



Inspire policy making by territorial evidence

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ESPON 2013 Programme
COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN 2013

Approved on 4 December 2012 by the ESPON Monitoring Committee

Amended following MC decision on 9 August 2013

Implementation Framework: The ESPON Communication Plan 2007-2013
approved by the European Commission on 10 June 2008



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1. Background and Summary

In 2013 the ESPON 2013 Programme and its Communication Action Plan will mainly be influenced by (1) the last Call for Proposals for Transnational Networking Activities by the ESPON Contact Points; (2) the results of the last Calls for Proposals 2012 (3) the life time of the Programme.

As for (1), at the Monitoring Committee Meeting in Dublin on 12 June 2013 the Coordination Unit presented a note detailing the progress in implementation of actions and projects under Priority 4, including a proposal for additional actions to be implemented within the budget available. The Monitoring Committee decided to launch a new Call for Proposals for an additional Transnational Networking Activity project further boosting the outreach of ESPON results.

Therefore, in the second half of 2013, the Coordination Unit will implement a new Call for Proposals and organise an information event for potential beneficiaries, which in this case are the ESPON Contact Points.

Consequently:

- The implementation period of ESPON's Communication Plan on Information and Publicity Measures will run, due to the new Call, till the end of 2014;
- The final event aimed at presenting the achievement of the Programme and its major projects will be moved to 2014.

In addition, the dialogue with beneficiaries (Lead and Project Partners), will continue to be a vital feature of ESPON's work within its Communication Plan. Events and meetings, such as Financial Managers Seminars, will help ensure that information is exchanged, in particular in terms of management and administration of projects as well as procedures related to the financial closure and winding-up of projects.

Dissemination of results from the contracted projects and at Programme level also feeds into the Plan with messages based on evidence of results of the projects, in particular through giving visibility to projects. Lead and Project Partners (LPP) have a significant impact on how ESPON is perceived; this is why it is important that LPPs are supported and well-informed to be able to act as ambassadors for ESPON, either in their daily contacts with various people or in their role as beneficiaries of ESPON. Lead and Project Partners are faced with many kinds of situations (speaking at conferences, meeting media, disseminating results from their researches etc.); therefore the CU will keep supporting their dissemination activities by, for instance, spreading news and articles on their projects findings and events.

The MA and CU will continue to work closely with the Member and Partner States as well as the ECPs to increase the relevance and understanding of ESPON's communications amongst its key target audiences and to expand its outreach. This will make ESPON better known and facilitate timely, coherent dissemination of ESPON messages in Europe.

ESPON will continue to use the full mix of communication means available. Furthermore, ESPON will promote coherence through strengthened cooperation with relevant authorities at national, European and international levels and continue to enhance dialogue with stakeholders and increase audience interactivity.

Regarding the competition "ESPON MapArt for Europe", this has been delayed due to the need of clarifying correct procedures and the media concept. The ESPON Monitoring Committee was informed by the CU at the meeting in September 2012 and at the meeting on 4 December 2012 the committee decided to put the competition on stand-by for 2014. The

moment of having a pan-European competition creating artworks for promotional purposes has been surpassed by the current richness in final research results etc. making a larger campaign for the competition risking giving the wrong impression of ESPON doing art and not solid territorial evidence. It is now the evidence that needs the attention.

The Communication Action Plan 2013 will in order to deliver the best possible continue to remain flexible to take into account changing circumstances.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Authority: Official communication with Programme bodies and European Commission.

Coordination Unit: Overall Programme level communication to general public, beneficiaries, project partners, programme bodies.

ECPs: Informing on ESPON activities to relevant regional / national and academic stakeholders in the transnational context; promoting ESPON in their countries by increasing the national networks around ESPON.

Projects Partners: Developing mandatory set of communication and fulfilling information requirements; participating in meetings, seminars and other events to present results of the projects.

3. Coordination between Communication and Capitalisation Activities

The communication activities are fully complementary with the capitalisation activities that are an inherent part of the overall ESPON Work Plan for 2013.

The key messages of the Communication Plan will be as well channelled through media and action belonging to the Capitalisation Activities, in particular: the ESPON website, Newsletters, Press Releases, Seminars and workshops targeting the Programme stakeholders.

The Communication Action Plan will also serve as support for the main activities envisaged in the Work Plan 2013.

