

SPECIFICATION

ESPON Scientific Platform and Tools Project 2013/3/7

Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes (2012-2013)

(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 more options for regions and larger territories in deciding on their development path as development is no longer a zero sum game for Europe.
- Interaction is growing between the EU territory and the surrounding neighbour countries as well as the other parts of the world, becoming apparent by 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 are supporting a geographical concentration of activities. The current economic downturn is having asymmetrical impacts on regions and cities, often mostly related to their national context and more local economic base.
- The ongoing demographic change with an ageing European population and migration is affecting the regions differently and boosts the competition for skilled labour.
- The occurrence of hazards is increasing due to climate change while 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, some of which have particular potential for production of renewable energy sources.
- The enlargement of the EU to 27 Member States, and soon with additional countries, 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 into different positions for contributing to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy as well as to EU Cohesion Policy. Territorial diversity, particularly in the economic base, implies the need for tailor-made regional strategies building on endogenous potentials and synergies through

cooperation in order for regions, cities and larger territories to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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 produced by ESPON 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. Therefore, interest is growing among policy makers and practitioners for the information, knowledge and understanding ESPON can offer.

The ESPON 2013 Programme shall bring this knowledge base one step further by carrying out 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 2007-2013 Programme will potentially benefit stakeholders all over Europe at all levels. Policy makers dealing with territorial development require sound evidence and comparable regionalised information as well as medium and long-term development perspectives in order to draw up sustainable and efficient integrated policy responses for their territories.

All in all, the European process moves towards a more integrated approach to policy making which makes the territorial dimension important for policy makers. Currently, an integrated and territorial place-based approach to future Cohesion Policy is up for discussion. This discussion takes its point of departure in the aim of territorial cohesion included in the Lisbon Treaty which supports this approach by considering the territory as framework for policy making.

The current discussion of future Cohesion Policy promotes evidence based and result-oriented policy contributing to the EU 2020 Strategy and a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In this context, due to its provision of territorial evidence from a European Perspective based on analyses of different territorial units, the ESPON 2013 Programme is of strategic importance for the European policy development and cooperation.

By further extending and deepening the existing knowledge and indicators on territorial structures and dynamics, the ESPON 2013 Programme will continue playing the role of supporting the policy process of the current period 2007-2013 and contributing to the development of Cohesion Policy beyond 2013.

(i) General objectives of projects under Priority 3

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

- Contribute to the consolidation of the scientific platform of the ESPON 2013 Programme and to the territorial knowledge base needed for informed policy formulation and application.
- Ensure data, territorial indicators and tools that are usable for policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels.
- Respond to needs for public access to the ESPON data and tools.

- Ensure availability of comparable and robust regional (and urban) data at as detailed geographical scale as possible as well as statistical quality control and data validation.
- Ensure that European standards for spatial referencing and storage of data are respected (such as applying the ETRS1989 standard and the Inspire Directive).
- Support a concrete application and use of data for policy, strategy and planning processes, including tools and techniques for forecasting and modelling.
- Continuously provide an updated basis for monitoring and assessing territorial development trends in relation to territorial policy objectives at European level based on relevant territorial indicators/indices.

This project shall during its implementation contribute to these general objectives for projects related to the ESPON Scientific Platform and Tools, and in doing so make best use of existing ESPON results, new results from ongoing ESPON projects as well as other research results and relevant studies. The project is in particular opting at concrete application and use of ESPON results.

(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:

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

The applied research projects will opt for information and evidence on territorial potentials and challenges focusing on opportunities for success for 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.

b) Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to 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 know-how, new understanding of future development potentials and challenges may arise, which could be transformed into projects and actions.

c) 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 the indicators, data and tools.

d) Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking

Under this priority, actions are foreseen that will be aiming at making the evidence and knowledge developed operational through measures raising awareness and involving stakeholders in the results and their practical use.

Priority 3 of the ESPON 2013 Programme assembles the knowledge, indicators and data produced within the ESPON 2013 Programme, the different applied research and analytical actions. The priority opts as well at providing tools that can support analyses and policy implementation in using ESPON results.

