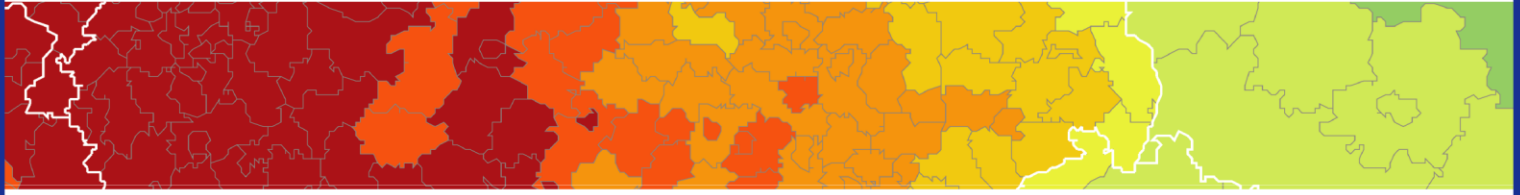


**Inspire policy making by territorial evidence**



# ESPON

## Transnational Outreach Support 2016-2019

**Delivery 1.5 – First annual activity report**

Version 05/04/2018

This Outreach activity is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

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This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

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Information on ESPON, and related projects, can be found at [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu).

The web-site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by completed, and by on-going, ESPON projects.

This delivery exists only in an electronic version.

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## Abbreviations

AB	Advisory Board
AWP	Annual Working Plan
EC	European Commission
ECP	ESPON Contact Point
EGTC	European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
MC	ESPON Monitoring Committee
MS	Member States
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
TIA	ESPON Territorial Impact Assessment tool
TNO	Transnational Outreach

## 1. Strategy and Approach

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

The proposed activities for 2017 were the result of a two-step process:

- Results of needs-assessment process (between January and May 2017);
- Consultation process on the first draft of TNO AWP 2017 (between May and June 2017).

The needs assessment was conducted by ESPON TNO in the beginning of 2017, collecting valuable insights from the ECP network relating to policy needs, processes and implementation stages through a three-step approach:

- Step 1: Desk research
- Step 2: On-line questionnaires
- Step 3: Telephone interviews

This process drove to the definition of the strategic priorities for outreach for the first year and, based on the common interests within each of the 4 transnational groupings, the specific fields of intervention. In July 2017 an update of the needs assessment was conducted, in order to start the preparation of the Annual Work Plan 2018 including topics, dates and locations of the proposed activities.

For the second step, a first draft of the TNO 2017 AWP was prepared including two alternative options per transnational grouping. A version of the TNO 2017 AWP dated 05/05/2017 was subject to a consultation process from May to June 2017. This first document was discussed at the MC and ECP meeting in Malta in May 2017. The PST (Project Support Team) and the ECPs (ESPON Contact Points) sent further input during June 2017.

## 2. Summary of Activities 2017

### 2.1. Survey and needs assessment

The activities proposed in the AWP 2017 aimed to respond to the current policy processes and needs that were identified through the needs assessment, aiming to support stakeholders in their policy endeavours, and in current or near-future policy-making processes, by providing them with relevant ESPON results. Time and resource constraints for 2017 were taken into consideration and the final plan followed the consultation process on the first draft of the TNO AWP 2017.

Commencing the outreach activities in the last quarter of 2017, the Transnational Outreach project (TNO) has organized three events between October and November 2017 on the following topics:

- Accessibility;
- Governance;
- Northern Peripherality.

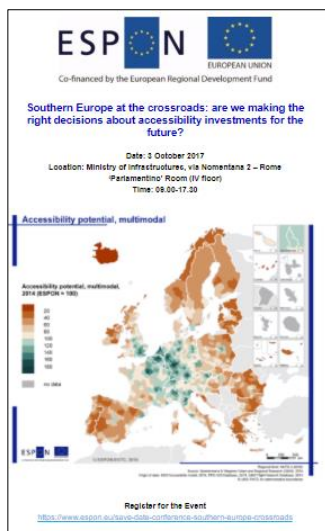
### 2.2. Accessibility

#### Conference “South Europe at the crossroads – Are we making the right decisions about accessibility investments for the future?” – Rome, Italy

The first event of the 2017 TNO activities was the Conference “**South Europe at the crossroads – Are we making the right decisions about accessibility investments for the future?**” that took place in Rome, Italy on the 3rd of October 2017.

