

SPECIFICATION

ESPON Targeted Analysis Based on User Demand 2013/2/19

Growth Poles in South-East of Europe (GROSEE) (2012-2013)

(o) Targeted analyses within the ESPON 2013 Programme

The ESPON 2006 Programme provided integrated analysis and long-term spatial scenarios which enriched the European policy debate and knowledge base. Tying in with the achievements of the previous programme period, the ESPON 2013 Programme continues conducting applied research on European territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion. At the same time, a new type of projects is carried out in the form of targeted analyses based on specific demands expressed by stakeholders and making use of existing ESPON results.

The priorities describing the work-programme of the ESPON 2013 Programme are structured in four strands:

- 1. Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on European territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts**
The applied research projects will create information and evidence on territorial challenges and opportunities for success in the development of regions. Cross-thematic applied research will be a major activity integrating existing thematic analysis and adding future analysis of new themes. Territorial impact studies of EU policies will be another focus under this priority.
- 2. Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective on development of different types of territories**
This priority responds to a clear demand of practitioners for user and demand driven actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme. By convening an analytical process where ESPON findings are integrated with more detailed information and practical know-how, new understanding of future development opportunities and challenges may arise, which could be transformed into projects and actions.
- 3. Scientific platform and tools: Territorial indicators and data, analytical tools and scientific support**
The scientific platform and analytical tools built up within the ESPON 2006 Programme will be maintained and further expanded. New actions shall be undertaken to develop current achievements and make use of existing indicators, data and tools.

4. Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking

Under this priority, actions are foreseen that will make the evidence and knowledge already developed operational through raising awareness and involving stakeholders in the results and practical application of them.

Targeted analyses under Priority 2 enable stakeholders to obtain customised and up-to-date information on their particular territorial context and opportunities for development which can be used for policy development. Given the targeted focus of these projects on specific territorial entities, targeted analyses will contribute to the use of ESPON results in practise and to the involvement of policy makers, practitioners and scientists in a joint synergetic process.

(i) General objectives of targeted analyses under Priority 2

The general objectives of targeted analyses within the ESPON 2013 Programme are the following:

- Provision of evidence and knowledge based on ESPON results on the strengths and weaknesses of individual regions and/or larger territories seen from a European perspective, or a global context, giving European regions the option to compare themselves to other regions and hereby finding competitive advantages for development and cooperation.
- Improvement of the usefulness of ESPON results by testing new, experimental and innovative options such as (1) analysis of themes of interest for groups of regions, partly based on case studies, (2) methodological frameworks for translating territorial development goals and policy aims into concrete actions and (3) technical, methodological and analytical support to territorial planning processes and spatial programming and visions.
- Provision of analytical support and evidence based on ESPON results on thematic priorities in cooperation with other Structural Funds Programmes.

The aim is to carry through targeted analyses in partnership with policy makers and/or practitioners showing an interest in gaining awareness of European evidence, information, experience and/or knowledge on common challenges related to their territorial and/or urban development.

The individual targeted analysis shall support better informed policy decisions by:

- Integrating ESPON findings with more detailed information and practical know-how, either from a territorial part of Europe or from a sector authority.
- Contributing to a sound knowledge of territorial development perspectives/trends through new understanding of future development potentials and challenges for the respective territorial and/or urban development.

This project shall contribute to these objectives during its implementation by ensuring a close cooperation and partnership with the stakeholders who expressed their need for this targeted analysis.

(ii) Types of Action under Priority 2

Projects under Priority 2 can have different foci and accordingly vary in their content. In order to have a clear distinction between the various possible project orientations, each project needs to be clearly allocated to one of the following types of action:

1) Integrated studies and thematic analysis

This type of action is foreseen to follow a “traditional” analytical approach using existing results of ESPON applied research and other studies. The analysis can integrate several themes relevant for certain types of territories, regions and/or cities or they can be less comprehensive in the approach by focusing on one or a few themes.

The main objectives are:

- a) To provide added value for territorial development of specific types of territories¹ by offering new comparative insight and understanding on territorial potentials and challenges from a European perspective;
- b) To ensure that other (similar) types of territories/regions can benefit from the output of the analysis.

2) Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions

This type of action clearly allows for the implementation of projects that differ from the mainstream of the ESPON 2013 Programme by being more experimental and/or innovative in character. It is in a way a laboratory for developing ways of meeting main territorial challenges that Europe is confronted with.

The objectives are:

- a) To support experimental and innovative actions carried through in partnership with stakeholders with European knowledge on territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impact;
- b) To provide methodological support to experiments and innovative efforts.

3) Joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes

The joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes take a geographical starting point in the area covered by these programmes, be it transnational, cross-border, interregional, regional or urban territories. The content of these actions can be integrated and thematic analyses or they can be experimental and innovative of nature (as described above). A main prerequisite is that they are justified by supporting Structural Funds Programme implementation.

¹ Types of territories codified for the territorial dimension, include urban, rural-mountains, rural-islands, rural-area (sparsely and very sparsely populated), rural-other, former external border, area dependant on fisheries, outermost regions, transnational cooperation areas, cross-border cooperation areas and interregional cooperation areas (as listed in the ESPON 2013 Programme, p. 9).

The objectives are:

- a) To provide information and analyses on the European position of these areas, their comparability with other similar areas, and their potentials and challenges, useful for Structural Funds Programmes (regional, cross-border, transnational, interregional and urban);
- b) To provide methodological support for strategic processes, including visions and scenarios for spatial development and planning.

Independent of the type of action, each project should have a European perspective (i.e. supporting the understanding of the wider European context), a clear transferable character and a concrete implementation part, focusing on specific territories.

The analytical approach can provide integrated, cross-thematic analyses, study individual themes or sectors, or focus on a specific type of territories. At any rate, ESPON findings shall be integrated and supplemented with more detailed information and practical know-how, either from a territorial part of Europe or from a sector authority. Analysis can include/be based on case studies. The geographical coverage will normally have a more limited territorial coverage than the entire European territory.

(iii) Scope and rationale of the targeted analysis

The aim of the project is to analyze the role of the Capital Regions in South-Eastern Europe in the European urban network, to identify what type of actions are needed in order to improve the relations between these Capital Regions and the European core economic development area, and make policy recommendations regarding the economic and territorial development of these metropolitan areas. The project will perform a comparative analysis of three case study areas, which are all capital regions in South-Eastern Europe: Bucharest (Romania), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Athens (Greece). These areas have the territorial potential to form together a new European integrated area of concentrated economic growth. The project also aims at finding evidence, showing what kind of role formal metropolitan areas (cooperation of the cities with the surrounding territory) play in terms of competitiveness and in enhancing accessibility and connections with the European urban network.

Main characteristics of the territory to be addressed

The study area includes three countries situated in the South-East of Europe: Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, covering the Eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula and most of the Carpathians. This is an area lagging behind the Pentagon and Central Europe, although in accordance with the ESPON project 3.2. *Territorial Scenarios*, the South-East of Europe can become a so-called “emerging peripheral integrated zone”. The main pole of such an emerging development area is Athens, classified as a 2nd category MEGA by the ESPON project 1.1.1. *Potentials for polycentric development in Europe*, while Bucharest and Sofia are listed as 4th category MEGAs in the same study. It should be noted that the ESPON study previously cited includes only one more MEGA in Romania, Bulgaria or

Greece – which is the Romanian city of Timișoara – although polycentric networks of FUAs are present in the three countries. Thessaloniki, the second largest city situated at the North of Greece, constitutes also a dynamic developing economic centre, being at the centre of the study area and bearing long-term and traditional bonds with the Balkans and the Black Sea countries.

The South-East of Europe is confronted with a key challenge to overcome the barrier of a lower accessibility due to geographical barriers (mountains, seas) and to a greater distance to the Pentagon. This obstacle has to be managed by finding means to reduce the effect of the barriers and enhance the accessibility to the European core area. Also the effects on the economic development, caused by lower accessibility to the European core area, need to be reduced in this respect.

The targeted territory includes the following three capitals in South-Eastern Europe: Bucharest, Sofia and Athens, which are the most developed centres of their countries in terms of administrative, commercial, industrial, educational and cultural activities and they are also important transport nodes. The economy of Bucharest, Sofia and Athens is dominated by services, but the global financial services and business centres are less developed than in the European core development area (i.e. the Pentagon).

