

TPM

Territorial Performance Monitoring Annexes

Guidelines for Qualitative Analysis of
Regional Governance System and Resilience

Targeted Analysis 2013/02/13

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

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1 Scope of the framework

This document presents a framework for the qualitative analysis of EU regions and their relationships with macro spatial challenges. It is part of the territorial monitor tool and it should be considered complementary to the quantitative-analysis part and its data analysis.

A first evaluation of existing monitoring tools has shown that they all might be too exclusively quantitative in nature. In this sense, not only should quantitative data gaps be filled in by qualitative research, but also qualitative research in itself is intended to give a better insight in how the regions are dealing with global challenges.

The process is not only involving researchers. The way this qualitative data is collected should be subject to a peer review by the other stakeholders. They provide insights and knowledge from the policy-maker side and can contribute to fine-tuning the evaluation of strategies and policies.

Moreover, many aspects of the four global challenges are future challenges, or at least the trends will probably be more pronounced in the future than they are today. This means that the monitoring tool should find a way also to include existing future projections. It is recognised, however, that the TPG does not have the capacity to develop its own projections.

In order to ensure coherence to the approach adopted by each regional partner, the document frames some guidelines for monitoring the capacity of the Regions in dealing with the four macro-challenges through:

- Planning systems and governance structures
- Strategies and planning documents

In order to do that, the framework draws on the methodology of previously developed qualitative-analysis frameworks, some other Espon projects, and on a literature overview.

Moreover, the document defines a methodological structure combining:

- Researchers' activities in a desktop analysis;
- Stakeholders' involvement for complementary analyses.

The guideline presented in the following pages gives reference to a variety of different methods - Delphi method, questionnaire, semi-structured interview, focus group, ranking exercise, and document analysis -, the combination of which will be specified by each research group.

It is taken heed of that formalized criteria should avoid being rigid procedural or over-prescriptive. Therefore, the guidelines have been devised to be flexible, and to give the opportunity to each partner to tailor the qualitative analysis to the specificity of the Region.

The outcome of the analysis will be a report on each region, including some form of evaluation of which type of qualitative methods and which aspects of qualitative evaluation would be the most important for monitoring the respective region.

Moreover, it should include some recommendations about measures that are necessary at regional level in the planning domain to improve the capacity to tackle aspects of the global challenges.

2 Aims of the analysis

The framework is built on a set of five *aims* from which to derive and structure *appraisal questions* that should be explored in the analysis, according to different methodologies.

Further questions might be also added depending on the case study to be analysed and on the adopted methodology.

In line with the general perspective of the TPM research project, the *aims* of the qualitative analysis are to:

1. Evaluate the **awareness** of the (spatial) policy domain about the macro-challenges;
2. Assess the **resilience** of the planning system and its capacity to react/take in account these challenges;
3. Estimate the **effectiveness** of the actual measures in the policy documents/strategies and tools in addressing eventual answers to the challenges;
4. Give indication about possible **future threats/opportunities** that the macro-challenges can represent in the following decades.

Each 'aim' is considered as a session, and it can be articulated in a group of appraisal questions, with several degrees of flexibility. The structure should be used as a reference for developing the framework for the qualitative analysis for each region.

The scheme that will be used as reference; which breaks down the items and sub-items in appraisal questions, is at the end of the document.

3 Sessions

3.1 Awareness of the macro challenges

The macro challenges might be explicitly addressed or implicitly considered in the policy strategies of the Regions or can also have been ignored until now. There are different degrees of awareness of these challenges, and it is worth having a perspective in terms of discourses, forecasting capacity and or place-in-action policies. The focus is on the perception of them in policy documents and planning instruments and in specialized debates.

3.2 Resilience of the planning system

Each planning system, either if it is regionalized or structured at national level, has different way of reacting to macro challenges and trends that have important territorial implications. It is determined by its capacity to understand those spatial implications and to strategically address territorial processes; to coordinate and integrate policies among different sectors and public bodies; to coordinate policies in a multi-scalar way, without following in contradiction with other levels; to share its aims involving public and private stakeholders, with participatory processes.

It is worth here assessing these aspects in order to understand the resilience of the planning system in relation with macro challenges and their spatial implications.

