

Version 4 March 2014



ESPON 2020

Cooperation Programme

DRAFT

Notification to Readers:

The structure of this version of the Draft ESPON Cooperation Programme is based on the European Commission's "Draft Template and Guidelines for Cooperation Programmes" – Version 3 of 28.06.2013.

As soon as the consolidated final version of the template model is available, the Draft ESPON Cooperation Programme will be transferred into this template model which shall be used to submit the programme digitally to the European Commission.

Table of Contents

Section 1: Strategy

- 1.1. Strategy for the contribution of the programme the Union strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.
 - 1.1.1. Introduction
 - 1.1.2. Context for the programme
 - 1.1.3. Lessons learned, needs and challenges
 - 1.1.4. Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Programme
- 1.2. Justification of the financial allocation

Section 2: Priority Axes

- 2.1 Introduction to Priority Axes of ESPON 2020

Section 2A

- 2.2. Description of Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach
 - 2.2.1. Specific Objective 1: Continued territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses
 - 2.2.2. Specific Objective 2: Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support
 - 2.2.3. Specific Objective 3: Improved territorial observation and use of tools for territorial analyses
 - 2.2.4. Specific Objective 4: Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence
- 2.3. Support to specific objective 5: Leaner, effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient management assistance
- 2.4. Actions supported under the investment priority
 - 2.4.1. Action related to Specific Objective 1
 - 2.4.2. Action related to Specific Objective 2
 - 2.4.3. Action related to Specific Objective 3
 - 2.4.4. Action related to Specific Objective 4
- 2.5. Definition of beneficiary
 - 2.5.1. Guiding principles for the selection of operations
 - 2.5.2. Common and specific output indicators
 - 2.5.3. Performance framework
 - 2.5.4. Categories of intervention

Section 2B

- 2.6. Summary of planned use of technical assistance, including actions reinforcing the administrative capacity
- 2.7. Description of Priority Axis for Technical Assistance
 - 2.7.1. Specific objective and expected results
 - 2.7.2. Actions to be supported and expected contributions to Specific Objective 5
- 2.8. Output indicators
- 2.9. Categories of intervention

Section 3: Financing Plan

- 3.1. Table specifying for each year the total financial appropriation from the ERDF.
- 3.2.A Financial Plan of the programme
- 3.2.B Breakdown of Financial Plan

Section 4: Integrated approach to territorial development

Section 5: Implementation provisions

- 5.1. Identification of relevant authorities and bodies
 - 5.1.1. The ESPON Managing Authority assuming the function and tasks role as Joint Secretariat
- 5.2. Summary description of management and control arrangements
- 5.3. The apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States
- 5.4. Use of the Euro
- 5.5. Involvement of partners

Section 6: Reduction of administrative burden

Section 7: Separate elements

- 7.1. List of relevant partners involved in the preparation of the programme

Annexes [to be completed later]

- Draft Ex-Ante evaluation report including executive summary
- Confirmations of agreement
- A citizen's summary

List of Tables [to be completed later]

SECTION 1. STRATEGY

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Introduction

The aim of the the ESPON 2020 Programme is to support the reinforcement of the effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral policies and programmes under European Structural Investment (ESI) funds, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial evidence covering the entire territory of the 28 EU Members States, as well as 4 Partner States of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The ESPON 2020 programme aims at promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels.

The purpose is to contribute to a Cohesion Policy that has the maximum effect in supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy, strengthening the capacity of the EU economy to grow, innovate and generate employment, and to deliver a positive and lasting impact in promoting territorial cohesion and harmonious development across EU regions and Member States.

The programme seeks to build upon the very significant pan-European territorial evidence and research base successfully carried through during the ESPON 2006 and ESPON 2013 programmes, to further strengthen evidence informed policy making across the EU territory and to contribute to enabling regions and cities to develop place-based responses to the Europe 2020 challenges of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a contribution of €41.3 million for the period 2014-2020.

The first section of this Cooperation Programme provides an overview of the context for the ESPON 2020 programme, the key lessons learned from the previous ESPON programme together with the needs and challenges ahead, and presents the overall strategy and objectives for the ESPON 2020 Programme.

1.1.2 Context for the Programme

Contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and a reformed Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

Evidence is essential to inform sound policy development. Against the backdrop of increasing scarcity of public resources, overcoming the economic crisis together with addressing key environmental and social challenges, EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 recognises that a more integrated, focussed and results-orientated intervention logic to ESI funding is required for the forthcoming programming period.

Reformed Cohesion Policy now proposes concentrating funding on a smaller number of 11 thematic objectives, closely related to the Europe 2020 Strategy, though which ESI funding is to be mobilised and targeted to maximise efficiency and to ensure that each policy priority receives sufficient funding to deliver a significant and lasting impact.

Further, progress towards achieving country specific Europe 2020 targets will be more closely monitored with clear indicators, conditionalities and performance incentives, linked to economic governance, to measure the effectiveness of policy intervention and thereby contributing to the overall aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Supporting economic, social and territorial cohesion and the Territorial Agenda 2020

Since the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, territorial cohesion has been elevated to a core goal of the EU, together with economic and social cohesion. Member States, their regions and cities as well as neighbouring territories play a crucial role in promoting territorial cohesion, both in terms of setting national and European policy agendas and through national sector policy decisions that impact territories.

The Territorial Agenda (TA) 2020 underpins the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy and sets out policy orientations for the development of the European territory. There is now at intergovernmental level a clear high-level recognition that the major societal challenges faced by the EU today - globalisation, innovation, economic competitiveness, demographic change and migration, climate change and environmental challenges as well as energy security and use have a clear territorial dimension, which will have different impacts in different regions and cities and different requirements to cope with the economic and social consequences of the crisis.

The capacity of Member States, their regions and cities to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth therefore depends on their specific endogenous development potential and their assets in terms of human, physical and natural capital, knowledge, institutions and networks. This establishes to a clear added value in including a territorial dimension for policy effectiveness.

In addition, the ever increasing inter-dependency of a larger territorial context due to globalisation trends makes the benefit of regions and cities joining forces and collaborating in territorial cooperation arrangements evident for an increasing number of policymakers. This points to a growing need for benchmarking regions and cities in a European, and even global, context and for exploring comparative advantages within wider territorial contexts.

Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020 therefore proposes to move beyond a “one-size-fits-all” approach to reflect the varied diversity of European regions to deliver policies and ESI funding tailored to the specific place-based needs of individual regions. A clear example of the new focus on the territorial dimension is the introduction of Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument and Macro-Regional Strategies which provides for the integrated delivery arrangements for investments under more than one priority axis which can be bundled into an integrated, cross-sectoral, place-based investment strategy for a certain territory or functional urban area, including cross-border regions and transnational cooperation areas.

Request for territorial evidence to support to policy development

The new shift in emphasis on performance monitoring and the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy is likely to yield a significant increase in the need and demand from the European Commission, Member States, regions and cities for high-quality, relevant and up-to-date territorial evidence to inform policy decisions. In this context, the Cohesion Policy legislative package 2014-2020 requests the further improvement of territorial analyses and data at European scale. Moreover, the European process emphasises the importance of urban policy and the need to work towards an Urban Agenda which in turn requires an urban focus in the development of territorial evidence.

European Territorial Cooperation Regulation 1299/2013, Art. 2, litra (3d) calls for reinforcing the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting:

“analyses of development trends in relation to the aims of territorial cohesion, including territorial aspects of economic and social cohesion, and harmonious

development of the European territory through studies, data collection and other measures”.

In addition, the ETC Regulation requests that interregional cooperation support the:

“strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends.”

The aim of the ESPON 2020 Programme is to take up this task and to meet this demand by producing, delivering and disseminating European, national, regional and local territorial trends and characteristics whether in terms of, for example, employment and labour market, business structures (such as SME) and investment patterns, functional urban regions, commuting patterns, population ageing and demographic shifts, cultural, landscape and heritage features, climate change vulnerabilities and impacts, land use and resource constraints, institutional and governance arrangements, infrastructures, connectivity and accessibility, service provision, metropolitan regions, smaller and medium-sized cities and towns and linkages between rural and urban areas.

At EU level, sectoral policies, such as transport, agriculture, environment etc., have concrete territorial impacts. Policy efforts contributing to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy will therefore benefit significantly from a pan-European territorial evidence base in respect of thematic objectives that clearly identify the territorial dimension and impact of policy implementation. This will, together with other relevant information, contribute to considerations on where investments may have the highest yield and/or where unwanted negative impacts on territorial cohesion may occur.

In addition, tools for benchmarking and cross-country, inter-regional and inter-city comparison, illustrating joint development opportunities and challenges together with forecasting territorial impacts will support efficient and more effective use of resources while helping to avoid unforeseen adverse territorial impacts.

At the national and regional level, efforts to implement Cohesion Policy will manifest in, for example, strategic spatial plans for local and regional development, urban integrated development plans in cities, macro-regional strategies and transnational co-operation programmes, etc. In summary, regions and cities of Europe can make an important contribution to the objectives to the growth and jobs agenda of Europe 2020 Strategy and to a European territory well-balanced in terms of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Such policy efforts will require robust, comparable and analytical territorial evidence.

This is where the ESPON 2020 Programme can bring added value by having a clear focus on evidence production, knowledge transfer, analyses support and outreach to potential users. The ESPON 2020 programme will, through this approach, contribute to continuous policy learning and uptake of a European territorial perspective which will reinforce the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy through new insights on development opportunities and challenges at European level (including with a global context), in Member and Partner States or in cross-border, regional and local strategies, and ultimately contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

1.1.3 Lessons Learnt, Needs and Challenges

ESPON has through the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes substantially improved the European knowledge and evidence base related to territorial development, territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts. ESPON 2013 has gradually evolved as a recognised and authoritative network providing important pan-European knowledge

and facts, observations and tools to policymakers at all levels. This has been delivered by engaging the cooperation of scientist and experts from throughout Europe, supported by a European network of ESPON Contact Points (ECP) in each of the participating states.

For ESPON 2020 to fully effective in delivering upon its objectives it should be firmly based on the real needs of its overall target group – the public authorities and other policy actors at EU, Member State, regional and local level in Europe. Member and Partner States will ensure that ESPON 2020 continues and contributes further to evidence informed policy making. This view is shared by the European Commission (EC), the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee as well as a growing number of regions and cities as active stakeholders and users of European territorial evidence.

Renewal, Refocus and Upgrade Of ESPON 2020

Needs for innovation through renewal, refocus and improvement of ESPON 2013 have been highlighted also by Member and Partner States as well as the EC. The key lessons are that ESPON 2020 must step up its effort to ensure better that its actions do in fact inform tangible policy development and changes.

A focal challenge at the policy level is the need for further improving a territorial dimension in policy development, which despite of the important improvements and support made by ESPON 2013, is still hampered by the lack of systematic, comparable and reliable European territorial evidence describing territories and functional areas at an adequate territorial level for effective policy-making.

Evaluations made of the ESPON 2013 Programme by the ESPON Monitoring Committee (MC) and by the EC have assessed needs and challenges and led to key recommendations for innovations of ESPON 2020:

- Improve substantially the transfer of territorial evidence, knowledge and results to the policy arena ensuring appropriateness, timeliness, clarity, relevance and quality of the evidence.
- Offer policy-relevant analyses upon demand from target stakeholders at EU and national, regional and local level. The analyses should provide territorial evidence to European, national and regional/local policy-making in a timely and responsive manner, be understandable and efficiently communicated.
- Provide stronger validation of the scientific quality of results and the comparability of data in support of innovative policy actions.
- Ensure the effective outreach of ESPON 2020 evidence to new users through coordinated efforts including the ECP Network.
- Reinforce the in-house scientific and communicative capacity in order to improve knowledge transfer and outreach.
- Encourage other ESI funding programmes and bodies to use territorial evidence.
- Establish an institutional set up which significantly reduces the overall administrative burden of the programme for Member and Partner State administrations and for beneficiaries.
- Apply administrative procedures including the use of service contracts that, through a lower level of administrative burden, will promote further the interest in being involved in delivering ESPON 2020 territorial evidence.

These needs for innovation in the ESPON 2020 Programme are presented in the SWOT analysis below.

