

TerrEvi

Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes

Scientific Platform and Tools Project 2013/3/7

Draft Final Report | Version 31/10/2013



This report presents a more detailed overview of the analytical approach to be applied by the project. This “Scientific Platform and Tools” Project is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

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

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

Information on the ESPON Programme and projects can be found on www.espon.eu

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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Summary

This draft final report shall help so that all types of programmes can make use of the results and the work conducted within the TerrEvi project. The purpose of this paper is therefore twofold: On the one hand, the main deliverables that have been developed stepwise and that base upon each other are to be presented (Part A). On the other hand, ideas and approaches how to deal with and include ESPON data into the programming cycle are to be presented in order to give some hints how programmes can generally make use of data provided by ESPON (Part B). Some recommendations and conclusions for ESPON and for the operational programmes that could be drawn from the work conducted by the project partners are given in the third section (Part C).

The first main deliverable comprised factsheets for 53 cross-border and 13 transnational programme areas presenting territorial evidence of ESPON that can be useful for the future development of the programmes. For ten selected programme areas (involving regional, cross-border, transnational programmes) more detailed Evidence Packs were developed and presented at ten local workshops. The feedback and the results of critical discussions with stakeholders from programme secretariats and managing authorities have been taken into account for the revision and preparation of the Evidence Packs. These Final Evidence Packs were delivered to the programmes afterwards. Furthermore, the project team presented its work at different ESPON seminars and at other scientific and political conferences.

To start with, part B shows how and where ESPON data can be used within the programming cycle. Based on the 11 thematic objectives of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 (ESIF) and the five main phases of the programming cycle (needs analysis, thematic concentration, result indicators, project selection, stakeholder consultation), linkages between ESPON data and the programme priorities as well as the spheres of potential use of ESPON evidence in different phases of the programme cycle for single groups (managing authorities, programme stakeholders, Commission services, regional implementing administrations) can be illustrated. Part B furthermore presents different ways how ESPON data as one among many useful sources of information can be interpreted at various geographical levels: Besides maps as a standard form of presenting ESPON data, for example, box-plots, territorial impact assessment or traffic lights are shortly introduced.

Part C gives a quick overview of key conclusions drawn by the project team that might be of use for ESPON itself and for the operational programmes. These conclusions refer to the main advantages and benefits of ESPON but also mention restrictions that have to be taken into consideration in order to increase both its utilisation and its usefulness.

Introduction

ESPON supports policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. The task of the ESPON TerrEvi project was to develop and test ways forward how the territorial evidence produced by ESPON can be useful for Growth & Jobs and Territorial Cooperation Programmes.

Does the territorial evidence produced by ESPON hold potentials to see a programme area in its European context adds an important new perspective that can help shaping the programming and the places of implementing projects?

The ESPON TerrEvi project focused on producing evidence for European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) programmes with the aim to support the development of the programmes to be carried out in the 2014-2020 period. A first milestone of ESPON TerrEvi was the development of easy-to-understand factsheets for all territorial cooperation programme areas, presenting selected ESPON findings. The second milestone concerned ten specific programme case studies illustrating how ESPON material can be used to support the development of future programmes e.g. by giving a comparative European dimension to the envisaged programme work. They provide the reader with insights on different types of ESPON territorial evidence with regard to the possible investment priorities of future programmes.

This report presents some key deliveries and approaches used in the ESPON TerrEvi work as well as reflections on the usefulness of these approaches and the material at hand. In doing so the report want to help stakeholders at programme level to better utilise ESPON material and see what are the particular challenges and potentials of the respective programme areas in relation to the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Part A focuses on the deliveries developed by ESPON TerrEvi and allows the reader to draw on the lessons for the development of similar activities in other programme areas or contexts. Part B presents a range of different approaches utilised in the ESPON TerrEvi work in order to facilitate the understanding and use of ESPON information and knowledge. Part C focuses on the lessons learned.

Part A: ESPON TerrEvi deliverables

1 Factsheets for Territorial Cooperation Areas

An important dimension of the ESPON TerrEvi project was the elaboration of factsheets on all present 53 cross-border and 13 transnational territorial cooperation programmes.

Aim of these factsheets is to provide within a short period of time some territorial evidence which can be useful for the development of the future programming documents. Furthermore, these factsheets illustrate that ESPON has interesting territorial evidence going beyond what the programmes usually use for their programming work. In doing so, the programmes shall be intrigued to further look into available ESPON material.

Certainly, the factsheets provide only a first glimpse rather than fully present the work of the large number of ESPON projects that are currently underway. Likewise, each programme area includes diverse development potentials and challenges, which need targeted information search. Nevertheless, the factsheets contain information, benchmarking the programme area in its larger, territorial context, that is of interest and helps to better understand the programme area and to navigate within the richness of ESPON material available (see textbox for details on the structure of the factsheets).

The factsheets have been published on the ESPON website in late November 2012. They can be downloaded at:

www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_ScientificPlatform/terrevi_factsheets121128.html

Table of content of factsheets

Introduction

1. Europe 2020

Smart growth: R&D; Employment in knowledge intensive service; Use of internet, Territorial patterns of innovation

Sustainable growth: Wind energy potential, Ozone concentration, Potential vulnerability to climate change, Impact of Directive 11; Combined Adaptive capacity to climate change

Inclusive growth: Long-term unemployment; At-risk-of-poverty; Persons aged 25-64 and 20-24 with upper secondary and tertiary education; Change in labour force 2005-2050; Employment rate

2. Territorial factors of interest: Urban-rural typology; Multimodal accessibility

3. Recommended ESPON readings: case studies, qualitative information...

2 Evidence Packs for selected Programming Areas

The second specific delivery in the TerrEvi project was a set of 10 Territorial Evidence Packs. These pilot Evidence Packs represent an ambitious attempt to demonstrate in practice to selected Managing Authorities (and other relevant programme bodies) what territorial evidence can contribute to the design and implementation of a result-oriented Structural Funds programme of the post 2013 period.

The purpose of the pilot cases was to demonstrate in practice to the respective Managing Authority (and other relevant programme bodies) what territorial evidence can contribute to the design and implementation of the new generation of Structural Funds programmes in the period 2014-2020.

In the early planning of the Territorial Evidence Packs it was envisaged to have a final composition of pilot cases comprising six Regional Operational Programmes (two for each regional category, i.e. less-developed, transition and more developed regions), three Transnational Programmes and one Cross-Border-Cooperation Programme

For the selection of the Regional Operational Programmes the project team used the following criteria:

- coverage for all regional categories, i.e. less-developed, transition and more developed regions;
- existence of a Regional Operational Programme already for the 2007-2013 period;
- variance of available budgets (i.e. ranging from small regional programmes to large national programmes with budgets of billion EUR);
- mix of old and new Member States;
- mix of central and peripheral regions;
- mix of small and large Member States;
- mix of programmes between old and new member states;
- inclusion of external borders and countries under ENPI and IPA;
- mix of experienced and less experienced;
- a variance of available budgets;
- performance in the current period (e.g. expressed by the current number of projects and absorption rate);
- institutional continuity of the Managing Authorities and
- expression of willingness to cooperate.

The TerrEvi project team started to contact these preliminary selected programmes introducing the project and evaluating the possibility being one of the ten pilot cases. Finally it turned out that there had to be taken some adaptations regarding the initial project plan.

As a matter of fact the final list of pilot cases consists of four regional programmes, one CBC programme and five TNC programmes

- Molise (regional)
- Umbria (regional)
- Thessalia (regional)
- Norte (regional)
- Austria – Slovakia (CBC)
- North West Europe (TNC)
- North Sea (TNC)
- Alpine Space (TNC)
- Atlantic Area (TNC)
- South East Europe (TNC)

The list of pilot cases has been set up in coordination with the ESPON programme and has been approved by the Coordination Unit.

The work on the evidence packs, or case studies, was organised in three main steps.

Step 1 – Preparation Phase

- Contacting the programme authority and illustrating the project, its structure, the main steps of the case study
- Preparing a draft factsheet to the authorities
- Discussing the process for the local workshop
- Organising the local workshop

Step 2 – Draft Evidence Pack, workshop and Final Evidence Pack

- Delivering the Draft Evidence Pack to the programme authority
- Conducting the workshop: presenting the Draft Evidence Pack, collecting feedback, collecting further element of interest for the Final Evidence Pack
- Preparing the Final Evidence Pack by integrating feedback collected in the workshop (see textbox for structure of Final Evidence Pack)

Step 3 – Feedback

Following the discussions during the workshop and additional feedbacks from the programme stakeholders, the Draft Evidence Pack were revised and finalised.

