

ESPON



EUROPEAN UNION

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Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

Transnational Outreach D1.7

# Annual Activity Report 2018

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## List of abbreviations

AG	Action Group
AWP	Annual Work Plan
ECP	ESPON Contact Point
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observatory Network
LAG	Local Action Group
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategies
TG	Transnational Grouping
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment
TNO	Transnational Outreach
ToR	Terms of Reference

## **1.** **Introduction**

### **1.1** **Strategy and approach**

The nature and fields of Transnational Outreach (TNO) intervention are defined together between the TNO service provider, the network of ECP's, the ESPON Monitoring Committee and ESPON EGTC. Those fields establish the framework for action in each of the 4 transnational groupings in support of the strategic policy processes in the ESPON Member States.

The definition of the activities implemented in 2018 were the result of a two-step process:

- Update of needs-assessment process;
- Consultation process on the first draft of TNO Annual Work Plan 2018.

This process drove to the definition of the strategic priorities for outreach for 2018 and, based on the common interests within each of the 4 transnational groupings, the specific fields of intervention.

The TNO AWP 2018 aimed to respond to the policy processes and needs that were identified through the needs assessment, aiming to support stakeholders in their policy endeavors, and in current or near-future policy-making processes, by providing them with relevant ESPON results. Time and resource constraints for 2018 were taken into consideration.

The Annual Work Plan 2018 was the result of this process, resulting in the 14 TNO events implemented in 2018 and supported by other means such as posters, transnational briefs and transnational observations.

## 1.2

### Overview of TNO activities 2018

The TNO activities implemented in 2018 included 2 Conferences, 4 Seminars, 4 Workshops, 3 Trainings and 2 e-learnings, as presented in the table below.

	TG I (Central)	TG II (Northern)	TG III (Western)	TG IV (Southern)
2018	Conference Hungary	Seminar Sweden	Seminar France	Workshop Spain
	Seminar Slovenia	e-learning	Seminar Ireland	Conference Greece
	Training Switzerland	Workshop Estonia	Workshop Belgium	Training Croatia
			Workshop Luxembourg	e-learning
			Training Netherlands	

Fig. 1  
Overview of TNO events 2018

Those activities addressed the strategic policy priorities identified in the revised needs assessment and summarised in the tables below.

**Table 1 Strategic policy priorities addressed by TNO events 2018**

TNO Events 2018	Strategic policy priority
Conference Budapest	Integrated Territorial Development in V4+2
Seminar Paris	Regional and national spatial planning: new challenges and new opportunities (Roadshow)
e-learning (March)	Territorial Impact Assessment Tool (TIA)
Workshop Nova Gorica	New thinking on functional urban areas, polycentric territorial structures and cross border collaboration
Seminar Dublin	Regional Spatial Strategies: the Architecture of Effective Regional Development (Roadshow)
Workshop Soria	Fighting depopulation in rural areas – identifying development potential in rural regions
Training Switzerland	Territorial Impact Assessment Tool (TIA)
Workshop Luxembourg	Public Participation in Spatial Planning
Workshop Tallinn	New challenges and thinking for spatial planning systems
Seminar Växjö	Economic development in rural regions – new thinking and policies in finding and exploiting endogenous capacities

e-learning (October)	Territorial Impact Assessment Tool (TIA)
Training Zagreb	Territorial Impact Assessment Tool (TIA)
Training The Hague	Territorial Impact Assessment Tool (TIA)
Conference Athens	Migration flows and integration policies

The table below lists the policy processes addressed by the TNO activities implemented in 2018.

**Table 2 Policy Processes addressed by TNO events 2018**

TNO Events 2018	Policy Processes
Conference Budapest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Spatial Development Strategy of the V4+2 Countries</li> <li>• National Concept for Spatial Development (NCSD) for the period 2013–2025 (Bulgaria)</li> <li>• Spatial development policy of the Czech Republic 2008 (PÚR ČR 2008)</li> <li>• National Development 2030 – National Development and Territorial Development Concept (NDTDC) (Hungary)</li> <li>• National Spatial Development Concept 2030 (KPZK 2030) (Poland)</li> <li>• Spatial Development Concept of Slovakia 2001 (KÚRS 2011)</li> </ul>
Seminar Paris	SRADDET “Schémas régionaux d’aménagement, de développement durable et d’égalité des territoires”
Workshop Nova Gorica	Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia
Seminar Dublin	Irish National Planning Framework (NPF) (Ireland)
Workshop Soria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estrategia Nacional frente al Reto Demografico (Spain)</li> <li>• Estrategia de Modernización y Devirsificación Rural (Spain)</li> </ul>
Workshop Luxembourg	Master Plan for Spatial Planning (Luxembourg)
Workshop Tallinn	Green Paper on Spatial Planning (Estonia)
Conference Athens	National Strategy for Integration of Third-Country Nationals (TCN) (Greece)

In addition to the events organised, the strategic priorities were also addressed by complementary means of the creation of 15 posters and the elaboration of the following shorter documents, to support and share among the participants of the respective events:

- Transnational Brief for Budapest;
- Transnational Observation for Paris;
- Transnational Brief for Nova Gorica;
- Transnational Observation for Soria;

- Transnational Brief for Tallinn;
- Transnational Brief for Växjö;
- Transnational Observation for Athens.



## 2. Review of TNO activities 2018

### 2.1 Integrated territorial development in V4+2 (Hungary)

The ESPON Conference “Integrated territorial development in V4+2” took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 at the Grand Hall of the Ministry for National Economy in Budapest, Hungary.

89 participants attended this Conference that addressed the common challenges (socio-economic, environmental, technological and planning) faced by Visegrad V4+2 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania) when it comes to integrated territorial development.

The major common challenges highlighted by the policy-makers present in the ESPON Conference were the discontinuation of development poles, axes, the lack of connectivity (transport networks), the population decline faced by some of the countries, the ‘need for a new planning culture for better coordination’ (BG) and to achieve a more balanced development. To move from a ‘sectorism’ and strategy pluralism to an integrated approach was also one of the aspects pointed out during the day (PL, RO and BG).

ESPON brought some advice on how to address these challenges and advises policy-makers to:

- Rethink their planning practices so as to cope with coordination challenges and globalisation trends; (2) to take on the “silo mentality” of sectoral policies and adopt a stronger holistic approach;
- Choose functional areas as the relevant level for territorial development strategies;
- Make the most of the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) approach and resources for metropolitan areas during the next programming period.

Testimonials from the policy-makers and representatives of the V4+2 countries present at the Conference highlighted some successful approaches and vision for the future:

- Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) works: how 800 years of rivalry were overcome with ITI
- ‘Promoting metropolitan ITI for the next programming period’ (BG)
- ‘Share ESPON views that all efforts including governance, strategies and tools should be pooled together to serve functional areas’ (HU)
- ‘Improving the planning system to take into account the increasingly rapid flows of investment’ (PL)

Conclusions of the day pointed out to the following principles that must be explored in more depth:

- Governance – developing a more place-based focus;
- Competences – seeking more clarity between the V4+2 countries on where and at which levels decisions are taken; Implementation – speeding up implementation at all levels;
- Monitoring – keeping track of implementation and using information to adjust and fine-tune strategies;
- Impact – identifying and communicating impact to a wider group of stakeholders;
- Collaboration – developing strong networks both within and between countries and regions.

Four posters and one transnational observation were prepared and shared with the participants of the Conference.

**Integrated Territorial Development in V4+2 countries:**  
new challenges, new ideas, new responses

7th March 2018  
Ministry for National Economy,  
Budapest, Hungary

ESPON

**Integrated Territorial Development in V4+2 countries:**  
socio-economic observations

**Knowledge economy (KE) potential**  
The combination of low competitive economy with low incidence of KE is the general pattern in V4+2 countries. A bigger potential for KE economy is registered only in Mazowiecka and Mazowieckie regions in Poland, the oblasts of Bratislava and Trnava in Slovakia, and the regions of Bucuresti Ilfov in Romania and Közép-Magyarország in Hungary.

**Types of Knowledge Economies**

**Potential brain drain...**  
Most regions of V4+2 countries are acutely affected by brain drain, except for the areas around the capital cities. Poland and Bulgaria exhibit a combination of negative net migration with a large percentage of the population with higher education. The Czech Republic is the only country in V4+2 where this scenario affects only a small proportion of the region.

**People with Higher Education (as % of active population) and regions with negative migration**

**Share of persons employed in SMEs 2008-2014**  
In line with most of Europe, the share of persons employed in SMEs has declined over the crisis years in the V4+2. However, there is more positive data from parts of Poland and Romania. SMEs have a high employment impact and depend on good governance, transnational and good accessibility. This means that SMEs thrive better in more urbanised regions which provide good accessibility conditions, which makes policy strategies more challenging for rural areas.