This ESPON Conference aimed at stimulating the debate between policy-makers and ESPON researchers regarding the considerable investments in transport that were made in Southern Europe – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Italy, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Spain – during the last years and its impact in terms of accessibility to markets and public services for citizens and businesses. Accessibility, investments and decisions were the key words of the Conference.

The dissemination activities for this Conference included the promotion through the main target groups in both English, Italian and Portuguese languages. The list of organizations directly invited to participate and to further disseminate this event, as main target groups were:



- INTERACT (Point Valencia)
- EUS Danube Region
- All EUSDR national coordinators, PACs (PA1) and transport-related SG members
- All national and pillar (blue growth and connecting the region) coordinators of EUSAIR
- BALCINET
- Medcities
- CIVITAS
- POLIS
- Eurocities
- EIB
- All ERRIN members, particularly southern regions

Among other contacts established to potential interesting participants to attract to this Conference and in particular Italian organisations, were:

- Università Tor Vergata
- Link Campus
- Ministero dell'ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare
- Isinnova
- Università di Bologna
- TRT – Transport e territorio
- Memex mobility
- Città di Reggio Emilia
- Regione Emilia Romagna
- Roma Città Capitale
- Pixel Firenze
- Innolabs
- REDDIN
- Europe for Business
- APRE Rome
- Stazione Leopolda (Pisa)
- Università Padova
- Sustainable Territorial Development
- Social Innovation Network (University of Bologna)
- Confindustria Bruxelles and RomaRadio Vaticana
- GIURI (Gruppo Informale Uffici di Rappresentanza Italiani Ricerca e Innovazione)
- AICCRE Lazio
- Ship2Shore

As a preliminary step to this event and in order to gather the main challenges and issues more relevant to be discussed, according to the target groups and particularly policy-makers from southern Europe, the TNO established contacts with the respective network of ECP's. This process allowed to design the agenda and identify the best available ESPON evidence able to provide concrete guidance and recommendations to address the main issues for the target regions.

During this Conference, ESPON research was presented to the high-level officials and policy-makers that participated, and particularly the projects TRACC (TRansport ACCessibility at regional/local scale and patterns in Europe); ESaTDOR (European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks), Accessibility by the Sea and potential accessibility models as well as Inner Peripheries.

Among the participants were decision-makers from the target countries including Italy, Croatia, Malta, Greece, Slovakia, Romania and Belgium. The interactions between practitioners during the day and the contribution of ESPON research allowed to draw important conclusions and key messages looking towards the future and the role of transport infrastructure to the cohesion of Europe.

The **potential accessibility prospects by 2030 for all transport modes in Southern Europe** developed by ESPON demonstrate a clear peripherality pattern for Southern Europe with below-average potential accessibility but also the importance to measure the relative changes in accessibility linked to transport infrastructure investment and population growth or decline. The presentations that took place during the first part of the Conference raised the discussion among the delegates present highlighted the importance of accessibility for European cohesion, the key role of

maritime transport for the Mediterranean and the differences in spatial terms for air transport when compared to rail and road transport. Inputs from PROFECY project also raised the discussion on the concept of inner-peripheries.

The discussions that took place during throughout the day raised awareness between policy-makers to understand the differences between connectivity and accessibility. Despite different investment priorities, southern European regions face similar challenges and the forecasts for 2030 suggests that, despite possible infrastructure upgrades over the next decade, no major potential accessibility changes is expected due to anticipated population decline all across Southern Europe. The need of more indicators and access to data at municipal and metropolitan levels was also highlighted.



From the interaction between the speakers and the participants present, raised the key message of the conference: the **need to align transport and infrastructure policy with other competitiveness and place-based priorities.**

Lucienne Meilak of the Maltese Ministry of Transport noted that strategies where transport links with accessibility, economic activity and environmental concerns were essential. Athina Foka of the Greek Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy referred to the need for strategic efforts to stimulate competitiveness of Mediterranean islands by capitalising on the place-based potential. According to Ms Foka, ESPON studies were needed to support evidence-based policymaking in this context. In terms of lead generation, the conference counted a number of follow-ups from policy makers including a written expression of strong interest in ESPON matters from the Appraisal Unit of the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers.

As a follow-up to the event and in order to capture concrete feedback from the participants, a feedback questionnaire was shared among the participants. Particularly targeting the policy-makers that attended the Conference in Rome, direct contacts and individual follow-up calls and/or individual emails were sent, in order to get more specific and complete follow-up from this target group.

