

Guidance for stakeholder proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses

1. ESPON Targeted Analyses – What are they?

Targeted Analyses involve stakeholders proposing practical ideas for relevant analysis to the ESPON EGTC. The ideas proposed should be based on stakeholders' defined policy needs, while also being relevant beyond the stakeholders' territories to other countries, regions or cities.

The Targeted Analyses are meant to support stakeholders in their policy development and add a wider European perspective to policy considerations related to their territories.

Following positive selection of a stakeholder proposal, the ESPON EGTC will implement Targeted Analyses through the procurement of external expertise via an open, EU wide procurement procedure.

Targeted Analyses are powerful means to transfer knowledge, share experience and facilitate the use of European territorial evidence rooted in real place-based policy development processes.

2. How do they work?

As a first step, stakeholders propose and describe their analytical need concerning their own territories, explaining why they need a Targeted Analysis with a European perspective, outlining the results they envisage to receive, as well as how they intend to make use of the Targeted Analysis in practice.

Stakeholders submit their proposals to the ESPON EGTC by filling in a digital application form, available on the ESPON website. The stakeholder proposals need to be complemented by letters of commitment from all participating stakeholders (including the lead stakeholder) institutions. The ESPON EGTC also provides a template for letters of commitment on the ESPON website, together with the digital application form. Stakeholder proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses can be submitted at anytime. The process is the following:

- The ESPON EGTC evaluates twice per year all stakeholder proposals received by certain cut-off dates. The exact deadlines will be advertised on the ESPON website.
- A stakeholder cooperation agreement is signed between the ESPON EGTC and the lead stakeholders of the selected proposals (template is available on the ESPON website).
- Together with the stakeholders the ESPON EGTC then further develops those selected proposals into detailed terms of reference.
- Selected Targeted Analyses will be openly tendered EU wide to procure highly qualified experts to carry out the Targeted Analysis.

The contracted experts will closely cooperate with the stakeholders and the ESPON EGTC in the implementation of the Targeted Analysis.

3. Who can apply?

In line with the ESPON 2020 programme documents the following stakeholders will be eligible for submitting proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses, either as lead or participating stakeholders:

- National, regional and local bodies, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation in the EU member states and the ESPON partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and other cross-border territorial cooperation bodies having competence or specific tasks in developing and/or implementing policies with a territorial dimension;
- Managing Authorities and joint secretariats in the EU member states and the ESPON partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and other cross-border territorial cooperation bodies responsible for implementing EU funded programmes for transnational, cross-border or macro-regional areas.

The ESPON EGTC welcomes proposals either by single or several stakeholders, acting jointly. This is to encourage a wide geographical coverage and that numerous countries, regions and cities can benefit of bespoke evidence. However, it is not a prerequisite to set up a stakeholder consortium. Targeted Analyses can also be selected if they are proposed by only one eligible stakeholder.

Universities, academic experts and private companies are not eligible to submit stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses. Nonetheless, they have the opportunity to submit tenders in the framework of the open procurement procedure following the selection of Targeted Analyses.

Eligible stakeholders can consider and propose involving representatives of European, national and regional “umbrella” organizations representing the interests of multiple sub-national (regional and/or local) authorities in the Steering Committee. Furthermore, additional representatives of local, regional, national or European authorities that are not involved in the stakeholder partnership can be invited to Steering Committee meetings as observers.

The objective of the Steering Committee is:

- To ensure the involvement and active participation of stakeholders in the implementation and steering of the project;
- To safeguard the policy relevance of the Targeted Analysis’ outputs for the stakeholders;
- To facilitate the information and data flow between the service provider’s team, of which at least one representative should always be present at steering committee meetings, the group of stakeholders and the ESPON EGTC.

The role of the Steering Committee is:

- To discuss and give feedback to deliveries from the service provider and provide guidance to the latter for the next steps of service implementation;
- To discuss and agree upon dissemination activities, particularly after the finalisation of the analytical work by the service provider.

4. How to apply?

Applications are to be submitted electronically. When submitting a stakeholder proposal the following requirements shall be fulfilled:

- Proposals include the completed electronic version of the application form in word format; a scanned, signed and dated application form; the scanned, signed and dated letters of commitment of all participating stakeholders (including the lead stakeholder);

- The application form shall be completed in English, and in full (all white fields completed).

5. What happens if the proposal is incorrect or not complete by the submission deadline? (correctable omissions)

In case of missing or incomplete documents, the ESPON EGTC will run a correctable omission procedure. Stakeholders will be given the possibility to complete the submitted proposal within a given deadline of 5 working days.