**Development of the share of persons employed in SMEs**

The Vingt4 Group, Vingt4 Four or V4 is a cultural and political alliance of four Central European nations – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (collectively designated as the Central-Eastern Development Strategy of the V4+2 Countries) is a continuation of the cooperation of six countries: the V4, Bulgaria and Romania (2) in the cooperation of transnational development <http://www.v4group.eu/>

**Integrated Territorial Development in V4+2 countries:**  
services and infrastructure

**Inner peripheries**  
The ESPON PROCECY project demonstrates that the "inner-peripherisation" of a region may be triggered by various factors such as an "isolated" location between core areas with higher economic potential, low access to services of general interest and/or poor connections with wider networks (digital economic circuits or places of political authority). Examples are the subregions of Wielkopolski, Śląski and Czechowicko-olski in Poland, the Karlovy Vary region in the Czech Republic, the Žilina Region in Slovakia, the counties of Focșani and Caraș-Severin in Romania, and the Blagoevgrad Province in Bulgaria.

**Main drivers of inner peripherality**

**Road accessibility**  
By 2050, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Eastern Poland could have greater potential accessibility. This will enhance east-west service flows. Many regions in the V4+2 (e.g. northern and western peripheral areas in Poland and Bulgaria) will still be less accessible. The accessibility model applied here is using connectivity and population forecasts. Disaggregation affects the attractiveness of markets, and consequently reduces potential accessibility.

**Digital transition**  
On-line interaction with public authorities is increasing. Currently around 50% of the EU population is using the internet for e-government purposes. An ESPON survey reveals that fewer than one in three European cities (29%) have adopted digital government strategies. Larger cities are in the lead, except for Eastern Europe, where only 42% of large cities have a digital strategy in place. Nine out of ten cities report that their services have improved because of digitalisation.

**Share of population interacting with public authorities online**

The Vingt4 Group, Vingt4 Four or V4 is a cultural and political alliance of four Central European nations – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (collectively designated as the Central-Eastern Development Strategy of the V4+2 Countries) is a continuation of the cooperation of six countries: the V4, Bulgaria and Romania (2) in the cooperation of transnational development <http://www.v4group.eu/>

Reference only Budapest Poster 3P18A1.

**Integrated Territorial Development in V4+2 countries:**  
new challenges, new ideas, new responses

**Some recommendations...**

**Creates an SME friendly environment at the regional level**

Enhancing cooperation across administrative borders, between public authorities (cross-border and trans-regional functional areas) is one of the biggest drivers for economic growth and can further encourage clusters and firms to network and grow.

Setting up specialised territorial offices to guide SMEs to find the information they need and enhance entrepreneurship, and to further disseminate the opportunities for SMEs. They can also support the internationalisation of SMEs.

Involving SMEs in the Smart Specialisation Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) – an inclusive and interactive bottom-up process, in which participants from different environments (public, business, academic, etc.) are disseminating and producing information about potential new activities and feeding into smart specialisation strategies.

Keeping SMEs updated on regulations and implementing monitoring mechanisms and free legal counselling for SMEs, could reduce the regulatory challenges that often demotivate small entrepreneurs.

Cooperating the "brain drain" faced by the V4+2 countries is one of the most important factors to support SME access to human resources. ESPON research identifies many good practices, being implemented at national and regional levels by a variety of countries, to motivate skilled workers being attracted by return.

The Vingt4 Group, Vingt4 Four or V4 is a cultural and political alliance of four Central European nations – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (collectively designated as the Central-Eastern Development Strategy of the V4+2 Countries) is a continuation of the cooperation of six countries: the V4, Bulgaria and Romania (2) in the cooperation of transnational development <http://www.v4group.eu/>

Poster no. 6

Fig. 2 Posters Budapest



Fig. 3  
Transnational  
Brief  
Budapest

## 2.2

### Roadshow on regional spatial planning strategies (France, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg)

The ESPON TNO Seminar in Paris “Regional and national spatial planning: new challenges and new opportunities” was the first in a series of five transnational outreach events in Western Europe (Benelux, France, Ireland and UK) in 2018 and 2019, examining new developments in terms of national and regional spatial planning.

68 participants attended this first seminar in France that particularly examined the SRADDET “Schémas régionaux d’aménagement, de développement durable et d’égalité des territoires” and brought the contribution and exchange of experiences from representatives of Luxembourg, Wallonia, Flanders and Ireland, as well as researchers from the ESPON projects COMPASS, ReSSI and ACTAREA.

The key conclusions were that there seems to be a renaissance in regional spatial planning, with new regional spatial plans being developed in Belgian regions, Luxembourg, and most recently the completed National Planning Framework in Ireland. French Regions and the Netherlands will complete their new spatial plans in 2019. While legal and institutional contexts are continuously moving when it comes to spatial planning matters, the fact that those regions are currently experiencing institutional reforms led to a shared discourse about how to face those changes. Concerns were also raised about the misalignment between the need of regional capacity for spatial planning and the expected ambitious of the new plans.

Throughout the day, participants expressed their interest in European benchmarks regarding spatial planning strategies, which is a major dimension of ESPON research. The concept of soft cooperation, illustrated by the ACTAREA and ReSSI case studies, was seen as particularly important. The process of public consultation has been identified as a priority for all countries and regions, engaging civic actors at the regional level and deal with multi-level governance. One particular issue is the scope of the consultation and how to engage regional stakeholders in the consultation process. However, the need for a greater inclusion of regional stakeholders and economic players in spatial planning was widely shared. Dealing with multi-level governance is also an imperative. This means a careful consideration of balancing a top-down approach linked to investment potential (e.g. Ireland) or a more localised bottom-up approach closer to the citizen but lacking resources to implement. The question of legitimacy of the regional level was also raised during the day. Different answers can be provided if one makes a

distinction between the best level for internal cooperation between territorial actors and the best level to compete with other entities. Concerns were expressed regarding the regional capacities, in terms of political and financial resources, to implement the spatial planning strategies. Regions may then be led to request access to local resources, such as the support from universities in the case of Wallonia. Financial resources are also important, as one participant put it, but planning strategies often follows funding instead of the opposite. The articulation between regional planning strategies and other comprehensive approaches – such as environmental protection strategies, for instance – has also been identified as a key challenge.

This first seminar in a series of five on spatial planning centred around processes of developing spatial plans at the regional and national level and there was a great deal of attention to the similar challenges faced by all regions and countries and the methodologies involved in developing spatial strategies.

One transnational observation was prepared and shared with the participants of the Seminar. It was also made available for the subsequent events of the roadshow.



Fig. 4  
Transnational  
Observation  
Paris

## 2.3

### E-learning on the ESPON Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) tool

The first TNO e-learning activity took place in March and focused on the ESPON Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) tool.

This activity consisted of two webinars guided by OIR, an expert on the tool. This e-learning counted with the participation of 77 national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners from all ESPON countries, particularly those from Southern Europe.

Its main goal was to raise awareness and demonstrate to the participants the capabilities and added value of performing an ex-ante analysis of the potential impact and territorial effects of a specific policy or legislation on the development of regions by examining all relevant indicators.

## 2.4

### Functional urban areas, polycentric territorial structures and cross-border collaboration (Slovenia)

This ESPON Transnational Outreach Seminar, in Nova Gorica, Slovenia, examined new thinking on functional urban areas and cross border collaboration, with a range of expert speakers from Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, and Serbia, as well as speakers presenting ESPON projects from Norway, Germany, the UK, and Luxembourg.

The organisation of this event in Nova Gorica was an ideal place for a cross-border seminar, due to its border-city character with Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy), which are twin-cities, and together form a cross-border FUA (Functional Urban Area).

36 participants participated in the discussions during the day, reflecting the growing attention in the EU to cross-border challenges and opportunities across Europe, and with particular emphasis on the Italian-Slovenian border. An important contribution to these discussions were the results from the latest ESPON research, and European practices in planning, governance, and provision of service in cross-border functional (urban) areas.

When addressing the challenges and opportunities of cross-border regions, the conclusion is that there is no-one-size-fits-all solution, since interactions take place in the local context. It is important that regions understand what already exists to avoid duplication of infrastructures. When going beyond immediate cross-border activities, it becomes clear that spatial planning, which often stops at the border, now needs to widen its area of reflection, and examine in more depth the obstacles and the opportunities for cross-border territories.

The Slovenian spatial development strategy includes the integration into EU space, the development of efficient infrastructures, and the protection of nature, but there is still insufficient attention paid to cross-border services and to spatial structures across the border, as a consequence of jurisdiction factors. Spatial planning can play a more important role in overcoming the challenges and in exploiting opportunities. A key factor is to get services of general interest to complement rather than compete, and to improve the connectivity and organisation of public transport.

