

VI WORLD FORUM OF
LOCAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

WFLED Seville meeting report

October 2023

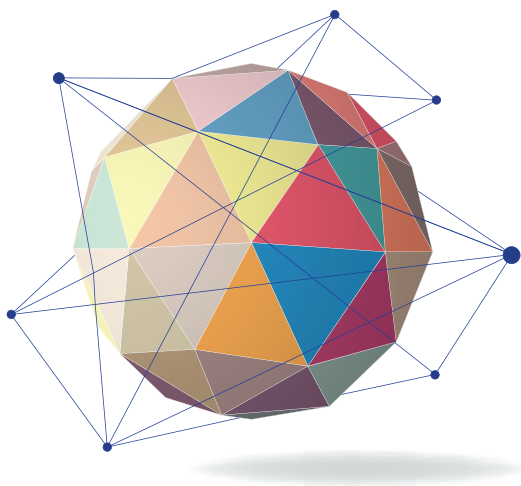


Partnerships for a just, inclusive and sustainable transition and promoting social justice

October 18-19, 2023

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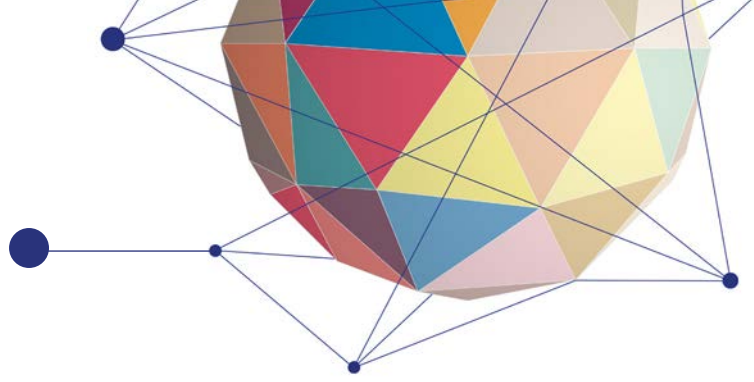
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1

The framework of the meeting



1.1 Introduction

On October 18 and 19, 2023, the meeting International and Territorial Alliances to promote a Just, Inclusive and Sustainable Transition and Social Justice took place, organized by the Andalusian Municipalities Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI), the UCLG Committee on Local Economic and Social Development and the International Labor Organization (ILO), with the co-financing of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Provincial Council of Seville and the Provincial Council of Huelva.

The meeting was an opportunity to reflect on SDG 8: Employment, Local Economic Development and Decentralized Cooperation, and brought together some 100 people from 15 countries.

The space was part of the WFLED process that began in 2010 and is currently heading towards its sixth edition.

This document brings together the concerns, challenges and proposals that arose during the meeting in

order to contribute to the process of reflection on sustainable economic growth and employment, in particular, and local economic development, in general.

1.2 Meeting contents

The technological revolution and the climate emergency are two dynamics that condition the global community and, in particular, local and regional environments. The gaps resulting from these processes threaten the stability, equality and sustainability of people and communities, especially among the most vulnerable.

Climate action and adaptation to new technologies and innovation processes call for the strengthening of partnerships between actors and territories to promote sustainable economic growth and decent, quality employment that contributes to promoting social justice.

In this line, the **alliances and shared commitments** such as the 2030 Agenda, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice, or the Paris Agreement, which promote contextualized local solutions, stand out.



Opening of the Meeting in Seville October 18-19

Concern about a just transition has been gaining ground in the political and social debate and now has a strong multilevel and multi-stakeholder component. At the international level, organizations such as the ILO have defined just transition as the greening of the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible for all concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind; and UNDP has proposed specific ways in which a just transition can help achieve the Paris Agreement, such as by increasing decision-making processes, supporting a green jobs revolution, laying the foundation for a resilient zero net emissions economy, driving contextualized local solutions, and consolidating the urgency of coordinated efforts.

From **international development** cooperation, although the concept is still new, largely because international standards for just transition are relatively recent, there is a growing line of action on just transition, both in the field of research and in

the practice of initiatives; and, in any case, its work has been extensive in directly related issues, such as poverty eradication, promotion of decent work and the environment.