Table 1: Innovation needs for ESPON 2020 – a SWOT analysis

Issue	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Improved knowledge transfer	Increases the outreach and uptake of territorial evidence	Territorial issues not the top of political agenda	Stimulates a territorial dimension in policy making	Too much transfer creating exhaustion. Addressing the wrong target groups
Swifter policy relevant analyses	Increased use of territorial evidence	Requires internal competence	Recognition and higher visibility	Quality and communication not sufficient
Stronger scientific quality	Solid and reliable results for policy making	Difficulties in communication	Support the recognition of ESPON	Impression that ESPON is only about science
Wider outreach to new users	Broader use of territorial evidence at all levels	Difficulties in communication	Use targeted translation of key texts	Lack of uptake by potential new users
Increased scientific and communicative capacity	Strengthen the quality in reports and transfer speed of results to policy	Potentially less use of national experts	Support ESPON as a recognised European body for territorial evidence	Trade off between increased capacity and transparency in specific activities
New delivery to other ESI funded programmes	Enhance a territorial dimension in ESI funding programmes	Long term in relation to programming post 2020	Support territorial evidence use in programme and project implementation	Lack of capacity in programme secretariats to process territorial evidence
New organisational setup enhancing steering via workplans and reporting	Better focus on impact of the programme by the MC, no necessity of many single decisions on single activity	Transparency in the detail of every single activity may risk decreasing for MS/PS	Increased awareness and focus of the MC on and use and impact of ESPON territorial evidence	The type of approach in monitoring may hamper some MS/PS' interest in involvement
New organisational setup for less administrative burden of Member and Partner States	Reduce financial control from 32 to 1 country. Less need of the ESPON MC checking partner status and finance. Simpler steering of activities by monitoring the single beneficiary.	Concentration of liabilities in one body – the ESPON EGTC – where not all countries are members. No micro-management decision making possible anymore	Lean and efficient administration of the EGTC by very limited membership. Sharing the burden through a liability mechanism. Focus on the overall performance of the programme	In some MS/PS benefits may not be as high as in other. Positive externalities may be perceived as decreasing for ESPON MC members because of fewer decisions on each activity
New organisational setup for less administrative burden of researchers and experts (switch to use of service contracts)	Services increase interest of researchers and experts as no financial reporting and first level certification is necessary. Better definition of output and steering of outcome of contracts.	More indirect involvement in the selection may raise a sense of lack of ownership by MS/PS	Potential increase in competition for contracts getting top researchers and experts. Increase of the usefulness of results for policy	Call for tender procedures are still burdensome. Some researchers and experts may not find service contracts attractive

1.1.4. Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Programme

Mission of ESPON 2020

Taking into consideration the main territorial needs and challenges of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the lessons learnt identified above, the ESPON 2020 Programme will provide continuity in respect of the significant knowledge base built by the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes. At the same time, it will meet the needs expressed by Member and Partner States and the EC for renewal, refocus and innovation.

The strategy for the ESPON 2020 programme will ensure that ESPON 2020 plays the specific role of supporting policy development institutional capacity, effective policymaking and efficient public administration with European territorial evidence and in doing so pursue the following overarching mission:

- *ESPON 2020 shall continue the consolidation of a European Territorial Observatory Network and grow the provision and policy use of pan-European, comparable, systematic and reliable territorial evidence.*

Building on this overall mission statement the programme strategy is further defined as follows:

- Contribute to enhancing the use of territorial evidence in policy development and programmes related to EU Cohesion Policy (economic, social and territorial cohesion) at EU level and in Member States and regions, in relevant European and national sectoral policies and in relevant policy processes, such as the Territorial Agenda 2020.
- Implement applied research and analyses producing new evidence and facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange for policy processes by delivering territorial evidence to support to policy development at the EU, national, regional and local level as well as in a transnational and cross-border context.
- Monitor major European territorial trends, potentials and challenges, and provide analytical tools in order to contribute actively with EU-wide territorial evidence and experience to relevant policy processes and political debates as well as to territorial strategy building.
- Ensure effective, timely and prompt communication, maximisation of outreach and use by potential stakeholders together with facilitating on-going coordination and cooperation with a wide range of target institutions at EU, national, regional and urban level and ESI programmes, in particular at transnational and cross-border level.

ESPON 2020 actions shall in particular promote the territorial dimension of EU 2020, EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 as well as other territorially-relevant, sectoral policies and programmes, at all levels of government.

Specific Objectives

In order to serve the target groups in the most efficient and effective manner, and in accordance with the mission for the ESPON 2020 Programme, the strategy for 2014-2020 is to pursue **5 specific objectives** that will guide the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme:

- **Specific Objective 1:** *Continued production of territorial evidence.*
- **Specific Objective 2:** *Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.*

- **Specific Objective 3:** *Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses.*
- **Specific Objective 4:** *Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.*
- **Specific Objective 5:** *Leaner, effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient programme assistance.*

In respect of the Specific Objective 5 above, to ensure the most streamlined and efficient administration possible for the kind of activities that ESPON 2020 will implement, the organisational structure will comprise of an European Grouping of Territorial Cohesion (EGTC) contracted to a Single Beneficiary to implement Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Programme using public procurement and service contracts only. The required scientific and communicative capacity of the Single Beneficiary, including senior scientific and policy communication capacity, shall be provided in-house for ESPON 2020 to be able to achieve its objectives.

Continuous policy relevant guidance to applied research activities shall be provided throughout the ESPON 2020 Programme in order to achieve high-quality output results of the highest possible level of direct interest and relevance for policy development processes and target groups.

EC Thematic Objective and Corresponding Investment Priority

Programmes for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 are generally required to concentrate on a limited number of thematic objectives in order to increase the potential to make a significant contribution to regional policies across the EU. The eleven optional thematic objectives are as follows:

1. Research & innovation.
2. Information and communication technologies (ICT).
3. Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).
4. Shift towards a low-carbon economy.
5. Climate change adaptation & risk prevention and management.
6. Environmental protection & resource efficiency.
7. Sustainable transport & removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures.
8. Employment & supporting labour mobility.
9. Social inclusion & combating poverty.
10. Education, skills & lifelong learning.
11. Institutional capacity building & efficient public administrations.

The ETC Regulation 1299/2013, Article 6 does not set a specific thematic objective or limitation in the number of thematic objectives to be selected under interregional cooperation which the ESPON 2020 programme is part of. As all 11 thematic objectives have a territorial dimension or impact, they are all considered relevant for support by European territorial evidence produced, generated and disseminated by ESPON 2020. The ESPON 2020 Programme will aim therefore at providing support in general under the Thematic Objective 11 as follows:

“Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening of institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administration supported by the ESF”.

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall, in the production of territorial evidence, analyses, studies and data (pursuant to Article 2 (3d) of the ETC Regulation 1299/2013), be capable to serve all policy development programmes related to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, no matter what range of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities the individual policy process programme has selected.

Against that backdrop, the investment priority selected for the ESPON 2020 Programme is referred in the ETC Regulation 1299/2013, Art. 7 (c)(iii), states the need for:

“strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through analysis of development trends.....”

Table 2: Synthetic Overview of the Justification for the Selection of Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
<p>Thematic Objective 11:</p> <p>Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening of institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administration supported by the ESF</p>	<p>ETC Regulation, art. 7 (c)(iii):</p> <p>Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through analysis of development trends</p>	<p>EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral and thematic policies and programmes require high-quality territorial evidence at the pan-European scale in order to support the effective implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy and achieve the aims of economic, social and territorial cohesion.</p> <p>Evidence informed policy development, including a territorial dimension, will contribute to the efficiency of implementation of ESI funds and the Europe 2020 Strategy as well as other territorially relevant policies.</p>

Target Groups for ESPON 2020

The contribution of ESPON 2020 to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and the support to economic, social and territorial cohesion lies in its ability to engage with and inform the real needs of key target groups in designing and implementing policies. Territorial evidence will support integrated, place-based approaches and deliver a wider European benchmarking of individual regions, cities and larger territories, which can help defining and exploring new opportunities for development and growth.

Target groups for the programme should be clearly defined in the preparation for each activity to be carried through ESPON 2020. In fulfilling its overall mission and objectives, the primary target groups for receiving and using the ESPON 2020 territorial evidence are:

- European policymakers, in particular in the field of Cohesion Policy as well as other relevant sectoral and thematic policies and programmes, particularly those currently not fully articulating their territorial approach.
- National policymakers and practitioners responsible for territorial cohesion, ETC programmes, macro-regional strategies and Cohesion Policy preparation and implementation at national level, as well as other relevant policy fields.
- Authorities implementing ESI Funding programmes and preparing periodical reporting.

As secondary target groups, the following actors are important as receivers and users of territorial evidence:

- Organisations promoting different regional/urban interests at EU level.
- Practitioners and actors of multi-level governance systems.
- Policy officers and planners at regional and local level as well as for larger territories.
- University academics, both researchers and students as future decision makers.
- The private sector and wider European audiences.

As the providers of the research capacity and scientific excellence for ESPON 2020, academics, scientists and researchers are important for ESPON 2020 outputs. Indirectly, the actions and corresponding activities of ESPON 2020 will therefore benefit the scientific community within Europe in the field of territorial research.

Participatory Process and Partnership Principle

A participatory process has been organised according to the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), Art. 5, and implemented in accordance with the principle set out in the European Code of Conduct for Partnership (ECCP).

The ESPON Managing Authority (MA) and the ESPON Joint Working Group (JWG) have identified the relevant partners for open consultations as the main target groups identified in the current Cooperation Programme, in particular competent institutions and authorities at European, national, regional and local level as well as relevant economic and social partners whose sectors and decisions can benefit from the results of the programme.

In the process of elaborating the Cooperation Programme, several consultation with relevant national administrations have been undertaken and the results have been used for the initial phase of the programming exercise, such as creating a common narrative for the new programme. These consultations have helped to better identify the needs to be addressed by the ESPON 2020 Programme.

On the basis of the draft final Cooperation Programme, a Europe-wide, open web-based Public Consultation including a questionnaire was organised from 4 March 2014 to 2 April 2014. The consultation gave competent institutions and bodies at all levels, stakeholders and citizens interested in ESPON the possibility to state their views, ideas and demands to the ESPON 2020 Programme. The consultation focused on the main areas of involvement set in the ECCP:

- Definition and selection of the priorities and related specific objectives
- Definition of programme specific indicators.
- Proposed allocation of funds.

A draft final version of the Cooperation Programme was made publicly accessible on a specific section of the ESPON 2013 Programme website dedicated to the programming exercise for the period 2014-2020.

Participating Member and Partner States conducted in the same period national consultations using a format that they found most adequate.

A dedicated feedback session targeting the European institutions, bodies and organisations were organised in Bruxelles on XX March 2014 to ensure that opinions and ideas of a wide range of EU stakeholders and users of territorial evidence at European level was fed into the final considerations on the ESPON 2020 Programme.

The results of the consultations carried through on the ESPON 2020 Programme were documented and made public on the ESPON website. Direct feedback was provided to participating partners.

The results were considered by the ESPON JWG in the process of the finalisation of the Cooperation Programme before its submission to the EC for approval.

[Note: Following the public consultation process this section will be updated to reflect feedback received.]

Geographical coverage

With reference to the EC Regulation 1299/2013, Article 3 (5), interregional cooperation programmes shall cover the entire EU territory. The ESPON 2020 Programme will during 2014-2020 cover the territory of all 28 EU Member States.

Moreover, the geographical coverage of the 4 Partner States of Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland will continue from the previous ESPON 2013 Programme as partners to the programme.

The analysis, studies and data collection will where relevant, feasible and cost-efficient include territories of EU Candidate Countries and other countries upon acceptance of the ESPON MC.

1.2 Justification of the financial allocation

The ESPON 2020 Programme continues the work on European territorial knowledge and evidence that follows the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes. The purpose is to make a European territorial knowledge and evidence base available for policies and programmes related to economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe in support of Thematic Objective 11.

The renewal of the ESPON programme for 2014-2020 with a stronger capacity to deliver territorial evidence in time for policy processes requires resources that will partly be liberated from streamlining the administrative system.

Moreover, the outreach and use of the European territorial evidence provided by ESPON 2020 shall be further stimulated giving a wider group of stakeholder's analytical support with a European perspective.

This continuous progress, maintenance and update of a European territorial knowledge and evidence base will require financial resources. However, the renewal of ESPON is possible to implement within a budget for 2014-2020 that is only marginally higher than in the previous programme period.

The financial allocation to ESPON 2020 Programme will be split between the two Priority Axes with the large majority of financial means allocated to Priority Axis 1. The

justification for this partition is that the actions under Priority Axis 1 (Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach) are delivering the European territorial evidence that is the specific reason for having the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Within the same logic, and in accordance with the renewed institutional setting, the financial allocation for Priority Axis 2 (Technical Assistance) will be kept at a level needed to implement the tasks and duties of the programme bodies as required by the EC Regulations.

Table 3: Overview of the programme investment strategy

[This table is generated automatically by the SFC based on information inserted under other sections of the cooperation programme.]

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Investment priorities	Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective [input from result indicator tables]	ERDF support) - EUR	Share of the total Union support to the Cooperation programme (by Fund) ¹		
						ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)
1	Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening of institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administration supported by the ESF.	Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through analysis of development trends.	Continued European territorial evidence production	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON applied research outputs and results in policy and programming processes	21'296'772,00 €	80%		
			Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.	7'470'046,40 €	80%		
			Improved territorial observation and tools for analyses	Increase the number of users in selected target groups affirming regular use	4'515'721,60 €	80%		

¹ Presentation of amounts transferred from ENI and IPA depends on management option chosen, cfr. fiche no. 28 on Elements related to proposed integration of allocations under external financing instruments into ETC programmes.

Draft For Public Consultation

				of ESPON territorial observations and tools for territorial analyses in policy and programming processes				
			Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the (1)usefulness and (2) policy relevance of ESPON territorial evidence	5'694'460,00 €	80%		
			Leaner, effective and efficient implementing provisions	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the implementation provisions of ESPON 2020 Programme	0	80%		

SECTION 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES

2.1 Introduction to Priority Axes of ESPON 2020

In order to fulfil the strategy, mission and objectives related to the ESPON 2020 Programme, two Priority Axes will govern the programme implementation:

- ***Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach***
- ***Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance (TA)***

The organisation of the programme implementation along two Priority Axes is closely related to the establishment of a Single Beneficiary for the implementation of Priority 1 of the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Priority Axis 1 covers a single thematic objective of the ETC Regulation. The implementation of Priority Axis 1 will be governed by an Operation Specification agreed by the ESPON MC and provided by the ESPON MA to the Single Beneficiary as basis for an Operation Proposal. The Operation Proposal will include a Multi-Annual Work Programme and an Annual Work Plan for the first year (2015) of programme implementation. The Operation Proposal will include proposals on activities related to the specific objectives and their associated types of actions. The Operation Proposal and its annual implementation shall be agreed by the ESPON MC.

