

# The Governance of Land Use

## Country fact sheet Denmark

### The planning system

#### *Levels of government and their responsibilities*

Denmark has three levels of government: the national government, 5 regional governments and 98 local governments. On the national level, the Ministry for Business and Growth prepares a national planning report after each parliamentary election. The report presents the government's long-term considerations on the spatial development in Denmark and provides overall guidelines for spatial planning in Denmark. Furthermore, the ministry is responsible for safeguarding national interests in physical planning and releases a report on *National Interests in Municipal Planning* (every four years). The ministry also provides a national planning directive for overall planning in the greater Copenhagen metropolitan area. More generally, it has the power to issue national planning directives related to areas that are of importance for the broader society, such as infrastructure construction. Lastly, the ministry can establish special rules for the planning of certain activities, such as the construction of wind turbines.

Regional governments are primarily responsible for strategic development planning with a focus on regional economic development. They create *Regional Growth and Development Strategies* that are supposed to align different stakeholders behind a common vision for the region. Furthermore, they prepare the *Regional Raw Materials Plan*.

Municipalities are the most important actors in land-use planning. They conduct extensive forward-looking strategic planning for their territory and prepare detailed municipal and local plans that steer land use (unless being overridden by a national planning directive).

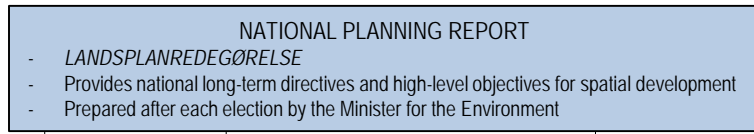
#### *Spatial and land-use plans*

Denmark uses a hierarchical spatial planning framework that can be characterised as a three-tier system of development plans and strategies and a two-tier system of land-use plans. Each level of government prepares a strategic plan. The *National Planning Report* provides a vision for spatial development in Denmark. *Regional Growth and Development Strategies* focus on economic development with an emphasis on the inclusion of relevant stakeholders. *Municipal Strategies for Planning* vary in their characteristics. Some are strictly focused on land use, but more and more municipalities use them to prepare broader local development strategies.

Two types of land-use plans are prepared by the municipal level. The *Municipal Plan* is the most complex plan in the Danish planning system. It has the role of integrating the different objectives of higher level strategic plans into a comprehensive policy document that specifies overall objectives for development, includes guidelines for land use and provides a general land-use framework for the municipality. *Local Plans* are the second type of land-use plans in Denmark. They provide detailed land-use regulations on varying topics at scales mostly from 1: 10 000 to 1: 1 000. Local plans have to be created for every major development project.

## Organisation of spatial and land-use planning in Denmark

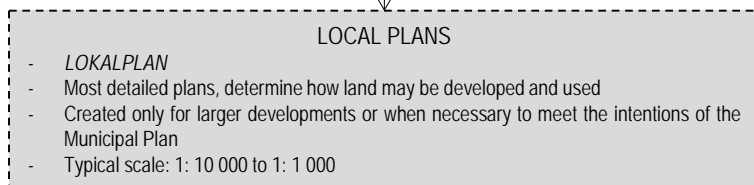
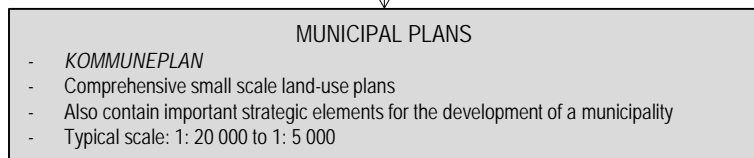
### General framework National



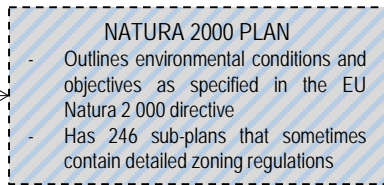
### Regional



### Municipal



### Sectoral Plans



- > Sub-ordinate plans must conform
- .....> Sub-ordinate plans do not need to conform
- Primarily policy / strategic guidelines
- Primarily land-use plans
- Strategic and land-use guidelines
- Partial geographical coverage

Three main types of sectoral plans exist in addition to the above-mentioned plans. The *Water Resources Plan*, the *Natura 2000 Plan* and *Regional Raw Materials Plans*. Each of the types of plan contains strategic objectives but also zoning regulations for selected areas.