Local and regional governments, for their part, have a great responsibility in contributing to global challenges, due to the role they play in regulating and encouraging citizen social practices and because of the direct contact they have with the daily lives of citizens. This is a key position for creating and implementing transformative actions that respond to the immediate needs of local communities and territorial ecosystems.

The role that local governments play in the implementation of effective just transition plans is fundamentally centered on their capacity to diversify local economies, promoting the local circular economy, the installation of green infrastructure and renewable energies, ensuring the sustainable management of local ecosystems and promoting alliances and social dialogue between all



Representatives of: ILO, FANSI, UCLG, ORU FOGAR, FMDV, CLGF, OECD and GSEF.

stakeholders in the territory. The municipalist movement has been growing stronger in recent years, gaining greater recognition as political actors in the multilateral system with transformative capacity at the local and global level. Mechanisms such as the Pact for the Future, promoted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), demonstrate the

power of collective action, co-creation and international cooperation and solidarity as cornerstones of just, harmonious and sustainable societies. Hence the importance of local and regional governments as relevant actors for a just transition.

Expanding and strengthening key processes such as **social dialogue**, multilevel institutional alliances and international cooperation, with the participation of all stakeholders - companies, trade unions, social economy organizations, academia and civil society - is crucial for the assumption of practical commitments adapted to each territorial context.

This dialogue process, within the framework of both local and global partnerships, can contribute to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, to the achievement of the **SDG8** targets that call for the development of productive activities and the creation of decent employment within the framework of efficient and sustainable production and consumption models.

In short, the transition processes towards more sustainable models entail profound structural changes, from the action of local and regional policies, oriented towards social justice that guarantees a decent life for the most vulnerable communities and people, who are the ones who suffer the most in the readaptation and transition mechanisms.

In this context, the **main objective of the meeting** was to share ideas and experiences to promote a just transition process that promotes and guarantees social justice and the generation of inclusive and sustainable societies, based on the action of alliances between local governments and international cooperation.

To this end, the meeting focused on two **lines of work**, with the aim of contributing to:

1. Renew and promote **alliances** between actors and territories to address just transitions where international cooperation, south-south cooperation and decentralized cooperation play a fundamental role.

2. Improve the conditions for **economic growth and employment** in new productive and consumption dynamics oriented towards more sustainable economic models, in line with SDG 8.

Multi-stakeholder and multilevel alliances; collaboration, cooperation and co-responsibility; decent and quality employment; just transition; sustainable economic growth, among others, were the main concepts on which the reflection revolved in a context characterized by the climate emergency and the technological revolution.

1.3 The Seville international meeting in the process of the World Forum of Local Economic Development

The World Forum of Local Economic Development (WLED) is a process aimed at enhancing policy dialogue and strengthening the cross-cutting partnership on Local Economic Development (LED) as a strategic and operational framework for sustainable and inclusive development.

The initiative for the organization of the World Forums on Local Economic Development was born in 2011 with the celebration of the First World Forum of Local Development Agencies in Seville. It was conceived as a permanent work process, as a space for reflection, exchange of experiences and knowledge, and the meeting between actors and entities involved in local development, with the leadership of public administrations and governments, especially local ones.

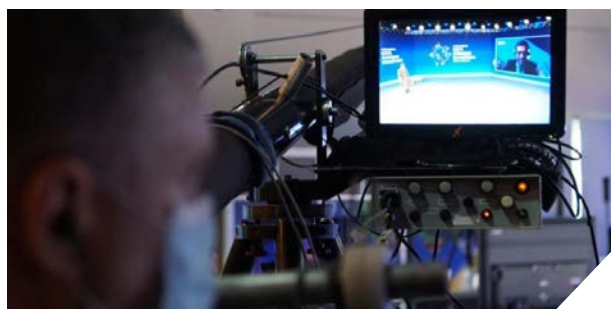


I, II, III, IV and V World Local Economic Development Forums

It has been followed by the World Forums in Iguazu, Brazil (2013); Turin, Italy (2015); Praia, Cape Verde (2017); and Cordoba, Argentina (2021).

The idea of launching this initiative responds, among other aspects, to debate ideas and generate innovation to face a difficult, uncertain and dangerous context, marked by a climate emergency and profound changes in production and consumption models. And, above all, by the conviction that the local context is ideal for building values and opportunities, deconstructing obsolete schemes and paradigms, and resisting the effects of a development model that is clearly not valid for the majority of people and for the planet itself.

