ESPON BSR-TeMo
Territorial Monitoring for the Baltic Sea Region

Scientific Platform and Tools Project 2013/3/9

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Part C | Scientific Report

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The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU27, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

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This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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1. Why institutionalise?

A monitoring system can only live up to its potential if it is continuously updated and utilised in policy making. Therefore, it is necessary to regularly update the data; adjust the system as a whole to future policy needs; carry out analyses, and disseminate both the system and the results to users of the system.

Obviously, future system updates are beyond the scope of the BSR TeMo project, which ends in February 2014.

In the TeMo Project Specification it is, though, stated that '*it is important to define a roadmap on how to maintain, update and revise the Monitoring System*'. Such a 'road map' includes a number of elements among which technical specifications for HOW the monitoring system is updated; listing the sources for the data gathering; indicating how often and at which geographical scale the indicators should be updated; and outlining options for the analysis of the territorial development are the elementary ones.

However, since these tasks are not undertaken without addressing more specifically who/which organisational form will do this update and how this could be implemented (administratively, financially, organisational), this Volume of the Scientific Report will provide four concrete suggestions that can be taken as starting points when considering the future of the BSR Monitoring System.

The topic of institutionalisation was addressed briefly in the Interim Report and has since been raised at the 4th stakeholder meeting on the 22nd of January in Oslo and also been debated in more detail with the stakeholders on a workshop held at Nordregio in Stockholm on the 29th of April 2013.

2. Ambition level

It is important to keep in mind that the institutionalisation suggestions closely relate to the ambitions for the usability of the monitoring system in terms of scope of actions and costs. In this respect it is also important to stress that the higher the ambition level, the more relevant the monitoring system becomes for policy making in the Baltic Sea Region, and the more relevant it is, the higher the frequency of usage and appreciation of the system will be at the same time (see Figure 1):

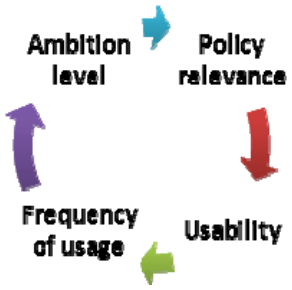

Figure 1 Enhanced relevance of the monitoring system

Overall, it can be argued that the more ambitious the future use of the monitoring system is, the higher the degree of institutionalisation is deemed necessary (illustrated in Figure 2):

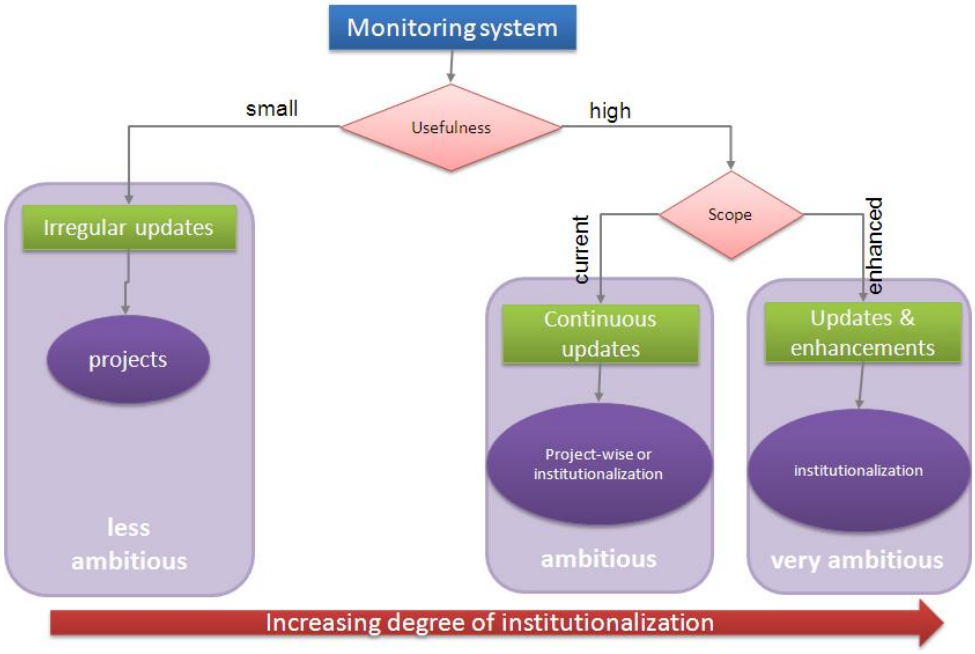

Figure 2 Institutionalisation options in regard to the continuation of the monitoring system