Those questions focused on the satisfaction and use of ESPON in the course of their daily work and consultation during the decision-making processes. An analysis of the answers received allowed to draft some conclusions from the participants that collaborated in this follow-up activity.

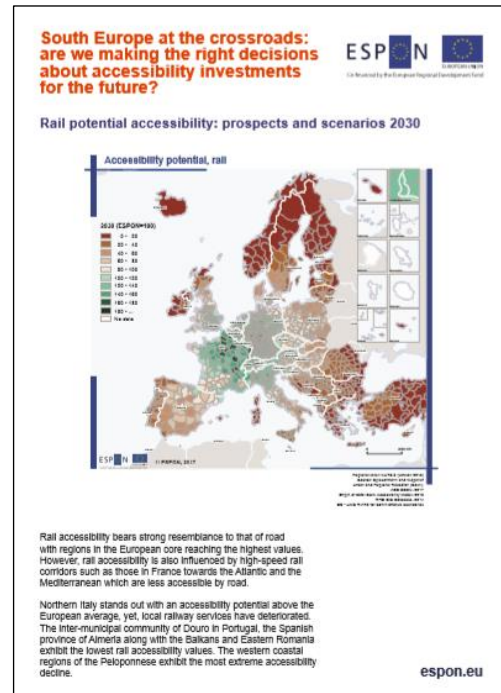
Regarding the frequency of use of ESPON evidence in the course of their work, most answers reveal its consultation 'occasionally' with approximately 50% answers received. When questioned about which sector was more relevant, answers demonstrate a prevalence of rail and road on top of the priorities, when compared to Air, Seaborne and access to Services of General Interest (SGI). The last question focused on which stage of the decision-making process where policy-makers used more frequently ESPON evidence as a support to their decision. The answers received pointed to the design stage, followed by monitoring and problem-framing, however no disparities in the answers received were noticed to draft main conclusions in this question.



This event counted with the **63 participants** and **17 speakers from 8 countries**, including an introductory speech by Massimo Sessa, President of High Level Council of Public Works from the Italian Ministry for Infrastructure

The main TNO activities related to this event included:

- An intensive and targeted dissemination campaign to promote the participation in the Conference in various languages and target countries
- Transnational Observation (in both English and Italian versions)
- Conference programme
- “Save the Date” on ESPON website
- 3 Posters:
  - Road potential accessibility: prospects and scenarios 2030
  - Rail potential accessibility: prospects and scenarios 2030
  - Seaborne accessibility: prospects and scenarios 2050
- Simultaneous interpretation EN-IT-EN during the day of the event
- Final report
- Follow-up of the event, including a survey to all the participants and article on ESPON website



## Transnational Observation “South Europe at the Crossroads: investments in road, rail, air and seaborne Transport for the Future”

The conference was accompanied by a transnational observation paper that analyses the potential accessibility by rail, road and air, and provides empirical evidence for seaborne accessibility in 2014. Furthermore, the paper offers future forecasts for all these modes, and identifies regions that are most severely affected by depopulation, which consequently leads to low potential accessibility and risks for infrastructure malinvestments.

Both English and Italian versions of this document were prepared. A total of 50 copies were printed for the event – 20 in Italian and 30 in English and shared with the participants of the Rome event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017. Both versions were uploaded to the page of the event on ESPON website and shared with the participants.



### 2.3. Governance

#### Seminar “New thinking on territorial governance – with a special focus on the Baltic States” – Vilnius, Lithuania

The second outreach activity was the Seminar “**New thinking on territorial governance – with a special focus on the Baltic States**” that took place in Vilnius on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 at the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment.

The administrative reforms in the target countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – including its local and regional administrative structures and cooperation models were discussed between policy-makers and ESPON researchers in the course of the Seminar in Vilnius.

Through dissemination activities to promote the participation on this event, the following target groups were contacted directly:

- Stakeholders involved in the implementation of HA Capacity of the EUSBSR
- Members in the UB
- Baltic Sea NGO network
- BSSSC Secretariat
- Euroregions in Northern Europe;
- Local Action Groups and Fisheries Local Action Groups from Northern Europe
- Members of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
- VASAB

In addition, in order to attract and enlarge the spectrum of potential participants in the Seminar, TNO used its own contacts and other channels to promote and disseminate this event through Social Media, including LinkedIn and Twitter.