ESPON offers scientific expertise to policy-makers who seek assistance in the design of cross-border functional (urban) strategies, innovative governance models, and service solutions. Recommendations during the Seminar pointed out the importance of multi-level governance. This means building collaboration and trust, but solutions are strongly influenced by crucial factors such as legacy, path dependency, and context. Another ESPON concept is that of Metropolitan Development Areas, which adapt to the reality of territorial politics, and are often bigger than the Functional Urban Areas (FUA). This concept illustrates the views of local and regional experts on the spatial context of the metropolitan areas in terms of key urban development factors, including transport, urbanisation, environment, housing, etc. Soft collaboration can also provide solutions; setting up a framework of characteristics of collaboration, and then identified common themes. Collaboration needs a 'community of intent' which can be defined as a strong voluntary cooperation, with a 'bottom-up' component, based on perceived needs and ambitions. This solution is suitable to achieve win-win outcomes, but requires some empowerment to be effective.

In conclusion, successful collaboration in cross-border regions requires a willingness to collaborate and coordinate. It also needs experience and capacities to implement defined actions, and mutual agreement on shared goals and benefits of cooperation. It can be improved by capitalising on existing governance structures.

Discussions along the day referred to the apparent absence of the UN's sustainable development goals in the analysis, and the importance of external influences on Europe. The Territorial Framework will be

able to identify the most important trends for border regions, and predict how border regions might be different in 2030 or 2050.

One poster and one transnational brief were prepared and shared with the participants during the event.

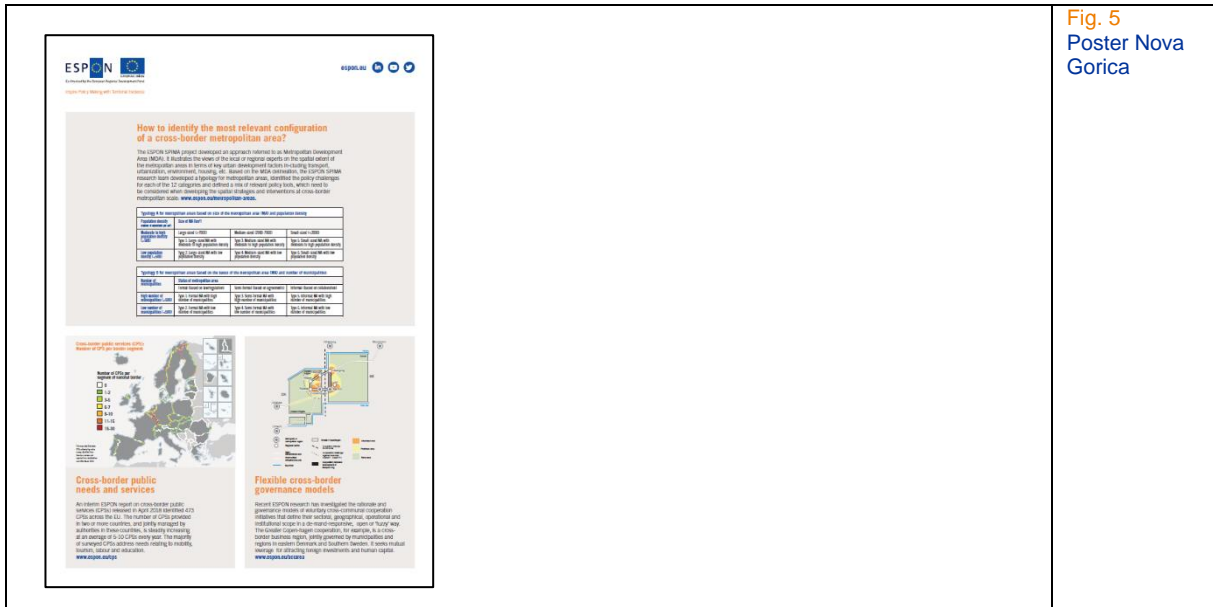


Fig. 5  
Poster Nova  
Gorica

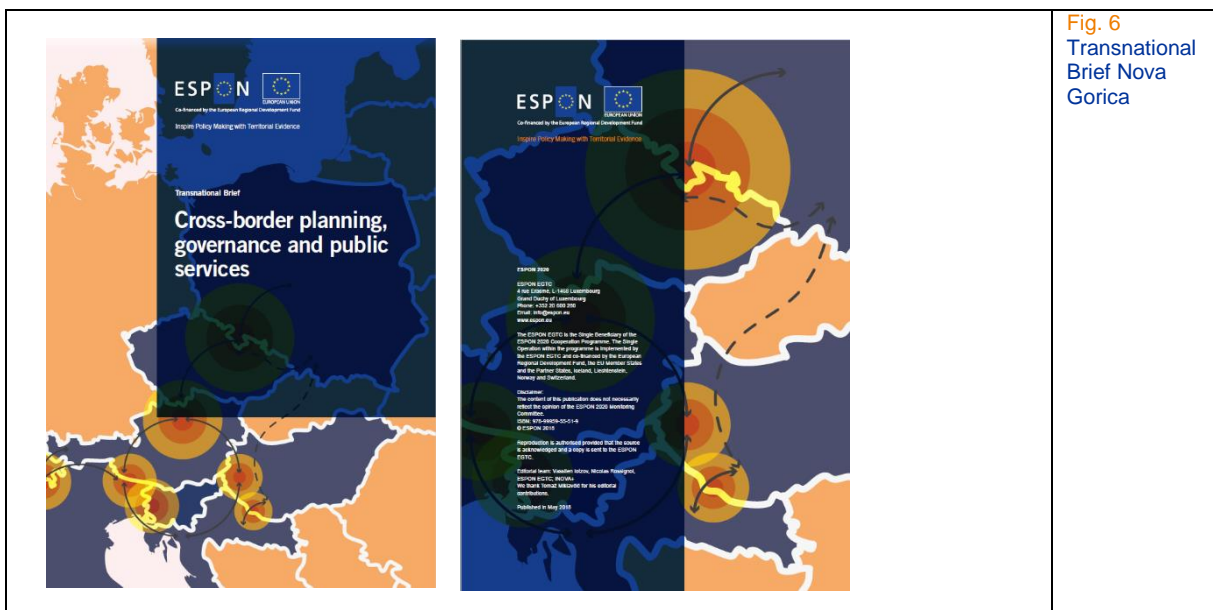


Fig. 6  
Transnational  
Brief Nova  
Gorica

## 2.5 Regional Spatial Strategies: the Architecture of Effective Regional Development (Ireland)

The ESPON Seminar that took place in Dublin on Regional Spatial Strategies counted with 34 participants and was the second in a series of linked events forming a roadshow in 2018 on spatial planning – going from the methodology to content, citizen participation and implementation steps. This

series of linked events aims at sharing experiences bringing different perspectives across the North-West Europe countries – France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. While all these countries operate in different contextual environments, they share common objectives in terms of spatial plans.

Some reflections from the first seminar in Paris started the discussions of the day, pointing out the renewed interest in spatial planning and methodologies, the need to build political and financial capacity at the regional level as well as the need to assure the legitimacy of the plans.

Ireland presented the Irish National Planning Framework (NPF) as the vision for Ireland for the future 20 years. Key challenges outlined included the domination of Dublin compared to other regions in the country, the link of the NPF to other resisting strategies, the delineation of metropolitan areas boundaries and how to accommodate the strength of a regional overview and a local perspective. These challenges lead to questions of power and legitimacy, and for the need to clarify relationships and competences. The Irish National Planning Framework represents a disruptive innovation as it seeks a better alignment between investment and place-based strategies. However, attention is still needed to avoid the development of a plethora of strategies and to assure the necessary means for regional governance to implement the strategies.

A view from the outside brought some lessons learned and new ideas from the experience of other countries. The Netherlands pointed that that decentralisation has reached its limits with widening gaps between territories and increased spatial challenges. A new planning act has spurred on a national vision which will include a spatial and environmental dimension, but that requires a new governance model more focused on activation not intervention or blueprint planning. Luxembourg, a country heavily influenced by cross-border commuting, has presented its new Master Plan for Spatial Planning which is a new approach and currently in a public consultation stage. It covers basic functions such as housing and mobility, the quality of life, social and territorial cohesion, resilience to climate change and resources e.g. the role of agriculture. As a representative of Belgium, Flanders shared its interest in exploring instruments such as compensation, appropriation and subsidies. Zoning remains a challenge in the country and while planning is a competence for the regions, cross-border collaboration was still not embedded in the regulations. The need of a regulator was raised as well the need for municipalities to collaborate and work together.

In order to answer some of those challenges, ESPON experts from COMPASS, SPIMA and ACTAREA shared their research findings and some relevant case-studies. Some of the key recommendations that emerged from the discussions:

- The need to develop further the competences for planning and territorial governance in functional regions;
- The importance of strengthening the 'strategic dimension' of the planning process and the integration of multiple sectors to enhance the chances of success;
- The need to follow a metropolitan planning approach: shared-governance at a multi-level scale, within and beyond 'metropolitan areas';
- Stimulate the emergence of soft governance areas to fill existing governance gaps and provide the required resources and political framework.

