

# TerrEvi

## Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes

Scientific Platform and Tools Project 2013/3/7

Final Report | Version 13/01/2014



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](http://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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## Executive Summary

The main objective of the TerrEvi project has been to ensure that all types of programmes can make use of the results and the work conducted within the TerrEvi project. The purpose of this report is twofold: On the one hand, to present the main deliverables which have been developed stepwise and are based on each other (Part A). On the other hand, the report also aims to present the ideas and approaches on how to handle, include and use the ESPON data in the programming cycle (Part B). Based on the project partners' findings, the third section (Part C) includes a number of recommendations and conclusions addressing ESPON and the Operational Programmes (OP).

The first main deliverable comprised individual fact sheets for 53 cross-border (CBC) and 13 transnational programme areas (TNC) presenting territorial evidence from ESPON that can be useful for the future development of the corresponding programmes. For ten selected programme areas (including regional, cross-border, transnational programmes) more detailed Evidence Packs had been developed and presented at ten local workshops. The aim was to provide the reader with more insight into the different types of ESPON territorial evidence with regard to the possible investment priorities of future programmes.

The feedback and the results of the critical discussions with the stakeholders from the programme secretariats and the Managing Authorities (MA) have been taken into account for the revision and preparation of the Evidence Packs. The following main questions were raised in these workshops:

- Does the territorial evidence produced by ESPON allow for analysing a programme area in its European context?
- Does it add a new and important perspective that can help shaping the programming and implementation of projects?

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), the linkages between the 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 (MAs, programme stakeholders, Commission services, regional implementing administrations) can be illustrated. Furthermore, part B presents different ways of 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 provides a brief overview of the key conclusions drawn by the project team that might be of use for ESPON itself and for the OPs. These conclusions refer to the main advantages and benefits of ESPON but they also mention restrictions that have to be taken into consideration in order to increase both its utilisation and its usefulness.

In general, this report presents some key deliverables and approaches used in the ESPON TerrEvi work as well as reflections on the usefulness of these approaches and the information and data at hand. In doing so, the report aims at supporting stakeholders at programme level with using the ESPON material more effectively and identifying 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: ESPON TerrEvi deliverables

### 1 Fact sheets for Territorial Cooperation Areas

An important dimension of the ESPON TerrEvi project was the elaboration of individual fact sheets on each of the existing 53 cross-border and 13 transnational territorial cooperation programmes.

The aim of these fact sheets was to provide, within a short period of time, territorial evidence which can be useful for the development of the future programme documents. Furthermore, these fact sheets show that ESPON has interesting territorial evidence going beyond what the programmes usually use for their programming work. In doing so, the intention was to increase the programmes' interest in the available ESPON material.

However, the fact sheets provide only a first glimpse of the work of the large number of existing ESPON projects. Likewise, each programme area is characterised by diverse development potentials and challenges which need targeted information search. Nevertheless, the fact sheets contain information for benchmarking the programme area in its larger, territorial context, that is of interest and could help understanding the programme area better and to navigate within the richness of ESPON material available (see textbox for details on the structure of the fact sheets).

The fact sheets 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](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_ScientificPlatform/terrevi_factsheets121128.html)

#### Table of content of the fact sheets

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 deliverable 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 MAs (and other relevant programme bodies) what type of territorial evidence can contribute to the design and implementation of a result-oriented ESIF programme of the post 2013 period.

Criteria like the coverage of all regional categories (less developed, transition, more developed regions), the variance of available budgets, the mix between old and new, small and large, central and peripheral Member States or the expression of willingness to cooperate with TerrEvi built the basis for a shortlist of 20 regions for the final selection of case studies by ESPON in an early stage of the project.

The following regions have been foreseen for the final selection of case studies by the ESPON programme:

**Table 1. Proposed Regions for case study selection**

	Regional Programmes			ETC-Programmes	
	Less developed regions	Transition regions	More developed regions	CBC	TNC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jihovychod, CZ</li> <li>• Thessalia, GR</li> <li>• Norte, PT</li> <li>• Sicily, IT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sachsen-Anhalt, DE</li> <li>• Lorraine, FR</li> <li>• West Macedonia, GR</li> <li>• Molise, IT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Styria, AT</li> <li>• Valencia, ES</li> <li>• Umbria, IT</li> <li>• Northrhine-Westfalia, DE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AT-SK</li> <li>• GR-BG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North West Europe</li> <li>• North Sea</li> <li>• Alpine Space</li> <li>• South East Europe</li> <li>• Atlantic</li> <li>• Macaronesia</li> </ul>
Number of Regions (OPs) to be selected for the case studies	2	2	2	1	3

The TerrEvi team started to contact these preliminary selected programmes by introducing the project and evaluating the possibility for these programmes to be one of the ten pilot cases. As a matter of fact and due to different reasons the final list of pilot cases consists of four regional programmes, one CBC programme and five TNC programmes:

- Some programmes were not able to participate in the TerrEvi analysis as pilot cases due to the high level of workload faced in the context of preparing the programming period of 2014-2020;
- Some programmes were simply not interested in the project;
- Some changes were made upon request by the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Therefore the following list of pilot cases has finally been set up in coordination with the ESPON programme and has been approved by the ESPON Coordination Unit:

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

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

**Step 1 – Preparation Phase**

- Contacting the programme authority and describing the project, its structure, the main steps of the case study
- Preparing a draft fact sheet for the 10 programme authorities
- Discussing the process for the local workshop within the Transnational Project Group (TPG) and with the beneficiary



- 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 the Final Evidence Pack)

### **Step 3 – Feedback**

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

#### **Table of content of Evidence Packs (= fact sheet + local verification of ESPON evidence)**

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Context information (e.g. GDP per capita, population growth)
- Europe 2020
- Smart Growth: Fact sheets indicators + others interesting at local / programme level; Results and feedback from the workshop
- Sustainable Growth: Fact sheets indicators + others interesting at local / programme level; Results and feedback from the workshop
- Inclusive Growth: Fact sheets 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 illustrating the key points and evidence from a territorial perspective. The participants were asked to:

- indicate positive and negative aspects of the suggested topics;
- inform about additional existing data sources;
- identify the main positive and negative elements through a SWOT exercise;
- identify those elements in relation to the thematic objectives;
- identify all further information, in particular splitting them into two categories (the group of information already available at a local level and any information which could be useful although not available).