As an initial contribution to the design of the agenda for this Seminar but also as major input for the transnational brief, policy-makers from the three target countries were contacted by ESPON TNO. Those contacts allowed to understand in further detail the administrative reforms going on and the main challenges being faced to which ESPON evidence could provide the right recommendations. The identification of the concrete challenges and needs of the target countries is of major importance to allow ESPON researchers to provide meaningful messages to the audience.

**40 participants** and **9 speakers** were present in this Seminar, including an opening speech from Rėda Brandišauskienė, Vice Minister, from Ministry of Environment of Lithuania.

As a starting point for the discussions, policy-makers from each of the countries were asked to briefly present to the audience the current state of play and the main challenges that the administrative reforms aimed to address. Contacts were established prior to the event between policy-makers and the TNO team in order to identify the common challenges and how ESPON evidence could help to tackle them and a number of good practices which could be followed by policy-makers.

Rėda Brandišauskienė, from the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, pointed out the need for evidence policy making which was especially useful for the reform of multi-level governance currently happening in Lithuania and the review of regional policy and the reflections on regions and functional areas. Dr Donatas Burneika, Marius Narmontas and Gediminas Česonis, raised similar questions regarding the challenges faced in Lithuania, where fragmentation and disparities between municipalities in terms of dimension, capacity, geographical specificities and cultural environment were among the main issues targeted by the ongoing administrative reform.



Deputy State Secretary Aivars Draudiņš from Latvia highlighted the low levels of cooperation between territories as the main challenge and raised the question on how to balance both soft and hard forms of governance with more focus on the territorial level, in order to develop mutual trust and confidence between stakeholders.

Dr Mihkel Laan presented the main objectives of the administrative reform in Estonia and the main challenges to be addressed. The fragmentation of state administration at regional level, the low levels of cooperation between each regional administration body, the lack of cooperation within ministries and across sectors are again in the top of the challenges faced in this country.

This event allowed to present how ESPON can fertilise the administrative and governance structures and the future territorial adaptation to the administrative reforms in the three Baltic countries. A number of key messages were transmitted by ESPON researchers from different projects throughout the day to face the identified challenges. While solutions cannot be automatically transposed to other realities and a number of factors must have been taking into consideration, ESPON researchers brought examples from other countries and a number of good practices that verified successful in the past where similar challenges were present.

In order to address the identified challenges for the three Baltic States, researchers from ESPON projects such as ReSSI, ACTAREA and TANGO presented in Vilnius concepts and case studies to the policy-makers present in the Seminar that helped to understand recent trends in the evolution territorial governance in Europe, as well as practical tools aimed at policy-makers to evaluate and improve governance at a regional level. The lessons and recommendations of ESPON highlight more specifically the advantages of more voluntary and “softer” modes of territorial governance.

ESPON ReSSI focused on the turn from managerial government to voluntary and open governance, bringing concrete examples from Coventry, where the decentralisation of competences in economic matters in England has recently resulted in the creation of two new types of governance actors:

Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships, replacing the traditional Regional Development Agencies. These new two types of institutions have contributed to a better geographical alignment between functional policy areas and administrative territories, as well as to improve the coordination between all local stakeholders, some of the main challenges referred by the Baltic States.

ESPON ACTAREA encouraged the emergence of soft” forms of territorial governance to enable local actors to overcome the constraints of traditional administrative boundaries.

The model for territorial governance developed by ESPON TANGO and its five dimensions was present in the discussions and highlighted throughout the day. The policy question raised to the policy-makers from the three Baltic States was how to incorporate the five dimensions that compose the TANGO framework in rigid administrative routines, and how to transfer good practices from other contexts to their specific environments.

During the last part of the event, participants and speakers were invited to join group discussion tables where the specific challenges and proposed solutions were address for each country. Conclusions from each of the tables were finally presented and discussed with the whole group.



### Key Messages and Recommendations:

- Soft forms of territorial cooperation should be encouraged by policy-makers for overcoming constraints in dealing with territorial development within administratively defined territories, complementing existing institutionalised collaborations and ‘traditional’ political-administrative’ spaces for spatial planning.
- Shifting from managerial government to voluntary governance – Assessment of new and more flexible modes of regional/local governance, including the introduction of new types of governance actors such as Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Following to the event and in order to collect the feedback from the participants, a feedback form in both paper and online versions were circulated through the participants. Learning from the experience from Rome, the feedback form was updated, targeting particularly the policy-makers present and aiming to understand the use of ESPON in their decision-making process, in addition to the overall questions regarding the satisfaction with the content and organisational aspects of the Seminar.

