

SPECIFICATION

ESPON Applied Research Project 2013/1/12

European Perspective on Specific Types of Territories (2010-2012)

(o) Territorial challenges relevant for ESPON 2013 projects

The development of the European territory is facing several ongoing mega trends and impacts of policies:

- The integration of the EU in global economic competition is accelerating, offering regions and larger territories more options to decide their development path, as development is no longer a zero sum game for Europe.
- Interaction is growing within the EU territory and between the surrounding neighbour countries and other parts of the world. This is apparent through e.g. migration pressure on more developed countries, which are themselves confronted with population decline, and by access to and investment in new markets.
- Market forces and the evolution of society in general support a geographical concentration of activities.
- The ongoing demographic changes with an ageing European population, in addition to migration, affect regions differently and increase the competition for skilled labour.
- The occurrence of hazards due to climate change is increasing and different parts of Europe experience different types of hazards.
- Increasing energy prices and the emergence of a new energy paradigm have significant territorial impacts, some regions being more affected than others. This presents particular development opportunities for the production of renewable energy sources.
- The enlargement of the EU to 27 Member States, and potentially more, presents an unprecedented challenge for the competitiveness and internal cohesion of the Union.

ESPON results have revealed that territorial capital and opportunities for development are inherent in the regional diversity that is a characteristic of Europe. Consequently, different types of territories are endowed with diverse combinations of resources, putting them in different positions for contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas, as well as to Cohesion Policy. Territorial diversity, especially in

the economic base, implies that strategies other than opting for a knowledge-based economy might be more appropriate and viable for some regions.

The ESPON 2006 Programme provided integrated analysis and long-term spatial scenarios which enriched the European policy debate and knowledge base. The results and observations on territorial structures, trends, perspectives and assessment of EU policy impacts had not been fully evident before and supported a better understanding of the European dimension of territorial dynamics. This has prompted interest among policy makers and practitioners for even more information, knowledge and understanding that ESPON can offer.

The ESPON 2013 Programme shall bring this knowledge base one step further through applied research and targeted analysis, indicator development and data collection, capitalisation events presenting results, etc. All these actions will be related to an improved understanding of territorial structures, development trends, perspectives and policy impacts.

The European-wide evidence provided by the ESPON 2013 Programme will potentially benefit stakeholders at all levels throughout Europe. Policy makers dealing with territorial development require sound evidence and comparable regionalised information in addition to medium and long-term development perspectives, in order to create sustainable and efficient integrated policy responses for their territories.

Given that the European Union is moving towards a more integrated policy approach, the territorial dimension is particularly important for policy makers. The aim of territorial cohesion proposed by the Commission supports this approach by taking the territory as an element within the framework of policy making. Due to the provision of evidence based on analyses of territorial units, the ESPON 2013 Programme is of strategic importance for European policy development and cooperation.

By further developing and expanding the existing knowledge and indicators, the ESPON 2013 Programme will play a strategic role in supporting the policy process of the 2007-2013 period, and contribute to the development of Cohesion Policy.

(i) General objectives of applied research projects under Priority 1

The general objectives of applied research projects within the ESPON 2013 Programme are the following:

- Building new evidence based on comparable information about European regions and cities, including information on dynamics and flows, and covering the entire territory of EU 27, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
- Addressing major territorial challenges and political priorities providing comparable information covering the entire European territory, its regions and cities.

- Providing comparable regionalised information and possible policy options for making use of opportunities inherent in territorial structures; anticipating and counter balancing negative trends and structures, taking into account the diversity of the ESPON territory and considering institutional, instrumental and procedural aspects.
- Identifying types of territories, regions and cities that share common development challenges and are affected most (positively or negatively) by the identified structures, trends, perspectives and/or policy impacts.
- Contributing to the further identification of structures within the EU territory that represent options for exploring comparative advantages and provide synergy through territorial cooperation arrangements, involving regions and/or cities.
- Contributing to the improvement of the scientific platform for European applied territorial research by refining existing concepts, methodologies, indicators, typologies, European maps and models and by defining new ones.
- Providing the knowledge and competence capabilities needed to ensure scientifically validated results of the applied territorial research with the support of Sounding Boards¹.
- Supporting the use and dissemination of results to an audience of policy makers, practitioners, scientists and experts.