The implementation of Priority Axis 2 will ensure a leaner, effective and efficient implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme. The Technical Assistance (TA) provided by the ESPON MA will ensure support to the renewed structure and organisational arrangements according to this objective.

Section 2.A:

2.2. A Description Of The Priority Axes Other Than Technical Assistance

Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach ***Investment Priority: Institutional capacity and an efficient public administration***

In order to deliver European territorial evidence relevant for on all 11 thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities of the ESI funds and contribute to an enhancement of institutional capacity and effective public administration, four mutually supportive specific objectives will be guiding the implementation of Priority Axis 1. Specific Objective 5 will also indirectly support Priority Axis 1.

2.2.1 Specific Objective 1: *Continued Production of Territorial Evidence Through Applied Research and Analyses.*

Specific Objective 1 builds on and further improves the maintenance of a systematic, comparable, consistent and reliable European territorial evidence base through applied research and supports the systematic implementation of territorial impact assessments in EU institutions and programming bodies.

In support of this objective, activities to be carried through by the Single Beneficiary shall thematically respond to policy needs in practice, be cross-disciplinary, territorial (by looking across sectors) and result from transnational networking on research and expertise. Output

and results shall be of high quality in terms of research, analyses, data, indicators and tools for ESPON 2020 to be recognised as a reliable and authoritative source of pan-European territorial evidence, observation and impact assessment that is highly relevant for policy development and programming.

Continuous involvement and steering by the ESPON MC in applied research from the definition of the activities to delivery of results, through Project Support Teams (PSTs) and through open access for the ESPON MC to all intermediate deliverables, shall ensure policy relevance of the themes and results of the applied research and analyses undertaken. The new territorial evidence achieved shall feed into the knowledge transfer and user support actions under Specific Objective 2, the observatory functions under Specific Objective 3 and the outreach to users under Specific Objective 4 which shall be all part of the ESPON 2020 Programme implementation.

The target groups for this specific objective include policymakers and practitioners at European and national level as well as authorities implementing ESI programmes. Moreover, the results will be of interest for the secondary tier target group defined, in particular for policy officers and planners in regions and local authorities as well as organisations at EU level and academia in the field of territorial research.

Project Support Teams (of a limited size) will be established for all applied research activities led by a senior scientist of the Single Beneficiary. At least one ESPON MC member and a representative of the EC, if required, should together with experts from the Single Beneficiary follow and steer the implementation of the activities from its definition through terms of reference to its final delivery. As contractor of the service, the Single Beneficiary can overrule the opinion of the PST but should document when and why in the Annual Implementation Report.

Table 4: Specific Objective 1 and Expected Results

ID	S01	Indicators
<i>Specific objective</i>	Continued European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.	Results: Number of users within selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON applied research outputs and results in policy and programming processes.
<i>The results, which the Member State seeks to achieve with EU support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better understanding of medium and long term territorial trends, potentials and challenges of a wide range of territorial dynamics. - Better understanding of future perspectives for Europe through forecasting and territorial scenarios. - Improved pre-legislative and regulatory territorial impact assessments of 	Output: Number of applied research outputs produced under SO1.

	EU policy proposals with a territorial impact.	
--	--	--

2.2.2. Specific Objective 2: *Upgraded Knowledge Transfer and Use of Analytical User Support.*

Specific Objective 2 provides for the useful transfer of scientific evidence and knowledge to policy development and provides analytical input to policy processes of different actors at all administrative levels which can stimulate policy development informed by territorial evidence.

In support of this objective, activities, including targeted analyses projects for groupings of national bodies, regions and cities similar to the activities that were successfully implemented as part of the ESPON 2013 Programme, shall be carried through based on stakeholder demand. The thematic focus will be defined by stakeholders following calls for interest, and the analysis shall provide a European perspective for the stakeholders to translate into their specific policy contexts. Interested representatives of related organisations at European level for the specific theme should also be invited and encouraged to take part in the implementation.

For Specific Objective 2 activities, ESPON 2020 will offer its knowledge base and tools in supporting an active cooperation among Member States, regions and local communities in EU policy making and in supporting the transfer of a European territorial perspective to lower governance levels. Emphasis on delivering a higher number of targeted analyses compared to the ESPON 2013 Programme shall be ensured. In order to support private-public development initiatives, cooperation with and inclusion of the private sector in targeted analyses will also be possible.

Policy development and ESI funding programme implementation shall be supported actively with territorial evidence that can support the creation of synergy and horizontal cross-sectoral dialogue and interaction as part of integrated and place-based approaches and strategies.

By the end of the ESPON 2013 programme, territorial evidence support to other Structural Funds programmes was started where 65 ETC programmes received territorial fact sheets for their programming and 10 programmes, regional as well as transnational and cross-border, received a more analytical territorial evidence pack. Based on the positive appreciation of this type of support, the ESPON 2020 programme will enlarge its cooperation and evidence provision to other ESI funding programmes, in particular programmes dedicated to European territorial cooperation.

As a new activity within ESPON 2020, the ability to feed relevant territorial evidence in a promptly and timely manner to selected policy processes will be ensured through swift analytical deliverables, such as policy briefs, working papers or similar formats. This new type of ESPON support to policy development shall enhance the transfer and uptake of the territorial knowledge and tools produced. For this activity to be feasible, the necessary in-house capacity will be ensured, including senior scientific and human resources experienced in policy oriented communication.

The output of the many activities will include analytical reports with policy options and maps related to stakeholder territories and ESI funding programme areas, transfer of pan-European indicators for benchmarking of regions, cities and other relevant types of territories as well as analytical briefs based on territorial evidence oriented towards important policy processes,

such as EU Presidency priorities and debates related to territorial cohesion, the Europe 2020 strategy, sector policy areas and the TA 2020.

The target groups for Specific Objective 2 are mainly the key target group of policymakers and practitioners at European, national and regional level as well as authorities implementing ESI funding programmes. Moreover, the targeted analyses will involve groups of stakeholders, policy officers and practitioners, from national, regional and local administrations wanting to include a European territorial perspective in their considerations on policy development.

Table 5: Specific Objective 2 and Expected Results

ID	S02	Indicators
<i>Specific objective</i>	Upgraded knowledge transfer and use of analytical user support.	Results: Number of users in selected target groups affirming they are satisfied with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.
<i>The results, which the Member State seeks to achieve with EU support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extended use of territorial evidence adding a European perspective to policy development at national, regional and local level for different purposes. – Better integration of the territorial dimension in ESIF Programme implementation and in the generation of programmes after 2020. – Stronger presence of European territorial evidence and facts in the European policy debate and development. – Improved uptake of results of research and analyses in relevant territorial, urban and sector policy processes at all levels of government. 	<p>Output: Number of targeted analysis activities undertaken under SO2.</p> <p>Number of thematic focus papers produced under SO2 e.g. evidence briefs, working papers etc.</p>

2.2.3. Specific Objective 3: *Improved Territorial Observation and Tools for Territorial Analyses*

Specific Objective 3 provides for the continued observation and monitoring of structures, trends and dynamics in different European types of territories and explores potentials and challenges for their future territorial development. The observation and monitoring will build on the progress made in the ESPON 2013 Programme and, as a new element, include custom-

made transnational territorial monitoring systems linked to a fully operational, web-based European territorial monitoring system.

Territorial monitoring reviews shall be issued on a regular basis targeting policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders dealing with territorial policies, development and cohesion issues at different administrative levels. A major report on the state of the European territory will be published 2-3 times during 2014-2020.

The web-based ESPON Database, developed since 2002, will continue as the backbone in support of this objective. The operability and easy use of the ESPON Database by visitors shall be improved. Particular emphasis shall be placed on ensuring the coverage of all national territories of countries participating in the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Moreover, particular effort will be made on updating data, on improving the geographical detail of data and on map presentation, including improving the visibility of smaller countries in ESPON maps. This will be carried out within opportunities presented by European statistical data and potential use of “big data”.

Together with policy relevant indicator development and innovative data solutions, tools for territorial analyses and monitoring, novel mapping facilities etc., the output from this specific objective shall constitute an integrated online system, or “ESPON toolbox”, supporting applied research, knowledge transfer and outreach activities. The development of the ESPON toolbox shall be well coordinated with other European institutions, such as EUROSTAT, EEA, JRC, EIB etc., and build on existing European data.

The ESPON toolbox developed by the end of the ESPON 2013 Programme shall be reviewed, and a proposal made on useful tools that will be maintained and developed, if needed, while less used tools could be wound up. New tools shall be developed based upon clear demand and drawing upon expertise and good practice in territorial analysis in participating countries. Supporting this tools review a survey among ESPON users shall be carried through.

A new ESPON activity in the toolbox will be to offer “technical” support and training to users, in particular to policy officers and practitioners at regional and local level who require indicators, typologies, etc. This shall support the systematic application of the toolbox at national and European level.

In order to ensure improved territorial observation the following activities will be carried through:

- Continuous European territorial observation, monitoring of territorial structures, trends and dynamics through a European territorial monitoring system.
- Custom-made macro-regional and transnational monitoring systems upon demand.
- Regular reporting and reviews for policy development based on indicators capturing present policy orientations.
- Continuous development of the ESPON toolbox, including maintenance and development as well as promoting systematic use of tools and “technical” support to users.

The output of the activities under this objective will be to generally support the wide use, uptake and outreach of ESPON, the ability to influence policy decisions and to include a European territorial evidence dimension in relevant policy processes at different levels.

The output shall include monitoring reports and briefs; two major online tools of relevance to European territorial development; the ESPON Database and the ESPON monitoring system (including decentralised systems), as well as other coherent analytical tools, and moreover,

support to the use of territorial impact assessment tools and “hotline” support for “technical” queries. All tools shall freely be available, if relevant online using the most recent innovations in ICT to maximise functionality and use.

The target groups for this specific objective shall primarily be the key target group of policymakers and practitioners at European, national and regional level as well as authorities implementing ESI funding programmes for regions, cross-border or transnational territories. Authorities involved in macro-regions are also considered a target group. Moreover, as the tools will all be accessible free of charge online via the ESPON website, all actors from the second tier target group will be able to benefit from the activities carried out under this objective, and even the wider public.

Project Support Teams may be established by the Single Beneficiary within Specific Objective 3.

Table 6: Specific Objective 3 and Expected Results

ID	S03	Indicators
<i>Specific objective</i>	Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses.	Results: Number of users in selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON territorial observations and tools for territorial analyses in policy and programming processes.
<i>The results, which the Member State seeks to achieve with EU support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved territorial monitoring of policy implementation and periodical reporting based on the European monitoring system. – Stronger uptake of a territorial dimension at all levels with particular focus on customised monitoring systems for macro-regions and transnational territories. – An improved and more useful toolbox for territorial analyses and impact assessment offering better support and training to users at all government levels as well as by other ESI funding programmes. – Greater uptake and use of ESPON data, indicators and maps in relation to different relevant policy processes 	Output: Number of ESPON tools created under S03.

	and arenas.	
--	-------------	--

2.2.4. Specific Objective 4: *Wider Outreach and Uptake of Territorial Evidence.*

Specific Objective 4 ensures a wide outreach to potential users of European territorial evidence, stimulating interest for uptake of a European territorial perspectives at all levels of policy making.

Effective, targeted and understandable communications towards clearly defined target groups shall be carried through providing relevant information and data on territorial structures, trends, scenarios and policy impacts at European as well as transnational, cross-border and national levels in an effective and prompt manner to inform policy development.

Policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders, senior and young researchers and students, experts as well as citizens will be targeted as part of the envisaged outreach activities. In particular, the use of social media, e-learning and training shall be enhanced.

The involvement and collaboration with regional and local actors and capacity building will in particular be assisted by an ECP Network, including national institutions nominated by EU Member States and Partner States contributing to the ESPON 2020 Programme. In this context, translation of shorter documents into recognised national and regional languages will be used to improve the outreach and uptake.

In order to support Cohesion Policy and regional and urban development and investment, a continued cooperation on creating synergies between ESPON and other pan-European European Cooperation Programmes e.g. INTERREG EUROPE, URBACT III and INTERACT III shall be implemented during 2014-2020. The cooperation shall build on the good experience gained in the ESPON 2013 programme implementation and include joint activities, such as thematic workshops crossing exchange of experience with territorial evidence. The goal is to create synergies between territorial evidence, the experience feedback of target groups at national and regional level and with the objective of promoting efficient implementation procedures leading to concrete results.

In order to ensure a wide outreach of the territorial evidence produced by the ESPON 2020 Programme within Specific Objective 4, the following activities shall be carried through:

- The Outreach Strategy for the entire programme period, which will be part of the Multi-annual Work Programme, and include capitalisation and knowledge transfer activities at European level, at transnational and national level.
- Organisation of “high impact” events, in the form of conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions etc., at European, transnational and/or national level, some in cooperation with other ESI funding programmes and other bodies.
- Active participation at events at European, transnational and national level.
- Publication of thematic and synthetic results from applied research and analyses as well as related to tools and scientific progress.
- Publication of short easy-understandable reports on themes of particular political interest.
- Web-based communication efforts, including use of social media, ‘apps’, e-learning, etc.