Table of content of Evidence Packs (= factsheet + local verification of ESPON evidence)

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Context information (e.g. GDP per capita, population growth)
- Europe 2020
- Smart Growth: Factsheets indicators + others interesting at local / programme level; Results and feedback from the workshop
- Sustainable Growth: Factsheets indicators + others interesting at local / programme level; Results and feedback from the workshop
- Inclusive Growth: Factsheets indicators + others interesting at local / programme level; Results and feedback from the workshop
- Territorial factors of interest for the programme area
- Recommended ESPON readings

3 Workshops with selected Programming Areas

The starting activity of the workshop was the presentation of the Draft Evidence Pack. The presentation made by slides illustrated the key points and evidence from a territorial prospective. The participant were asked to:

- indicate for each topic positive and negative aspects;
- if further information sources exist;
- locate the main positive and negative elements in a SWOT;
- identify those elements in relation to thematic objectives;
- identify all further information, in particular splitting them into two categories (the group of information already available at a local level and all information which could be useful even if not available).

The workshop was led by an expert from the project team using the Metaplan technique and other facilitation tools.

As a final stage, the Managing Authority was asked to fill in a short questionnaire about the possible uses of the evidence pack (expectations).

The contributions of the workshop, in terms of the additional figures and information were integrated into the final version of the evidence pack which was then delivered to the local authorities.

In most cases between 8 and 15 people participated in the workshops, mainly from Programme Secretariats and Managing Authorities.

All workshops followed roughly the same structure starting with introducing the team, the project itself and the agenda for elaborating the envisaged results. The following main steps have been done in every workshop:

- Presentation of smart growth indicators
- Interactive session on smart growth
- Presentation of sustainable growth indicators
- Interactive session on sustainable growth
- Presentation of inclusive growth indicators
- Interactive session on inclusive growth
- Concluding presentation and discussion

4 Dissemination activities

As for the dissemination, the project team has presented its work at the ESPON seminars in Aalborg (June 2012), Pafos (December 2012) and Dublin (June 2013). Main objectives were the presentation of the methodology as well as project's content and context. Moreover, mutual influences with EU neighbours in the scope of Macro-Regions were discussed during workshops where results have been presented. By taking part in these discussions a valuable interchange with other ESPON project teams was possible and input as well as feedback could be considered for further project implementation.

Furthermore, the TerrEvi team has presented the factsheet work at an INTERACT event in London (May 2012) and ESPON-INTERACT events in Luxembourg (September 2012) and Vienna (December 2012). The input focused on main results of the TerrEvi project with regards to territorial and thematic dimensions integrated in programming and projects and the support of realistic strategies contributing to the delivery of the Europe 2020 targets within territorial cooperation. Decision makers and programme managers involved in cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes from regional, national and European level could hereby profit by collecting ideas and discuss future ways for cooperation.

The project partners also prepared and presented a paper for a closing conference of the ESPON SCALES project in Berlin (October 2012) and the EUGEO Conference in Rome (September 2013).

The publication of the 66 factsheets on the ESPON website and the delivery of ten evidence packs to the regional, transnational and cross-border programme authorities – two specific deliveries of the TerrEvi project – can also be considered as dissemination activities. By this means programme bodies within Structural Funds implementation can use the territorial knowledge for the identification of place-specific contexts which in turn can support the setting of public investment priorities accompanied by tangible targets. In a further consequence – through the inclusion and involvement of diverse ETC programmes – a broad European public sphere benefits from the outcome and generated knowledge.

The TerrEvi project team envisages organising further dissemination activities in the next months.

The first dissemination activity could be the realisation of an online application / web tool. Moreover, the project team could produce, at least, one more factsheet for another area, e.g. for a macro-region, Interreg programme area. The choice of the area would then be based on the demand from the areas. The project team could organise a meeting with selected managing authorities and programme stakeholders and could furthermore take part in other conferences in order to spread the knowledge of ESPON evidence and the main results of the TerrEvi project.

Part B: How TerrEvi dealt with ESPON material

5 Setting the Scene

ESPON supports policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. It provides comparable information, evidence, analysis, and scenarios on territorial dynamics, which reveal territorial capitals and development potentials of regions and larger territories. Considering the programme area in its European context adds an important new perspective that can help shaping the programming and the places of implementing projects.

The ESPON TerrEvi project focused on producing evidence for European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) programmes with the aim to support the development of the programmes to be carried out in the 2014-2020 period. A first milestone of ESPON TerrEvi was the development of easy-to-understand factsheets for all territorial cooperation programme areas, presenting selected ESPON findings. The second milestone concerned ten specific programme case studies illustrating how ESPON material can be used to support the development of future programmes e.g. by giving a comparative European dimension to the envisaged programme work. They provide the reader with insights on different types of ESPON territorial evidence with regard to the possible investment priorities of future programmes.

In all of this the aim was to help the programmes to better utilise ESPON material and see what are the particular challenges and potentials of the respective programme areas in relation to the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In doing so, it supports territorially differentiated programming activities in order to address regional specificities as it is emphasised in the Territorial Agenda 2020. The work carried out shows that ESPON results can be used¹ for the following moments within the programme cycle: needs analysis, thematic concentration, programme monitoring, project selection, and stakeholder dialogue.

Making best use of the ESPON results available requires certainly also a proper understanding of the policy context of future European Cohesion Policy. Some key points are highlighted in this chapter, before the next chapter explores concepts and methodologies successfully applied in the ESPON TerrEvi work.

¹ with differing intensity

5.1 Key policy documents

The analysis of ESPON material useful for future European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) takes not only account of the discussion on future European regional policies, but relates also to a number of overarching European policy documents. The most important of these are:

- **Europe 2020.** The Europe 2020 Strategy (launched in 2010) represents the overarching strategy of the EU. Its aim is to help the European Union to recover from the current crisis through smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Strategy forms the basis for all European policies and especially the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) are seen as an important contribution to achieving the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- **5th Cohesion Report.** Paving the way for a reformed Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-20, the 5th Cohesion Report was adopted in November 2010. It addresses a wide array of relevant issues, such as the concentration of resources on a few priorities closely linked to 'Europe 2020', the definition of clear performance indicators and targets, the conditionality and incentives associated with the use of EU structural funding, etc. The 5th Cohesion Report also discusses territorial cohesion by analysing the territorial dimension of access to services and a wide range of EU policies, paying more attention to climate change and the environment, and considering how the territorial impact of policies can be measured. The notion of territorial cohesion still however requires a more comprehensive introduction in the next generation of Cohesion Reports.
- **Territorial Agenda 2020.** The Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA2020) was adopted at an informal ministerial meeting during the Hungarian EU Presidency (Gödöllő, May 2011). It stresses the importance of a territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The TA2020 is the follow-up of the Territorial Agenda for the EU – the TAEU (Leipzig, May 2007) and its Action Plan (Ponta Delgada, November 2007).
- **Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.** In 2007 the Commission launched a public debate on territorial cohesion by issuing a green paper. The debate showed that territorial cohesion is largely associated with an integrated approach to development, entailing the better coordination of public policies, taking better account of territorial impacts, improved multilevel governance and partnership, the promotion of European territorial cooperation as a clear EU asset, and a reinforced evidence base to improve territorial knowledge.
- **Barca Report.** The European Commission asked Fabrizio Barca to prepare an independent report analysing the recent practice and

achievements of EU Cohesion Policy while proposing various policy steps to redirect it in view of the 2014-2020 period. This report was published in April 2009. Among various proposals, Barca made a strong case for basing future EU regional policy programmes and operations on a “place-based approach”, a notion previously explored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

- **EU regulations.** The European Commission sets the framework for the following funding period 2014-2020 through its regulations. The main regulation COM (2011) 615 contains general as well as financial and administrative principles. It furthermore presents eleven thematic objectives (see textbox below) that are to be supported by all European Structural and Investment Funds in order to contribute to the European 2020 Strategy.

Thematic objectives for SF programmes 2014-2020

- (1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
- (2) Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies
- (3) Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector
- (4) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
- (5) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
- (6) Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
- (7) Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
- (8) Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility
- (9) Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
- (10) Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning
- (11) Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration

- **Legislative proposals.** The European Commission adopted the legislative proposals for cohesion policy during the period 2014-2020 on 6 October 2011. The new regulations should enter into force in 2014. The figure below presents the general provisions on the Structural Funds within the Common Strategic Framework (CSF).

