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31st January 2014

Dear Nuno,

**Re: Draft Final Report - USESPON (121\_PR4\_PP\_0489)**

Please find enclosed the Draft Final Report of the USESPON project and its Annexes.

Please do not hesitate to contact Dr Michael Harris, Project Coordinator or myself should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Julius Ursu  
Project Manager

# USESPON

Transnational Networking Activities 2013/7

Draft Final Report | Version 31/1/2014

This report presents the draft final results of Transnational Networking Activities conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU28, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

Information on the ESPON Programme and projects can be found on [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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## **A Executive Summary**

### **The central challenge**

USESPON has addressed a major challenge in the capitalisation of ESPON results: how to engage stakeholders at national and sub-national level, and especially persons working in practice in fields related to territorial policy and planning. These people are typically under considerable work pressures and while they may potentially make use of ESPON data and findings, too often they are unaware of what ESPON can offer, or reluctant to search for it, or to apply it in their day-to-day work. USESPON set out to use new approaches to reach such people, and to show them how they could make use of ESPON in practical situations.

### **The origins of the project**

USESPON is a Transnational Networking Activity (TNA) funded under Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 programme. It has been undertaken by a partnership led by the ESPON Contact Point (ECP) for the United Kingdom (UK), the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The other partners are the ECPs for France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, and Poland. The project effectively had a little over a year to run before this Draft Final Report was submitted. Like all Priority 4 projects it is not a research study, rather such projects “aim at activating transnational interest in ESPON by involvement of policy makers, practitioners and scientists”, as the ESPON website states.

USESPON was designed in response to the call for proposals that opened on 18 April 2012. The call stated that a new TNA project should “benefit from positive capitalisation experiences made in other ongoing Transnational Networking Activity projects and explicitly include cross-fertilisation of activities integrating thematic issues and approaches already undertaken in other transnational capitalization projects under Priority 4 and making use of best experiences in a communication targeting users of ESPON results.” (Section 5.3.2).

To achieve the desired cross-fertilisation, USESPON brought together the Lead Partners of four other TNAs. In addition, in small countries there is only ESPON data at national level, and so capitalisation has to be different than in large member states, therefore ECP Luxembourg was brought into the USESPON partnership.

### **The aims of USESPON**

The main aim of USESPON has been to develop capacity and a sense of ownership amongst key stakeholders in respect of use of methods developed within ESPON 2013. The aspiration has been to build know-how and confidence amongst the stakeholders. This reflected experiences gained in other TNAs and in the nationally-funded work of the ECPs.

In particular it was recognised that a number of barriers exist that have limited use of ESPON at national and sub-national levels. These include issues of accessibility (reports are in English, not other languages, and tend to be long, and rooted in quantitative analysis undertaken by researchers), and data (which is generally not available below NUTS 3 level).

The USESPON partners worked transnationally to tackle these challenges. They agreed that an ECP has to play an interpretive and facilitating role to connect ESPON and national/sub-national stakeholders; simply disseminating information about ESPON would not achieve the desired impacts, though raising awareness would be a necessary part of the project.

## **USESPON's Strategy and Objectives**

The strategy of the project was developed transnationally with active inputs from all the partners. It had the following elements:

- Achieve cross-fertilisation from all Priority 4 projects;
- Translate ESPON into the operational world of the stakeholders;
- Focus the capitalisation on use of methods from ESPON projects, rather than on maps, data and project results;
- Take Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth (from EU2020) as a theme to link to the methods;
- Make best use of the know-how amongst the partners and the legacies from earlier TNAs.

The strategy was developed into a list of 11 objectives, as follows:

1. Identify key stakeholders;
2. Identify the methods to disseminate and ESPON use of them and associated findings;
3. Design and keep up to date a web portal that is integrated with the ESPONTrain VLE;
4. Design 'support materials' to support the delivery of the methods in workshops, and which can be used as the basis for teaching about the methods on the VLE (see objective 6);
5. Deliver interactive workshops;
6. Develop VLE materials to be delivered on the ESPON Train VLE;
7. Ensure feedback and evaluation;
8. Undertake blunder checks;
9. Deliver all national and project reporting required;
10. Deliver findings to other ECPs;
11. Ensure effective communication and efficient management.

### **Implementation – Identifying stakeholders**

Having reviewed how the other TNA projects had gone about identifying stakeholders, the USESPON partners agreed that in order to achieve capitalization and not just dissemination of ESPON, the project would concentrate on working in some depth with a small group of mainly practitioner stakeholders in each country, rather than following the more conventional academic conference approach. Each partner had built a national database of stakeholders, and the diversity between countries had to be taken into account in identifying the kind of institutions who would be potential ESPON stakeholders. For example, regional administrations were of growing importance in Greece, but in England Regional Development Agencies had recently been abolished. Therefore each partner was given the discretion to identify and involve stakeholders within their own country, but within a shared transnational framework.

### **Implementation – Support materials**

The idea of preparing an attractively designed short booklet to communicate key aspects of ESPON had been tested in the ESPON INTERSTRAT Priority 4 project and found valuable. USESPON partners agreed to adapt this approach and develop for each workshop a booklet that would explain step-by-step the method being presented for capitalisation.

Support materials were designed according to a common template agreed by the partners. The template was flexible enough to fit with each national context, while still containing some common information. Firstly, each support material introduces briefly the challenges of implementing the EU2020 strategy at national level. Secondly, the main outcomes of the selected ESPON tools or results are presented before some key elements about the policy implications. The ESPON programme and the USESPON project are also briefly presented.

In order to reach a wide audience, including but not limited to those taking part in an event, the support materials took the form of an accessible 4-page document, using a balance of text and illustrations. The team decided to produce each support material in a national language in order to reach as many practitioners as possible, as well as in English. All the support materials were posted on the USESPON website, where they can be accessed in the Publications section.

### **Implementation – The workshops**

The first event for stakeholders was held in Luxembourg with the theme “Research and Innovation: What strategy for Luxembourg?” The capitalisation activity was to organise an exchange between institutions involved in Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) and institutions involved in the management of structural funds. It was spread over a number of weeks and had three stages. The participants received the support material and then participated in an interactive workshop. A synthesis was produced by the ECP, based on the results of the workshop, together with a questionnaire to the experts, giving them the chance to develop and refine their contributions. The interaction was extensive but also in-depth, and demonstrated to the participants how the Delphi method (which has been used in a number of ESPON projects) could be used to address their practical concerns.

The one day workshop held in Berlin focused on the theme of “City benchmarking”. It introduced the Urban Audit Atlas and the ESPON CityBench tool that was still under development at the time of the workshop.

City benchmarking was also the theme of the workshop held in Warsaw. Urban policy was identified as one of the most important topics in the current regional and spatial development agenda in Poland. The aim of the event was to provide comprehensive information about urban benchmarking as a simple and flexible method of assessing cities' development opportunities and challenges. The workshop was tailored to the needs of public administration representatives at local, regional and central level. Participants learned about urban benchmarking, its pros and cons, and how to apply the method in their everyday work. They also had an opportunity to design urban benchmarking analysis, using ESPON results and tools such as typologies, HyperAtlas, Database or CityBench.

The theme of the Athen's event was “The role of regions in the EU2020 strategy: Sustainable growth of South regions in a European context”. The interactive workshop aimed to support regional governors, policy makers and practitioners at regional level by promoting strategic thinking for territorial development in their regions. Sustainable, inclusive and smart growth was projected by means of the Nexus methodological tool, towards an integrated development approach, the delivery of more efficient European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) regional schemes and the achievement of the objectives of EU2020. ESPON Projects reflecting the priorities of the Greek Presidency to the EU Council were presented and discussed.

Finally, a half day event was held in London on the theme of “Promoting local growth” (a high priority of the government in England). This gave participants a chance to work in small groups to try to apply the “Nexus + Growth” method that the UK ECP had adapted from the Nexus model used in the TeDi and GEOSPECS ESPON projects.



## **Implementation – The USESPON VLE**

The ESPONTrain TNA had delivered a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). USESPON sought to build on this and so the ECP Greece was able to take the support materials produced by partners and convert these into learning materials for the VLE. This it is possible for stakeholders to access at their own convenience online packs that explain each of the Delphi, Nexus and City benchmarking methods, and also to go to follow-up reading and take self-assessment exercises to ensure that they have understood the material.

## **Implementation – The USESPON website**

The experience of the ESPON INTERSTRAT project informed the development of the USESPON website (<http://www.espon-usespon.eu>) which was built by the ECP Poland in co-operation with the other partners. A key part of the site, carried forward from INTERSTRAT, is the Library, which contains electronic copies of 142 key documents from across Europe on territorial development and territorial cohesion. Statistical analysis showed that most of the 1,200 unique users came from USESPON partners' countries, especially those where USESPON events were organised. However, a relatively large number of visits came also from Italy, Romania, Spain, Estonia, the United States and Belgium. As well as using the project website, partners also used their own ECP and/or institutional websites to disseminate news and information about USESPON.

## **Implementation – USESPON Week**

ESPON Week was another transnationally planned and executed activity of USESPON. It was agreed to use the week 11-15 November 2013 as a focus for an intensive range of activity within the project, to try to generate mutually enhancing momentum for dissemination and awareness raising. The week was chosen because it included the final workshop and conference and final Project Steering Group meeting. ESPON Week saw the project partners publishing blogs about ESPON, using social media, and launching the USESPON VLE, as well as regular "Map of the Day" updates on the project website and other mailings from the ECP partners to their national stakeholders and on their national websites.

## **Evaluation**

Because reaching stakeholders was such a key part of the project, USESPON partners decided at the first meeting to undertake a thorough and consistent evaluation of stakeholders' experiences. This work was led by ECP France, though like all other aspects of the project the underlying approach was developed transnationally with participation by all partners.

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess:

- stakeholders' general knowledge and use of ESPON;
- the level of knowledge and use of the tools presented in the support materials and the national workshops;
- the way stakeholders think they will use the tools after receiving inputs from the USESPON project;
- their understanding of the tools after the delivery of the support materials and workshops;
- the type of tools on which they would like more information, general needs and suggestions related to ESPON;
- experiences of the workshops themselves.

A questionnaire was used to get feedback from participants in the events. This was supplemented by telephone interviews with two stakeholders from each workshop, to get a more qualitative and in depth understanding of their views.

The analysis of responses showed that participants were very positive about the quality and value of the workshops. Crucially there was clear evidence that a significant proportion of those questioned were considering using the methods presented in the workshops in their day to day practice. This, more than anything, demonstrated the success of USESPON. Similarly, stakeholders appreciated having materials in their national language. However, there were also some rather familiar comments about the barriers to using ESPON at national and sub-national levels. These problems include outdated data, at too broad a scale, and the sheer volume of material which makes it hard for a busy period to quickly identify what is likely to be useful – the search engine on the main ESPON website was found to be not as helpful as it might be, for example.

### **Key messages**

- Stakeholders told USESPON that they want to use ESPON, but currently find language and the long, complex reports and outdated data to be barriers.
- ESPON should seek to move from a model of knowledge transfer to one of knowledge exchange, where stakeholders frame the questions and researchers find the evidence required to answer the questions.
- The “Targeted Analysis” projects fit this model. However, proposals for the first round of those projects had to be submitted before the call for any of the ECP TNA projects, and now in the later stages of ESPON 2013, when TNA projects are running, there are no further opportunities to submit proposals for Targeted Analysis projects. Better co-ordination of timetables is needed.
- It is important to link dissemination of ESPON to current concerns of practitioners within a member state. Sometimes this will best be achieved by very precisely targeting particular stakeholders – e.g. those concerned with ESIF or INTERREG or URBACT.
- Stakeholders appreciated the interactive style of the USESPON workshops. Learning by doing in a supportive atmosphere holds out the prospect of a better sense of ownership of ESPON than can be achieved by a standard Powerpoint lecture. Interactive approaches should be used in ESPON 2020, and ECPs who lack experience of delivering through such methods should be able to access training in them.
- Stakeholders value it when they can see practical examples and demonstration of the use of ESPON findings and methods. Given the wide range of ESPON work, and the very limited resources available to ECPs, it is not easy for the ECP to satisfy the stakeholders. New tools from the Scientific Platform are becoming available just as funding for TNA and other ECP activities runs down. In ESPON 2020 ECPs might be seen as trainers, delivering national capitalization, but to do this they will need training and resources.
- Newsletters and events proved to be effective ways to draw visitors to the USESPON website. Statistics suggest that events not only provide new, single-visitors but also users that explore the website deeper and use its content, such as the Library.
- In contrast, some stakeholders made critical comments about the main ESPON website, in particular about the quality of the search engine within the site. This could be addressed in ESPON 2020.
- The USESPON Library was the most popular part of the project’s website. If ESPON post-2013 wants to build stronger links with practitioners it might consider

embedding a library of documents related to territorial development in its main website. The USESPON Library could be a starting point.

- Although social media currently play a rather small role in promotion and dissemination of ESPON results, they seem relatively good in promoting events and news. ECPs in ESPON 2020 should be helped to make best use of social media.
- Ministries can aid the capitalisation of ESPON by demonstrably associating themselves with ECP-organised activities. For example, a Ministry can enhance the profile of an event by providing the covering letter inviting representatives of central, regional or local administrations to attend, and by providing the venue.
- The ESPON VLE has potential that should be built upon in ESPON 2020.

## **B Main Report**

### **Preface**

The ESPON network of national Contact Points (ECPs) has a key role to play in the dissemination and capitalisation of ESPON. They are a diverse group, from different backgrounds, in different institutional settings and with different skills. They are appointed in different ways by Member States. Many have few resources to do the ECP work; some have faced uncertainty about the continuation of their contracts for the duration of the programme.

ESPON has delivered capitalisation at a pan-European scale through other contracts and through production of a range of publications (Synthesis Reports, Territorial Observations, project reports, Evidence Briefs, ESPON Atlas etc), seminars and workshops, the website and ephemera such as posters, pens and folders. However, at national, regional and local scales the main means for capitalisation has been the “Priority 4” projects – Transnational Networking Activities (TNAs) undertaken by partnerships of ECPs who submit a successful expression of interest.

To achieve capitalisation at sub-European level demands considerable investment of time and requires a rich set of skills. Typically ECPs have had to identify potential stakeholders who might be interested in ESPON. However, what the ECPs have to offer is research on a set of topics that may or may not be of direct interest to stakeholders, and for which the data may or may not be at a scale that fits with the scale at which stakeholders are working.

The ECP has to play an interpretive role to connect ESPON and national/sub-national stakeholders. In small countries there is only ESPON data at national level, and so the stakeholder dialogue needs to take a different form. Then in many cases there is an issue with language. The more local the level at which stakeholders are working the less likely it is that they are comfortable working in English. Even in an English-speaking country there are problems, since much of the terminology of ESPON and “territorial development and cohesion” is unfamiliar to most practitioners.

Challenges such of these have emerged as the work of the ECPs has developed and as the TNAs have progressed. Thus the Programme Manual for the call for proposals that opened on 18 April 2012 said that a new TNA project should “benefit from positive capitalisation experiences made in other ongoing Transnational Networking Activity projects and explicitly include cross-fertilisation of activities integrating thematic issues and approaches already undertaken in other transnational capitalization projects under Priority 4 and making use of best experiences in a communication targeting users of ESPON results.” (Section 5.3.2). This was the brief to which the partners responded by designing the USESPON project.

This report explains how the Transnational Project Group (TPG) made up of six partners went about the task of helping stakeholders to “USE ESPON”. The first section explains the aims, strategy and how the partners sought cross-fertilisation with other Priority 4 projects. Section 2 then reviews the implementation of the project. This largely follows much the chronological sequence over the 13 months or so when the main activity took place.

The report begins by describing the development and use of the project’s website. Section 2.2 addresses a key part of the work – how the team identified stakeholders, and collectively and severally decided to engage with them. This is followed by an explanation of how the group came to decide that they would focus their capitalisation on the general theme of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth and use it to demonstrate to stakeholders how methods used in ESPON – the Delphi method, the Nexus model and Urban benchmarking – could be applied to practical situations. Support materials were prepared to explain these

methods, and that process is discussed, followed by a review of each of the five workshops that were delivered for stakeholders.

In Section 2.7 we also explain the setting-up and use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that was part of the project, and then explain in sequence some of the other activities undertaken – the ESPON Week, participation in the EUGEO conference in Rome, and the blunder checking on ESPON reports, and other required activities.

The third section of the report is about outcomes and achievements. It begins with an evaluation based on findings from questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders. It then assesses whether the project reached its objectives. Finally there are some “key messages”. Finally, there are a number of (mainly statistical) annexes.

## Section 1 - Aims, strategy and links to other Priority 4 projects

The main aim of USESPON has been to develop capacity and a sense of ownership amongst key stakeholders in respect of use of methods developed within ESPON 2013. The aspiration has been to build know-how and confidence amongst the stakeholders. To this end, and in response to request in the call for proposals for “cross-fertilisation of activities integrating thematic issues and approaches already undertaken in other transnational capitalization projects under Priority 4”, the TPG developed a strategy that organised and infused their work in USESPON.

### 1.1 Strategy: Seek cross-fertilisation

To facilitate the cross-fertilisation of activities and experiences from other Priority 4 projects, USESPON built a partnership that included the Lead Partners of four other TNA projects. These projects were:

- **CaDEC** – Capitalisation and Dissemination of ESPON Concepts
- **ESPON-INTERSTRAT** – ESPON in Integrated Territorial Strategies
- **ESPONTrain** – Establishment of a Transnational ESPON Training Programme to Stimulate Interest in ESPON 2013 Knowledge
- **SCALES** – Breakdown and Capitalisation of ESPON Results on Different Scales.

The Lead Partners of those four projects (FR – France, UK – United Kingdom, EL – Greece and DE – Germany, respectively) were joined in USESPON by ECPs from Poland (a partner in INTERSTRAT) and Luxembourg (who were a partner in SCALES).

From the project design stage onwards USESPON sought to share and build upon the experiences from these projects, and also to liaise with the two projects that had a macro-regional focus centred on Scandinavia and the Baltic, NORBA and ENECON.

