

## **ESPON 2013 Programme**

### **Work Programme 2011**

**Approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee on 15-16 November 2010**

The Work Programme 2011 includes the actions envisaged in 2011 as the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme continues. The planning of activities under the 5 Programme Priorities was started in 2008 and has progressed steadily since then.

The Monitoring Committee and the Concertation Committee will be closely involved in the implementation process together with the other programme authorities. In particular, the committees are behind the selection of themes and specifications of new projects, covering Applied Research, Targeted Analyses, the Scientific Platform and Transnational Networking Activities by the ECP Network.

#### **I. General Outlook and Priorities for 2011**

##### **I.1. Policy demand**

The year 2011 is very important in terms of policy demand related to ESPON. In particular, the new European Treaty and the aim of Territorial Cohesion as part of EU Cohesion Policy is an important novelty that will also impact the further development of ESPON in the short as in the longer term.

The European Commission has by November 2010 launched their ideas on future policy development at European level in relation to Structural Funds post 2013. The clear commitment is that EU Cohesion Policy is an important tool contributing to the realisation of the Europe 2020 Strategy on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Territorial Agenda for the European Union will also be updated in spring 2011 and followed by a second Action Plan. This process will also involve considerations on continued evidence support from ESPON in the remaining programme period in relation to particular themes and actions.

In 2010 the Monitoring Committee has conducted a process of selecting the themes for the remaining 6-8 Applied Research projects within the ESPON 2013 Programme, which reflects the current policy demand for new territorial knowledge.

The interest from stakeholders for Targeted Analyses is expected to continue being high in relation to the last planned call for Expression of Interest during the ESPON 2013 Programme. The Transnational Activities of capitalisation by the ECP Network are expected to further stimulate this interest.

The ESPON post 2013 is an important issue for 2011. The process defining the future started in 2010. This will continue in 2011 where decisive decisions related to the

budget of the EU and to Structural Funds after 2013 will be taken. The corresponding EC rules and regulations are under preparation and the institutional setting of ESPON post 2013 should through active involvement be duly reflected in this work. Member States, Partner States and the Commission have exchanged opinions and started detailing the future ESPON during autumn 2010. This will continue in 2011.

## **I.2. Implementation status**

The implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme is now well advanced. In total 40-50 projects are final or ongoing under the programme priorities. By 31 December 2010 the status for contracted and remaining projects under the ESPON 2013 Programme can be seen from the following table which also include the target set in the OP:

### **Project status by end 2010 (exclusive 8 MA led projects under P3 and P4)**

Major projects	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
Ongoing or under contracting	17	16	2	5	40
Remaining	8	4-5	2-3	1-3	15-19
Total	25	20-21	4-5	6-8	55-59

These numbers show a significant increase in comparison to a year earlier due to important efforts made to accelerate the project implementation. The ESPON 2013 Programme has in 2010 approved 27 new projects amongst which 11 applied research projects, 10 targeted analysis projects, 1 scientific platform project and 5 transnational networking activity projects.

Furthermore, new Calls for Proposals are under preparation which means that the programme manages projects at all different stages of development and implementation. In 2011 it is planned to launch two rounds of calls that will start the remaining projects indicated in the table above. The first round of calls will be opened in January 2011 and the second starting in August 2011.

The two rounds of calls will included the following calls:

January 2011:

- Call for Proposals for 4 Applied Research projects
- Call for Expression of Interest for Targeted Analyses
- Call for Proposals on Territorial Monitoring and Reporting

August 2011:

- Call for Proposals for 4 Applied Research projects
- Call for Proposals on 4-5 Targeted Analyses
- Call for Proposals for additional Tools project (tbc)
- Call for Proposals on Transnational Networking Activities

Connected to the maturity of the programme implementation the administrative and financial management becomes a more important task. The closure of finalised projects

is a significant task in 2011, both in terms of closing the content part and in terms of checking progress reports as basis for payments.

Ensuring the spending necessary in order to avoid de-commitment of ERDF funds in 2011 is another crucial task. The progress made in 2010 on the spending side was encouraging, however also 2011 will represent a profound challenge. The audits carried through in 2010 were successful in having none or very limited findings. However, in 2011 the number projects to be audited will increase due to the higher number of ongoing projects.

The programme maturity and the extensive volume of incoming final results in 2011 will further shift the focus of activities towards communication and capitalisation. The ability of ESPON to deliver interesting results, facts and new evidence to policy development is a crucial factor for success. The activities foreseen under Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme will therefore start gaining importance in the programme implementation in 2011 which will continue over the coming years.

### **I.3. Strategic avenues for 2011**

In 2011 the programme implementation as such will continue as hitherto. However, the following 5 strategic avenues will receive particular attention in 2011:

- (1) **Launching the remaining major projects** of Applied Research, Targeted Analyses, within the Scientific Platform and on Transnational Networking Activities.
- (2) **Finalising projects with high quality** ensuring solid, policy relevant evidence and robust facts that can be of interest for policy development at all scales.
- (3) **Further drive on capitalisation and communication activities in 2011 based on rising number of final project results** and preparation of targeted activities towards policy development levels from 2012 and onwards where new ESPON knowledge output will be booming.
- (4) **Implementing the roadmap for avoiding de-commitment** within the ESPON 2013 Programme and continue sound programme management with finding-free audits and quality checks.
- (5) **Preparing the future ESPON post 2013** in a transparent process that can lead to clarity in time for the decision making process related to EU Cohesion Policy post 2013.

More detailed information on the concrete programme implementation in 2011 can be found in the following chapters of the Work Plan 2011. The envisaged overall timing of activities in 2011 is available as annex 1. The latest Programme Implementation plan, including the two remaining rounds of calls and the corresponding budget allocations, is included as annex 2. Finally, the Budget for 2011 following decision by the MC is included as annex 3.

## **II. Detailed actions within the main activities 2011**

### **II.1 Project start, implementation, development and closure (Priority 1 and 2)**

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2011 put emphasis on launching the remaining major Applied Research and Targeted Analysis projects. In parallel, many ongoing projects will deliver final or interim results. In order to guarantee the required high quality and policy relevance, important efforts will be made to support and steer project development and implementation.

#### ***Priority 1: Applied Research projects***

The implementation of Applied Research projects will in 2011 be at cruising speed. In 2011, the programme will manage in parallel 25 Applied Research projects taking together contracted projects and projects in preparation.

The project implementation of the 17 contracted projects looks as follows:

- 5 projects are expected to have submitted their final deliveries the latest on 31 December 2010 and will enter the phase of financial and administrative closure.
- 1 project will during 2011 deliver a Final Report and then also enter the phase of financial and administrative closure.
- 1 project will deliver a Draft Final and Final Report and then also enter the phase of financial and administrative closure.
- 1 project will deliver a Draft Final Report.
- 6 projects will deliver an Interim Report.
- 3 projects will deliver an Inception and Interim Report.

The ESPON 2013 Programme foresees in 2011 two Calls for Proposals for altogether 8 additional Applied Research projects:

- The Calls of January 2011 will include new applied research projects for the following themes:
  - European Regions: Potential Contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy
  - Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe
  - Territorial Governance – Best Practices for New Perspectives
  - Territorial Potentials for a Greener Economy
- The Calls of August 2011 will include 4 new applied research projects for the following themes (working titles):
  - European neighbour regions
  - Small and medium sized towns in functional urban areas
  - European gateway regions
  - Territorial impact of the financial and economic crisis

#### ***Priority 1: Knowledge Support System (pool of experts for Sounding Boards)***

The Knowledge Support System currently includes 74 experts but will be extended in 2011 with experts related to the themes of the new Applied Research projects to be

launched in the same year. A Call for Expression of Interest was opened in November 2010 and shall be closed on 21 January 2011.

***Priority 2: Targeted Analysis***

The implementation of Targeted Analysis projects will in 2011 further accelerate. In 2011, the programme will manage in parallel 22-23 Targeted Analysis projects taking together contracted projects and projects in preparation.

The project implementation of the 18 contracted projects looks as follows:

- 6 projects are expected to have submitted their final deliveries the latest on 31 December 2010 and will enter the phase of financial and administrative closure.
- 2 projects will deliver a Draft Final and Final Report and then also enter the phase of financial and administrative closure.
- 10 projects will deliver an Inception and Interim Report.

The ESPON 2013 Programme foresees in 2011 two Calls related to Targeted Analyses. The Call for Expressions of Interest for Targeted Analysis is foreseen opened in January 2011. This call will result in the selection by the Monitoring Committee of 4-5 project ideas that will be included in Calls for Proposals in August 2011. These projects are intended to be selected and kicked-off early 2012.

**II.2 Scientific Tool developments and Analytical support (priority 3)**

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2011 make important efforts to further develop and optimise the scientific platform. The last remaining larger Scientific Platform project shall be launched and in addition, additional scientific tools will be developed. At the same time ongoing projects shall deliver final results, in particular some larger projects. The required high quality shall be guaranteed by permanent support and steering of the projects.

***ESPON 2013 Database***

The ESPON Database 2013 project - phase I will deliver its Final Report in February 2011. This Final Report will be accompanied with a final update of the ESPON 2013 Database itself and a number of additional tools.

The ESPON Database 2013 project – phase II has been in a Call for Proposals from 24 August 2010 till 19 October 2010. The MC will select the best proposal on 1 february 2011. This follow up project is expected to start in March 2011 and will then deliver an Inception Report in June 2011.

Cooperation on European territorial data will continue in 2011, integrating the ESPON Programme further into this European process. The cooperation with EUROSTAT will continue on the basis of an updated Action Plan that should ensure mutual benefits in the development of pan-European regionalised information and European maps.

### ***Territorial Indicators and Monitoring***

The project on territorial indicators and indices, INTERCO, will deliver its Interim Report on 31 March 2011 and its Draft Final Report on 30 November 2011.

The project on the establishment of a territorial monitoring system will be in a Call for Proposals in January 2011. This selected project is envisaged to start in autumn 2011.

### ***Scientific Tools***

Four service contracts on scientific tools will be running in 2011 in various stages of implementation. These tools are the following:

- Update of the HyperAtlas tool for the ESPON website: a Final Delivery is expected on 28 February 2011.
- ESPON Online MapFinder to make available ESPON maps: the service is expected to be contracted early 2011.
- Update of Data Navigator, including Iceland and Liechtenstein: this service is expected to be tendered early 2011.
- Cartographic Language for territorial science and policy: this service is expected to be tendered late 2011 or early 2012.

### ***Territorial trends through Update of Data and Maps***

During 2011 the updating of maps is currently planned to cover the following indicative themes:

- Aggregated natural and technological hazards and vulnerability of European regions.
- Human development index at pan-European level (which will involve input from DG Regio)

The themes of updates are however influenced by policy demand and deliveries from other bodies and may be changes accordingly. As preparation for next updates a theme in consideration is “Labour market areas in Europe – Functional areas”, which would be an updating of the work developed within ESPON 2006 project 1.1.1.

The map updates and the related report will all be used for issues in the series of ESPON Territorial Observations.

## **II.3 Capitalisation and Communication** (priority 4 and partly 5)

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2011 make increasing efforts to communicate the final results of the projects through a wide range of activities and channels, existing as well as new ones. In addition, the Capitalisation Strategy approved by the Monitoring Committee in September 2010 will be implemented in a number of targeted actions aimed at policy makers, stakeholders and the media.

## ***Capitalisation Activities 2011***

Based on the Capitalisation Strategy approved by the Monitoring Committee on 30 September 2010, the following activities are envisaged for 2011.

### **1. Media and Publication**

#### a) Media Bureau and Capitalisation Strategy

In cooperation with the contracted service provider, the following activities are planned for 2011:

- At least 4 press conferences in relation major publication launches or events, such as the first Scientific Report, Open Seminar, Conference and the Internal Seminar.
- At least 6 press releases in relation to major publications launches and events.
- 6 ESPON Newsletters
- Delivering speeches at minimum 3 external major events.
- Drafting media-relevant reports of ESPON Events and activities (i.e. fact sheet, tool kits).
- Video clips

#### b) ESPON Publications

Like previous year, a substantial number of ESPON Publications are envisaged in 2011. The first ESPON Scientific Report, based on ESPON Workshops at the RSA Annual Conference of 2010, is expected to be published in January 2011.

Furthermore, 2 volumes of the series of short publications, ESPON Territorial Observations, are envisaged. These volumes will cover “Territorial trends in telecommunications and ICT accessibility” and “Cultural and creative workforce as a development opportunity for European regions and cities”. The basis for these volumes will be the results from the update of indicators and maps conducted under Priority 3.

During 2011 a Publication Plan for 2012-2015 will be elaborated and presented for the MC for decision.

#### c) ESPON Website

The *ESPON Website* will continuously be updated during 2011 when enhancements seem necessary. It is envisaged to have at least 6 Maps of the Month displayed at the Website in 2011.

The makeover of the *ESPON Intranet* communication tool, that took place during 2010 in order to make it more functional and user-friendly and in accordance with the ESPON Corporate design, will become operational in 2011.

### **2. European Seminars and Workshops**

In 2011, an Open Seminar will be organized on 21-22 June in Budapest during the Hungarian EU Presidency. The Open Seminar will link in to the Territorial Agenda which is planned decided at Ministerial level during spring 2011. In addition, the seminar might be able to further connect to the European policy debate on future Cohesion Policy post 2013. Apart from this, a number of interesting ESPON projects will be for debate between policy makers, stakeholders, the ECP and experts/scientists.

Furthermore, the Coordination Unit shall in cooperation with the Polish Presidency organise an *Internal Seminar* on 29-30 November 2011 in Krakow. The internal seminar shall contribute to ensuring the internal consistency and synergy related to the content of projects within the different programme priorities. The thematic scope and aim of the Seminar will be defined in due time during the first half of the year.

The postponed ESPON Stakeholder Conference on Targeted Analyses will be carried through probably in early spring 2011. The intention is now to arrange the conference in Bruxelles when the first Targeted Analyses are final and the second round of Targeted Analyses well defined.

In addition, two open ESPON Workshops are foreseen. The first one in March 2011 where a theme related to the application of ESPON scientific tools by projects might be picked. The second ESPON workshop is scheduled for early October 2011 based on the INTERCO project.

ESPON results will in any case, as in earlier years, be the basis for many presentations around Europe. Also the Open Days in Bruxelles in 2011 is on the programme for capitalisation of ESPON.

Finally, the cooperation with other networking programmes dealing with European Territorial Cooperation will continue in 2011, seeking to explore complementarities between the different activities carried through. An update of the common activities 2011 was agreed in December 2010 which apart from the yearly meeting at the level of programme directors includes a common effort pooling activities related to innovation in an UrbAct event and in a workshop at the Open days in October 2011.

### **3. Transnational Networking Activities**

In the beginning of 2011, the ECP network will be asked to report their national activities carried out until the end of 2010. Their reports will be compiled as one annual report for 2010 (and before) and will be made available to the MC and published on the ESPON website.

A third Call for Proposals on Transnational Networking Activities will be launched in August 2011, followed by an Info day on 13 September 2011. The decision on these proposals will be taken by the Monitoring Committee in early 2012.

Of the ongoing projects, the INTERSTRAT project initiated in 2010, will present a Draft Final Report in December 2011. The NORBA project will deliver three progress reports during 2011.

The new projects on Transnational Networking Activities decided in autumn 2010 will also make progress in 2011. The CaDEC project focusing on the capitalisation and dissemination of ESPON concepts will hold a project kick off meeting in January 2011 and deliver an inception report in March. In December there will be arranged national project workshops. The SCALES project is focused on the breakdown and capitalisation of ESPON results to different geographical scales. It envisages having 3 transnational seminars in 2011.

The ESPONTrain project providing an e-learning platform was decided by the MC on 15-16 November 2010 based on an offer from the Lead ECP to amend the proposal submitted, including a reduction of the number of topics/themes to be developed into teaching material and the corresponding budget. The start and contracting of this project is foreseen for early 2011.



## ***Communication Plan 2011***

For the year 2011, the ESPON Managing Authority, with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit, intends to implement the following actions:

### **1. Events**

The MA and the CU will during 2011 address specific country related problems of the certification of expenditure according to 1st level control. Specific meetings will therefore be organised in identified countries in cooperation with the relevant MC members.

A first seminar on management and administration of projects will be organised end of February / early March 2011 for Lead and Project Partners of approved projects under the round of calls launched in 2010. A second seminar for projects approved under the round of calls launched in January 2011 will be organized in September 2011.

Internal ECP meetings will be organized in June and November 2011 in order to ensure coordination of activities of the programme at national level, the internal coherence and share of experience.

The Programme will organise two major information activities - *Info Days and Partner Cafés* on New Calls including a Q&A session - to present the new funding opportunities and the conditions for applying. The events will be organised in February and September, and target stakeholders, potential beneficiaries and authorities.

The elaboration of *ESPON MapArt* is planned during the year aiming at generating artistic pieces of art based on ESPON maps. The output of 13 pieces of ESPON MapART is intended used for promotional material, such as an ESPON Calendar 2012, for wider distribution. This is awaiting a final decision on the right format including whether a competition format with prize awards is feasible within programme regulations.

The programme will be marketed at several events like conferences, seminars, exhibitions. Information will be disseminated on e.g. project and programme results, funding opportunities. The ESPON CU will select during 2011 key events, organised by different institutions and/or organisation (the European Commission, other European programmes, etc.), including:

- EC Cohesion Forum, *January*
- NTCCP, *February*
- DG Territorial Cohesion, *March*
- Informal Ministerial Territorial Agenda, *May*
- Open Days in Brussels, *October*.

### **2. Information tools**

The *Applicants' package and the Programme Manual* will be updated and completed prior the opening of the Calls to be launched in January and August 2011. They will be published on the ESPON website and disseminated during the info day event and on demand.

The Calls will be announced at the *Official Journal* in two steps: the pre-announcement and the announcement.

The *Programme Management Supporting System* of the ESPON 2013 Programme will continue to serve as the main source for both quantitative and qualitative data on projects implementation and achievement.

MC Members will be involved in reaching potential beneficiaries, policy makers, other stakeholders and the citizens. The CU itself will provide continuously information about the programme. External information requests will be answered as well as documents will be provided on demand. In order to enable the flow of information between the various management units of the programme, i.e. between the CU, MA, CA, AA, MC regular meetings and contacts between the different units and actors will be held as well as regular messages to keep the programme's bodies informed.

The ECP Network will continue to be continuously involved in the ESPON communication activities and informed through *ESPressON*, which is providing the ECPs audiences with the latest news with link to the relevant web pages at the ESPON Website.

### **3. Communication Tools**

Information material for beneficiaries on the framework and purpose of actions will be published and distributed in printed and/or electronic form as "Programme and Guide Documents" (Programme Manual and Application Pack).

The *ESPON Website* will continuously be updated during 2011 targeting beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, including the publication of the list of beneficiaries.

For each of the 6 *ESPON Newsletters* foreseen for 2011, the ESPON CU will elaborate a short article targeting the launch of the calls. In addition, information on the timetable of events will be as well provided.

At the launch of calls, *press releases* will be elaborated and channelled to the relevant media. The press releases will be mainly targeting the press, the general public and the potential beneficiaries..

During 2010, ESPON started providing information and updates via a range of social media tools making it possible to now follow ESPON on Twitter, LinkedIn, RSS Feed, Netvibes and Delicious. In addition, the ESPON LinkedIn page gives users information about the Programme, and a group has been created that allows ESPON Partner Café members to interact with potential project partners. These Social Media tools will continuously be updated during 2011 to communicate calls, events, information about the Programme.

### **4. Promotional material**

In order to promote the ESPON Programme, promotional materials shall be produced in 2011 by implementing the service contracts with external companies (printing, Corporate Identity and Layout, Media Bureau). It is planned to produce the following:

- Maps and Posters based on selection by the CU of the most appropriate maps from the ESPON Projects and publications such as the ESPON Synthesis Report, the Territorial Observations, etc.
- New ESPON stands will be produced in accordance with the ESPON Corporate Identity, to be displayed at events and market the Programme at external events. The CU in cooperation with external service providers will develop a proposal during 2011.

- Thirteen pieces of ESPON MapArt shall be used to produce an ESPON Calendar 2012.

In terms of dissemination, the promotional material will be distributed at ESPON events, to the MC and ECPs for national coverage, to the main target groups, on demand.

The Communication Plan 2011 is available as a separate document decided by the Monitoring Committee in November 2010 and has been submitted to the Commission for information.

#### **II.4. Management of Programme and Projects, Audit and Ongoing Evaluation (Priority 5)**

The main challenge in relation to the Programme Management in 2011 will be to meet the commitment targets and pave the way for the more challenging commitment targets in 2012.

A total of 4.378.651 EUR of ERDF will have to be certified to the Commission by the end 2011<sup>1</sup> (by the end of 2010 since the beginning of the Programme implementation period a total of 2.018.000 EUR of ERDF could be certified to the Commission). Reaching the commitment targets for 2011 will require a close monitoring of projects and of the respect of the reporting deadlines.

In addition, it will be crucial to pave the way for a smooth and faster financial implementation of the programme as additional 4.792.371 EUR of ERDF will have to be certified to the Commission by the end of 2012 and additional 11.410.480 EUR of ERDF by the end of 2013.

##### ***Programme Management***

From the programme management side during 2011 the main milestones are related on one side to the reporting duties to the European Commission and on the other side to the implementation of the specific programme management verifications that are foreseen in the approved management and control system description.

From the reporting side, two main reports will have to be submitted to the European Commission via the SFC-2007:

- Payment Forecast for 2011 and 2012, by the 30 April 2010
- Annual Implementation Report for 2010 which will have to be submitted to the European Commission by 30 June 2011 following its discussion and formal approval of the MC.

The Managing Authority and the Coordination Unit will have as well to cooperate and coordinate with the Certifying Authority for the submission of the report on irregularities due by the 31 March 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> For this first year of application of the de-commitment rule the 7% advance payment has to be reduced from the total ERDF to be declared to the European Commission.

In relation the management verifications, during 2011 the Managing Authority will have to continue implementing quality controls on ongoing projects and as well support Member States for the implementation of their quality checks on their respective first level financial control system. More information can be found in the section related to the Audit activities.

Finally, as underlined in the introductory text, an important milestone for 2011 will be to make sufficient progress with the financial implementation leading to a no de-commitment risk for the years 2011 and ensuring sufficient progress for avoiding de-commitment in 2012.

### ***Procedure review***

Following the delivery of the final report related to the review of procedures at the beginning of 2011 the CU will finalise and consolidate all programme documents. This will include the Rules of Procedures of MC and CC, the Programme Manual for all priorities, the Internal Manual and all the relevant annexes. According to the results of the external procedure review, the MA-led projects will be as well checked and consolidated according to the procedural modifications approved.

### ***Calls for proposals, calls for expression of interest and call for tenders***

During the first months of 2011 the ESPON CU will still be busy managing contracting of the projects approved in the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> around of calls and finalising the eligibility and financial management checks of the 6<sup>th</sup> round of calls closed on the 19 October 2010. In addition the CU will be running the 7<sup>th</sup> round of calls that will be opened on the 24 January 2011. The CU will also be managing the 3<sup>rd</sup> KSS call for expression of interests and contract the selected experts related to the projects to be approved under the 7<sup>th</sup> round of calls. An additional 8<sup>th</sup> round of calls will be opened on the 24 August 2011.

The eligibility checks (including the treatment of eventual correctable omissions cases) and the evaluation of the Management and Financial capabilities if proposals received for P1, P2, P3 and P4 will be closed only during the month of June 2011. Following the decision of the MC kick off meeting with the selected Lead Applicants will have to be organised. During the kick off meetings the remarks of the evaluations will be considered which in most of the case results in the compilation of an annex to the standard subsidy contract and the resubmission of the Part A of the application form. Taking into account the experience of 2010, it is foreseen that process will last at least two months starting from the date of the kick off meeting.

With regards to the EoI, during the second half of 2011 the CU will have as well to start the preparation of the elaboration of the stakeholder's cooperation agreement which will have to be sent for signature to the respective successful lead stakeholders and be received signed prior the launch of the call for proposal foreseen for 24 August 2011. The signature process will only be able to start as soon as the MC has taken decided on the project specifications and on the respective budgets.

Finally, the MA and CU will has well to manage the call for tenders related to the implementation of actions in the framework of priority 3 and priority 4 (see sections II.2

and II.3) as described in the MA led project proposals approved at MC meetings in 2010.

### ***Project Monitoring***

In relation to project monitoring during 2011 there will be a major increase of the work related to the monitoring of ongoing projects together with the contracting of the new projects selected following the call closed on 19 October 2010. The CU expect receiving 60 progress report during 2011 and address the financial closure of 12 projects.

Particular attention, in agreement with the priority set for the year and in line with the Road Map to avoid de-commitment, will be provided to the timely and correct submission of projects reimbursement claim, taking into account the important deadline with the application of the de-commitment rule by the end of the year. The experience of 2010 showed again an insufficient level of quality of the submitted reimbursement claims and as well shortcomings in relation to the certification according to first level financial control.

In order to avoid de-commitment at the end of 2011 and in particular at the end of 2012, the ESPON CU will have to reinforce the support to Lead and Project Partners, but as well to the first level financial controller. As indicated in the section related to the Communication Plan, specific events have been planned in order to treat with the needed urgency this issue. In addition, specific session at the ESPON seminars will be organised.

Close contact with the Lead Partners and the first level financial control will be reinforced and as well projects will be encouraged to send to the CU the draft reimbursement claims before they are sent to the first level financial controller for verifications.