This is an initiative that seeks the joint work of local and regional governments, multilateral organizations, actors and experts to share, highlight experiences, reflect, debate and seek alternatives to advance in for-



mulas that allow the construction, from the territories, of development models that result in a better quality of life for people. And to do so by weaving networks, joining efforts for a greater impact and incidence on the global agenda, from local spaces.

During the International Meeting held in Seville last October, a space was set aside to analyze the current status of the forum process and how to approach its roadmap in the medium and short term.

The report presents an initial balance, highlighting the tendency to prioritize global and international alliances that have contributed to sustainability and visibility, while reducing the weight of contributions from the territories. The search for a better

balance between global and local dynamics is presented as a challenge, as well as an opportunity to address new spaces for exchange.

Added to this are the limited results so far in terms of the scope of the SDGs within the framework of the 2030 Agenda or the complexity of the international context with new global balances and emergency situations, conflicts and climate emergencies, among others. On the other hand, global processes and the generation of other forums and meetings are multiplying and crowding the agenda.

In this context, the WFLED Forum has proved to be a useful forum for dialogue, knowledge building, the promotion of local government networks and increased political advocacy on the issue of local economic development. Its main attraction has been its capacity to bring together territorial actors together with multilateral entities. Increasing this multi-stakeholder and multilevel governance is one of the keys to strengthening the process, which will have a new high point during the VI WFLED, which is expected to be held in the city of Seville.

Regarding the roadmap, the following measures, among others, are proposed:

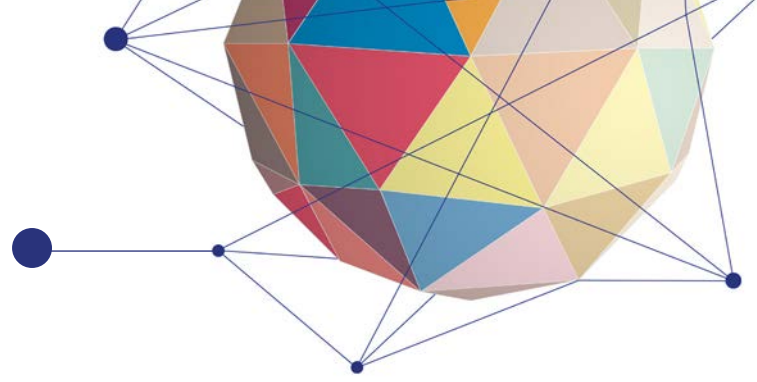
- strengthen the forum process by providing more consistent support to the work of the Executive Committee and the Technical Secretariat in order to adjust the interests in terms of themes, participation and results to the various stakeholders and territories;
- to strengthen the space for knowledge management and the learning community, which is materialized, among other activities, in the intermediate spaces for reflection and dialogue, such as the International Meeting from which this document originates;
- linking the Forum process to other international venues as an associated event; and
- to work on innovative financing formulas for the process itself in order to increase participation and the presence of various entities and institutions.

Second day of the Meeting in Seville 19 October 2023



2

Diagnosis and context



In the current scenario, characterized by the uncertainty of the immediate future and technological transformations, the **digital and green economy** emerges as a new paradigm. However, the inevitable transition to this model faces contradictions between economic growth and sustainability (it is not easy to ensure economic growth while being sustainable), as well as between competitiveness and job quality (it is not easy to establish decent work in a system with exacerbated competitiveness).

Moreover, the need to adapt to change is becoming crucial, as **millions of jobs will disappear and new ones will emerge**, transforming the relationship with the planet and employment with a view to establishing

a **circular economy**. All these changes require **innovative responses**.

New economic dynamics pose risks of **widening existing gaps, such as territorial, gender, skills and digitalization**. Green jobs are increasing in developing countries, while polluting jobs are concentrated in nations with lower GDP. In addition, there are gender and qualification gaps, with more qualified men working in green jobs in greater proportion, as well as digitalization gaps, since ICT training is required for the development of most of the new jobs related to the green transition. In addition, there are disparities between types and sizes of companies (the largest ones concentrate the majority of green jobs) and territories (between capitals and the rest of the regions, mainly).