An analysis of the answers received allowed to understand the familiarity of the participants with ESPON and the awareness and use of ESPON evidence. Approximately 35% of the answers revealed that participants were “somewhat familiar” with ESPON prior to the event, and that the large majority of them referred to ESPON applied research results “occasionally” during their work (e.g. policy-making decisions/processes). Most answers pointed to the use of ESPON evidence in “Spatial Planning” field, during both “Problem Framing” and “Consultation” stages.

The main TNO activities related to this event included:

- An intensive and targeted dissemination campaign to promote the participation in the Seminar, in various languages
- Transnational Brief in English



- Programme of the Seminar
- “Save the Date” on ESPON website
- 2 Posters:
  - TANGO model on territorial governance (for the event)
  - Second poster with the main conclusions of the discussions and recommendations during the day (a posteriori)
- Simultaneous interpretation EN-LT-EN during the event
- Final Report
- Follow-up of the event, including a survey to all the participants

### Transnational Brief “New thinking on territorial governance – with special focus on the Baltic States”

The TNO project has delivered a follow-up transnational brief with further recommendations on how the common governance challenge in the three Baltic States (lack of systemized cooperation culture amongst static administrative units) can be addressed through a different bottom-up governance approach, i.e. Communities of Intent (ACTAREA) and place-based strategies (ReSSI).

Upon agreement with ESPON EGTC and in order to include in the document the result of the discussions between the policy-makers and the researchers present in Vilnius, an updated version was submitted including a summary table with the concrete recommendations for the Baltic States regarding their administrative reforms and main challenges faced.



This document is available only in English and 50 printed copies will be prepared in final layout version.

## 2.4. Northern Peripherality

### Workshop “Understanding northern peripherality and devising strategies for intervention” – Oslo, Norway

The third TNO activity of 2017 was the Workshop “**Understanding northern peripherality and devising strategies for intervention**” that took place in Oslo, Norway on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2017. It was organized in cooperation with the Nordregio Forum 2017.

The ESPON workshop aimed at providing a better understanding of the **challenges associated with outer and inner peripherality in Northern Europe**. Using a sound and reliable knowledge base in an interactive way, the objective of the workshop was to provide hands-on advice to policy makers involved in the implementation of the EUSBSR and the Baltic 2030 Action Plan, monitoring of government policies, law-making and administrative reforms, design and implementation of ESIF programmes, policy papers and strategic development plans, community-led local development and cross-border cooperation.

Regarding the dissemination and promotion of the events through the target groups, individual emails were sent to the following audience:

- Nordregio – who also collaborated in the promotion and dissemination of the event
- National, regional and local officials from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, responsible for regional development policies

- Stakeholders involved in the HA Spatial Planning of the EUSBSR as well as the implementation of the Baltic 2030 Action Plan
- Members of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
- Stakeholders involved in sub-regional and local cross-border cooperation: BSSSC, UBC and B7
- Euroregions, Local Action Groups and Fisheries Local Action Groups
- Members of local and regional Councils, MPs
- Officials involved in the design and implementation of ESIF programmes including European Territorial Cooperation
- Swedish Institute
- CBSS
- Ministry of Finance, Estonia
- Ministry of Development, Poland
- Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, Germany
- Danish Nature Agency
- Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
- Prime Minister's Office, Finland
- VASAB
- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (Republic of Latvia)
- Municipalities from Northern countries – more than 200 municipalities from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

In addition, the TNO team also promoted the participation in the ESPON Workshop throughout the participants of the Nordregio Forum event.

Following the example of the two prior TNO events, the involvement and collaboration with the host ECP in the identification of the main challenges faced in Northern Europe to be addressed and covered by this workshop was of major importance to both the design of the agenda and draft structure of the transnational observation. Regular contacts by both email and over the phone allowed to invite the speakers that could provide concrete answers to the needs of the audience and target policy-makers in particular.

The **26 participants** present in the Workshop were invited to discuss ways of optimizing ongoing policy processes – implementation of the EUSBSR and the Baltic 2030 Action Plan – through strategic approaches devised to better cope with the demographic and natural handicaps, as well as through measures to mitigate the inner periphery risks.

Together with ESPON researchers (involved in the policy brief and working paper on specific types of territories and ESPON PROFECY), participants during the workshop discussed ways of optimising their policy processes through strategic approaches devised to better cope with the demographic and natural handicaps as well as through measures to mitigate the inner periphery risks. The discussion was structured around the following two themes: Sparsely populated areas and Inner Peripheries. Advocating the concept of integrated asset-based strategies for regions with natural or demographic handicaps to spur economic development and increase their capacity to participate in national and international markets, ESPON researchers looked into the applicability of this approach in Northern Europe.