4. Aim and Objectives 2013

Communication and dialogue

2013 will see ESPON continuing to engage in effective communications and dialogue with its potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries as well as partners in the EU institutions and Member and Partner States.

Being understood

Together with Member and Partner States, ESPON will further increase the relevance and understanding of its communications among its key target audiences. It will deploy the full range of tools at its disposal to communicate its messages. These tools will help ensure meaningful, tailored and effective messages reach the relevant audiences.

A coherent approach

Coherent communications will be promoted through strengthened cooperation with relevant partners at national, European and international levels. In close working relationships with the Member and Partner States, its Network of National Contact Points (ECPs), ESPON will continue to enhance dialogue and cooperation with its target groups in order to increase audience awareness and interactivity.

The following priorities will be addressed in 2013:

- a) Inform potential beneficiaries and raise awareness and transparency of the opportunities on offer by calls opened by the Programme.
- b) Work closely with beneficiaries to visualise results and evidence of projects and provide them with complete, accurate and updated information about regulations, guidelines for good project management in order to maximise the quality of project implementation.
- c) Inform project partners and raise awareness of the responsibilities they have under the regulations, provide guidance and advice to help ensure compliance, ensure that results are communicated by the project partners and the programme jointly in order to make the programme operations tangible and visible.
- d) Inform the programme's partners, stakeholders and wider audience about the programme's achievements, progress and major projects.
- e) Inform and raise awareness amongst the general public of the role of the Community in the actions funded by the Programme.

5. Target Groups

The ESPON "Communication Plan on Information and Publicity Measures" for the programming period 2007-2013 defined and clarified the primary targets and recipients of its communications activities¹. At any given time additional groups may be added to this list, although it is our assessment that these groups are relevant for the entire programme period.

In general, the following order applies:

- Potential and final beneficiaries: public or public-equivalent bodies described in the Programme Manual and governed by public law, private bodies.
- Programme Bodies: MC, ECPs, Paying Authority, European Commission.
- The Scientific Community: those with a specific interest in the direction of ESPON and the outputs it will produce.
- Media and Opinion Leader: for journalists working for regional, national and European media; the immediate services for this audience concern the provision of press releases and announcement on events and achievements.
- General public, in particular to underline the central role that the European Union plays in the ESPON 2013 Programme in cooperation with the Member and Partner States.

6. Information and Publicity Measures 2013

ESPON will work in partnership with MS and PS as well as the ECP Network in order to provide information and to promote the Programme. The ESPON CU will keep ECPs informed of all activities that will be undertaken over the year for them to play their role.

All actions will be implemented in the full respect of the information and publicity requirements of the ESPON Programme as well as of EU Requirements as stated in Articles 8 and 9 of Commission Regulation 1828/2006.

¹ Cf 3. Target groups, "Communication Plan on Information and Publicity Measures" for the programming period 2007-2013 2006.

For the year 2013, the ESPON Managing Authority, with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit, intends to implement the following actions:

6.1. Information tools

6.1.1. Programme Managing Support System (PMSS)

The Programme Management Supporting System is accessible for the main actors of the Programme, such as the Monitoring Committee, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Group of Auditors and First Level Controllers for their use.

The PMSS stores information about the projects and subsequently also information about the various priorities and measures on the Programme level that is updated regularly by the ESPON CU. The database serves as the main source for both quantitative and qualitative data on projects implementation and achievement.

One of its functions, OLAP enables the users to extract and analyze the different data according to their needs. The PMSS can be considered as a reliable monitoring and financial reporting system that can support the everyday management and monitoring of the operations.

The PMSS has been updated with the proposals received in the last round of calls of the ESPON 2013 Programme. In the course of 2013, it will be completed with data from the so-called “MA Led Projects” being implemented under Priority 3 and 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

6.1.2. Programme Manual and Applicants’ package

The Applicants’ Package and the Programme Manual will be updated and completed prior the opening of the Call for Proposals under Priority 4 to be launched in August 2013. They will include the relevant information providing detailed information on the Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme, its background and objectives, the principles for applying, assessing, approving and monitoring projects and the application form, the Operational Programme and the Regulation providing the legal framework for the ESPON 2013 funded operations. The Call and the Applicants Package will be published at the ESPON website and disseminated during the corresponding Info Day event and on demand.

6.1.3. Official Journal EU

The Call in August 2013 will not be announced at the Official Journal of the EU.