## 2.6

### Depopulation and development potential of southern rural regions (Spain)

The issue of rural depopulation is particularly challenging in Spain, where the population from rural regions moved massively towards cities and coastal areas between 1950 and 1980 due to the mechanisation of agriculture. The choice of Soria for the realisation of the ESPON workshop on rural depopulation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2018 was therefore particularly pertinent because it is one of the Spanish provinces that has suffered most from rural depopulation. This event counted with 57 participants among the two days.

These migration flows coupled with low birth rates in Spain have led to the depopulation of many rural areas in several Spanish regions. This phenomenon has accelerated territorial imbalances and highlights the importance of counteracting policies and actions, since its associated challenges – poor access to public services (SGIs), low accessibility, lack of economic competitiveness and precarious governance – are interdependent and may trigger a vicious circle, being both the causes and symptoms of demographic decline.

Discussions during the day pointed out the need of more practical measures to encourage immigration to rural areas and to restore its attractiveness and retain talent. This involves supporting entrepreneurial activities and social entrepreneurship. ESPON studies point to the need for smart place-based approaches and innovative ways to improve the provision of services to tackle both demographic and economic decline. Another aspect refers to the need of investment in Information and communication technology (ICT), strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between municipalities (knowledge transfer) and focusing on smart specialisation strategies to capitalise on their unique resources (local solutions). Those are some of the measures recommended to enhance attractiveness of rural regions and increase the efficiency of investments. A focus on citizens' involvement (soft governance) can also partially compensate for a lack of public resources. In parallel, strengthening strategic spatial planning and territorial governance through integrated strategies are needed, since the challenges of rural depopulation require multi-scalar, holistic and long-term strategies. More attention is also needed in emphasising the positive characteristics of rural regions such as the (usually) lower costs for start-ups development (e.g. rent, land costs), and business opportunities in supplying social needs or in sectors such as tourism, forestry, gastronomy and natural heritage.

Case studies presented during the seminar stressed the need to retain a positive vision for the future of rural areas as there are good examples in other countries also facing low levels of population density. In Portugal, the municipality of Fundão is implementing a number of combined actions to boost the local economy by promoting the exports of its agricultural products (e.g. cherries and cheese) through show-cases and local festivals, as a way to provide market opportunities for local producers. The creation of a research and knowledge centre on plant biotechnology aimed to transfer knowledge to companies and start-ups and investing in the 'Internet of Things' will support pilot projects in various agricultural fields involving companies, producers and local/regional partners and integrate an incubator and a fab lab in the municipality. Training children in skills adapted for local activities is another of the measures being implemented as a long-term investment. In Romania, and particularly on small and/or remote communities facing demographic challenges, area-based and people-based interventions to fight rural decline effectively are being implemented through Local Action Groups (LAG) as an instrument for (participative) community development. Some Spanish regions are also already developing new models of a territorial approach for social policies through the collaboration between departments and multi-



level governance to provide a more integrated approach e.g. Integrated Territorial Investment Plans (ITI).

A panel discussion during the Workshop summarised a number of combined actions to improve the situation of rural shrinking regions: a) enhance the emphasis on social innovation; b) improve education and training linked to high-speed broadband; c) increase knowledge transfer; d) promote cooperation and collaboration between municipalities; e) support a new rural narrative towards the exploitation of rural potential and increase the visibility for rural areas; f) encourage positive discrimination and financial incentives to encourage re-population.

One poster and one transnational observation were prepared and shared with the participants during the event.



Fig. 7  
Poster Soria

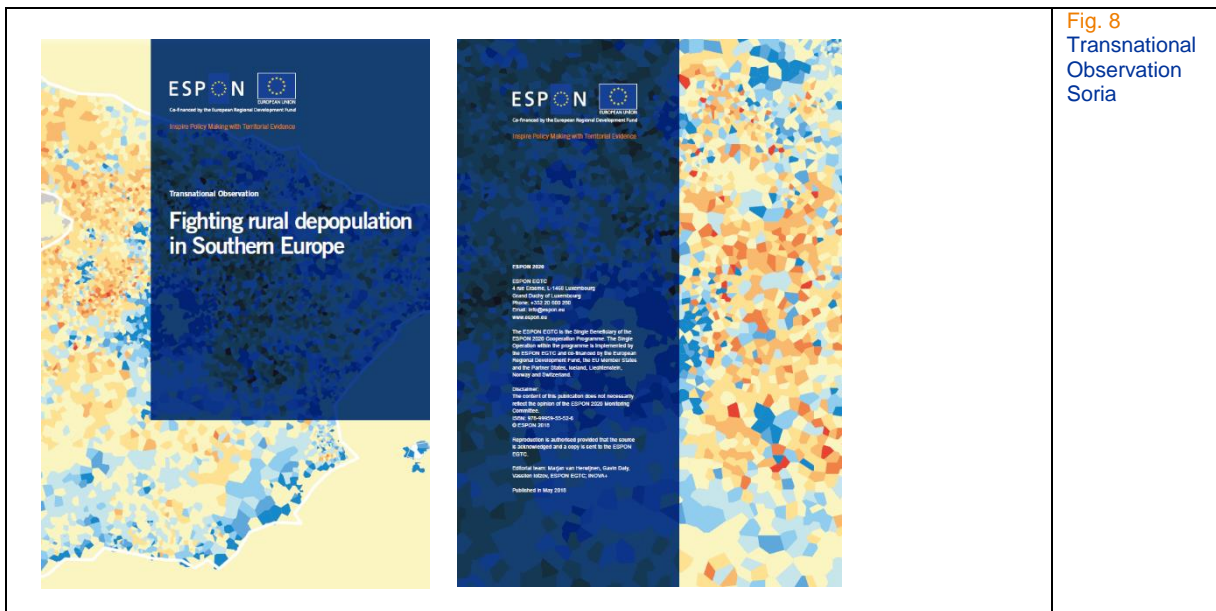


Fig. 8  
Transnational Observation Soria

## 2.7

### Training on the ESPON TIA Tool (Switzerland)

The first TNO Training activity focused on the ESPON TIA tool and was realised in cooperation with the Annual RSA Conference that took place in Lugano in June 2018.

This training activity was guided and moderated by Mr. Bernd Schuh (OIR), an expert on the ESPON TIA Tool. The 16 participants that attended this training were guided through the different steps of the impact analysis and have received assistance and guidance for preparing a territorial impact analysis.

## 2.8

### Spatial planning systems (Estonia)

Should spatial planning be more visionary, integrated, comprehensive or more light touch and flexible with an emphasis on continuity and stability rather than constant change? What is the role of the regional level of strategic and spatial planning between the national and local dimensions? These were the topics discussed by the 28 participants that attended the ESPON Transnational Outreach Workshop at the Estonian Ministry of Finance in Tallinn on the 16th October 2018.

This ESPON workshop examined some of the issues faced by the Estonian planning system and the challenges described by the Green Book that is being prepared. These issues include the difficulties of combining strategic and land-use planning; supporting a regional level of planning without a regional administration; dealing with the inherent complexity and rigidity of spatial planning and involving an increasingly wider set of stakeholders in the planning process.

Four country experts from Finland, Slovenia, Latvia and Ireland outlined their challenges and the way that they were dealing with these challenges. Latvia highlighted the need for more pragmatism, more flexibility, more transparency and improved capacities at the local level which requires a new generation of spatial planners. Finland is preparing the reform of the 'Land Use and Building Act' and developing a draft for a government proposal. Also, Finland's possible wider change in local vs regional administration (health and social) may in the longer run have implications on regional level spatial planning. Ireland presented their recently approved 'Irish National Planning Framework', a promising and profound approach in dealing with the country's spatial questions. Slovenian latest 'Spatial Management Act' in 2017 needs to deal with the need to design and moderate a process rather than designing a plan; overcoming the weaknesses of sectoral planning by improving dialogue and capacity building; more participation and less information and increasing the digitalisation of spatial planning.

ESPON projects and policy briefs then added to the country expert input. The RESSI project illustrated with two case studies the need for the regional level to play a brokering role, building consensus and trust between municipalities and acting as a bridge between national and local strategies. The COMPASS project examined spatial planning systems across Europe and their changes over time – e.g. widening of planning's scope, decentralisation, shift towards regulatory (vs visionary) planning. The SPIMA project examined metropolitan governance and noted that there is no single definition of a metropolitan area that matches the urbanization trends, administrative borders, planning practices and perceptions of local actors and outlined current trends such as decentralisation, widening scope, administrative simplification and improving performance and citizen engagement and digitalisation. ESPON policy brief on Indicators for Integrated Territorial and Urban Development highlighted the needed on the actual content, territorial coverage, budget and scope of the integrated strategies and their purpose.

Discussions during the day raised a strong consensus among participants to focus on systems and dialogue with attention to capacity building among key stakeholders and for the need of a 'regional'

dimension of spatial planning between the national and the local levels. Establishing this regional level, especially where there are no regional administrations or new regional administrations (as in the case of Ireland) is not easy. Adequate resources, cooperation and leadership will be key watchwords for success.