The decision to include ECP Luxembourg as a partner was itself an illustration of building on the lessons from other TNAs. The SCALES project had highlighted the importance of scale in the capitalisation of ESPON results, and in particular the challenges of small states where there is no difference between NUTS3 and NUTS1. Similarly, the involvement of ECP Poland reflected their success in INTERSTRAT in building a library of documents on strategic territorial development, which USESPON saw as important to sustain.

As the application explained, the Partners aspired through USESPON “to achieve a dynamic synthesis that can take the capitalisation of ESPON results to a new level.” To this end, USESPON began by sharing the lessons from other partners about stakeholder use of ESPON. INTERSTRAT, CaDEC and SCALES had all found that practitioner stakeholders said they had very limited time available: they could not / would not read ESPON reports. Therefore, USESPON would have to *extract* the essence of the results, identify the stakeholders’ needs, and find appropriate communication tools. Also these TNAs and ESPONTrain had all found that close engagement with small groups of practitioners in workshops seemed to create greater interest than presentations to larger groups.

### 1.2 Strategy: Translate ESPON into the operational world of the stakeholders

Thus the “translation” of ESPON was seen as central to the strategy. This meant taking ESPON work and directly relating it to the operational context of the stakeholders. This was very evident, for example, in the small and interactive events that ESPON-INTERSTRAT staged, or in CaDEC’s work with small groups of 15-20 people who were able to operate in

their own national language when completing questionnaires or taking part in national events. The SCALES experiences showed that the embedding of ESPON results in the national context and the combination with national findings on lower regional levels enhances interest of the audience.

Exploring the need for and means of undertaking, this “translation” would be undertaken transnationally by the partners in USESPON. However, it was also recognised that the diversity within Europe means that the strategy had to allow the actual task of “translation” to be nationally or regionally specific.

Another finding from the previous projects that USESPON partners had been involved in was that generally stakeholders at sub-national level had relatively little interest in the pan-European maps and data. While there was interest in urban benchmarking, in general NUTS3 and even more so NUTS2 were seen as too broad a scale by local stakeholders. A further problem was that such stakeholders often had access to more recent data about their territory than ESPON could provide.

“ESPON brings the European scale perspective. The ECPs bring understanding of their national and regional context and their networks. That is their added value”  
*USESPON Partner, November 2013.*

The USESPON partners thus were faced with a huge volume of ESPON findings, which would increase through the duration of the project. USESPON had to be selective about just what to “translate” for their stakeholders.

### **1.3 Strategy: Focus on methods rather than maps, data and “results”**

Through a transnational dialogue it was agreed to focus on just a few methods used in ESPON projects. There were two reasons for this collective decision amongst the partners. It was felt that methods had more transferability than most other aspects of ESPON’s work. CaDEC had found that different stakeholders interpreted concepts in different ways. In contrast, methods were seen by USESPON partners as more robust in respect of use in different member states. Secondly, methods were seen as something that practitioner stakeholders could potentially make direct use of in their day to day work; methods could be applied to stakeholders’ own regional / local situations.

### **1.4 Strategy: Take Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth as a theme to link to the methods**

Partners agreed that Europe 2020 was a vital document that should provide a focus for all the capitalisation within USESPON. Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth could add substance to the dissemination of methods, and was also agreed by all partners as being a theme that should have widespread appeal to practitioners, and so command their interest.

### **1.5 Strategy: Make best use of the know-how amongst the partners and the legacies from earlier TNAs**

The ESPONTrain project had delivered a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to take teaching about ESPON findings to practitioners and post-graduate students. ESPONTrain was drawing on the first batch of ESPON 2013 projects (DEMIFER, FOCI, Re-RISK, CLIMATE, EDORA, TeDi, METROBORDER, plus the later projects TERCO and SGPDT). USESPON built this into its strategy: the VLE could be used to deliver teaching of the methods to a wider and different audience.

The INTERSTRAT project had developed methods of stakeholder identification: these could be shared. INTERSTRAT also had built a library that could be sustained and developed by USESPON.

### **1.6 Objectives**

A set of objectives were identified to achieve these aims. These were:

1. Identify key stakeholders;
2. Identify the methods to disseminate and ESPON use of them and associated findings;
3. Design and keep up to date a web portal that is integrated with the ESPONTrain VLE;
4. Design “support materials” to support the delivery of the methods in workshops, and which can be used as the basis for teaching about the methods on the VLE (see objective 6);
5. Deliver interactive workshops;
6. Develop VLE materials to be delivered on the ESPON Train VLE;
7. Ensure feedback and evaluation;
8. Undertake blunder checks;
9. Deliver all national and project reporting required;
10. Deliver findings to other ECPs;
12. Ensure effective communication and efficient management.



## Section 2 - Implementation

### 2.1 The web portal and library

The Polish ECP led the **development of the project's website**. However, ideas for the portal were developed through a transnational process during the first Project Partners Meeting and subsequently through e-mail exchanges, in which all partners were able to input their ideas, comments and remarks in relation to the structure, content, and design of the website.

In this transnational activity special attention was given to designing the logo and visual identification of the project (colours, fonts etc.). These were important because they would be used not only on the project's website, but also in support materials, the VLE, invitations to the events and other official project documents. The partners agreed that they wanted a clear, simple, "clean-looking" design for the website, which would be cohesive and recognisable. This visual identification for the project was to communicate the message that USESPON wanted to make ESPON easy to access and use.

In addition, at every stage the web page design has been consistent with the ESPON 2013 Programme publicity requirements. The website is at: <http://www.espon-usespon.eu/>. The ESPON logo and EU emblem are visible on all subpages, as are the project logo and search engine, based on tags assigned to all posts. At the bottom of the page users can find additional information about Privacy Policy (including cookies) and the Legal Note (based on the note from the ESPON website).

8,400 pageviews.

1,216 unique visitors.

3.35 minutes average visit.

*USESPON website 28  
March-31December 2013.*

The website is in English. It was launched on March 28, 2013 and is located on the University of Warsaw's servers. This is to ensure that it will remain visible after the project ends. All the posts on the websites contain links to other related sections of the USESPON web portal and, where appropriate, other ESPON related websites.

All suggestions and remarks from Partners about the website structure and visual design were (if possible) incorporated into the portal. The whole content was also approved by all partners. This rule (approval by partners) was also applied during the whole project so each major modification on the website (e.g. adding a new post) was consulted with the Lead Partner or relevant partner (e.g. news about national events). As well as using the project website, partners also used their own ECP and/or institutional websites to disseminate news and information about USESPON.

All partners provided documents for the Library, and information about the events and other materials for the website. These were then added to the portal by the Polish partner. Thus the website was developed transnationally, but under the leadership of Polish ECP. The Partners' involvement in the website development was also applied in the promotion of the portal – through Partners' own institution's official website and/or ECPs websites, newsletters, bulletins, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The website was also promoted through the official ESPON Newsletter (33/2013).

The implementation of these activities built on experiences from the interactive web portal developed in the INTERSTRAT project, and findings from the monitoring of the use of the INTERSTRAT website. The USESPON website was a tool for internal and external project

communication. It was a platform for sharing information on the progress of the project, and for the Europe-wide promotion and dissemination of project outputs and results, in particular the support materials as well as events, publications and VLE.

Since the website was prepared at the beginning of the project, when all other activities were in the preparation phase, the portal was designed in a very flexible way so it could be adjusted to activities undertaken throughout the project. Every 3 months Polish partner prepared website statistics that were presented and discussed with all other partners.

The **content of the project website** was designed to emphasise the connection (through links) to the ESPON programme and projects, and especially to other TNAs (to help achieve a synthesis). The website is integrated with the ESPONTrain VLE portal and enables direct connection to the VLE website. This way the latest version of the VLE is always available online regardless of the entry method. The USESPON website explains the aims and the work of the project, presents information about the project partners and provides links to USESPON partners' websites (institutions' and/or ECPs'). It includes the News and Events section with information about meetings and events (past and upcoming). The Publication section contains USESPON support materials and the e-Library.

The website was updated throughout the project duration and new materials (in News, Events and Publications sections) were added without unnecessary delays. It was especially important in the case of national events - partners could use the project website as a reference source when promoting the events. When possible, posts on the website were illustrated with photos or graphics, since visual materials attract users' attention and make the content more user-friendly.

#### **Box 1: Content of USESPON website**

- 1) Home – here you can find the latest News, direct links to the Library, VLE, subpage with information about the project and partners. Since the ESPON Week (11/11/2013) this page also contains flash banners with attractive visual and dynamic information about the workshops, final conference and – during the ESPON Week – Map of the Day. At this page there is also contact information to the Lead Partner;
- 2) The Project – this section includes information about the project, its aim and planned activities, and general information about all project partners. The latter is presented as a map with links to detailed contact information and partner institutions' websites;
- 3) News – this section gathered all new information added to the website (27 posts during the whole project lifetime): about the workshops, conferences, as well as activities during the ESPON Week (final conference, Map of the Day). It also contains selected news from ESPON Newsletters, especially those related with the project's aims i.e. ESPON tools and methods, and other TNAs projects;
- 4) ESPONTrain VLE – here some general information about the USESPON VLE packs are presented, with direct link to the ESPONTrain VLE website;
- 5) Publications – this section contains two subpages: Supporting materials and the Library. The former presents support materials prepared by the project's partners for the interactive workshops, describing selected ESPON tools presented during the workshops. All documents are available in English and in national languages. The Library is one of the most important and at the same time the most popular (see the website's statistics in the Annex) part of the USESPON website. It was developed on the basis of the INTERSTRAT Library with 99 publications related with ITDS (integrated territorial development strategies) and expanded by 43 new items (copies of publications related to policy and research on territorial development), added by USESPON partners during the life of USESPON project. The Library gathers publications from different European countries as well as EU level documents, in

English and/or national languages, mainly policy papers and research reports, as well as scientific articles and practical handbooks. Each item includes the document (in PDF, in all available language versions) and short description and is assigned to one of the territorial categories (country, EU) and type of publication. Users can search the Library by keywords (based on tags, titles and descriptions of the documents), country or type of the document.

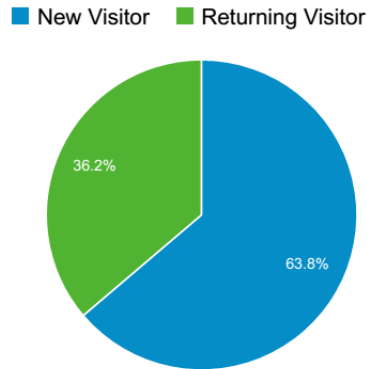
- 6) Events – this section gather information about previous and upcoming (during the project lifetime) USESPON events, both the workshops and conferences as well as Steering Committee Meetings and ESPON Seminars. It documents project activities by presenting short reports from the events, with all additional documents e.g. presentations, videos and photos;
- 7) Links – here the user can find links to the official ESPON website and general information about the ESPON project priorities, as well as other TNA projects, EU presidencies and blogs in English related to territorial development.

Table 1 shows the number, origin and type of document held in the Library (USESPON partners are shown in bold):

**Table 1: Documents in the USESPON Library**

Country (USESPON partners are underlined)	Practical handbook	Policy paper	Research report	Scientific article	Other	TOTAL
EU	12	12	6	5	1	36
Belgium		5				5
Bulgaria		2				2
<b>France</b>		2	5			7
<b>Germany</b>		1	8			9
<b>Greece</b>	1	8	1			10
Ireland		6				6
Italy		4	7	6		17
<b>Luxembourg</b>		9	1		1	11
<b>Poland</b>	3	9	3	1		16
Romania		4		1		5
Slovenia		1				1
<b>UK</b>	3	4	3			10
other	3	2	1	1		7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>142</b>

**Statistical data on the number of visits to the USESPON website** was collected using Google Analytics from March 28 2013 until December 31 2013. Over that period, the USESPON website had **1,886 visits** and **1,216 unique visitors**. About 1/3 (36.3%) of the visits were by returning visitors (Figure 1). It indicates that 684 users were so interested in the website content that they came back and visited it at least once again. At the same time, the share of new visitors, that can be used as a measure of effectiveness of promotion and outreach activities, was rather stable and exceeded 50% for most of the time. With **8,400 pageviews**, the average number of pages viewed per one visit was 4.45. Average visit last about **3:35 minute**, 2:51 for new visitors and 4:51 for returning. The bounce rate was 50.32% which means that about half of the visitors visited only one page (visits in which the person left the site from the entrance page without interacting with the page). The bounce rate was smaller for returning visitors (46%) than for new visitors (53%).



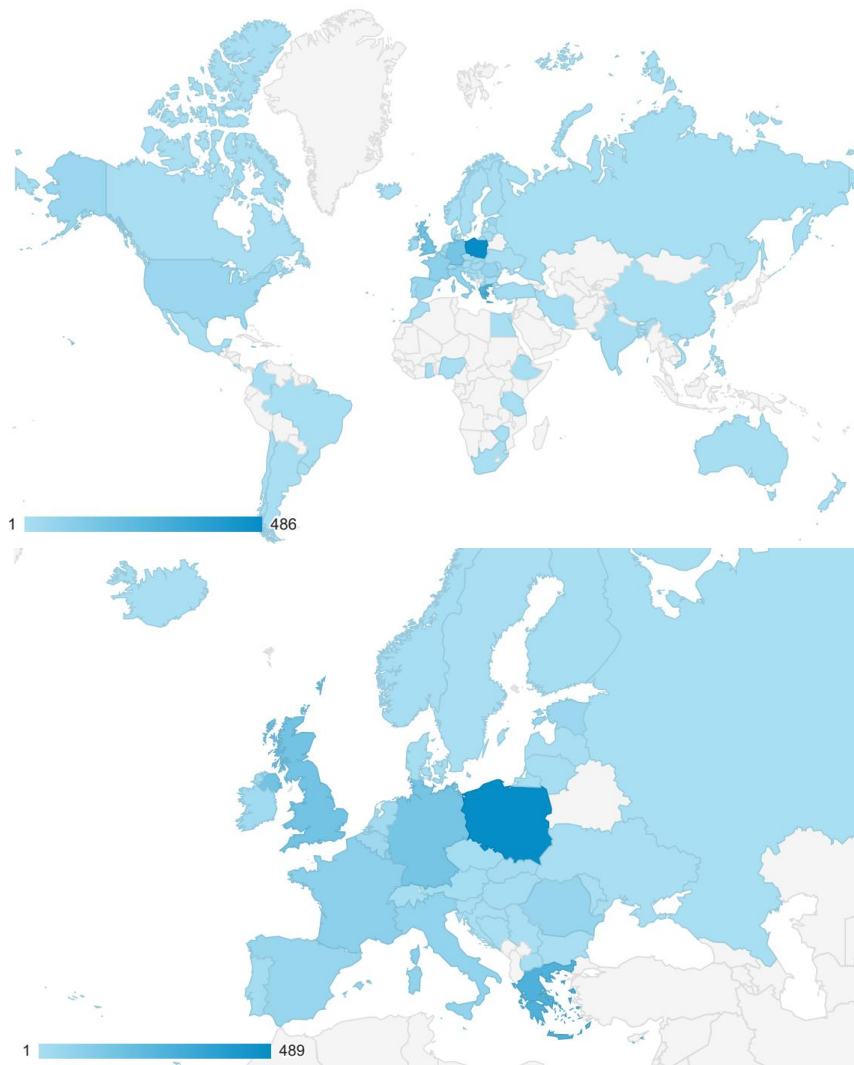
**Figure 1: Visits on the USESPON website: new and returning visitors.**

The heaviest **traffic on the website** was at the beginning, when information about launching the website appeared at partners' institutions' websites, in newsletters, on Facebook etc. During most of the time there was a very clear pattern of the traffic with the lowest number of visits during weekends and about 5-10 visits per day during working days. From October, and especially in November, there was a very strong increase in traffic, related to USESPON workshops, ESPON Week and the Final Conference. Although after that the traffic declined, it was still higher than before the workshops. This suggests that participants in the workshops might visit the project's website after the events and, possibly, also promote the website among their co-workers.

The highest traffic (about 30-40 visits) was related to:

- Launching the page;
- ESPON Newsletter – released on July 30, with information about the USESPON Library;
- Sending invitations to USESPON workshops;
- USESPON workshops, ESPON Week and the Final Conference;
- Actions related to promotion of the VLE Pack.

Most of the users represented USESPON partners' countries, especially those where USESPON events were organised (workshops and the final conference) (Fig. 2). However, a relatively large number of visits came also from Italy, Romania, Spain, Estonia, United States and Belgium (between 35 and 70 visits). Except of Estonia, these countries had a much higher bounce rate and lower average visit duration than USESPON partners' countries.

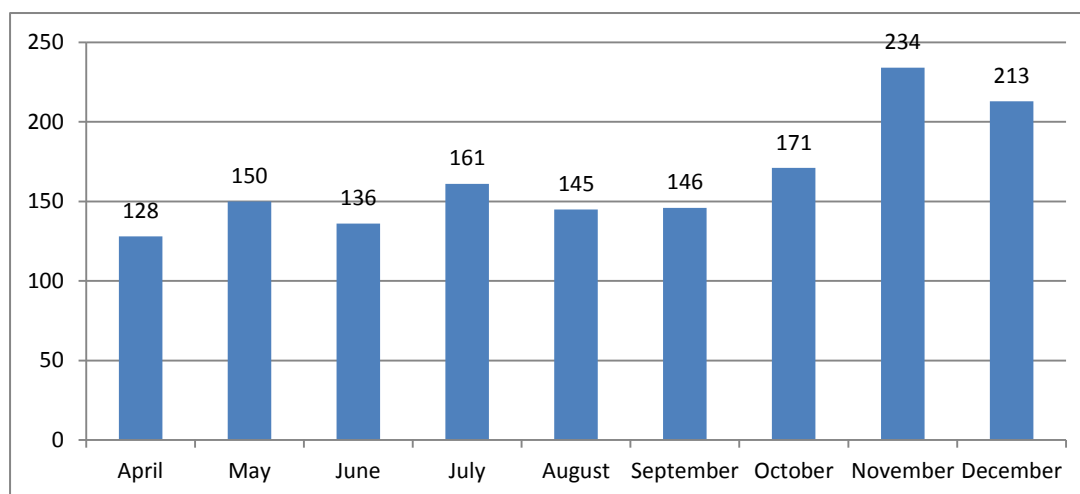


**Figure 2: Number of visits on the USESPON website by country**

Although the most frequent users of the website (more than 25 visits) were probably the project partners and 2/3 of users were single visitors, there were about 250 users that visited the website at least 5 times. Apart from 1,048 visits that last no more than 10 seconds (within that 949 were bounced visits), 266 (31%) of the visits lasted less than 1 minute, 371 (44%) – between 1 and 10 minutes, and 201 (24%) – more than 10 minutes.