Bucharest is the Romanian capital; it has a population of almost 2 million inhabitants (2010) and coordinates a large area in the Danube Plain. Bucharest is developing strongly on a north-south axis, from Giurgiu to Ploiești-Brașov, with a tendency to develop more to the north. Public projects (a new airport, a channel from Bucharest to the Danube) are foreseen in the south, in order to achieve more balanced development. There have been three different initiatives to create a metropolitan area, with different size and criteria for delimitation, but none has been implemented up to 2011, so the spatial development of the surrounding areas is not coordinated.

Sofia is the Bulgarian capital and has 1,376 million inhabitants (2010). There is strong pressure for further urban development due to the attractiveness of the region. The main development is oriented on a NW-SE axis with a tendency of overgrowth to the south that the public authorities intend to balance. In Sofia the industrial, educational and cultural potential of Bulgaria are concentrated with constructions, real estate, business services, transport and telecommunications sectors having the largest share of growth in the recent years.

Athens is the Hellenic Capital with a population of approximately 4 million inhabitants (2001 data). The population of the Attica Region has increased by 6,77% over the decade 1991- 2001. Although it covers only 2,9% of the total country area altogether 34,3% of the total population is concentrated there. Athens is one of the most developed centres in SE Europe, including major infrastructures of regional and global importance such as the port of Piraeus and the International Airport Athens. The city holds the tradition of knowledge and excellence in science and culture as the base of major universities and technical schools and a popular travel destination. The city has expanded rapidly over the last decades, but started to reshape recently after the completion of major urban infrastructures (e.g. the “Attiki odos” highway, the Metro and the suburban train network etc), facing new opportunities and challenges.

Thematic scope for the targeted analysis

The economy of South-Eastern Europe is lagging behind most of Europe. Recent studies have highlighted the emergence of a second area – after the Pentagon – with a high concentration of economic activities. This emergent area is situated in Central Europe but does not reach South-Eastern Europe, even in the most cohesion-oriented scenario, as demonstrated by the ESPON project 3.2. *Territorial Scenarios*.

The main growth poles in South-Eastern Europe are Athens, Sofia and Bucharest. In Greece, Bulgaria and Romania the capital cities are by far the most developed areas, as demonstrated by studies and demographic, economic and social indicators. Thus, in 2008 Bucharest had a GDP 5 times higher than any other Romanian NUTS 3 region, and the GDP per capita rate is higher by 40 % than the next ranked NUTS 3 region (Ilfov, the county surrounding Bucharest) and by 82% higher than the county Timis, situated in the west of the country. Bucharest also has the lowest unemployment rate, together with the Ilfov County, as even during the economic crisis the unemployment was less than 3%, two times lower than any other NUTS 3 region. The annual income is also significantly higher in Bucharest than in the rest of the country.

Sofia accounts for 16% of the country's population but produces 34% of the national GDP. Sofia's GDP growth rate has consistently exceeded the national average, even within the financial crisis conditions a growth of 3% was anticipated in 2010. Sofia's GDP per capita is currently at 72% of EU average and is expected to exceed 80% by 2015. The district of Sofia is one of only 2 Bulgarian NUTS 3 regions that have a positive trend of demographic growth, the considerable immigration to the capital from poorer regions of the country, as well as urbanization, are among the other reasons for this increase. The unemployment is lower than in other parts of the country - 2.45% of the active population in 1999 and declining, compared to 7.25% for the whole of Bulgaria as of 1 July 2007. The service sector accounts for 74% of city's GDP compared to the national average of 60%. The private sector generates 94% of all services and 87% of all sales within which the SME sector generates 71%.

Athens Region (Attiki) is the most densely populated region in Greece since it includes the capital of Athens as well as the largest Greek port of Piraeus. The region of Attica produced 49,7% of the country's GDP in 2007 and had a GDP per capita 33% higher than any other Greek NUTS 2 region. The tertiary sector produces approximately 87% of the total added value of the region followed by the secondary and the primary sector with 12,5% and 0,5% respectively. The region produces 6% of the country's agricultural production and 57% of the services. The service sector is the most developed of the Greek economy, the number of persons employed in business services being 72% higher than the next Greek region. Unemployment was amongst the lowest between the 13 regions of the country (having the second lowest unemployment rates in the period before the global financial crisis, -6.5% in 2008). The last 12 months unemployment has rapidly increased from 8,2% in 2009 to 11,6% in 2010.