One transnational brief was prepared as a complementary measure and shared with the participants during the event.

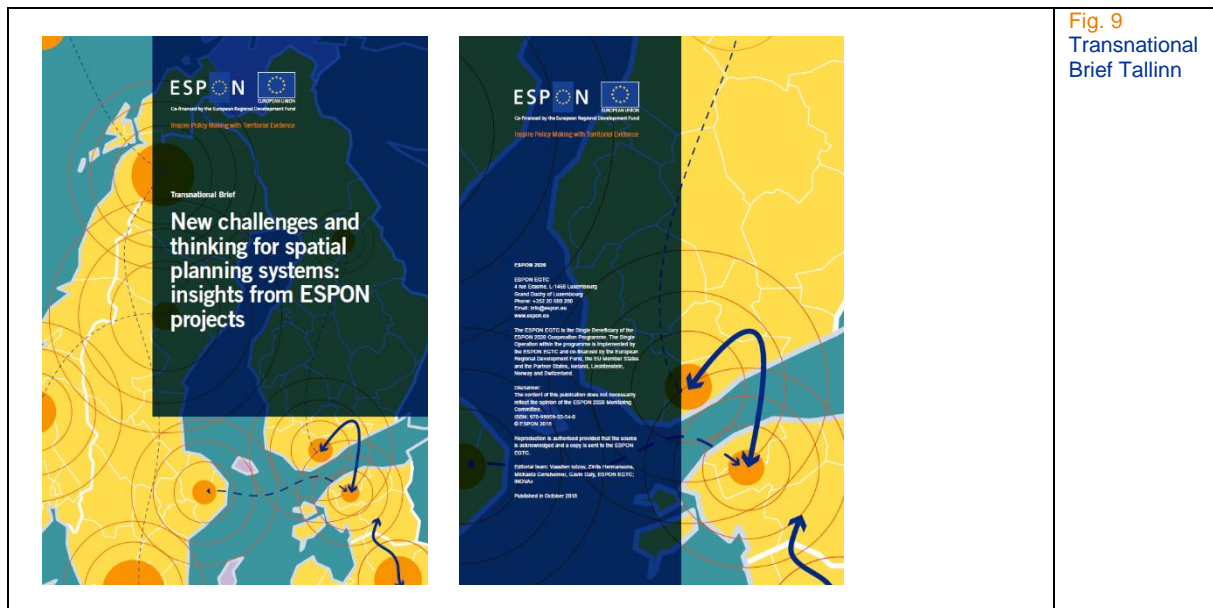


Fig. 9  
Transnational  
Brief Tallinn

## 2.9

### Economic development in northern rural regions (Sweden)

“Learn from others while being aware of local context”, “Developing quadruple helix collaboration at the local and regional level” and “the need of more engagement and support mechanisms for SME” summarize some of the key conclusions and learning points of the ESPON Transnational Outreach Seminar that took place in Växjö, Sweden.

This 25 participants of this ESPON Transnational Outreach Seminar examined economic development in rural areas and featured presentations on changing geographies of growth, rural initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurship, a wider view of rural development across the Baltic region and an overview of three ESPON projects and research on SME development, Foreign Direct Investment and rural shrinkage.

Discussions during the day reveal that northern rural regions share similar challenges: how to attract and retain knowledge and talent; how to stimulate entrepreneurship and how to match skills with job opportunities. More problematic is how to identify who is responsible for rural policies and at what level policy initiatives should be developed and implemented.

Growth areas for rural development were examined during this seminar: bio-economy, silver economy and the circular economy. Rural economies need to exploit their endogenous resources – in areas such as natural capital, heritage, renewable energy, bio-economy and tourism – and exploit trust and partnerships to achieve successful results. Since funding is needed to facilitate capacity building and increase access to knowledge, rural regions need to invest in improving their public procurement policies, provide adequate infrastructures and build strategies of resilience. More attention is also needed in engagement and support mechanisms for SMEs at the local and regional level.

The debate on ‘smart shrinkage’ and rightsizing economies and services was raised for discussion among the participants. An analysis on the ESPON research on SME performance in Europe revealed that education is the most important driver for the performance of microenterprises and that governance quality along with accessibility (often linked to urbanisation) plays a major role in the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises.

ESPON research on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Europe reveals that FDI is attracted to strong industrial clusters and previous FDI investment, but there is no evidence that it supports regional convergence. There is a need to analyse the economic incentives that attract FDI and the role of accessibility, clusters and internationalisation in attracting FDI and exploiting its spillover effects.

One poster and one transnational brief were prepared and shared with the participants during the day.

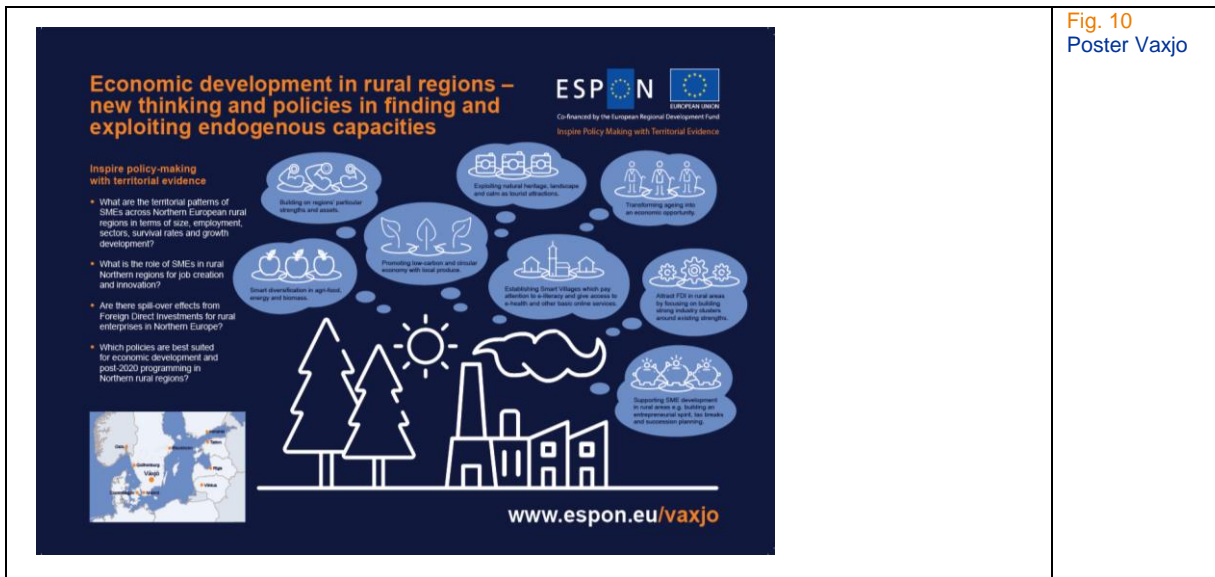


Fig. 10  
Poster Vaxjo



Fig. 11  
Transnational Brief Vaxjo

## 2.10

### **Spatial planning: implementation, governance, finance and regulations (Brussels)**

The ESPON TNO workshop “Spatial planning: implementation, governance, finance and regulations” took place in Perspective Brussels on the 24th October 2018 and gathered 54 participants from the three Belgium regions and experts on spatial planning from Belgium, France, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

Three policy questions were addressed during the day:

- What are the key policy challenges of your region?
- How do you plan to implement these solutions for the challenges?
- What do you expect from ESPON in this respect?

The workshop started with an inside-out perspective of the three Belgian regions – Brussels Capital, Flanders and Wallonia – which have been developing their spatial strategies over the past years and are now on the point of political approval of the respective strategies.

This first session was followed by an outside-in perspective from representatives of France, Ireland and The Netherlands, providing their input as an opportunity to learn and exchange views and best practices from each other. The three countries examined their own challenges from a specific perspective: Ireland through its National Development Plan, the Netherlands through their City Deal programme and France through cross-border collaboration in the Lille Metropolitan Area.

Finally, during the third session of the day representatives from ESPON projects and from the European Commission (DG Regio) shared their inputs with the participants. Thomas de Bethune (DG Regio) presented the future funds of new Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 including the respective main objectives and horizontal priorities. Experts from ESPON COMPASS (Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe) and ESPON SPIMA (Spatial Dynamics and Strategic Planning in Metropolitan Areas) projects completed the session with insights from their research results.

Research evidence from ESPON SPIMA highlighted that 75% of the population of Europe lives in urban areas but increasingly the ‘administrative city’ not always fit with the ‘real city’ (cities are growing outside of their administrative borders). Therefore, it reinforces the need for changing governance models with new actors, new levels of action that leads to a need to develop other types of governance. Evidence collected from ESPON COMPASS recommends that planning systems should strengthen the integration of sectoral policies by developing a narrative as a framework for strategic planning involving policy makers and planning practitioners from the ground.