6. What are the selection criteria?

When putting together a proposal for an ESPON Targeted Analysis, stakeholders should be aware that their proposals will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria:

1) Presence of European perspective/dimension in the Targeted Analysis

Even though Targeted Analyses focus on specific study areas (i.e. the stakeholders' territories), they need to reflect a wider European perspective. This means that the stakeholders should describe the prominence of the proposed Targeted Analysis theme in the current EU policy context; or relevance of the topic for other countries involved in the ESPON 2020 programme; or propose benchmarking of the stakeholders territories in relation to other regions in Europe.

2) Degree of added value and transferability

The results expected from a Targeted Analysis should offer a clear added value to the stakeholders behind the activity. Results should also be capable of being transferred to the particular policy contexts within the stakeholders' territories. At the same time, other countries, regions or cities throughout Europe should be able to benefit from the results.

3) Realism in analytical terms

Stakeholder proposals should be of such a character that the analysis is feasible both in terms of methodology, indicators and data provision. Existing relevant sources should be complemented with specific stakeholder knowledge, data and other information in order to create the new bespoke evidence that should result from the Targeted Analysis.

4) Use of the analytical results in policy making

Stakeholders should have a clear view on what they want to do with the output of the analytical activity and dispose of the necessary competencies and capacities for applying the analytical results in policy-making process. Therefore, they should specifically indicate how and when they plan to make concrete use of the results coming out of the Targeted Analysis they request in the policy-making and/or strategic planning process. Results should, for instance, feed into specific policy planning documents and/or a territorial development strategy.

5) Relevance for place-based development strategies

The analysis needs to be related to the stakeholders' specific territorial context and the policy opportunities and challenges there. In this sense, the analytical results envisaged should feed into and support integrated place-based policy making of the territories in question.

6) Competent involvement of stakeholders in the analytical process and in steering of the activity

Stakeholders proposing an ESPON Targeted Analysis need to bear in mind that their active involvement in the analytical process is required to receive meaningful and useful results. This means that stakeholders shall commit to provide regional/local data, relevant documents and proactively and continuously engage with the experts that are contracted by the ESPON EGTC to perform the analysis e.g. attendance at steering group meetings etc. This may involve travel and other related costs.

7) Relevance and complementarity to existing ESPON territorial evidence

The ESPON 2013 Programme produced a wealth of territorial and analytical evidence. Furthermore, the ESPON 2020 Programme is currently implementing further applied research, Targeted Analyses and complementary tools and outreach activities. In order to maximise synergies, stakeholders should consider how their project proposal relates to past and ongoing ESPON activities.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the above mentioned criteria on a scale from 0-10. On each of the criteria the proposal has to receive a minimum of 6 points, otherwise it will not be considered further. If a proposal fails to get selected, stakeholders have a possibility to improve their proposals and resubmit them at a later stage.

7. What are the duties of stakeholders once their proposal is selected?

Lead stakeholders behind selected stakeholder proposals will receive a selection letter from the ESPON EGTC, together with the following two documents:

- A Declaration of No Conflict of Interest. This needs to be dated and signed both by the lead stakeholder and by the participating stakeholders, and sent back to the ESPON EGTC as a scanned copy.
- A Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement, which needs to be dated and signed by the lead stakeholder and sent to the ESPON EGTC. The ESPON EGTC then countersigns the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement and sends a copy to the lead stakeholder.

A template of the Declaration of No Conflict of Interest and the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement can be found on the ESPON 2020 website

By signing the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement the lead stakeholder will commit to:

- Participate at own costs in the steering of the Targeted Analysis (this will incur some travel costs, for instance);

- Deliver regional/local information and data (if needed);
- Support (at own expenses) the uptake and transfer of results of the Targeted Analysis via communication activities after having consulted the Steering Committee. In line with the publicity requirements, a reference should be made in all communication activities that the Targeted Analysis has been financed by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation programme.

8. What happens with stakeholder proposals that are not selected?

Should you wish to lodge a complaint against a decision not selecting your proposal by the ESPON EGTC, you may do so within 10 working days counting from the reception date of the rejection letter by email to the ESPON EGTC indicating the reasons for lodging the complaint.

The complaint should be lodged by the lead stakeholder to application@espon.eu in the format of a duly signed scanned letter.

The ESPON EGTC will refer the complaint to the ESPON Managing Authority. Provided the complaint is lodged within the given deadline, is on procedural aspects and contains valid and reasonable arguments, the MA will investigate the complaint.

Should the MA consider that the complaint is founded, it will draft a report to the attention of the ESPON EGTC requesting the ESPON EGTC to re-evaluate the proposal(s).

The complainant will be informed about the final decision by the ESPON EGTC within 15 working days counting from the date of the reception of the complaint by the ESPON EGTC.

9. Where to get further information?

Staff at the ESPON EGTC is available to field queries on developing stakeholder proposals.

Please email your query to application@espon.eu.

All previously implemented and ongoing Targeted Analyses proposals are available for download at the ESPON website, which may provide some useful guidance for stakeholders in developing their proposals.