operators appear in the process of distributing resources. However, this is not the case. The reason for this is that the management of TOP Plus resources is strongly centralized. It is true that the county local governments are present as regional operators, but they are only connected to the processes with a helping, mediating, and commenting role. If a small settlement cannot perform the tender writing/project management tasks, it can ask for the help of the county local government, which performs this task through its own tender writing company. The institutional structure established at the time of the TOP is also applicable in the case of the distribution of TOP Plus resources, since the institutional structure did not change during the change of budget periods. Its management authority is centralized, and the contributing organizational tasks are performed by the Hungarian State Treasury (Pálné Kovács, 2019) (Figure No. 1).

#### Managing authority

Deputy State Secretariat for Regional Development Programs of the Ministry of National Economy



**Figure 1:** *Institutions participating in the distribution of TOP and TOP Plus funds* Source: Kószó, 2022

TOP Plus's resource allocation schemes, indicators, and evaluation criteria prevail according to fixed and strict rules, therefore the role of county local governments and decision-making committees cannot be essential in the processes. The influence of lobbying may arise during the evaluation of the submitted tenders, however, based on the information available to us, this cannot be supported (Pálné Kovács, 2019).

The next test point is the existence of the involvement of the lower level. In the case of TOP Plus, the lowest-level operators for whom the operational program itself was created are local governments. However, they were completely excluded from its planning and implementation. As regional operators, it would be useful to involve them, since they are the beneficiaries of the operational program, they would be really concerned in the useful and effective allocation of resources (Perge, 2022). Since they do not have the powers of regional operators, their role is limited to commenting on calls for tenders. Based on the level of involvement of regional operators, the program assumes the application of a "top-down" approach rather than a "bottom-up" approach. The question of involving the lower levels is clearly visible in the practice of regional development.

The involvement of the lower levels and the community took place on the basis of the partnership agreement prior to the finalization of TOP Plus tenders. The Hungarian government put them out for consideration (Government of Hungary, 2020).

In regional development, partnership, i.e. cooperation means that the relevant organizations must be given insight into the planning, the development of the programs and the relevant background materials. In a good case, the participation is not limited to getting to know the opinions of the partners with the help of some communication tool, but there is also a chance to take the opinions into account and give feedback (VÁT Strategic Planning Office, 2003).

The defining document of the subject area is the European Commission's Delegated Regulation 240/2014/EU (7 January, 2014) on the European code of conduct related to partnerships implemented within the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds (European Commission, 2014). The decree establishes that the relevant partners must be involved in the preparation and implementation of operational programs in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of the member states.

One of the reasons for the need to involve the civil sector may be that the operational programs define the development path of a country for at least a 7-year time interval. The 7-year programming includes how the goals and resources should develop. Therefore, building experiences and opinions into programs can be significant in the design of the appropriate program and can increase the effectiveness of projects (Finta, 2021).

In Hungary, the involvement of the relevant partners can be described today with the concept of "socialization". Within the framework of socialization, the government presents the titles, goals and structure of the planned operational programs on a web page. All operative programs and their calls for tenders can be found on the website. This is where interested parties have the opportunity to express their opinions. Opinions were also received in connection with TOP Plus tenders. Commenting on the announcements was not proportionate. While only 3 comments were received for the tender TOP Plus-3.3.3-21 "Sustainable human infrastructure", there were 20 for TOP Plus-1.2.1-21 "Livable settlements". If we examine the number of comments received, it can be concluded that the participation of reviewers was low. Suggestions were received from municipalities, civil organizations, private individuals and other interested parties. In terms of their scope, the suggestions and guidelines covered a wide range. Attention was drawn to filling in gaps and incorporating experience (Government of Hungary, 2021). So the interested parties had the opportunity to express their opinions and shape the call for tenders. With this, we can recognize the characteristics of the "bottom-up" development approach. However, it should also be noted that the EU's regulations may stand behind the involvement of persons concerned and it is possible that the government only meets the Commission's expectations. The number of people participating in the opinion poll is very low, and it is not guaranteed that the will of the interested parties will actually be taken into consideration by the government.

The question of the flow of information and the communication between the operators also arises in the case of TOP, which theoretically concentrates on regions and regional operators, and then in the case of TOP Plus. Examining the speed of responses given to problems arising during TOP projects did not support effective communication between the operators. During the realization of many projects in the 2014-2020 period, an unexpected problem arose in the form of a cost increase. Mainly as a result of the rise material prices, the items which had been planned in advance in the projects could no longer be purchased at the previously constructed prices. The cost increase was created from the difference between the originally planned price and the new increased price. The problem already affected many project managers in 2017, but the institutions involved in the allocation of resources were unable to solve it for a long time. Finally, in 2019, the state paid the amount of additional costs required for the projects of the settlements struggling with the problem. Based on this, the question arises, why was the solution delayed for so long? Obviously, learning about the problem itself was delayed, as well (Kószó, 2022).

The organization carrying out the project generation always holds an information day before the start of the projects, where it personally informs the beneficiaries of the projects about the possibilities of the projects, the tender conditions, and the most necessary information through a direct contact. These informational activities usually date at the start of the beginning of the given budget period. Here, people representing settlements have the opportunity to ask questions and formulate proposals (Holczreiter, Számadó, Treszkán-Horváth, 2015). The transmission of information flowing from top to bottom is ensured in this way, but information flow from bottom to top does not have such a special channel. In the implementation phase, the lower levels can no longer be involved in the processes.

Since the "top-down" development approach cannot be as effective as "bottom-up" developments, regional differences still exist (Komarek, 2019).

#### 4. Conclusions

Examining the development plans of Hungary and the established system of operational programs, we can come to the conclusion that the number of regional programs has been continuously decreasing in recent decades. By contrast, the proportion of sectoral programs was much more significant. Based on these, the development approach to be used in the country is closer to the "top-down" approach.

The dominant regional operational program of the period 2014-2020 include the TOP, and the only regional operational program of the period 2021-2027, TOP Plus, contain mixed development elements. The study points out that the number of regional operators participating in the planning and implementation of the programs has decreased and a strong centralization has taken place in both processes. Only the county local governments, as regional operators, participate in the development of the regional evaluation aspects of the tenders and in the program is centralized, and their role became of little importance. The managing authority of the program is centralized, and the contributing organizational tasks are performed by the Hungarian State Treasury.

The European Union pays special attention to the channelling and integration of the opinions of citizens, civil organizations and the parties involved into planning, and therefore it requires this by law, as well. The Hungarian state fulfils this requirement through the socialization of operational programs, however, the number of participants in commenting on tender calls is very low. In addition, it is not guaranteed that the will of the parties interested will actually be channelled and that the government will include them in the tenders.

The study points out that the communication and information flow between the operators is weak. Based on the "bottom-up" development approach, well-developed networks should be functioning, however, they did not develop in connection with TOP and TOP Plus. Although information comes from the higher level, the role of the information day can be mentioned here, for example. On the other hand, the lower levels and the beneficiary settlements do not have similar forums, so their involvement in the processes is problematic.

It can be concluded that bottom-up approach is given very little space, since the interest integration mechanisms between the local, subnational and central levels do not function on a healthy level. The role of the lower level is much weaker. Instead of decentralization, centralization is taking place.

The information presented in the study shows that both "top-down" and "bottom-up" development approaches are present in regional and settlement development in Hungary, but the "top-down" approach prevails much more strongly. The development advantages offered by the regionally based "bottom-up" approach lack, therefore regional differences continue to exist.

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