The output of the activities carried out in support of Specific Objective 4 will be orientated at capitalising on the results of the ESPON 2020 Programme. The overall Outreach Strategy and the related activities are all directed towards supporting the use, uptake, outreach and impact

of ESPON and the ability to include European territorial evidence in relevant policy processes and arenas at different levels of government.

The output will include a well-coordinated and focused cascade of high-impact events, reports, web campaigns, carried through in cooperation with national ECPs.

The target groups for this specific objective include in principle all, the key target group of policymakers and practitioners at European and national level as well as authorities implementing ESI funding programmes together with the second tier target groups defined incorporating organisations at EU level, policy officers and planners at regional and local levels, university academics as well as the wider public and private sector.

Project Support Teams may be established within this specific objective offering the ESPON MC and EC to take part.

Table 7: Specific Objective 4 and Expected Results

ID	S04	Indicators
<i>Specific objective</i>	Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.	Results: Number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the
<i>The results, which the Member State seek to achieve with EU support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An efficient Outreach Strategy that can support a high level of outreach and uptake of territorial evidence in policy development. – Higher level of outreach to a larger group of potential users of European territorial evidence, partly supported by exploring complementarities and synergies with the other pan-European ETC and ESI programmes. – Greater impact and presence with territorial evidence and arguments in policy debates at European, transnational and national levels. – Better uptake based on understandable communication towards clearly defined target groups. – Strong support by the ECP Network in reaching and engaging policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders, researchers, experts and citizens, and in building 	<p>(1)usefulness and (2) policy relevance of ESPON territorial evidence</p> <p>Output: Number of ESPON (1) outreach events held and (2) attendees at outreach events held under SO4 and (3) Publications.</p>

	capacity at transnational, national regional and local level.	
--	---	--

2.2.5 Overview on programme specific result indicators

Table 8: Result indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023) ²	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
	Number of users within selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON applied research outputs and results in policy and programming processes	Not Applicable	Survey of target stakeholders	2015	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON applied research outputs and results in policy and programming processes	Annual Surveys	2018, 2020, 2023
	Number of users in selected target groups affirming they are satisfied with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.	Not Applicable	Survey of target stakeholders	2015	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.	Annual Surveys	2018, 2020, 2023
	Number of users in selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON territorial	Not Applicable	Survey of target stakeholders	2015	Increase the number of users in selected target groups affirming regular use of ESPON	Annual Surveys	2018, 2020, 2023

² Target values may be qualitative or quantitative.

	observations and tools for territorial analyses in policy and programming processes				territorial observations and tools for territorial analyses in policy and programming processes		
	Number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the (1)usefulness and (2) policy relevance of ESPON territorial evidence	Not Applicable	Survey of target stakeholders	2015	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the (1)usefulness and (2) policy relevance of ESPON territorial evidence	Annual Surveys	2018, 2020, 2023
	Number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the implementation provisions of ESPON 2020 Programme	Not Applicable	Survey of target stakeholders	2015	Increase the number of users within selected target groups affirming satisfaction with the implementation provisions of ESPON 2020 Programme	Annual Surveys	2018, 2020, 2023

2.3. Support to Specific Objective 5: *Leaner, Effective and Efficient Implementation Provisions and Proficient Programme Assistance.*

The specific objective of a leaner, efficient and effective programme implementation will be embedded in all actions and corresponding activities of the ESPON 2020 Programme and will cut across both Priority Axis 1 and 2.

Based on the administrative experience with the ESPON 2013 programme, the ESPON 2020 Programme will engage a Single Beneficiary, which shall receive a Grant Agreement based

on a granting procedure, to carry through the content under Priority Axis 1 as a Single Operation under this Cooperation Programme. The role of Single Beneficiary will be awarded to an ESPON EGTC with a tailor-made set up to serve this role [tbc]. The Specific Objectives 1-4 described above all belonging to Priority Axis 1 and shall be carried through by the Single Beneficiary.

This renewed administrative structure also allows for using public procurement and service contracts for the implementation of the activities envisaged and for involving the different target groups contributing to the operation as such. The use of public procurement and service contracts will greatly reduce the administrative burden of ESPON, in particular at the level of Member and Partner States.

Furthermore, the management of a single Grant Agreement with the Single Beneficiary by the ESPON MA, steered and monitored by the ESPON MC, will be much more streamlined, effective, lean and efficient in comparison to the situation under the ESPON 2013 Programme.

2.4. Actions to be Supported Under the Investment Priority

2.4.1. Action related to Specific Objective 1: *Continued Production of Territorial Evidence Through Applied Research and Analyses.*

Actions

The action to be carried out related to Specific Objective 1 shall be to undertake and produce applied territorial research and analyses on European territorial development.

This type of action will contribute to the knowledge base of ESPON and produce European territorial evidence in response policy demand for themes as well by way of steering from policymakers. Contracting of the most qualified, suitable and appropriate researchers and experts within Europe in the thematic field in question shall be sought.

Expected Contribution of Related Activities (Non-Exhaustive)

The type of activities which may be carried out in support of this action can include:

- European wide, comparable information and evidence on territorial potentials and challenges focusing on opportunities for success for the development of regions and cities defined by the demand of policymakers and.
- Cross-thematic applied research integrating existing thematic analysis and adding future analysis of new themes in areas including, for example, climate change and energy; demographic and migratory flows; economic crisis and resilience; spatial indicators for a Europe 2020 Strategy; territorial analysis; impact of globalization for Europe and its Regions, green economy, territorial scenarios and visions for Europe, EU enlargement, etc.
- Territorial impact studies of EU policies will be another focus under this priority.

Main Target Groups

- National, regional and local public authorities responsible for instigating and implementing territorial policy.
- EU Institutions and ESI funding programmes
- Universities, knowledge and research institutes and institutes of higher education

Specific Territories Targeted

This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. Specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as research and analyses including neighbouring territories and the world will part of activities under Specific Objective 1. The different types of territories mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty Art.174, such as islands, mountain areas, sparsely populated areas, etc. will as far as possible be considered.

2.4.2. Action related to Specific Objective 2: *Upgraded Knowledge Transfer and Use of Analytical User Support.*

Actions

The action to be carried out related to Specific Objective 2 shall be (a) to undertake targeted analyses and (b) to produce thematic focus papers (e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc), on specific thematic areas in response to stakeholder demand.

These types of actions will contribute to knowledge transfer and support the use of European territorial evidence on the ground in concrete policy development processes. In stimulating the use of the territorial evidence support provided, targeted analyses for stakeholders from, national, regional and local level as well as targeted delivery of territorial evidence to ESI funding programmes will be important actions. ESPON 2020 will provide and target the evidence produced through applied research and the provided evidence and analyses with a European territorial dimension shall inform practical policy development and ESI funding programmes in their implementation of programmes and projects.

Moreover, actions within the Specific Objective 2 will focus on delivering prompt policy-relevant analytical responses drawing from the evidence base of ESPON 2020. In this context, ESPON 2020 will focus on becoming an authoritative and relevant platform for contributing and informing policy formulation. Specifically, ESPON 2020 should take up demand expressed by policymakers across Europe, including at European and national levels related to EU Presidency priorities, to contribute effectively to debates on territorial cohesion, the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Territorial Agenda 2020.

Expected Contribution of Related Activities (Non-Exhaustive)

In order to ensure an upgraded knowledge transfer and the practical use of the evidence support provided to the policy field, the type of activities which may carried out in support of these actions can include:

- Targeted analysis for and defined by stakeholders at national, regional and local level aimed at enhancing their understanding of the larger EU territorial context and providing a European perspective to considerations on the development of their territories.
- Territorial evidence briefs and packs to ETC Programmes, ESI funding Programmes and EU macro-regions.
- Short territorial policy briefs/working papers, fast and timely, benefiting from the increased in-house capacity of the Single Beneficiary, to European policy processes, normally of around 10 pages of text, providing insight and information on territorial dynamics, impacts, prospects, etc. affecting territories, regions and cities.

Main Target Groups

- National, regional and local public authorities responsible for instigating and implementing EU Cohesion Policy, territorial and spatial development and sectoral policies with territorial impacts.
- EU Presidencies, European Institutions and ESI funding programmes (including Macro-regions).

Specific Territories Targeted

This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. Specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as research and analyses including neighbouring territories and the world will part of activities under Specific Objective 2, depending on stakeholder demand and availability of the necessary territorial evidence.

2.4.3. Action related to Specific Objective 3: *Improved Territorial Observation and Tools for Territorial Analyses*

Actions

The actions to be carried out related to Specific Objective 3 shall be to (a) to undertake territorial observation and reporting; and (b) develop tools for territorial analyses.

Specific Objective 3 shall provide the scientific platform for the all activities carried out under the ESPON 2020 programme. In observing and monitoring territorial trends and publishing reports providing reviews of progress related to policy orientations for European territorial development, mainly in relation to territorial cohesion and the Territorial Agenda 2020, this objective will contribute to policymakers understanding of European territorial dynamics compared to explicit policy orientations.

By further improving the ESPON Database becoming more up-to-date, user-friendly and with more accurate time-series and indicators of higher geographical detail, the fundamental information source for other ESPON 2020 activities will be available. This will include key territorial indicators with pan-European coverage as well as indicators with a more limited geographical coverage, often stemming from targeted analyses.

Moreover, appropriate tools for territorial analyses will contribute to solid and reliable results and support policymakers and practitioners at all levels in their daily work.

Expected Contribution of Related Activities (Non-Exhaustive)

Related to the Specific Objective 3, examples of activities foreseen in support of these actions include:

- ESPON Database development with focus on data update and user-friendliness.
- European Monitoring System with custom-made macro-regional sub-systems meeting stakeholder demand.
- Territorial Monitoring Reports covering Europe related to policy orientations of Cohesion Policy, the Territorial Agenda 2020 and other relevant policy issues, as well as Territorial Monitoring Reviews on interesting findings for policy development.
- A reviewed ESPON toolbox and fine-tuning of analytical tools for territorial analyses.

Main Target Groups

- National, regional and local public authorities responsible for instigating and implementing territorial policy.
- EU Institutions and ESI funding programmes.

- Universities, knowledge and research institutes and institutes of higher education.
- Wider public and the private sector.

Specific Territories Targeted

This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. Monitoring specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as indicators data including neighbouring territories and the world will part of activities under Specific Objective 3.

2.4.4. Action related to Specific Objective 4: *Wider Outreach and Uptake of Territorial Evidence.*

Actions

The actions to be carried out related to Specific Objective 4 shall be to (a) hold events and (b) produce publications, in order to support outreach to users and the widest possible use of ESPON 2020 territorial evidence in practice.

The activities related to the action shall be guided by an Outreach Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Programme implementation that shall ensure the highest possible capitalisation. The ECP Network, nominated by each participating country, shall be an important factor and collaborator in ensuring the outreach to policymakers in all parts of Europe, promoting transnational collaboration with regional and local stakeholders and building capacity.

In reaching out to policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders, researchers, experts, private sector actors and the wider public widening further the audience, ESPON 2020 will host an updated website with additional modern means of web communication (such as social media and ‘apps’), and which is friendly for policy use. The range of events, such as conferences, seminars and workshops, both at European as well as transnational and national level, will contribute, particular as material can be translated into relevant languages, if needed. Publications aimed at the different audiences will also contribute to the general outreach of European territorial evidence and shall be supported by PR activities, such media, PR and promotion activities will be used to spread results.

The outreach to local, regional and national actors shall be carried through in coordination with the network of national ECPs nominated by the participating countries.

Expected Contribution of Related Activities (Non-Exhaustive)

Related to the Specific Objective 4, examples of activities foreseen in support of these actions include:

- Events at European level, as seminars, conferences or workshops.
- Events at transnational and national level carried through in cooperation with the ECP network.
- Active participation in debates with policymakers and practitioners at transnational regional and local level.
- Publication of thematic and synthetic reports and material related to findings as well as short publications such as “territorial tendencies” giving policy up-to-date information based on big data or similar.
- Translated material to be used in outreach activities targeting regional and local policymakers and practitioners.

Main Target Groups

- National, regional and local public authorities responsible for instigating and implementing EU Cohesion Policy, territorial and spatial development and sectoral policies with territorial impacts.
- EU Presidencies, European Institutions and ESI funding programmes (including macro-regions).
- ECP Network.
- Universities, knowledge and research institutes and institutes of higher education.
- Wider public and the private sector.

Specific Territories Targeted

This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States, including transnational territorial contexts. Specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as outreach to transnational, cross-border, neighbouring territories etc. will part of activities under Specific Objective 4.

2.5. Definition of Beneficiary

In establishing a leaner, effective and efficient procedural setting, based on the experience of the ESPON 2006 and ESPON 2013 Programme, the implementing provisions of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme proposes the establishment of an EGTC as Single Beneficiary which will implement all actions described under Priority Axis 1 through a Single Operation on the basis of a Grant Agreement with the ESPON MA.

All countries participating in this Cooperation Programme support the creation of a legal entity, the ESPON EGTC, which is set-up tailor-made to specifically serve the function of assuming the role of Single Beneficiary under the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. This allows for using public procurement for the involvement of target groups and for implementing the activities foreseen such as research, analyses and communication.

Among all options discussed to improve the performance of the ESPON 2020 programme, several evaluations by the EC and by the ESPON 2013 programme as well as exchange on the level for Director Generals of the all Ministries involved in preparing the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

On the proposal of the EC, the conclusion was reached that under the common framework a setup with a Single Beneficiary would offer the best institutional setting for the improvements wanted in order to serve the target groups of the Cooperation Programme.