Besides the institutionalisation aspect itself, the ambition level can be adjusted on a range of parameters, of which data updates are only one aspect[1] to consider. A rough overview of the elements that can be adjusted according to perceived necessity and available funding (see Table 1):

Table 1 Elements of maintenance of the monitoring system

Ambition Level	**Data Updates** (frequency and scale of indicators)	**Functions** (enhance existing or add new functions of the systems as such)	**Type of analyses** (at various geographical scale; of few or several policy topics; of various time series)	**Dissemination and stakeholder involvement** (of results and knowledge of the monitoring system itself and deve-loping the usability with stakeholders)
Less ambitious	↕	↕	↕	↕
Ambitious	↕	↕	↕	↕
Very ambitious	↕	↕	↕	↕

A less ambitious solution would imply only minimum data updates, no functional and analytical enhancements in future, and only limited dissemination activities. In contrary, very ambitious solutions could imply detailed and highly frequent data updates, a series of new functionalities and large extensions of new types of analyses, and very active dissemination activities. One could also think of mixed solutions, where for instance data updates and dissemination are given high

[1] Often data updates are thought of as the only critical task; nevertheless, it should be stressed that updating functionalities, extended range and type of analyses, and also dissemination activities may consume a lot of time for a successful and sustainable monitoring system.

priorities (i.e. are very ambitious), while functional and analytical enhancements are given less priorities (or vice versa).

To help the stakeholders think about the various elements that are part of the updating of the monitoring system, Table 2 gives an overview of the involved tasks. However, without a set ambition level for each element, it is difficult to list the exact tasks, wherefore the following is to be taken as an indicative rather than complete list.

Table 2 Tasks related to the maintenance of the monitoring system.

Tasks		***Tasks***	
Data updates	• Data collection • Data harmonisation • Update of GIS database • Update of maps • Generation of new maps • Recalculation of advanced / complex indicators	**Analyses**	• Evaluate the current policy domains • Evaluate the current geographical coverage • Update typologies • Analysis of updated outputs • New analyses (of new policy fields, new geographical coverage) • State-of-the-region report
Functions	• Update of presentation system (with new maps and tables, with revised maps and tables) • Add new functions • Add new domains / scales / typologies	**Dissemination and liaison with stakeholders**	• Different dissemination activities (flyers, press release, newsletter, fact sheets, annual reports) • Stakeholder participations (workshops consultations) • Interaction with the stakeholders on how to use the monitoring system

3. Technical and knowledge requirements

The requirements of both technical nature and of the experience and knowledge demanded by the staff carrying out the maintenance and future update of the monitoring system are obviously also closely related to the chosen ambition level for the updates. In the following Table 3, the most grounding requirements are listed.

Table 3 Staff and technical requirements

Staff should have experience in:	**Technical requirements**
• GIS, geo-databases and mapping • Working with quantitative indicators at European scale • Statistical analysis and indicator interpretation of spatial phenomena at European scale • Data gathering, data harmonization and data processing • Databases, data sources and data vendors in the European sphere, Russia and Belarus., incl. ESPON. • European territorial cohesion policies and of the policy debate in the BSR in particular • Liaison with stakeholders • Writing up policy documents / analytical texts • Developing local browser applications / web applications based upon latest web standards (html, css, javascript etc.) • Dissemination, including acting as 'contact point' for public access to the monitoring system. • Project management	• An appropriate geo-database for hosting the data • GIS software for mapping and charting but also for processing certain indicators (raster data) • Website or other electronic possibility to provide public access to the monitoring system • Well-established organisational and/or administrative framework • Well embedded and functioning network of stakeholders (both policy-oriented, and technical) • Capacity for producing publications, flyers, etc.

The staff skills might be attributed to several experts, not just one, although certainly one expert might cover several of the listed requirements. Similarly, the ideal solution would be that the selected institution would cover all technical requirements in-house; optionally, requirements might also be outsourced.