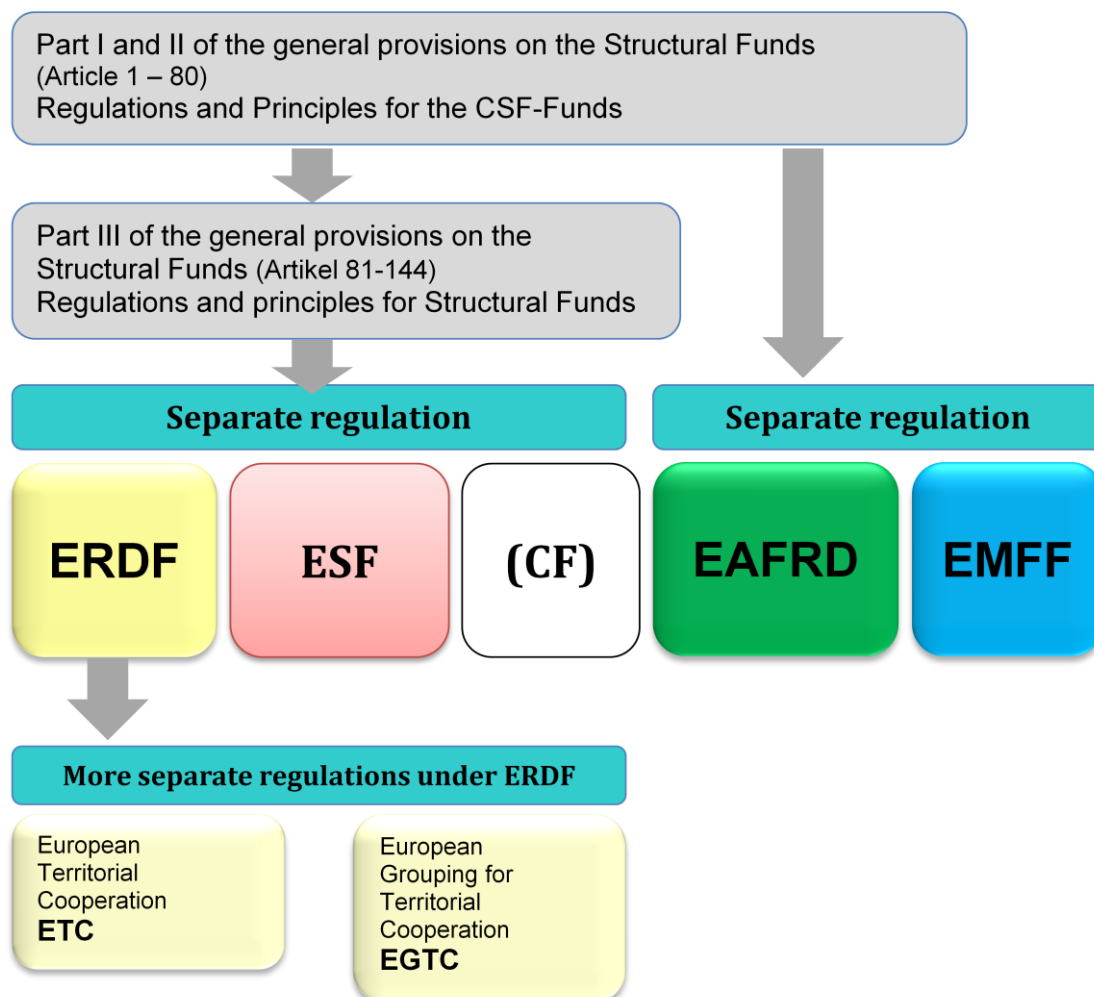


Figure 1 Common Strategic Framework provisions

Similar, the separate regulations under ERDF, the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) 2014-2020 and European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) regulation will undergo modifications. ETC-projects will have to define clear deliverables in line with EU policy priorities and closely linked to regional and EU countries' strategies. The regulation will support multi-country cooperation and has been simplified in order to reduce administrative burden. The proposed changes for EGTCs would make the system simpler and extend their scope, although existing EGTCs would not have to change unless they saw a benefit of it.

5.2 Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

Alignment with Europe 2020 strategy is a characteristic feature of European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014 to 2020, e.g. via the linkage of objectives and priorities to Europe 2020 targets. This is at the not at least expressed by the list of 11 thematic objectives defining the thematic scope of the programmes.

Furthermore, there is a focus on results in the reporting of programme implementation coupled with conditionalities, both ex ante and macro-economic, and a performance reserve will create additional needs for methodologically sound evidence base for all programmes.

The ambition of Cohesion Policy to be more “performance-based” has been at the core of the debate about the future of the policy. The new proposed general regulation on Cohesion Policy - COM (2011) 615 - aims to focus more on results and to diminish administrative costs and burdens.

This programming approach needs an evolution of the setting and use of the indicators: “the goal is to build a system of monitoring and evaluation whereby each Member State and Region chooses, according to agreed general principles, those outcome indicators that are most suitable to capture the objectives of its own programmes (which outcome for which people?) and to track the progress towards them, and commits to annually report about changes in these indicators and to evaluate impacts. How the new indicator system shall work is described in the working documents “concept and ideas” of DG REGIO. It is based on a strong correlation between the policy/programme aim (theory of change), the programme priorities, the realisation and result indicators (see figure below).

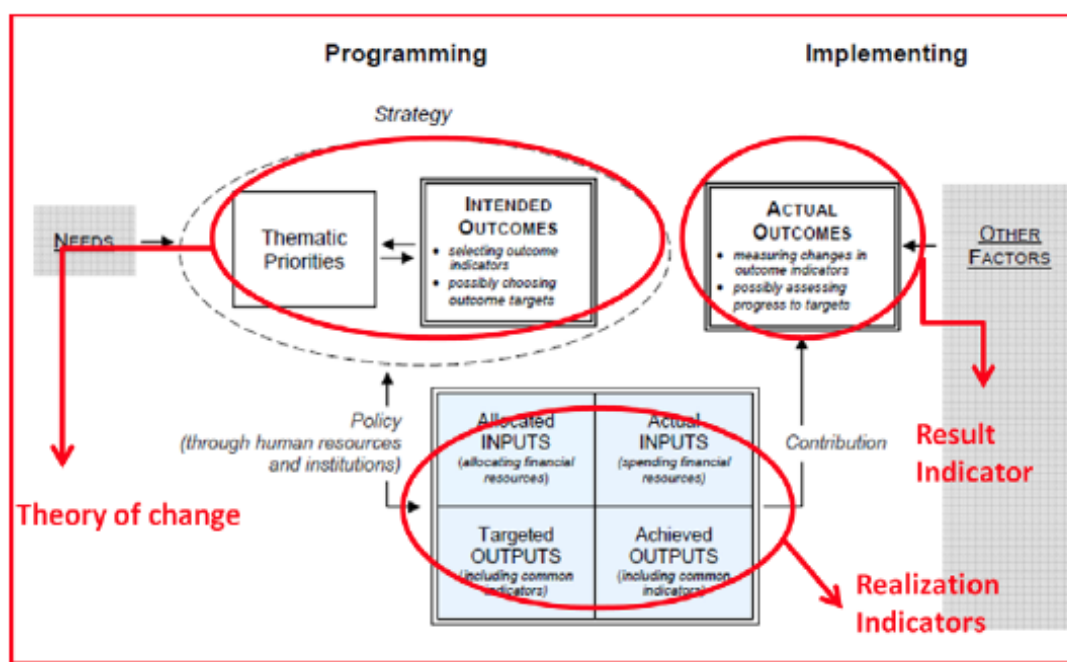


Figure 2 Barca and McCann framework elaborated ESPON 2013

In this new indicator framework, triggering the economic and social context along with the strategy of the programme shall be one of the most important activities of the programming phase. According to the new regulation (art. 24), the new Operational Programs for “each priority shall set out indicators to assess progress of programme implementation towards achievement of objectives as the basis for monitoring, evaluation and review of performance”.

The renewed cohesion policy as it presents itself today has strongly been inspired by the so called Barca-Report and a number of subsequent inputs by F. Barca and his teams. In particular the place-based approach gained much attention. Barca explained the notion of place-based development policy as being:

- a long-term development strategy aimed at reducing the underutilisation of resources and social exclusion of specific places, through the production of integrated bundles of public goods and services
- determined by extracting and aggregating people’s knowledge and preferences in these places and turning them into projects
- and exogenously promoted through a system of grants subjects to conditionalities and multilevel governance.
- within such a place-based development policy, a place is not identified by administrative boundaries
- nor by any other ex-ante “functional” criteria but rather; a place is endogenous to the policy process. It is a contiguous area within whose boundaries a set of conditions conducive to development apply more than they do across boundaries.

This notion of place-based development policy can serve as a common denominator of (a) regional development policy, the traditional domain of (b) cohesion policy and Structural Funds programmes, and the notion of territorial cohesion strongly advocated by the spatial development community in particular within the Territorial Agenda 2020. Reconciling these two notions will therefore be another important feature of our approach to the production of Territorial Evidence Packs.

6 ESPON in the operational programme cycle

The following chapters explore and introduce concepts and methodologies that have been successfully applied during the ESPON TerrEvi work. First of all, it is important to mention that ESPON material, incl. indicators and data, can be relevant at different steps in a programme or even a project cycle. However, ESPON can only be one of many sources to draw on. Beside the need for other data and material, it is furthermore necessary to distinguish between different types of programmes as well as between different phases in the programme cycle. For the former, one has to distinguish between regional, national, sectoral and territorial cooperation programmes like cross-border or transnational programmes, for example. With regards to the different phases, five main moments in the cycle can be identified at which ESPON results related to smart, sustainable, inclusive growth or the territorial dimension can be of interest:

- **Needs analysis.** By seeing an area in a larger context, it becomes easier to see comparative advantages or disadvantages and also judge a region's "performance" in relation to how other regions in Europe are doing. Understanding the wider territorial context, may help to better judge a region's needs.
- **Thematic concentration.** Following the approach of the use of ESPON material for the needs analysis, ESPON results can also facilitate the discussion about the thematic concentration of a programme or even a project. Seeing where an area is comparably strong or weak might guide the discussion on possible thematic concentrations of future investments to either further strengthen existing strength or combating existing weaknesses.
- **Result indicators.** European regional policies put a lot of emphasis on good result indicators for the programme period 2014-2020. ESPON information can be useful to see possible result indicators or judge whether an indicator might be relevant as result indicator.
- **Project selection.** In particular in geographically larger programme areas, ESPON results can also be used to support project selection. This can e.g. be done by seeing whether the issues addressed by a project or most relevant or pressing in particular that part of the programme area.
- **Stakeholder consultation.** Both during the programming as well as during the running of a programme there are various moments of stakeholder information, dialogue or consultation. Here ESPON material can support the communication by helping to illustrate how an area stands in a wider European context or comparison.