3.3 Effectiveness of policy documents/strategies, programmes and tools

Each document, strategy, programme or tool that influences spatial development processes and dynamics might have a specific approach to the macro challenges. It might have an explicit or an implicit approach to them, and it might provide more or less detailed measures to tackle their spatial connotations. The appraisal exercise, thus, should focus on different aspects: the awareness of the macro challenges and how they influence the way the bundle of policies (either directly or indirectly related to them) copes with the spatial dynamics; the effectiveness and the strategic capacities of this policy bundle, determined by the congruence of the spatial vision(s) with the development of the spatial characterization of the challenges; the articulation of the vision in feasible objectives, providing a more or less coherent development of it; the coordination of different tools and policies necessary for synergic processes.

This session provides an overall assessment of the presence of each challenge in different instruments, and the capacity of their strategies to tackle its spatial dynamics.

3.4 Future threats/opportunities of the macro challenges

The macro challenges concern aspects that will be deployed in the future, or at least that their trends will be more pronounced in the future than today. Thus, the qualitative analysis of the regional answers has to be conducted at the same time with the reporting of the perception of the threats and the opportunities represented by these challenges. It implies an exercise of future forecasting, combining if possible what has been reported in the documents (if existing), other forecasting exercises, and the sensibilities of some key experts.

4 Methods and techniques

The proposed methodology for the qualitative analysis combines several methods.

The overview here below gives a brief description of them. The way the different methods can be utilised in the framework is shown in figure 1 of the following section.

4.1 Delphi method

The Delphi method is an interactive method that relies on a panel of experts, who should answer questionnaires in two or more rounds. It is mainly used for forecasting exercises, in which after each round, a facilitator provides an anonymous summary of the experts' forecasts from the previous round as well as the reasons they provided for their judgements. Thus, the experts are encouraged to revise their earlier answers in light of the replies of other members of their panel. In this way, the range of the answers will decrease round by round, and the group should converge towards the "correct" answer. Finally, the process ends after a pre-defined stop criterion (e.g. number of rounds, achievement of consensus, or stability of results) and the mean or median scores of the final rounds determine the results.

The methodological aspect that appears interesting for TPM is the articulation in two or more rounds of the interaction process with stakeholders. The first contributions from the stakeholders can be collected in the form of answers to questionnaires and their comments to these answers. In specific cases, some pre-structured interviews could also be used. Later, the coordinator can control the interactions among

the participants by processing the information and filtering out irrelevant content.

This procedure avoids the negative effects of face-to-face panel discussions and solves the usual problems of group dynamics. Participants can comment on their own forecasts, the responses of others and on the progress of the panel as a whole, revising their earlier statements, while in regular group meetings participants tend to stick to previously stated opinions and often conform too much to group leader.

After the first round, responses are collected and analyzed, and common and conflicting viewpoints are identified. At this point, the process could continue through thesis and antithesis via questionnaires, to work gradually towards synthesis and building consensus. In the present framework, it is worth giving the possibility as well to break the process and to gather the panel of stakeholder in a meeting in which the agenda is defined by the results of the analysis of the answers.

4.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case. Usually, a questionnaire consists of a number of questions that the respondent has to answer in a set format. However, a distinction can be made between open-ended and closed-ended questions. An open-ended question asks the respondent to formulate his own answer, whereas a closed-ended question has the respondent pick an answer from a given number of options. The response options for a closed-ended question should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Four types of response scales for closed-ended questions are distinguished:

1. Dichotomous, where the respondent has two options
2. Nominal-polytomous, where the respondent has more than two unordered options
3. Ordinal-polytomous, where the respondent has more than two ordered options
4. (Bounded)Continuous, where the respondent is presented with a continuous scale

On the opposite, a respondent's answer to an open-ended question is coded into a response scale afterwards.

This technique can be used for the first and the second round of interactions with stakeholders.

4.3 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview is a method of research that in social sciences is used for its higher degree of flexibility compare to structured ones. While a structured interview has a formalized, limited set questions, a semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored.

However, the specific topic or topics that the interviewer wants to explore during the interview should usually be thought about well in advance, with a sort of interview guide prepared, which can have the shape of an informal grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer can ask in different ways for different participants. In this way, a structured framework helps to focus on the topics at hand without constraining them to a particular format.

In TPM these technique can be used both in the first and in the second round. In the former, the framework of appraisal questions can be used as an interview guide, framing the topics but leaving the freedom to tailor their questions to the interview context/situation, and to the people they are interviewing. In the latter, the analysis of the first round of questionnaires / interviews provides the topics of the interview guides.