This call will be published at the ESPON Website (www.espon.eu) and disseminated via email alert to the potential beneficiaries (which are limited to the ESPON Contact Point institutions) as soon as the launch of the call has been decided by the MC.

6.1.4. Programme Bodies

The programme bodies –MC Members and ECP network, - will be involved in reaching 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.

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.

As for the messages, the CU will keep producing and disseminating regularly the ESPressON towards ECP and MC Members.

6.2. Communication tools

6.2.1. ESPON Newsletter

For each of the newsletters disseminated in the framework of the Capitalisation Strategy during 2013, the ESPON CU will elaborate articles targeting any other information on the timetable of events. In 2013, it is foreseen to have at least 6 Newsletters.

6.2.2. ESPON Website

The ESPON Website will be regularly updated and constantly developed by the CU through additional new pages and new products.

Work iteratively modernizing and improving the website shall continue under the Priority 4 of the Programme. Also, in keeping with Commission Regulation 1828/2006 Article 7(2) (d), the already included list of beneficiaries, the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to the operations will be updated.

6.2.3. ESPON Intranet

During 2012 large improvements have been carried out in the ESPON Intranet. Most of the improved functionalities appeared in the administrator part of the Intranet, enhancing the speed and upload possibilities. For the 'normal' user changes in the download, upload and search functionalities are the most noticeable. The menu structure remained the same, meaning that the users were fast accustomed to the new Intranet. For 2013 some small improvements are expected based on input from users.

6.2.4. Media

Press releases will be elaborated and channelled to the relevant media. The press releases will be mainly targeting the press and the general public. This task will be realised in the framework of the Capitalisation Activities 2013. In 2013 is envisaged to opt at the following concrete output: 6 Press Releases.

6.2.5. Social Media

The Social Media tools will continuously be updated during 2013 to communicate events and information about the Programme.

6.3. Targeted activities and actions/Events

In 2013, the following activities and events will take place.

6.3.1. Financial managers seminars

Initially envisaged by end of 2012, the seminar of the ESPON 2013 Programme on management and administration of projects will be organized in March 2013 for Lead and Project Partners of approved projects under the last round of calls that ended in June 2012.

Information about e.g. eligibility rules, programme manual, subsidy contract, reporting and monitoring procedures will be given, as well as information about administrative, legal and practical matters of relevance concerning project coordination and management. The seminar will give special attention to the procedures in relation to project financial closure and winding-up.

The seminars will as well be open to first level financial controller of centralized and designated controllers of decentralized control systems willing to acquire additional and more

specific information about ESPON 2013 reporting procedure and minimum requirements for the certification of expenditure.

An additional event to support the LPP shall be organised in July 2013.

6.3.2. ECP Meetings

Internal ECP meetings will be organized in June and December 2013 in order to ensure coordination of activities of the programme at national level, the internal coherence and share of experience.

6.3.3. Annual Event: ESPON Info Day on Call in August 2013

The Programme will organize one major information activity, an ESPON Info Day on the newly decided Call for Proposals including a Q&A session, to present the new funding opportunities and the conditions for applying. The event will be organised in September and will target potential beneficiaries. Detailed information on the new call, the conditions to access the funding and any other relevant information will be provided.

6.3.4. Working together with the EU Presidencies: ESPON Seminars

The aim of presenting the achievements of the Programme will be gained through the Open Seminar which is to be organized in June 2013 during the Irish EU Presidency.

The Coordination Unit will in cooperation with the Lithuanian EU Presidency organise an Internal Seminar on December 2013. The internal seminar shall contribute to ensuring the internal consistency and synergy related to the content of projects within the different programme priorities. It will bring together for dialogue the Monitoring Committee, Stakeholders from Targeted Analyses, the ESPON Contact Points, and the partners in the Transnational Project Groups. The thematic scope and aim of the Seminar will be defined in due time during the first half of the year.

6.3.5. Participation in external events

The programme will be marketed at several events like conferences, seminars, exhibitions. Information will be disseminated on e.g. project and programme results and any funding opportunities that might be possible. The ESPON CU will select during 2013 some key events, organised by different institutions and/or organisation (the European Commission, other European programmes, etcetera).

6.4. Flying the EU flag

Provision will also be made to ensure that, for one week, starting on 9 May, the European flag will be flown in front of the premises of the Managing Authority and the new offices of the Coordination Unit in Rue Erasme on Kirchberg.