2.5.1. Guiding principles for the selection of the Single Operation

As described above, the Cooperation Programme defines the ESPON EGTC as the Single Beneficiary of the Single Operation of the programme.

Following the approval of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the ESPON MC will further detail the conditions for the application procedure and will establish the Operation Specification and the Operation Implementation Guidance document. The Operation Specifications establish the minimum criteria for the proposals that are binding for the Single Beneficiary in the elaboration of the Operation Proposal.

In particular, the ESPON MC will identify, describe and decide on:

- The application procedure and the template for the submission of the Operation Proposal including a Multi-Annual Work Programme and the first Annual Work Plan.

- The Operation Specification, which will further elaborate on the main elements included in the Cooperation Programme and in particularly setting up the minimum requirements for the Operation Proposal:
 - Strategy to fulfil all the objectives indicated in the Cooperation Programme for each of the strands identified, including main milestones during the implementation of the operation.
 - Analysis on how the operation aims to fulfil all output and results indicators.
 - Strategy for achieving sufficient scientific and policy oriented standards.
 - Description of the proposed types of activities corresponding to each of the four identified specific objectives and their actions as indicated in the Cooperation Programme.
 - Description of how all target groups identified in the Cooperation Programme will be addressed.
 - An overall budget for the operation according the budget categories.
 - Description of the overall management and financial management of the operation.
 - For its first year of implementation (to be repeated every year) a detailed Annual Work Plan and a further detailed budget corresponding to the Annual Work Plan.

Based on these provisions the Single Beneficiary will draw up the Operation Proposal. Further guidance for the elaboration of the proposal, its submission and the implementation of the Single Operation will be provided via the Operation Implementation Guidance.

In the first step, the Operation Proposal presented by the Single Beneficiary will have to be assessed by the ESPON MA on behalf of the ESPON MC according to eligibility criteria related to the completeness of the dossier both from an administrative point of view but also from a content point of view.

In a second step, the selection criteria are applied on the Operation Proposal by the ESPON MC or a delegated group of the ESPON MC. Taking into account that there is only one Single Beneficiary and one Single Operation the term ‘evaluation criteria’ is more appropriate. The objective of the evaluation procedure is to assess the degree that the Operation Proposal fulfils the abovementioned provisions and in order to formulate, if needed, recommended improvements before the signature of the Grant Agreement. This approach ensures that the proposal of the Single Beneficiary complies with a high standard and, in case of falling short in this regard, the Single Beneficiary will be asked to improve particular elements of the proposal before signing the Grant Agreement.

The criteria to be used by the ESPON MC in the evaluation are the following:

- ***Eligibility Criteria:***
 - The application is complete and includes all the requested elements according to the Operation Specification.
 - The content of the proposal specifically includes all the compulsory activities required and respects the minimum requirements provided.
- ***Content Related Evaluation Criteria:***
 - Soundness of the proposed strategy, adequacy of the objectives set and the activities proposed.
 - Consistency of the strategy, objectives and activities, and the right mix and balance of activities.
 - Consideration of wider selection of target groups and adaptation of actions to their specificities
 - Geographical balance in the implementation of the proposed activities.

- Appropriateness and innovative character of the overall approach.
- **Management Related Criteria:**
 - Appropriateness and clarity of the management structure and the plan for the implementation.
 - Transparency of procedures related to ERDF requirements.
 - Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources.

Following the evaluation and decision on the Operation Proposal by the ESPON MC including the optional formulation of recommendations, an amendment of the Operation Proposal might be necessary, either to be implemented in the Operation Proposal itself or in an addendum to the proposal. The check of the compliance between the recommendation and the implementation of the recommendations in the addendum can be delegated to MA. The ESPON MC can ask to be involved in the assessment in specific elements according to their strategic nature.

The Grant Agreement template approved by the ESPON MC will be applied and signed by the ESPON MA and the Single Beneficiary. It will detail the rights and duties of both parties and the reporting timetable and requirements. The Multiannual Work Programme and the Annual Work Plans will be an integral part of the Grant Agreement (the first Annual Work Plan will be considered as annex) and consider the recommendations and conditions defined by the ESPON MC. Each year the Grant Agreement will be amended by the respective Annual Work Plan.

The Single Beneficiary will every year submit a detailed Annual Work Plan. The first Annual Work Plan will be submitted in connection with the Operation Proposal and should take into account any remarks and recommendations made on the Multi Annual Work Programme.

In the following years the Annual Work Plan will be submitted by the Single Beneficiary to the ESPON MC (via the ESPON MA), assessed, negotiated and approved by the ESPON MC. This process can also result in a series of recommendations for change/improvements that will have to be implemented by the Single Beneficiary before the inclusion of the Annual Work Plan to the Grant Agreement as addendum.

Following the approval of the Annual Work Plan, the Single Beneficiary will start implementation according to the plan.

2.5.2 Common and specific output indicators, including the quantified target value (by investment priority)

Table 9: Common and programme specific output indicators (by investment priority)

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	Number of applied research outputs produced under SO1	Absolute Value	To Increase	ESPON EGTC	2018,2020,2023
	Number of targeted analysis activities undertaken under SO2	Absolute Value	To Increase	ESPON EGTC	2018,2020,2023
	Number of thematic focus papers produced under SO2 e.g. evidence briefs,	Absolute Value	To Increase	ESPON EGTC	2018,2020,2023

	working papers etc				
	Number of ESPON tools created under S03	Absolute Value	To Increase	ESPON EGTC	2018,2020,2023
	Number of ESPON (1) outreach events held, (2) attendees at outreach events held under SO4 and (3) publications	Absolute Value	To Increase	ESPON EGTC	2018,2020,2023
	Financial allocation of budget to activities under S01-S04	Absolute Value	To Achieve Targets in Mult-Annual Work Plan	Annual Implementation Report	2018,2020,2023
Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance	% of activities undertaken by the Single Beneficiary delivered (1) within budget and (2) within time limit for execution	Absolute Values	To Increase	Annual Implementation Report	2018,2020,2023

2.5.3 Performance framework (by priority axis) -

An identification of implementation steps and financial and output indicators to act as milestones and targets for the performance framework in accordance with Article 19(1) CPR and Annex (xx) (Table 5) – by priority axis.

Table 10: The performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type (Key implementation step, financial, output or, where appropriate, result indicator)	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
---------------	--	----	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------	---------------------	----------------	--

Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	Result	1	Indicator	Non Applicable	To increase the use and satisfaction of ESPON outputs and results	To increase the use and satisfaction of ESPON outputs and results	Annual Surveys	<p>The purpose of this indicator is to gauge the level of ESPON 2020 is to measure the extent to which specified target groups are using ESPON results in practice and the extent to which ESPON data and evidence is being concretely used in policy development processes.</p> <p>The results and output indicators included in Table 3 and 4 above will feed into this performance framework.</p>
Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance	Key Implementation Step/Result	2	Key implementation step	Non Applicable	Full operation of the ESPON EGTC	Full implementation of the ESPON EGTC Multi-Annual Work Plan	ESPON MA	<p>A key objective of the ESPON 2020 programme is to achieve a more efficient and leaner implementation. A key element of this is the establishment of the ESPON EGTC as a Single Beneficiary and the correct steering of the Single Operation through a Multi-annual Work Plan</p> <p>The purpose of this indicator is to monitor the performance of the Single Beneficiary/Single Operation. The results and output indicators included in Table 3 and 4 above will feed into this performance framework.</p>

2.5.4 Categories of intervention (by priority axis) - Article 7 (2) (b) (vii) ETC Regulation

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of the Union support is shown below:

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR) - ERDF
Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	0100 (Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance)	38.977.000
Technical Assistance	0102 (Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection)	2.200.000
Technical Assistance	0103 (Evaluations and studies)	100.000

Technical Assistance	0104 (Information and communication)	100.000
----------------------	---	---------

Table 12: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR) - ERDF
Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	01 (Non repayable aid)	38.977.000
Technical Assistance	01 (Non repayable aid)	2.400.000

Table 13: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR) - ERDF
Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	00 (EU territory)	38.977.000
Technical Assistance	00 (EU territory)	2.400.000

Table 14: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR) - ERDF
Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	00 (EU territory)	38.977.000
Technical Assistance	00 (EU territory)	2.400.000

Code 011: Enhancing Institutional capacity and efficient public administration

Code 0100: Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance

Code 0102: Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection

Code 0103: Evaluations and studies

Code 0104: Information and communication

Data will be provided electronically for information purposes during programme implementation.

Section 2B

2.6. A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including actions reinforcing the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes, beneficiaries and relevant partners.

Technical Assistance and communication on the programme modalities are necessary and inevitable components of all Structural Funds programmes.

The distinct feature and strategic nature of the ESPON 2020 Programme with only one content related Priority Axis and one Single Beneficiary already identified in the Cooperation Programme, the Technical Assistance will focus on the smooth implementation of the Programme, the correct fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Managing, Certifying and Audit Authorities and the fulfilment of the evaluation and communication requirements. Considering the limited number of actors involved and their proximity (also in geographical

terms) the efforts needed to ensure the compliance with the minimum requirements foreseen in relation to the implementation of the management and control systems will be simpler to implement.

Taking into account the specific nature of the programme and its particular implementation framework with one Single Beneficiary and the involvement of 28 (+4) countries in the programme, efforts will also be needed to ensure sufficient coordination and steering of the Single Operation and guidance to the Single Beneficiary from the ESPON MC and the ESPON MA.

Two specific elements are constitutional part of the ESPON 2020 contribution to the coordination and monitoring and to the communication and policy uptake of the programme. Regarding coordination and policy uptake, the participation of policy experts of the ESPON MC in PSTs is introduced. The Outreach Strategy for ESPON 2020 results shall be coordinated and carried through in collaboration with national ECPs. In order to enable these activities, travel cost and meeting cost should be supported by the Technical Assistance budget. The technical assistance will support, among other (not an exhaustive list):

- Costs related to the implementation of the regulatory duties of the ESPON MA who will also take up the tasks of the joint secretariat for the management of the programme, the monitoring and financial control of the Single Operation.
- Meeting costs of the ESPON MC including the travel costs of one representative per country twice per year. The need for meetings of the committee shall be limited by use of decision by written procedures.
- Costs of the Certifying Authority.
- Costs of the second level audit and, if needed, of auditors coordination meetings.
- Costs related to the implementation of the Communication Plan (according to art. XX of the CPR).
- Costs related to the implementation of the programme evaluation plan (Art. 47 of the CPR stipulates that evaluation shall be carried out by experts that are functionally independent of the authorities responsible for programme implementation).
- Costs related to the set up and maintenance of the computerised system ensuring the electronic exchange of data between programme authorities and Single Beneficiary according to Art. 112 of the CPR.
- Costs of ECP meetings in connection to the development of the Outreach Strategy and hereafter once [or twice tbc] a year including the coverage of travel cost of one representative per country.
- Travel costs for policy experts nominated out of the ESPON MC or by the ESPON MA to participate in the PSTs.

As part of Technical Assistance an evaluation plan will be drawn up by the ESPON MA (Art. 49, CPR) and submitted to the first meeting of the ESPON MC (Art. 104.1, CPR) which will examine and approve it (Art. 100.2, CPR) at its first or second meeting.

As requested by the regulations, a seven year Communication Strategy and a yearly action plan shall be adopted by the ESPON MC. These are also part of the Technical Assistance. In particular, the seven year Communication Strategy will be developed with the view of ensuring that:

- Activities receive the widest possible media coverage, using various forms of communication.
- A programme launch event/annual major information activity is organised which as well has to be seen in the light of the activities on outreach of the Single Beneficiary.
- The EU flag is displayed at ESPON MA premises.
- The details of the Single Operation is published and updated.
- Examples of projects, or in the ESPON context elements of the Single Operation should be posted on the web also in an alternative widely-spoken EU official language other than the official language(s) of the Member State, which again will be coordinated with the outreach activities of the Single Beneficiary.
- Updated information about programme implementation, including main achievements.

Taking into account that the Cooperation Programme will finance only one Single Operation, which includes Specific Objective 4 about outreach, the activities of the seven year Communication Strategy and the yearly Action Plan will adapted accordingly and complementary to the Single Beneficiary in order to be effective, ensure synergies and avoid overlaps.

In compliance with Art. 112 of the CPR, the Technical Assistance will support the establishment of a computerised system ensuring that, no later than 31 December 2016, all exchanges of information between the ESPON MA, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the Single Beneficiary can be carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems.

2.7. Description of the Priority Axis for Technical Assistance

Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance

Investment Priority: Institutional capacity and an efficient public administration

2.7.1. Specific objective and expected results

In the ESPON 2020 Programme, Technical Assistance will be implemented in accordance with the programme strategy. The specific objective is the following:

Specific Objective 5: Leaner, effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient programme assistance.

The implementation of this specific objective for Technical Assistance for the programme will include that the following is achieved:

- Ensure the correct administrative and financial implementation of the programme in the full respect of EU and national rules providing the necessary support to programme Single Beneficiary and programme authorities.
- Ensure sufficient coordination among the programme actors and between the programme actors and the Single Beneficiary for a correct steering and monitoring of the Single Operation.
- Ensure that the assistance is transparent and provides the Single Beneficiary the necessary conditions for the support of the Single Operation, including the specific requirements concerning products and/or services to be delivered under the Single Operation, the financing plan and the time-limit for execution.

