

Italian Borderscapes After 2020

Mapping, Unfolding, and Re-Framing Border Territories in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

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1. PARTNERS & TEAM

Partner Universities

- DASTU, Politecnico di Milano
- Faculty of Art and Design, Free University of Bozen
- CNR-ISSIRFA

Diverse Expertise & Disciplinary Approaches

- Urban Planning, Design and Policies
- Social Sciences
- Geography



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**Inter-disciplinary
& Inter-Generational Team**
3 Experiences Researchers
2 Full Professors
3 Research Fellows

International Advisory Board

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2. THEMATIC FOCUS

- Understanding the **territorial impacts of a series of crises** (ecological, socio-demographic, humanitarian, and sanitary including the recent Covid-19 pandemic, often termed as “**polycrisis**”) on **Italian border areas**;
- Shifting the perspective on these marginal territories **from national “edge lands” and “peripheries” to “borderscapes”**, namely “constellations” of spaces, relations and practices emerged as resilient responses to the above-mentioned crises;
- Addressing such issues in a selection of **three case studies** located on Italian national borders (Italy-France, Italy-Austria, Italy-Slovenia).

08.2016

Credit: European Union, contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data 2024, processed with EO Browser

08.2023

Credit: European Union, contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data 2024, processed with EO Browser

The Washington Post

Europe is closing borders amid coronavirus outbreak. They may be hard to reopen.



By [Michael Birnbaum](#)

March 17, 2020 at 4:45 p.m. EDT



June 12th, 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has shattered the myth of a borderless Europe

Newsweek

WORLD

Borders Across Europe Shutting as COVID-19 Cases Spike

BY **BASIT MAHMOOD** ON 8/7/20 AT 7:06 AM EDT



Source: Frame from video “Coronavirus : Scheibenhart(t), village coupé en deux”

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/097677-000-A/coronavirus-scheibenhart-t-village-coupe-en-deux/>



NEWS

Coronavirus: European Union seals borders to most outsiders

🕒 17 March 2020



Coronavirus: UNHCR offers practical recommendations in support of European countries to ensure access to asylum and safe reception

27 April 2020 | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [عربي](#)

THE CONVERSATION

Migration: how Europe is using coronavirus to reinforce its hostile environment in the Mediterranean

Published: May 13, 2020 11.30am BST



Source: Frame from the film “Io sto con la sposa”

Italy, Antonio Augugliaro, Gabriele Del Grande, Khaled Soliman Al Nassiri (2014)

3. OBJECTIVES

Objective 1:

Re-frame **cross-border cooperation and border management mechanisms in Europe** before and after 2020, and understand what happened across and along EU member states' borders in the past years, with a specific focus on the Italian context and its bilateral relations;

Objective 2:

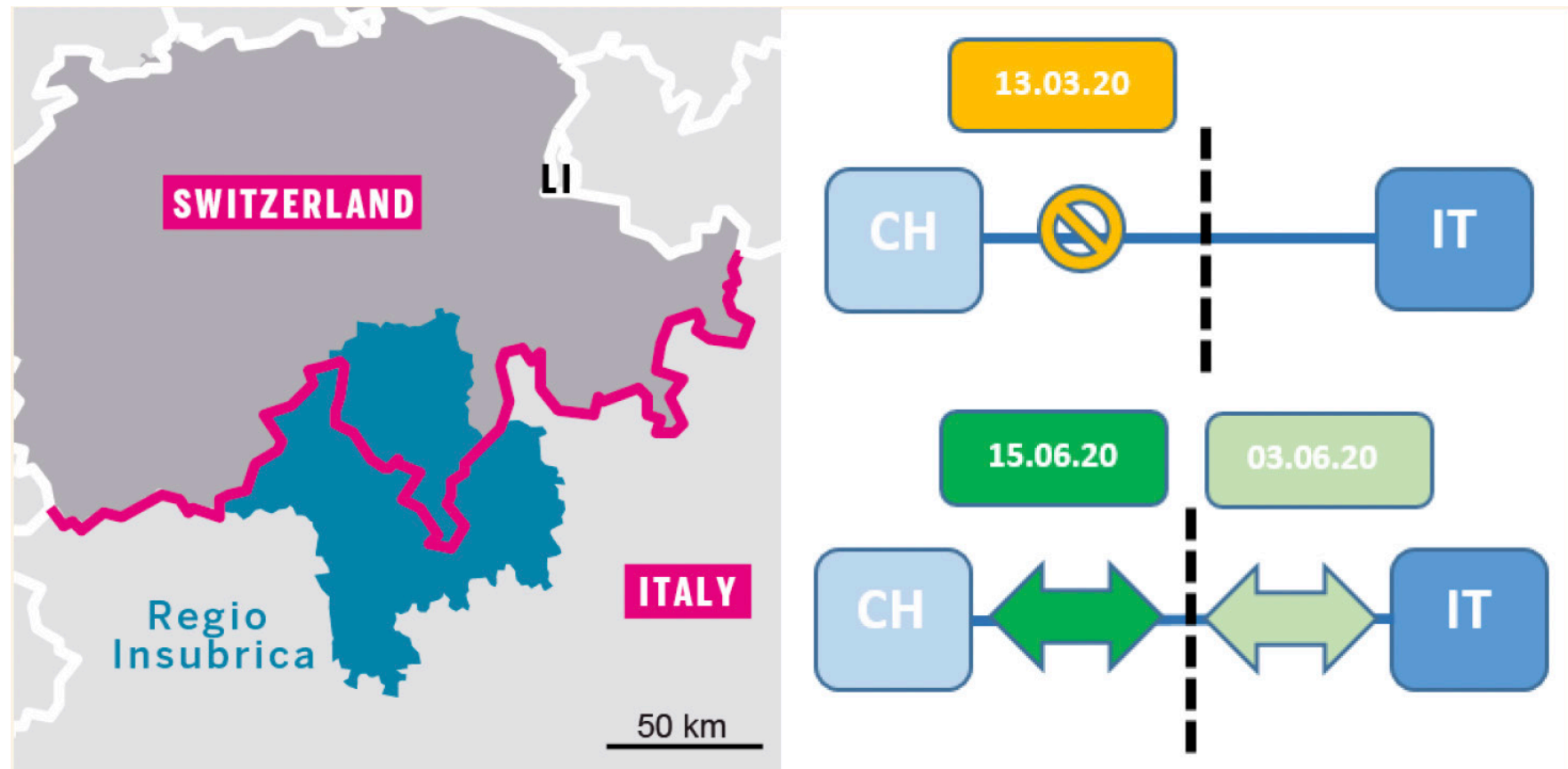
Identify in three study contexts both:

- a. the new **territorial fragilities** pushed by the multiple crisis;
- a. the **synergies and coping strategies** that have been activated by alliances of local stakeholders and citizens to provide bottom-up and/or institutional responses to the social and economic distresses caused by the sanitary emergency.

By doing so, also exploring the socio-cultural perceptions of national, regional and everyday tangible and intangible borders by local communities and how these have changed since 2020;

Objective 3:

Explore **pathways of resilient territorial development** among cross-border territories in a permanent crisis conditions / post-pandemic recovery phase, considering their (old and new) interdependencies, integrating the existing strategies, plans and policies at the regional and local scale.



Source: Peyrony, Rubio, & Viaggi, 2021



The Alpine region as defined in the EUSALP, the Interreg Alpine Space Programme and the UN Alpine Convention.

Source: EUSALP website - <https://www.alpine-region.eu/mission-statement>

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent have the institutional frameworks of cross-border cooperation and border management in Europe been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020?

Which new forms of territorial fragilities and synergies and which strategies have emerged and been produced by alliances of local actors and citizens to provide solutions to the social and economic distress caused by the health emergency since 2020?

How to imagine new territorial development pathways, tools and practices of multi-level governance between cross-border territories in a post-pandemic recovery phase, considering their (old and new) interdependencies and the synergies activated by the emergency?

Which different perceptions of tangible and intangible (national, regional and local) borders have emerged among local communities?

5. METHODS & CASE STUDIES

- An **inter- and trans-disciplinary** approach between urban planning, political geography, and social sciences, aiming to create new knowledge among the different research units, with different expertise in the academic careers of the researchers involved.
- Emphasis on the **integration between spatial, social and political sciences research methodologies**, with particular attention on **visual analysis and production** (e.g. maps, plans, photographs and videos).

→ **Three (macro) study contexts as main ‘backgrounds’ for the construction of specific case studies at different scales.**

Italy-France

Italy-Austria

Italy-Slovenia



Italy's borderscapes & inner areas. Sources: (*) WorldPop 2020 / (**) ISTAT (2020)]

Methods in Practice

WP 1 | Literature Review

- Literature Review on cross-border management & policies in Europe and Italy;
- Mapping and visual production on the three study context, at different scales;

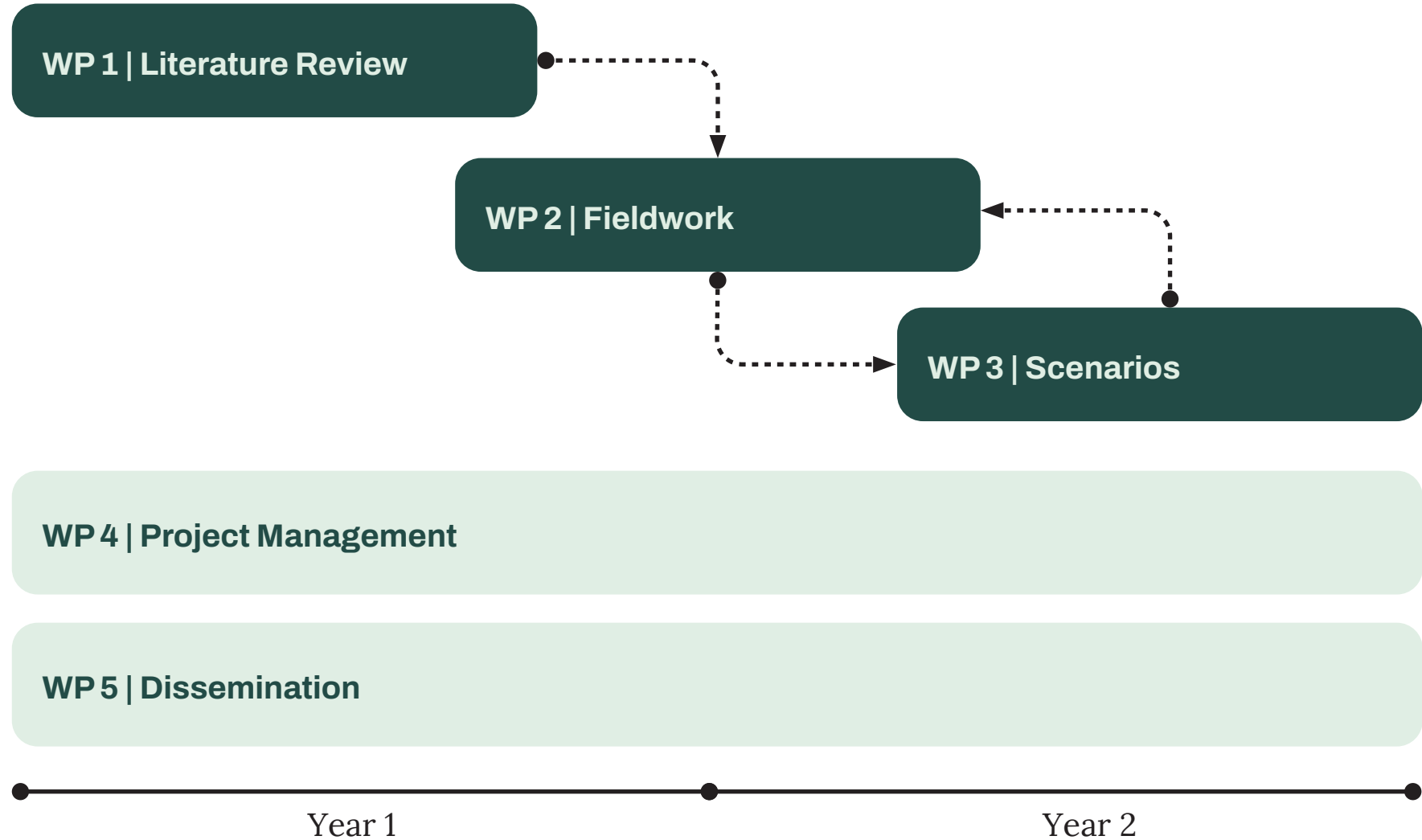
WP 2 | Fieldwork

- Interviews, focus groups, and workshops with relevant stakeholders & citizens (participatory action research);
- Integrated content analysis;

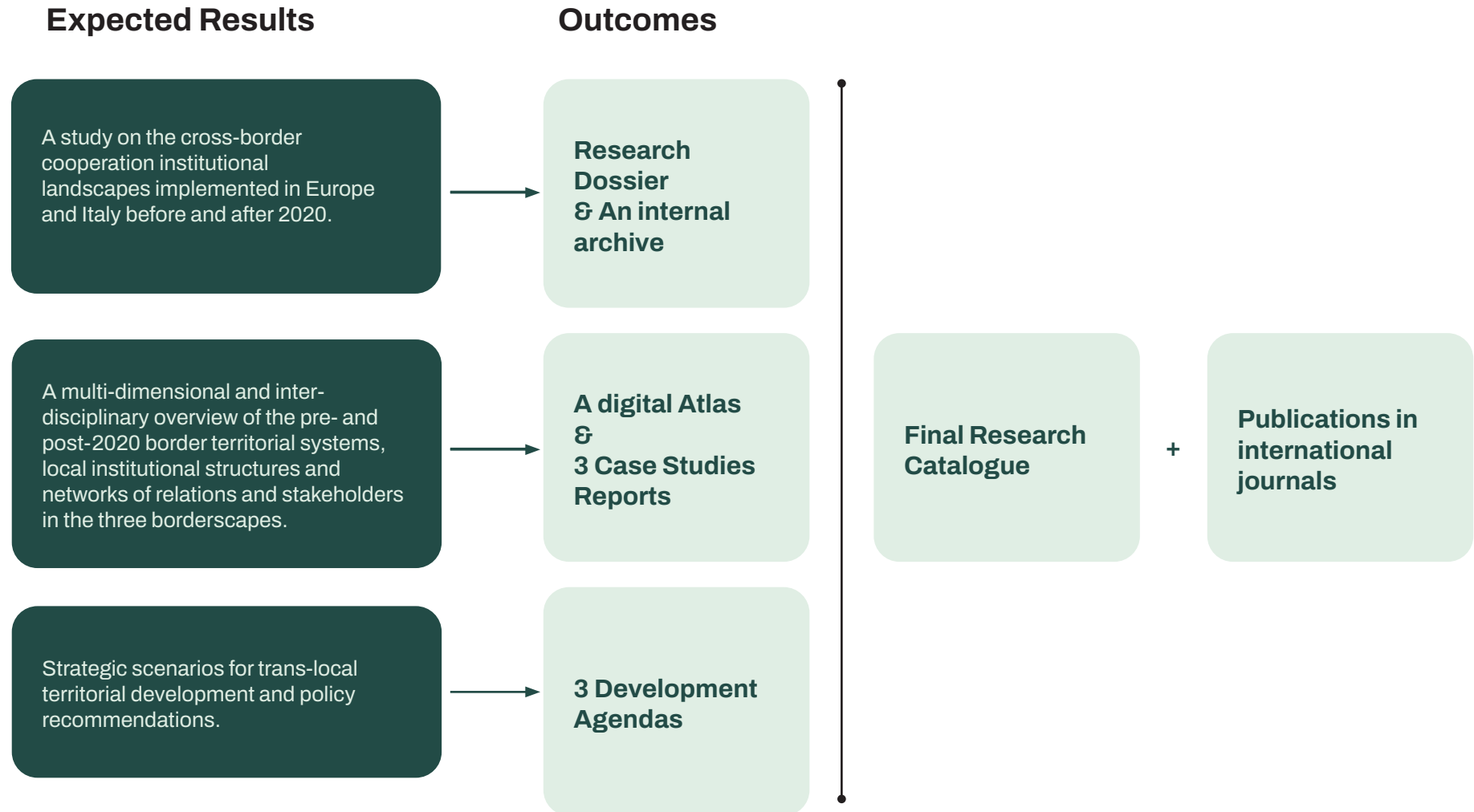
WP 3 | Scenarios

- Scenario-building and design of cross-border agendas in three “test sites”.

6. WORKPLAN



7. EXPECTED RESULTS & OUTCOMES



8. WHAT'S NEXT?

Feb. > April 2024

WP 1 | Literature Review

- Refinement of research methods
- Assessment of border management and cross-border interactions in Europe and Italy, before and after 2020
- Definition of “test sites” case studies

First public event in Rome (April 2024)

May > Oct. 2024

WP 2 | Fieldwork

- First study missions in the three case studies / test sites
- Interviews with relevant stakeholders
- Mapping activities & visual production
- Data Analysis

International conferences and seminars

Nov. > Dec. 2024

WP 2 | Scenarios

- First elaboration of cross-border development agendas
- Participatory activities & workshops with relevant stakeholders
- Planning for the second fieldwork missions (2025)

Second public event
Publication of early results

Thank you for your attention!

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