The listed requirements also mean that when considering the costs of running the monitoring system, a number of different budget lines should be foreseen (Figure 3). Depending on the type of organization, and the country where it is located, different funding sources may be required for each budget line.

The size of these budget lines, and whether they apply at all for a selected organisation, is closely related to whether the organisation carrying out the maintenance/updating are already in possession of e.g. GIS licences and databases or if these have to be bought specifically for the monitoring system. Similar considerations can be taken in regard to whether dissemination is added to existing dissemination activities; whether there is already a strong interaction with relevant stakeholders that can be expanded upon, or if the monitoring system in other ways can be added to existing related activities.

Therefore it is currently not possible to estimate the number of working days per year that would be required for each task implementation as this depends on the prior experience and capacity of the organisation(s) that would be working with the tasks.

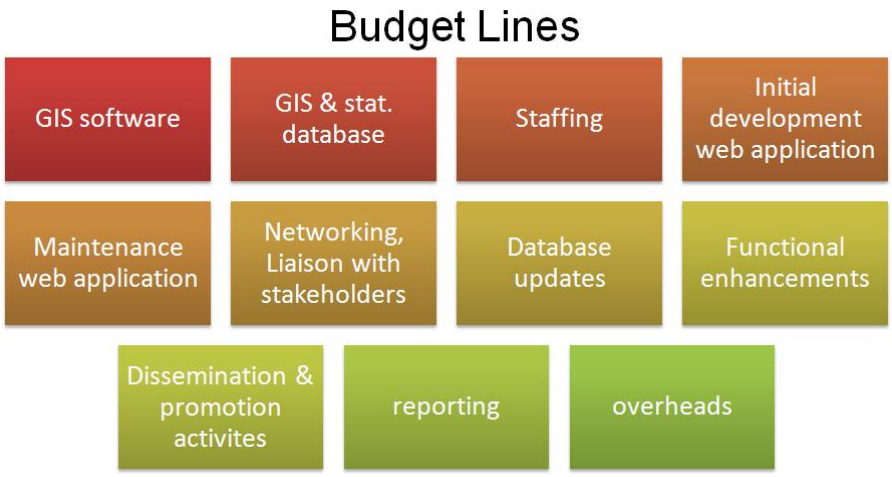

Figure 3 General budget lines for the maintenance of the monitoring system

4. Four institutionalisation models

The identified elements of the future maintenance of the BSR Territorial Monitoring System above were discussed at the work shop with members of VASAB and the ESPON CU. Based on these discussions the following four suggestions for how to institutionalise the monitoring system are brought forward for consideration:

Project model

This continuation suggestion is similar to the current TeMo project form: a project is set up with specific aims and tasks and is carried out over at set time frame.

Such a continuation project can be financed in various ways (EU funding, BSR funding, national funding) but obviously requires that certain actors take on the role of either setting up and financing a project call or take the initiative to apply for available funding.

Regarding the long-term continuation of monitoring territorial development in the BSR, this solution requires a high level of coherence between the projects from different time periods as well as from different funding sources and also that there is some room for more general maintenance of the monitoring system (such as 'retro' data adjustments; re-consideration of policy domains; technical updates; etc.) within each of these consecutive projects. The inclusion of new experts will open up the system to new and fresh ideas, or will bring in new analytical methods. Through tendering procedures there are chances for lower costs.

A danger of this model might arise if a new follow-up project does not seamlessly start after end of the previous one, i.e. time gap might occur in which system maintenance might not be ensured. Also, the budgets of follow-up projects might differ so that in cases of decreasing budgets not all tasks could be fulfilled to highest satisfaction. Regarding dissemination activities, uncertainty might arise if new people (new faces) are always presented to stakeholders and the media, with every new project. Finally, long-term continuity is not ensured with this solution.

Institution form

This suggestion implies that one institution takes responsibility for both the task of maintenance of the monitoring system and also the financing of it – whether this will be by own means or by applying for funding. Administratively this is a simple solution and in terms of synergy between the different elements of the monitoring system, it is rather straight-forward. To ensure the relevance of the monitoring system for several actors, it is however necessary to ensure that other stakeholders are also engaged in the future use and development of the monitoring system.