This project shall contribute to these general objectives during its implementation, and in doing so make best use of existing ESPON results, new results in other ESPON projects as well as other research results and relevant studies.

(ii) Relation of this project to the ESPON 2013 Programme

The priorities describing the work programme of the ESPON 2013 Programme are structured in four strands:

1. Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on European territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts

The applied research projects will create information and evidence on territorial challenges and opportunities for success in the development of regions. Cross thematic applied research will be a major activity integrating existing thematic analysis and adding future analysis of new themes. Territorial impact studies of EU policies will be another focus under this priority.

2. Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective on development of different types of territories

This priority responds to a clear demand of practitioners for user and demand driven actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme. By convening an analytical process where ESPON findings are integrated with more detailed information and practical

¹ For each applied research project a Sounding Board will be set up, accompanying the project throughout its life cycle and giving advice to the TPG on both, scientific issues as well as relevance for policy makers. Sounding Boards will normally be made up of one scientist and one practitioner. Their tasks will consist of assessing project proposals, giving continuous feedback to TPGs and commenting on their reports.

know-how, new understanding of future development opportunities and challenges may arise, which could be transformed into projects and actions.

3. **Scientific platform and tools: Territorial indicators and data, analytical tools and scientific support**

The scientific platform and analytical tools built up within the ESPON 2006 Programme will be maintained and further expanded. New actions shall be undertaken to develop current achievements and make use of existing indicators, data and tools.

4. **Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking**

Under this priority, actions are foreseen that will make the evidence and knowledge already developed operational through raising awareness and involving stakeholders in the results and practical application of them.

A strong coordination and interlinkage with other ongoing ESPON projects is crucial for achieving comprehensive results. A close cooperation with the appointed Sounding Board and the ESPON CU must also be established as part of the project implementation.

This project belongs to the first priority. It holds a key position in developing a European perspective of specific types of territories (i.e. border areas, highly or sparsely populated areas, the inner periphery, mountain areas). Knowledge on these issues is vital for targeted policy development in the light of Cohesion Policy aiming, inter alia, at job creation and properly mirroring the characteristics of specific types of territories.

(iii) Thematic scope and policy context

The EU Cohesion Policy debate has included a focus on regions with specific territorial features. The Treaty of Lisbon (2007), being in the process of ratification, mentions already some of these types of regions and territories. It states that “(...) *among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and islands, cross-border and mountain regions.* (...)”

The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (2008), which launches the EU wide debate on Cohesion Policy, highlights as well the specific types of territories and regions. To better understand the strengths and weaknesses, which a specific region possesses, and to develop policies accordingly, comparable and comprehensive evidence and knowledge from a European perspective is thus in high demand for each type of region. Against this backdrop, the Green Paper holds the respective subtitle “Turning territorial diversity into strength”.

Apart from that, the Territorial Agenda of the EU (2007) already underlined that diverse territorial potentials may form the basis for sustainable economic development. It states

that “(...) *the diverse territorial potentials of regions for sustainable economic growth and job creation in the EU must be identified and mobilised. (...)*”

Based on the policy demand for new evidence and knowledge at European level, the dimension of types of territories sets the focus of this applied research project. The following types of territories and regions constitute the main regional types in the applied research project:

- Border areas (incl. inner peripheries)
- Highly or sparsely populated areas (against the background of specific thresholds [to be developed by the Transnational Project Group] of population density and thus particular challenges urban areas are facing)
- Inner periphery (defined as sparsely populated areas, isolated from centres and main transport networks with low socio-economic development dynamics)
- Mountain areas
- Islands
- Coastal zones
- Outermost regions