4.4 Focus group discussion

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a study agenda. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. It should bring together a small homogeneous group (usually six to twelve persons) with the purpose of reveal underlying opinions, attitudes, and reasons for their behaviour, using the social dynamics of the group, in which a moderator/facilitator stimulates the participants to focus on specific items.

The discussion should be led by a moderator/facilitator (preferably experienced), assisted by an observer who takes notes and arranges any tape recording. The moderator uses a prepared guide to ask very general questions of the group, and usually more than one group session is needed to assure good coverage of responses to a set of topics.

In TPM, this technique could be used in the second round, when stakeholders are gathered in order to discuss some issues that rise from the analysis of the first round of questionnaires or interviews.

4.5 Ranking exercise

A ranking exercise is a simple, participatory and rapid method for establishing what the affected community considers its primary problems and needs. In contrast to simple voting procedures, ranking can help you identify different priorities and the associated facilities and activities needed within a camp of an affected community. In order to do that, ranking exercise is defined on the base of a relationship between a set of items such that, for any two items, the first is either 'ranked higher than', 'ranked lower than' or 'ranked equal to' the second.

By reducing detailed measures to a sequence of ordinal numbers, rankings make it possible to evaluate complex information according to certain criteria. Thus, for example, the rank of priorities can be based on the estimation of their relevance.

Despite its approximation, it can become useful in the translation of qualitative aspects in ranking lists that might appear in the monitoring tool.

4.6 Document analysis

In a document analysis activity, researchers are given a single document or group of documents to thoroughly analyze. The activity can take several forms. The document analyzed is text-based and follows a predefined framework. It can lead to a series of open-ended comments or a more structured way of assessment.

In TPM the set of appraisal questions is used as framework for the document analyses.

5 Structure of the qualitative analysis

In the below figure the structure of the analysis is represented, including the role of both researchers and stakeholders.

The proposed method has a hybrid structure, combining different techniques:

- Desktop analysis done by the different project partners;
- Two-step procedure of involvement of stakeholders:
 - first, a questionnaire or a semi-structured interviews;
 - second, a procedure of feedback on the first outcomes, in which different techniques can be adopted (focus group, or simple singular feedback from the stakeholders, ranking technique, etc)

- Supports from and confrontation with the quantitative-analysis process.