The figure below shows the spheres of potential use of ESPON evidence in different phases of the programme cycle for single groups of actors/stakeholders that are generally involved: Managing Authorities (MA), Programme stakeholders, Commission services, regional implementing administrations.

Reading the figure, certainly the limitations of what can be expected from ESPON and other European-wide information sources need to be taken into account. It is evident that ESPON can be a useful source of information, but it will always be only one among many sources on which a programme can draw. ESPON cannot replace national or regional data sources.

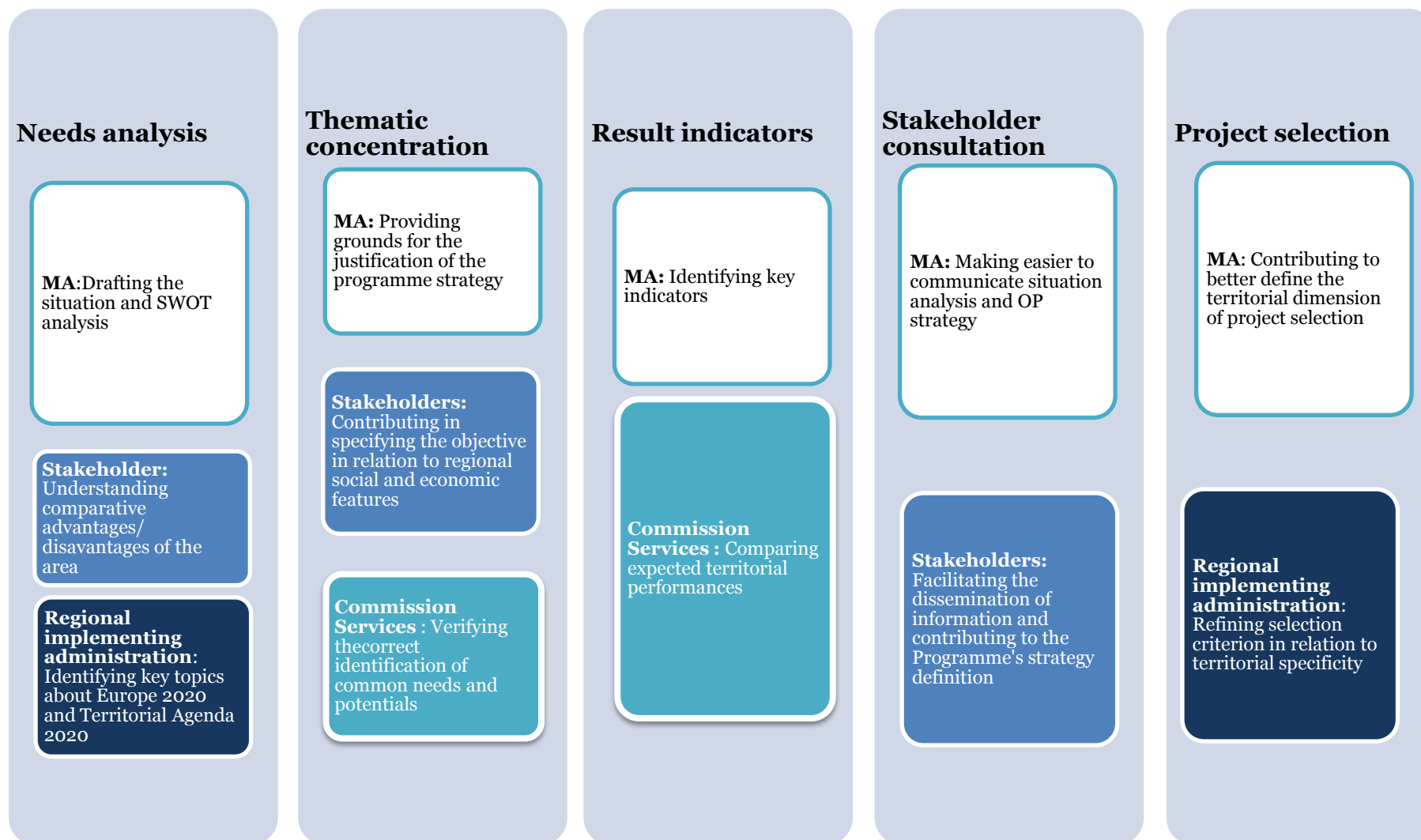


Figure 3 Potential use of ESPON evidence

When ESPON set out its applied territorial research the investment priorities of the ESIF were not known. Consequently, there is no perfect match between themes of ESPON information and the type of information needed to support future programmes, although in many cases some related ESPON information can be found. Furthermore, ESPON material comes with a series of methodological caveats such as e.g. the fact that a wide range of information is based on data sets which are a few years old. This is partly due to the long-winded procedures for harmonising data sets in Europe, and partly also due to the fact that some ESPON studies have been finalised some years ago. Furthermore, the geographical level of detail at which ESPON has information at hand is not always the one most suitable for programme discussions. However, in many cases it can help to understand the programme area in a European perspective.

Despite all the caveats and according to the feedback from the workshops that were conducted for the ten case studies of TerrEvi, ESPON material can be used as interesting and stimulating input to the debate in various phases in the programme cycle. It will however only be one of many sources and needs to be discussed in conjunction with other qualitative information to provide useful evidence.

7 Selection of relevant ESPON information

Using ESPON results and material in the work and discussion of future European programmes, poses a number of questions. Over the years, ESPON has developed a very rich flora of different reports, publications, data sets, tools etc.

To start with one can certainly simply read the latest Synthesis Report, Territorial Observation or ESPON Brief and draw own conclusions based on that. This will already allow for far reaching insights on the territorial dimension of various developments in Europe.

Aiming at a more targeted use of ESPON material one needs to apply ESPON findings more directly to the context of one's programme or project area. For this there are a number of key features which ESPON TerrEvi has tried to approach systematically:

- **Indicator selection.** ESPON uses a wide range of indicators and a systematic use of ESPON material requires first a thorough review on which topics are relevant for one's activities and within these topics, which indicators are useful.
- **Multi-scalar views.** ESPON material presents usually information for 27+4 countries at regional level. This allows for analysis at different

geographical levels and in different contexts. Doing this requires a clear approach of how to draw conclusions on different levels etc.

- **Comparing and putting into place.** To really understand the findings deriving from the reading of ESPON results at different geographical scales one needs also to keep in mind some basic approaches helpful when comparing areas or putting them into a wider context.
- **Impact Assessment.** In policy making one usually is interested what happens in future in case a certain policy is put into place. For getting first glimpses on that, ESPON has developed a range of Territorial Impact Assessments and a guide for carrying out on impact assessments.

ESPON offers a wide range of indicators and comparative European-wide data sets at regional level linking up with the objectives of Europe 2020 and 11 investment priorities. These can be useful for a wide range of programme and project activities as they provide important context information and allow to place a programme or project area in a wider geographical context.

Given the wealth of information, a crucial aspect is the right selection of indicators. The selected indicators need to be understandable, useful for the programme / project work, linked to Europe 2020, reliable data needs to be available and preferably also collected in future to allow for monitoring.

For the selection of relevant indicators, the ESPON ATLAS on Territorial Dimensions of the Europe 2020 Strategy offers a first entry point which is closely linked to the Europe 2020 objectives and targets.

In addition, ESPON TerrEvi has identified a number of ESPON indicators which are important for discussion regional development and which can be linked to the 11 investment priorities. The table provides a quick overview on the indicators proposed/used by ESPON TerrEvi and how they link up with the investment priorities. This selection of indicators has been used successfully for the ESPON TerrEvi Evidence Packs as well as for various workshops with Structural Funds programmes.

The selection of indicators was limited to indicators for which Europe-wide comparable data was available within ESPON. However, for many indicators data were only available on the level of NUTS 3 regions. As a consequence most indicators are displayed at NUTS 2 and only partially at NUTS 3 level and do therefore not allow for more nuanced picture which would have been helpful in smaller programme areas. Furthermore, the data quality has been a topic in various workshops as European-wide data sets partially have lower quality and use different definitions as compared to national and regional data sets. In some cases also the complexity of ESPON indicators caused discussion as to what conclusions can be drawn from this.