Some of the ongoing ESPON targeted analyses will contribute to improving the knowledge base of policy makers in the regions concerned. These projects are the ones on “The Development of the Islands – European Islands and Cohesion Policy” (EUROISLANDS), “Cross-Border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions” (METROBORDER), “Success for Convergence Regions’ Economies” (SURE) and “Territorial Diversity” (TeDi). This applied research project shall thus take into account the work that has been and will be carried out within the framework of these projects, yet taking itself a clear European perspective. Nevertheless, new facts and analysis through applied research remains necessary in order to gather – with a clear European focus – a coherent framework of specific types of territories and regions.

Some types of territories and regions (e.g. coastal zones) as well as individual features related to them (e.g. socio-economic costs and benefits of coastal zone management) have already been elaborated. The coherent European perspective on all specific types of territories and regions, as mentioned before, is yet missing. This goes particularly for a comprehensive analysis of these types and their strengths and weaknesses.

Against this background, the project should strive to achieve a better understanding of the following key policy questions, for which it should produce supporting information and evidence:

- What are – considering effects of economic activity concentration in capital cities and densely populated conurbations – the development opportunities of the specific types of regions mentioned above, especially of their small and medium-sized cities as secondary growth poles, in overcoming differences in density? What is the diversity within the categories of types of regions mentioned? How can their assets

contribute to sustainable growth and job creation as well as to more and better cohesion in Europe?

- What are – taking yet inadequate access to transport connections, services, education, sustainable energy networks and broadband internet into account – the needs of the specific types of regions for connecting their territories with others to overcome the constraints of physical distances?
- What role – referring to the necessity to overcome the challenges of concentration and connectivity – may play territorial cooperation and partnership (e.g. urban-rural partnerships) for these specific types of regions supporting a better territorial balance and cohesion? Which public intervention (considering services of general interest) should be undertaken by whom? What role can Cohesion Policy play in this respect?
- What role may these specific types of regions play in the context of organising the European territory (e.g. global positioning, spatial positioning, benchmarking, and reference frameworks for comparison, becoming less vulnerable towards economic crises)? Is there a need for specific territorially shaped policies, i.e. for socio-economically disadvantaged territories being e.g. offshore in respect of the European mainland? If so, on which administrative level should such policies be developed?

The perspective of applied research under this measure shall be guided by the objective to identify broad development perspectives and trends for specific types of territories and regions, also in the light of the Lisbon Agenda/Gothenburg Agenda.

Ongoing projects under the ESPON 2013 Programme might produce highly relevant knowledge for this project. In particular interrelations are to be sought with the ESPON 2013 applied research projects on “Rural Areas’ Development” (EDORA) and on “Climate Change and Territorial Effects on Regions and Local Economies” (ESPO Climate). Results deriving from the above mentioned ongoing targeted analyses are to be taken into account as well. Some ESPON 2013 projects that start in parallel with this project might also generate relevant information, namely the projects on “Services of general interest”, “Attractiveness of European regions and cities for residents and visitors”, “European patterns of land use”, “Territorial cooperation in transnational areas, between regions and across internal/external borders” and “Transport accessibility at regional/local scale and patterns in Europe”.

(iv) Analytical framework and deliveries expected

In the sense of providing news facts and analysis, the project shall – based on a sound methodology – provide solid assessment of the current situation, trends and perspectives in and for the before mentioned types of territories and regions.

The analysis of these specific types of territories and regions shall be both quantitative and qualitative. Whenever possible, definitions of these territories and regions at NUTS 3 level used by the European Commission should be maintained. Where data is available at a level below NUTS 3, it can also be included.

The project shall strive for a comprehensive and integrated research approach, taking into account social, cultural, environmental, and economic aspects. In addition, a three-level-approach (European, transnational/national, regional) to the analysis, commonly used by all ESPON applied research projects, should be applied in order to support a clear presentation of results, which might vary depending on the geographical scale.