The most popular source of traffic was Google the direct URL address (including the website administrator), each containing about 1/3 of all visits. The ESPON website was the source of 8% of traffic, as well as institutional website of the Polish Partner. Visits from the ESPON and the RTPi website (UK partner) had very low bounce rate and covered a relatively large number of pages (more than 6 pages per visit). This suggests that these kind of “professional” referrals are very well targeted and, as a result, very effective (they reach users that are interested in the website content). Project partners’ websites (ECPs, ESPONTrain, institutions etc.) were the source of about 17% of all traffic. It is worth noting that about 5% of all traffic came from social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. These kinds of visits were especially intense at the beginning of the project, during the events (also ESPON seminars) and when newsletters were released. Visits from Facebook were relatively long and usually related to events.

The most popular part of the website (apart from the home page) was the Library, which attracted almost 600 pageviews (including 367 unique pageviews). Also past events and supporting materials sections attracted users' attention, with very low bounce rates (probably because of the downloadable documents available on those sub-pages). During 9 months almost 1,500 documents have been downloaded from the website, most of them from the Library, with the highest in November (when most of the events took place) and December (Fig. 3). The number of downloads has never fallen below 125 in any month.



**Figure 3: Number of downloads per month from the USESPON website (2013)**

Statistical data reveal that some documents were especially popular e.g. *New paradigm in action* from Poland, *Metropolitan areas in Europe* from Germany, *The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov* from Romania, and the Polish and English versions of the Infographic on Urban Benchmarking prepared for the workshop on Urban Benchmarking in Poland (Table 2).

Apart from the Library, the USESPON website was also an important source of the project's publications such as support materials prepared for the workshops, in national and English language versions (PPT presentations, videos, infographics) (Table 3).

**Table 2: Downloads from the USESPON website**

Month	Downloads	The most popular documents
April	128	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda of the ESPON Train conference (24)</li> </ul>
May	150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some considerations about spatial planning and development policies in Italy, Maria Prezioso (14)</li> <li>• The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov (Romania) (13)</li> </ul>
June	136	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Reports on Collection of Existing Data – Veneto Region (35)</li> <li>• The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov (Romania) (31)</li> <li>• Strategia dezvoltării polului de creștere Brașov (Romania) (29)</li> <li>• National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (26)</li> </ul>
July	161	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New paradigm in action (Poland) (48)</li> <li>• Strategia dezvoltării polului de creștere Brașov (Romania) (26)</li> <li>• Land use and development (Poland) (26)</li> </ul>
August	145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New paradigm in action (Poland) (28)</li> <li>• Geography and new models for territorial planning: Italian case study, by Maria Prezioso (18)</li> </ul>

September	146	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metropolitan areas in Europe (BBSR) (59)</li> <li>• The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov (Romania) (40)</li> <li>• Local development strategies in the EU (Belgium) (37)</li> <li>• Geography and New models for territorial planning: Italian case study, by Maria Prezioso (35)</li> </ul>
October	171	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metropolitan areas in Europe (BBSR) (71)</li> <li>• Local development strategies in the EU (Belgium) (36)</li> <li>• The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov (Romania) (34)</li> <li>• National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (34)</li> </ul>
November	234	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metropolitan areas in Europe (BBSR) (105)</li> <li>• The Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Growth Pole Brasov (Romania) (57)</li> <li>• New paradigm in action (Poland) (56)</li> </ul>
December	213	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New paradigm in action (Poland) (132)</li> <li>• Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Policy in France (59)</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1484</b>	

**Table 3: Number of downloads of USESPON materials**

<b>Material</b>	<b>Number of downloads (documents) or views (videos)</b>
Support Material (Delphi) (LU)	112 (36 in French, 40 in German, 36 in English)
Support Material (Urban Benchmarking) (PL)	103 (59 In English, 44 in Polish)
Support Material (Urban Benchmarking) (DE)	56 (36 in English, 20 in German)
Support Material (Urban Benchmarking) (FR)	32
Support Material (Nexus) (GR)	90 (20 in English, 70 in Greek)
Support Material (Nexus) (FR)	26
Support Material (Nexus-Growth) (UK)	49
Presentations from German workshop	397
Materials from Luxembourg workshop	33
Materials from Polish workshop	222 (117 in English and 105 in Polish)
Presentations from UK workshop	168
Tutorial on ESPON City Bench (prepared for the Polish workshop on Urban Benchmarking, available on You Tube) (PL)	92 (52 English in and 43 in Polish)
Tutorial on ESPON Hyper Atlas (prepared for the Polish workshop on Urban Benchmarking, available on You Tube) (PL)	60 (31 English in and 29 in Polish)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1440</b>

## **2.2 Identifying and engaging with stakeholders**

A key theme of the first and second Steering Group Meetings was what lessons had previous projects learned about identifying stakeholders, and how should USESPON go about the task? It became clear that no one method of identifying or engaging with stakeholders was applicable to all partners' contexts. All partners had, through involvement in other Priority 4 projects and use of their own local knowledge, evolved individual means of recognising stakeholders. More widely, differing governance structures in each partner state mean that every ECP is confronted with a different set of priority stakeholders.

## Box 2: Summary of approaches to stakeholder identification in Priority 4 projects

**CaDEC** sought to involve a group of 10 to 15 people as ‘target group members’ in each partner country. The idea was to identify a group of people that could become involved in the project in the following 3 years. Partners tried to involve policy makers, practitioners and scientists that would otherwise would not be informed from ESPON. Naturally, each project partner took into account some national circumstances, e.g. the existing territorial administrative structures in each country. The total number of target groups was 102 people.

**ESPONTrain** aimed to train policy-makers, practitioners and students to use ESPON knowledge and methods in practice.

**ENECON** sought to generate transnational interest in ESPON amongst policy-makers, practitioners, scientists and young academics in the Nordic-Baltic countries. ENECON substantially carries forward the approach to stakeholder engagement that was developed in NORBA. The first event in August 2013 was held in co-operation with the Northern Research Forum.

**INTERSTRAT** adopted a matrix for identifying and categorising stakeholders. All 9 INTERSTRAT partners used this same framework, though within their specific national context. The matrix categorised stakeholders into four typologies based on their ability to influence integrated territorial development strategies and their capacity to use and benefit from ESPON data and evidence.

**NORBA** aimed to facilitate “transnational dialogues on spatial planning between policy-makers and practitioners, scientists and young academics and students in the Nordic-Baltic countries” (NORBA Final Report: 10). The project team also engaged with relevant stakeholders outside the region. An important part NORBA's approach was to work with some key organisations within the macro-region, putting on joint events to reach a wider audience. NORBA targeted the national research communities by organising a joint scientific congress with the Nordic Section of the European Regional Science Association.

**SCALES** focused on disseminating ESPON results at different policy levels, and sought to overcome the problems associated with making ESPON evidence relevant to the sub-national scale. The project offered five seminars, each seminar under a special topic so the composition of stakeholders differed slightly. The announcements for the seminars were quite similar in each country. The information about the contents of the seminars was distributed via email and mailing lists using the contacts of the respective national networks. The main addressees were local and regional stakeholders and planners (although the final SCALES event in Berlin addressed INTERREG secretaries and steering groups). The invitations were spread quite widely into the institutions to reach as much as possible persons with different professional backgrounds.

Looking at the picture in Box 2, the overall impression is that it had been easiest to involve researchers, especially if the medium for contact was a conventional academic conference. At the other extreme, in the main the Priority 4 projects had not succeeded in reaching many people in the private sector or in INTERREG or URBACT projects (although one event for the SCALES project in Bern had a focus on innovation and R&D and addressed private consultancies).

Having established this synthesis from across the other TNA projects, the USESPON partners agreed that in order to achieve capitalization and not just dissemination of ESPON, the project would concentrate on working in some depth with a small group of mainly practitioner stakeholders in each country, rather than following the more conventional academic conference approach followed by NORBA and ENECON. Furthermore, it made sense to work with the databases of stakeholders that each partner had built up, and to give each partner the discretion to identify and involve stakeholders within their own country, within a shared transnational approach. Stakeholders identified would be communicated with via a number of mechanisms including email and telephone, and invited to use the support



materials and VLE and attend interactive events where appropriate. The approach of each partner is now described.

**ECP France** identified individuals from a range of institutions using the UMS-RIATE contacts database. These stakeholders were practitioners, policy-makers and researchers interested in the theme of smart growth, and either new to ESPON or with little prior knowledge of ESPON. From previous experiences, it was assumed that a restricted number of stakeholders is a good way to disseminate and capitalize ESPON results. The idea is to go deeper than wider in the ESPON understanding and use.

Thirteen persons were selected from the database, all of them were already interested in getting European information on European territorial development. As the USESPON project was limited in time, this seemed an efficient way to extend the interest of stakeholders ready to receive new information. In making the selection the ECP France was also influenced by the ESPON methods that partners were planning to use: specifically which stakeholders might be interested by urban benchmarking and by the NEXUS model? For the full list of French stakeholders and their roles and relation to urban benchmarking and NEXUS see Annex 2.

First, the French ECP contacted the stakeholders by phone calls. This gave the opportunity to explain (re-explain) the ESPON programme as a whole and to explain the dissemination and capitalisation strategy specific to USESPON. Following these phone calls, the support materials (these are described in a later section of this chapter) were sent to the different stakeholders with the evaluation grid by emails (again the evaluation grid is discussed later). Feedback was asked for on the support materials from the stakeholders, using the evaluation grid. The stakeholders were also informed that they would be able to have, later on, access to the final report of USESPON and notably to the transnational analysis of the evaluation.

**ECP Germany** followed a similar method to that in the SCALES project, using the contact database of SCALES with 250 stakeholders to get a first overview of possible participants. The SCALES database contained contacts of national and regional ministries and administrations as well as researchers from universities and other institutions. Announcements about the workshop were particularly targeted at persons and institutions interested in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. One objective was to reach persons not familiar with ESPON. Mailing lists included researchers and contacts in national, regional and local administrations included. Also the German ESPON Newsletter was used and distributed to 187 subscribers (the German Urban Audit community were also informed and their newsletter were used to spread the invitation about the workshop).

**ECP Greece** had developed a database of stakeholders from different scales of territorial organisation through involvement in INTERSTRAT (more than 1000 contacts) and ESPONTrain (which contributed to the extension of the INTERSTRAT list through its dissemination and participants' engagement activities). Both these projects focused on the administrative reform in Greece ('Kallikrates') and the fact that new administrative structures and regional elected authorities acting as strategic/development planning units would need to be informed about ESPON findings and how to use them in every-day planning. The

We decided that the most important thing for us will be listening to what stakeholders want and addressing their needs. We were also discussing about our experiences from other ESPON Projects (especially Transnational Networking Activities) and how to use them in USESPON." *Report of First Steering Group Meeting, USESPON website.*

Greek USESPON stakeholder database was formed by merging these previous databases following the INTERSTRAT classification – most contacts being either executive staff or staff dealing with planning at regional/state decentralised authorities/central levels. For the identification of USESPON stakeholders, the ECP used the INTERSTRAT/ESPONTrain criteria but enriched them in order to maximise the capitalisation of the methods and tools to be used in a wider circle of relevant stakeholders (mostly at regional level) who are engaged with the development of policy documents for the next programming period 2014-2020. Communication with these stakeholders took the form of either personal contacts, where feasible, emails and, if appropriate, telephone conversations. Use was also made of the ECP Greece website, ESPON newsletter and relevant mailing.

**ECP Luxembourg's** thinking about stakeholder identification developed during USESPON. Discussions within USESPON about patterns of stakeholder involvement in other TNAs (Box 2) had identified a general failure to connect with the persons managing ERDF programmes nationally. The ECP's idea of focusing a workshop on Research & Development and Innovation (RDI), and linking that to the development of the operational programmes for the new round of Cohesion Funds, gave a new dynamic to the identification of stakeholders in Luxembourg. Two target groups were therefore defined consisting of just 10 people to ensure an interactive workshop. The two groups were people responsible for the design of operational programmes, and experts for RDI in Luxembourg. All ten people were contacted individually by phone or e-mail.

**ECP Poland** differentiated between the wide range of stakeholders for whom the website and VLE platform is intended, and the specific targeted stakeholders who were invited to attend the interactive workshop. The stakeholders were chosen to ensure that the attendees were most likely to be interested in the methods being discussed and would benefit from using them. The interactive character of the workshop would require active involvement of the participants. Therefore, the identification of the targeted stakeholders was precise and based on a review of the official websites of the Ministries, Marshall Offices and City Halls, as well as regional and spatial planning agencies etc. Priority 2 stakeholders were also approached to attend the workshop. Participants in other events related to urban policy (e.g. conferences, workshops organised by central administration) were also considered, so that any other relevant stakeholders can be identified. Contact with potential participants of the workshop was by e-mails and, sometimes, phone calls. To identify the broader group of stakeholders (for the VLE and USESPON website promotion), the existing PL ECP database was used and email was the main form of communication (mainly through the ECP Newsletters).

**The United Kingdom ECP** had built a database of more than 650 stakeholders over the course of the ESPON 2013 Programme. In identifying stakeholders for use in USESPON, the UK ECP used the INTERSTRAT matrix and its knowledge of the UK policy landscape to target key people from UK Government and the Devolved Nations. Given the objective of promoting the use of ESPON in policy-making and planning practice, and taking account of resources, it had been established that the focus of engagement should be those stakeholders categorised as having high power/influence and direct benefit from ESPON in the INTERSTRAT typology. These included, but were not limited to, the following:

- UK Government and Devolved Nations - specifically the Department for Communities and Local Government (Local Economics, Regeneration and European Programmes and Planning Divisions), Scottish Government (Built Environment Directorate), Welsh Government (Planning and Environment and Countryside Divisions), the Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland (Regional Planning Unit of Transport, Policy, Strategy and Legislation Division);

- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) - especially Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Greater Manchester and Newcastle Gateshead LEPs;
- Local authorities - Forward planning teams within Local Planning Authorities
- Priority 2 project stakeholders - particularly Birmingham City Council, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, New Economy Manchester.

Communication with these stakeholders took the form of emails and, where appropriate, telephone conversations, which are more resource intensive. Combining telephone calls with targeted emails which can be produced with fewer resources meant that the ECP could maximise its capacity to engage with stakeholders. Stakeholders were informed of key developments in the USESPON project, and encouraged to use the support materials and VLE pack put together in a UK context. Some of these stakeholders were invited to attend the final project conference in London.

“We were also discussing about methods and techniques to be used during the planned workshops. We decided that we should be very flexible in this matter, since the national context in different countries requires different approaches. We were also looking for added value of the USESPON project” *USESPON Second Steering Committee Meeting, USESPON website.*

### **2.3 Choosing the theme and methods for workshops**

At the first two meetings the Partners had some intense discussion about what ESPON content should be delivered in the planned events. Although the project application had said that the focus would be on methods used in ESPON projects, and had given some examples some partners had doubts about the feasibility of concentrating on a method. A method would need to be linked to a theme to interest stakeholders. The theme most likely to attract stakeholders was “Smart growth”, given its importance in EU 2020 and the pressure across Europe for “jobs and growth”.

In the end the Partners decided that each workshop should make connections to the EU 2020 priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, while still aiming to give participating stakeholders some “hands-on” experience in using a method from ESPON. But which methods to use? It was agreed that each ECP would know best what would be most useful to their stakeholders and most relevant to current national practice concerns.

The USESPON application had already “tentatively identified” three possible methods for consideration. These were the territorial impact assessment (TIA) methodology developed in the ESPON-TIA Priority 2 project; the NEXUS model that had been used first in the Priority 2 TeDi project and then in the GEOSPECS Applied Research project, and the idea of urban benchmarking that was the focus of a Scientific Platform project that was the subject of a call for expressions of interest. There was transnational discussion in the Project Steering Group about these methods, and others, with partners carefully considering the nature of each and their possible appeal to their stakeholders and their possible use in relation to the theme of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. As well as being used in the workshops the chosen methods would be converted into on-line learning materials for the VLE.

#### **Box 3: Methods chosen from ESPON projects for use in the workshops and for the VLE**

**ECP Germany** opted for urban benchmarking, because there was evidence that this was a theme that appealed to stakeholders.

**ECP Greece** decided to focus on the Nexus model, because of the number of Greek regions with “geographical specificities” (e.g. islands).

**ECP Luxembourg** used the Delphi technique, which had been used in the Priority 2 METROBORDER project that included Luxembourg.

**ECP Poland** used urban benchmarking, because of the focus on cities in Poland at present.

**ECP UK** modified the NEXUS model so that the focus became less on territories with geographical specificities and more on exploring how to achieve local growth, a key concern of the UK government.

It is worth noting that some degree of adjustment had to be made to use these methods. The Urban Benchmarking tool was not yet available, so while it could be announced, benchmarking had to rely on the ECP using other ESPON data. Similarly, the UK adapted the NEXUS model to become “NEXUS + Growth” so that it would have more appeal to potential stakeholders: “NEXUS” as a title on its own would not mean much to practitioners being invited to an event or to read about the method or study it on the VLE.