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

#### **Metaplan technique**

- This technique was developed in Germany in the '70s by two brothers, Wolfgang and Eberhard Schnelle.
- Can be used as a facilitation method for groups and as a communication model, in which opinions are developed, a common understanding is built and objectives, recommendations and action plans are formulated to focus on a problem and its possible solutions.
- Moderators – could also be described as facilitators – administer the groups and ensure that good communication, cooperation and high levels of understanding are achieved.
- Certain communication tools are used, including:
  - ✓ Certain physical items (standard oval, cloud-shaped and rectangular cards of various colours).
  - ✓ Felt tipped pens,
  - ✓ Display boards,
  - ✓ A series of standard presentation get-togethers.
  - ✓ Rules that produce clear and legible display.
  - ✓ Rules that provide effective communication, voting, etc. in groups.

As a final stage, the Programme MA was asked to complete a short questionnaire about the possible ways to use the evidence pack.

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 10 different workshops, mainly from Programme Secretariats and MAs.

All workshops followed roughly the same structure starting by 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

### **Sample of results from the workshops**

The indicators provided by ESPON projects for the sections Smart, Sustainable or Inclusive Growth were in most cases at least partly viewed as useful by the workshop participants comprising in general members from the MA and the Joint Technical Secretariat of the different programmes. Nevertheless in all ten conducted workshops for elaborating the evidence packs the participants contributed to a fruitful discussion on how the indicators – or at least some of them – can be used at the level of programming and implementation. The discussion focused, inter alia, on the following aspects:

- In general the set of indicators proposed by ESPON and the TerrEvi project team were characterised as interesting and well prepared but in some particular areas they were not seen as the most obvious ones for certain programmes.
- Dated or obsolete data. Relatively old data sets make it difficult to explain the baseline context especially in the context of planning the new programming period. Although it is clear that data collection and harmonisation needs considerable time, some indicators date back to more than five years and this is definitely not ESPON's problem.
- Complexity. Although composite or complex indicators can provide interesting insight into a specific policy theme, they can also confuse or overly complicate policy-making.
- On the other hand, more aggregation was considered as useful. For instance the Slovakia – Austria programme highlighted that for the field of renewable energies a more aggregated indicator set would be useful. The approach of picking themes such as wind energy is too specific. Also following a discussion about the climate change indicators, it turned out that an aggregation of the vulnerability and the combined adaptive capacity would be interesting.
- On several occasions throughout the workshop discussions with regional or CBC programmes, it has been argued that the programme is simply too small to go into the discussion about territorial evidence in the programming steps of “result indicators” and “project selection”.
- The indicator “change in labour force” led to an intense discussion when working with highly developed programme areas. The participants mainly raised two specific topics they would like to modify in this field: First, it should be differentiated between geographical and economic issues in the scenarios. Second, there should be one scenario for 2005 – 2020 and one for 2020 – 2050. In general many programme representatives expressed the wish for more differentiated indicators about the whole employment issue.
- Granularity (territorial or sectoral). Although programming is carried out at the NUTS2 level even in regional programmes, it was deemed necessary that the granularity of some indicators at the territorial or sectoral level is improved.
- In some cases an absence of indicators was noticed in terms of monitoring the entrepreneurial perspective of smart growth and certain indicators were proposed for this purpose of different programmes.

In some workshops with less developed programme areas, the participants expressed the wish to also obtain indicators for territorial evidence from ESPON which would comprise some “surprise effects” for the region. More precisely, the participants to receive information that is not “obvious” in pointing out that the programme is lagging behind in a lot of fields compared to the rest of Europe.

Concerning the five programming stages discussed in all workshops, the proposed set of indicators was of very different use for the programmes. In some cases the reviewed indicators were in principle relevant for all five stages, in some cases just for one or two of them or under certain circumstances only. From time to time certain indicators were of no use at all for any of the five steps in the programming process.

Finally the discussion on the set of indicators in certain workshops led the group to propose a couple of specific aspects which could be useful in this section from their perspective. This implies a proposal of additional indicators which would have been useful for the specific programme.

## 4 Dissemination activities

The project team has presented its work at the ESPON seminars in Aalborg (June 2012), Pafos (December 2012) and Dublin (June 2013), including presentations of the methodology as well as the project's content and context. In addition, mutual influences with EU neighbours in the scope of Macro-Regions were discussed during workshops by presenting results. Taking part in these discussions facilitated the valuable interchange with other ESPON project teams as well as the exchange of useful feedback for further project implementation.

Furthermore, the TerrEvi team has presented the fact sheets at an INTERACT event in London (May 2012) and ESPON-INTERACT events in Luxembourg (September 2012) and Vienna (December 2012). The input focused on the 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. In this way, decision makers and programme managers involved in cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes from regional, national and European level could benefit from collecting ideas and discussing future ways of 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 fact sheets on the ESPON website and the delivery of ten evidence packs to the regional, transnational and cross-border programme authorities – the two specific deliveries of the TerrEvi project – can also be considered as dissemination activities. By this means programme bodies within ESIF implementation can use the territorial knowledge for the identification of place-specific contexts. This can support the setting of public investment priorities accompanied by tangible targets. Furthermore, through the inclusion and involvement of various European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes – a wider European audience has benefitted from the outcomes and knowledge generated by the project.