Meeting of the International Committee and partner networks of the WFLED, Seville 17 October 2023.





Dialogue Table. Territorial policies to promote social justice and a just and sustainable transition. Partnerships and cooperation

Faced with the risk of not knowing how to avoid the deepening of these gaps in the new economic models, **proactive policies** to reduce inequalities are demanded.

The UN recognizes that little progress has been made on the SDG targets (estimated at 12%), with SDG 8 being one of the least progressed, especially in the social and environmental aspects. For its achievement in these areas, the need for a joint effort in the promotion of social protection, social justice, fair distribution of burdens and benefits and environmental preservation is emphasized. In this sense, **co-responsibility** is revealed as a crucial issue in fields such as sustainability, decent employment and the circular economy, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreements.

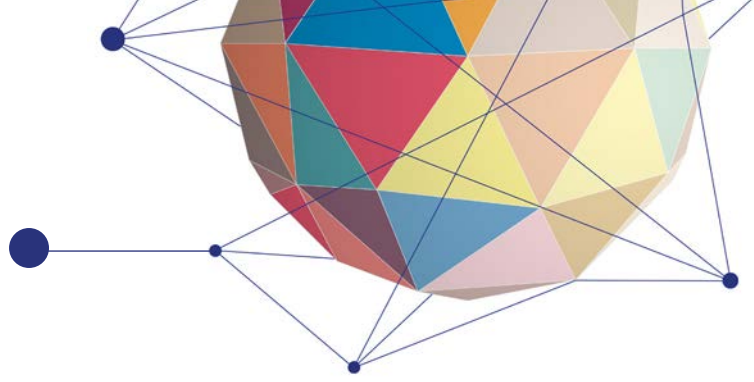
Labor dignity is closely linked to **training**, especially vocational training, and constitutes a fundamental pillar of decent human development. It is essential to broaden and renew the concept of decent work, recognizing labor rights as fundamental human rights, including the right to decent employment, social dialogue and collective bargaining, especially in a context of increasing job insecurity.

In this context, it is emphasized that the process towards decent employment and sustainable development takes place mainly at the local level, highlighting the **importance of local policies and social cohesion** in this transformation.

Finally, the fact that the 2030 Agenda is presented as a political commitment rather than a standard raises questions about the usefulness and credibility of these commitments in practice.

3

Territorial alliances



In the context of territorial alliances, emphasis is placed on the need to **work at various levels**, and not only at the local level.

The adaptation of both people and territories to international challenges, especially in the face of the climate crisis, is an unavoidable priority. Each territory has its own particularities and unique needs that must be considered and addressed in a specific manner.

The exchange of opinions and **comparative analysis** at the local level prove to be crucial tools for effectively addressing problems and orienting policies towards **solutions adapted to specific local contexts**. In addition, the importance of government transparency, youth training and support for entrepreneurship, from local governments, but with a multilevel approach, are highlighted as measures to eradicate labor informality, thus promoting quality and sustainable jobs.

Managing the diversity of interests is a necessary challenge to promote effective cooperation among stakeholders. **Strengthening alliances and associations** of municipalities and federations becomes imperative in this context.

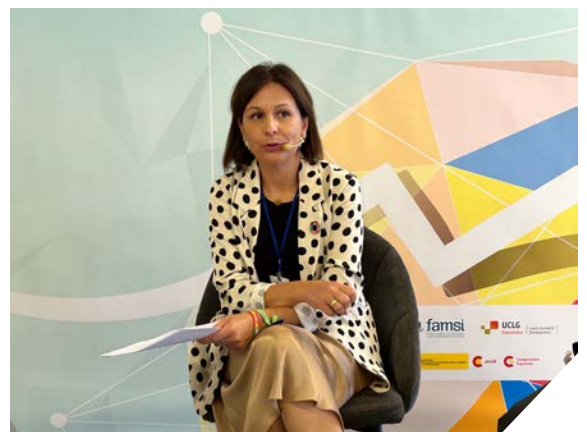
At the center of these territorial alliances and strategies are **local governments** and **decentralized governance models**. **Decentralization and financial and fiscal autonomy** are presented as elements to be taken into account when it comes to generating employment and businesses directly, as well as adding value in different sectors, such as agriculture and tourism.