6.5. List of beneficiaries

The list of the beneficiaries has been published on the web site of the Programme since 2008, together with the names of the operations and the amount of public funding allocated to each single operation. The final list will be updated as soon as the remaining projects are contracted.

6.6. Promotional material

Promotional Materials and Stands

The calls for tenders aiming at producing new promotion materials (bags, umbrellas, pens, memory keys) and exhibition stands, which were part of the Communication Plan 2011 were unfortunately not yet been launched.

Even though the CU drafted the tenders' documents, the two tenders had been delayed due to a lack of resources. However, the calls for tender will be launched end 2012/ beginning 2013. As for the promotional materials, the tender will only include items such as ESPON pens and memory keys.

MapArt

Started in 2010, the preparation has taken longer than envisaged due to the need of investigating the implementation framework in the national legislation and deeply clarifying its structure. In addition, as with the competition ESPON engages with new target groups that have not been specifically targeted yet within the Programme, a strong dissemination campaign with the involvement of the media bureau was envisaged in order to implement the promotional campaign.

The ESPON Monitoring Committee decided to take note of the opinion on a need for a change of concept as voiced by the CU at the meeting in September 2012 stating that the moment of having a pan-European competition creating artworks for promotional purposes has passed and that a larger campaign for the competition would risk giving the wrong impression that ESPON is doing art and not solid territorial evidence. At this stage of implementation the evidence produced needs all the attention. The idea of an outreach to a wider European public via a competition will be put on stand-by for 2014.

Evaluation

To ensure a correct implementing of the above listed Information and Publicity Measures 2013, the relevant indicators that are included in the Communication Plan on Information and Publicity Measures 2007 – 2013² will be taken into consideration.

The evaluation may also be based on brief questionnaire disseminated at ESPON events.

² Programme Manual and Applicants' package: number of downloads, number of documents requested, number of visits to the relevant website pages;
Programme Managing Support System: number and type of enhancement of the database;
Programme Bodies: number of ESPressON issued, number of reports distributed, number of meetings held;
Newsletters: number of subscriptions, number of newsletters distributed;
Website: number of website visitors;
Intranet: number of communication distributed;
Media: number of press releases issued;
External events: number of events MA/CU has participated in;
Targeted activities and actions/events: number of participants at the annual event/info day, number of project representatives participating at financial seminars, number of events held;
List of beneficiaries: number of downloads; Promotional material: type and number of promotional material produced, numbers of copies requested and distributed by CU.

7. Resources: Budget allocation 2013

ESPON has an allocated publicity budget of 466.000 EUR from 2007 onwards to fund its communication activities. The allocation by year is as follows:

Year	Budget allocated	Envisaged Activities
2007	0,00	
2008	58.250,00	Information sources (programme manual, applicants` packs, database); communication tools (newsletters, website and intranet, media/pr); targeted activities and actions (major event launching the Programme and the first calls and expression of interests, Q&A event for potential beneficiaries, info day on second call, financial managers seminar)
2009	68.000,00	Information sources (programme manual, applicants` packs, database); communication tools (ESPressON, newsletters, website and intranet, media/pr); targeted activities and actions (financial managers seminar, info day on third call, fourth call)
2010	135.000,00	Information sources (programme manual, applicants` packs, database); communication tools (ESPressON, newsletters, website and intranet, media/pr); targeted activities and actions (three calls and two info days, two financial manager seminars, promotional material)
2011	100.000,00	Information sources (programme manual, applicants` packs, database); communication tools (ESPressON, newsletters, website and intranet, media/pr); targeted activities and actions (two calls and two info days, two financial manager seminars)
2012	40.000,00	Information sources (programme manual, applicants` packs, database); communication tools (ESPressON, newsletters, website and intranet, media/pr); targeted activities and actions (ten and last call, info day, one financial manager seminar)
2013	24.750,00	
2014	40.000,00	Final Event aimed at presenting the achievement of the Programme and its major projects
Total Budget	466.000,00	

The publicity measures noted in this Communication Action Plan 2013 will be funded by the communication plan (priority 5), the capitalisation (under priority 4) as well as technical assistance (priority 5).