- Ensure the visibility of the role played by the EC and ensure that the value added of the EC assistance is explained to the public and awareness is raised on the achievements of the Cooperation Programme as EC programme, also in relation to the indicators set.
- Ensure a correct programme implementation mechanism and delivery system which can be monitored and improved during its implementation.
- Ensure a minimum level of administrative burden for all involved actors still in full respect of the EU and national legal and regulatory frameworks.

2.7.2 Actions to Be Supported and Their Expected Contribution to Specific Objective 5

In compliance with this specific objective and the request of the EC Regulatory Framework, the following actions will be supported by the Technical Assistance, always taking into account that the structure of the programme disposing of one Single Beneficiary and one Single Operation opens for efficient, effective and lean administrative set-up.

- Elaboration of an Operation Specification document, accompanied by an Operation Implementation Guidance document that details for the Single Beneficiary the necessary content and administrative arrangements and provide sufficient guidance to the Single Beneficiary on how to propose, set up and implement the Single Operation
- Design of a lean and efficient management and control system that will include the minimum elements requested by the EC regulations, such as the setting up of a grant agreement template, the implementation of quality checks, ongoing coordination between the Single Beneficiary and the ESPON MA, the setting up of up a computerised system for the electronic exchange of data between the programme authorities, the Single Beneficiary and the EC
- Elaboration and implementation of an evaluation plan and a Communication Strategy.

This set of actions will contribute ensuring the correct administrative and financial implementation of the programme. In particular, having one single reference document (Operation Specification) that will guide the Single Beneficiary in the setting up and implementation of the Single Operation and establishing an electronic framework for the monitoring of the Single Operation will ease the understanding of the legal and regulatory framework required by all involved actors and facilitate the implementation of the required management verifications and audit in full traceability and transparency.

The elaboration of an Operation Specification and Operation Implementation Guidance document will contribute to a sufficient coordination among the programme actors and between the programme actors and the Single Beneficiary for a correct steering and monitoring of the Single Operation. The documents will include provisions for regular meetings between the ESPON MA, the ESPON MC members and the Single Beneficiary, normally in connection with ESPON MC meetings. This ongoing dialogue between the ESPON MC, ESPON MA and the Single Beneficiary will contribute to a successful coordination of the programme implementation.

In addition, it will serve as a guide for the Single Beneficiary for the setting up and implementation of the Single Operation and will establish the minimum requirements in terms of strategic elements, objectives, expected output and results that shall be attained. They will ensure transparency in relation to the use and management of the funds and set the specific requirements concerning products and/or services to be delivered under the Single Operation, the financing plan and the time-limit for execution.

A lean and efficient management and control system will contribute ensuring a minimum level of administrative burden for all involved actors still in full respect of the EU and national legal and regulatory frameworks. The combination of a clear, straightforward and lean management and control arrangement system together with a computerised system for the electronic exchange of data and the simplified implementation framework characterised by a Single Beneficiary and a Single Operation and the use (within the Single Operation) of service contracts will considerably simplify the implementation of the Cooperation Programme and reduce the administrative burden for all actors involved. The system will see single programme authority steering and monitoring a Single Operation implemented by an identified Single Beneficiary. The amount of controls and check needed to ensure a correct implementation of the Cooperation Programme results will be considerably lower than in the past by this reduction in the number of involved actors.

The elaboration and implementation of the Communication Strategy will contribute ensuring the visibility of the role played by the Community and ensure that the value added of the Community assistance is explained to the public and awareness is raised on the achievements of the Cooperation Programme as a community programme, also in relation to the indicators set.

The requirement of the regulations demands several activities by the ESPON MA in the field of communication, however these will be coordinated, calibrated and limited in the context of the ESPON 2020 Programme with the fact that the Single Beneficiary is asked to be very active in the outreach activities. The seven years Communication Strategy and a yearly Communication Action Plan elaborated by the ESPON MA and approved by the ESPON MC will be designed specifically to ensure the visibility of the added value of the EC assistance and target the general public.

The ESPON MA and the ESPON MC will ensure that the communication and outreach activities proposed by the Single Beneficiary fit the overall programme communication strategy and do not overlap or become repetitive. Here specific requirements will be included in the Operation Specification. On a yearly basis the programme Communication Action Plan will be coordinated with the Single Beneficiary. In addition, the coordination of the communication actions will ensure a correct mix of forms of communication to reach the identified target group relevant at programme and operation level.

Furthermore it has to be taken into consideration that the ECP will support the communication in Member and Partner States in a focused and coordinated way. Once the Outreach Strategy to be implemented by the Single Beneficiary in cooperation with the ECP network is in place, one yearly meeting of the ECPs [tbc] will be supported as well as the travel cost of one delegated ECP contact person per country.

The setting up of the evaluation plan will ensure a correct programme implementation mechanism and delivery system which can be monitored and improved during its implementation. In particular, the evaluation plan will include minimum elements such as indicative list of evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale; methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements; provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected; a timetable; a strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations results; the indicative budget for implementation of the plan; possibility of a training map.

The evaluation plan set up with the above elements will ensure the ongoing monitoring of the programme implementation mechanism. The strategy for the use of the evaluation results will ensure that the results of the evaluations are channelled into the system in order to make the

necessary corrections and improvements that might be needed to achieve satisfactorily the set objectives, results and impacts.

2.8. Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 15: Output indicators

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2022) ³ (optional)	Source of data
	Guidance documents elaborated for the Single Beneficiary	Number	1	Management and control system
	Computerised system set	Number	1	Management and control system
	Communication strategies elaborated	Number	1	Annual implementation report
	Evaluations carried out	Number	2	Annual implementation report

SECTION 3. THE FINANCING PLAN

3.1. A table specifying for each year, in accordance with Articles 53, 110 and 111 of the CPR, the amount of the total financial appropriation envisaged for the support from the ERDF (EUR) - Article 7 2 (D) (i) ETC Regulation⁴

Table 16:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<i>ERDF</i>	2.052	2.997	4.279	7.776	7.931	8.090	8.252	41.377
<i>IPA amounts (where applicable)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>ENI amounts (where applicable)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total</i>	2.052	2.997	4.279	7.776	7.931	8.090	8.252	41.377

Disclaimer: Please note that this Financing Plan has been developed on the basis of 80/20 co-financing arrangement between the ERDF and Member States. The budget has not been finalised yet with the Member and Partner States and may change.

³ Target values for output indicators under technical assistance are optional.

⁴ Where outermost regions combine cbc and transnational allocations in one programmes, the respective allocations need to be presented separately.

3.2.A Financial plan of the cooperation programme specifying, for the whole programming period, for the cooperation programme and for each priority axis, the amount of the total financial appropriation of the support from the ERDF and the national co-financing. (EUR) (Table 17) (Article 7 (2)(d) (ii) ETC Regulation)

Table 17⁵

	Fund	Basis for the calculation of the Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b) (2)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)	For information	
					National funding (c)	Public funding (1) (d)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
Priority axis 1	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI) ⁶		38.977.000	9.744.250	9.744.250		48.721.250	80%		
	IPA									
	ENI									
Priority axis 2	ERDF (possibly incl. amounts transferred from IPA and ENI)		2.400.000	600.000	600.000		3.000.000	80%		
	IPA									
	ENI									
Total	ERDF									
	IPA									
	ENI									
Total	Total all Funds		41.377.000	10.344.250	10.344.250		51.721.250	80%		

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

⁵ Special allocation for outermost regions pursuant to Article 4 (2) ETC Regulation needs to be reflected in a separate priority axis given the different co-financing rate.

⁶ Presentation of amounts transferred from ENI and IPA depends on management option chosen, cfr. fiche no. 28 on Elements related to proposed integration of allocations under external financing instruments into ETC programmes.

3.2.B. Breakdown of the financial plan of the cooperation programme by priority axis, and thematic objective (Table 19) - Article 7 (2) (d) (ii) ETC Regulation

This breakdown is required in order to fulfil the requirement set out under (Article 7(2) (d) (ii) to specify for priority axes, which combine investment priorities from different thematic objectives, the amount of total financial appropriation and the national co-financing for each of the corresponding thematic objectives. Where each priority axis corresponds to a single thematic objective, this table will not require a breakdown below the level of a priority axis.

Table 18

Priority axis	Specific objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1	S01: Continued European Territorial Evidence Production Through Applied Research And Analyses	21'296'772,00 €	5'324'193,00 €	26'620'965,00 €
	S02: Upgraded Knowledge Transfer And Analytical User Support	7'470'046,40 €	1'867'511,60 €	9'337'558,00 €
	S03: Improved Territorial Observation And Tools For Territorial Analyses	4'515'721,60 €	1'128'930,40 €	5'644'652,00 €
	S04: Wider Outreach And Uptake Of Territorial Evidence	5'694'460,00 €	1'423'615,00 €	7'118'075,00 €
	S05: Leaner, Effective and Efficient Implementation Provisions and proficient programme Assistance	0,00 €	0,00 €	0,00 €
	TOTAL P1	38'977'000,00 €	9'744'250,00 €	48'721'250,00 €
Priority axis 2	S05: Leaner, Effective and Efficient Implementation Provisions and proficient programme Assistance	2'400'000,00 €	600'000,00 €	3'000'000,00 €
	TOTAL P2	2'400'000,00 €	600'000,00 €	3'000'000,00 €
TOTAL		41'377'000,00 €	10'344'250,00 €	51'721'250,00 €

Table 19: The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (Article 24 (5) CPR)

This table is generated automatically by SFC based on categorisation tables included under each of the priority axes.

The information provided in this table is based on uniform conditions on the implementation of a methodology for each of the ESI Funds adopted by the Commission based on Article 8 of the CPR.

Priority axis	The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)	Share of the total allocation to the cooperation programme (%)
1.	n.a	n.a
Total	-	-

SECTION 4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

A description, taking into account the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, of the integrated approach to territorial development, including in respect of areas referred to in Article 174 (3) TFEU, having regard to the Partnership Agreements of the participating Member States, and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results

ESPON will, in its implementation logic, be “territorial” and support an integrated territorial approach through provision of comparable evidence covering a wide range of themes and issues relevant for authorities and bodies deciding the development of regions, cities and larger territories. Due to the specific objectives of the Community Programme, ESPON 2020 will directly offer other programmes under ESI Funds its territorial evidence support. Moreover, the targeted analyses envisaged to groups of national authorities, regions and cities based on their evidence needs will be able to contribute to an integrated approach, e.g. in ITI and development of functional urban areas etc.

SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE PROGRAMME

5.1 Identification of the Relevant Authorities and Bodies

The authorities and bodies are listed in the table below which includes an ESPON MA the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority.

In support of the dissemination of results at transnational and national level a network of national ECP institutions has been established by the countries participating. In principle, a national authority or body has been nominated as ECP in each country.

Table 20: Identification Of and Contact Details for the Relevant Authorities and Bodies⁷

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body	Head of the authority/body
ESPON MA	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures Department for Spatial Planning and Development (DATER), Division for European Affairs, Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Sinner/Thiemo Eser
Certifying Authority, where applicable	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department	Christian Plein

⁷ In accordance with Article 7 (11) ETC Regulation, the information on the identification of the managing authority, the certifying authority, where appropriate, and the audit authority is not subject to the Commission decision approving the cooperation programme, but remain under the responsibility of the participating Member States.

	for Spatial Planning and Development (DATER), Division for General Affairs and Budget, Luxembourg	
Audit Authority	Ministry of Finance, General Inspection of Finance (IGF), Luxembourg	

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

- the ESPON MA
 the certifying authority

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body	Head of the authority/body
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Decentralised system with Approbation body: or centralised system Ministry of Finance, Directorate for Financial Control, Luxembourg	Patrick Gillen
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	Ministry of Finance, General Inspection of Finance (IGF), Luxembourg	Jeannot Waringo

Authorities supporting the national dissemination of results	Name of the authority/body	Head of the authority/body
ECP Network, one for each country participating	To be defined by each country 3 month after approval of the programme	To be defined by each country 3 month after approval of the programme

5.1.2 The ESPON Managing Authority Assuming the Function and Tasks as Joint Secretariat

Due to the size and the organisational structure of the ESPON 2020 Programme with only one Single Operation and in order to keep the administrative and financial burden as low as possible, no separate Joint Secretariat shall be set up for the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Instead, the ESPON MA shall assume the function and tasks of the Joint Secretariat relevant for the implementation of the programme and shall assist the ESPON MC and the Certifying Authority in carrying out its tasks.

On-going information and assistance to the Single Beneficiary shall also be provided in order to support a sound and correct implementation of the Single Operation.

Limited staff necessary to support the ESPON MA will be contracted and the work space will be available at the location of the ESPON MA for a smooth functioning of the secretarial function with the MA.

5.1.3 Summary Description of the Management and Control Arrangements

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall be implemented through the following main implementation structures: a ESPON MC, the ESPON MA also assuming the function of a joint secretariat, a Certifying Authority, and the Audit Authority.

Role and Tasks of the ESPON MC

In accordance with Article 47 (3) CPR, the Member States and Partner States shall set up within three months of the date of notification of the Commission decision adopting the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the ESPON MC to monitor the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme in agreement with the ESPON MA. The ESPON MC shall draw up its Rules of Procedure and unanimously adopt these Rules of Procedure during the first meeting of the ESPON MC.