By the end of 2010 access to the PMSS has been provided to the MC, GoA members and as well to the Central Approbation Bodies. The sections related to the payments implemented by the Certifying Authority has also been finalised and is now currently in use.

### ***Audit activities 2011***

The main audit activities within the year 2011 will be mainly:

- Audit of operations during the first half of the year to be finished by 30 June 2011.
- Annual control report and opinion during the second half of the year to be delivered to the EC by 31 December 2011.

The audit of operations will be implemented on behalf of the Audit Authority by the external auditor between February and April 2011, taking into account the need of giving all audits closed by the 30 June 2011. The methodology of the audit of operation will remain the same as in 2010. However, based on the previous experience, the preparatory phase of the audit of operations will start already early January 2011 by informing the audited beneficiaries and planning the on-field interventions by the external auditor.

The Group of Auditors met in Paris on the 22 and 23 November 2010 and defined the confidence level of the ESPON 2013 programme based on the positive results of the system audits and the audit of operations of 2010 and reduced the size of the sample to be audited from 10% to 7,5%. No additional system audit of central authorities is foreseen for 2011. The sampling of audit of operation includes 10 projects from priority 1 to 3 that have declared expenses and have been paid and certified in the year 2010.

The complementary sample is left to the AA and GoA's discretion according to the results of the mandatory sampling if it helps to conclude and provide a meaningful opinion to the EC by the 31 December 2011. The sampling size of the audit of operation is one operation selected as mandatory sample and two partners (one Lead Partner and one project partner) from two different operations, i.e. 4 Lead Partners and 4 projects partners during February-April 2011.

The Annual Control Report and opinion of the reference year 01/07/2010-30/06/2011 will be prepared by the external auditor and approved by the Audit Authority and Group of Auditors during the GoA meeting foreseen in Luxembourg and planned for the second half of November 2011.

### ***The MA Quality checks***

The Managing Authority and the ESPON Coordination Unit will continue in 2011 to perform MA quality checks on operations, on-the-spot. The number of MA quality checks in 2011 will be more important than in 2010 since the approved projects are more numerous compared to the previous year. The MA/CU plans to have between 5 and 10 MA quality checks during 2011.

The beneficiaries, Lead partners or Project partners, will be selected for MA quality checks, based on the risk analysis performed by the MA/CU which plan to inform the latest on an on-going basis over the year 2011.

The main focus of the MA Quality checks in 2011 will be put on the improvement of the reporting process, in particular the improvement of the respect of submission deadlines and of the quality of documents submitted, as part of the MA/CU' efforts to ensure no de-commitment in 2011. Involvement of the MC members, First Level Controllers and Central Approbation Body representatives in relation to the beneficiaries concerned by MA quality checks will be demanded from the preparatory phase until the implementation of necessary corrective actions, if any.

Results of the MA quality checks will be presented to the central authorities of the Programme, MC and CA over the year 2011, once the final reports are ready. The follow-up on implementing corrective actions should be the case, will be controlled by the First Level Controllers concerned.

### ***The MS/PS Quality checks***

The Member States and Partner States will be continuously strongly recommended by the MA/CU to perform Quality checks of their First Level Control Systems. Late 2010, the MC members will be given a MC info note where the proposed countries to perform Quality checks for the FLC will be detailed for the first and the second half of the year 2011.

The MA/CU will bring support to the Member States and Partner States. MS/PS will be supported by the MA/CU via internal manuals, interview guidance and an overview by country of their First Level control system and issues encountered during desk review performed by the CU on behalf of the MA. Involvement of the MC members, First Level Controllers and Central Approbation Body representatives in relation to MS/PS quality checks will be demanded from the preparatory phase until the implementation of necessary corrective actions, if any.

The main focus of the MS/PS Quality checks in 2011 will be put on the improvement of the certifying process, in particular the improvement of the First Level Controllers' qualifications and of the quality of control documents submitted.

No MS/PS quality check has been performed in the second half of 2010 by the MS/PS. The delay in implementing the MS/PS quality check can be explained by a need of further assistance by the ESPON CU/MA to implement the controls for the first time in the programming period. The MC members and the Central Approbation Body representatives in charge of launching the MS/PS quality checks have expressed the necessity to be assisted in these tasks. The results of the first MS/PS quality check will be gathered by the MA/CU and communicated to the central authorities of the programme, early 2011. The follow-up on implementing corrective actions, should be the case, will be controlled by the Member States / Partners States, with the support of the MA/CU.

Due to the fact that each Member States and Partners States must perform at least one quality check of their First Level Control System in place during the programming period according to the regulation, 10 MS/PS quality check must be planned for the entire year 2011. The assistance of the ESPON CU/MA to the MS/PS has been identified as essential for the successful implementation of these quality checks.

### ***CA quality checks***

The Certifying Authority will perform a CA quality check on operations in the second half of 2011. The selection of operations will be made based on the list of operations paid and certified between 30/06/2010 and 30/06/2011 prepared by the MA/CU early July 2011.

One project will be sampled based on a risk analysis performed by the CA in accordance with the defined methodology. Most probably, the CA will perform CA quality checks on two operations in 2011. The selection of the second operation was foreseen already in 2010. However, due to the low number of operations paid and certified between 01/01/2007 (beginning of the programme) and 30/06/2010, the CA decided in 2010 to postpone the selection of this second operation to 2011. The CA already informs that the FOCI project under Priority 1 cannot be selected again in 2011 in accordance with the defined methodology, except exceptional circumstances, because it has been already controlled in 2010 by the CA.

Results of the CA quality checks will be communicated to the central authorities of the Programme via final reports before the 31 December 2011. Follow-up on implementing necessary corrective actions, should this be the case, will be given to the MA/CU in case of irregularities and to MC members and First Level controllers concerned.

#### ***II.4.5 Ongoing Evaluation***

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme shall according to EC Regulation 1083, Art. 47 be conducted as an ongoing evaluation during the entire programme implementation.

Hence, the ongoing evaluation will continue in 2011 with internal evaluation reports including the Monitoring Scoreboard established by January 2011 for the second half of 2010 and by June 2011 for the first half of 2011 which will be presented to the MC at the same time as the Annual Report. By late November 2011 it is the intention to score the second half of 2011 and presented the results to the MC at the same time as the Work Programme for 2012.

The External Evaluation started in November 2010 after the selection of external evaluator though a call for tender will be finalised by early 2011, as stated in the ESPON Programme Manual. Preliminary findings and first responses will be presented and discussed during the MC meeting in February 2011. Final report of the external evaluation approved by the MC is foreseen to be delivered by end March 2011 by the external evaluator.

#### **II.5 ESPON post 2013**

The discussion on ESPON post 2013 started in 2010 with the involvement of the TCUM and the MC. At their meeting on 30 November 2010 the General Directors of Member and Partner States responsible for ESPON decided that a proposal on the ESPON post 2013 should be forwarded for decision at the meeting of Ministers during the Hungarian EU Presidency.

The work in detailing a proposal on ESPON post 2013 will be progressing during 2011 according to the road map presented for the MC at the meeting in November 2010.

### **III. Time planning 2011**

The main activities and meetings foreseen in 2011 are envisaged to follow the timing as indicated below, which is presented in the indicative Calendar 2011 included in Annex 1.

#### ***1. Monitoring Committee meetings 2011***

In 2011, three MC meeting are scheduled on 1 February 2011 in Bruxelles, on 23-24 June 2011 in Budapest, Hungary, and on 1-2 December 2011 in Krakow, Poland. Written procedures are foreseen during the year and will be conducted when needed for an efficient programme implementation.

#### ***2. Concertation Committee meetings 2011***

The CC will convey meetings at least 6 weeks in advance of each MC meeting. In 2011, meetings will be held on 2 May 2011 in Luxembourg and on 19 October 2011 in Bruxelles (tbc). The advice of the CC will in 2011 concentrate on the specification of the last round of applied research projects.



### ***3. ECP meetings 2011***

The ECP Network will meet twice during 2010, on 20 June 2010 in Budapest, Hungary, and on 28 November 2009 in Krakow, Poland.

### ***4. Group of Auditors meetings 2011***

The meeting of the GoA will take place, due to the timing of the reporting to the EC, during the first half of November 2011. No precise date have so far been decided as GoA meeting are organised jointly by the three network programmes IVC, URBACT and ESPON. In 2011 this task lies with ESPON.

## **IV. Budget 2011**

The implementation of the Work Programme for 2011 is envisaged to imply expenses according to the indicative budget inserted as Annex 3. During 2011, the MC will be presented for budget updates corresponding to the contracting, spending and absorption of funds.

## **IV. Annexes**

- Indicative Calendar 2011-2012-2013
- Implementation Plan 2007-2015
- Budget 2011