The project should consider existing data, indicators for the analysis. The data, indicators and maps of the ESPON 2006 Programme are one important source in this respect. This project shall in particular be informed and make use of relevant results from the following ESPON 2006 Projects:

- The ESPON Project 1.1.4 (“Spatial Effects of Demographic Change and Migration”) showed that there are concentration effects in larger urban areas and depopulation effects in the peripheral areas of the EU.
- The ESPON 3.2 (“Spatial Scenarios in Relation to the ESDP and EU Cohesion Policy”) delivered trends in specific types of regions.

The ongoing ESPON Typology Compilation project (envisaged to be carried out in the period 2009-2010) will provide its final report in January 2010. The ESPON Typology Compilation project aims at defining and compiling a set of operational typologies of regions that can reflect types of territories that are of particular concern for European policy makers. This project is expected to consider the results coming out of the latter project.

The project shall also strive for delivering innovative results which can support the policy development in the field of territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion. It should demonstrate an inventive approach with regard to the scientific answers to the policy questions and should aim at showing new development opportunities for the European territory. There should be a combination and interrelation of various sectors and territorial insights on the development in order to contribute to the creation of new development paths and visions.

In the concrete design of the applied research project and its work packages, the project is expected to answer the following key research questions:

- **Which are the present state, trends and drivers for development?**
 - What definitions for different types of regions do exist and how can different (also possible new) types of regions be delineated on that basis?
 - What is the present state of the before mentioned specific types of territories and regions in Europe, particularly of the socio-economically disadvantaged ones, considering their strengths – in the sense of territorial potentials, quality of life, biodiversity – and weaknesses, based on the most appropriate economic, social and environmental indicators which can be collected Europe-wide? What are the commonnesses and/or differences in strength and weakness patterns when looking at multiple levels, i.e. regional, national, European, global? How can strengths and weaknesses be measured? Which endogenous development opportunities of

- which specific types of territories and regions could be better exploited for achieving improved regional strength?
- What are (medium-term and long-term) trends over space and time, considering for example types of territories and regions showing deviation with respect to common territorial development trends (e.g. demography, economic growth)? Which are their likely future development paths?
 - Where are the specific types of territories and regions which are most prominent and what are the drivers of a favourable development there?
 - What might be the diversity within the different categories of types of regions?
- **Which opportunities for cooperation and partnership exist?**
 - Are there under-used opportunities for cooperation and partnership in and between specific types of territories and regions of the same specificity? If so, where and to which degree could they contribute to more competitiveness and cohesion both, within the specific type of the territory and region and on a European level?
 - **Which reference frameworks and benchmarking could be developed?**
 - Can a reference framework for comparing the specific types of territories be elaborated? What can thus be recommendations for policy makers for shaping territorially relevant policies? Considering benchmarking: Which are the key indicators, taking the diversity of specific types of territories into account?
 - **Which options to handle specific features could be proposed?**
 - What are possible options for economically specialised territories to handle their specific vulnerability to e.g. economic crises and/or climate change?

The project shall include +/- 10 targeted case studies in order to receive some more focused and detailed information on specific regions (e.g. why some mountain areas are doing fine while others are facing difficulties).

The geographical coverage of the project shall encompass all the countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme. Furthermore, the Transnational Project Group (TPG) should assess the data situation for their field of research in the EU Candidate Countries (i.e. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and/or the other countries of the Western Balkans (i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) and report on their findings in the Inception Report. Depending on the respective data situation these countries would then be included in the analysis.

The deliveries of the project should make use of and complement the existing scientific platform and tools of ESPON, which are accessible on the ESPON Website. The project is expected to enhance the scientific platform of ESPON with at least the following deliveries:

- Data input based on a critical assessment of existing data to the development, update and extension of the ESPON Database by additional data on specific types of territories and regions gathered within the project, particularly in relation to the new ESPON Partner States (Iceland and Liechtenstein). Indicators need to offer compatibility with a map-making facility, to provide a consistent, homogenous, reliable, and up-datable database;
- Indicators and new complex indicators offering – as tools – additional information, particularly for monitoring purposes, on the specific types of territories and regions;
- European maps revealing the specific types of territories and regions as mentioned before (border areas, highly or sparsely populated areas, inner periphery, mountain areas, islands, coastal zones, outermost regions) and their strengths and weaknesses as well as new typologies aiming at the clustering of regions.