In this context it is highly relevant to study the case of these three growth poles, their relation to the European core development areas (including the emergent growth area in Central Europe), their competitiveness and the role that the three capitals can have apart as well as seen together in the European polycentric network as economic drivers of the

South-Eastern Europe area. There are important differences between the developments of the three capital regions studied. A comparative analysis of Bucharest, Sofia and Athens, identifying the main factors and drivers for competitiveness (industrial clusters, human resources, policies, urban-rural cooperation, urban phenomena etc) would be useful for the decision-makers in the case study areas and other European urban areas. Therefore, it would be very interesting to address the synergies through potential metropolitan cooperation exploring the comparative advantages.

The project aims are in line with objectives of key policy documents. Thus, the Territorial Agenda adopted at Leipzig in 2007 promotes the concept of polycentric territorial development of the EU, with a focus on integrating new member states in the European polycentric development. In the revised document - Territorial Agenda 2020, adopted at Gödöllő during the Hungarian Presidency in 2011 – the polycentric and balanced territorial development is seen as a key element to achieving territorial cohesion and to enhancing the competitiveness outside the core ‘Pentagon area’. The European Commission, in the Green Paper for Territorial Cohesion, published in October 2008, supports the balanced and sustainable territorial development through less concentration of growth and economic development.

A key factor is the cooperation of the capitals with the surrounding territory. There are important differences of the case study areas, concerning the state-of-art of metropolitan areas (e.g. Bucharest has not any formal cooperation with the surrounding area, all the proposals for a Bucharest metropolitan area having been blocked so far) and the urban expansion takes diverse shapes due sometimes to geographical barriers (e.g. mountains near Sofia, seashore next to Athens). This leads to different orientations of development axes and to different development patterns. All these differences need to be analysed in order to better understand the case studies and their current state of development. The results can provide evidence on the contribution of metropolitan areas to competitiveness and to better accessibility to the European core development area, and can improve the criteria used for delimitation of metropolitan areas.

From the results of recent ESPON studies (particularly FOCI) it is clear that South-Eastern Europe has a comparatively low accessibility to the rest of Europe, greatly due to the physical distance and the “white hole” of the Western Balkans², which is significant for the territorial integration, of the total EU territory due to the geographical position and the spatial continuity with the rest of the EU territory, considering also the gate-way importance of many cities in the area in correlation with the European transport corridors (EU TINA policies). As accessibility has a great impact on competitiveness, the project should assess alternatives to overcome the long distances in order to improve the accessibility of South-Eastern Europe and its competitiveness.

It is therefore of great interest to identify key policies and infrastructure projects that can enhance the accessibility and/or the economic development of the case study areas. In addition it is important to evaluate the contribution of these proposed policies, measures and projects to the competitiveness of the case studies and to an enhanced accessibility to the European core city network. The relations of the case study areas with other main

² “ECPs Transnational Networking activities 097/2005 - Data and Indicators of Western Balkans” (ESPON 2006)

urban centres in the rest of South-Eastern Europe (particularly Western Balkans, Black Sea countries and the South East of the Mediterranean) as well as their connections to the rest of the world also need to be explored for a better overview of South-Eastern Europe. The results of the ESPON 2006 project '3.4.1 - Europe in the world' and the ESPON 2013 project 'TIGER - Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions' should be considered in this context.

The case study areas are affected by urban sprawl, which leads to environmental problems. Territory (space) is an important resource that generates many conflicts related to land use due to competition for land, functional incompatibilities and restrictions caused by projects, both public (transport infrastructure, delocalisation of institutions) and private (e.g. residential areas). An overview of past and recent policies in the case study areas should provide examples of urban planning measures or of other instruments (e.g. protected areas) that control the development of the urban areas. Good practices of territorial governance, transnational and crossborder cooperation, which can be applied in the study areas, are also envisaged to be reviewed by the project.