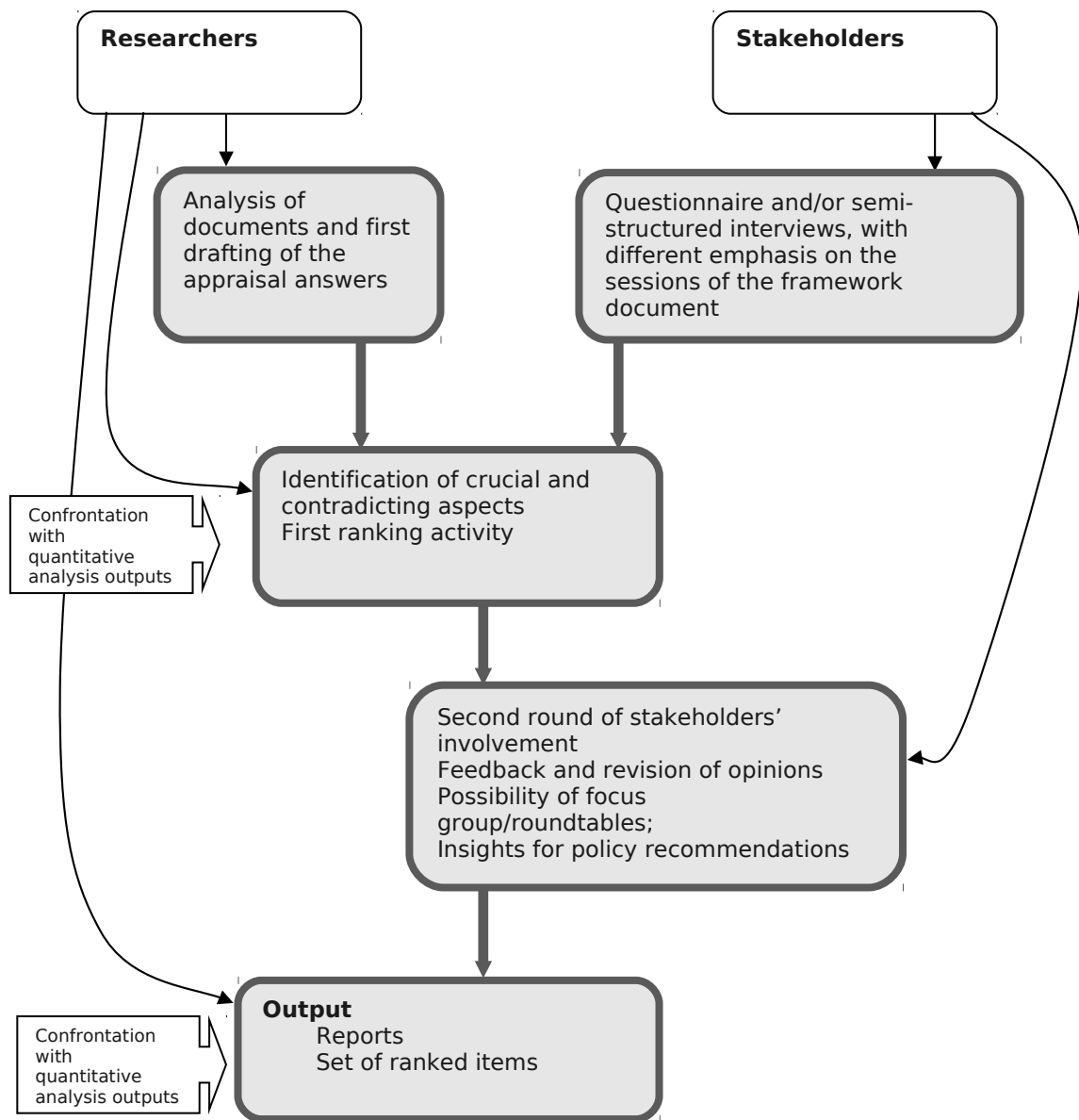


Figure 1: Procedure for qualitative analysis of regional governance

The proposed structure takes inspiration from the Delphi method, in which two or more rounds of confrontation with stakeholders can be used to fine tuning the assessment.

In the first round, the stakeholders can be involved using questionnaires or semi-structured interview technique, using the framework of appraisal questions as basis of the collection of opinions. The specification of the questions and the emphasis on some of the sessions of the framework is up to the teams in agreement with the TPM coordinator. At the same time, researchers of each team can focus mainly on the analysis of documents,

tools and regional strategies, as well as the assessment of the planning system.

The first round of analysis can be pre-informed with some quantitative analysis of early set of data.

In the following phase, the researchers gather the output of the stakeholders' interaction and their draft analysis. The aim is to highlight crucial aspects of the analysis per each challenge, both concerning the planning system and the bundle of related policies (see part XX) related to each of them. At the same time, some contradictions among opinions and among documents can be the base of further discussion and in-deep investigations.

This phase should show elements of strength (e.g. resilience capacity of the planning system, the existence of a specific environmental strategy embedded in a broader vision, etc.) and of weakness (e.g. an incapacity of providing an integrated strategic vision, the predominance of sectorial policies, the rigidity of a set of policies in relation with updated trends, etc).

Moreover, the researchers should also try to consider some implications of the macro challenges for the future, both in terms of threats (from a governance perspective, e.g. the increasing of reactive and/or sectoral measures, and from a spatial perspective, e.g. the increment of energy consumption due to urban-sprawl phenomena, etc) and opportunities (stronger coordination with EU directives, necessity to implement a monitoring system connected with the strategy-making processes, but also the role of immigration in contrasting the aging trend of population, etc).

The entire activity should be translated in a sort of easy rating system evaluating the relevance and the state of and the presence/absence of policy response to the challenges and the resilience of the planning system to the raise of the macro challenges. At the same stage feedback from the quantitative-analysis process can be expected, which will give additional information to the general picture.

The second round of stakeholders' involvement has as objective the fine-tuning of the opinions and a further investigation of some aspects/contradictions. Here different techniques could be adopted, as for instance focus group discussions, or a second round of questionnaires, together with ranking exercises.

Finally, the interaction with stakeholders could address the issue of defining some recommendations in terms of policies and governance processes, based also on evidences coming from the quantitative analysis.

The last step of the qualitative analysis should end in a wrapping-up activity done by the research group, in which the different items are coherently organized in a report.

5.1 Stakeholders

The involved stakeholders could be selected on the base of the potential contribution that can come from their specific knowledge.

We can distinguish three types of knowledge (not mutually elusive).