Emphasizing on the access to services of general interest, the second workshop theme revolved around solutions to prevent further decline of the existing inner peripheries as well as areas of risk to become inner peripheries, seeking corrective measures to address the current trends. The conference triggered the interest of policy makers involved in the design and implementation of RIS3 in Northern Europe.

### **Key Messages and Recommendations:**

- The geographical distance to the economic strongholds is not the only Northern challenge that needs attention. Inner Peripherality is also a major concern. This complex phenomenon entails the socio-economic disconnection from neighbouring territories.
- 'Compensating for handicaps' is not necessarily meaningful and more attention is needed on social, economic and institutional factors which determine resilience. One of the key issues that needs to be discussed in the context of population decline and ageing is how to increase productivity in sparsely populated regions.
- National governments can play an important role in addressing these place-based challenges.
- Remote and sparsely populated areas should not be seen as regions lagging behind by definition but as regions with specific characteristics including challenges and opportunities. More attention should be focused on methods and processes and not challenges and geography.
- Nordic countries are interested in developing a learning culture and not a copying culture. It is important to adapt solutions to their policies and traditions.

Following the same principle of the previous TNO events, after the Workshop in Oslo a feedback form in paper and online versions was circulated through the participants to collect their feedback regarding the event but also about the use of ESPON evidence in their daily work. An analysis of the results demonstrate all range of answers regarding the awareness of ESPON prior to the event, from "not at all" until "quite aware"; however most of the participants replied "somewhat familiar". About the question on the use of ESPON evidence in the course of their work, addressed to policy-makers present in the Workshop, answers reveal that the large majority refers to this evidence "occasionally" and around 80% in "problem framing" or "consultation" stages, but the answer varied through all the stages suggested. The most chosen field for use of ESPON evidence was "spatial planning".

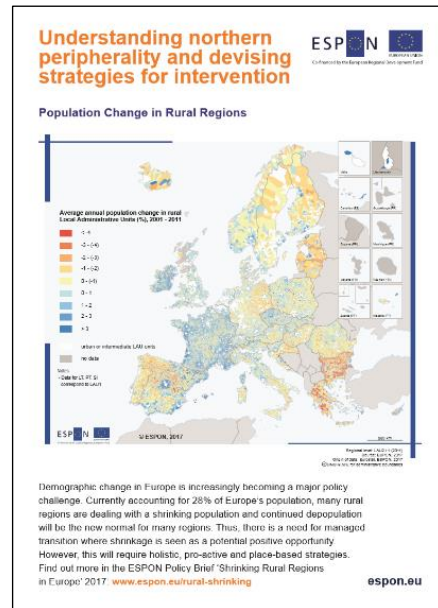
Even the contacts that were invited but could not participate in this workshop, the feedback received regarding the interest in the topic can be highlighted:

*"The theme is interesting and the subject also in Estonia. (...) We are continuously interested in the further developments and discussions about peripherality and sparsely populated areas – all the information and updates concerning those issues are very much appreciated."*

*"Thank you for the information on the ESPON workshop and invitation to participate. We are following closely activities of the ESPON network, its research results are very relevant to our work. VASAB has communicated to our network the Nordregio Forum and other events taking place back-to-back with the Forum. Information on all events is published on VASAB web site"*

The TNO activities related to this event included:

- An intensive and targeted dissemination campaign to promote the participation in the Workshop in various languages and countries
- Transnational Observation in English
- Workshop programme
- “Save the Date” on ESPON website
- 2 Posters:
  - First poster with an ESPON map on ‘demographic change in rural regions of Europe’ together with a targeted message, presented during the event;
  - A second poster as a follow-up to the Workshop.
- Final report
- Follow-up of the event, including the analysis of the survey sent to all the participants.



## Transnational Observation “Understanding northern periphery and devising strategies for intervention”

The transnational observation “*Understanding northern periphery and devising strategies for intervention*” was submitted to EGTC on the date of the event. Further feedback was later received from EGTC with request for changes in the document. A revised version was assessed by the EGTC in December 2017 and needs for further editorial improvement were communicated.

The paper examines the correlation between RIS3 priorities in Northern Europe, the performance of SMEs and the ability to attract FDI. No printed copies of this document were requested in the Request of Services.