After a lively discussion during the day, it could be concluded that while similar challenges, objectives and even proposals are shared between the community of urban planners, the key challenges is the now the implementation of the plans, visions and strategies. It requires understanding and putting into practice the next step: how to better implement it in practice, in different types of territories. There are many barriers, most often budgetary and political. But often the main barrier is governance, which involves coalitions, commitment and consensus.

## 2.11

## E-learning on the ESPON TIA tool

The second TNO e-learning activity took place in October 2019 and focused on the ESPON Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) tool.

This activity consisted of two webinars guided by OIR, an expert on the tool. 25 national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners from all ESPON countries attended this e-learning activity.

Its main goal was to raise awareness and demonstrate to the participants the capabilities and added value of performing an ex-ante analysis of the potential impact and territorial effects of a specific policy or legislation on the development of regions by examining all relevant indicators.

### 2.12

#### Training on the ESPON TIA Tool (Croatia)

The second TNO Training activity focused on the ESPON TIA tool and took place in Lugano (Switzerland) in June 2018.

This training activity was guided and moderated by Mr. Bernd Schuh (OIR), an expert on the ESPON TIA Tool. The 20 participants of this training were guided through the different steps of the impact analysis and have received assistance and guidance for preparing a territorial impact analysis.

### 2.13

#### Training on the ESPON TIA Tool (The Netherlands)

The third TNO Training activity focused on the ESPON TIA tool and took place in Zagreb (Croatia) in June 2018.

This training activity was guided and moderated by Mr. Bernd Schuh (OIR), an expert on the ESPON TIA Tool. The 12 participants of this training were guided through the different steps of the impact analysis and have received assistance and guidance for preparing a territorial impact analysis.

### 2.14

#### Migration flows and integration policies (Greece)

The ESPON-Interact joint Conference “Migration flows and integration policies – Data evidence and best practices in the EU” took place in Athens, Greece, on the 22-23rd of November, with the participation of more than 90 attendees during the two days.

After the massive migration crisis of 2015, now southern European countries have to deal with the medium to long-term challenge of integration. As Professor Bianchini from the University of Bologna noted, we need “Long-term policies for long-term issues, as migration is not an emergency but a global fact”.

The policy questions now are how to put in place mechanisms for multi-level governance and to build the bridge between national governments – responsible for regulations such as the Greek ‘National Strategy for Integration of Third-Country Nationals (TCN)’ – and the flexibility of local bottom-up approaches and concrete actions. Further attention to vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors (UAM) and the improvement of relocation schemes with more focus and a better understanding of the absorption capacity of regions (public support, demographic trends and employment patterns) is needed.

While there are no ‘one size fits all’ solution for integration, a multi-level and cross-sectoral approach is needed – combining housing, education, health and more actions for matching skills with job opportunities. More comparative data on regions and with a strong emphasis on the city-level – as cities are magnets for integration – is needed and this is where ESPON can provide territorial evidence.

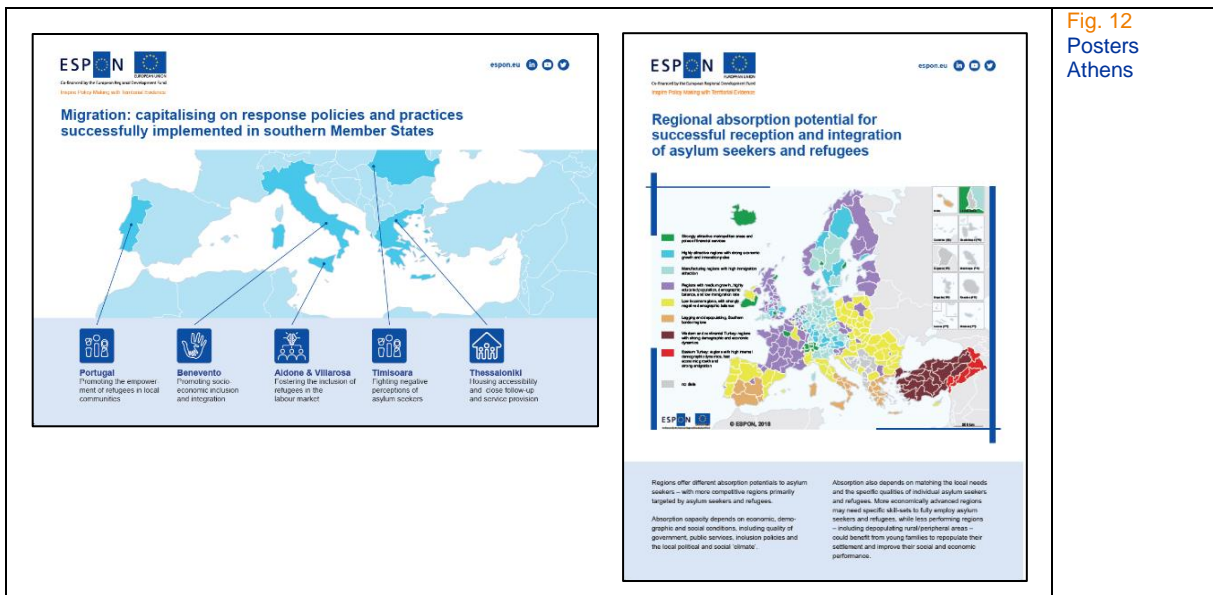
More actions are also needed on developing more positive narratives – promoting migration not as a threat but rather an opportunity – as migrants will certainly be needed in some work sectors as the European Economic and Social Committee member on the final conference panel pointed out.

While there are variety of programmes and organisations dealing with migration, more effort is needed to engage and involve migrants in programmes available instead of them being seen as passive recipients. There is also the need to counteract the risk of ‘inertia’ from both refugees and municipalities. There is now considerable efforts to support municipalities and promote a ‘can-do’ attitude.

Migration is a key aspect for territorial cohesion and requires a better understanding of the flows for more focused place-based approaches.

Future research should involve a better understanding of the ‘value chain’ from reception to integration and requires more data and evidence such as employment patterns, demographic changes, economic transformation and skills/re-skilling – not only applicable to migrants but to all citizens across Europe.

Two posters and one transnational observation were prepared and shared with the participants during the day.



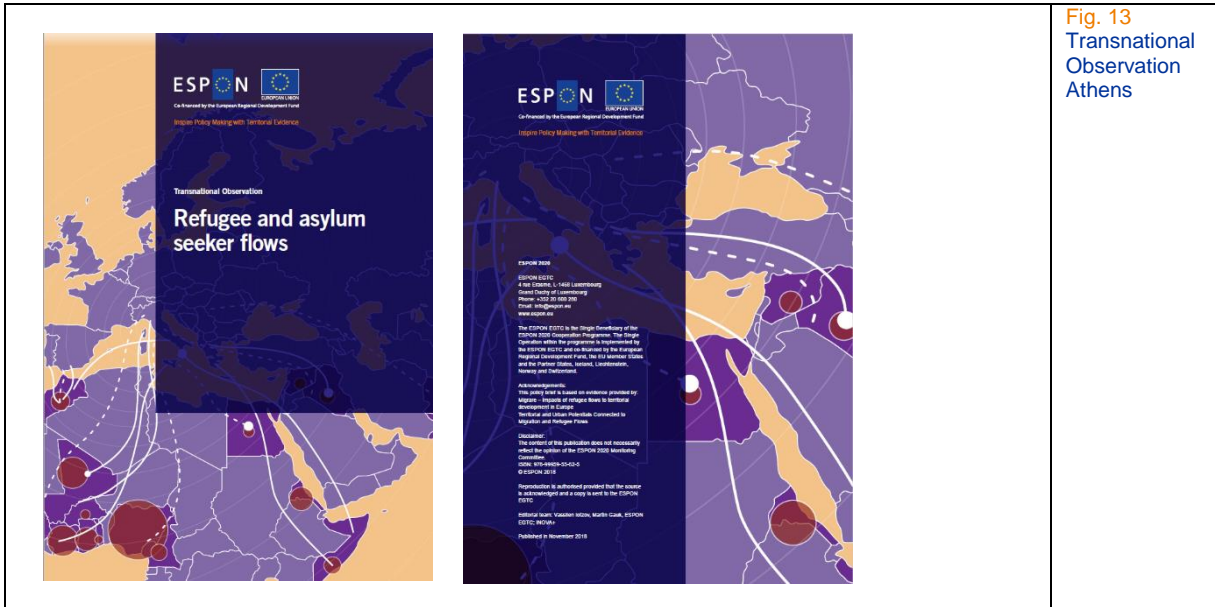


Fig. 13  
Transnational  
Observation  
Athens

### 3. Outreach Impact Assessment

#### 3.1 Surveyed feedback analysis

To measure the impact of each of the TNO activities is a crucial step to attain higher levels of satisfaction with and use of ESPON evidence at transnational, national and subnational scales. This process is part of the quality management and continuous improvement procedure and includes the collection and analysis of a feedback form filled by the participants after each of the TNO events.