3. Technical knowledge
4. Process Knowledge
5. Explanatory knowledge

The first refers to a very specific knowledge in the field, concerning details on operations, strategies, laws, etc. The second refers to knowledge on routines, specific interactions, processes and relationships between institutions. Usually experts are directly involved as actors of the processes themselves. The third refers to actors who have subjective interpretations of relevance, rules, beliefs. They can focus on ideas, ideologies and their inconsistencies.

Their combination should guarantee a balanced group for the developing of the different appraisal aims.

5.2 Framework questionnaire for the analysis

The following tables draft the items and sub-items for the appraisal questions. Depending on the regional context and the target audience, these questions quite certainly have to be adapted to fit into the local realities.

1. Awareness of the macro challenges [to be compiled per each macro-challenge]	
Items	Appraisal questions
1 Local articulation of the macro-challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can you provide an illustration of the specific challenges of demographics/globalisation/climate change/energy within your region? b. What spatial impact will such challenges have on the region? c. Are the challenges outlined above specific to your region and how do they compare with neighbouring regions and the EU in general? d. Apart from the 4 global challenges outlined here, are there any other challenges that are important to your region?
2 Way of addressing the challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are the macro challenges addressed within regional policy and documentation? b. Does the region address these issues directly through policy development or does it ignore the challenges?
3 Forecasting activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the region use forecasting methods/results? b. What time horizon do these forecasts cover ? c. Is it shared with stakeholders and experts? d. What is the use of supra-regional (e.g. European) forecasting analyses concerning the macro-challenge?
4 Relationship between the forecasts and the declared measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are the forecast results used to shape accordingly some policy measures? Please, provide examples. b) Is the forecast activity embedded in a cyclic monitoring activity on the base of which changes in spatial dynamics become feedback for the forecasting activities?

Table 1: Awareness of the macro challenges

2. Resilience of the planning system

Items	Appraisal questions
<p>1. Strategic capacity of the planning system</p>	<p><u>1. Vision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the planning system make use of visions of regional territory? b. Is it an explicit vision or it is a combination of different contributions, mainly sectorial? c. Is there a predominance of a specific sector / discipline / field or is it comprehensive and inter-sectorial? d. Are the contents of the vision (objectives, spatial concepts and/or policy goals) regularly updated based on changes in the spatial dynamics of the region or new challenges? e. Are the contents of the vision shared (among stakeholders, different bodies of the administration, NGOs citizens)? f. Is there flexibility to update the overall objectives of the region (vision) depending on new challenges or must the objectives be adhered to for the lifetime of the plan? <p><u>2. Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the planning system based on a number of different objectives that feed into the overall vision? If so, what are they? e.g economic development, transport, environment 2. Is the planning system able to formulate direct/indirect lines of intervention in relation with the vision (in particular in the case of a macro-challenge has to be dealt with)? 3. Are measures usually content-wise coherent with the general vision? 4. Is there a time-plan for delivering objectives and can it e reviewed and adjusted if required? 5. Is there any form of prioritization in the time plan and in the organization of the objectives? 6. Have the objectives a budget and a feasible capacity? 7. Are stakeholders involved in the definition and the actuation of the objectives? Which (typologies of)

2. Resilience of the planning system	
Items	Appraisal questions
	<p>stakeholders?</p> <p><u>3. Monitoring</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the planning system have any monitoring tools for the assessment of on-going policies? 2. Does any assessment process have the capacity to influence policy makers through feedbacks? <p><u>4. Communication</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are the contents of the planning system widely debated? b. Is the participative and communicative processes efficient and inclusive? c. Are strategic challenges widely debated? <p><u>5. Others</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?
2; Horizontal coordination / integration of policies and instruments (and stakeholders)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the capacity of the planning system to provide horizontal integration in order to address a spatial challenge (among different sectors and stakeholders, e.g. in the field of transport, environment, energy, research & development, service of general interest, housing, etc)? 2. In case of specific challenges is the planning system able to provide answers combining different sectorial measures and coordinating the activities of different stakeholders? 3. In terms of planning dynamics and is there a predominance of any the following fields? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. spatial planning 2. sectorial competences/directives 3. developing strategies 4. Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?