Objectives of the targeted analysis

The project is expected to explore the potential and evaluate the progress of the emergence of a new peripheral integrated zone of concentrated economic growth in South-Eastern Europe, whose core is the triangle Bucharest - Sofia - Athens, and to provide policy recommendations to continue this progress.

This targeted analysis aims at identifying the role of Bucharest, Sofia and Athens in the European polycentric network and their economic relations and transport links with the core areas of Europe. The targeted analysis should analyse the TEN-T network and the perspectives for the development of the transport corridors linking the Balkans and Central Europe and the funding opportunities in relation to the "Budget for Europe 2020 - Part II: Policy fiches" (Brussels, 29.6.2011) proposed by the European Commission and in particular the "Preliminary list of European Mobility Corridors and Transport Core Network Projects and Sections" to be financed until 2020. Of particular relevance are the transport axes linking Athens, Sofia, Bucharest, Belgrade and Budapest and the Hamburg – Rostock – Constanta – Burgas – Piraeus – Lefkosia Corridor.

The project will need to address indicative questions such as:

- *What is the role of Bucharest, Sofia and Athens in the European polycentric network?*

The project is expected to analyse the role of the three cities in the European economy and their position in their countries, in South East Europe and the whole European Space. It will be based on existing ESPON studies (particularly ESPON 1.1.1. and FOCI) and on a small selection of relevant indicators (the results of project INTERCO - *Indicators for territorial cohesion* can be used as a starting point for the selection of indicators). The project will also perform a comparison with other functional urban areas across Europe from the point of view of competitiveness.

- What is the accessibility of these cities and how can it be improved? What is the efficiency of European transport corridors?*

The project will provide an analysis of the accessibility and connectivity of capital regions in South-Eastern Europe to the Pentagon. It will pay attention to the influence of European transport corridors and the possible perspectives resulting from the “Preliminary list of European Mobility Corridors and Transport Core Network Projects and Sections” to be financed until 2020.
- What are the main drivers for competitiveness in the three capitals? Do metropolitan areas play an important role as drivers for competitiveness in the region?*

The project shall perform a comparative analysis of the factors of competitiveness for the three studied cities and for their surrounding regions. The analysis should demonstrate the policies applied to the case study areas, the policies’ impacts on economic growth and the barriers that may inhibit it. The study will provide evidence of the potential of these metropolitan areas, as drivers of competitiveness in the South-East Europe, the European and the global context. Thus, new elements may arise for the emergence of new peripheral metropolitan areas in the European Space.
- What are the key policies and measures that can be taken to support an emergence of a competitive area concentrated on the Bucharest - Sofia - Athens triangle?*

Based on the above mentioned thorough analysis, it is expected from the project to propose a list of policy recommendations, policy measures and possible projects at metropolitan level that can improve competitiveness and enhance the accessibility of Bucharest, Sofia and Athens to the European core development area. The improvement of the cooperation relations between the three capitals and the identification of potential development synergies should be explored.

The project will also contribute to the internal integration of the study area and will provide scientific support to transnational and cross-border cooperation programming for the next programming period.

Against this background the project shall contribute to the analysis of the needs, strengths and opportunities for transnational and cross-border cooperation between the 3 Member States Bulgaria, Greece and Romania and the role of their metropolitan areas in transnational activities in a future INTERREG programme and cross-border cooperation programmes to be elaborated for the next programming period. The Interim Report and the Draft Final Report envisaged to be issued respectively in October 2012 and April 2013 could be used for the purposes of programming the cross-border cooperation programmes Romania – Bulgaria, Greece – Bulgaria and INTERREG programme in South East Europe for the next programming period.

The comparative analysis of the case studies could include an evaluation of the available spatial resources (land) for metropolitan projects and of the land use patterns, while also taking into consideration the territorial potential and physical geographical factors. The project should take into account the residential and constructed areas to analyse if there is a relation between the land use patterns and the competitiveness of the regions.

(iv) Implementation methodology and project governance

Partnership in the project implementation is vital in order to achieve useful results. This applies to both, the partnership between the ESPON Programme and stakeholders, as well as between the team of researchers (TPG) and the stakeholder representatives.

Stakeholder involvement is essential throughout the project's life-cycle and starts off with the definition and development of the specific theme for the targeted analysis. During the implementation phase of the targeted analysis, stakeholders play an active role by providing and giving access to information relevant for the project, as well as by steering and guiding the work of the TPG.