ESPON indicators used by TerrEvi	Share of R&D infrastructure	Private sector R&D expenditures	Employment in Knowledge-Intensive services	Human resources in science and technology	Territorial patterns of innovation	Private use of e-commerce	ICT employment	Tourist arrivals	Travel cost to nearest maritime port	Openness to extra-ESPON and neighbourhood trade	Quality of natural landscape	Wind power potential	Wave power potential	Maritime flows	Combined adaptive capacity to climate change	Potential impact of climate change	Potential vulnerability to climate change	Employment rate	Long-term unemployment rate	Change in population in 2005-2050	Share of old people	Regional sex ratio structure	People at risk of poverty	People with high education	Young academics	Regional early school leavers	Adults in education and training
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	X	X		X	X		X						X											X	X		X
Enhancing access to and use and quality of ICT			X	X		X	X																				
Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	X	X			X					X																	
Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors												X	X														
Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management															X	X	X										
Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency											X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures									X					X													
Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility			X	X			X											X	X			X		X	X		X
Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty																					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure																							X	X	X	X	X
Enhancing institutional capacity						X																					

Figure 4 List of indicators in our evidence packs

8 Multi-level approach to interpreting data

ESPON results and the data on which it is based can be interpreted at various levels of geographical detail. The following sections provide some guidance on how this can be done. All these approaches have been successfully tested and applied in the ESPON TerrEvi project. All findings presented in this chapter result from discussions within the project team and from discussions with the participants of the workshops that have been conducted for the ten case studies.

In all steps certainly the limits of what can be expected from ESPON and other European-wide information as regards level of analytical detail and methodological caveats need to be taken into account. It is evident that ESPON can be a useful source of information, but it will always be only one among many sources on which a programme can draw. ESPON cannot replace national or regional data sources.

8.1 ESPON multi-level approach

A key feature of ESPON is that applied research and analysis work across five levels. This is important for effective territorial policy making in a networked world. The levels are:

- Global, European neighbourhood
- European
- Macro-regional
- National
- Regional and local

With regard to ESIF programmes and projects, ESPON material appears to be particularly useful for comparing or benchmarking a programme or project area with regard to the rest of Europe or in a macro-regional context. To a certain degree ESPON material can also be useful to establish benchmarks against various national contexts, e.g. comparing a programme or project area to national averages. This is of particular interest for transnational or cross-border areas where it is otherwise difficult to have comparable information for all countries involved.

The multi level approach has also been used for the evidence reports which were presented at the TerrEvi workshops. First of all, for each indicator the general European picture was explained. Afterwards, the regional context of the programme area was taken into account, i.e. that for transnational programmes regional similarities and disparities within the programme area were illustrated whereas for regional and cross-border programmes the wider regional, national and cross-border context was explained.

8.2 Maps – a standard form of presenting ESPON data

The project partners in the SCALES project developed a targeted dissemination strategy, the CoZiCo approach. It is based on the methods “Comparing, Zooming-in and Completing”

“Comparison is about comparing the situation of another region with the region back home in order to illustrate parallel or diverging trends. It can also be of interest for local stakeholders to compare the situation of their region with other EU regions that have similar patterns of development.

Zooming-in may help small states or regions with strong transregional/cross-border interdependencies to take into account more specific debates. It works through either increasing the size of the map or by delivering the data at a finer scale.

Completion means either illustrating the situation with comparable national information if data are missing in an ESPON report, or by adding more relevant data to the existing one, e.g. on a lower NUTS level which is of higher political or administrative relevance.” (Source: ESPON SCALES)

Without being explicit about this, ESPON TerrEvi has also made use of this approach, as for the factsheets and Evidence Briefs developed by ESPON TerrEvi zoomed into specific programme areas and also compared the situation in these programme areas to other areas in Europe (see textbox below). Only in very rare cases other sources than ESPON have been used to enhance ESPON results. Overall, this systematic approach of three steps can be recommended for future use of ESPON results by programmes and projects.

Example: Population change in Europe and in the Atlantic Area

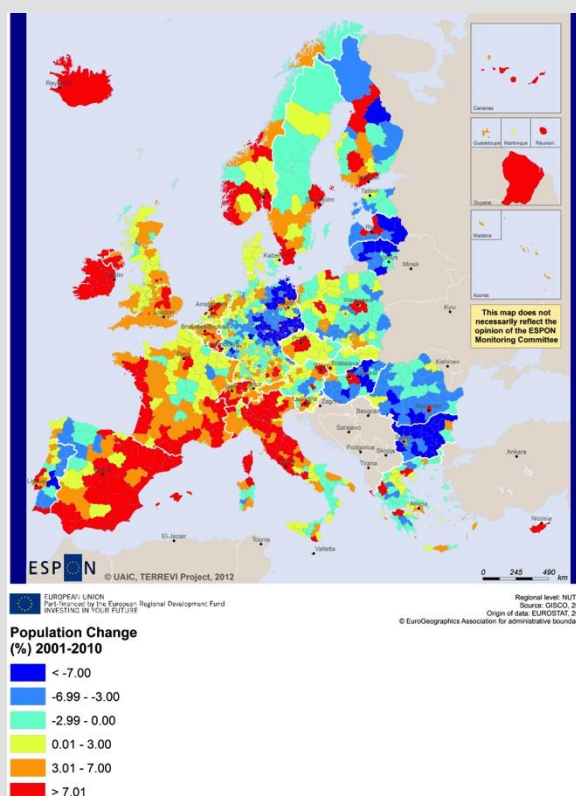


Figure 5 Population change 2001-2010

“It is striking that areas of population growth and those of significant population decrease are often close to each other. At European level, population is particularly growing in a Mediterranean arc ranging from central Italy over southern France to eastern and southern Spain, and in an Atlantic Arc ranging from western France to Ireland and Iceland. In addition, population grows in some regions of Nordic countries and in all capital regions. Significant population decrease can be found in north-western Spain, several Portuguese regions, eastern and central Germany, the Baltic states, some peripheral regions of Finland and south-eastern Europe – except their capital regions.

Within the Atlantic Area there are disparities between more dynamic Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and French regions and less dynamic regions on the Iberian Peninsula. Another disparity concerns coastal regions on the one and continental regions on the other hand. In general, population growth focuses on areas close to the sea. Population decrease is concentrated in Portugal and north-western Spain. Yet even there, population is growing in coastal regions. Among all coastal regions of the Atlantic area, only Alentejo Litoral, Baixo Mondego, Lugo and Asturias are affected by population decrease.” (Source: ESPON Evidence Pack for the Atlantic Area)

8.3 Traffic lights approach – easy to communicate

ESPON TerrEvi employed a system of traffic lights in order to graphically represent the situation of an analysed programme area compared to (a) EU-27+4 space, (b) other comparable programme areas (e.g. the total picture for all cross-border or transnational programmes) and, and where relevant (c) Member States involved in the analysed programme. The traffic light approach, which is also used by other ESPON projects, allows for an easy communication of whether a programme area is situated better or worse off than the European average, other programme areas of the same type or involved countries. However, it does not allow for a more nuanced picture as concerns the disparities in an area.

The traffic lights are based on median values, calculated depending on the values registered for every NUTS 2/NUTS 3 region composing the programme area. The median of the programme area was compared successively to the ones computed for EU-27+4 territories, other comparable programmes and Member States. Interval thresholds were obtained by calculating the arithmetic mean between the median and the values of the first (Q1) and third (Q3) quartiles. These calculations defined the lower (L1) and upper limits (L2) of each interval.

Consequently, there are three distinctive situations:

1. **Green or Red**. When the median value of the programme area is below L1, there will be a red traffic light indicating problems inside the programme area (or green traffic light if there is a noticeable progress: i.e. long-term unemployment).
2. **Yellow**. When the median value of the programme area is between the lower and the upper thresholds, there will be a yellow traffic light marking a similar situation of the similar programme areas to the rest of the spatial structures.
3. **Red or Green**. When the median value of the co-operation area is over L2, a green traffic light will be displayed (or red traffic light when there is a negative trend: i.e. potential vulnerability to climate change).

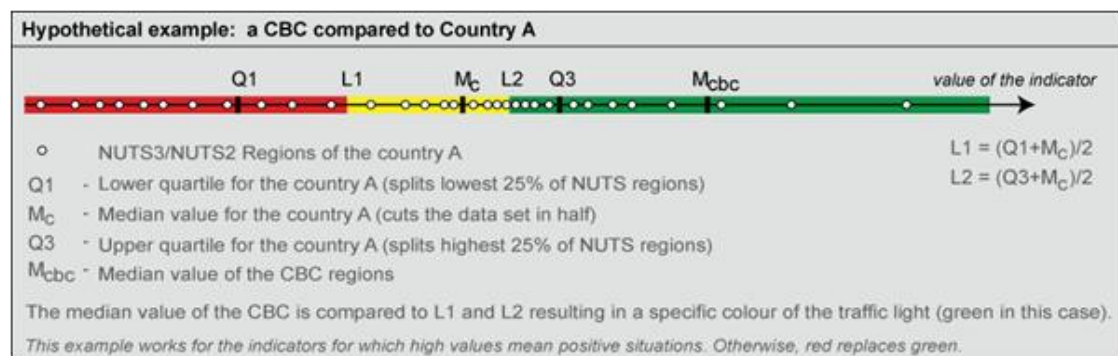


Figure 6 Functioning of the traffic light model
ESPON 2013

Choosing median as central value requires a special attention in analysing the traffic lights when the number of NUTS 2/NUTS 3 regions is below 7. Using percentiles implies also that the final result is highly dependent on the type of statistical distribution. This should be considered as well when establishing the relative situation of a programme area compared to a specific country.

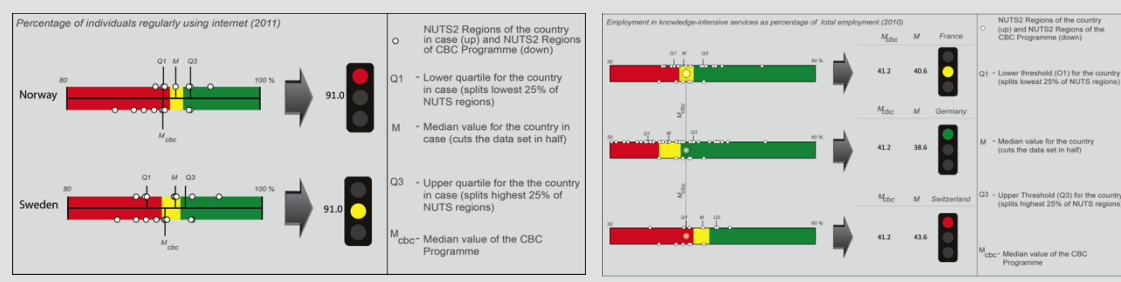
Examples: Establishment of ESPON TerrEvi traffic lights

The below gives two examples for traffic lights which at a first glance could cause misunderstandings. The first case shows the CBC Öresund – Kattegat – Skagerrak compared to Sweden and Norway for the indicator “Percentage of individuals regularly using internet (2011)”. Both countries show the same value but in comparison to the CBC programme there are different colours in the traffic light.

The second case shows the CBC Upper Rhine and its countries France, Germany and Switzerland compared to the median value of the CBC area for the indicator “Employment in knowledge-intensive services as percentage of total employment (2010)”. This example comprises three countries with values within a very close margin and at the same time three different colours in the traffic light.

Figure 7 Case 1: Öresund – Kattegat – Skagerrak

Figure 8 Case 2: Upper Rhine



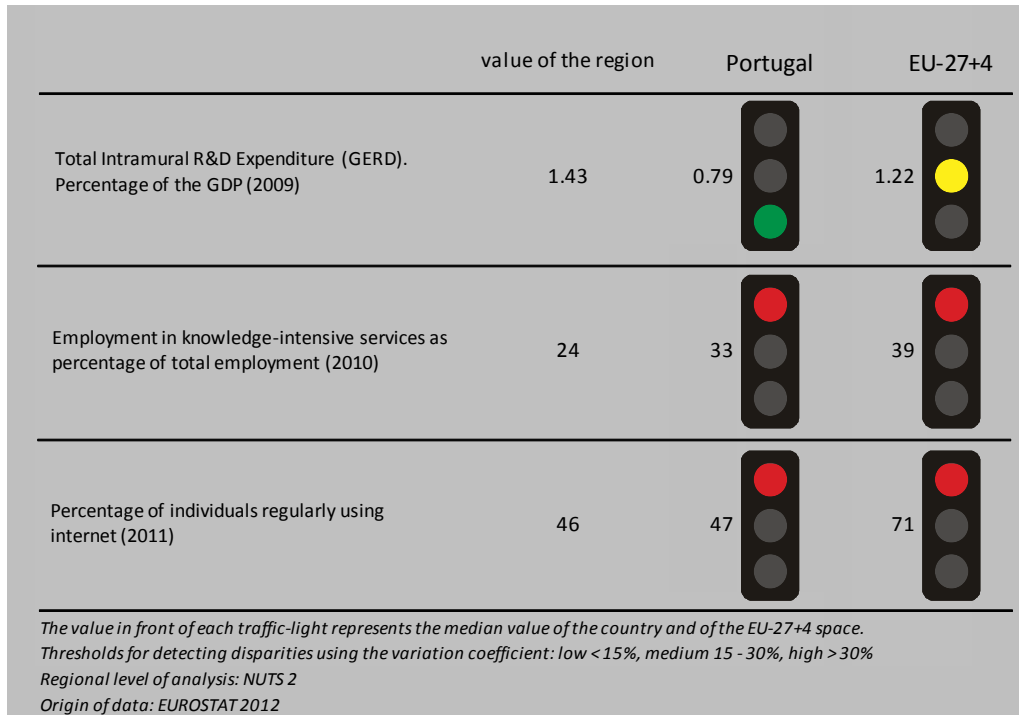


Figure 9 Example – Traffic light for a Regional Programme

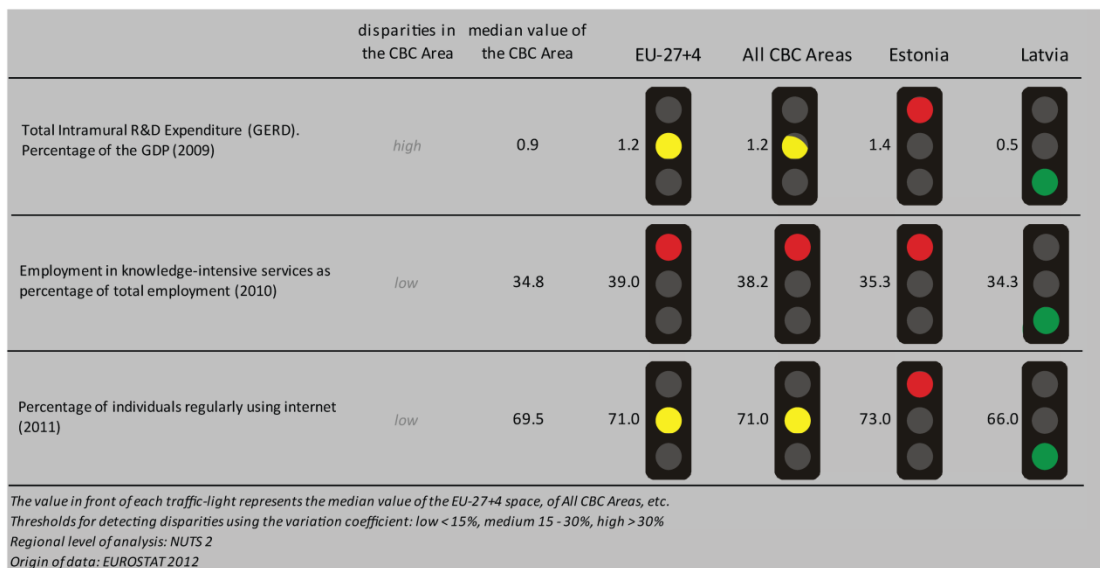


Figure 10 Example – Traffic light for a Cross-Border Programme

	Total Intramural R&D Expenditure (GERD). Percentage of the GDP (2009)			Employment in knowledge-intensive services as percentage of total employment (2010)			Percentage of individuals regularly using internet (2011)		
	disparities in the TNC Area	median value of the TNC Area	median value of EU-27+4	disparities in the TNC Area	median value of the TNC Area	median value of EU-27+4	disparities in the TNC Area	median value of the TNC Area	median value of EU-27+4
SMART GROWTH	high	1.3	1.2	medium	41.1	39.0	medium	71.0	71.0
	Wind energy potential			Ozone concentration			Potential vulnerability to climate change		
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH	high	133178	73939	high	5.6	8.6	high	0.2	0.1
	Long-term unemployment rate (12 months and more) - 2011			At-risk-of-poverty rate - 2011			Persons aged 25-64 and 20-24 with upper secondary or tertiary education attainment (%) - 2011		
INCLUSIVE GROWTH	high	3.5	3.0	medium	19.0	15.7	medium	72.3	76.4

Regional level of analysis: NUTS 2 (except for Potential vulnerability to climate change - NUTS 3)
Thresholds for detecting disparities using the variation coefficient: low ≤ 15%, medium 15 - 30%, high ≥ 30%
Origin of data: EUROSTAT 2012, ESPON ReRisk, ESPON INTERCO & ESPON Climate Projects

Figure 11 Example – Traffic light for a Transnational Programme

8.4 Box-plots approach for advanced readers

Going beyond the level of traffic lights, box plots offer the opportunity to compare a larger programme area to the rest of Europe or other selected areas also taking into account difference within the area. The purpose of the box-plots is to allow the reader a quick overview on the situation of a programme area as compared to Europe (EU-27+4 space) and cross-border areas in general. The creation of box-plots followed three major objectives that were intended to highlight the behaviour of the European regions participating in a specific programme area by comparing it to:

- the rest of the NUTS 2 / NUTS 3 regions from the EU-27+4 territory;
- all other NUTS 2 / NUTS 3 regions that are included in the cross-border programmes;
- all regions from each country participating to the programme.