The implementation of this project will harvest elements from many ESPON projects which will require a broad insight in the options available and the establishment of strong linkages to other ESPON projects.

iii) Thematic scope and context

The ESPON knowledge base is now developed to a level capable of delivering important support to other Structural Funds Programmes which can help programme bodies in their strategic programming and implementation.

Important new facts and evidence at European level from ESPON projects can be broken down to regions and, if relevant, aggregated to larger territorial contexts which in turn can be used as knowledge base for identification of place-specific characteristics as well as territorial features such as interrelationships and interdependencies within or between places. This evidence can support the designing of well-tailored and evidence-based policy solutions capable of delivering concrete results.

The European Commission underlines the importance of strengthening the analysis in programme preparation for Structural Funds Programmes post 2013 and that ESPON shall provide what can currently be offered in that respect. Programmes should be informed about this ESPON evidence as soon as possible to fit the timing of programme preparation.

This project “ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes” aims at providing practical European territorial evidence to other programmes making the ESPON knowledge base useful in practice.

The European Commission indicates in the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion that the European added value of Cohesion Policy is to be enhanced and should be better linked to EU priorities as expressed in the Europe 2020 Strategy. It is for all Structural Funds Programmes to contribute to this policy orientation.

The strategic character of programmes may be improved by benchmarking and identification of key challenges and potentials in a European context which in turn can support the setting of public investment priorities accompanied by tangible targets.

There is also expressed a need for integrated place-based approaches and priorities allowing territories to contribute to the overall ambition of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its overall priorities of the EU as a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. With these three mutually reinforcing priorities, the Commission wishes to help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion and has set five ambitious objectives related to employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy to be reached by 2020.

EU Member States have adopted a Territorial Agenda 2020 for the European Union that sets out policy principles for the development of the EU territory in contribution to the Europe 2020

Strategy. These principles are particularly important for considerations about territorial structures in the individual programmes and should be supported by evidence as far as possible.

Many Structural Funds Programme areas share the ambition of the European Commission that more strategic programming is necessary in the period beyond 2013. Against this political backdrop, this project is expected to deliver concrete evidence support focused on the European context of regions and larger territories.

The ESPON deliveries to programme bodies involved in programmes resulting from this project shall support the ambition of an evidence-based and result-oriented Cohesion Policy post 2013 and in a highly digestible manner help the development and implementation of other programmes under the Structural Funds.

In order to comply with this ambition, the deliveries of the project shall be based on a clear methodological concept and explore tools providing the territorial evidence to regions and larger territories in an easy understandable and operational way, useful for more strategic programming in the period beyond 2013.

In principle, the project shall prepare and provide the envisaged transfer of territorial knowledge to programmes under all three Objectives (Convergence, Competitiveness and European Territorial Cooperation) covering one-region programmes as well as multi-region programmes.

Programmes under European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3) needs particular attention in the provision of territorial evidence relevant for the cross-border areas and transnational cooperation areas involved. Currently, 52 cross-border and 13 transnational co-operation programmes are active.

In the discussion on an ESPON programme post 2013, it is envisaged to offer strengthened territorial evidence support to all types of Structural Funds programmes in the new programming period. The ambition is to use territorial evidence in support of evidence-based strategy building at programme level as well as for project development and selection.

This project shall in this context prepare for such a role and gain the first experience in developing delivery mechanisms for concrete territorial evidence based inputs from a European perspective.

iv) General objectives

The project shall make the ESPON knowledge base useful in practice in a highly digestible and direct manner to policymakers involved in Structural Funds programming. As programmes after 2013 will have to include a stronger territorial dimension due to new Lisbon Treaty aim of territorial cohesion, this would be a very useful contribution by ESPON providing analyses positioning the programme territories in a pan-European context. The main objective of the project is therefore to develop an operational methodological concept and supporting tools for using European territorial evidence for more strategic programming in the period beyond 2013.

The key target group are the Managing Authorities from Structural Funds Programmes and their Joint Technical Secretariats. Their territorial analyses should be based on a targeted statistical input focusing on diversity within the relevant territory and setting it in the European context. The project implementation should therefore build on cooperation between programmes and

ESPON where the analytical focus should be developed in cooperation with the Managing Authority/JTS of the programme in question.