In accordance with Article 48 (1), (3) and (5) CPR, the ESPON MC shall be composed of the following members:

- (a) Representative(s) of the ESPON MA of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.
- (b) Representative(s) of each EU Member State.
- (c) Representative(s) of each Partner State.
- (d) Representative(s) of the European Commission, participating in the work of the ESPON MC in an advisory capacity.

The members of the ESPON MC shall be appointed by the participating country at the latest within 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision approving the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. Once appointed, the national authorities and contact persons responsible for representing a Member or Partner State in the ESPON MC shall be promptly notified to the ESPON MA.

The ESPON MC shall have a chairman (usually the country of the EU Presidency) and a co-chairman (the ESPON MA), which is nominated according to the procedure to be defined by the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

By way of derogation from Article 5 CPR on partnership and multi-level governance, due to the specific character and mission of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, competent urban and other public authorities or economic and social partners or other relevant bodies and non-governmental organisations representing various societal issues shall not be included as members in the ESPON MC. If appropriate and upon request of a majority of the members of the ESPON MC, such organisations may participate as guests in specific meetings of the ESPON MC or seminars organised by the programme.

Representatives from EU Candidate Countries and from the Certifying Authority may participate in ESPON MC meetings as observers. Upon request, also external experts supporting the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and representatives of the Single Beneficiary may participate in ESPON MC meetings as guests.

The ESPON MC, as the only decision-making body within the ESPON 2020 Programme, shall have the overall responsibility for monitoring the Programme. For this purpose and in accordance with Article 49 CPR, the ESPON MC shall regularly meet twice but at least one time per year. The ESPON MC shall establish rules for written procedures and silent consent in the Committee's Rules of Procedure.

The ESPON MC shall review the implementation of the Cooperation Programme and Cooperation Programme's progress made towards achieving its objectives. In doing so, it shall have regard to the financial data, common and programme specific indicators, including

changes in the value of result indicators and progress towards quantified target values, and the milestones defined in the performance framework referred to in Article 21(1), and, where relevant, the results of qualitative analyses.

Pursuant to Article 49 (2) (3) (4) CPR and to Article 110 CPR, while taking into consideration the specific context of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the ESPON MC shall in particular:

- (a) Examine any issues that affect the performance of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and of the Single Operation;
- (b) Examine and approve the annual and final implementation reports of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme;
- (c) Examine the evaluation plan drawn up by the ESPON MA for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme at its first meeting, approve it or amend the evaluation plan at a later stage;
- (d) Examine progress made in implementing the evaluation plan and the follow up given to findings of evaluations;
- (e) Examine and adopt a seven year Communication Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and the yearly Communication Action Plans as well as any amendment of this communication strategy or of a given yearly action plan;
- (f) Implementation of the communication strategy of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme closely coordinated and calibrated with the outreach activities of the programme;
- (g) Examine and approve any proposal by the ESPON MA for any amendment to the ESPON 2020 Programme;
- (h) Discuss and approve the Operation Specification which shall guide the preparation of the Operation Proposal;
- (i) Establish minimum criteria for approving, if necessary under conditions, the proposal for the Single Operation elaborated by the ESPON EGTC in its role as Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme;
- (j) Discuss and approve the Single Operation proposal submitted including the Multi-annual Work Programme 2015-2020 for the Single Operation and the respective proposed financial allocations;
- (k) Discuss and approve the Annual Work Plans for the Single Operation, including the respective proposed financial allocations and scoping notes for those actions the ESPON MC considers to be of particular importance;
- (l) Discuss and approve the Annual Implementation Report for the Single Operation and related activities of the Single Beneficiary;
- (m) Ensure monitoring of activities of the ESPON EGTC as Single Beneficiary, according to the modalities stipulated in the Grant Agreement;
- (n) Ensure the nomination of representatives of the ESPON MC to participate in Project Support Teams, for accompanying the implementation of major projects mainly on applied research and for acting as a rapporteur to the ESPON MC, and addresses the proposals made by Project Support Teams;

- (o) Provide, via the rapporteur, direct feedback to the Single Beneficiary on important activities related to the Specific Objectives 1-4.

The ESPON MC shall seek to make decisions on ground of consensus. Should a consensus not be reached, a qualified majority voting shall apply for which further details are provided in the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

Members of the ESPON MC having a conflict of interest in respect of any subject matter up for consideration by the work or by decision of the ESPON MC shall declare such interest to the meeting and shall not take part in the decision. The details of this procedure shall be set out in the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

If necessary for facilitating and preparing its decisions, the ESPON MC may establish separate (Sub-) Committees or formats of cooperation between the Member States and Partner States.

The representatives of the ESPON MC will ensure that on the national level all relevant partners are involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme as referred to in Article 5(2) the CPR.

Role and Tasks of the ESPON MA

The ESPON MA will be responsible for managing the cooperation programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management as described in Article 125 of the Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 CPR and Article 23 ETC Regulation. It will ensure that the different programme bodies interact in a smooth way.

The ESPON MA assuming the function of the joint secretariat assists the ESPON MC and, where appropriate, in a strictly secretarial function the Audit Authority in carrying out their respective functions and shall especially:

- Prepare, implement and follow-up decisions of the monitoring and programming Committee.
- Organise the ESPON MC meetings.
- Liaise with the implementing authorities and the European Commission, to ensure that the relevant implementation reports and any other relevant information is made available to them.
- Cooperate with organisations, institutions and networks relevant for the objectives of the programme.
- Distribute information according to the CRP and running a programme website and events.
- Establish a programme database and operation monitoring system to provide data in computerised form necessary for the monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit.
- Develop for approval by the ESPON MC a transparent procedure for the establishment of the Operation Specification, the applications form, and the funding rules in the form of Operation Implementation Guidelines.
- Manage the operation application process and to advice the Single Beneficiary organise the checking and assessment of the Operation Proposal towards the decision of the ESPON MC.

- Coordinate the dialogue and cooperation between the ESPON MC and the Single Beneficiary in the preparation of the Annual Work Plans by the Single Beneficiary to be submitted by the Single Beneficiary for approval by the ESPON MC.
- Monitor commitments and payments of ERDF funds at programme level.
- Provide advice and assistance to the Single Beneficiary regarding implementation of activities and financial administration.
- Monitor the progress made by the Single Beneficiary through collecting and checking the Single Operation progress reports, including monitoring outputs, results and financial implementation.
- Ensure that payments to the Single Beneficiary are made within the agreed timeframe.
- Set up a coherent programme management and control system ensuring the legality, regularity of declared expenditure and the respect of the principle of sound financial management.
- Carry out the verifications pursuant to Article 23 (4) ETC Regulation.
- Draw up the management declaration of assurance on the functioning of the management control system.
- Manage the Technical Assistance budget (accounting, procurement, payments, reporting).
- Fulfil the usual work of a programme secretariat, i.e. organisation of meetings, preparation of documents.
- Liaise with the Certifying Authority and to make all relevant data available to them.
- Support the Audit Authority in a strictly secretarial function by organising and following up of meetings, following the procurement procedure for the externalisation of audits, ensuring a good communication flow between the Audit Authority audited bodies and the external audit firm, making relevant data available to these actors to allow for a smooth implementation of their tasks.

With regard to the management of the Single Operation, the ESPON MA has the following discretionary powers:

- The ESPON MA can decide on changes as long as the purpose and the other basic features of the Operation are not altered. It can also decide on changes in an activity which does not have consequences on the eligibility or the results of the project. In particular the ESPON MA can decide on:
 - Additional minor conditions to the approved Single Operation minor corrections, errors or clarification requests are found during the phase of fulfilment of conditions
 - Changes in activities which do not change the overall objectives of the project;
 - An extension of the date by which progress reports have to be presented by the Single Beneficiary;

The ESPON MC decides in cases of doubt and in all other cases.

Role and Tasks of the Certifying Authority

In accordance with Article 21 ETC-Regulation, the Certifying Authority shall assume all functions as set out by Article 126 (a) – (h) CPR and shall establish all procedures referred to in Annex XIII (3) (B) CPR. The Certifying Authority shall also

- (a) Draw up and submit to the EC all payment applications according to Article 131 CPR and on the amount as defined by Article 130 CPR laying down common rules for calculating interim payments and payment of the final balance;
- (b) Observe and comply with the proceedings and deadlines as set out by Article 135 CPR for a presentation of interim payment applications and for their payment;
- (c) Receive the payments made by the EC;
- (d) Receive the national co-financing of the Member States and the contributions of the Partner States;
- (e) Make payments to the Single Beneficiary, in accordance with Article 132 CPR, and to any other recipient of a payment.

A Euro-currency (EUR) bank account for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme shall be available at the Certifying Authority in the name of the Trésorerie de l'Etat du Luxembourg at the latest 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision approving the Programme. The single bank account shall be used by the Certifying Authority for receiving the ERDF-contribution from the Commission, the Member States' co-financing and the Partner State contributions and for making all payments to the Single Beneficiary or to any other recipient of a payment.

Role and Tasks of the Audit Authority

The Audit Authority shall assume the functions as set out by Article 127 (1) – (8) CPR. The Audit Authority shall also contribute to the EC's cooperation with audit authorities in accordance with the provisions as set out by Article 128 (3) CPR.

In agreement with the provision of Article 124 (2) CPR, the Audit Authority is responsible for drawing up the report and opinion assessing the fulfilment by the ESPON MA and Certifying Authority of the criteria related to the internal control environment, risk management, management and control activities and monitoring, on the basis of the Annex XIII of the CPR.

With reference to Art. 25 ETC-Regulation, the setting up of a Group of Auditors is not required considering that the only two grant-receiving bodies of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme (the ESPON MA and the Single Beneficiary) are located in Luxembourg. However, on demand of Member and Partner States, a Consultative Group of Auditors of may be established at own cost of the sending countries. In order ensure a well-coordinated approach of the audits with other Interregional Programmes the Audit Authority may search for cooperation with the Group of Auditors of these programmes.

The Audit Authority shall within eight months of adoption of a Cooperation Programme, prepare an audit strategy for performance of audits. The audit strategy shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on projects and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years.

The Audit Authority, (in agreement with the ESPON MC for the budgetary provisions), may decide to contract an external audit firm to carry out audits on the proper functioning of the management and control systems and on an appropriate sample in compliance with Article

127 CPR. The quality and completeness of the audit work carried out will be ensured by the Audit Authority assisted by the ESPON MA strictly in a secretarial function. The ESPON MA will inform the ESPON MC of the results of the audit work and necessary follow-up.

Organisation of the Assessment of the Single Operation

The Operation Proposals will be submitted by the Single Beneficiary can be submitted following the invitation by the ESPON MC to submit an Operation Proposals with reference to the Operation Specifications decide by the ESPON MC.

Details of the assessment criteria and procedure will also be made available through the Operation Specification and the Operation Implementation Guidelines. The Operation Proposals submitted by the Single Beneficiary will be made available to the members of the ESPON MC. If the ESPON MC so decides it shall set-up a Assessment Committee with a limited number of representatives of the ESPON MC. The ESPON MA supports the process by organising the assessment procedure based on the eligibility and quality criteria approved by the ESPON MC, and prepares in line with the assessment of the Assessment Committee a proposal for a decision on the Operation proposals to be taken by the ESPON MC.

The chair of the ESPON MC together with the Chair of the Assessment Committee and ESPON MA will guide the process towards a decision on the Operation Proposal presented by the Single Beneficiary which can be an acceptance of the Operation Proposal without conditions or under conditions or a rejection of the proposals combined with recommendations for a resubmission.

Once the Operation Proposal is accepted by the ESPON MC the ESPON MA will sign the Grant Agreement with the Single Beneficiary using template approved by the ESPON MC, which is laying down further details concerning the responsibilities, obligations and liabilities of the Single Beneficiary.

The ESPON MA shall ensure that the Single Beneficiary will produce all documents relevant for the Grant Agreement and its implementation, will provide necessary information and will give access to their business premises to any authorised body of the EU, to the Audit Authority, the Certifying Authority, the ESPON MA itself for control and audit purposes in compliance with Article 132 CPR. The Grant Agreement makes reference to the control systems set up in accordance with Article 23 ETC regulation .

Financial Control of the Single Beneficiary

According to Article 23 (4) ETC Regulation and considering that the ESPON MA does not carry out verifications under Article 125 (4) (a) CPR, Luxembourg designated the body responsible for carrying out such verifications in relation to the Single Beneficiary on its territory. The body responsible for the approbation of the First Level Control of the Single Beneficiary is defined in Chapter 5.1.1. of the Cooperation Programme. The full description will be included in the description of the management and control system in accordance with Article 72 CPR.

The relevant authorities will do its utmost to ensure that the expenditure is verified and confirmed by the controllers within a period of two months after the end of each reporting period so that the Single Beneficiary is in a position to submit the Progress Reports to the ESPON MA at the dates set in the Grant Agreement and so that the ESPON MA/Certifying Authority can declare regularly expenditure to the EC.

The cost of these verifications of the Single Beneficiary will be carried by itself. These costs are considered eligible for an ERDF reimbursement and thus reported within the progress

reports. The template of documents (such as standard control confirmation, control reports incl. checklist) shall be decided by the ESPON MC.

With regard to Technical Assistance payments to the ESPON MA the body as described in Chapter 5.1.1. will carry through verifications and will ensure that the expenditure is certified in line with the control system set up of the Cooperation programme.

The result of any verification of the proper functioning of the first level control system carried out by the Certifying Authority and shall be communicated to the ESPON MA. The ESPON MA will also inform the ESPON MC of the results and follow-up of any checks carried out by other programme bodies or the EC or European Court of Auditors.

