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ESPON evidence for EU Cohesion Policy after 2014: inspiring growth and development for regions and cities

By end of 2013, national and regional authorities will start submitting their operational programmes for 2014-2020 to the European Commission. ESPON's contribution to this process with new European territorial evidence is in focus at the Open Seminar on 13-14 June 2012, "European Territorial Evidence for EU Cohesion Policy and Programming", organised in cooperation with the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The ESPON Open Seminar is taking place during a period of a process negotiating the future EU cohesion policy. Future EU funded activities should be more integrated and include a stronger territorial dimension in support of territorial cohesion. Policy shall also to be clearly result-oriented and evidence-based. This calls for knowledge and information related to the European territory, its regions and cities.

Peter Mehlbye, Director of the ESPON Coordination Unit, said: "*In the year of the tenth anniversary of ESPON, the supply of European wide comparable evidence and tools for policy making has matured substantially giving the possibility to benchmark and see new development opportunities from the European context*". "*The ESPON Open Seminar is an opportunity dialogue for all policy makers, practitioners, scientists and experts, who want to know more about the ESPON evidence or who are already involved in defining, producing and using the results of ESPON*" he added.

The event in Aalborg, Denmark on 13-14 June 2012, will address territorial evidence of relevance for regions and cities and for the preparation of new programmes. Its purpose is two-fold:

- Allow policy makers and practitioners to share concrete experience, discuss the use of territorial evidence and to approach new options for developing Creative Regions of Innovation and Knowledge.
- Address the use of territorial evidence in relation to the thematic objectives of the "Common Strategic Framework" (CSF)¹, and the ESPON tools that can support a territorial dimension in the programming within future EU Cohesion Policy.

¹ The CSF is the programming tool for all structural funds intended to help in setting clear investment priorities for the next financial planning period from 2014 until 2020 in Member States and their regions. More at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

Against this backdrop, the Open ESPON seminar has a double scope:

- The first day, the theme of “Creative Regions of Innovation and Knowledge” will be addressed to stimulate a thorough discussion based on concrete experiences making reference to territorial trends and evidence from ESPON projects. Key target groups are policy makers and practitioners from regions and cities interested in finding new inspiration for the efforts of developing their own region or city.
- The second day is structured around the thematic objectives of future Structural Funds. In a series of workshops organised around the thematic priorities of the “Common Strategic Framework”, researchers and experts will present territorial evidence that could support policy-makers and stakeholders on where to propose action in their specific programming area, and on what. Key target groups are policy makers, practitioners, managing authorities and programme secretariats currently working on the evidence base needed for including a stronger territorial dimension in future programmes.

The Open ESPON Seminar will moreover offer insights on the tools, indicators and data made available by ESPON. There will also be an opportunity for the participants to discuss how to make good use of the territorial evidence in practice.

More details and programme of the event at the ESPON Website www.espon.eu

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The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department of Spatial Planning and Development of Luxembourg.

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