It is also clear that any of the ECPs could have chosen to use tools already available from Priority 3, Scientific Platform, projects. The fact that none did, was for a couple of reasons. Firstly, not that many techniques were available to choose from in the Scientific Platform when USESPON began. USESPON in effect had a year to do its work: there was no real scope to wait for the later Priority 3 projects to be completed. Secondly, the ECPs noted the finding of the SCALES project that “The ESPON tools, first and foremost the ESPON database, but also the ESPON HyperAtlas, seem very interesting for stakeholders, but difficult to be used by those who do not work with it regularly.” For the credibility of the ECPs, USESPON and of ESPON, there had to be some confidence that the methods chosen could be made “user-friendly” and directly applicable to the day to day work of the stakeholders.

#### **2.4 Preparation and use of support materials**

Transnational working and learning from previous TNAs also underpinned the preparation of the support materials. The idea of preparing a short booklet that could be available in the national language had been trialled successfully by the INTERSTRAT project. In design terms the parameters of the lay-out of the support materials had already been determined by a combination of the design decisions (colours, style etc.) taken for the USESPON website (see earlier section of this report), and by the ESPON graphical requirements.

However, the support materials would be key documents for the events and for the VLE. Thus there were still important questions about the structure and content of the materials. The general objective of the support material was to provide stakeholders introductory and step by step information about the method/content to be worked with during the workshop.

The support material was designed according to a common template agreed transnationally by the partners. The template was meant to be flexible enough to fit with each national context, while still containing some common information. Firstly, each support material introduces briefly the challenges of implementing the EU2020 strategy at national level. Secondly, the main outcomes of the selected ESPON tools or results are presented before some key elements about the policy implications. The ESPON programme and the USESPON project are finally briefly presented.

In order to reach a wide audience, including but not limited to those taking part in an event, the support material took the form of an easy-to-handle 4-pages document, using a balance of text and illustrations. Drawing on past experiences, the team decided to produce each support material in a national language in order to reach as many practitioners as possible, as well as in English, thus making the documents accessible to readers from outside the

host country. Although each document was embedded in a specific national territorial development context, it also had sufficient generality to be used by non-nationals. To enable such access, all the support materials were posted on the USESPON website, where they can be accessed in the Publications section.

#### **Box 4: The support materials in each USESPON partner country**

In **France** there was no event. However, materials on Nexus and on urban benchmarking were made available in French by the ECP.

In **Germany** the support material was provided to the participants at the workshop. It demonstrates urban benchmarking in a German context, as well as giving an overview of how the method has developed so far within ESPON. The support material gave an overview about the presentations of the workshop and explained what urban benchmarking is and which targets are behind this approach. All this was raised against the background of the EU2020 strategy and its implementation in Germany.

In **Greece** the support material was also made available at the workshop. It provides added value by demonstrating the application of the Nexus method to the Greek context, especially to identify a region's assets, challenges and opportunities to achieve territorial cohesion. The document presents the main steps to be undertaken in order to design and implement a nexus model at local and regional level. It can easily be used as a support document in other decision making contexts.

In **Luxembourg** the support material was sent to the participants 10 days prior the event. As this workshop rather put emphasis on the content (RDI) than on the method which has been implemented through the workshop, the support material presents a territorial diagnosis in the field of RDI in Luxembourg. ESPON results were filtered and analysed to define Luxembourg's profile (challenges and opportunities) in the field of RDI. Therefore, it presented some of the key maps with interpretation for Luxembourg and the Greater Region. The document served also as an introduction towards the debate of the workshop. It comprised a section entitled "Discussion and policy implications" where hypotheses and questions for the discussion were presented. No specific feedback was required but it helped to familiarise the participants with some of the main ESPON results and facilitated the participants' preparation. Some participants, for example, had prepared questions on data, indicators and methods before attending the workshop.

In **Poland** the support material was sent to selected stakeholders with the invitation to the Polish workshop, one month before the event. So it was delivered not only to the workshop's participants, but also to stakeholders that, due to organisational, financial or any other constraints, could not take part in the workshop. The workshop was focused on the urban benchmarking method and its links with different ESPON projects. To meet this goal the support material presents in a very didactic way which steps should be followed to implement the tool (urban benchmarking) and how results and products of ESPON projects can be used during this process: at the preparation phase, as a source of data for the analysis, and as an example of how to use the method. The material also presents the pros and cons of using this method and its implications in policy development, with special emphasis on public participation. In the evaluation questionnaires almost all workshop participants assessed the material as a good source of the basic information needed to understand the urban benchmarking tool.

In **UK** the support material was provided to the participants attending the Final USESPON conference, which included a workshop session using the NEXUS method. The booklet was given the headline title "Promoting local growth", and used a figure from GEOSPECS showing the application of the Nexus model to the Scottish Highlands. It provided a one-page, three-step guide to "building your Nexus + Growth model."

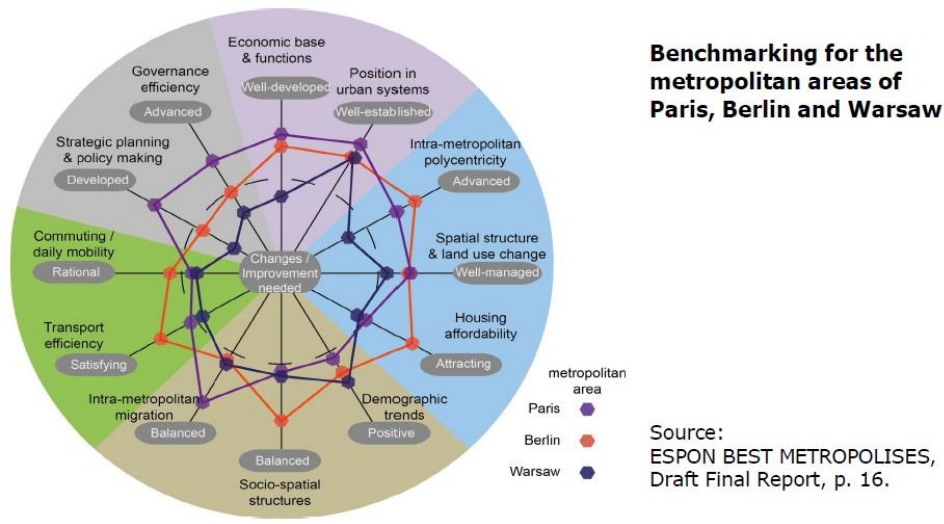
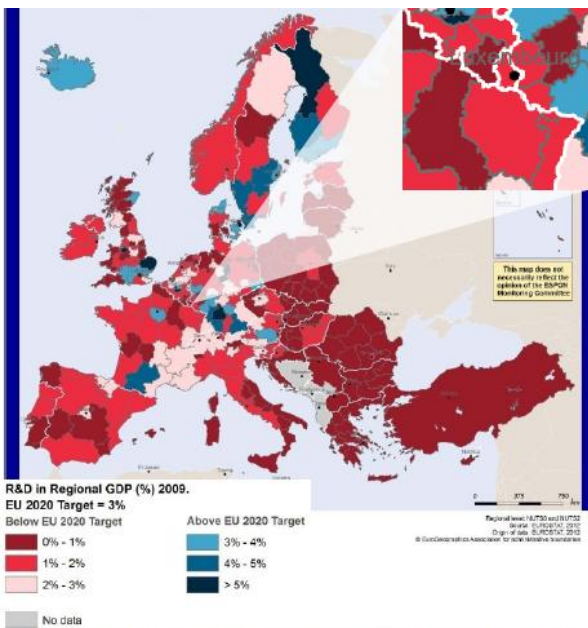


Figure 4: Illustration in the Polish and German support materials on urban benchmarking

Figure 5 (below) Zoom-in used in Luxembourg support materials



Map 1: General expenditure in R&D as percentage of regional GDP, 2009

Source : SIESTA, FR, p.44

## 2.5 Design and delivery of the events

It was agreed that events to roll out the methods to the stakeholders would be held in Luxembourg, Berlin, Athens, and Warsaw, with a Final Conference in London during which there would be a workshop session giving a “hands-on” group-based test of the Nexus + Growth method. No workshop was to be held in France, and the French ECP took on the evaluation role for all the USESPON events. Reports and materials from all five events can be found and downloaded from the USESPON website. The design and delivery of each



event is now described. The aim of all workshops was to present ESPON methods and tools to practitioners, and so to disseminate ESPON results in a way that would encourage their capitalisation. The evaluation of the events is covered in Section 3 of this report, as part of the discussion of “Outcomes and Achievements”.

Smart growth was the central theme of the first USESPON event “Research and Innovation: Which strategy for Luxembourg?” in **Luxembourg**. At the time of the project activities (spring 2013), civil servants in charge of implementing structural funds in Luxembourg were about to prepare the operational programmes for the period 2014-2020. The smart growth objective detailed in the EU2020 strategy is very linked to the objective of dedicating 3% of the GDP to R&D expenditures. The ESPON KIT project investigated to what extent a link can be found between investment in research and GDP growth. It also established a typology of innovation in Europe. In this context, ECP Luxembourg decided to concentrate its capitalisation activities on the question: how may ESPON results (especially KIT results) be used to concretise the priorities for the operational programmes dealing with “smart growth”?

The main challenge of the capitalisation activities was to organise an exchange between institutions involved in RDI and institutions involved in the management of structural funds. The table below summarises the experts reached with this approach and their institutional background. In the end the USESPON “event” was spread over a number of weeks and had three stages. First, the participants received the support material. Then they participated in the workshop. Then a synthesis was produced by the ECP, based on the results of the workshop, together with a questionnaire to the experts, given them the chance to develop and refine their contributions. Thus the interaction was extensive but also in depth.

Dates of the workshops
Luxembourg, 11.07.2013
Germany, 26.09.2013
Poland, 06.11.2013
Greece, 07.11.2013
Final Conference - United Kingdom, 15.11.2013

**Table 4: Stakeholders in the Luxembourg event**

		INTERREG authorities with RDI objectives			
		FEDER <i>*Ministry of Economy</i>	INTERREG A <i>*Ministry of Interior</i> <i>*Joint technical secretariat</i>	INTERREG B <i>*Ministry of spatial planning</i>	INTERREG C <i>*Ministry of spatial planning</i>
<b>RDI institutions</b>	Public institutions involved in research <i>* CEPS research centre</i> <i>* University of Luxembourg</i>		<i>*INTERREG TIGRE project (University of Liège)</i>		
	Institutions promoting innovation <i>* Luxinnovation</i>				
	Ministries involved in RDI <i>* Ministère de la recherche</i> <i>* Ministère of Economy</i>				

NB: institutions mentioned in italics were contacted, showed interest but could not attend due to unexpected agenda conflicts. As they showed interest they received the documentation in relation to the workshop.

In total 11 experts involved in Luxembourg or in the Greater Region attended the workshop on 11 July 2013. These were mainly professionals who knew ESPON in general without having made extensive use of ESPON results so far. The support material served as a basis to present to the workshop participants how ESPON results can be interpreted in Luxembourg.

The aim of the workshop was to define possible priorities for the concretisation of Structural Funds programmes in the field of research and innovation. To implement this objective, ECP Luxembourg considered different methods used in ESPON. Urban benchmarking proved to be inappropriate to address research and innovation. After an exchange with the GEOSPECS project team who designed the Nexus model, it also turned out that this method would have needed further methodological developments to be applied to the workshop in Luxembourg. The Delphi method was finally selected. The specific context in Luxembourg explains why the capitalisation activities of USESPON (especially the workshop) were slightly adapted: the Delphi method was used to disseminate ESPON results, rather than prioritising the dissemination of the method itself.

This was the first time that ECP Luxembourg had delivered an interactive ESPON event: previous ones have mainly consisted of presentations based on ESPON results. This new format proved to be very interesting as participants could extensively discuss the results and their interpretation for the context of Luxembourg. The half-a day-format linked with a light lunch gave sufficient time for formal and informal discussions between the participants (geographic proximity within Luxembourg helped). A one-day conference would not have been possible for most of the practitioners. The USESPON event brought stakeholders together who do not usually meet, such as INTERREG actors and RDI experts. This may serve as a basis for future exchanges.

**Table 5: Delphi method and its use in the Luxembourg workshop**

<b>Key characteristics of a Delphi study</b>	<b>Implementation in the USESPON workshop in Luxembourg</b>
CONTEXT: understand a problem when limited knowledge and data is available	There are numerous reports on research and innovation in Luxembourg. However, they reflect specific schemes and policy and are not particularly linked with the Structural Funds. The workshop was used as a <b>platform to set-up a common diagnosis on RDI in Luxembourg</b> , based on ESPON results.
AIM: schematically, the method is used for 3 different objectives: forecast, facilitate decision-making ("policy Delphi") or to reach a consensus among stakeholders	The process was <b>future oriented</b> (next Structural Funds programming period) and supported the development of <b>policy options</b>
IMPLEMENTATION: a group of experts is consulted through an iterative process (questionnaires), they have the opportunity to reconsider, deepen, and concretise their assessments.	<p><b>Introduction:</b> support material: ESPON results were filtered and analysed to identify their main added-value for Luxembourg in the field of RDI. The document was sent to the experts 10 days prior the event. No specific feedback was required.</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> round: Workshop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work out the diagnosis of the situation presented by the ECP on the basis of ESPON results.</li> <li>* Work out options for the development of priorities for the structural funds operational programmes in the field of research and innovation</li> </ul> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> round: Synthesis &amp; Questionnaire</b></p> <p>The workshop results were synthesized and a questionnaire was established to deepen and concretise the workshop's results.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p>



	The results of the consultation process were synthesised and sent to the participants for final use in their institution
ANONYMITY: it allows the exchange between stakeholders without bias such as the dominance of some experts.	The consultation process followed this principle partially (only the second round was anonymous). The workshop did not only aim at commenting ESPON results but also at taking benefit of the exchange of expertise between experts. It was also a networking opportunity for the participants.

The Delphi method offered an appropriate framework to structure exchanges between stakeholders in different settings. The iterative process is particularly valuable when stakeholders have little time to debate in a workshop. The response rate to the questionnaire was acceptable (6 contributions while 11 participants attended the workshop). Individual stakeholders mentioned bilaterally that this process was very relevant but that they had too little time to answer the questionnaire.



**The Luxembourg workshop**

The workshop and the questionnaires were followed up. ECP Luxembourg produced a 12-page synthesis report based on the findings. It is a document that stakeholders can use in their future work. It (and the workshop presentations) can be downloaded from <http://www.espon-usespon.eu/past-events,usespon-workshop-in-luxembourg>. Thus the USESPON event in Luxembourg created a new national network of stakeholders that cut across political and institutional backgrounds.

The one-day workshop in **Germany** was held in Berlin and lasted five and a half hours. The method which was presented in the workshop was benchmarking of cities in general. For the presentation of the workshop Dr. Kai Böhme from Spatial Foresight was engaged as he is an expert for ESPON as well as for German cities.

**Box 5: The delivery of the Berlin Workshop**

After a welcome from the director of the BBSR, Harald Herrmann, the workshop started with the first block, dealing with the role of cities in territorial development. An introductory presentation about the European perspective on German cities by Klaus Kunzmann (TU Dortmund) opened that part. He underlined the advantages of Germany's balanced settlement structure in Germany. It is now being seen as a kind of ideal also for countries which traditionally have a more centralised structure with a few dominant cities. Kunzmann listed several reasons and different interests why to compare or benchmarking cities. They vary from meeting scientific interests, learning from other cities, or reflecting on the own situation, to more marketing oriented reasons like attracting firms, investments

and the well-educated and/or creative class, or optimising the real estate market.

A presentation with a more global view on the performance and functions of European cities and the role of cities in a globalised world introduced ESPON project results. Gilles van Hamme (Université Libre de Bruxelles) presented results from the ESPON projects FOCl and TIGER which analysed, compared and categorised trends, performances and development perspectives of European metropolitan regions. Van Hamme made clear that the shift in policy in spatial planning to diversity and cities underlines the importance of engaging with urban questions. Summing up the related ESPON findings, he pointed out, that the performance of big cities is less the more developed countries are, and that there is only little evidence that big cities are motors of regional development and foster regional growth. However, the economic and financial crisis showed that big cities perform better due to their economic diversity and by this guarantee stability for investments.

After scene-setting reflections, the following presentations dealt with the main aspects of the seminar, introducing and discussing ideas and tools to compare and benchmark cities.

Jochen Hucke (Berlin Senate) talked about his experiences as a stakeholder in the ESPON priority 2 project BEST METROPOLISES which analysed social, economic and spatial processes to describe development potentials and challenges of Paris, Berlin and Warsaw. Issues which were analysed were living conditions and migration, transport and mobility and metropolitan governance.

Ana Sanchis Huertas (University Jaume) from the ESPON CityBench project presented their web tool which was still in a processing phase at that time, developing on a usable demo' version. The project aims to develop an online tool helping policy-makers, practitioners and public and private investors with indicators on the economic, social and environmental sustainability of cities. The web tool will allow decision-makers to compare their cities with other cities to find similar cities taking for example into consideration demographic challenges, economic challenges, social disparities/polarisation, urban sprawl and greenhouse gas emissions. The web tool holds the promise that it can make it easier to use ESPON results for urban benchmarking.

In the last presentation of the day Günther Bachmann (City of Darmstadt) also presented a benchmarking tool which is available online, the Urban Audit Atlas for structural data which contains data for all German Urban Audit cities and allows comparison of cities on different indicators. He showed results from an analysis of Urban Audit data comparing cities with a strong focus on science.

The final discussion dealing with the usefulness of benchmarking of cities and the tools was interactive using the "fishbowl" method. The discussants, in this case the speakers and the representatives of the German ESPON MC and ECP were seated in a roundtable in front of the audience. An additional empty chair completes the round. The moderator starts the discussion with questions to the seated participants. If a person from the audience has a comment or wants to ask a question to the topic of the discussion, the person is allowed to take the empty chair and becomes then a part of the group. The advantage of this kind of discussion is that it is more structured than "traditional" discussions with disordered questions from the audience. After making the statement the person has to leave the chair opening the floor to other interested persons from the audience.

