

# Functional Regulatory Spaces

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**Abstract:** This article develops the concept of "Functional Regulatory Space" (FRS) in order to analyze new forms of State action addressing (super) wicked problems. A FRS simultaneously spans several policy sectors, institutional territories and levels of government. It suggests integrating previous policy theories that focused either on "boundary-spanning regime," "territorial institutionalism" or multi-level governance. The FRS concept is envisaged as a Weberian "ideal-type" of State action and is applied to the empirical study of two European cases of potential FRS: the integrated management of water basins and the regulation of the European sky through functional airspace blocks. It will be concluded that the current airspace regulation does match the ideal-type of FRS any better than the water resource regulation does. The next research step consists in analyzing the genesis and institutionalization of potential FRS addressing other (super) wicked problems such as climate change and economic, security, health and immigration issues in different institutional contexts as well as at various levels of governance.

**Keywords:** policy subsystem, territory, multi-level governance, water resource, airspace, (super) wicked problems