The level of satisfaction of the participants, in both organisational and content-related aspects, is summarized in the figure below.

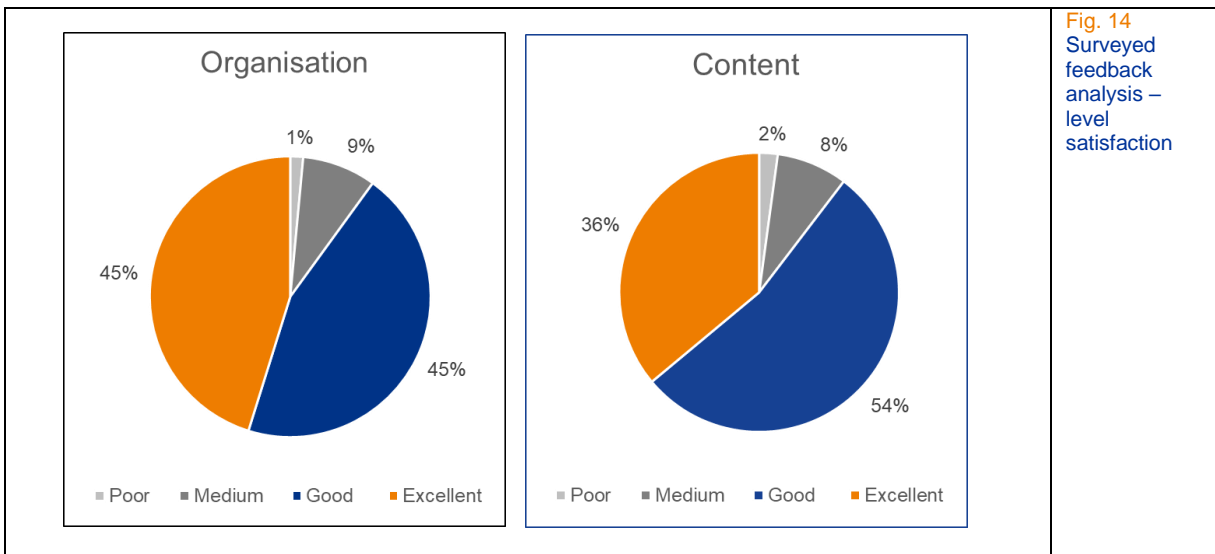
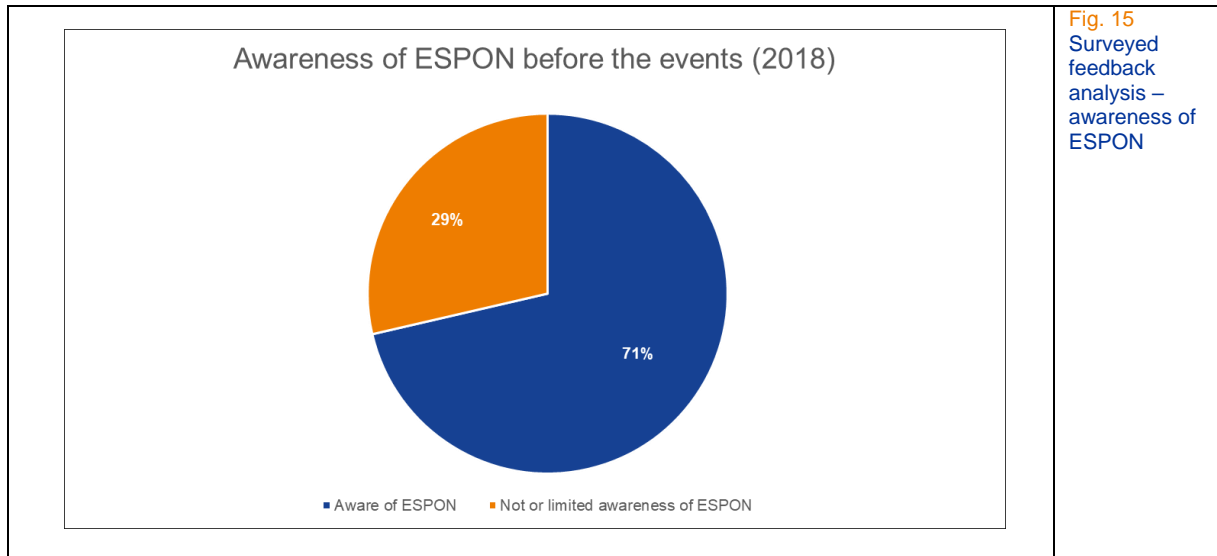


Fig. 14  
Surveyed  
feedback  
analysis –  
level  
satisfaction

Another aspect important to be taken into consideration regards to the awareness raising of ESPON research to participants that were not aware before the participation in the TNO events.



Results demonstrate that approximately 29% of the participants were not aware of ESPON before the events, what represents 181 new potential ESPON users in a total of 631 participants in the TNO 2018 activities.



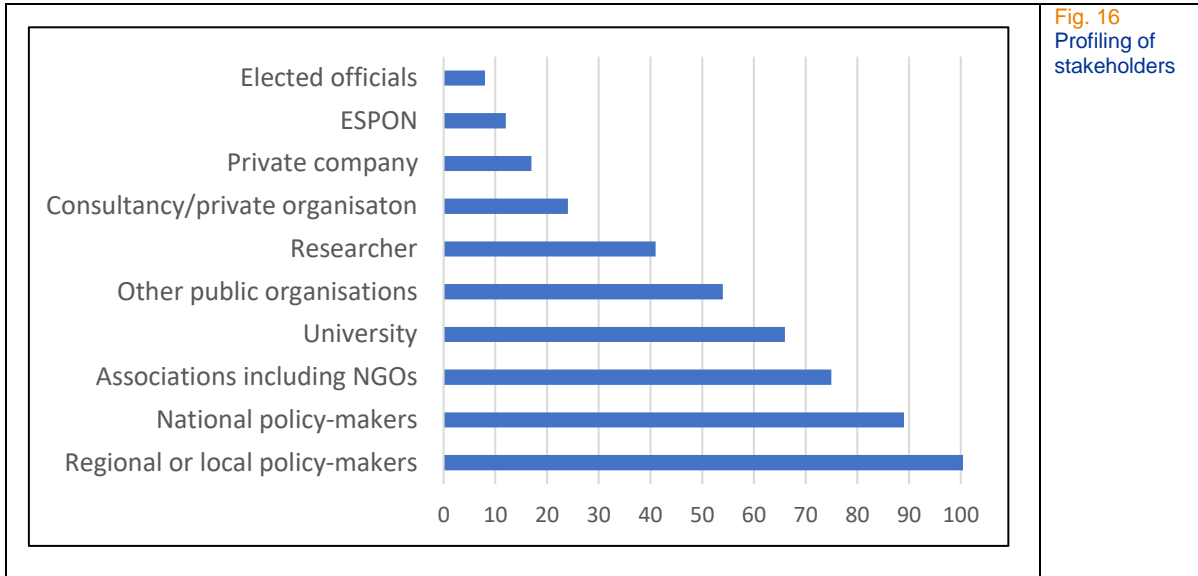
### 3.2 Profiling of stakeholders

The analysis of the type of participants that attend TNO events is an important indicator of the outreach activities and to measure the attractiveness to the expected target groups.

The most represented type of participants that attended the TNO events in 2018 are as following:

- **National policy-maker:** Involved in multi-national policies and national legislations
- **Regional policy-maker:** Drafting strategic programmes
- **Local policy-maker:** Implementing local strategies and urban agendas / sectoral policies
- **Universities:** Spatial planners

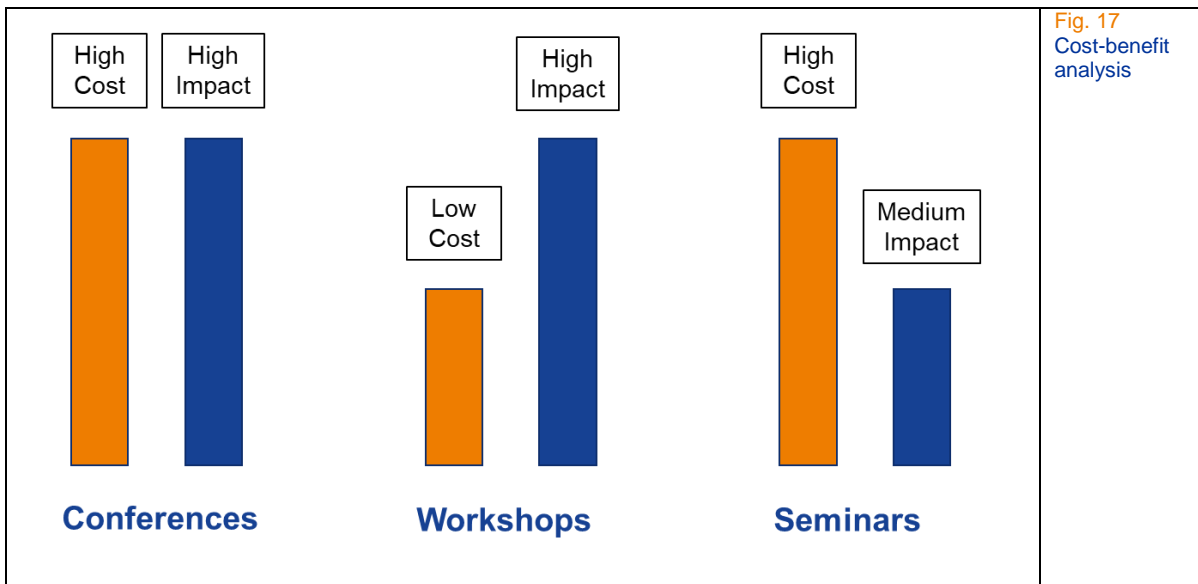
The figure below summarizes all the represented types of participants in all TNO activities 2018.