The discussion at the end of the Berlin workshop dealt with city benchmarking and rankings, but also with the use and function of ESPON in general. City benchmarking was seen as important in different ways. Benchmarking tools are necessary to show in which clusters a city is assigned and which cities in other parts of the country or Europe face similar problems or challenges. Also municipal decision-makers will get a more focused and intelligible view on the cities' position among other cities. To know which cities are similar it is important to achieve learning effects while working with the right partner. Benchmarking tools such as the ESPON CityBench were seen as very helpful and supportive for practitioners. However, several statements made clear that a comparable data basis is very important for urban benchmarking. Qualitative analyses should not be forgotten as it allows a more detailed breakdown. The idea of the CityBench project to include informal data from social networks, for example, was seen as very interesting, with potential to reduce the problem of time lags of official data sets. It was stated that municipal decision-makers are now more interested in data and their acceptance of statistical analyses is higher.

On ESPON, a gap was identified between the profound conceptual research and the persons who would like to use ESPON results in practice. To minimise this gap it was suggested that ESPON should further focus on practical tools to disseminate results. Projects should be supported which bring together researchers and practitioners as the Priority 2 projects in the ESPON 2013 did. One critical point concerning the work of ESPON was the collection of a huge amount of data which seem to have no concrete relation to the every-day work of practitioners. It was suggested that ESPON needs to create an institution which is available for concrete data requests. Several members of the discussion group pointed out that ESPON should become more user-friendly and react more quickly to current political questions and concerns. But the big advantage of ESPON is now that the member states are able to have a say in decision-making. This advantage could disappear when ESPON should be transformed into a new institution.

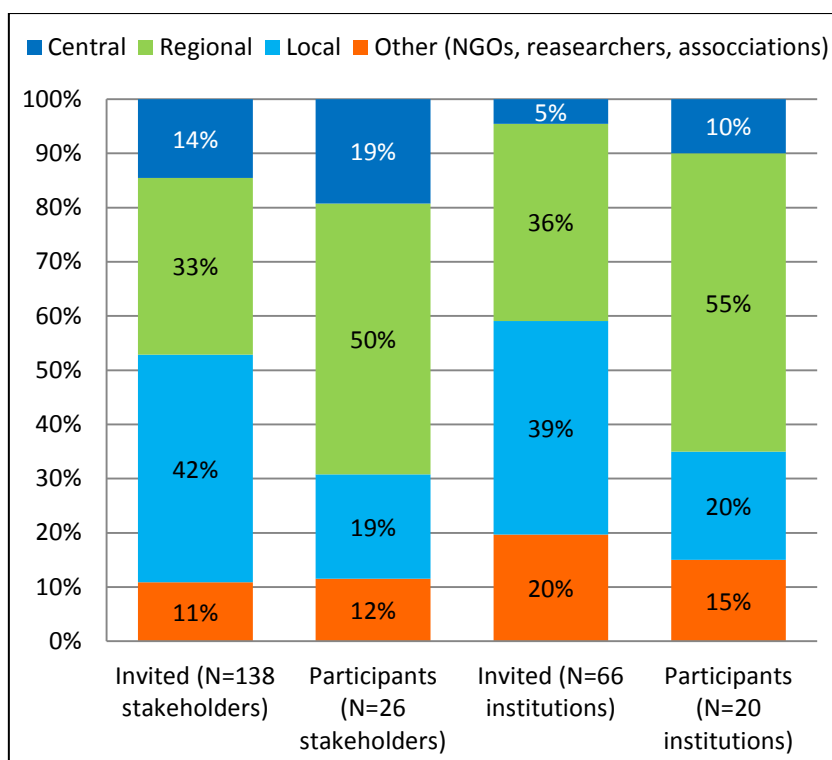
In **Poland** urban policy was identified as one of the most important topics in current regional and spatial development agenda. Therefore, the workshop focused on the urban benchmarking tool. The aim of the event was to provide comprehensive information about urban benchmarking as a simple and flexible method of assessing cities' development opportunities and challenges. The workshop was tailored to the needs of public administration representatives at local, regional and central level. Participants learned about urban benchmarking, its pros and cons, and how to apply the method in their everyday work. They have also had an opportunity to design urban benchmarking analysis, using ESPON results and tools such as typologies, HyperAtlas, Database or CityBench.

The workshop was designed to give participants theoretical knowledge about the method and examples from local government's practice of using this tool, as well as practical skills in preparing urban benchmarking analysis. Special emphasis was put on the importance of decisions made at all stages of the analysis, which have significant impacts on final results.

Invitations (with Polish support materials) were sent one month before the workshop to 138 stakeholders, identified on the basis of their involvement in urban policy at all administrative levels. In some cases it was possible to identify them very precisely, so some of the invitations were sent to more than one person from the same institution. As a result, invitations were sent to 66 institutions (see Figure 5). The invitation as well as the registration procedure followed the rule of proportional representation of participants from all 3 administrative levels (local, regional and central). This balance was very important due to the design of tasks prepared for the participants (more details follow).

More than 40% of invitations were sent to the representatives of local administration i.e. city halls, especially departments related with strategic planning and policy development. One third of invitations were directed to the representatives of regional administration, mostly Marshal Offices and Regional Offices of Spatial Planning. Invitations were also sent to the Ministries (central administration), especially the Ministry of Regional Development that is now preparing Poland's National Urban Policy, and to other institutions related with urban development, such as NGOs, associations, statistical offices etc.

Figure 5 reveals that this general, balanced structure was broadly maintained in case of actual participants of the workshop, although there were also some differences. Relatively few local administration stakeholders took part in the workshop (compared to the number of invitations sent). The greatest interest in the workshop was at regional level – half of the participants represented this type of institution. This situation might be related to the timing of the workshop i.e. progress in designing regional operational programmes for the 2014-2020 programming period.



**Figure 5: Structure of invitations and participants at the Polish workshop – stakeholders and institutions**

**Box 6: Summary of the Polish workshop**

The workshop ran for 4 hours 30 minutes. It started with an **introduction** to the aim and agenda of the event, the ESPON programme and USESPON project and general information about the method (urban benchmarking): its origins, main assumptions, applications in public sector, pros and cons (also in comparison to other methods – SWOT and Nexus). Some information about the increasing role of cities in development processes were also presented, as well as the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy.

This was followed by **brainstorming**. Participants were randomly divided into 3 groups, and each group was given a different question: criteria for selection of the reference group of cities, thematic areas of the analysis, and benefits and traps of an urban benchmarking tool. They were asked to discuss questions using information provided during the introduction and their own experiences. After 15 minutes of group discussions each group presented its findings and conclusions.

The last part of the first session was a more detailed presentation of **steps in urban benchmarking analysis**: aim & scope, data gathering and analysis & visualisation, interpretation & discussion. Each step was discussed in great detail, with special emphasis on difficulties that may occur (e.g. shortcomings of data or misinterpretation of the results) and ESPON projects that might be useful during the whole process (as a source of data, examples of using the method and basis for the scientific background of the analysis).

After a lunch break there were **video presentations** (with additional comment) explaining the use of ESPON on-line tools that can be useful during urban benchmarking analysis – HyperAtlas and CityBench. This worked well: it focused participants’ attention and made it possible to present two tools in relatively short time. One of the participants volunteered and presented a third on-line tool – ‘Strateg’, prepared by Polish Statistical Office – also in on-line form.

Next on the agenda was a presentation regarding **practical application** of urban benchmarking i.e. three case studies of using the tool at central, regional and local levels. Two examples were based on prepared hypothetical problems, but the local level case study presented actual benchmarking

analysis prepared by the city administration of Lodz (one of the Polish largest cities). A representative of Lodz city council spontaneously engaged in presentation of this case study. It gave an opportunity to share real experience on how the idea of urban benchmarking was implemented, prepared and conducted in that particular case.

This was followed by an **exercise**. Participants were divided into three groups – representatives of central, regional and local administration. Each group had to design urban benchmarking on the same topic (attractiveness of cities as a place of living for young professionals) but from three different perspectives: central, regional and local. Each group had to select criteria for the analysis, a reference group and indicators to be used during the benchmarking (taking into consideration availability of data). Participants were using on-line tools (Polish databases, ESPON HyperAtlas and ESPON CityBench). After half an hour each group presented the results, as well as problems, doubts and conclusions from the exercise. It seemed that the most important limitation of urban benchmarking analysis is lack of data, also within on-line tools which focus on selected cities or present only regional, not local, data. Limited availability of comparable data is especially important in international comparisons, so in this case ESPON data appeared especially valuable.

After the discussion presenting the results of exercise the workshop was **summarized** and the evaluation was conducted. In informal conversations during the breaks and after the workshop participants gave very positive feedback on both the topic of the workshop (cities) and its content (on-line tools, interactive activities).

As can be seen from Box 6, the Polish workshop was very interactive, and also enabled practitioners to share experiences, not only in their group exercises but also through spontaneous interventions. ECP Poland summarised the Warsaw event in a blog.

Key conclusions about urban benchmarking from the Polish workshop were:

- Limited data availability is the main difficulty in using urban benchmarking, especially for international comparisons.
- On-line tools that can be used during the analysis aren't perfect, and sometimes very difficult to use, especially for new users. There is a high demand to present their functionality by exemplary tutorials and exercises.
- Although urban benchmarking is based on quantitative methods also the qualitative element is important and should be introduced to the analysis. Numbers can't describe everything and are usually focused on economy.
- Urban benchmarking is a very flexible tool, which can be used not only for diagnosis but also for identification and/or redefinition of development goals (supported also by public participation and consultation), communication of the results (e.g. implementation of a programme or policy), and as a basis for networking and co-operation (e.g. by identification of cities with similar problems).
- Urban benchmarking is not a solution but a tool that can lead to easier identification of problems and finding solutions. At each stage of the analysis there are some limitations and pitfalls, which may lead to false results and wrong conclusions. That is why it is so important to understand the method, even if the analysis will be conducted by an expert or a subcontractor.

In **Greece** a one day workshop was held in Athens on 7 November 2013. The theme was "The role of regions in the EU2020 strategy: Sustainable growth of South regions in a European context". The interactive workshop aimed to support regional governors, policy makers and practitioners at regional level by promoting strategic thinking for territorial development in their regions. Sustainable, inclusive and smart growth was projected by means of the Nexus methodological tool, towards an integrated development approach, the delivery of more efficient European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) regional

schemes and the achievement of the objectives of EU2020. ESPON Projects reflecting the priorities of the Greek presidency to the EU Council were presented and discussed.

Currently, Greek regional authorities are developing strategies for using ESIF allocations aiming to social, economic and territorial cohesion. Furthermore, as 2014 is a year of regional elections, the Greek regional authorities should also draft a strategic policy document with the overall aims and strategic priorities for the next four years. Design of the USESPON event took into consideration a) the central role of the Greek Regions in the achievement of Europe2020, b) their need to recover from economic crisis, c) their new development role as recently established regional self-government units, d) the variety of their geographical specificities and challenges, and e) the need to focus upon unfolding their territorial potential. The Athens workshop focused to methods or processes that should help stakeholders and practitioners to understand the multifaceted, complex and non-linear regional development process.

The stakeholders targeted to take part in the event were representatives of regional government, and planners coming from the regions and from the decentralized units of central administration. Invitations were sent to the Governors of the thirteen Greek regions; the Secretary Generals of the seven Deconcentrated State Authorities; the executive staff of regional authorities that address spatial and environmental planning/development issues; and academics, practitioners and other scholars.

Nearly all regional authorities participated in the meeting by sending more than two executives as well as political representatives. This demonstrates both the need for new methodological knowledge like the one introduced by ESPON and the good timing of the workshop. The workshop was attended by both politicians from regional level and senior staff of the regions. The participating politicians included the governor of Thessaly, regional vice-governors from Attica and from South Aegean, regional councillors from 9 out of 13 regions of Greece and one Secretary General of a Decentralised Administration ("Deconcentrated Unit"). Besides them the majority of the participants were consultants to regional authorities, senior executives that address mostly issues of regional development and spatial/environmental planning, academics and a significant number of researchers. The meeting was opened by the Director General of the Ministry of Administrative Reform, Mrs. Georgia Valatsou, who attended the meeting, and the representative of the ESPON Monitoring Committee, Mrs Mathilde Konstantopoulou.

The USESPON workshop in Athens showed that the ESPON methods presented have the potential to contribute to an integrated and balanced territorial development strategy. This was fully acknowledged by policy representatives who participated, though they found the Nexus tool quite complex method. The workshop was really helpful towards a better understanding of its principles and use. The participating stakeholders acknowledged that the ESPON2013 findings could be a crucial base for more comprehensive regional integrated strategies. It was clear, that such interactive one-day workshops are really welcomed by both policy-makers and practitioners.

#### **Box 7: Summary of the Greek workshop**

The ESPON programme, tools and methods and its main findings on territorial cohesion were presented in the morning session with emphasis upon the critical findings for the Greek regions towards the achievement of the EU2020 goals. The first speaker Ms. Konstantopoulou, member of the ESPON Monitoring Committee, presented an introduction to the ESPON2013 findings and ESPON's development post-2013. Ms. Kyvelou, Director of the Greek ESPON Contact Point gave a speech on the policy implications of ESPON for the Greek regions and cities, making reference to the ESPON Projects reflecting the Greek Presidency priorities.

This introductory session was followed by more focused presentations. The main aims of the USESPON programme were presented by Ms. Nektaria Marava, Senior researcher and member of the ECP, while Prof. Nikitas Chiotinis, also member of the ECP, presented briefly the Nexus, Delphi and Urban Benchmarking methodological tools and their use during the formation of integrated territorial strategies. The first part concluded with a brief but systematic and coherent presentation by Mrs Stella Kyvelou and Mrs D. Avgoulidou regarding the regional use of ESPON2013 findings in terms of data, methods and policy-making procedures.

The participants then had the opportunity to hear about two of the USESPON methods: the Delphi and the Nexus. The Nexus methodological tool was presented in a step by a step analysis from a researcher of the TeDi project. He described how the method was used in TeDi Project, and discussed its pros and cons. Previous discussions with key stakeholders had led the ECP Greece to conclude that it was necessary to cover both Nexus and the DELPHI methodological tool, considering both of them as valuable for development of an integrated approach to local and regional needs. This session finished with a thorough dialogue between policy-makers and stakeholders about these tools. Both agreed that the Nexus methodological tool is quite interesting, but difficult to elaborate. Its usage could be promoted and advanced by the Delphi approach.

The dialogue was really lively and it set up the next session, the simulation of the methodological tool, namely Nexus to a Greek region with key geographical characteristics, challenges and potentials, the region of East Macedonia - Thrace. One of our stakeholders, a senior executive from the regional managing authority of East Macedonia - Thrace, Mr. Panayiotis Koudoumakis, was invited to give a presentation describing the main geographical specificities of the region and key challenges, but also its territorial potential and development opportunities.

The Final Conference in London was preceded by a half day **United Kingdom** workshop, to which there was an open invitation. The theme was “Promoting Local Growth”. This half-day event provided an insight into the range of approaches being taken to achieve growth in the UK and mainland Europe. ESPON findings are clear that policies should be place-based, and while there can be no universal strategy for growth, there are lessons to be learned from successful places such as Munich. Feedback received after the event revealed that 100% of participants felt that the interactive nature of the event worked well, with 68% rating it as good or very good.

#### **Box 8: Summary of the UK workshop**

Jo Talbot (JOHT Resources Ltd) chaired the session, and began by setting out the EU’s growth agenda, linking the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth objectives to England’s priorities. Jim Hubbard (RTPI) then discussed planning as a driver for growth, outlining the UK Government’s emphasis on local growth. Jim spoke about the RTPI’s involvement in the All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local growth and highlighted some of the key points in the RTPI’s response to the call for evidence. These included the need for joined up, spatial thinking and strengthening of relationships between LEPs and local authorities. Jim set out the RTPI’s work on economic growth and encouraged participants to respond to the RTPI’s call for evidence on the economic benefits of planning.

Cliff Hague (UK ESPON Contact Point) contrasted smart and stupid growth. Cliff explained smart growth in terms of smart specialisation and innovation, where places exploit their strengths and opportunities and combine this with innovation system logic. He discussed different types of innovation and drew on the ESPON Secondary Growth Poles project to highlight Munich as a place which has successfully fostered growth through innovation. The key lessons were that businesses, government and universities need to work together in a sustained, long-term strategy which advocates both hard (infrastructure) and soft (entrepreneurialism) investment. However, civil society also has a role – particularly in enabling sustainable and inclusive growth – and that place managers who understand the economic, social and ecological environment can ‘connect the dots’ and create local growth.

Alister Scott (Birmingham City University) then spoke about the role of LEPs in the pursuit of growth.



Alister set out the aims of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) of creating jobs, growing the economy and, as a result of the former, raising quality of life for the LEP population and explained that leadership, the duty to cooperate and the tradition of regional planning in the West Midlands were influential reasons for the LEP's adoption of a spatial approach to planning. He explained that addressing housing shortfall, making the duty to cooperate work, community engagement, realising the opportunities of rural development and HS2 would be the key issues over the long term. He also urged participants to respond to the GBSLEP's consultation on its spatial plan for recovery and growth.

Erik Gloersen (University of Geneva) then provided an overview of the Nexus model. Erik explained that the model allows practitioners to consider the 'defining features' in an area and draw out the development challenges and opportunities arising from them. Cliff Hague described how the UK ESPON Contact Point had adapted the tool for use in formulating growth strategies. In essence, the model enables the practitioner to explore opportunities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by encouraging them to identify and analyse the area's characteristics. The first step involves defining the features of an area; step two is to connect these features with policy objectives e.g. smart growth; finally, 'logical chains' should be established which connect the features with the objectives. Attendants at the event were then asked to test the model in relation to a particular area. Groups considered places such as the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, Coast to Capital LEP and Luxembourg City and discussed the characteristics and scope for development.

Dave Valler (Oxford Brookes University) ended the event with an overview of the governance capacity and arrangements in three areas in South East England in respect to delivering growth. He proposed that success factors in achieving growth include having a distinct identity; clear overall agenda; detailed plan; stakeholder engagement; political influence and resourcing. Some preliminary conclusions suggest that 'soft spaces' can be important in shaping mind-sets and that possession of a large, robust evidence base and organisational coherence is crucial in delivering growth.