The importance of local knowledge and specialization is emphasized, although the need to evaluate the capacities of local governments, especially in the area of employment, is also noted (the **need for greater technical assistance** is raised, as well as the need to generate more spaces for dialogue).

Building capacities and tools for **effective dialogue with the private sector and SMEs** is considered a key issue, since on many occasions only companies are relied upon for financing. It is also understood that it is necessary to take advantage of the opportunities for internationalization of companies through international cooperation.

In addition, the **potential of public services to boost decent jobs** is recognized. Local governments can manage basic services such as water and waste, which not only improves the quality of life, but can also generate significant employment in local communities.

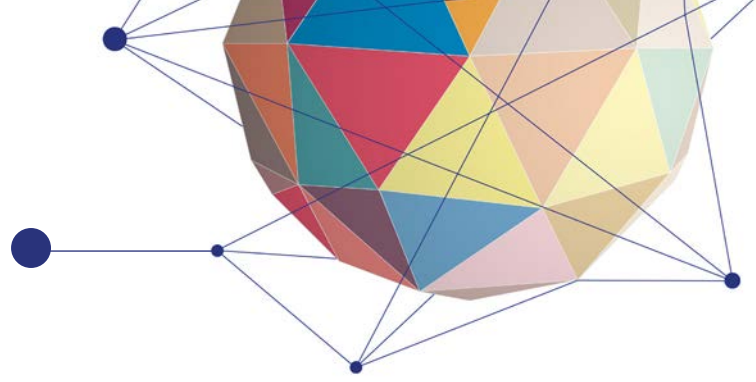
In summary, it highlights the need to address the complexities of employment and sustainability from a holistic perspective and adapted to local realities.



Local and regional government representatives participating in the Seville Meeting 18-19 October.

4

Economic activity and employment



In relation to economic activity and employment, there is a need to take advantage of the opportunities of the new economy, promoting local productive environments and **adding value at the local level**, especially in sectors such as sustainable energy, the circular economy and energy efficiency. Instead of continuing with offshoring processes, the focus should be on **localizing production**, thus keeping the added value in the territory.

It highlights the importance not only of promoting green jobs, but also of **greening all employment and reducing gaps**, incorporating sustainability in territorial planning and promoting the **social and solidarity economy**.

Social dialogue and **collective bargaining** are essential pillars for establishing sustainable working conditions and avoiding a return to crisis situations and austerity policies.

*Dialogue Table:
Decent jobs for new economic activities*

Vocational training, developed from a perspective of fostering critical thinking values and promoting entrepreneurship and applied innovation, is presented as a **crucial strategy to meet the demand for new jobs**. It is understood that this education must be inclusive and diverse, developing itineraries adapted to the particularities of individuals, which guarantees the incorporation of all groups into the labor market.

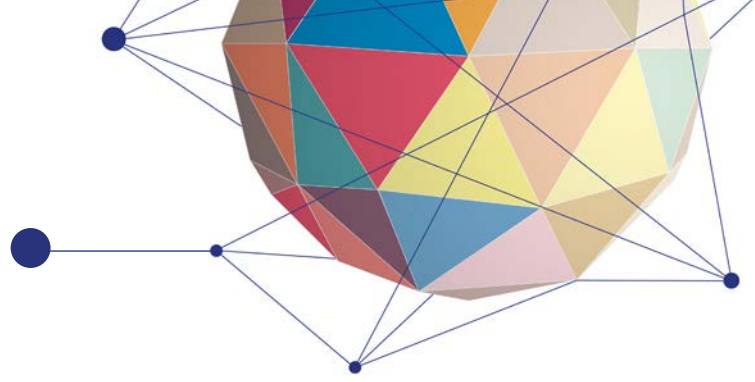
The Global Jobs, Social Protection and Just Transition Accelerator initiative is highlighted as an essential tool for attracting investment and quality jobs to the local level, while at the same time promoting meaningful cooperation and collaboration. It also underscores the need to work specifically on **agendas to combat youth unemployment and defend women's rights**.

These comprehensive and collaborative approaches are fundamental to building a fair and sustainable economy in local territories.