The concept of Territorial Evidence Packs is envisaged to include the following elements:

1. ESPON Evidence Report (working title), is foreseen to bring in evidence from an integrated territorial analysis of the programme area seen from a European perspective. The territorial analysis that leads to Evidence Reports shall support the revelation of potentials for development and investment, be attentive to challenges that should be overcome or may be turned into development opportunities and propose options for integrated action aiming at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the programme area.
2. ESPON Factsheet (working title), providing simple key information and indicator values covering economic, social and territorial issues accompanied by short explanations and interpretations, which allows for positioning (benchmarking) the programme area in relation to other areas in a European context and provides a first interpretation of the diversity of indigenous potentials within a programme area.
3. Maps, including maps showing the programme area in its wider European context.
4. Background datasets.

A possible outline of the content of the Evidence Reports is described below.

Evidence Report – Possible outline

1. Position and development potentials of the programme area seen from a European perspective
The analysis should support in detecting thematic priorities and specific points of attention / foci within certain themes. Indicators and territorial-analytical references that are to be used for the analysis are still to be defined.
 - 1.1. Description of position in relation to main territorial structures and trends
(E.g.: “At the edge of the Pentagon”)
 - 1.2. Description of the integration in global and European networks
(E.g.: “The global integration of businesses depends on some key cities”)
 - 1.3. Strengths / Weaknesses: Comparison of the territorial situation with other parts of the European territory
(E.g.: Unemployment rate 12.3% in comparison to 10.5% with Europe)
 - 1.4. Opportunities / Threads: Comparison of territorial trends with other parts of the European territory
(E.g.: Level of multimodal access is weakening in contrast to the general trend in Europe)
2. Territorial balance / imbalance within the programme area
The analysis should allow for targeted action and territorialised objective-setting.
 - 2.1. (De)concentration of urban and economic activity within the area
(E.g.: Maps showing concentration of population, economic production, services at NUTS2/3)
 - 2.2. Overview and comparison of types of territories within the area
(E.g.: Comparison of economic strength of urban, rural, mountain, ... areas)
3. Conclusions providing an overview of key issues that should be dealt with from a programme perspective

The outline is purely illustrative and should be further elaborated, discussed with the project team as part of the project implementation.

The methodological concept and tools used in producing Territorial Evidence Packs, both the benchmarking and the analytical part, shall be conceived using existing ESPON results. In particular, the policy themes at European level which is currently being addressed by several ESPON projects and producing relevant indicators should be capitalised upon.

In order to fit the demand of different types of Structural Funds Programmes, in developing the concept, the project shall, supported by the ESPON CU, set up direct links with programme secretariats allowing for feedback. The project proposal shall include an effective though pragmatic dialogue and working structure with involved Programme Secretariats in order to comment on concept/approach/indicator considerations in relation to the benchmarking part and in order to refine programme specific elements of territorial analysis articulated in Territorial Evidence Reports with relevant maps and database information in function of the needs.

As indicated, the current ESPON 2013 knowledge base shall be the base for the evidence support to other Structural Funds Programmes. The ESPON 2013 projects are manifold and contain content of relevance for this project.

The ESPON applied research projects have delivered insight and indicators on a large number of relevant themes decided by policy makers. In particular, the Applied Research Project 2013/1/18 “European Regions: Potential Contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy” will be highly relevant for the Territorial Evidence Packs.

ESPON Targeted Analyses has as well provided new experience in making use of ESPON evidence via projects such as Ulysses and Metroborder where a substantial project activity is dealing with using ESPON knowledge in the cross-border context. The projects TransMEC and POLYCE include some first ideas on exploiting ESPON knowledge at the transnational/macro-regional geographical level of scale. The project SURE provided insights in reasons for success in convergence programmes under ERDF Objective 1.

Results of other projects under the ESPON Scientific Platform, in particular the ESPON 2013 Database and the INTERCO Project (territorial indicators) shall be considered main sources for the project.