There were mixed responses to the added value of the Nexus model, with some identifying its ability to structure strategic thinking as a benefit while others suggested that it the difference between legacies and intermediate factors was unclear. The tool was, however, successful in provoking a discussion and encouraging participants to think strategically about the assets they have at their disposal.



**Group work applying the Nexus + Growth method, London**

In addition to these events, some USESPON partners took part in the **European Geographers' (EUGEO) conference in Rome**, where there was an all-day ESPON track on 7 September. This was organised by the ECP Italy, and enabled networking with other ECPs from outside USESPON and with members of the CU. A presentation of USESPON was made by the Lead Partner. The Lead Partner had also made a presentation of the project to the **ESPON Monitoring Committee** on 5 June 2013 during the Dublin meeting.



## 2.6 ESPON Week

USESPON partners agreed to co-operate to deliver an “ESPON Week” with the idea that partners would make a special effort together by concentrating some activities in the same week to raise awareness of ESPON. The concept had been trialed successfully by the UK ECP in the lead up to the final INTERSTRAT conference in September 2011. Thus its use in USESPON was another example of synthesis and sharing from across TNA projects.

It was agreed to use the week 11-15 November 2013, as it included the London workshop and final conference and final Project Steering Group meeting, and would follow the workshops in Athens and Warsaw the previous week.

### **Box 9: ESPON Week Activities**

**ECP France** put on its website (<http://www.ums-riate.fr/orate2.html>) French translations of the ESPON report “Europe’s Neighbourhood from a Territorial Perspective” and the Final Report of the ESPON CLIMATE project. Also posted were *Fiches de Synthèse* - Summaries of reports emphasising methods, tools, and findings for the ESPON projects CLIMATE, Secondary Cities and TIGER. Tools and policy recommendations are also analysed from a French point of view and in the light of the French political agenda. Then for the projects TIGER and KIT the ECP posted a *Expertise de rapport de projet*. A national expert is asked to run a scientific expertise to first read the report from a French point of view, and second to consider if the tool, concepts or methodology could be implemented in France or French context.

In addition, the French ECP made a presentation of the HyperAtlas at schools. The aim was to promote the ESPON [HyperAtlas](#), which has great pedagogic value suitable to anyone willing to work on multi-scalar territorial analysis. The activity was run with 16/18 years old pupils. Starting from the HyperAtlas tool and a selected specific topic, the aim of our activity was to create pedagogical support materials to teach geography. The ESPON week was a first attempt and we chose to work on inequities in Europe. Two kind of support material were designed; the first one is intended to teachers to present the tool and help them to work with the HyperAtlas and the other one was targeting pupils to guide them during the lesson. Support material is available [here](#).

**ECP Greece** The disseminating activities of USESPON during the ESPON week in Greece coincided with the launching of the USESPON-VLE and its national language part (for more on the VLE see the next section of the report). A special ESPON newsletter/bulletin was sent to all the Greek ESPON forum and published on the Greek ECP’s website (<http://www.espon2013.panteion.gr>) and the SDMed website ([www.sd-med.org](http://www.sd-med.org)) as well as via social media (the ESPONTrain Facebook page etc) highlighting the ESPON week activities. Through this activity stakeholders were informed about the USESPON-VLE and the ESPON-USESPON project. The USESPON project and the relevant educational material (included in the VLE) were presented to several Greek university students. While presentations were previewed in several universities, some of them were postponed due to a strike that kept closed the majority of Greek universities during that period. Despite this constraint, a wide call permitted to a sufficient number of students to attend the relevant presentation organized at Panteion University. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the USESPON-VLE was also presented to postgraduate students at Panteion University, and the Greek Team also attended the Final USESPON Conference held in London.

**ECP Luxembourg** put material on their website as follows: Monday 11<sup>th</sup>: map dedicated to secondary school (in FR and DE); Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>: report on the ECP national event (in FR and DE); Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>: map on the knowledge regions (in FR and DE); Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>: report on the USESPON activities held in Luxembourg (workshop, Delphi study and results of this consultation process about research and innovation in Luxembourg, in FR and DE)

**ECP Poland** and **ECP UK** put out tweets (see Annex 4).

**ECP Poland** put up a “map of the day” each day on the USESPON website, with different flash banners for each day.

**ECP UK** gave a presentation on “Strategic Planning for Local Growth: International Lessons” at the Department for Communities and Local Government on 12 November.

**ECP UK** posted blog on [www.espon.org.uk](http://www.espon.org.uk) on “Informing policy with international research” (11 November); “Grappling with growth: What Europe can teach us about strategies for promoting local growth” (12 November); “From stupid to smart: International lessons for local growth” (13 November); “Policy-making doesn’t need to be an ‘act of faith’” (14 November) and “A tool to help you plan for local growth” (15 November).

**All USESPON Partners** participated in the Project Steering Group meeting (14 November), UK workshop and Final Conference (15 November).

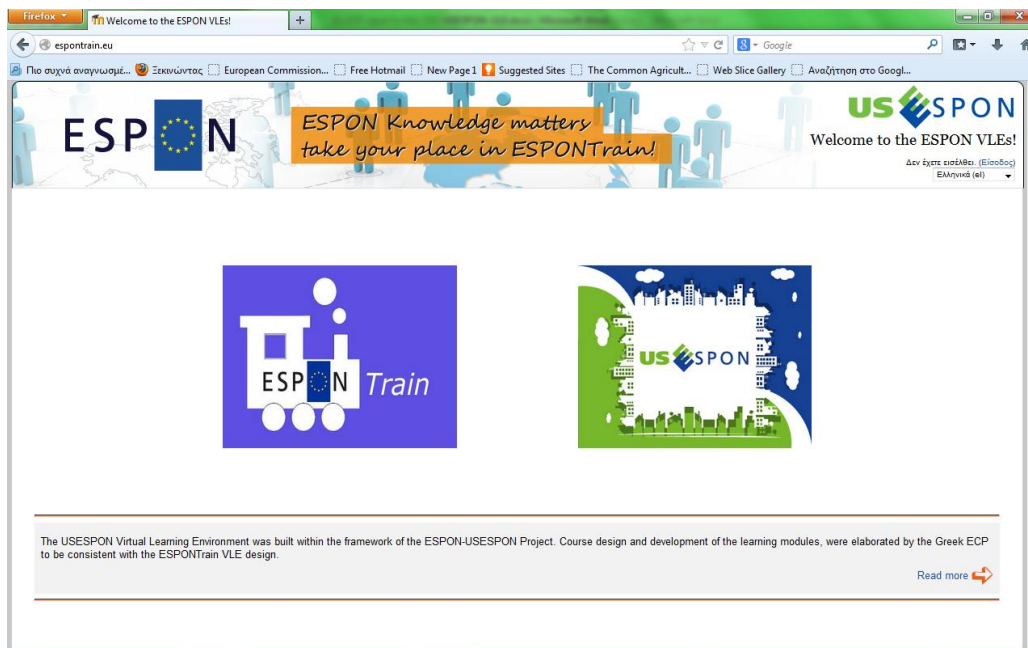
## **2.7 The USESPON VLE**

One of the USESPON activities was to design, develop, release and update a VLE with specific modules about USESPON tools. The USESPON VLE (<http://espontrain.eu/mod/page/view.php?id=11980>) is compatible with the ESPONTrain VLE thus creating a synergy between the USESPON and the ESPONTrain project, but without duplicating or repeating the first one. Taking into consideration the project goals and target groups and building on the ESPONTrain experience, a new ESPON-VLE part was specially created for the USESPON project. The USESPON-VLE complemented the project dissemination conducted through the interactive workshops and provided the opportunity to stakeholders to participate in a more in-depth training concerning the use of ESPON tools and methods.

The Greek ECP led on VLE development with partners’ contributions, mainly the original support material. The main final activities of this work package were a) to develop the **USESPON-VLE platform** with three different learning modules about the USESPON methods, b) **disseminate it** during the ESPON week and c) elaborate a brief **Guide on Using the USESPON-VLE**. Completing these actions a **new asynchronous learning environment** for anyone interested to ESPON methods was created. Registered users could read or download learning material, PowerPoint presentations from the workshops, key readings and references, could assess their knowledge through self-assessment quizzes and/or could participate in discussion forums for each of the USESPON tools, thus enriching the dialogue and the learning between stakeholders even after the completion of the project. However, resources within USESPON did not permit all six partners to actually offer interactive teaching and tutorials using the VLE.

One important part of the USESPON –VLE was the ability for participants to interact to their own language if needed. For instance all learning material was translated in Greek and separate forums have been created in order to allow users to interact in their national language. The USESPON-VLE is supported by Greek ECP ICT Team and was launched on November 13, 2013, during the Project’s ESPON week. The ESPON-VLEs design and operation is coherent with the ESPON 2013 Programme publicity requirements.

The cornerstone of the ESPONTrain learning environment was the **Moodle Learning Management System**. Moodle (abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) is the most popular and usable open source e-learning software platform which has been customised for the needs of ESPONTrain and USESPON (i.e. customisation of the theme, the course structure, and the integration of specific plug-ins). Moodle was chosen for ESPON-VLEs because it helps in creating online courses (synchronous learning) while it can be linked with social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).



**Figure 6: Screenshot of the ESPON- VLE’s home page**

The learning courses developed were based on the ESPON Methods presented during the project’s workshops, namely the tools: Nexus, Delphi and urban benchmarking. USESPON support materials were the primary base for all three modules. Each module consisted of learning materials with a specific aim, structure and content. Each is available in English and in Greek. Each partner, according to its knowledge and competences provided support documents, presentations from the workshops or documents for further reading , translated documents to their national language as well (e.g. France and Poland). The partners’ involvement in the USESPON-VLE was also important for the promotion of USESPON-VLE – through partner’s institution’s official website and/or ECPs websites, newsletters or lists of stakeholders. The USESPON-VLE was also promoted through the USESPON website.

The educational platform is a portal only for registered users who have access in all learning modules. Two volunteers were assigned as tutors, a Greek and a Polish tutor in order to constantly update the relevant learning material. The USESPON-VLE has been designed for use by independent learners, and thus **includes self-assessment exercises** with multiple choice questions, **links to further reading** and an **active forum for each of the learning modules** where participants can exchange ideas or information about a specific methodological tool.

**Box 10: USESPON VLE learning materials**

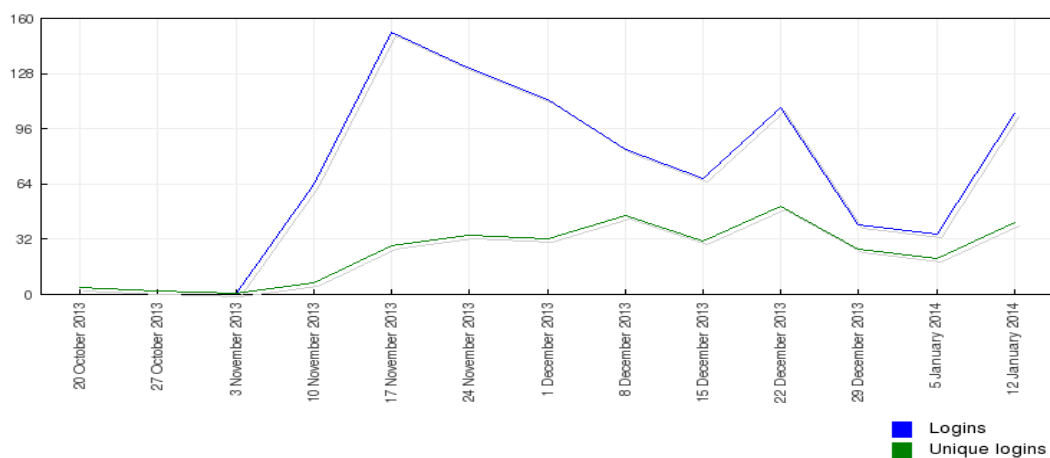
The learning materials consist of:

- A **course overview** that informs the learner simply and quickly what the module is about.
- Each course is then divided into units. Each **unit** has a **unit overview, learning objectives and learning material, further reading** or even in Greek version **learning activities** to be fulfilled by students. Usually, the first unit is an introductory one referring, for example, to the main characteristics of the tool, its main advantages and disadvantages for application to policy – making, or how it was used in ESPON projects. The last unit is a step by step analysis for applying the method.
- **Self-Assessment Quizzes:** all learners can test their acquired knowledge by attempting the self-assessment test. If they do not succeed or they are not satisfied with their results, they could retry it more than once

- More information about the method is available (**further reading, support materials and presentations from the workshop, application of the method**).
- A link to the USESPON website.
- **Glossary and Terms of ESPON** as “**Tip of the day**”. An additional application of the USESPON VLE is the ESPON glossary. This glossary introduces the participants to several ESPON terms in the form of a “**Tip of the day**”. A term is analysed as the “tip of the day”, based on the glossary that the Greek ECP uploads to the platform.

USESPON–VLE users can create fora in their own language, where they can participate in or launch discussions or exchange information.

At the time of preparing this DFR, the ESPON VLEs had 410 registered users. With the USESPON-VLE approximately 200 users were added. In November 2013, and by its launch during the ESPON week, there was evidence of steadily increasing logins to the platform.



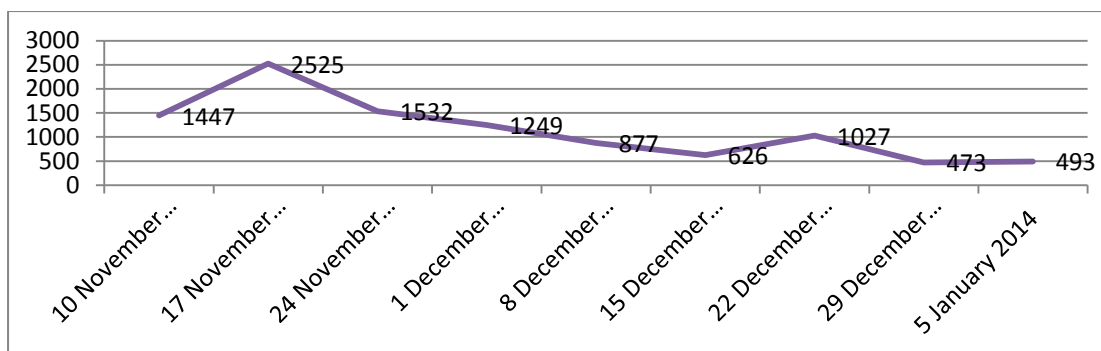
**Figure 7: Number of Logins from November up to January 2014**

The number of unique logins on the platform and the demand of the registration of new users increased on the following occasions:

- After the final USESPON conference;
- In mid-December 2013, when partner institutions promoted the VLE through their websites, newsletters, and/or social media.

The same pattern applies more or less with the ESPON-VLEs views. The highest number of views was related to:

- The launching of the platform and after its presentation in the Greek Workshop in Athens (9<sup>th</sup> of November);
- ESPON Week;
- The Final Conference on November 15;
- The Christmas Holidays. This reflects the key advantage of this virtual learning environment which is the possibility to have access at your convenience.



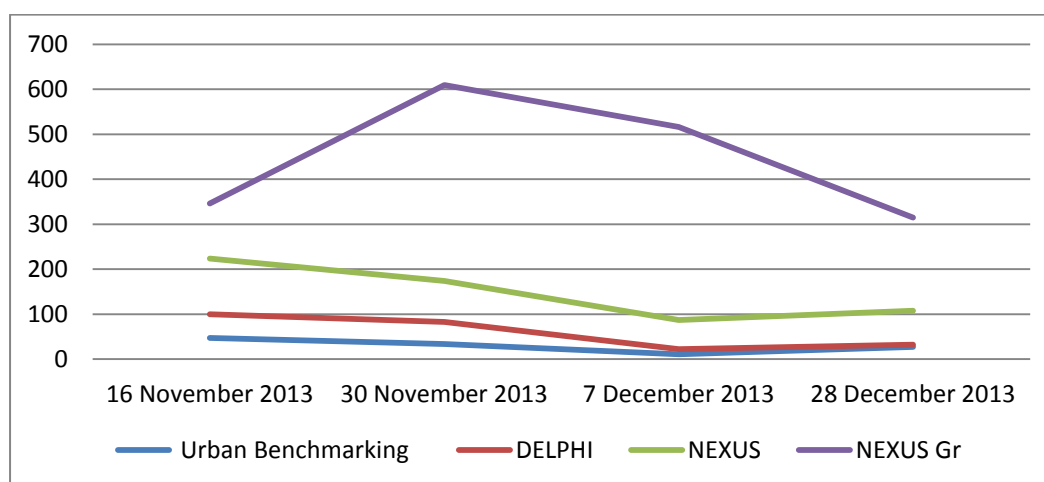
**Figure 8: Number of ESPON-VLEs Views**

In total from 10<sup>th</sup> of November (pilot registration with Greek Stakeholders), ESPON-VLEs had 4306 terms of views is Nexus (1192 views), following by the Delphi (971) then Urban benchmarking (921 views). Once modules were made available in Greek language then the views for NEXUS became higher. The Greek courses also attracted the highest number of registered stakeholders and students. This demonstrates the importance of the national language for the dissemination of ESPON methods.

Table 6 counts views from all users – guests (members of ECPs or of the Monitoring committee), teachers and students. When the statistical analysis has been restricted to the role of Students, again a high frequency of visits for the NEXUS GR was evident (Figure 9).

Learning Module	Views	Number of Users	Quiz Attempts
DELPHI	971	165	2
DELPHI Greek	641	212	2
NEXUS	1192	165	22
NEXU Greek	3469	212	7
Urban Benchmarking	921	212	1
<b>Urban Benchmarking Greek</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 6: USESPON Learning Modules, November 2013 – mid-January 2014**



### **Figure 9: Views of the USESPON Learning modules only from students by selected dates**

The most attractive unit of each module is the one explaining the step-by-step approach for applying the method. The next most popular is the “suggested reading” section.