As national authorities of regional development, the stakeholders will ensure all the relevant information and data for the case study areas, and will also facilitate the relation with the local authorities at metropolitan and city level. The representatives of the local authorities (Bucharest, Sofia and Athens) have already been informed of the project proposal and will participate in the project activities. All the available data and studies will be provided to the future TPG, as well as all the relevant expertise from the stakeholders.

The Lead Stakeholder, the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, will set out a Steering Committee that will consist of representatives from all stakeholders involved in the project and the responsible project expert from the ESPON Coordination Unit. At least one representative of the research team will be invited to the Steering Committee meetings. Representatives at metropolitan/capital city level will also be invited to participate in the Steering Committee meetings as observers. The other partners in the stakeholder consortium are:

- The Greek Ministry for Development, Competitiveness and Shipping,
- The Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

Each stakeholder will name a person responsible for the project who will be represented in the Steering Committee. It is also expected to ensure the participation of the local authorities of the three capitals and their regions. The Steering Committee will meet periodically to monitor the project progress and the reports produced by the TPG and to ensure the correct orientation of the research activities. In addition it is envisaged to invite EURO CITIES with observer status, in order to better orientate the project activities.

The role of the Steering Committee is to advise the ESPON Monitoring Committee and the ESPON Managing Authority on the overall decisions with respect to the project. By doing so it shall in particular give feedback to project reports, provide guidance to the next steps of the project implementation and advise on major changes in project activities and/or possible reallocations of the project budget.

The ESPON Coordination Unit will bear the contractual responsibility for the GROSEE targeted analysis on behalf of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

The Steering Committee will be closely monitoring the progress of the project and ensure that the stakeholders' needs and the ESPON Programme's expectations in relation to the project are met. To ensure coordination and communication across the partners from the

start, the ESPON Coordination Unit will convey a kick-off meeting with the Lead Partner of the TPG that should coincide with the first Steering Committee meeting. At this occasion, the participants in the Steering Committee will agree upon a schedule and the locations for further meetings throughout the lifetime of the project. Indicatively, 3 Steering Committee meetings will take place during the implementation period of the project. These events will ensure that the research team and the stakeholders have the same objectives and the project is oriented in a manner that satisfies all parties.

The stakeholders will continuously support the research team with data and available studies, while also facilitating the relations with the local authorities at metropolitan and (capital) city level. A permanent link will be ensured by setting up a mail group, where the members will be able to share information and work in cooperation on documents. This group will include all stakeholders, TPG members, the ESPON CU project expert and other experts involved (e.g. representatives of the local/metropolitan authorities).

It should be noted that although some information (e.g. statistical year-books, some legislative acts and national strategies) is available in English, there will be many documents (policy planning documents, strategies, previous studies) available only in Romanian, Bulgarian or Greek. Therefore the interested researchers need to dispose of the necessary language skills to read documents in the three national languages and to interview the local stakeholders, planners, practitioners etc.

In order to discuss important issues and/or to clarify specific problems with the representatives from the local authorities (e.g. Bucharest City Hall, Sofia Metropolitan Region, Attica Periphery), the TPG is asked to organize local workshops (one in each of the three cities) involving the above mentioned target group. The group of stakeholders can be of support in this respect by providing necessary contacts and the venue.

(v) Envisaged results of the targeted analysis

The TPG is asked to prepare a suitable methodology in order to answer the policy and research questions as defined in the objectives of the targeted analysis.

The project results should include at least the following elements:

- A thorough analysis of the current situation of the three cities including the particular problems these capitals face, such as urban sprawl, infrastructure facilities and development planning for these cities that affect employment and lead to the transfer of productive activities to other cities or regions, migration and its consequences, the downgrading of the urban environment, environmental issues and spatial planning arrangements. The analysis will include evidence for the position of the three capitals in the South-Eastern Europe and the whole of the European Space.
- A thorough analysis on the accessibility and connectivity of the capital regions within the South-Eastern Europe and to the core economic development area in Europe, including comprehensive maps and indicators;
- A comparative analysis of drivers of competitiveness in the South-Eastern Europe area and an overview on the perspectives for future development of