Regarding the development of new data and maps and/or the use of existing data, the TPG is expected to cooperate closely with the TPG in charge of the development of the ESPON 2013 Database and Data Development project.

The results and conclusions of the applied research within the project should be formulated in relation to policy orientations present at European level and make use of the new maps resulting from the project.

The final results should also be presented for transnational cooperation areas under Structural Funds, and – where appropriate and possible – also for cross-border cooperation areas and inter-regional cooperation areas.

Following the logic of the Territorial Agenda of the EU, orientations for policy makers should refer to the respective territorial development opportunities and the available options to mobilise these for the benefit of the regions and cities in question. In this respect, references to future policy options should take account of European Cohesion Policy orientations, in particular expressed in the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion 2007-2013 and the Fourth Report on Social and Economic Cohesion as well as the spring 2009 debate opened by the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

Project findings should make clear which impact the use of the identified development opportunities could have on the competitiveness and socio-economic situation of European regions and cities as well as on the realisation of economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe.

Finally, the project should consider avenues for further applied research on the theme.

(v) Outputs and timetable

One of the main objectives of the ESPON 2013 Programme is to focus on research with policy relevance and to contribute to the development of relevant policies. Therefore, the

outputs of the research project should be highly operational and coordinated in time, as far as possible, to fit into the relevant political agenda.

The proposal for the project is expected to reveal individual work packages on project coordination, research activities, and dissemination, as well as a schedule for project implementation based on the following indicative² timetable and specification of outputs:

June/July 2010 (Inception Report):

Twelve weeks after the Kick-Off Meeting, a more in-depth concept should be submitted by the TPG allowing for a detailed overview on the research approach to be applied, the methodology and hypothesis for further investigation as well as a review of the main literature, data sources, etc. It shall as well include an overview of more detailed deliveries and outputs envisaged by the project as well as an indication of likely barriers that the project implementation might face. The Inception report also presents the selection of case studies that will be analysed. It shall give clear orientation for the applied research previewed towards the Interim Report. The research team should also report on the findings regarding the assessment of the data situation in the EU Candidate Countries (i.e. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and / or the other countries of the Western Balkans (i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) and, on that basis, determine the geographical coverage of their research. Finally, the TPG should outline how it envisages making use of existing ESPON results that are relevant for this project.

November/December 2010 (Interim Report):

The content of the Interim Report shall reflect the orientations given in the Inception Report as well as the results of the discussions having taken place with the Sounding Board. The report is envisaged to include elements such as:

- a) Preliminary results on the basis of available data, developed indicators, typologies, and European maps, including
 - Data collection achieved, including an overview on statistical and geographical data collected by EUROSTAT, and National Statistical Institutes, etc.;
 - Draft European maps;
 - First indications on the conclusions and policy relevant options that could be the outcome of the project.
- b) Plan for the applied research towards the Draft Final Report as well as the Table of Content envisaged.

² The final timetable for the project will depend upon the exact date of the project's Kick-off Meeting. At this meeting, the exact delivery dates for all project reports will be agreed upon with the Lead Partner.