In **summary**, the USESPON VLE motivated users to learn more about the USESPON methods after the completion of the relevant workshops. There was a multiplier effect in relation to the USESPON website and the workshops for disseminating the use of ESPON methods.

USESPON sought to create a synthesis with other TNAs. There are some interesting comparisons to be made between the VLE elements of ESPONTrain and USESPON. The “raw material” that ESPONTrain had to work with to create its learning materials was mainly the rather long and complex reports from ESPON Applied Research projects. In contrast USESPON materials were built up from the support materials produced by partners, which were brief and consciously designed with an eye to dissemination to stakeholders.

The main difficulty in the USESPON VLE proved to be getting the learners to make active use of the forum. This may reflect on their inexperience with this learning medium, and so could be overcome in future.

#### **2.8 Blunder checks**

Blunder checks were carried out on the reports produced by the TANGO and GREECO projects. These were undertaken within USESPON by all partners except for ECP France, who did the blunder checks as part of the CaDEC project. Partners also carried out all other reporting of national activities as required by ESPON.

## Section 3 – Outcomes and achievements

### 3.1 Evaluation

Because reaching stakeholders was such a key part of the project, USESPON partners decided at the first meeting to undertake a thorough and consistent evaluation of stakeholders' experiences. This work was led by ECP France, though like all other aspects of the project, the underlying approach was developed transnationally with participation by all partners.

The **objectives** of the evaluation were to assess:

- stakeholders' general knowledge and use of ESPON;
- the level of knowledge and use of the tools presented in the support materials and the national workshops;
- the way stakeholders think they will use the tools after receiving inputs from the USESPON project;
- their understanding of the tools after the delivery of the support materials and workshops;
- the type of tools on which they would like more information, general needs and suggestions related to ESPON;
- experiences of the workshops themselves.

In terms of the **methodology**, an evaluation grid was built and then adjusted after discussion with all project partners. Changes were introduced to reach an agreement on the evaluation grid (see Annex 5). The evaluation grid has been translated into national languages by each ECP and conducted during the workshop or a few days after. In order to ease the process of analysis, the French ECP elaborated and sent to the USESPON partners an Excel file to collect the answers from the evaluation grid. This meant that all responses were compiled in one single file that allowed a transnational analysis of the results (see below). Furthermore, project partners considered that it would be useful to get more in depth feedback from stakeholders via phone calls. Therefore, the French ECP proposed a common set of questions to be asked (Annex 6). All project partners selected 2 stakeholders to interview using these questions: a synthesis of the outcome of those phone calls is available in the results section.

In order to adapt the evaluation to different national contexts and to relations of ECPs to their stakeholders, some project partners chose to not ask all questions of the general evaluation grid:

- For ECP Luxemburg, the question 17 was not asked
- For ECP Germany, the questions 9 to 12 and 16 were not asked
- For ECP UK, the questions 2 to 8 were not asked
- For France, the evaluation grid sent to French stakeholders omitted the question on the workshops (questions 17, 18) as no workshop was held in France. Nevertheless, question 17 was rephrase to take this situation into account: "Has this support material met your expectation on how to use the tool?" As no workshop has been held in France, no phone calls were made.

In all 95 replies were received to the main questionnaire. A full analysis is provided in Annex 7. Regional government and research and teaching each account for just over a quarter of the respondents, with local government next with 15% then the private sector with 11%, and central government with 9% ("Other" made up the rest).

While the UK did not ask the question about whether participants had heard about ESPON before the workshop, amongst the rest 81% said “yes”. Of these, a clear majority, 67%, had heard of ESPON through their job, and a similar proportion said that they used ESPON results in their everyday work. When asked what kind of information they use from ESPON, replies were rather evenly spread between “general knowledge about the European territory”, “data” and “basis for development of policy orientations”, with fewer mentioning “methods of analysis”. Overwhelmingly, these respondents (not including those at the UK event) were positive when asked whether they could see potential uses for ESPON in the future. Potential uses identified covered a very large range of wishes, including general or thematic information as much as methodological outcomes or delivering data.

The tools presented during the workshops were unknown to two thirds of the respondents. This shows the relevance of the USESPON strategy to use tools to disseminate ESPON results to stakeholders. It also demonstrates that more dissemination from ESPON is needed to reach stakeholders at national and sub national levels. **80% of the respondents said that they thought that they would in the future use the tools presented during the workshops.** This can be considered as a significant achievement of the USESPON workshops. Policymaking and evaluation were identified by respondents as fields where they thought they could use the tools. Some also indicated that the tool could be used as part of an involvement strategy: “to get a group discussion going”, for “Community development work”. **It is important to stress that the capitalization objective of the P4 projects in general, and of USESPON in particular, seems here to have been reached.**

Questions about the tools presented in the workshops also revealed some useful insights. Comments were made about the difficulty of obtaining data to inform the tools (e.g. for Urban Benchmarking), and the lack of theoretical explanation of the tool presented (e.g. the Nexus model). On the other hand, some comments were made that tools were too academic (Nexus again!), with presentations giving too little explanation of possible practical use of it. Other comments underlined a specific problem related to the Nexus model that it does not show how a “system” is related to others (openness, networks...). The Urban Benchmarking tool was also said to be relevant for large size cities but not for second-tier cities.

The support materials delivered before the workshops seem to have been appreciated by the stakeholders, though there were a high number of non-responses to this question (36 out of 95). Respondents saying that the support materials were not sufficient in order to understand the tools, said they found them: too short, too complex, misunderstanding of some concepts (e.g. “Intermediate factors” in Nexus), with not enough examples, and insufficient information on the methodology of implementation of the tool.

Nearly three quarter of the stakeholders said that the workshops have met their expectations. **Nine-tenths of the respondents considered the quality of the presentations during the workshops as “good” or “very good”.** Similarly, four-fifths found the interactive style of the workshop “good” or “very good”. Some comments underlined the stimulating inputs of USESPON that had opened doors to new knowledge in a nice atmosphere (i.e. the workshops).

The explanations given on why the workshops did not meet the expectation of the respondents are interesting for USESPON but also for ESPON, including:

- data to implement the tools seem too old, no information is given on how to obtain more recent data;
- not enough examples on current application of the tools;
- more insights are needed on the backgrounds of these tools, the theoretical or political background.



A Scientific Platform in a new ESPON programme might note that when invited to indicate tools they would be interested in, respondents came up with:

- tool to assess territorial policies;
- SWOT analysis type tools;
- tools that allow to combine (measurement, to chose of policy options...): growth, sustainable development and quality of life;
- tools for participatory planning;
- benchmarking of governance;
- benchmarking for non-urban space.

Some suggests that ESPON should better target groups with specific needs instead of trying to reach at the same time stakeholders with different centres of interest. There were suggestions, for example, to target stakeholders of a particular city or region or a type of stakeholders (e.g. developers, researchers).

On the tools presented, while there was a lot of positive feeling, the NEXUS model raised a lot of questions that seem broadly unanswered for some of the respondents: lack of clarity of the notions used that seem to overlap (e.g. “legacies” versus “intermediate factors”, “challenges” versus “opportunities”) or for which it seems difficult to clearly establish relationships (e.g. the link between opportunities/challenges and legacies/features), or lack of clarity on the level of observation (should we establish a generic trend for all areas or a specific trend for one area?). Here there is a need to show how the tool can work in “real-life” through a practical demonstration. Sometimes the tool evoked strong scepticism: “What additionality does Nexus bring? Haven’t planners been doing this for more than 20 years as SWOT? Difficult to apply to non-geographic and functional regions”... The question of the systemic approach was also questioned: if Nexus is a system, then what are its relations with the outside world? Some comments were also directed at the Urban Benchmarking tool after reading the support material: what data is used for the benchmarking?

Another frequent suggestion (not only in the framework of USESPON) is the need to promote ESPON data and to have more information at NUTS 3 level. Another frequent comment was the need to take into account the scales dimension when dealing with tools, data, etc. It was also suggested that synthesis documents would be very useful in order to outline various projects, how are they applicable in policies (with “real-life” examples) and can they be considered as successful (i.e. are they good/best practices examples?). There were also comments that the dissemination of ESPON results at sub-national levels is very low and that ESPON appears as a research programme and not as a programme that helps policy makers to take decisions. The weak relations between the ESPON programme and European networks related to territorial development that can act at very local level was also criticised.

**Analysis of the telephone interviews** added to understanding of stakeholders’ views. Policy makers and practitioners said they wanted ESPON to be a platform allowing them to access new and up-to-date data and information on territorial development. Furthermore, there was a consensus among interviewees on the need to have a program like ESPON at European level to generate debates on territorial development and spatial planning. Some interviewees did not know about ESPON before, and they underlined the added value of concepts and tools that enable them to comprehend differently the issues and challenges they are facing at local/regional level.

Interviewees appreciated the map that shows economic performance and look forward to having more maps and tools. Only 2 interviewees, from the same member state, referred

especially to the tool presented during the workshop. They welcomed the fact that the tool was easy to use and enabled them to compare their cities with others across Europe. The innovative process of using social networks to gather data sources as in the ESPON City-Bench project was warmly welcomed. Both stated they look forward to learning more about other ESPON tools. Others who already knew about ESPON tools such as HyperAtlas underlined the fact that complexity could prevent them from using the tool.

Interviewees regretted the fact that data are not up-to-date and at a sufficiently detailed scale to show them how their territories are doing in comparison with others across the EU. Indeed, out-dated data was the most recurrent grievance amongst interviewees. **If ESPON wants to be a relevant tool in the planning process, it needs to issue up-to-date, localisable and accessible data.** Also to use concepts produced by ESPON at smaller scale, stakeholders need more data. In fact, a lot of findings and methods are based on national/NUTS 3 level and if stakeholders are willing to use them they need first to supplement the appropriate data using national Census data for example. ESPON should think this issue through because it could be a deciding factor on whether or not to use ESPON evidence.

Some interviewees said that ESPON could be of interest to policymakers as long as they are working on national scales. When it comes to regional/local level, all interviewed stakeholders reported that currently ESPON findings would not be useful and relevant at smaller scales. On findings, interviewees frequently remarked that reports are very long, sophisticated and complex. Tools are extremely difficult to master and use. In general ESPON evidence derives from quantitative and econometric approaches. Interviewees favoured a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. This would help to tackle complexity issues that stakeholders are facing while using ESPON evidence.

Numerous complaints were voiced about the very academic and complex character of ESPON. There is not enough information and material suitable for a practitioner audience. **ESPON must ensure the link between its evidence and the people it targets as its key stakeholders.** Concepts notes, tailor-made synopsis, support material on best practices, training modules are very welcomed from practitioner's side. ESPON has to help stakeholders to understand the relevance of its work and show them the potential added value it could bring to their daily work. In offering ready to use tools ESPON will spare its stakeholders some time which they could use to think how to use ESPON findings. **ESPON needs also to learn to simplify its language to reach out to all levels of the decision making process.** Language is also an issue especially at regional/local level and **capitalisation materials in vernacular languages as the one produced by the USESPON project are very much appreciated.**

Difficulties in finding information on the ESPON website were voiced. Technically the search function does not work well enough as it does not allow users to find the most relevant document matching their request. Furthermore, users should be able to search by key words and not only by projects. As well as improving its online presence, stakeholders pointed that ESPON needs to make itself more visible by attending national events such as national conferences of statisticians and showing those people how ESPON can help them.

It is also worth noting that ESPON is perceived at first glance as a tool that could be used for lecturing purposes or used as a tool to prepare proposal for calls from other EU programs. So ESPON is not only a data production machine but is also a way to understand the EU working traditions and preoccupations on several different topics. Interestingly, one interviewee stated that use of ESPON should be mandatory to other European programmes like INTERREG.

Some of interviewees expressed a wish to be more involved in the programme drafting process. They acknowledged that ESPON understands the questioning and issues they are facing and assumed that tools and concepts would be more relevant to their activities if the designing process was also a bottom-up process allowing ESPON and academics to get an insight from the inside about stakeholders' daily work. The need for more targeted analysis and small working groups on specific questions was heavily stressed.

Finally, almost all the interviewees said they would be very interested in cooperation and exchange of best practices with colleagues from other member states. ESPON was seen as a potential support to create and animate this network which would involve also other European bodies like DG Regio, Eurostat, and EU observatories. Furthermore, interviewees seem to be convinced by the benefits of benchmarking and comparing similar territories/cities across the EU and exchange of successful practices. This could be a way for ESPON to show how some member states and other institutions are using it.

### 3.2 Reflections on Priority 4 projects

At the **final conference in London** the ECP network, consisting predominantly, but not exclusively, of USESPON partners, met to discuss the successes and challenges of Priority 4 projects and to proffer some thoughts on how the next ESPON Programme might be informed by ECPs' experience of stakeholder engagement and dissemination. Christabel Myers chaired the session and encouraged the group to initially consider the experiences gained from involvement in Priority 4 projects. ECPs agreed that general dissemination or 'advertising' had not proved effective. In light of this, it was acknowledged that USESPON's more targeted approach to dissemination had been positive; the aim was not to promote 'all of ESPON' but concentrate on tools and methods and show how they are relevant to stakeholders.

In terms of barriers to effective capitalisation of ESPON results, the discussion centred on issues of language and understanding. ECPs face the challenge of translating resources into their national languages and the extent of 'Euro-speak' in ESPON outputs is an additional hindrance. Engagement with stakeholders was seen as pivotal in capitalisation, but follow-up has been limited since there is a general lack of resources to do so. Furthermore, Priority 4 projects have an end-date and so do not facilitate long-term activities.

For the next Programme, there was a view that ESPON needs to move from a traditional, top-down model to one of knowledge exchange based on stakeholder needs. This could involve ECPs feeding stakeholder needs into the commissioning loop in a similar way to Priority 2 project development. The 'new model' could involve creation of a neutral arena for discussion around ESPON; however, it was acknowledged that this would be more easily achievable where ECPs lie outside of the respective Ministry.

Finally, there was consideration of how ESPON findings could be made more appealing to practitioners. Part of this involves meeting stakeholders' needs: one of the biggest challenges facing planners and policy-makers is housing and property development, but ESPON is currently offering nothing on this subject. The

"It's an outdated model of knowledge transfer. Somebody up there sets the research agenda, we disseminate it to somebody we hope will use it. In contrast, ESPON should look to knowledge exchange – stakeholders should help set the questions then we go and find the knowledge they require. Policy makers are surrounded by evidence: what they need are people who can help them sort it out." *USESPON Partner, November 2013.*

mentioned language barrier must also be overcome and ESPON must market itself to the highest calibre of researchers across Europe to ensure high quality research.

### 3.3 Did the project meet its objectives?

USESPON can now be evaluated against its objectives.

**Table 7: Assessment of the project against its objectives**

Objective	Evidence	Was the objective achieved?
Identify key stakeholders	Project reached stakeholders in central, regional and local government and the private sector as well as researchers and academics.	Yes
Identify the methods to disseminate and ESPON use of them and associated findings	Delphi, Nexus and Urban benchmarking identified as the methods to disseminate. Use of them in projects e.g. METROBORDER, TeDi, GEOSPECS, SGPTD and City-Bench identified. Findings from other relevant projects identified, particularly in relation to the theme of Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth – e.g. KIT, TIGER.	Yes
Design and keep up to date a web portal that is integrated with the ESPONTrain VLE	<a href="http://www.espon-usespon.eu">www.espon-usespon.eu</a> links to ESPONTrain VLE.	Yes
Design “support materials” to support the delivery of the methods in workshops, and which can be used as the basis for teaching about the methods on the VLE	Support materials produced for 5 workshops which were used to develop the VLE learning materials about the 3 methods.	Yes
Deliver interactive workshops	5 workshops delivered, all with an interactive element.	Yes
Develop VLE materials to be delivered on the ESPON Train VLE	VLE materials designed and put on the ESPONTrain VLE.	Yes
Ensure feedback and evaluation	Full feedback collected from questionnaires and telephone interviews with participants in workshops. Findings evaluated and reported.	Yes
Undertake blunder checks	Blunder checks done by five partners for TANGO and GREECO. Other partner did blunder check through the CaDEC project.	Yes
Deliver all national and project reporting required	All required reports submitted by all partners.	Yes
Deliver findings to other ECPs	Presentations to Monitoring Committee, at ECP meeting in Vilnius, inputs to main seminar in Vilnius, presentations at EUGEO; USESPON website contains materials from all events.	Yes
Ensure effective communication and efficient management	Website statistics show effective communication. Project has been delivered on time and within budget.	Yes

### **3.4 Key messages**

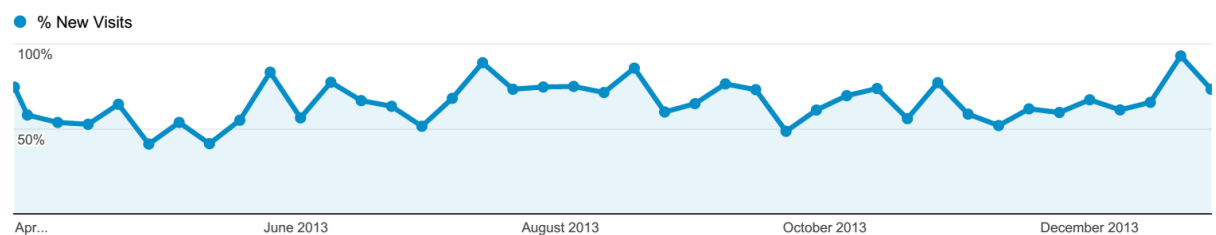
- Stakeholders told USESPON that they want to use ESPON, but currently find language and the long, complex reports and outdated data to be barriers.
- ESPON should seek to move from a model of knowledge transfer to one of knowledge exchange, where stakeholders frame the questions and researchers find the evidence required to answer the questions.
- The “Targeted Analysis” projects fit this model. However, proposals for the first round of those projects had to be submitted before the call for any of the ECP TNA projects, and now in the later stages of ESPON 2013, when TNA projects are running, there are no further opportunities to submit proposals for Targeted Analysis projects. Better co-ordination of timetables is needed.
- It is important to link dissemination of ESPON to current concerns of practitioners within a member state. Sometimes this will best be achieved by very precisely targeting particular stakeholders – e.g. those concerned with ESIF or INTERREG or URBACT.
- Stakeholders appreciated the interactive style of the USESPON workshops. Learning by doing in a supportive atmosphere holds out the prospect of a better sense of ownership of ESPON than can be achieved by a standard PowerPoint lecture. Interactive approaches should be used in ESPON 2020, and ECPs who lack experience of delivering through such methods should be able to access training in them.
- Stakeholders value it when they can see practical examples and demonstration of the use of ESPON findings and methods. Given the wide range of ESPON work, and the very limited resources available to ECPs, it is not easy for the ECP to satisfy the stakeholders. New tools from the Scientific Platform are becoming available just as funding for TNA and other ECP activities runs down. In ESPON 2020 ECPs might be seen as trainers, delivering national capitalization, but to do this they will need training and resources.
- Newsletters and events proved to be effective ways to draw visitors to the USESPON website. Statistics suggest that events not only provide new, single-visitors but also users that explore the website deeper and use its content, such as the Library.
- In contrast, some stakeholders made critical comments about the main ESPON website, in particular about the quality of the search engine within the site. This could be addressed in ESPON 2020.
- The USESPON Library was the most popular part of the website. If ESPON post-2013 wants to build stronger links with practitioners it might consider embedding a library of documents related to territorial development in its main website. The USESPON Library could be a starting point.
- Although social media currently play a rather small role in promotion and dissemination of ESPON results, they seem relatively good in promoting events and news. ECPs in ESPON 2020 should be helped to make best use of social media.
- Ministries can aid the capitalisation of ESPON by demonstrably associating themselves with ECP-organised activities. For example, a Ministry can enhance the profile of an event by providing the covering letter inviting representatives of central, regional or local administrations to attend, and by providing the venue.
- The ESPON VLE has potential that should be built upon in ESPON 2020.