The TerrEvi project team envisages organising further dissemination activities in the closing stages of the project. Among these dissemination activities, the project team is considering the establishment of an online application / web tool, the production of, at least, one more fact sheet for another area, e.g. for a macro-region, Interreg programme area, depending on the needs of the areas. In addition the project team considers the possibility of organising a meeting with selected MAs and programme stakeholders as well as participating 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 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 fact sheets 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.

As described in part A, the main aim of the TerrEvi project has been to help the ESIF programmes to use the ESPON material more effectively and to identify 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, the project has supported territorially differentiated programming activities by addressing regional specificities as emphasised in the Territorial Agenda 2020.

The work carried out shows that ESPON results can be used<sup>1</sup> for the following moments within the programme cycle: needs analysis, thematic concentration, programme monitoring, project selection, and stakeholder dialogue. Using the available ESPON results in an effective manner requires a proper understanding of the policy context of the future European Cohesion Policy. Some key points in this regard are highlighted in this chapter, while the next chapter explores the concepts and methodologies applied in the ESPON TerrEvi work.

#### 5.1 Key policy documents

Analysing the use of ESPON material for the future ESIF not only relies on the current discussions on future European regional policies, but also a number of overarching European policy documents. The key references in this respect are:

- **Europe 2020.** The Europe 2020 Strategy (launched in 2010) is 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 ESIF are seen as an important contribution for 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 the 'Europe 2020', the definition of clear performance indicators and targets, the conditionality and incentives associated with the use of ESIF, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> with a differing intensity

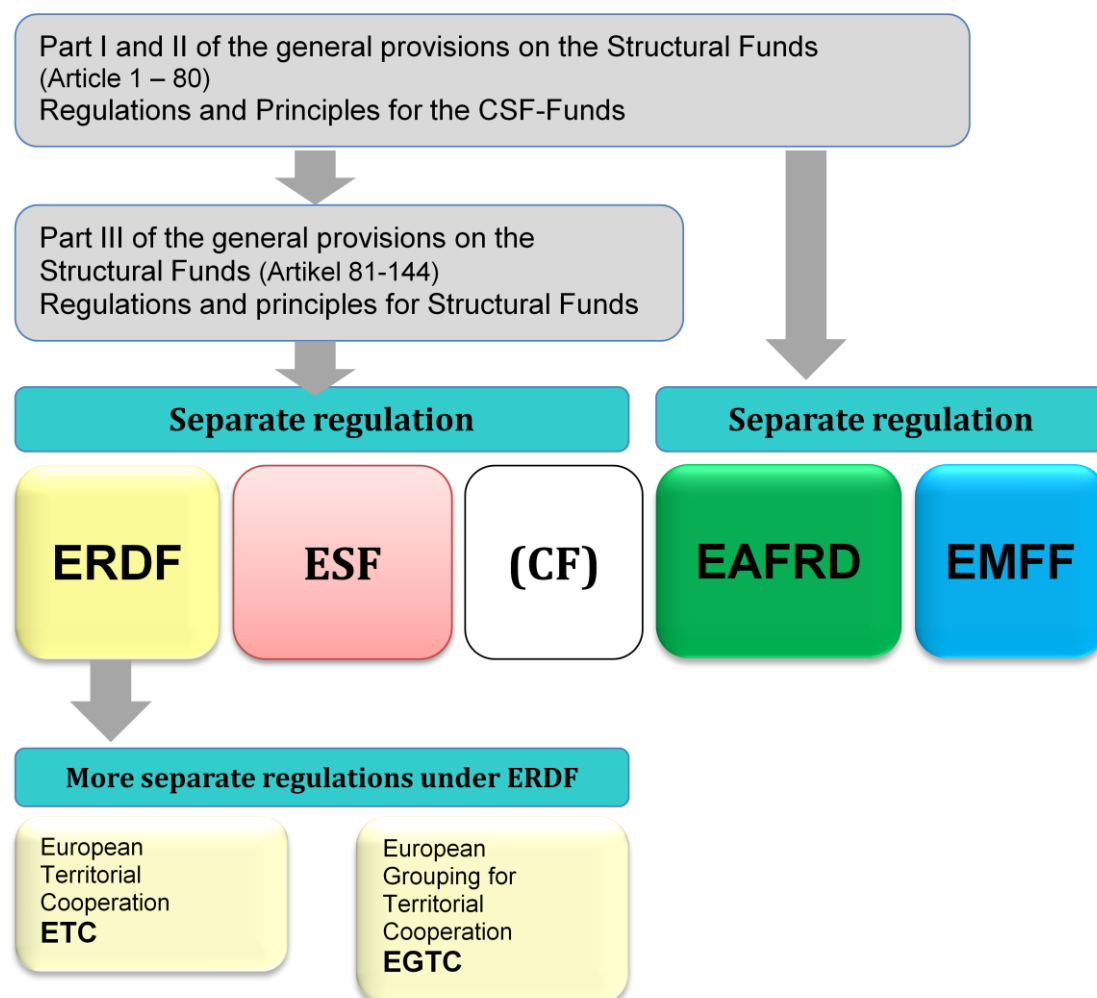
- **Territorial Agenda 2020.** The Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA2020) was adopted at an informal ministerial meeting under the Hungarian EU Presidency (Gödöllő, May 2011). It stresses the importance of a territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The TA2020 is the follow-up of the Territorial Agenda 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 ESIF 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 the 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**



Similarly, the separate regulations under the ERDF, the ETC 2014-2020 and the 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 the existing EGTCs would not have to change unless they saw a benefit of it.



## 5.2 Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

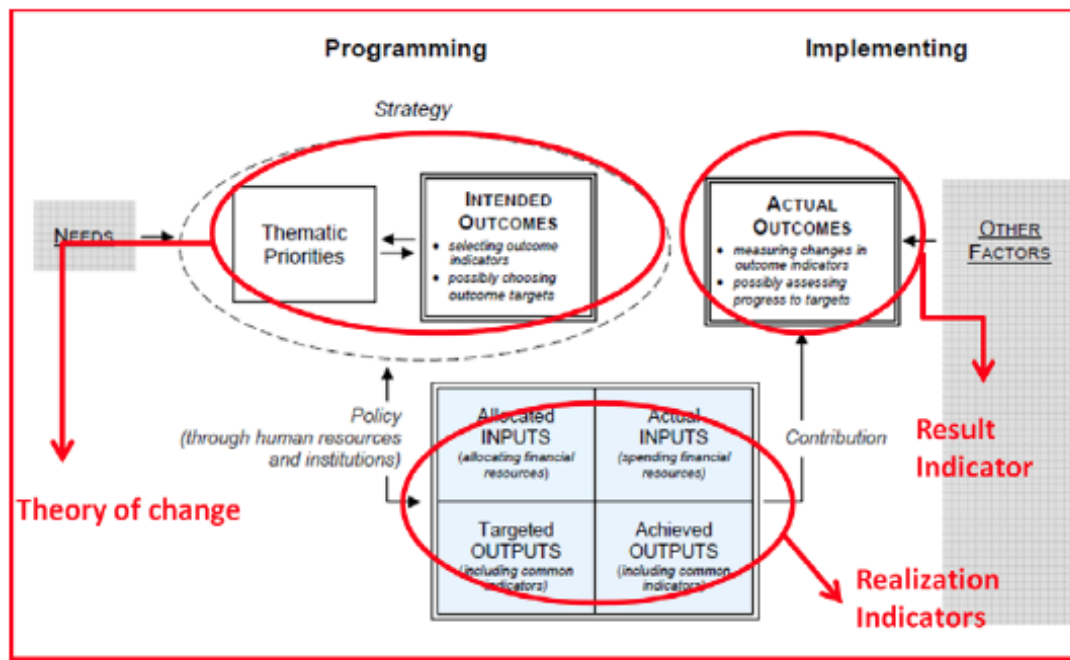
Alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy is a characteristic feature of ESIF for the period of 2014 to 2020, e.g. via the linkage of objectives and priorities to Europe 2020 targets. This is particularly emphasised through the 11 thematic objectives defining the thematic scope of the programmes.

Furthermore, there is a focus on the 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 diminish the administrative costs and burden.

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 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**



In this new indicator framework dealing with the economic and social context along with the strategy of the programme will be one of the most important activities of the programming phase. According to the new regulation (art. 24), for each priority the new OPs “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 has been strongly inspired by the so called Barca-Report and subsequent inputs. In particular the place-based approach has gained much attention. The notion of place-based development policy is defined as:

- 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 is supposed to serve as a common denominator of (a) regional development policy, the traditional domain of (b) cohesion policy and ESIF programmes, and the notion of territorial cohesion strongly advocated by the spatial development community in particular within the Territorial Agenda 2020. Consequently, reconciling these two notions has been another important feature of the approach to the production of the Territorial Evidence Packs.

## 6 ESPON in the operational programme cycle

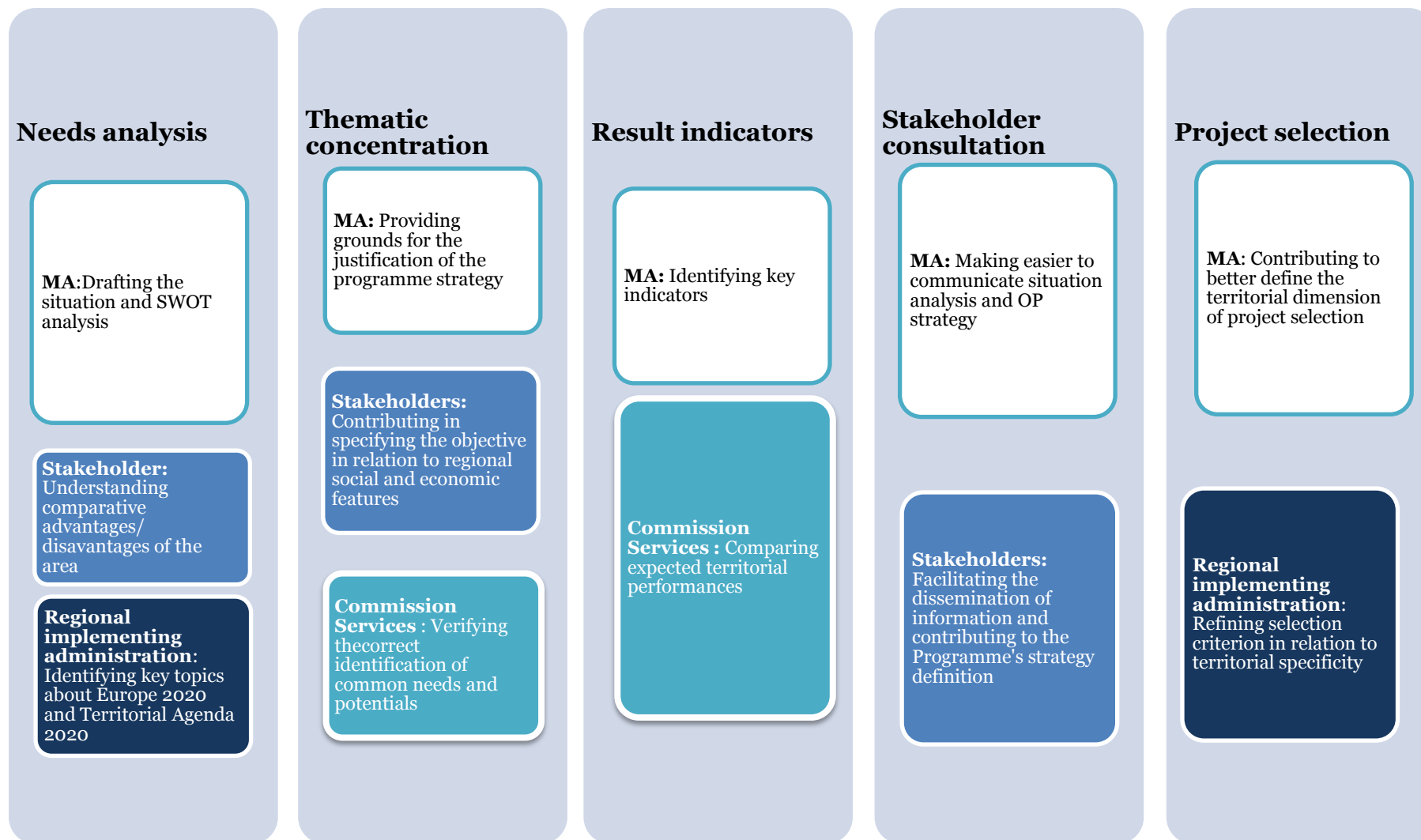
The following chapters explore and introduce concepts and methodologies that have been applied during the ESPON TerrEvi work. First of all, it is important to mention that ESPON material, including the indicators and data, can be relevant at different steps in a programme or even a project cycle. However, ESPON is just one of many sources to draw on. ESPON cannot replace national or regional data sources. 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.

Regarding the different types of programmes, 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 programme phases, five key moments in the cycle can be identified where ESPON results related to smart, sustainable, inclusive growth or the territorial dimension can be of interest:

1. **Needs analysis.** By observing an area in a larger context, it becomes easier to identify the comparative advantages or disadvantages and also to analyse a region's "performance" compared to other regions in Europe. Understanding the wider territorial context may help to better understand a region's needs.
2. **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. Understanding the comparably strong or weak aspects of an area might guide the discussion on possible thematic concentrations of future investments to either further strengthen the existing potential within the region or combating the weaknesses.
3. **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 identify possible result indicators or estimate whether an indicator might be a relevant result indicator.
4. **Project selection.** In particular in geographically larger programme areas ESPON results can also be used to support the project selection. This can e.g. be done by exploring whether the issues addressed by a project are most relevant or pressing in that part of the programme area.
5. **Stakeholder consultation.** Both during the programming phase as well as during the implementation 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 during different phases of the programme cycle for single groups of actors/stakeholders that are generally involved: MAs, Programme stakeholders, Commission services, regional implementing administrations.

Figure 3. Potential use of ESPON evidence



When the applied territorial research of ESPON was set up, the investment priorities of the ESIF were not known. Consequently, there is no perfect match between the themes of ESPON evidence and the type of information needed to support future programmes. Furthermore, ESPON material comes with a series of practical and methodological caveats, e.g. the fact that a wide range of evidence 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 a few years ago. In addition, the geographical level of the information held by ESPON is not always the most suitable level of detail for programme discussions.

Despite the caveats and as evident from the feedback during the workshops that were conducted for the ten case studies of TerrEvi, ESPON material can be used as interesting and stimulating input for the debate across the various phases of the programme cycle and enable a better understanding of the programme area in a European perspective.

## 7 Selection of relevant ESPON information

Using the ESPON results and material in the development and discussions around the 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 draw conclusions on the latest Synthesis Report, Territorial Observation or ESPON Brief. This will already allow for obtaining a far-reaching insight into 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 a specific programme or project area. In order to do so, 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 first requires 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 an 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 placing in a larger context.** In view of really understanding the findings deriving from the reading of ESPON results at different geographical scales one also needs to keep in mind some basic approaches which are helpful when comparing areas or putting them into a wider context.
- **Impact Assessment.** In policy making one usually is interested in what happens in the future in case a certain policy is put into place. In order to merely get a broad idea, 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 lined up with the Europe 2020 objectives and its 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 of the indicators proposed/used by ESPON TerrEvi and of 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 ESIF 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 at the level of NUTS 3 regions. As a consequence most indicators are displayed at NUTS 2 and only partially at NUTS 3 level and therefore do not allow for a 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.

Figure 4. List of indicators in our evidence packs

<b>2014-2020</b> <b>Thematic</b> <b>Objectives</b>	<b>ESPON indicators used by TerrEvi</b>																										
	Share of R&D infrastructure	Private R&D sector 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	
Enhancing institutional capacity						X																					

## 8 Multi-level approach to interpreting data

The ESPON results and the data on which they are based can be interpreted at various levels of geographical detail. The following sections provide some guidance on how these interpretations can be reached. All these approaches have been successfully tested and applied in the ESPON TerrEvi project. All findings presented in this chapter result from the discussions held within the project team as well as in the framework of the workshops conducted for the ten case studies.

The limits of what can be expected from ESPON and other Europe-wide information with regards to the level of analytical detail and methodological caveats need to be kept in mind in all steps. It is evident that ESPON can be a useful source of information, but it will always be only one among many sources to be used by the programmes. 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 the effective territorial policy making in an intertwined 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 for establishing 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 draft 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)

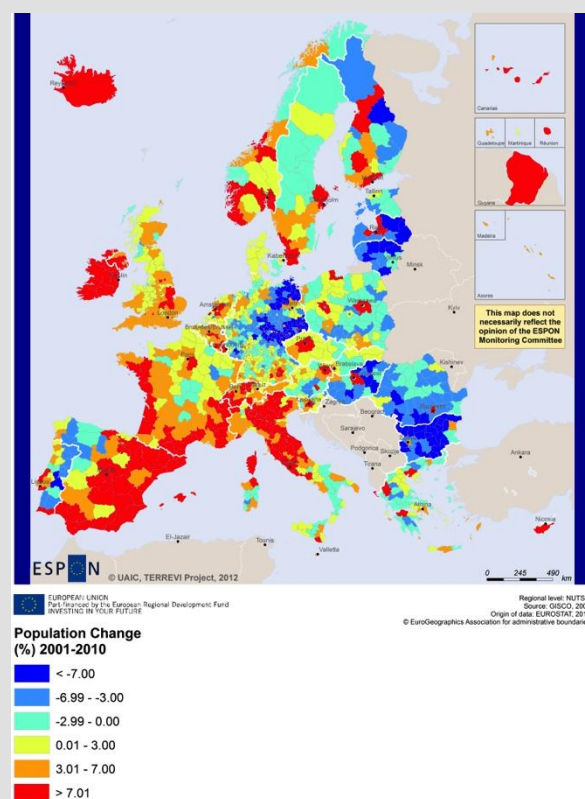
Without being explicit about this, ESPON TerrEvi has also made use of this approach for the fact sheets and Evidence packs by zooming into specific programme areas. The situation in



the programme area has also been compared to other areas in Europe (see textbox below). Only in very rare cases have other sources than ESPON been used to enhance existing 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 TerrEvi 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 wherever 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

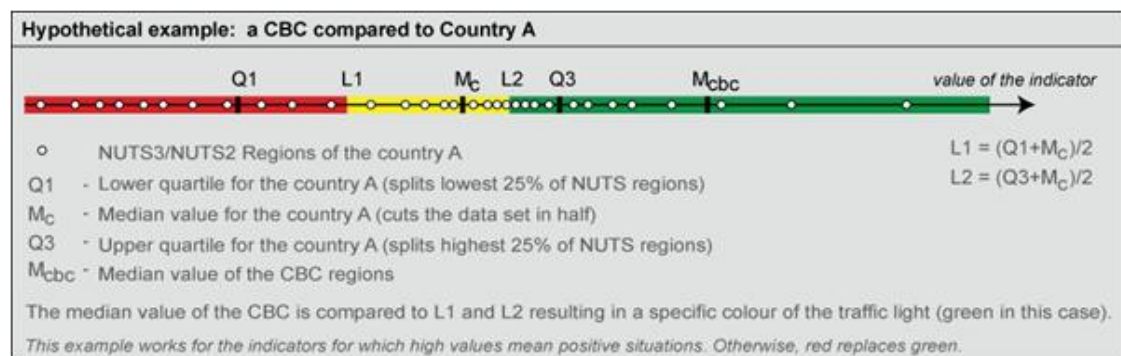
the European average, other programme areas of the same type or involved countries. However, it does not allow for a nuanced picture concerning the disparities within an area.

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**



Choosing the median as the central value requires special attention when 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 also be considered when establishing the relative situation of a programme area compared to a specific country.

## Examples: Establishment of ESPON TerrEvi traffic lights

The figures below show two examples of traffic lights which could cause misunderstandings at first glance. 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**

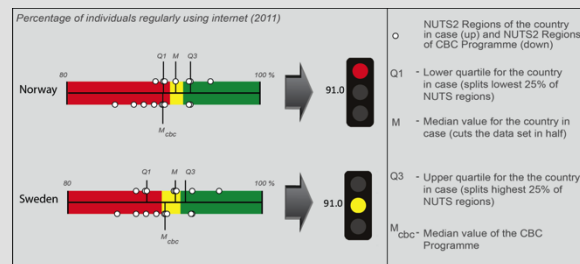


Figure 8. **Case 2: Upper Rhine**



Figure 9. **Example – Traffic light for a Regional Programme**

	value of the region	Portugal	EU-27+4
Total Intramural R&D Expenditure (GERD). Percentage of the GDP (2009)	1.43	0.79	1.22
Employment in knowledge-intensive services as percentage of total employment (2010)	24	33	39
Percentage of individuals regularly using internet (2011)	46	47	71

*The value in front of each traffic-light represents the median value of the country and of the EU-27+4 space.  
Thresholds for detecting disparities using the variation coefficient: low < 15%, medium 15 - 30%, high > 30%  
Regional level of analysis: NUTS 2  
Origin of data: EUROSTAT 2012*

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

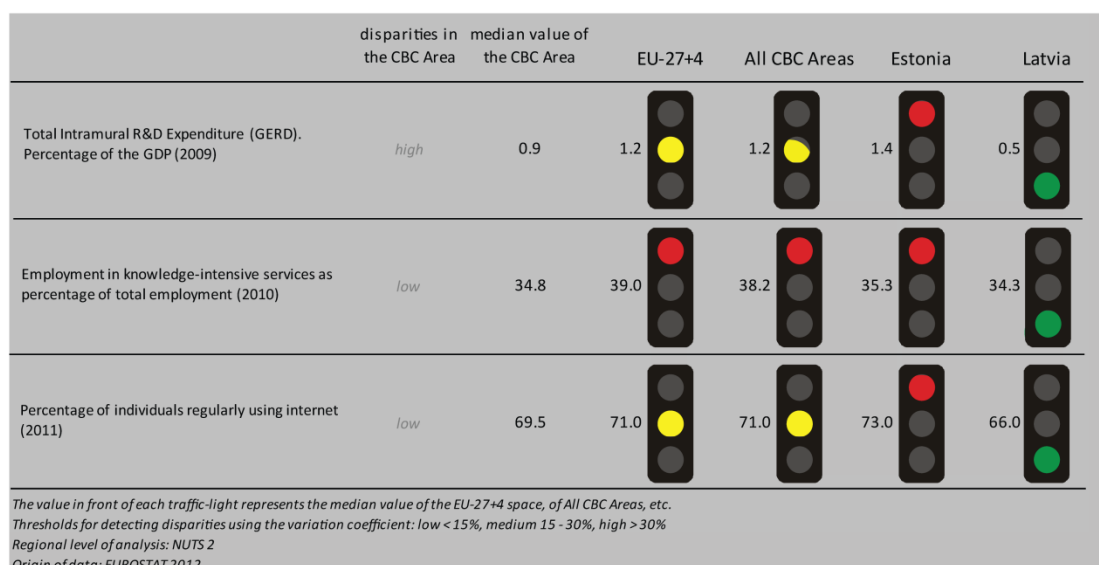
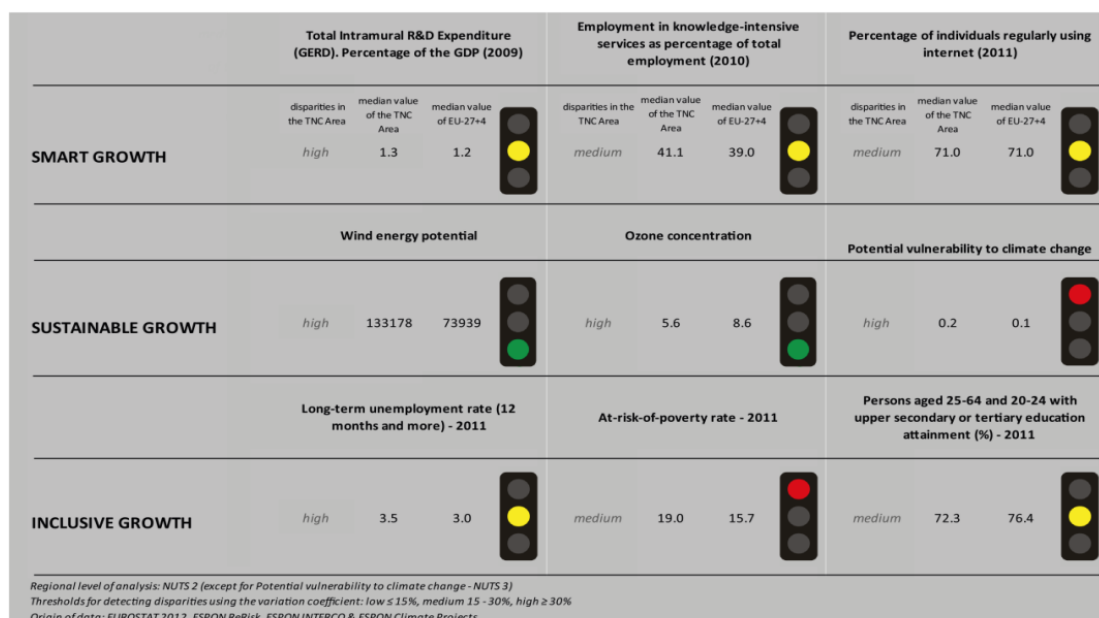


Figure 11. Example – Traffic light for a Transnational Programme

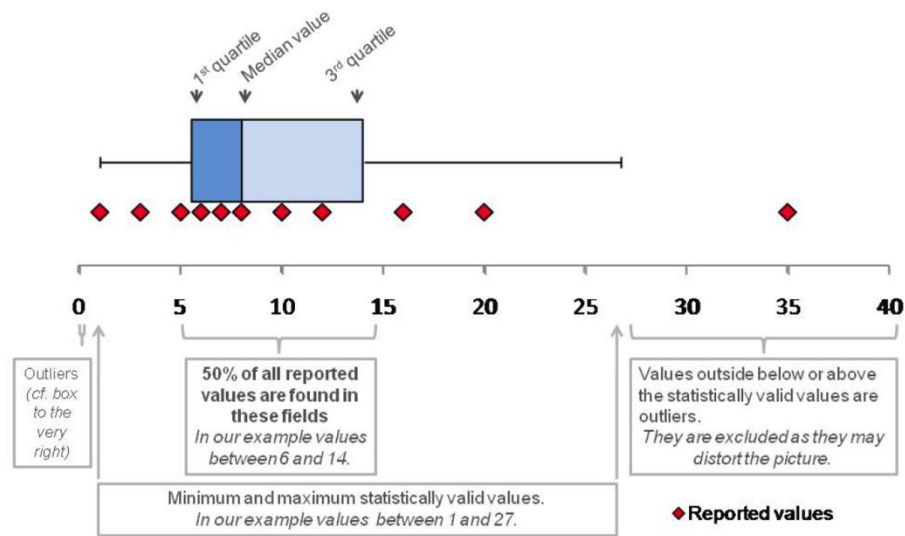


## 8.4 Box-plots approach for advanced readers

Going beyond the level of traffic lights, box plots make it possible to compare a larger programme area to the rest of Europe or other selected areas taking into account the differences within the area. The purpose of the box-plots is to allow the reader to get a quick overview of the situation of a programme area 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