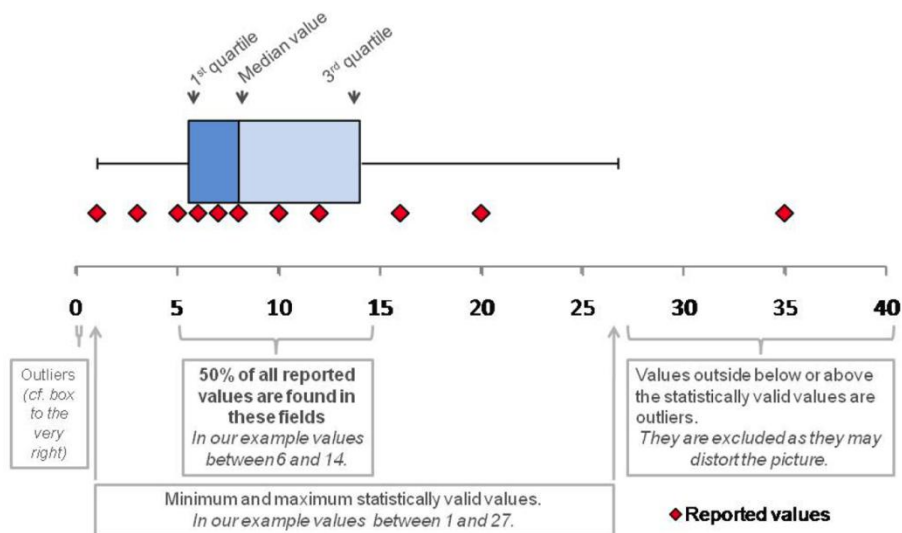


Figure 12 How to read a box-plot

The regions participating to a cooperation programme are chromatically highlighted in order to mark the difference between them and the other NUTS 3 regions not participating to a cooperation programme.

In creating the graphic elements, a classical model has been followed in which the median value represents the central value indicator and the box encompasses half of the cases (values that are in the range defined by the percentile of 25% and 75%). These regions that have values in this box can be considered to have, according to the variable in question, a situation close to the average behaviour of all regions analysed. When a region consistently deviates from the average profile of the analysed territorial context, this behaviour has been noted in the chart only when certain thresholds of statistical tolerances were exceeded, this being pointed in the diagram with segments perpendicular to the middle box.

Example: Combined adaptive capacity to climate change for the cross-border cooperation area Alpenrhein – Bodensee – Hochrhein

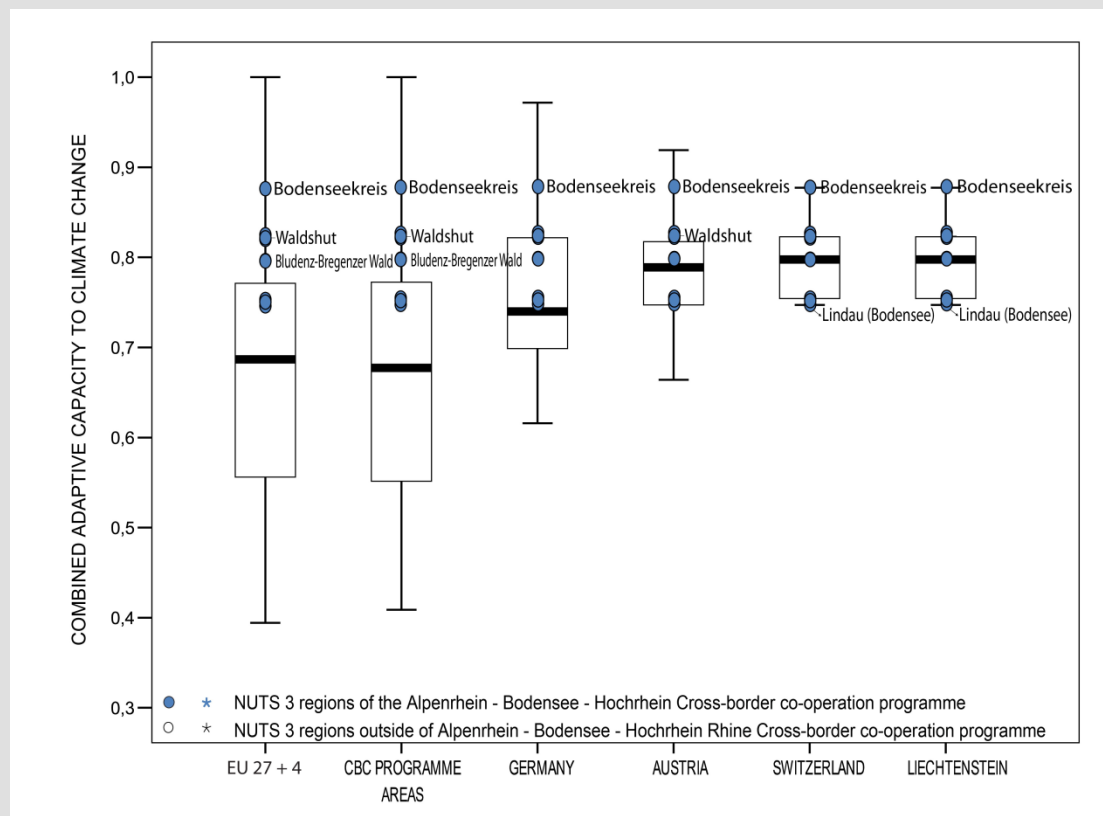


Figure 13 A boxplot for adaptive capacity to climate change

“Compared to an above-average level capacity in Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, the cross-border-cooperation area’s capacity to adapt to climate change is similar to the EU27+4 and Germany. Bodenseekreis stand out for its above-average capacity to adapt to climate change.” (Source: ESPON Factsheet for Alpenrhein – Bodensee – Hochrhein)

8.5 Comparing and benchmarking

Looking at a more detailed level, ESPON indicators and data sets allow also to compare or benchmark a programme region or regions within a larger programme area to other territories in Europe. This is often done when reading or interpreting maps.

This can either be done by seeing from the maps or data sets, which other regions show comparable characteristics, or by selecting a few regions against and compare systematically how these perform on specific indicators as compared to the (own) programme area and its regions. Without being explicit about this, ESPON TerrEvi has also made use of this comparative and benchmarking approach, which has been developed in particular in ESPON TPM project.

ESPON TPM developed a prototype of a complementary tool to the ESPON HyperAtlas, the ESPON TPM Benchmarking Tool. This is a simple to use system which can easily be fed with customised dataset, irrespective of the scale, as long as certain rules are respected. It is a prototype intended to demonstrate what is possible, but is already usable, although definitely not optimised (notably in terms of speed optimisation). The prototype is an invitation to regions to think about their current infrastructure and needs and to implement a more efficient tool within the framework of their existing systems. (Source: ESPON TPM)

This tool as well as detailed descriptions of the indicators used can be downloaded at

http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_TargetedAnalyses/TPM.html

8.6 Territorial Impact Assessment

ESPON results can help to a better understanding of the potential territorial impact of policies is vitally important for efficiency and cohesion. In particular, ESPON TerrEvi focused in the factsheets on the territorial impact of Directive on fossil fuel consumption.

Territorial impact assessments can contribute to a better judgement of how a policy affects development in different regions. Evidence of the effects of policies can be a first step towards identifying possible synergies – or the opposite - between policies and starting a constructive dialogue across policy fields. ESPON is developing approaches to territorial impact assessments and also the number of EU policy areas for which territorial impact assessments are conducted. Overall, Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) is an approach to see territorial effects and providing useful insight that could be helpful and synergetic both for territorial and sector policy-making. It often is use for raising awareness about the territorial dimension, rather than doing precise predictions.

ESPON Territorial Impact Assessments

- EU Transport Policy (ESPON 2013 – TIPTAP)
- EU Agricultural Policy (ESPON 2013 – TIPTAP)
- EU Transport and TEN policies (ESPON 2006 – project 2.1.1)
- EU Research and Development policy (ESPON 2006 – project 2.1.2)
- EU Common Agricultural & Rural Development Policy (ESPON 2006 – project 2.1.3)
- EU Energy Policy (ESPON 2006 – project 2.1.4)
- EU Fishery Policies (ESPON 2006 – project 2.1.5)

- EU Structural Funds (ESPON 2006 – projects 2.2.1 and 2.2.3)
- EU Aquis Communautaire and Pre-Accession Aid (ESPON 2006 – project 2.2.2)
- EU Environmental Policy (ESPON 2006 – project 2.4.1)
- EU Directives (ESPON 2013 – ARTS)
- Targeted analysis of territorial impact assessments (ESPON 2013 – ESPON TIA)
- ESPON and Territorial Impact Assessment (ESPON 2013 – ESPON EATIA)

Whereas the above text box provides an overview on the various works on Territorial Impact Assessment carried out by ESPON, we would like to briefly highlight the quick guides for carrying out own assessments developed by ESPON ARTS and EATIA.

