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Showcasing paths to regional economic growth and the use of European Territorial Evidence

The regions of Greater Manchester, UK, North Jutland, Denmark, the Balearic Islands, Spain, and rural parts of Latvia all have good experiences to share on how to develop regional economy based on innovation and knowledge. Their different paths are showcased to policy makers across the EU at the ESPON Open Seminar on 13-14 June 2012 in Aalborg, organised in collaboration with the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The ESPON CAEE study found that, over the past decade, Manchester has been one of a number of major European cities to have disproportionately driven economic growth. Greater Manchester South grew by over £8bn in real terms over the period 1996 to 2006, a level comparable to that found in the more extensive high growth area surrounding London. Over this period it has successfully navigated its way to being an economy that is increasingly characterised by knowledge intensive activity.

Factors behind this success are presented at the Open Seminar in Aalborg, Denmark by *John Holden (Deputy Director of Research at New Economy, Manchester)*. They include achievements reached through capitalising on existing assets, such as its research intensive universities and its successful airport, and by developing new assets of infrastructure, such as the UK's first modern tram network and the completion of an orbital motorway system. Holden will also speak about how the city's unique public-private governance structures have provided the leadership and continuity to achieve much of this change, characterised by evidence-based decision making, continuity and ambition of leadership, strong public-private sector links, and a unique level of influence at national level.

Speaking before the event, *John Holden* said "I am honoured to present Manchester case study at the ESPON Open Seminar which provides an opportunity for policy makers from across the EU to learn from the Manchester example, as well as for Manchester to learn from approaches that have been adopted elsewhere".

The Open Seminar "European Territorial Evidence for EU Cohesion Policy and Programming", organised by ESPON, focuses sharply on how European territorial evidence can inform the future result-oriented regional development policy in Europe.

The ESPON Open Seminar is taking place during the negotiating period for the EU's future cohesion policy and is aimed at assisting national and regional authorities in their operational programmes for 2014-2020. 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 addresses how territorial evidence can be used in relation to the coming thematic objectives of the EU's "Common Strategic Framework" (CSF), and how ESPON evidence and tools support a territorial dimension in the programming within the future EU Cohesion Policy. The key target groups of the event are policy makers, practitioners, managing authorities and programme secretariats currently working on the evidence base needed for the inclusion of a stronger territorial dimension in future programmes.

Policy makers and practitioners are able share their experience and discuss the use of territorial evidence as well as new approaches in developing European regions and cities. Against this backdrop, the ESPON Open Seminar has a double scope:

- Day one: the topic of "Creative Regions of Innovation and Knowledge" is addressed, stimulating a wide-ranging discussion on participants' concrete experiences related to territorial trends and evidence from ESPON projects.
- Day two: the event is structured around the thematic objectives of future Structural Funds. In a series of workshops dealing with the thematic priorities of the "Common Strategic Framework", researchers and experts are presenting territorial evidence that supports policy-makers and stakeholders in executing proposals in their specific policy area. The ESPON Open Seminar also offers insights on the tools, indicators and data made available by ESPON.

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

Interested in ESPON?

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 supports policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON supports 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 facilitates 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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