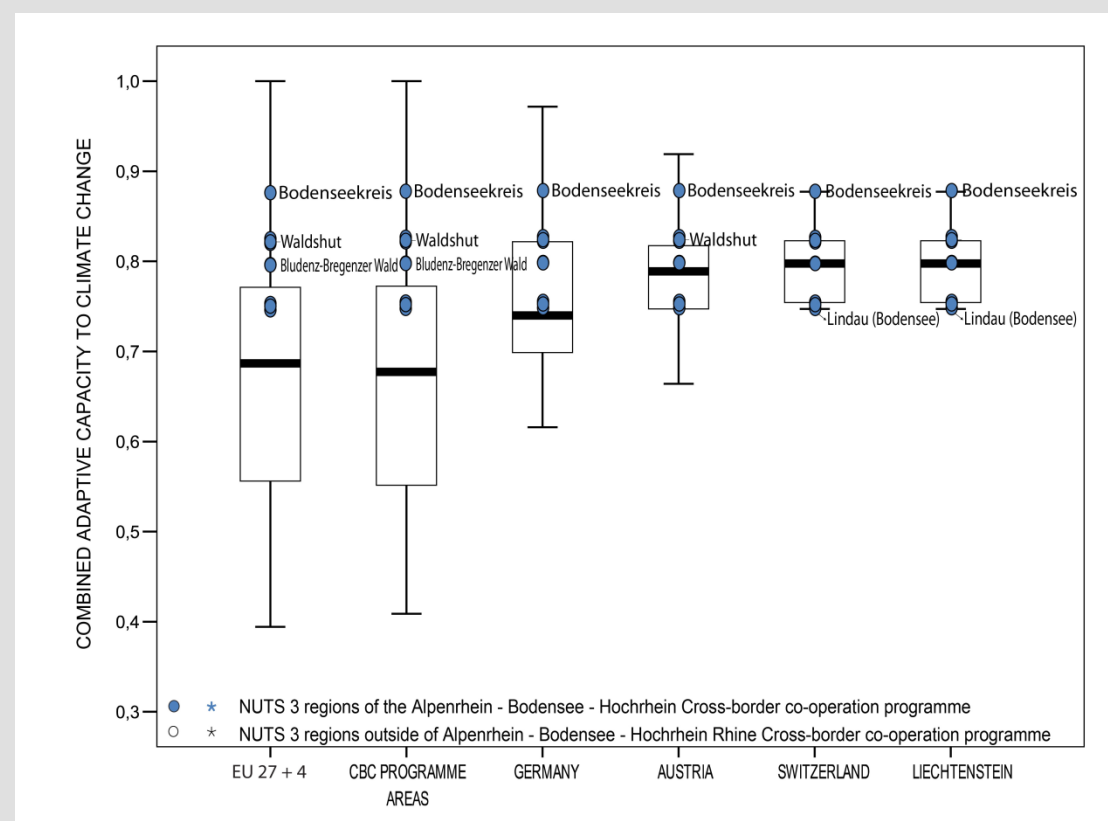


The regions participating in a cooperation programme are chromatically highlighted in order to differentiate them from the other NUTS 3 regions which are not part of a cooperation programme.

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%). Those 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. Whenever a region consistently deviates from the average profile of the analysed territorial context, this phenomenon is then noted in the chart. When a certain threshold of statistical tolerance is exceeded, this is 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 TerrEvi fact sheet 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 identifying other regions with comparable characteristics from the maps or data sets or by selecting a few regions and systematically comparing their performance for specific indicators compared to the programme area and regions at hand. Without going into detail, ESPON TerrEvi has also made use of this comparative and benchmarking approach, which has been developed in particular in ESPON TPM project.

The ESPON TPM developed a prototype of a complementary tool to the ESPON HyperAtlas, the so called ESPON TPM Benchmarking Tool. This is an easy-to-use system which can easily be fed with a 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 for regions to reflect upon 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](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_TargetedAnalyses/TPM.html)

## 8.6 Territorial Impact Assessment

ESPON results can help improving the understanding of the potential territorial impact of policies that are important for efficiency and cohesion. In particular, the ESPON TerrEvi fact sheets focused on the territorial impact of the Directive on fossil fuel consumption.

Territorial impact assessments can contribute to a better judgement of how a specific policy affects the 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, the Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) is an approach which allows observing territorial effects and providing helpful and synergetic insight both for territorial and sectoring policy-making. It is often used for raising awareness about the territorial dimension, rather than making 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)

While the text box above provides an overview on the various works on Territorial Impact Assessment carried out by ESPON, it is worthwhile highlighting the quick guidelines developed by ESPON ARTS and EATIA for carrying out individual assessments.

The TIA quick check developed by ESPON ARTS focuses on the effects deriving from a particular policy measure (exposure) 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, possible 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, the ESPON EATIA has developed a practical guidance for policymakers and practitioners based on contributions from ESPON projects and the European Commission. The tools 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 understanding the 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 discussing the material is very important as ESPON does not only provide data and maps but also other types of information and findings. These include a large variety of regional and local case studies, national- and Europe-wide conclusions and recommendations, as well as newly developed concepts and methodologies. In view of benefiting from the latter, it is necessary to scan a large variety of ESPON material and discuss its implications.

ESPON provides an essential underpinning for translating territorial evidence into practice. This especially relates to 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 reports providing valuable territorial evidence for future territorial cooperation initiatives.

The following documents are ESPON products of particular relevance for territorial cooperation (available at [www.espon.eu](http://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 of ESPON results available since early 2013.
- ESPON Territorial Observations is a publication series which presents policy-related findings deriving from latest ESPON research on a few pages.
- 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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:** 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 is only 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 ESIF programmes may find ESPON of interest to a varying degree. This mainly depends on 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 in 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 a specific programme area with other programmes within a European context might provide new insights and thus reveal both surprising similarities and differences. It can therefore promote a broader and more in-depth understanding of the specific territory analysed.

**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 when 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 limited visibility among ESIF programmes and MAs. 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 on how to make better use of existing ESPON material and ideas on 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 ESIF programmes.

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

**Usefulness.** In view of increasing its usefulness, ESPON might want to consider working 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](http://www.espon.eu)

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