This model can basically be implemented in two ways:

(i) All maintenance and enhancement tasks will be done directly by staff employed by the responsible institution (in-house solution). This would require that the institution has the necessary human and technical resources.

(ii) Parts of the tasks are outsourced to third parties by the responsible institution by service contracts with well-defined scope, tasks, outputs and time schedules. Such outsourcing activities could, for instance, cover data collection tasks, or tasks of data generation or modelling, or cartography.

This solution ensures continuity of the system maintenance and updates; will give room for implementing synergies with other in-house activities; reduces management and administrative costs; and future extensions and system updates might be easier to implement. One single organisation might also ensure the principle of 'one face to the customer' which may prove useful for promotion and dissemination of monitoring results.

But there are also drawbacks related to this solution: the appointed institution might develop into a "monopoly" situation in which it is difficult to involve stakeholders from outside, and in which future system enhancements are more difficult to implement. There is also danger of slowly decreasing interest of the

institution in the future system maintenance (loss in commitment), and diminishing willingness to incorporate new ideas or new views on the monitoring.

Cooperation model

The cooperation model implies that several actors take on joint responsibility for the monitoring system in a formalised way. This can be set up in various ways: that a certain actor is responsible for a certain task of the maintenance while others are in charge of other elements (such as data updates; dissemination; involvement of stakeholders; analyses), or that one organisation has the main responsibility for coordinating the tasks between the cooperating actors. One quasi-solution is also that some of the tasks are only carried out on a project basis.

This model is very much consensus-driven with a high degree of self-commitment for the continuation and success of the monitoring system. It should also be easy to involve different stakeholders. Upon set up of the cooperation, one can use the individual strengths of each cooperation partner (for instance, one partner might have very good analytical competences, while another one owns a GIS database, and a third one uses his extensive networks).

Depending on the set-up, the disadvantage of this solution is that it may be difficult to find new partners if one of the original partners decides to leave the cooperation (danger of tasks 'falling out'), and there is also risk that the overall responsibility of the maintenance slides. Administration and management costs in this model are potentially higher, since all activities must be coordinated in a timely fashion with several partners, including time spent for travel and coordination meetings.

Network model

The network model is different from the cooperation model in that it is a network of partners that jointly provide the necessary data to the system. Furthermore, they will jointly be responsible for carrying out analysis and/or apply for money for update, maintenance, visualisation and analysis of the territorial development. This model has the advantage of being relatively easy to set up in that it is less formalised than the cooperation model and thus does not require up-front (financial) commitment. Based upon shared responsibilities there is flexibility to shift individual tasks between partners, as required. Similar to the cooperation model, the individual strength of each network partner might be utilized in best ways. If in the future new challenges or political issues are posted upon the monitoring system, new network partners can easily be added to the network, taking over new tasks and new responsibilities.

However there is a risk that no one will take on the driving role, just as there is little possibility for enforcement or compliance if one or more partners do not deliver their promised delivery in time. If the degree of personal commitments to the monitoring systems differs significantly throughout the network, there is danger of rising tensions between the partners as to outputs and quality standards. This risk is more prominent, the lower the degree of formalization of such a network partnership is (little control, difficulties in establishing responsibilities). Therefore, to ensure the quality of the monitoring system as a whole, one actor must be appointed the task of carrying out quality assurance of all the (data) deliveries. Also, if for instance data delivery is to be done by electronic submissions, setting-up a system that can handle this can require high start-up costs. Finally, in such a network model it might be more difficult to establish synergies with other activities.

5. Overview of the institutionalisation models

In the following Table 4 the main advantages and disadvantages are listed for better comparison of the four suggestions.

