

The Territorial Dimension of Eco-innovation: Perspectives and Opportunities in Portugal

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The development and diffusion of eco-innovations generate positive socioeconomic effects, creating favourable conditions for more sustainable regional development. Studies on the topic highlight that the concentration of eco-innovative companies in each region encourages surrounding businesses to adopt practices that are less harmful to the environment. In less advantaged regions, such as Portugal, research points out that eco-innovations are an opportunity to reduce regional inequalities and create more complex green technologies. Thus, this investigation aimed to explore the Geography of Eco-Innovation in Portugal through selected indicators related to innovation, science and technology, and green jobs. This database was structured according to NUTS 2 and 3. In the study, we propose the construction of a synthetic indicator: Regional Eco-innovation Potential Indicator (REcoPI). The REcoPI captures each region's eco-innovation potential, considering the productive structure, R&D stimulating activities, and green sectors. The results reveal that, although the territorial configuration of eco-innovation mirrors that of general innovations, emphasising the coastal region, it was interesting to observe that the interior region, a less dynamic area of Portugal, has a productive structure prone to eco-innovate. These results open up new opportunities to help regions address the challenges of the green transition. Furthermore, despite the use of green patent databases has contributed significantly to understanding the dynamics of more radical eco-innovations, in countries with a low number of patents (such as Portugal), it is essential to look for other indicators, especially to capture the potential of more incremental eco-innovations and preferably with social impacts, such as inclusive eco-innovations.

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