Where relevant, the project is expected to make use of the nine standard ESPON Territorial Typologies when benchmarking and analysing programme areas: urban-rural; metropolitan regions; border regions; islands regions; sparsely populated regions; outermost regions; mountainous regions; coastal regions; regions in industrial transition. The first six were developed by DG Regio and the remaining three proposed in the ESPON project on Typology Compilation.

Finally, the project is expected to make use of relevant ESPON 2006 results.

v) Analytical framework and deliveries expected

The analytical framework of the project will consist of an operational methodological concept and tools for using territorial evidence for more strategic and result-oriented programming and to implement it swiftly in practice.

Territorial evidence seen in its pan-European context can help to define focused development strategies and public investment projects as well as to define more concrete and measurable targets.

ESPON evidence also allows for identifying territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts from European perspective that may offer opportunities and/or require action from a programme perspective and hence support in selecting projects, better defining their added value in relation to the programme context as well as national and regional policy action.

The analytical framework is therefore expected to include the following methodological concepts:

- A comprehensive and integrated operational approach to describing the territorial state and trends of programme areas in the European context, including relevant indicators.
- A territorial approach for selecting policy priorities, sub-priorities, flag-ship initiatives, etc. stemming from the EU level and the programmes. This approach should allow for an evidence-based characterisation (e.g. comparative analysis, network analysis) and appreciation (e.g. SWOT, benchmark) of the programme area in question.
- An operational set of indicators (1) related to the territorial dimension of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that is relevant for different Structural Funds programme development (and implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adjustment), (2) reflecting the Territorial Agenda policy principles and (3) useful in relation to the programme priorities. The Europe 2020 objectives and TA considerations will require a tailor-made translation to fit the programme area.
- Geographical approaches commonly used in ESPON such as typologies and multi-scalar analysis from the global to the regional/local level.

The methodological concept shall be applied to a number of programme areas by developing and delivering 10 ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs (35-40 pages). The Territorial Evidence Packs shall include the benchmarking ESPON Territorial Factsheet, an analytical part, maps and datasets that can support Managing Authorities from Structural Funds Programmes and their Joint Technical Secretariats in developing more strategic and targeted Operational Programmes for the period 2014-2020.

The ESPON Evidence Packs shall be based on an integrated territorial analysis including territorial indicators, maps and narratives on key developments. The analysis shall include a description of the programme area from a European perspective identifying its position in relation to European policy objectives and the European territorial structure in order to identify a set of key features for optional action. In addition, more in-depth analysis could be made of a limited selection of important territorial observations concerning potentials and challenges of specific relevance to the programme area in question.

The selection of case-study programme areas are envisaged to include 4 transnational co-operation areas, 2 cross-border co-operation areas, 2 convergence regions (Objective 1 of the Structural Funds) and 2 competitiveness regions (Objective 2 of the Structural Funds). The project is asked to include in the proposal an indicative and well-argued selection of case-study areas. The ESPON CU will in parallel test the interest and willingness of programme secretariats to cooperate in this exercise and ensure a geographical balance throughout the European territory. The final selection of case-study areas will be ensured in the start phase of the project.

Furthermore, the methodological concept shall allow for a swift territorial benchmarking and the delivery of ESPON Factsheets (working title) for all 65 Structural Funds Programme areas dealing with Transnational and Cross-border cooperation (see below). The ESPON Territorial Factsheets (5-10 pages) shall contain simple information related to key indicators, benchmarking the programme area in the European context, presented in an attractive way with a short interpretations and concluding texts indicating key assets and challenges for the area as well as some graphs and maps.