An important addition to the system of plans is the *Finger Plan 2007 and 2013*. It is a legally binding *National Planning Directive* for greater Copenhagen that contains a strategy for the growth and urban development of the metropolitan area. Planning in the Greater Copenhagen area must not conflict with the Finger Plan or other national planning directives for the area. Municipal planning in the Finger Plan area must ensure that urban development is planned with respect to a core urban region (“the palm of the hand”), the peripheral urban region (“the city fingers”), the green wedges (“between the fingers”) and the rest of the Greater Copenhagen area. Special attention is given to opportunities for strengthening public transport services and to avoiding urban growth in the green wedges.

### ***Major laws and regulations***

The framework legislation that defines the planning system in Denmark is contained in the *Planning Act*. Further important details regarding planning and development are contained in the *Building Act* that specifies requirements for building permits. Other important acts are the *Nature Protection Act* (the main environmental law) and the *Land Registration Act* that contains regulations on property ownership and registration and also specifies that a local plan must be registered in the land registry for each individual property. From a fiscal perspective, the *Valuation Act* is important for land use because it determines how property is valued and taxed.

### ***Co-ordination mechanisms***

Vertical co-ordination occurs through the legal requirement that lower level plans follow the guidelines in higher level plans. In particular, municipalities are required to align their planning documents with the above-mentioned national planning directives, water resource planning, Natura 2000 planning and raw materials planning. Also, municipal plans may not contradict the visions for spatial development in the *Regional Growth and Development Strategies*. However, enforcement of the latter is limited because of a lack of enforceable specific land-use regulation in regional strategic planning documents.

Horizontal co-ordination is explicitly required by the *Planning Act*. Municipal plans must take a number of themes and policy sectors into account in a comprehensive manner. There are no formal provisions how this is achieved in the planning process.

### ***Expropriations***

Expropriations for the common good are possible under strict conditions and with full compensation of the land owner. Land can be permanently expropriated or for a limited period of time. Alternatively, limitations to uses of land through easements are possible. Typically land is expropriated for infrastructure construction by the national or by local governments. Expropriations for private uses of land are not possible.

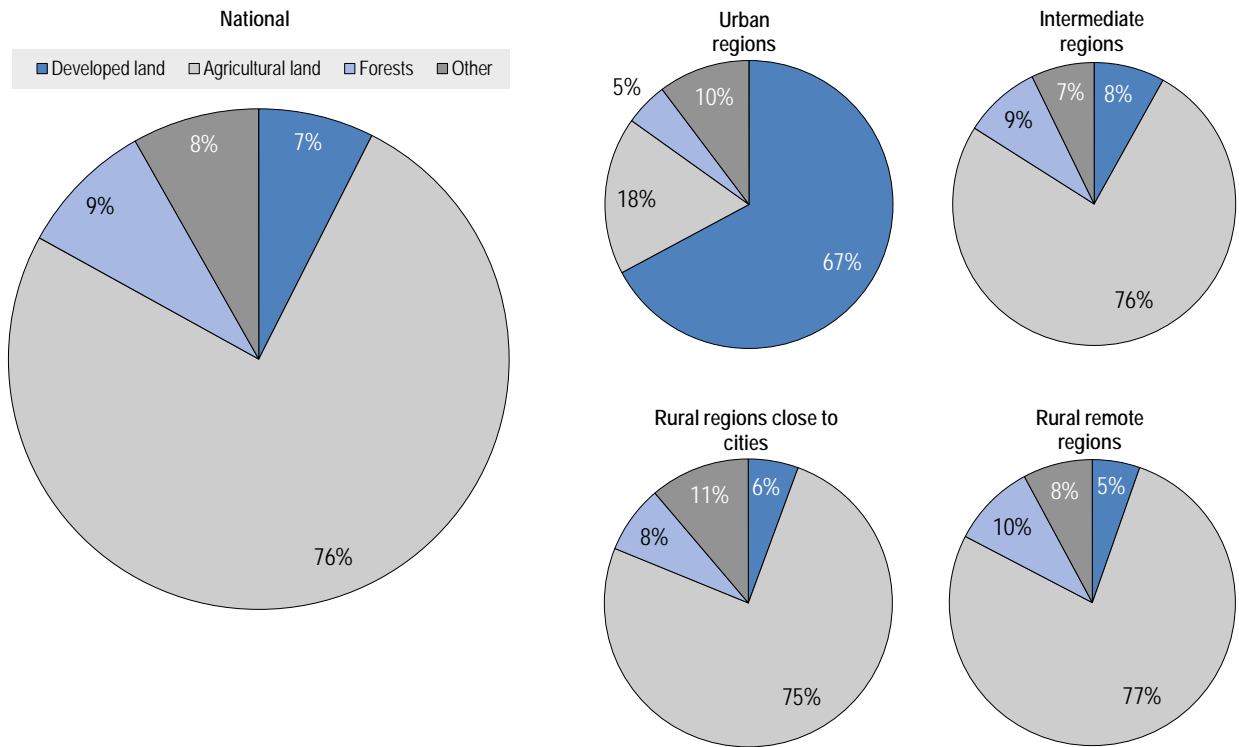
### ***Recent and planned reforms to the system of land-use planning***

A major reform to the planning system occurred in 2007 in parallel with the amalgamation of formerly 271 municipalities into 98. As part of the reform, regional land-use

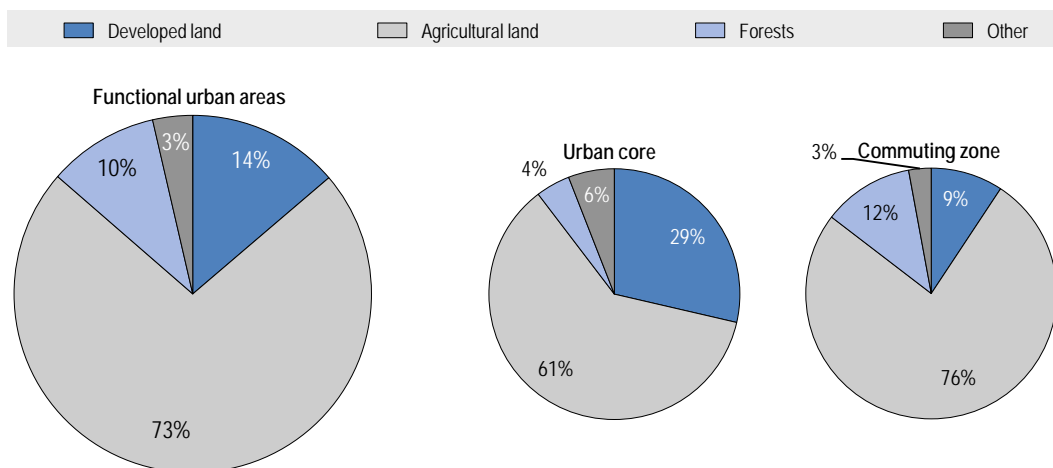
planning was almost completely abolished and municipalities were given the primary responsibility for land-use planning.

## Land cover in Denmark

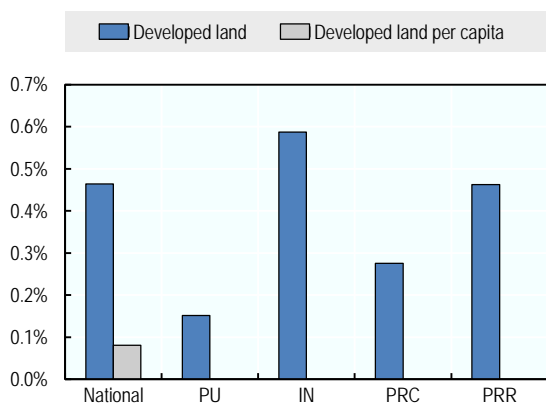
### Land cover at the national level



### Land cover in functional urban areas (FUAs)

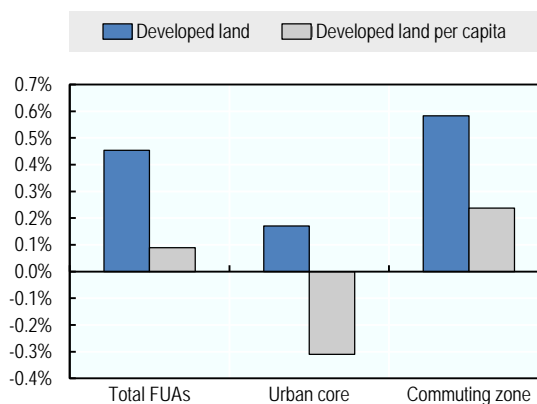


Annual change in developed land, 2000-12



Note: PU: urban regions, IN: intermediate regions, PRC: rural regions close to cities, PRR: rural remote regions.

Annual change in developed land in functional urban areas from 2000 to 2012



Note: Values for urban cores and commuting zones refer only to FUAs with more than 500 000 inhabitants.

### Land-use trends in Denmark

Land cover in Denmark is dominated by agricultural land. With 76% of the total land mass, the share of agricultural land is higher than in any other of the 28 analysed OECD countries. In terms of per capita use of developed land, Denmark ranks somewhat above OECD average. Between 2000 and 2012, its developed land has increased by approximately 5.7%, which is slightly above the population growth rate. In urban areas, population has been growing especially strongly in municipalities in the urban core, but this is not reflected in the growth of developed land, which has occurred predominantly in the commuting zone of urban areas.

Source: OECD calculations based on *Corine Land Cover dataset*.

## Land cover at the national level in Denmark

Land cover (km <sup>2</sup> )	National	Urban regions	Intermediate regions	Rural regions close to cities	Rural remote regions
Total area	43 116	531	20 289	7 961	14 335
Total developed land	3 212	357	1 639	446	770
Percentage of total	7.4%	67.2%	8.1%	5.6%	5.4%
Annual change in developed land, 2000-12	14.5	0.5	9.3	1.2	3.5
Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12	0.46%	0.15%	0.59%	0.28%	0.46%
Agricultural land	32 590	94	15 403	6 016	11 078
Percentage of total	75.6%	17.7%	75.9%	75.6%	77.3%
Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-16.9	-0.4	-11.0	-1.6	-3.8
Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-0.05%	-0.44%	-0.07%	-0.03%	-0.03%
Forests	3 775	26	1 782	607	1 360
Percentage of total	8.8%	4.8%	8.8%	7.6%	9.5%
Annual change in forests, 2000-12	-3.5	0.1	1.6	-2.3	-2.9
Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12	-0.09%	0.42%	0.09%	-0.38%	-0.21%
<b>Land cover per capita (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>					
Total developed land per capita	576	291	601	769	733
Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12	0.08%				
Agricultural land per capita	5 840	77	5 651	10 372	10 552
Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12	-0.43%				
Forests per capita	677	21	654	1 047	1 295
Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12	-0.47%				

## Land cover in functional urban areas (FUAs)

Land cover in FUAs (km <sup>2</sup> )	FUAs	Urban core	Commuting zone
Total area	10 540	2 429	8 111
Total developed land	1 450	696	754
Percentage of total	13.8%	28.6%	9.3%
Annual change in developed land, 2000-12	6.4	2.2	4.2
Annual percentage change in developed land, 2000-12	0.45%	0.33%	0.57%
Agricultural land	7 656	1 482	6 174
Percentage of total	72.6%	61.0%	76.1%
Annual change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-6.8	-2.5	-4.3
Annual percentage change in agricultural land, 2000-12	-0.09%	-0.17%	-0.07%
Forests	1 055	107	948
Percentage of total	10.0%	4.4%	11.7%
Annual change in forests, 2000-12	-1.1	-0.1	-1.0
Annual percentage change in forests, 2000-12	-0.10%	-0.06%	-0.11%
<b>Land cover per capita in FUAs (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>			
	FUAs (50 000+ inhabitants)	Urban core (only FUAs 500 000+)	Commuting zone (only FUAs 500 000+)
Total developed land per capita	477	294	611
Annual percentage change in developed land per capita, 2000-12	0.09%	-0.31%	0.24%
Agricultural land per capita	2 517	75	3 115
Annual percentage change in agricultural land per capita, 2000-12	-0.45%	-0.94%	-0.45%
Forests per capita	347	21	613
Annual percentage change in forests per capita, 2000-12	-0.47%	-0.07%	-0.39%

Source: All land cover statistics for Denmark are based on OECD calculations based on *Corine Land Cover dataset*.