## 2.5. Participation of TNO in other ESPON events

ESPON TNO participated in other ESPON events in the period covered by this report, namely:

- Seminar – Bratislava, December 2016
- ECP meeting – Bratislava, December 2016
- TNO-EGTC kick-off meeting – Luxembourg, January 2017
- ECP extraordinary meeting – Brussels, March 2017
- MC meeting – Brussels, March 2017
- TNO-EGTC meeting – Luxembourg, April 2017
- Seminar – Malta, May 2017
- ECP meeting – Malta, May 2017
- MC meeting – Malta, May 2017
- Partners Meeting – Malta, May 2017
- MC Meeting – Brussels, September 2017
- Monitoring Committee Meeting – Tallinn, December 2017
- Seminar – Tallinn, December 2017
- Partners meeting – Tallinn, December 2017
- ECP Meeting – Tallinn, December 2017
- TNO Annual meeting – Luxembourg, January 2018



### 3. Outreach Impact Assessment

A total of 129 participants were present in the three TNO events organised in 2017. In addition to the direct feedback covered during the events, a specific feedback form was prepared for each event and shared with the respective participants. The detailed results of those questionnaires is available in the final package of each event, however some main conclusions can be extracted:

- **Participants** – As expected being the main target group of the TNO activities, most of the participants of the three TNO events of 2017 were ‘policy-makers’, followed by ‘researchers/academics/scientists’.
- **Logistics** – The large majority of answers evaluated the organisational aspects including location and facilities, the quality of speakers and presentations as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.
- **Awareness of ESPON** – Results of the feedback form after the event demonstrate a mixed spectrum of attendees; it is considered as positive because not only the TNO events can attract participants already familiar with ESPON research, but also have the capacity to bring new persons and potential future users of ESPON evidence. The TNO team considers that it also relates to the organisation of TNO events in collaboration or embedded in other events, and thus contributing to enlarge the ESPON community.
- **Use of ESPON evidence (frequency)** – The question regarding the frequency of use of ESPON results in the course of the work (question particularly addressed to policy-makers), the biggest share of answers referred ‘occasionally’; after the event, most of the participants demonstrate interest in consulting the website of ESPON more often than they used to do it before;
- **Use of ESPON evidence (stage)** – Most of the answers revealed that, from the total number of participants (particularly policy-makers) that answered the feedback form, most of them use ESPON evidence during ‘problem framing’ and ‘consultation’ stages.

#### Testimonials from participants and stakeholders of the TNO activities in 2017

On the course of the activities developed in 2017, feedback from participants and other stakeholders involved was received by the Transnational Outreach team. Following a few examples illustrative of the positive feedback:

- *“We need a harmonized vision for infrastructure in the future, and ESPON gives us the chance to have one.”*
- *“I’m back at home with several new ideas. I’m going to discuss them with Ministry of Finance and other consultants next week.”*
- *“The seminar gave me an opportunity to contact a colleague of mine in Estonia. He’s involved in the administrative reform that Mikhel Laan presented at our seminar. The reform seems so interesting that I would like to include consultations with my Estonian colleague in some follow-up research of ReSSI.”*
- *“Thank you so much for sharing your work. From its reading, interesting approaches and conclusions that I share and that do not contradict the results of the research in PROFECY emerge.”*

- *“The theme is interesting and the subject also in Estonia. (...) We are continuously interested in the further developments and discussions about peripherality and sparsely populated areas – all the information and updates concerning those issues are very much appreciated.”*
- *“Thank you for the information on the ESPON workshop and invitation to participate. We are following closely activities of the ESPON network, its research results are very relevant to our work. VASAB has communicated to our network the Nordregio Forum and other events taking place back-to-back with the Forum. Information on all events is published on VASAB web site”*

#### **4. Lessons learnt and improvement proposals**

The implementation of the TNO activities of 2017 led to a number of lessons learned and room for improvements that will be applied in the course of the activities of 2018. It also takes in consideration the feedback received from ESPON EGTC, the ECP's network and Monitoring Committee.