Monitoring of the Single Operation

The ESPON MA shall monitor the implementation and financial progress of Single Operation. For this purpose, three main types of information need to be considered:

- The use of the ERDF subsidy for the purpose mentioned in the Grant Agreement and the approved application;
- The progress made in implementing the Operation in compliance with Grant Agreement and the approved application;
- The confirmation of expenditure by the Single Beneficiary controller in compliance with the system set up in Luxembourg according to Article 23 (4) of the ETC Regulation.

The ESPON MA shall assess the reports and monitor the proper implementation of the approved Operation referred to in the Regulation according to the procedure laid down in the description of the management and control system.

Programme Monitoring

The monitoring of this programme will provide information on the implementation at any given time. It will cover financial issues and achieved results considering the targets fixed for the different milestones in the performance framework.

Monitoring will encourage high quality, effective implementation by monitoring the progress of the Single Operation against the goals and intended results of the programme. Monitoring will be based on regular reports from the Single Operation.

The Programme specifies a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating its progress. The programme specific result and output indicators are presented in Section 2 of this document. They relate directly to the specific objective of the programme. In particular, result indicators are the cornerstone of the performance analysis of the programme. They relate to parts of the intended results that can be captured.

The Single Operation will be obliged to report twice a year at a minimum on the results achieved. The ESPON MA will collect and compile the data of these reports in order to allow for conclusions on the programme level. The ESPON MA will use this documentation – together with additional information on the financial implementation – to draft the annual and final reports and submit them to the ESPON MC.

Annual and Final Implementation Reports and Closure of the Programme

The ESPON MA will, in accordance with Article 14 ETC Regulation submit to the Commission implementation reports in accordance with the requirements of Article 50 CPR.

Prior the submission these reports will be approved by the ESPON MC. A final report on implementation will be submitted to the Commission by 31 December 2022. The closure of the programme will be carried out in compliance with Article 141 CPR by the competent programme authorities. The programme closure will be prepared to a maximum within the eligibility period of the 2014-2020 programme to limit the closure activities and costs to be financed by the Partner States or the successor programme afterwards.

Evaluations

The programme has been subject to an ex-ante evaluation by an independent evaluator with the aim of improving the overall quality of the programme and to optimise the allocation of budgetary resources and the quantification of target values in the performance framework. The recommendations of this evaluation have been taken into account during the drafting of this programme.

In accordance with Articles 56 and 114 CRP Regulation the ESPON MA will draw up an evaluation plan for the programme. The evaluation plan shall be submitted to the first meeting of the ESPON MC.

One or several evaluations will be carried out to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme on the basis of the evaluation plan. All evaluations will be examined by the ESPON MC and sent to the Commission.

By 31 December 2020, the ESPON MA will submit to the Commission a report summarising the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period, including an assessment of the main outputs and results of the programme.

Computerised Exchange of Data

Computerised systems for the management and monitoring of programme and operation data will be set up no later than 31 December 2015. The Online Operation reporting systems will also be set up in compliance with the requirements set out in Article 122(3) CRP. This will allow all exchanges of information between the Single Beneficiary and the ESPON MA/Certifying Authority, Audit Authority to be carried out by means of an electronic data exchange system. This system will facilitate interoperability and allow for the beneficiary to submit all information as referred to in Article 122 (3) CPR only once.

The Contribution of the Member and Partner States to the Financing of the Programme

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall be based on a co-financing rate of 80 % ERDF and 20 % national contribution (tbc) at the level of the Cooperation programme. Member States will provide the co-financing of the total programme according to the distribution agreed with the submission in annual instalments for the years 2014-2020 transferred to the Certifying Authority.

The Partners States will provide an additional budget agreed with the submission of the programme, which will be administered by the Certifying Authority in a separate budget in full transparency of the ESPON MC.

The payment of the annual contribution is due by end of February of the year to be funded. An extension of this deadline is possible only in duly justified cases. The ESPON MA shall send a written request three months prior to the due date in accordance with the financial tables of the national contributions. The written request will indicate the account number, the amount of the annual contributions and the payment due dates. A report on the payment situation will be given by the Certifying Authority to the ESPON MC on a regular basis. The

transferred national contribution will not produce neither and any interest not an interest shall be due as long as the transfer will be activated until the end of the respective year.

In the case that – at the end of the programme implementation period – the Member and Partner States have transferred more funds than have actually been used the Certifying Authority will reimburse these funds unless no other indication is given either by decision of the ESPON MC or the information of the respective State.

Payments to the Single Beneficiary

The Single Beneficiary shall receive an advance payment together with the transmission of Operation Specifications and the request of the ESPON MC to prepare the proposal for the Single Operation. The level of the advance payment will be decided by the ESPON MC when deciding on the Operation Specification.

The advance payment will allow the Single Beneficiary to pre-finance its activities. The claim for reimbursement within the progress report certified by the First Level Controller shall be sent to the ESPON MA. The reimbursement is paid by ESPON MA through the Certifying Authority to the Single Beneficiary. All amounts referred to in the subsidy contract are expressed in EURO (EUR). Funds will be disbursed in EURO (EUR) to the bank account specified by the Single Beneficiary in the project application.

The ESPON MA and Certifying Authority ensures that the Single Beneficiary receive payment in full and as quickly as possible, i.e. within 6 weeks on average after approval of the reports by the ESPON MA provided that the funds are made available by the European Commission and sufficient national contributions are transferred. No deduction, retention or further specific charges which would reduce the amount of the payment shall be made.

Should there be any suspicion of irregularities, the ESPON MA or the Certifying Authority in compliance with the description of the management and control system shall suspend the reimbursement of the ERDF contribution until the issues are solved.

Information and Communication

The ESPON MA will draw up a Communication Strategy in accordance with Article 116 CPR, which will be discussed and approved by the ESPON MC no later than 6 months after the adoption of the Cooperation Programme. The Communication Strategy shall be closely coordinated with the capitalisation and out-reach activities of the EGTC in order to avoid any overlap and allow reducing them to the appropriate level. Any revision of the Communication Strategy shall be discussed in, and approved by the ESPON MC.

The ESPON MA will inform the ESPON MC once a year about the progress in the implementation of the Communication Strategy and its assessment of the results, as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year.

The ESPON MA will designate one person to be responsible for information and communication at cooperation programme level and shall inform the Commission of this designated person. This person shall participate in any network(s) set up by the Commission to exchange on the results of the implementation of the Communication Strategy, as stipulated in Article 117(4) CRP.

The Communication Strategy will be implemented by the ESPON MA in close coordination with the capitalisation and outreach activities implemented by the Single Beneficiary. It will work in partnership with the Member and Partner States and other bodies identified in Annex XII (3) CPR. In particular, the Member and Partner States via their members of the ESPON

MC will support the communication activities through providing, where necessary, national specific information.

A budget for the implementation of the Communication Strategy will be made available as part of the programme's budget for technical assistance, in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

The Communication Strategy aims in particular to inform about participation opportunities under this Cooperation Programme and to publicise to citizens the role and achievements of cohesion policy through information and communication actions on the results and impacts of the programmes and the Single Operation. It will take into consideration the elements detailed in Annex XII CPR.

To ensure transparency in the support of the Funds, the information set out in Annex XII (1) CPR about the Single Beneficiary will be published on the programme website, updated at least every six months in an exportable in a format which allows the data to be easily published on the internet.

5.1.4 The Apportionment of Liabilities Among The Participating Member States in Case of Financial Corrections Imposed by the ESPON MA Or the Commission

Reduction and Recovery of Payments from the Single Beneficiary

The ESPON MA shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the Single Operation. The ESPON MA shall also recover funds from the Single Beneficiary in case of a termination of the Grant Agreement in full or in part based on the conditions defined in the Grant Agreement. In principle, if the Single Beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment the Member States, the country where the Single Beneficiary is located, e.i. in this case where the EGTC is registered, shall reimburse the ESPON MA based on Article 27 (3) ETC regulation. Details on the procedure will be included in the description of the management and control system to be established in accordance with Article 72 CPR.

The ESPON MA with the support of the Certifying Authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down in the cooperation programme and in Article 27 ETC Regulation.

In the case of irregularities discovered, for example, by the Court of Auditors or by the EC, which result in certain expenditures being considered ineligible and in a financial correction being the subject of a EC decision on the basis of Articles 136 to 139 CPR, the financial consequences for the Member and Partner States are laid down in the following section "liabilities and irregularities".

Any related exchange of correspondence between the EC and the Luxembourg as the state where the Single Beneficiary is located will be posted to ESPON MA, Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority where relevant.

If the ESPON MA or the Certifying Authority is becoming aware of irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the other body and respectively Audit Authority where relevant. In compliance with Article 112 CPR Luxembourg as seat of the Single Beneficiary is responsible for reporting irregularities committed by the Single Beneficiaries.

Appointment of Liabilities

The situation regarding ESPON 2020 and the establishment of a Single Beneficiary is particular as only two entities will receive subsidies so the cases of liability can be rather clearly allocated:

- (1) The *Single Beneficiary* under the Grant Agreement will receive the all funding allocated under the *Priority Axis 1*.
- (2) The *ESPON MA* will receive all funding under the *Priority Axis 2* (Technical Assistance).
- (3) On principle a third case of liabilities is possible by imposition of *flat-rate correction on the programme level* affecting both, the Single Beneficiary and the ESPON MA.

Liability of the Single Beneficiary - Priority 1

In case of occurrence of ineligible expenditure or irregularities with financial impacts in the use of funding by the Single Beneficiary the financial liability shall be borne by the ESPON EGTC. In case the EGTC is not able to cover these costs the members of the ESPON EGTC are liable. In order to support the members of the ESPON EGTC regarding a financial burden resulting from their unlimited liability in relation to the implementation of the ERDF-funding allocated under the Grant Agreement, an “ESPON EGTC Liability Mechanism” is set up (hereinafter referred to as Liability Mechanism).

The purpose, size of financing and practical operation of the Liability Mechanism is described in a specific “Reference Document on the Liability Mechanism” which shall be an Annex to the Agreement between Luxembourg and the Member and Partner States on the ESPON 2020 programme.

By the definition of the chain of liabilities any potentially occurring recovery of irregular expenditure from the Single Beneficiary to the ESPON MA is ensured.

Liability Related to the ESPON MA - Priority 2 (Technical Assistance)

For financial consequences of possible irregularities occurring in the use of funding for Technical Assistance under Priority Axis 2 of the ESPON 2020 Programme, two approaches shall be applied:

- (a) For irregularities with financial impacts related to the administration of Technical Assistance, the financial liability shall be borne by the ESPON MA alone.
- (b) For irregularities with financial impacts regarding the use of Technical Assistance, which is a consequence of a decision of the Member States and the Partner States in the ESPON MC, the liability shall be borne jointly by the Member States and Partner States proportionally to their financial contributions to the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Liability Related to Flat-Rate Corrections on the Level of the Cooperation Programme

Considering, that the ESPON 2020 Programme provides for a lean and clearly defined management and control structure and only two beneficiaries, the ESPON MA and the ESPON EGTC, any liability, in principle, shall be possible to be attributed. Therefore the probability of an application of flat-rate corrections is very low. Nevertheless, a rule shall be defined regarding the financial consequences of flat-rate corrections at the programme level:

- (a) For the proportion of flat rate corrections relating to the funding under the Grant Agreement under for Priority Axis 1, the Liability shall be borne by the Single Beneficiary, which can recur on the Liability Mechanism.

(b) For the proportion of flat rate corrections relating to Technical Assistance (Priority Axis 2), the liability shall be borne jointly by the Member States and Partner States proportionally to their financial contributions to the ESPON 2020 Programme.

5.1.5 Use of the Euro

Where applicable, the method chosen for the conversion of expenditure incurred in another currency than the Euro.

5.2. Involvement of Partners

5.2.1. *Role of the Relevant Partners in the Preparation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme.*

[Note: To be completed following the end and reporting of the Public Consultation].

SECTION 6. REDUCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

A summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden

Not applicable

SECTION 7. SEPARATE ELEMENTS - PRESENTED AS ANNEXES IN PRINTED DOCUMENT VERSION

7.1 List of Relevant Partners Involved in the Preparation of the Cooperation Programme

[To be completed following the end and reporting of the Public Consultation].

7.2 Equality Between Men and Women

The horizontal principle of gender equality is not considered to be a primary focus of the ESPON 2020 programme. ESPON 2020 does not intend to develop specific activities uniquely aimed at the promotion of gender equality. The reason that this horizontal principle is not pro-actively supported primarily lies in the nature and scope of the programme of providing European territorial evidence and the corresponding strategy adopted.

Tenders for service contracts will be invited to explain in their application how their proposal will address gender equality. At the end of the project the partners will be asked to report how their project activities and outputs actually contributed to this horizontal principle. Based on the aggregated contributions reported by service contracts, ESPON 2020 will be able to monitor and demonstrate how the programme concretely contributed to gender equality. However, no specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of activities dealing with this issue.

No specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of activities dealing with gender issues. However, the implementation of the programme may include applied research and/or analysis taking up gender issues depending on the demand from the policymakers involved.

The Single Beneficiary and the MA will be an equal opportunities employer.

ANNEXES

- Draft report of the ex-ante evaluation, with an executive summary (mandatory) (Article 48 (2) CPR).
- Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme, Article 7 (8) ETC Regulation.
- A citizens' summary of the cooperation programme (as appropriate)

[Annexes Not Included]