Table 4 Advantages and disadvantages of the four institutionalisation suggestions

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Project model	▪ Clear time frame ▪ Well-defined task ▪ Inclusions of various experts ▪ Potentially lower costs through tendering	▪ No continuity ▪ Each time start from scratch (particular if a new project team is appointed) ▪ System enhancements difficult to establish (particular with new team) ▪ No synergies ▪ Danger of non-funding periods (time gaps) ▪ Danger of different budget levels
Institution form	▪ Continuity ▪ Synergies with related activities of the institution ▪ High degree of (quality) control ▪ Extensions, advanced analyses, and system improvements easy to implement ▪ Lower management / administrative costs	▪ „monopoly" situation for the institution in charge ▪ Danger of „higher costs" ▪ Potentially diminished stakeholder input ▪ Higher difficulties to include new views / new ideas into the system in future ▪ In future institution might lose interest in monitoring system
Cooperation model	▪ High degree of stakeholder involvement ▪ Consensus driven ▪ Using individual strengths of each partner	▪ Risk of tasks 'falling out' ▪ Risks of high cost due to little agreement on tasks ▪ Consensus driven ▪ Higher administrative and management costs
Network model	▪ Simple/informal ▪ Shared responsibility ▪ Using individual strengths of each partner ▪ Easy to add new partners in the future	▪ Simple/informal ▪ Responsibilities difficult to establish ▪ Little control ▪ Extensions difficult to implement ▪ No synergies

To help evaluate the different suggestions, six parameters have been identified as very important for the future of the BSR monitoring system. Of these parameters some might be considered to have a higher value that others wherefore no summing-up or ranking of the solutions have been made yet.

Besides standard criteria of good organisations (i.e. clearly defined driving organization, quality assurance) there are two criteria related to the ESPON programme (i.e. synergy with ESPON data and indicators; compliance with ESPON tools), and another two criteria specific to the BSR (i.e. BSR policies, involvement of Russia and Belarus).

Table 5 Core parameters to consider for the 4 institutionalisation suggestions

Core parameters / Institutionalisation suggestion		Clearly defined main driving organisation.	Quality assurance	Russian / Belarus commitment	Accounting for specific BSR policies /challenges	Synergy with ESPON data /indicator updates	Synergy / compliance with other ESPON tools and projects
Project form	EU funded project	Medium	High	Low/ Medium	Medium	High	High
	BSR funded project	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	Low
One institution	EU organisation	High	High	Low	Low/ Medium	High	Medium/ High
	BSR organisation	High	High	High	High	Medium	Low
Cooperation model		Low/ Medium	Mediu m	Medium	High	Medium/ High	Medium
Network model		Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low/ Medium	Low

6. Recommendations from the TPG

While the ambition level for the future of the monitoring system is closely related to available funding for such a task, the prioritisation between the above mentioned parameters for the selection of the best institutionalisation solution is a political question – which parameters are the most important for maintaining the primary stakeholders' interest in the monitoring system.

However, with the interest of the territorial monitoring system in mind, the TPG recommends the suggestions that ascribe a clear division of responsibilities and in this sense would favour the institution form or the cooperation model, provided that it is possible to define clear roles of the involved actors and clear goals and ambitions for the monitoring. Since the temporal aspect is also important for monitoring in the long term, a more permanent solution than the project form is favoured, since the project form should only be favoured as an interim solution (such as the TeMo project in the development phase) or in combination with either the institution form or the cooperation model when certain tasks would benefit from being established in project form.

Furthermore, the TPG asks that the high degree and rather diverse requirements of knowledge capacity of the actors carrying out the data update and indicator analysis is kept in mind when selecting between the institutionalisation suggestions. Also, synergy with data and indicator updates from 'outside' of the BSR territorial monitoring system is another aspect to consider.

It has been requested during the final stages of the project (by the stakeholders) to get some kind of estimate of what would be the requirements for running the monitoring system. This would obviously depend on the institutional setting that is chosen, if the work is to be conducted by someone familiar with the project,

and how much of the work that was conducted during the actual project that should be "updated".

Given that we perceive the monitoring system to be all components of the TeMo project- i.e. data, indicators (simple and complex), policy relevance, visualisation, analysis and dissemination – we will provide some suggestions for the benefit of future discussion.

The estimates below are based on that all major task are pursued by someone familiar with the monitoring project and the institutional setting is at this point open (it could be work carried out within an institution or as a project). The time is also estimated based on a one year cycle of running the system. We also assume that the necessary GIS software and statistical software is available to the contractor.