### 3.3 Cost-benefit analysis

The cost-benefit analysis per type of activity was performed from both the point of view of the TNO contract but also from the perspective of the respective participants.

From the point of view of the participants, the figure below compares the required investment in terms of costs and time that participants need to consider, in comparison to what they can extract or benefit from the participation.



The figures are an estimation and depend on every situation, but Conferences and Workshops seem to have a more attractive cost-benefit ratio, which relates to the higher levels of attendance on the TNO activities, in comparison to the expected targets.

The participation in a Conference usually requires to stay for at least one night in a Hotel because those are full-day events, while Workshops are half-day and allow participants to save costs in accommodation. On the other hand, while Conferences bring high-level speakers and cover several

policy-processes and have a stronger transnational focus, bringing a particular added value to the participants, Workshops are very much focused and allow a very active participation in a specific policy process that is particularly relevant for local stakeholders (more focused and higher direct impact). Seminars are somewhere in between those two types of activities, but the experience implementing the TNO activities reveal that the complementarity between different types of activities brings more added value to the Transnational Outreach activities as a whole.

#### 4. Lessons learnt and improvement proposals

The experience in the implementation of the first two years of the TNO contract allows to have a good overview and lessons learned that affect the ‘success’ of TNO activities.

The combination of different factors is required to achieve the expected results for each activity, namely:

- Place (accessibility + critical mass);
- Topic;
- Timing

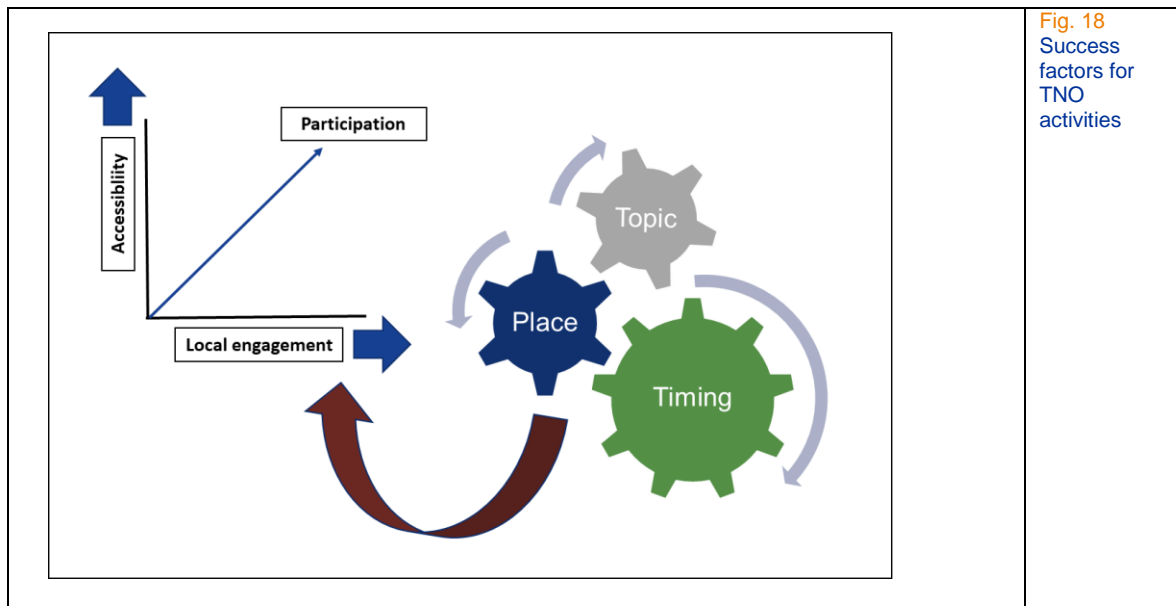


Fig. 18  
Success factors for TNO activities

The TNO activities for 2019 will follow the recurring PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. Lessons learnt from the activities previously carried out as well as the feedback from the ECP network and the participants in the events will be assimilated into the cycle when planning, implementing and evaluating each single activity. The key aspects include:

- Sound and timely preparation (Plan)
- Bringing ESPON closer to stakeholders (Do)
- Evaluation of the activities (Check)
- Implementation of the lessons learned (Act)

## 5. Budget overview

Work Package	Qtd.	Status Jan-2018		Status Dec-2018		Total Financial Offer	
		Qtd.	€	Qtd.	€	€	
<b>WP1 – Overall Outreach Strategy and Needs Analysis</b>	Lump Sum	40%	71 200,00 €	70%	124 600,00 €	178 000,00 €	70%
<b>WP2 – Cooperation with ESPON EGTC</b>	-	-	66 500,00 €	-	127 800,00 €	186 900,00 €	68%
2.1 Meetings with ESPON EGTC in Luxembourg	9	5	6 500,00 €	6	7 800,00 €	11 700,00 €	
2.2 Participation in Events	9	3	26 400,00 €	6	52 800,00 €	79 200,00 €	
2.3 Management of Website	Lump Sum	35%	33 600,00 €	70%	67 200,00 €	96 000,00 €	
<b>WP3 – Events</b>	-	-	83 200,00 €	-	417 600,00 €	678 000,00 €	62%
3.1 Conference	4	1	41 200,00 €	3	123 600,00 €	164 800,00 €	
3.2 Seminar	8	1	22 900,00 €	5	114 500,00 €	183 200,00 €	
3.3 Workshop	8	1	11 500,00 €	5	57 500,00 €	92 000,00 €	
3.4 Training Session	8	0	0,00 €	3	48 000,00 €	128 000,00 €	
3.5 e-learning	4	0	0,00 €	2	36 000,00 €	72 000,00 €	
3.6 Translation costs Event	10	2	7 600,00 €	10	38 000,00 €	38 000,00 €	
<b>WP4 – Short Documents</b>	-	-	38 950,00 €	-	112 250,00 €	250 600,00 €	45%
4.1 Transnational Brief	12	1	5 850,00 €	5	29 250,00 €	70 200,00 €	
4.2 Transnational Observation	8	2	17 600,00 €	5	44 000,00 €	70 400,00 €	
4.3 Poster	40	7	14 000,00 €	15	30 000,00 €	80 000,00 €	
4.4 Translation Costs Document	20	1	1 500,00 €	6	9 000,00 €	30 000,00 €	
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	259 850,00 €	-	782 250,00 €	1 293 500,00 €	60%

## 6. Planning of TNO activities 2019

Table 1 Policy priorities to be addressed in 2019

Strategic Priorities		ESPON evidence	Covered by TNO in 2017 / 2018
Macro-regions		Yes	Partly
Climate and Energy		Yes	No
Cultural Heritage		Yes	No
Digital Healthcare		Yes	No
Labour Markets		Yes	No
Functional Areas / Integrated / Place-based approaches		Yes	Partly

Table 2 Policy priorities 2017/18 that can be addressed horizontally on demand in 2019

Strategic Priorities	ESPON evidence	Covered by TNO in 2017 / 2018
Shrinking regions / Peripheral areas	Yes	Yes
Spatial Planning	Yes	Yes
Urban-rural interactions	Yes	Yes
Governance	Yes	Yes
Business development	Yes	Yes

The strategic priorities mentioned above will be addressed in 2019 by means of:

- 2 Conferences;
- 2 Seminars;
- 3 Workshops;
- 5 trainings;
- 2 e-learning sessions.

The above programme will be accompanied by shorter documents and posters, which are to be decided on the basis of the transnational demand.

Country	#	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Germany	1						S						
Austria	2				W								
Czech Republic	3											W	
Slovakia	4						T						
online	5		e-L										
Finland	6					C							
Latvia	7						T						
Denmark	8									T			
Netherlands	9				C								
Belgium	10			T									
online	11											e-L	
Romania	12										S		
Cyprus	13				W								
Portugal	14										T		

C	Conference
S	Seminar
W	Workshop
T	Training
e-L	e-Learning

Fig. 19  
Overview  
of TNO  
events  
2019