November/December 2011 (Draft Final Report):

The Draft Final Report will take into account feed-back on the Interim Report from an ESPON Seminar and by the Sounding Board. The report is supposed to include elements such as:

c) Report (max. 50 pages) on the main results, trends, impacts, projections and options for policy development, including key analysis / diagnosis / findings and the most relevant indicators and maps (any additional information should be included in a Scientific Report). Particularly important are options for policy makers, which could provide the basis for interventions related to opportunities for improving European competitiveness and cohesion.

d) An executive summary (max. 10 pages) summarising the main results of the applied research that can be communicated to a wider audience of stakeholders. This summary should be based on the report mentioned above.

e) Scientific Report documenting the scientific work undertaken in the applied research including elements such as:

- Literature, definitions and methodology / theory used;
- Methodologies, typologies and concepts developed and used;
- Data collected and indicators used, including calculation algorithms and tables with the exact values of indicators;
- Maps produced in support of the results, covering the territory of EU 27, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland;
- Tools and models used or developed;
- Future research avenues to consider, including further data requirements and ideas of territorial indicators, concepts and typologies as well as on further developments linked to the database and mapping facilities.

April/May 2012 (Final Report):

f) Revision of the Draft Final Report on the basis of comments received.

May/June – November/December 2012 (Dissemination):

g) Dissemination of project results by the TPG in the framework of international conferences and seminars, e.g. transnational activities of the ECP Network, events organised by the ESPON CU. These activities need to be reflected in the budget proposed by the TPG for the implementation of the project.

The ESPON 2013 Programme foresees in Priority 4 also capitalisation of project results including events, printed reports, website facility, etc. The Programme includes, in other words, substantial dissemination activities at Programme level which all projects should make use of and support. This means that the project's dissemination activities shall ensure consistency and avoid overlaps with and repetition of respective activities organised at Programme level. The project team shall refer to the objectives of Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme "Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity

building, dialogue and networking” when considering dissemination activities and closely coordinate these with the ESPON CU.

Irrespective of the above mentioned reports to be submitted at certain stages in the project life cycle, the TPG is expected to give presentations on the state of their research or/and the results in the framework of internal and external ESPON Seminars. Therefore, when setting up the project proposal, the TPG should also allow for travel expenses for the attendance of ESPON Seminars.

(vi) Budget for the applied research project

The maximum budget foreseen for this applied research project amounts to €900.000, including VAT, if applicable. Proposals exceeding this value will not be considered.

All real eligible costs incurred for carrying out the approved project will be refunded 100% by the ESPON 2013 Programme.

(vii) Existing access points

Synergies and use of results from outside the ESPON context shall be sought.

The other access points listed below can serve the purpose of providing the TPG useful information for preparing a proposal. It is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but should be considered as information that can be helpful in tracing additional useful background information.

- ESPON projects results, data, tools and maps (available at www.espon.eu)
- Treaty of Lisbon (2007)
- The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (2008)
- The Fourth Report and Social and Economic Cohesion (2007)
- The Territorial Agenda of the EU (2007)
- Remote rural regions:
 - How proximity to a city influences the performance of rural regions (2008) (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/focus/2008_01_rural.pdf)
- Border areas (documents available at www.aebr.net):
 - European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (2004)
 - Action Programme for Implementation of the Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (2004)
- Mountain areas (some documents available at www.euromontana.org)
 - Unlocking the Mountains – a new approach to rural development for Europe’s mountains (2004)
 - Mountain as natural ingredients for Europe’s competitiveness (2006)

- Declaration Urging the Presentation of a Green paper on the Future of the European Mountain Areas (2007)
- Convention on the Protection of the Alps, Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathian & Balkan Convention Initiative (2005)
- Alpine Convention (2004), available at ww.alpine-convention.com
- Transport and Mobility in the Alps (2007), available at www.alpine-convention.com
- Carpathian Convention (2003), available at carpathianconvention.org
- Coastal zones, islands (documents available at www.crpm.org)
 - An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Costs & Benefits of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2000)
 - An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union + Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying this Document (“Action Plan”) (2007)
 - Analysis of the European Commission’s Blue Book “An integrated maritime policy for the European Union” (2008)
 - Tasks, policies and competences of the European Union: what the peripheral maritime regions expect from Europe (2002)
 - EU focus on coastal zones
 - Regions at the heart of European maritime policy (2007)