The expected deliveries of the project can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Methodological conceptual framework for delivery of relevant territorial benchmarking and analyses components in ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes within the logic explained in detail above.
- 2) 10 Territorial Evidence Packs for the selected case-study programme areas, including the following components:
 - Territorial benchmarking: ESPON Factsheet
 - Territorial analysis: ESPON Evidence Report
 - +/- 5 key maps showing territorial structures and trends of the co-operation area from a European perspective.
 - +/- 5-10 key maps showing territorial structures and trends at the level of the co-operation area (the maps should, if feasible, also show territorial (im)balances within the programme area, most realistic for transnational and cross-border programmes).
 - +/- 5-10 maps showing potential for public investments and territorial co-operation across the borders of the programme area.
 - Datasets with territorial indicators (preferably at NUTS3) in Excel including:
 - 10-15 key indicators for smart, sustainable and inclusive territorial development.
 - 5-10 indicators that complement or deepen the key indicators for challenges specific for the co-operation area.
- 3) 65 ESPON Factsheets benchmarking 52 Cross-border areas and 13 Transnational Co-operation Areas currently active. The 65 deliveries are envisaged largely to be produced using the same set of key indicators.

The deliveries of the project shall be conceived for dissemination via e-mail and for becoming available via the ESPON website. A targeted mailing of the benchmarking Factsheets and the Territorial Evidence Packs will be done towards all other Structural Funds Programmes in support of raising further interest. All deliveries shall respect the ESPON Corporate Identity.

The geographical coverage of the project will be the programme areas of the Structural Funds programmes addressed. In the relevant cases, the TPG should assess the data situation for regions outside the EU territory. The ESPON 2013 Database project and the CU will be supportive in this respect. Depending on the respective data situation regions from these countries should be included in the territorial benchmarking and analyses undertaken within the project.

(vi) Expected results and timetable

In order to fit the timing of ongoing programming processes in many European regions and larger territories, this project will require a short implementation period in order to maximise the usefulness of the deliveries to programming and implementation efforts related to Cohesion Policy post 2013.

The project period is therefore 2012-2013. The project is envisaged to present deliveries for external dissemination at two moments in time until end 2013: (1) swiftly the 65 ESPON Factsheets, and (2) the 10 ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs later on.

The proposed project implementation 2012-2013 shall include a clear timing and allow for some flexibility in relation to work packages involving contact meetings with the ESPON CU and feedbacks from the ESPON MC that are ready to support the development of this project and clarify open questions.

The project is supposed to follow the timetable and specifications of outputs as presented below:

May 2012 (Inception Report):

- Detailed description of the methodological concept, taking into account the objectives envisaged and the deliveries foreseen
- Template for the ESPON Territorial Factsheets, including selection of key benchmarking indicators and maps
- Draft template for ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs, including the Table of Content and envisaged components of territorial benchmarking and analysis, maps and illustrations.
- Considerations on the most appropriate 10 case-study programme areas for full ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs to be discussed with and processed by the ESPON CU for selection at the latest in June 2012.
- Work plan until the Interim Report.

August 2012 (First Specific Delivery):

- 65 ESPON Factsheets for 52 Cross-border and 13 Transnational Co-operation Areas

November 2012 (Interim Report):

- Final methodological concept and template for ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs
- First results, indicators and maps for the 10 selected case-study programme areas
- Work plan until the Draft Final Report.

March 2013 (Second Specific Delivery):

- 10 ESPON Territorial Evidence Packs for the selected case-study programme areas

September 2013 (Draft Final Report):

- Description of the methodological concept (25 pages)
- Description of synthetic findings of the analytical work (15 pages)
- Recommendation from the project in terms of future ESPON territorial evidence support

December 2013 (Final Report)

- Final version of the draft final report.

- Annex:
 - 10 Territorial Evidence Packs
 - 65 Factsheets produced and delivered

(vii) Budget

The maximum budget for this project is an amount up to €500.000. 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.

(viii) Existing access points

The 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 project results and indicators:

- www.espon.eu
 - The Applied Research projects and Targeted Analyses in general, and in particular
 - Applied Research Project 2013/1/18 “European Regions: Potential Contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy”
 - Targeted Analyses Ulysses and Transmec
 - Scientific Platform and Tools Projects, in particular
 - ESPON Database 2013
 - INTERCO – Indicators for Territorial Cohesion

European Commission policy documents of relevance:

- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy
- http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

Intergovernmental policy documents related to the territorial dimension:

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 - Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions (May 2011)

- (<http://www.eu-territorial-agenda.eu/Reference%20Documents/Final%20TA2020.pdf>)