Bucharest, Sofia and Athens as well as options for acting together and creating synergies;

- An assessment of the importance for competitiveness and for accessibility of metropolitan cooperation of the three Capital cities with their surrounding areas and with each other;
- An analysis of how the specific urban phenomena and the land use patterns influence the territorial development and quality of life of these metropolitan areas;
- An overview of good practices of territorial governance and urban development measures in the three case study areas;
- Maps, indicators or other types of evidence showing the current relations between Bucharest, Sofia and Athens and a list of proposed policy measures to improve these relations;
- A selection of policy measures and major infrastructure projects that can contribute to the improved economic development of the case studies, to the emergence of cooperation relationships between Bucharest, Sofia and Athens and to better connections with the European urban network;
- Policy recommendations regarding territorial development and particularly infrastructure and accessibility, distance from the other central European poles and attractiveness for entrepreneurship;

The added value of the proposed analysis will result from the following elements:

- A focalized view on the most important three growth poles in South-Eastern Europe, that could become the core of a third European concentration area of development, and identification of policy measures and major projects that can improve their competitiveness and accessibility;
- A better understanding of the relation of the case studies with the European urban network, taking into account their peripheral position. Also, the lack of continuity of the European Space due to the Western Balkans should be considered in the analysis of accessibility;
- More detailed knowledge of these cities as metropolitan areas and of their competitiveness within the European space as well as a better measure of the importance of cooperation between capitals and their surrounding territory (effects of metropolitan areas on competitiveness), evidence that will be useful when setting out criteria for the definition of new metropolitan areas in Europe.

(vi) Stakeholders' envisaged use of the targeted analysis

The participating stakeholders will use the results of the study to have a better basis for the national territorial strategy and national policies. The possibility to develop a triangle Bucharest-Sofia-Athens, with possible inclusion of secondary growth poles, will be

analysed on the basis of the project results. The project results will be relevant for the Danube Strategy, the Mediterranean Territorial Cooperation programmes and for the future cooperation of Visegrad 4+2 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia + Romania and Bulgaria) in the field of spatial development.

The findings will also help the stakeholders to prepare their position regarding the next programming period and the relevant European regulations. The project results will lead to a better understanding of polycentric development in Europe and of the factors of competitiveness for growth poles in SE of Europe. The aims of the project are in line with objectives of key planning documents (e.g. Territorial Agenda, Leipzig Charter on Sustainable Cities), such as balanced development and territorial cohesion.

Each stakeholder will organize a national event for the dissemination of results with a wide participation of decision makers at national, regional and local/metropolitan level. The analytical results and policy recommendations will be discussed and the main conclusions and policy proposals to be included in future national strategic documents will be drawn. It is intended to also have a joint workshop at the end of the research activities for broad debate of the results, so in total there will be four capitalization events in which also the TPG will be invited to participate. The results will be presented to the European Commission and to Member States at future European seminars and meetings.

An abstract (including at least the executive summary and the key results) will be translated into national languages (Bulgarian, Greek and Romanian) by the stakeholders and will be disseminated widely by publication of electronic version on the Internet sites of the stakeholders and of the ECPs and by multiplication of paper versions, to be disseminated at the very least to all participants of the national events.

(vii) Outputs and timetable

The project is expected to start in February 2012 and shall deliver the following four reports throughout the lifetime of the project:

- **Inception Report: May 2012**
This report focuses on the elaboration of the analytical framework; the research approach of the project; definition of the priority fields and the data sources to be used. The report will identify the case study areas and will describe the South-eastern Europe with its characteristics and particularities will define the placement of the three capitals in this setting and examine them within the wider European context. It will reflect a review of the main documents and data sources provided by stakeholders and a first analysis of existing ESPON results that are relevant for this project.
- **Interim Report: October 2012**
This report focuses on the presentation of intermediate project results for each city/metropolitan region and an outline of results at the level of the South Eastern Europe macro region. The results will be based on the comparative analysis of the three case studies, analyzing their role and future perspectives in the South-eastern Europe and in the European core economic development area (maps, indicators and best practices). The report will include a first identification of

findings and will also provide an insight on how the project is expected to formulate policy recommendations. The report targets the stakeholders behind the project and potential end users of the project results.