- 1) Start all arrangements revolving around events well in advance (ideally at least 2 months prior to the events) in order to assure the availability of relevant speakers, stakeholders and target audience – the TNO team, together with EGTC, will make additional efforts to start the publication and dissemination of the events in both ESPON website (at least one month prior to the event) and through other dissemination channels (including social media) in order to maximize the potential of TNO activities and bring a range of relevant participants from all the targeted countries.
- 2) Finalise the shorter documents in advance (one-week prior to the event) in order to ensure their distribution to all the participants during the events – the TNO team and EGTC will agree as a starting point a base structure for the shorter documents including the key messages and based on the needs identified by the network of ECP's. Based on this structure, a first draft will be shared with EGTC and the ECP's for feedback in order to accommodate further inputs for the final version. The distribution of the shorter documents during the events is of high relevance as a background material to support the discussions.
- 3) Involvement of the speakers suggested by the network of ECPs and clearly define their expected contribution to the events – TNO team and EGTC, in consultation with network of ECPs, will collaborate in the definition of the most relevant speakers, allowing for flexible arrangements.
- 4) Reinforce and enhance the preparation of the speakers prior to the events, by examining the local, regional and macro-regional strategies and the main challenges to be addressed. By providing concrete guidance and instructions on what is expected will allow speakers to be more focused in their messages and prepare tailor-made presentations. It will contribute to enhance the impact and relevance of the events, assuring that the key messages are more focused and better addressed to the target audience, i.e. policy-makers of the targeted regions and macro-regions. Based on the key objectives of each event and the specific contribution expected, an annotated agenda with specific guidelines for each speaker will be prepared and shared prior to the event.
- 5) Disseminate the main conclusions and recommendations that emerge from the events to a larger audience, by sharing a small article with the conclusions and the online version of the shorter documents. It will contribute to maximise and better push the achieved results, recommendations and overall awareness of the programme to a larger number of stakeholders at regional and macro-regional level. This way, the key messages and main conclusions from an event can be transferred and emulated elsewhere, multiplying the outreach effect.

- 6) The use of social media will be intensified and better exploited before, during and after each of the events and new channels/tactics shall be investigated and exploited.

## 5. Planning of TNO activities for 2018

The planning of the TNO activities for 2018 started with an update of the needs assessment, conducted in July 2017, where valuable insights were collected from the ECP network regarding the policy needs, processes and implementation stages. Based on this assessment and the common interests within each of the four Transnational Groups, the strategic priorities and fields of intervention for outreach in 2018 were proposed to ESPON EGTC.

A first version of this planning was present for discussion and inputs to both ECP network and Monitoring Committee in September 2017, in Brussels, in two separate meetings. The inputs were received and included in a second version, already further detailed and presented in Tallinn in December 2017 for final comments. The result of these two rounds and regular contacts particularly with the ECP's which are going to host and collaborate in the planned events for 2018 allowed the TNO team to present a final proposal of the planned activities for 2018.

The TNO priorities in 2018 will be addressed by means of:

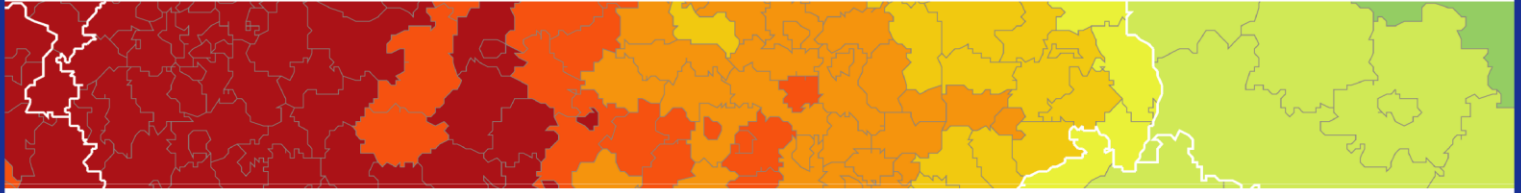
- 2 conferences, 4 workshops, 3 seminars and;
- 7 shorter documents (3 transnational observations and 4 transnational briefs).

The above measures will be accompanied by horizontal support efforts, including 3 trainings and 2 e-learning sessions dedicated to the ESPON Territorial Impact Assessment tool (TIA). Moreover, 16 posters (1-2 per event) will provide ESPON visual aid to the proposed events.

#	Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
I	SI					S							
	HU			C									
	CH						T						
II	EE						W						
	SE									S			
	online										e-L		
III	FR			S									
	IE					S							
	BE										W		
	LU									W			
	NL										T		
IV	ES					W							
	EL										C		
	HR										T		
	online			e-L									

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

I	Central Europe
II	Northern Europe
III	Western Europe
IV	Southern Europe



### **ESPON 2020 – More information**

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