The TIA quick check, developed by ESPON ARTS, focuses on the effects deriving from a particular policy measure (exposure) are combined with the characteristics of a region (territorial sensitivity) to produce potential territorial impacts. In the TIA quick check the following definitions are used:

- The exposure describes the intensity by which EU directives and policies potentially affect European territory through a double logical chain. On the one hand, single directives and policies may affect specific classes of regions (regional exposure), without reference to the specificity of each region; on the other hand they may affect particular “fields” of the territorial realm, e.g. surface water quality, emissions, sectoral production (field exposure);
- The (territorial) sensitivity describes how single territories/regions are subject and evaluate impacts in specific exposure fields, due to their socio-economic and geographical characteristics and to the social values and priorities they are likely to show;
- The territorial impact is the final, likely effect of a given EU policy or directive as a product of exposure and regional sensitivity. The impact can be direct or indirect along specific cause and- effect logical chains.”

Following the approach developed by ESPON ARTS, ESPON EATIA has developed a practical guidance for policymakers and practitioners based on contributions from ESPON projects and the European Commission. The tools in presented in this guide:

- Are quick and easy-to-use to meet the expressed needs of practitioners and policymakers for no new burdensome requirements;

- Can assist in identifying and potentially reducing negative and unintended consequences of policies, and help to understand potential positive impacts on a territory;
- Through their multi-level participatory approach, can improve co-operation between tiers in the context of multi-level governance, improving effectiveness, efficiency and overall governance, which is strongly desired in the current economic climate;
- Can have a longer term and a wider role in improving policy-making, its transparency and the vertical and horizontal coordination of policies and actions and developing policy synergies; and
- Should be seen as part of a process to realise territorial potentials and improve people's lives rather than as part of a compensation argument or settlement.”

9 Screening of further ESPON material

Screening and discussion of material is very important as ESPON does not only provide data and maps but also other types of information and findings. Among them are a large variety of regional and local case studies, national- and European-wide conclusions and recommendations, as well as newly developed concepts and methodologies. To benefit from these it is necessary to scan a large variety of ESPON material and discuss its implications.

ESPON provides an essential underpinning for translating into practice the calls for integrated and place-based approaches to economic development, when analysing a programme area or deciding about future programme priorities. ESPON has published a wide range of exciting reports providing valuable territorial evidence for future territorial cooperation initiatives.

Some of overall ESPON products of particular interest for territorial cooperation are (available at www.espon.eu):

- ESPON ATLAS “Territorial Dimensions of the Europe 2020 Strategy” provides a good overview on the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 objectives and future investment priorities.
- ESPON Synthesis report “Territorial insight: Where to focus what types of investments” provides an easy to read overview on ESPON results available by early 2013.
- ESPON Territorial Observations is a publication series, which on a few pages presents policy relevant findings deriving from latest ESPON research.
- ESPON 2013 Database Portal provides regional information provided by ESPON projects and EUROSTAT.

- ESPON HyperAtlas allows comparing and analysing a region's relative position at European, national and local scale for a wide range of criteria.
- ESPON MapFinder provides access to the most relevant ESPON maps resulting from ESPON projects and reports.
- ESPON Typologies provides nine regional typologies for additional analysis of regional data to be considered in the European context.

Example: Screening ESPON documents relevant for the Atlantic Area

CAEE: It aims at a better understanding of the economic costs and benefits of large urban agglomerations (see e.g. figure 1). The case studies include Dublin and Manchester (Annexes 2 & 3).

TRANSMEC: It develops general tools to support territorial cooperation programmes in capitalisation and considerations on future strategic project development (see map 27 and from map 36 to 39 on potential accessibility indicators). The method is applied for the Northwest-Europe cooperation area. It covers also two projects of Interreg IVB Atlantic Area, i.e. SHAREBIOTECH and ATLANTOX.

ARTS: It develops a quantitative tool to quickly gauge the potential impact of EU legislation, policies and directives on regions. This 'quick check' should be as simple, comprehensible and user-friendly as possible.

SGPTD: It provides evidence on European secondary cities, their performance and functional roles in different parts of Europe, and the potential policy intervention affecting their performance (see from figure 2 to 2.12). The case studies include among others Cork (annex of the Scientific Report).

ATTREG: It provides a better understanding of the contribution of European regions' and cities' attractiveness to economic performance. The case studies comprise among others Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, in the United Kingdom (Annex 4/3) and the Algarve, in Portugal (Annex 4/1).

GEOSPECS: It provides evidence on the strength, weaknesses and development opportunities of specific types of territories and regions (e.g. border areas, highly or sparsely populated areas). The case studies include Highland Council area in Scotland (Annex 24) and the Irish Sea (Annex 31).

EATIA: It tests the practical use of existing methods and tools for Territorial Impact Assessment. A particular focus is on Portugal (Annex 3) and the UK (Annex 1).

ESATDOR: It provides evidence on the exploitation of sea and coastal areas for economic purposes which are increasingly important but also face growing concerns on environmental issues.

ReRisk: It focuses on opportunities to support competitive and clean energy supplies for regions in Europe and to generate and strengthen sustainable energy sources. The case studies include Navarra, in particular in the case of Wind Energy.

PURR: It creates and tests new ways to explore the territorial potentials of some rural areas and small and medium-sized towns in peripheral parts of Europe around the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea. The project analyses the Cambrian Mountains, in Wales, as a case study region.

TPM: It establishes knowledge on how territorial impacts of these macro challenges translate at the regional level and how to deal with these challenges. Two regional highlights concern Navarra and the Greater Dublin Area.

KIT: It describes patterns and potentials of regions in terms of knowledge and innovation economy and explores development opportunities (see from map 3.1.1 to 4.4.1). It provides some case studies on Cambridge, Oxford, Cardiff and West Wales (see Draft Final Scientific Report, Vol. 2, 3).

PART C: Lessons learned

10 Lessons for Operational Programmes

ESPON – one of many. ESPON can only be one of many different sources, a programme needs to draw on. Incomplete data sets, insufficient quality of available or even outdated data are just a few obstacles that make it necessary to take into account various sources in order to warrant a solid basis of information and data.

Differentiation by programme. Different types of ERDF programmes may find ESPON to varying degree of interest. This mainly depends on the fact whether specific ESPON material is available for those strengths and weaknesses that have been identified as most relevant and for those thematic priorities that have been selected for the programme area.

Context information. National and regional programmes can benefit from ESPON providing information on a wider European context of their programmes.

Harmonised data. Cross-border and transnational programmes may benefit from ESPON as regards data sets that are harmonised across national borders. Different political and legal systems make it difficult to simply compare data sets provided by two or even more national statistical offices.

European perspective. The main benefit of ESPON is providing the European perspective and allowing for discussions on programming areas comparative advantages and disadvantages in a European perspective. Comparing the own programme area with other programmes within a European context might give new insights and thus reveal both surprising similarities and differences. It can therefore promote a broader and more in-depth understanding of the own territory.

Internal diversity. ESPON data is usually difficult to use to understand internal differentiations within a programming area. In order to understand these disparities and especially for regional programmes it would be important to use data sets that at least refer to the level of NUTS 3 regions.

Watch out. Interpreting ESPON results requires a careful consideration of the data sources and methodologies used. One has to have a good understanding of what is included in the data sets and what information is not taken into consideration (and why) and how different aspects have been combined or calculated, for example.

Discussion. Experience has shown that a proper understanding of ESPON material and how it could be used is best based on discussions with experts in the field. Involving different stakeholders and integrating external and in-depth

expertise implies that the same data is analysed and interpreted from different perspectives which often leads to a fruitful and progress-oriented debate.

11 Lessons for ESPON

Visibility. At present the ESPON programme has only limited visibility towards structural funds programmes and managing authorities. Whereas ESPON has somewhat higher visibility in the field of territorial cooperation, regional and national programmes seem to be rarely aware of it. In order to increase the visibility of ESPON, both approaches how to make better use of existing ESPON material and ideas how to design the future programme are needed. The results of the TerrEvi project should be seen as a first step. Future applied research projects might want to consider from the beginning of the project how they can promote the visibility of ESPON and how their results can be used in structural funds programmes.

Usability. For ERDF programmes ESPON can only be one of many sources to be used and in many regards the topics and geographical levels do not fit perfectly.

Usefulness. To increase the usefulness ESPON might want to consider to work with more regular updates of the most important indicators, a further detailing of the geographical levels of ESPON research and an easy-to-search data base on case studies and the most important thematic findings and conclusions. As this can only be done stepwise, a first analysis could focus on identifying the most important but outdated indicators and indicators for which more detailed knowledge on lower geographical levels is necessary. This knowledge could also be used for communication purposes to the European Commission, the Member States or Eurostat, for example.

www.espon.eu

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory.

ISBN