Table 6 Estimate of time required for running BSR TeMo one year

Tasks	Time (in months)
Database update:	1
Production of maps and tables:	1
Update and maintenance of presentation tool:	0.5
Networking and liaison with stakeholders:	0.25
Testing and analysis:	1
Dissemination and promotion activities:	0.5
Reporting and documentation:	1
Management (project and financial):	0.5
Total	**5.75**

Hence, we perceive that in total around 6 months would be necessary for keeping the system "alive" a year. Obviously this would be different if the system had been left untouched for a few year – then time would be needed to get familiar with data, mapping, tools, stakeholders etc.

It should also be pointed out that this would not imply that 6 months each calendar year would need to be devoted to this task. Different persons could be working in parallel. However, some tasks are sequential – like data collection – mapping – analysis.

The data compiled and the analyses carried out during the lifetime of the TeMo project is based on latest data entries from 2011/2012 at the best, and for indicators where one or several statistical bureaus lag in data provision behind their ideal time frame, even as early as 2009. Therefore the TPG suggests that - in order to avoid a drastic time gap in the monitoring already from the outset of the continuation of the BSR territorial monitoring - a solution to ensure continuous updates of the data is sought. Particularly updating the headline indicators could be one way of ensuring at least some level of continuity. If desired, this update could be flanked by testing of other themes than the ones chosen for the TeMo project or by deeper analysis of the resulting slightly longer time lines, should the stakeholders find that interesting.

7. Position of BSR TeMo within ESPON monitoring

Something that is relevant to address after the end of the BSR TeMo project is, this monitoring system's position within the continued ESPON programme 2014-2020.

Regardless of the recommendations of the TeMo TPG, it is a fact that the ownership of BSR TeMo lies with the ESPON program and therefore is within the control of the ESPON CU/MA. Given this reality, it seems necessary to reflect on the institutional structure in the near future of the continuation of TeMo. Obviously TeMo can be sustained in the format of service contracts where data is updated, new applications are tested and the further dissemination of the system is pursued. This could probably still be pursued without the disadvantages of the "project model" for some time to come. The main difficulties, or disadvantages, which would eventually have to be addressed can be summarised from table 4 as follows: continuity and synergies. Eventually the project model would suffer from loss of continuity if the tasks will be performed by various actors – and loss of synergy with other ESPON and BSR projects if only shorter service contract are pursued. Short, specified contracts will probably not allow for long-term interaction with other projects, either through meetings, seminars, personal involvement in other TPGs, etc. or through direct cooperation with related projects.

During its development, the TeMo project has benefited from its position within the ESPON framework and has been developed in synergy with other ESPON projects, as illustrated as in figure 4:

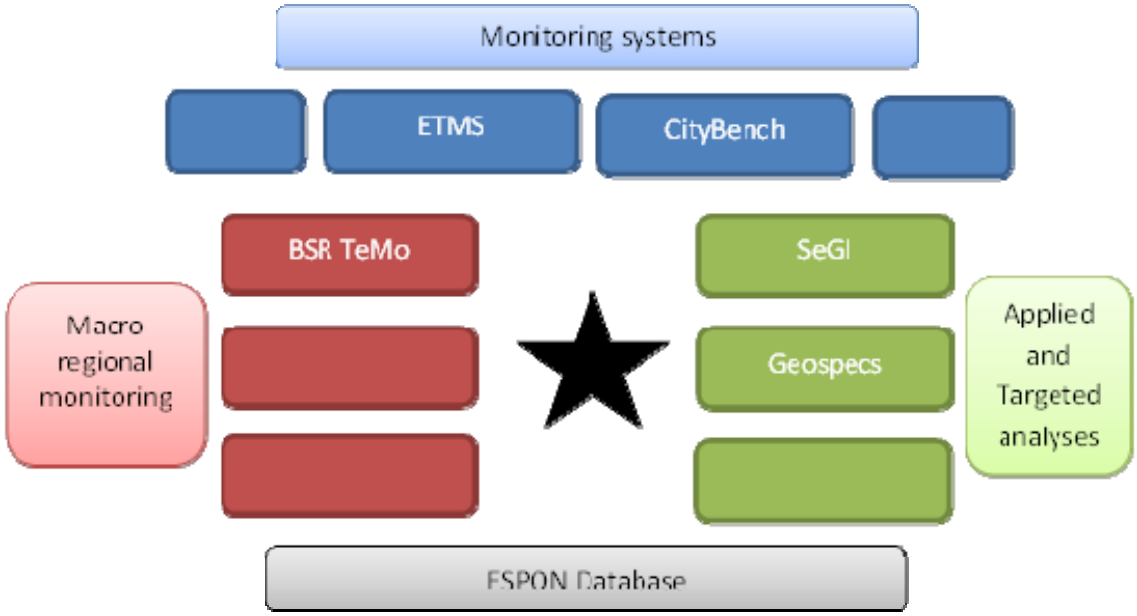

Figure 4 Perceived current position of TeMo within the ESPON programme.

An alternative situation for the institutionalisation of TeMo could thus be, that it will more formally be incorporated as a component (or satellite) of an ESPON Europe-wide monitoring tool; based on NUTS-2 level with macro-regional and territorial (including urban) zoom-in components. Such a monitoring scheme would then take influence from thematic and applied research projects and the general evolution of European policy. This situation is depicted in figure 5.

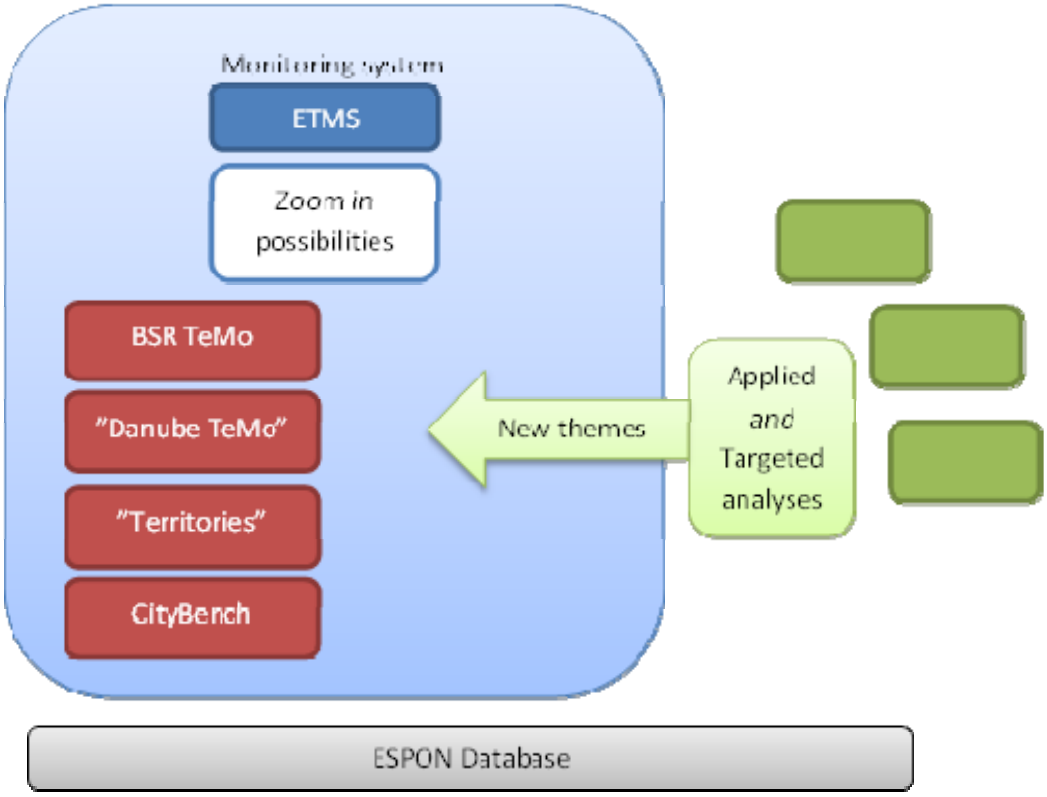

Figure 5 Possible future position of TeMo within a larger ETMS.

In the end, as with the other institutional choices for TeMo, this is a political or ESPON strategic issue. The TPG can only reflect on how this might be a possible setting in which the institutionalisation of the BSR monitoring can be embedded.

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