5

Financing



The financing of projects, especially those related to the **social and solidarity economy**, is seen as fundamental for local economic development. In addition to investment, it is essential to **create an enabling environment for these investments**. To address this challenge, several strategies are proposed:

- **Financial innovation and green bonds:**

The implementation of financial innovations, such as green bonds, may be a viable solution. The creation of a specific space to discuss these ideas in future meetings is suggested as an issue to be considered.

- **Aid and support funds for the social and solidarity economy:**

Establishing aid and support funds specifically targeted at the social and solidarity economy can generate added value in production and value chains, thus promoting local economic development.

- **Public-private collaboration and public procurement:**

Collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential. Exploring and systematizing part-

nerships, both at the local level and through cooperation funds, can create opportunities for economic growth. However, it is important to take into account existing limitations and regulations in public procurement processes, as well as the challenges associated with decentralization.

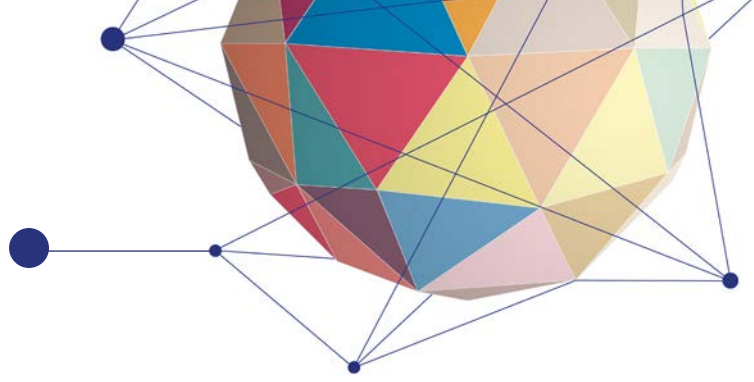
- **State entrepreneurship:**

Local governments can play an active role as entrepreneurs, generating business models that promote decent work and contribute to the sustainable economic development of the community.

These financial and collaborative strategies can be critical to ensure the success of initiatives, especially those focused on the social and solidarity economy, in the context of local economic and labor challenges.

6

Cooperation



In the context of project management, there is a need to reanalyze partners and stakeholders to address coordination and synergy issues. The **incorporation of companies** is presented as a component to be worked on to improve the success of the projects, since in many cases they only participate in the financial area and not in the cooperation dialogue as such.



*Ideas for action:
"International and multilevel cooperation
in its contribution to SDG8"*



Public policy evaluation and impact analysis are fundamental, although they face challenges related to data availability and quality.

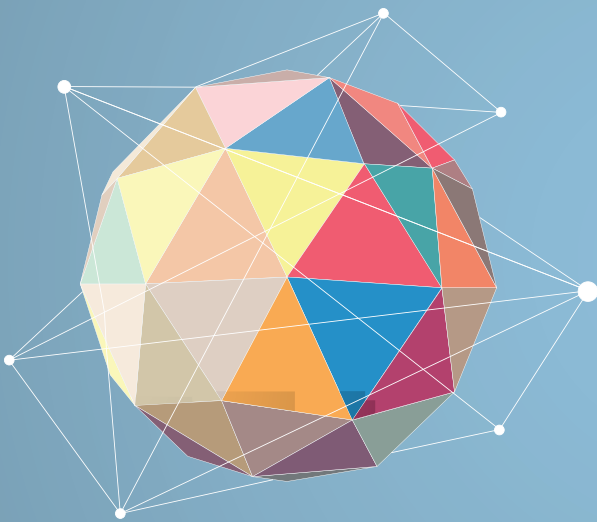
Training is highlighted as a crucial aspect, advocating new models based on co-creation in the framework of partnerships. It is necessary to train people working in the field of cooperation in collaboration through partnerships to ensure good coordination and avoid problems in planning, distribution of resources or implementation.

It stresses the importance of adopting global perspectives to **avoid excessive fragmentation** of entities and, therefore, of aid, thus aligning with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. This global perspective is considered vital to ensure the effectiveness of cooperation.

The relevance of the local perspective is also recognized, especially with regard to the capacity for articulation of the territories. In this sense, the projects presented in the round table Territorial experiences for a just, inclusive and sustainable transition, focused on the elaboration and commercialization of handicraft products or the constitution of formal and legal agricultural cooperatives, among other issues, are a good example of this.

Table: Territorial experiences for a just, inclusive and sustainable transition





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