- **Draft Final Report: April 2013**
This report presents the final results of the project and focuses on relevant conclusions and recommendations at the level of each individual city/metropolitan region and at the level of the South Eastern Europe macro region. Policy measures and major projects will be identified that can contribute to the improved economic development of these city/metropolitan regions, to the emergence of cooperation relationships among them, enhancing their connection with the core of Europe. The report targets the stakeholders behind the project and potential end users of the project results.
- **Final Report: July 2013**
This report is in principle a revision of the Draft Final Report taking into consideration final comments and suggestions from the stakeholders and end users, the ESPON Monitoring Committee, the European Commission and the ESPON Coordination Unit. Simultaneously, the datasets, maps and figures used and produced within the framework of the project should be delivered.

The TPG is expected to give presentations of (intermediate) results at the occasions mentioned above.

(viii) Budget for the targeted analysis

The maximum budget foreseen for this project amounts to € 360,000.00. Proposals exceeding this amount will not be considered.

The amount will include all costs for the TPG for completing the project including all travel expenses and the attendance at ESPON Seminars (taking place twice a year in June and December – June 2013 included) and Steering Group meetings as well as the local workshops mentioned above.

Travel costs in relation to dissemination events organised by the stakeholders and for which participation of a representative of the TPG would be requested from the stakeholders will be covered by the latter.

ESPON projects are generally conducted in a partnership of several bodies from at least three EU Member and Partner States (from three different countries taking part in the ESPON 2013 Programme).

(ix) Existing access points

The project proposal builds on existing ESPON applied research results, mainly of the following ESPON 2013 projects:

- FOCI (Future Orientation for Cities) - a lot of relevant information, including participation of cities to Global and European networks

- ATTREG (Attractiveness of Europeans Regions and Cities for residents and visitors) - e.g. factors of attractiveness and competitiveness
- TRACC (Transport accessibility at regional/local scale and patterns in Europe) - indicators of accessibility and results
- EU-LUPA (European land use patterns) - land use patterns, particularly concerning the urban sprawl and expansion of constructed areas)
- TIGER (Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions) – the position of European cities in the global network
- TERCO (European Territorial Cooperation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life) – identification of potential drivers for cooperation, determinants and governance structures
- POLYCE (Metropolisation and Polycentric Development in Central Europe: Evidence Based Strategic Options) – methodology for integration of an emerging city network in the European polycentric network
- BEST METROPOLISES (Best Development Conditions in European Metropolises: Paris, Berlin and Warsaw) – methodology for analysis of metropolitan regions, examples of good practices.

There are also several ESPON 2006 project results that can be used as they are relevant for the proposed project:

- 1.1.1. Polycentricity
- 1.1.2. Urban-rural
- 1.1.3. Enlargement and Polycentrism

All available at www.espon.eu.

The project will also have to take into consideration the results of territorial cooperation projects within the study area (e.g. SEETAC – www.seetac.eu).

Documents provided by stakeholders:

Common spatial development document of the V4+2 countries, adopted at the meeting of ministers responsible with regional development of the Visegrad Group countries, Bulgaria and Romania on March 29th, 2010.

National documents

- National Regional Development Strategy of Bulgaria 2005 - 2015 - summary in English
- Mid Term Evaluation Report of the National Regional Development Strategy of Bulgaria 2005 - 2015 in Bulgarian.
- Romanian National Spatial Plan (PATN) – approved sections:
 - Transport network
 - Water
 - Protected areas
 - Human settlements network
 - Areas of natural risks
 - Tourism areas

- Greece National Strategic Reference Framework 2007 – 2013
- Greece General Framework of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development

Regional and local documents:

- Regional Development Plan București – Ilfov 2007-2013 – in Romanian
- Ilfov County Spatial Plan – in Romanian
- Bucharest General Urban Plan – in Romanian
- Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 – in Romanian (ongoing work, it will be available when finished)
- The Attiki Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013
- Attiki Regional Framework of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development
- Master Plan for Athens

European Policy Documents:

- The Lisbon Treaty
- Leipzig Charter
- Europe 2020 Strategy
- European Spatial Development Perspective
- The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020
- Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial cohesion
- The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion
- The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)