# Annexes

## 1. Statistics for the USESPON website (retrieved from Google Analytics™)



### 1.1 Visits for each day



### 1.2 New visits by week

Visitor Type	Acquisition			Behaviour		
	Visits	% New Visits	New Visits	Bounce Rate	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration
	1,882 % of Total: 100.00% (1,882)	63.76% Site Avg: 63.55% (0.33%)	1,200 % of Total: 100.33% (1,196)	50.27% Site Avg: 50.27% (0.00%)	4.46 Site Avg: 4.46 (0.00%)	00:03:35 Site Avg: 00:03:35 (0.00%)
1. <a href="#">New Visitor</a>	1,200	100.00%	1,200	52.67%	3.89	00:02:51
2. <a href="#">Returning Visitor</a>	682	0.00%	0	46.04%	5.46	00:04:51

### 1.3 New and returning visitors

Visit Duration	Visits	Pageviews
0-10 seconds	1,045	1,172
11-30 seconds	154	435
31-60 seconds	112	414
61-180 seconds	181	1,055
181-600 seconds	190	1,669
601-1800 seconds	154	1,885
1801+ seconds	46	1,758

### 1.4 Visit duration

Country/Territory	Acquisition			Behaviour		
	Visits	% New Visits	New Visits	Bounce Rate	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration
	<b>1,886</b> % of Total: 100.00% (1,886)	<b>63.73%</b> Site Avg: 63.52% (0.33%)	<b>1,202</b> % of Total: 100.33% (1,198)	<b>50.32%</b> Site Avg: 50.32% (0.00%)	<b>4.45</b> Site Avg: 4.45 (0.00%)	<b>00:03:35</b> Site Avg: 00:03:35 (0.00%)
1. <a href="#">Poland</a>	<b>489</b>	<b>54.81%</b>	268	39.26%	7.34	00:06:32
2. <a href="#">Greece</a>	<b>266</b>	<b>50.38%</b>	134	41.35%	3.59	00:03:38
3. <a href="#">United Kingdom</a>	<b>165</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	110	39.39%	4.50	00:03:27
4. <a href="#">Germany</a>	<b>154</b>	<b>61.04%</b>	94	46.75%	5.34	00:03:12
5. <a href="#">Luxembourg</a>	<b>94</b>	<b>60.64%</b>	57	38.30%	3.88	00:03:03
6. <a href="#">France</a>	<b>88</b>	<b>69.32%</b>	61	46.59%	4.05	00:02:54
7. <a href="#">Italy</a>	<b>71</b>	<b>70.42%</b>	50	59.15%	3.49	00:03:28
8. <a href="#">Romania</a>	<b>58</b>	<b>55.17%</b>	32	67.24%	1.97	00:00:51
9. <a href="#">Spain</a>	<b>54</b>	<b>51.85%</b>	28	70.37%	2.13	00:01:37
10. <a href="#">Estonia</a>	<b>44</b>	<b>20.45%</b>	9	93.18%	1.20	00:00:24
11. <a href="#">United States</a>	<b>44</b>	<b>95.45%</b>	42	72.73%	1.36	00:00:17
12. <a href="#">Belgium</a>	<b>36</b>	<b>77.78%</b>	28	61.11%	2.64	00:01:09
13. <a href="#">Ireland</a>	<b>27</b>	<b>85.19%</b>	23	62.96%	3.22	00:02:47
14. <a href="#">Netherlands</a>	<b>25</b>	<b>92.00%</b>	23	68.00%	2.44	00:00:44
15. <a href="#">Portugal</a>	<b>18</b>	<b>94.44%</b>	17	50.00%	6.44	00:03:12
16. <a href="#">Slovakia</a>	<b>16</b>	<b>68.75%</b>	11	75.00%	1.69	00:00:36
17. <a href="#">Austria</a>	<b>15</b>	<b>93.33%</b>	14	80.00%	1.67	00:00:36
18. <a href="#">Czech Republic</a>	<b>15</b>	<b>80.00%</b>	12	66.67%	1.67	00:00:53
19. <a href="#">Hungary</a>	<b>14</b>	<b>85.71%</b>	12	71.43%	2.07	00:01:46
20. <a href="#">India</a>	<b>14</b>	<b>85.71%</b>	12	85.71%	1.50	00:00:09
21. <a href="#">Turkey</a>	<b>12</b>	<b>91.67%</b>	11	66.67%	2.75	00:02:51
22. <a href="#">(not set)</a>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	10	90.00%	1.50	00:00:19
23. <a href="#">Denmark</a>	<b>9</b>	<b>88.89%</b>	8	77.78%	1.44	00:00:12
24. <a href="#">Switzerland</a>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	8	62.50%	2.75	00:00:30
25. <a href="#">Lithuania</a>	<b>8</b>	<b>75.00%</b>	6	62.50%	1.50	00:00:06

## 1.5 Origin and activity of visitors

Source/Medium	Acquisition			Behaviour		
	Visits	% New Visits	New Visits	Bounce Rate	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration
	<b>1,882</b> % of Total: 100.00% (1,882)	<b>63.76%</b> Site Avg: 63.87% (-0.17%)	<b>1,200</b> % of Total: 99.83% (1,202)	<b>50.27%</b> Site Avg: 50.27% (0.00%)	<b>4.46</b> Site Avg: 4.46 (0.00%)	<b>00:03:35</b> Site Avg: 00:03:35 (0.00%)
1. (direct) / (none)	<b>609</b>	59.44%	362	42.04%	6.26	00:04:48
2. google / organic	<b>600</b>	77.17%	463	61.00%	3.13	00:02:46
3. espon.eu / referral	<b>153</b>	55.56%	85	28.10%	5.26	00:04:21
4. euroreg.uw.edu.pl / referral	<b>140</b>	49.29%	69	50.00%	4.71	00:04:07
5. facebook.com / referral	<b>63</b>	60.32%	38	65.08%	2.22	00:02:33
6. espon.pl / referral	<b>36</b>	86.11%	31	44.44%	3.97	00:03:22
7. rtpi.org.uk / referral	<b>35</b>	51.43%	18	20.00%	6.74	00:03:16
8. live.hot.ee / referral	<b>34</b>	2.94%	1	100.00%	1.00	00:00:00
9. espontrain.eu / referral	<b>31</b>	58.06%	18	54.84%	2.77	00:03:31
10. ums-riate.fr / referral	<b>30</b>	46.67%	14	50.00%	3.43	00:01:20

## 1.6 Source of visitors

Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate
	<b>8,388</b> % of Total: 100.00% (8,388)	<b>5,594</b> % of Total: 100.00% (5,594)	<b>00:01:02</b> Site Avg: 00:01:02 (0.00%)	<b>1,882</b> % of Total: 100.00% (1,882)	<b>50.27%</b> Site Avg: 50.27% (0.00%)
1. /	<b>1,638</b>	947	00:01:15	872	32.34%
2. /library	<b>591</b>	367	00:00:46	148	55.41%
3. /about-usespon	<b>363</b>	255	00:01:20	50	64.00%
4. /past-events	<b>339</b>	167	00:00:28	4	0.00%
5. /supporting-materials	<b>311</b>	158	00:00:34	11	27.27%
6. /partners	<b>273</b>	155	00:00:51	8	25.00%
7. /news	<b>260</b>	154	00:00:33	9	55.56%
8. /upcoming-events	<b>225</b>	144	00:00:36	5	40.00%
9. /vle-platform	<b>163</b>	123	00:00:49	20	60.00%
10. /upcoming-events,final-usespon-conference-promoting-local-growth	<b>123</b>	99	00:01:23	72	56.94%

## 1.7 What visitors viewed



## 2. Stakeholders involved by ECP France

Name	Function	Institution	Support Material
Élodie AUFORT	Head of representation	Haute-Normandie region in Brussels	Nexus
Caroline HUCK	Policy Officer European Programs	Alsace region	Nexus
Pascale BOUET	Head of studies, institutional cooperation, Europe	General council of the Deux-Sèvres	Nexus
François LIENARD	Project manager Research, innovation, development	European Interregional Agency for Brittany, Poitou-Charente, Pays de la Loire	Nexus
Jean-Marc André LOECHEL	President	Foundation Territories of Tomorrow	Nexus
Jean-Yves PINEAU	Director	Association Towns and countryside	Nexus
Romain WASCAT	Project manager	Picardie region in Brussels	Nexus
Sophiane DEMARCK	Communication Officer	Planning agency of Flanders-Dunkerque	Urban benchmarking
Maxime KAYADJANIAN	Responsible for the observatory pole	Regional agency <i>Naturparif</i> (Regional council of Ile de France)	Urban benchmarking
Maryse LARPENT	Research analyst	Planning agency of Brest	Urban benchmarking
Louis-François REITZ	Chief Operating Officer	Network of cities <i>Quattropole</i> (Metz, Luxemburg, Trier, Saarbrucken)	Urban benchmarking
Jean-Sébastien SAUVOUREL	Research analysis	Association of the French medium-sized cities	Urban benchmarking
Corinne AUTANT	Associated Professor, Member of Board	European Localized Innovation Observatory	Urban benchmarking

### 3. Tweets during #ESPONWeek2013

1.  [t33 sound policy @t33Srl](#) Nov 15

[#ESPONWeek2013](#) Geotec project presented <http://bit.ly/HUaD2w> Information on our [#ESPON](#) scientific platform TerrEvi <http://bit.ly/1gQHafv>

2.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 15

Check out this tool to help decision-makers plan for local growth drawn from ESPON research <http://is.gd/9BJfRk> as part of [#ESPONweek2013](#)

3.  [Dorota Celińska @Dorota\\_Celinska](#) Nov 15

[#ESPONWeek2013](#) Rainbow info-graphic about Urban Benchmarking <http://goo.gl/ITRiSc> - don't fall into a trap!

4.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 14

European perspectives on urban and rural development in Wales <http://bit.ly/1e5gvBj> [#ESPONweek2013](#)

5.  [Cliff Hague @CliffHague](#) Nov 13

My blogs just keep coming! Stupid and smart growth: <http://tinyurl.com/olgfafv> . Based on yesterday's talk [@CommunitiesUK](#) part of [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

6.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 13

[@CliffHague](#) reflects on stupid and smart growth: <http://tinyurl.com/olgfafv> . Based on yesterday's talk for [@CommunitiesUK](#) part of [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

7.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 13

[#ESPON](#) evidence informs new RTPI briefing on issues and implications of planning for more people: <http://tinyurl.com/o5tuzec> [#ESPONweek2013](#)

8.  [Cliff Hague @CliffHague](#) Nov 13

Trudi Elliott reports on the [@ESPON Programme](#) event that i spoke at in Birmingham last week <http://tinyurl.com/oghsqsp> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

9.  [Kasia Wojnar @kasia\\_wojnar](#) Nov 13

[#ESPONWeek2013](#) Find out which country's regions present full variety of economic basis types <http://goo.gl/ARnhti>

10.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 13

Grappling with growth - Trudi Elliott explains how Europe can help us plan for growth: <http://tinyurl.com/oghsqsp> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

11.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 12

[#ESPONWeek2013](#) UK's wave power capacity high - Atlantic & North Sea could provide wind, wave and tidal power: <http://goo.gl/7dGRkf>

12.  [Kasia Wojnar @kasia\\_wojnar](#) Nov 12

Need some help with ESPON online tools? Watch our tutorials <http://goo.gl/yr6w6c> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

13.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 12

[#ESPON](#) ranks Scotland as European cluster of excellence for nano&bio tech. More messages for NPF3 at: <http://goo.gl/JGISCU> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

14.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 11

[#ESPON](#) map of the day: UK performs well compared to EU27 on GDP, unemployment and R&D spending: <http://goo.gl/yReRf2> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

15.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 11

Overcoming rural, urban & cross-border development challenges - presentations from last year's event: <http://is.gd/ey0Gdy> [#ESPONWeek2013](#)

16.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 11

Take a look at key messages from [#ESPON](#) in our report on England's growth challenge: <http://goo.gl/4AojMs> [#ESPONWeek2013](#) [@ESPON Programme](#)

17.  [RTPI Policy&Research @rtpiknowledge](#) Nov 11

It's [#ESPONWeek2013](#). Read Eleanor Rowe's blog to find out what we're doing to celebrate over the coming days: <http://goo.gl/k3vi9d>

18.  [Dorota Celińska @Dorota\\_Celinska](#) Nov 11

[#ESPONWeek2013](#) Can rural areas perform positively? See yourself on the Map Of The Day at <http://www.espon-usespon.eu>

[Cliff Hague @CliffHague](#) Nov 16

My second blog of [#ESPONWeek](#) outlines how to analyse potential for local growth - [http://bit.ly/18zRObB\\_](http://bit.ly/18zRObB_).



[Cliff Hague @CliffHague](#) Nov 14

About to head into London again for [#ESPONWeek2013](#) meeting with [@ESPON Programme](#) [#USESPON](#) partners then tomorrow's conference.

## 4. GENERAL EVALUATION GRID

USESPON – WORKSHOP (Country)

Date, Place

### EVALUATION GRID

To fine tune the dissemination of ESPON results among stakeholders, it is very important to assess the different dissemination activities and see if they succeed in meeting their goals.

We would be very pleased if you could answer the following survey to help us to better understand the way you use those results and you evaluate the USESPON project.

These questions will provide the ESPON project partners valuable feedbacks at national and transnational level. Your contribution will also help defining the 2014 ESPON work program and contribute to shape future orientations.

The questionnaire aims to identify:

- your interest in the USESPON approach, and in the tools presented in the support material and in the workshop;
- your interrogations the chosen tools for the USESPON support materials and workshops;
- your suggestions for improvement of the capitalization and dissemination of the tools developed by ESPON;
- your future needs concerning tools to build a solid link with ESPON.

### ABOUT YOU

#### Question 1 – General Information

- Your work/professional situation:
  - Executive / Director
  - Member of Staff in Charge of Implementation of Actions / Policies
  - Member of Staff in Charge of Studies
  - Researcher and / or Experts
  - Other (please, precise):
- Your Institution:
  - Central Government and Administration
  - Regional Government and Administration

- Local Government and Administration
- Research and/or Teaching Institution
- Private Body
- Other (please, precise):

ON ESPON

**Question 2 - Have you heard about ESPON before being asked to participate to the workshop?**

- Yes
- No (If no, go straight to **question 9**)

**Question 3 – How did you heard of ESPON before?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- By media
- During a conference
- In my job
- Other (please, precise):

**Question 4 - Do you use ESPON results in your everyday job?**

- Yes
- No (If no, go straight to **question 8**)

**Question 5 - Do you or have you ever used:**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- ESPON Scientific reports
- ESPON Database
- Other ESPON materials (please, precise):

**Question 6 - What kind of information do you use from ESPON?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- General knowledge on the European territory
- Basis for development of policy orientations
- Methods of analysis
- Data
- Other (please, precise):

**Question 7 – According to your knowledge of ESPON, do you see other potential uses in the future?**

- If yes. Which ones? Precise:
- If no. Why?

**Question 8 - Why do you not use ESPON in your job?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- I do not know ESPON works
- ESPON works seem irrelevant to me
- My activities are not in relation with ESPON works
- Too strong language barrier (ESPON works are in English)
- ESPON works are too difficult to understand (too long, too scientific...)
- Other (please, precise):

ON USESPON (Tools, support material, workshop)
--

**Question 9 - Have you ever heard about the tool XXXXX presented during this workshop?**

- Yes
- No (If no, please go straight to **question 13**)

**Question 10 - Do you use the tool XXXXX presented during this workshop in your work?**

- Yes
- No (If no, please go straight to **question 12**)

**Question 11 – In which circumstances do you use the tool XXXXX presented during the workshop in your work?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- In Internal Documents and Analysis
- In Official Policies and Documents
- In Policies / Actions Implementation
- In Teaching activities
- Other (please, precise):

**Question 12 – Why do you not use the tool XXXXX presented during this workshop?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- I do not know the tool XXXXX before
- The tool XXXXX seems irrelevant to me
- My activities are not in relation with the tools XXXXX
- I disagree with the aim of this tool (please, precise why?):
- