

Government Tier		England	France	Germany	Ireland	The Netherlands	Spain
Central/Federal government	Plan	Set policies and guidance.	Sets national codes, which provides the basis for local regulation.	Guidelines and principles.	Sets policies and guidance. Sets National Spatial Strategy.	Policies and guidelines.	Provides general framework for the planning system.
	Function	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.  Coordination between national and regional planning.	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.  Coordination between national and regional planning.	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.  Coordination between national and regional planning.	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.  Coordination between national and regional planning.	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.  Coordination between national and regional planning.	Sets policies that are to be implemented by lower tiers of government.
Autonomous communities	Plan						Provides policies and guidelines
	Function						Implements the basic urban planning and housing policies.  Develops own planning legislation.
Region	Plan	Regional Spatial Strategies	The SCOT	Regional development plan	Regional Planning Guidelines	Regional plans	Regional plans
	Function	Provides a spatial vision for the region. Outlines housing figures for district and unitary authorities to take forward in their Local Development Frameworks.	Covers several communes and ties together low-cost housing, infrastructure and environmental protection policies.	Establishing principles for planning within the region.  Develops own planning legislation.	Requires regions to follow the provisions set out in the NSS.	Regulate spatial planning. Regional plans are developed from the national spatial plan.	Establish the framework for the spatial organisation of land uses and activities.
Local	Size – average population	119,000	1,550	5,000	40,000	23,000	4,800
	Plan	Local Development Framework.	The PLU.	Preparatory land use.	Development plan.	Land use plan.	Master Plans.
	Function	Outlines how planning will be managed in the local area.	Decisive legal document which provides the development plan for the local authority or groups of authorities.  Establishes planning zones.	Binding future municipal development planning.	Sets out the local authority's policies for land use control and development.	Must fit with the regional plan.  Regulate the use of land within the municipality as well as maximum height and width of buildings and constructions.	Define the distribution of different types of land (zoning) inside their jurisdiction.  Plans also have detailed provisions for aspects such as density and building typologies.