2. Resilience of the planning system	
Items	Appraisal questions
3 Vertical coordination / integration of policies and instruments (and stakeholders)	<p>A) What is the capacity of the planning system to provide vertical integration (among different levels) in order to answer to spatial challenges?</p> <p>B) What is the relationships and the integration capacity of the planning systems with the upper levels (national, EU)?</p> <p>C) What is the relationships and the integration capacity of the planning systems with the lower levels (provinces, municipalities)?</p> <p>D) Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?</p>
4 Cooperation and participation	<p>a) Public-Private partnerships and cooperation</p> <p>b. Is the planning system enabling the cooperation and the partnerships between public and private partnerships in case of specific aspects of spatial challenges?</p> <p>c. Is there the capacity to shareholding with public and/or private stakeholders the general vision and the specific objectives? Are there privileged interlocutors?</p> <p>d) NGO's cooperation and citizens participation</p> <p>e. Is the planning system supporting the cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders in case of specific aspects of spatial challenges?</p> <p>f. Are there any form of participation and involvement of citizens in relation with spatial challenges? Are there privileged interlocutors?</p> <p>g) Others</p> <p>h. Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?</p>

Table 2: Resilience of the planning system

3. Effectiveness of policy bundles [to be compiled per each macro-challenge]	
Items	Appraisal questions
1. Direct / indirect relationship with the macro-scale challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any document/strategy/programme/tool with a direct or indirect intention to address the aspects related to the macro-challenge (or the specific regional challenge – point 1.1.a-d) ? • In general terms, is there a coherent approach? Please, explain
2. Strategic capacity the policy bundles	<p>a) Visioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the vision of the policy bundle (in its comprehensive view) updated in relation with the way of interpreting the challenge? • Is it evidence-based? • Is it correctly framing regional dynamics in the wider territorial (macro regional / European) perspective? is it adhering to European policy objectives such as 20/20/20? • Do the different documents share a similar vision and aim to achieve a similar goal? • Has it been shared with stakeholders/citizens? <p>b) Articulation in objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there direct/indirect measures, which should implement the general territorial vision, that are tackling aspects of the macro-challenge? have the policy bundles set out specific and practical objectives and policies that will target the challenges? • Are they content-wise coherent? • Is there a prioritization of acts/measures, embedded in a shared and coherent time-plan framework? • Is there a financial budget for the measures, with the specification of targets? • Is it present a monitoring capacity in order to keep the targets and the objectives updated? • Is there any form of involvement of stakeholders (private actors, NGOs, etc), either in the definition of the measures or in their implementation?

3. Effectiveness of policy bundles [to be compiled per each macro-challenge]	
Items	Appraisal questions
	c) Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?
3. Efficiency of the strategic capacity of the policy bundles	3. Feasibility <p>3.1. Are there any forms of horizontal integration/synergic cooperation among traditional sectors (transport, environment, energy, development, education, services, health, price strategy, etc) for the implementation of the strategy?</p> <p>3.2. Is there a predominance of any the following fields?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spatial planning • sectorial competences/directives • developing strategies <p>3.3. Are there any specific innovative governance episodes? Please, list them.</p> <p>4. Vertical integration (different stakeholders)</p> <p>4.1. Are there any forms of vertical integration/synergic cooperation with other upper levels (State, EU) or lower level (provinces, municipalities) for the implementation of the strategy?</p> <p>4.2. Who has the main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge?</p> <p>5. Cooperation and awareness of the topic</p> <p>5.1. Are there any forms of involvement of private partners / stakeholders, NGOs, citizens? Please describe it?</p> <p>5.2. Is there awareness of the topic in specialized and public debates?</p> <p>6. Etc.</p> <p>6.1. Are there other specific issues, or aspects characterizing the region in relation with this item?</p>

Table 3: Effectiveness of policy bundles

4. Future threats/opportunities of the macro challenges [to be compiled per each macro-challenge]	
Items	Appraisal questions
1. Threat in spatial terms for the region	6.2. What are the main risks from a spatial perspective that are forecasted in the policy bundle (documents, programmes, instruments, strategies)? 6.3. What are the main risks from a spatial perspective according to the involved stakeholders / experts?
2. Threat in governance terms for the region	1. What are the main risks from a governance perspective that are forecasted in the policy bundle (documents, programmes, instruments, strategies)? 2. What are the main risks from a governance perspective according to the involved stakeholders / experts?
3. Opportunities in spatial terms for the region	a) What are the main risks from a spatial perspective that are forecasted in the policy bundle (documents, programmes, instruments, strategies)? b) What are the main risks from a spatial perspective according to the involved stakeholders / experts?
4. Opportunities in governance terms for the region	a. What are the main risks from a governance perspective that are forecasted in the policy bundle (documents, programmes, instruments, strategies)? b. What are the main risks from a governance perspective according to the involved stakeholders / experts?

Table 4: Future threats/opportunities of the macro challenges

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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.