BUDGET Communication Action Plan 2013		
Information tools	EUR	Source of Funding
Programme Manual		P5 - TA staff budget and P4 – Capitalisation / Printing
Applicants' Pack		P5 - TA staff budget and P4 – Capitalisation / Printing
Programme database		Ad hoc TA Budget Line
ESPressON		P5 - TA staff budget
Communications tools	EUR	Source of Funding
Newsletter		P4 – Capitalisation and P5 - TA staff budget
Website and Intranet		P4 – Capitalisation and P5 - TA staff budget
Media / Press Releases		P4 – Capitalisation and P5 - TA staff budget
Social Media		P4 – Capitalisation, P5 - TA staff budget
Targeted actions and activities	EUR	Source of Funding
Two Financial Managers Seminars	18.000,00	P5 - Communication Action Plan for 2013
Annual Event - ESPON Info Day on New Call including a Q&A session	6.750,00	P5 - Communication Action Plan for 2013
Participation in external events		P5 - TA travel budget
Flying of EU flag		No cost
List of beneficiaries		P5- TA staff budget; P4 – Capitalisation
Promotional materials and Stands		P5 – Communication Action Plan 2011
TOTAL	24.750,00	

Annex 1 – Indicative Calendar of Major Communication Activities 2013

Month	Document of reference	Activity
December 2012 / early 2013	Communication Action Plan 2011	Promotional Materials and Stands
January	Communication Action Plan 2013	List of Beneficiaries
March	Communication Action Plan 2013	Financial Manager Seminar
May	Communication Action Plan 2013	Flying EU flag
July	Communication Action Plan 2013	Financial Manager Seminar
September	Communication Action Plan 2013	Annual Event - ESPON Info Day on New Call including a Q&A session
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013	Programme Management Support System (database PMSS)
Yearly around	Communication Action Plan 2013	ESPressON
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013/Capitalisation	Newsletter
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013/Capitalisation	Website and Intranet
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013/Capitalisation	Media / Press Releases
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013/Capitalisation	Social Media
Yearly around	Work Plan 2013	External Events

Annex 2– 2012 Results (by October 2012)

ESPressON

From June 2009 until October 2012 the CU disseminated 286 ESpresON, with a monthly average of about 7 messages.

Year	Number of ESpresON
2009 (June)	36
2010	83
2011	97
2012 (until October)	70
Total	286

Newsletter

5 Newsletters were produced and distributed to a mailing list with more than 3.000 recipients. Direct mailing campaigns towards the newsletter subscribers were implemented as well to spread the announcements of Calls for Proposals, events, and so on.

Media / Press Releases

8 press releases / communications produced and disseminated in 2012:

- 15 February 2012, Videos, “ESPON releases six new videos”
- 20 April 2012, Calls for Proposals, “ESPON just opened new Calls for Proposals”
- 29 May 2012, Open Seminar, “ESPON evidence for EU Cohesion Policy after 2014: inspiring growth and development for regions and cities”
- 13 June 2012, Open Seminar, four case studies (Spain, UK, Latvia, Denmark) and translations

Social media

By October 2012 around 400 people and organisations (including regions, cities, cohesion programmes, journalists, and bloggers) were following the ESPON account on Twitter. More than 200 tweets were posted.

Website

In the period January-October 2012, the ESPON website received 264.361 visits with a monthly average of 26.680 visits. Over the course of 2012, new publications and improvements operations were made to the ESPON website including 1) publication of 63 news items and a number of new web pages; 2) adaptation of website about the main activities of the year, including reports from projects, events, calls, newsletters, etc.

Events

About 500 participants were counted in the 6 events organised by the CU. The Open Seminar in Denmark and the Info Day in Brussels were the biggest events organised in 2012. ESPON attended also different major external events.

Event	Date	Participants
Financial Managers Seminar	Bern, 3 May 2012	47
Info Day on Calls for Proposals and Partner Café	Brussels, 10 May 2012	100
Workshop “Workshop “Territorial Impact Assessment”	Brussels, 6 June 2012	28
Open Seminar "European Territorial Evidence for EU Cohesion Policy and Programming"	Denmark 13 and 14 June 2012	227
Joint Seminar ESPON – INTERACT “European Territorial Cooperation Delivering Europe 2020"	Luxembourg, 25 September 2012	60
Workshop “Innovation & Knowledge - Territorial dimensions for future EU Cohesion Policy”	Brussels, 5 October 2012	56
Total number of participants (by October 2012)		518

Promotional Material

Several items (pens, memory keys) that have been produced within a Call for Tender launched in 2010, have been disseminated at events in 2012.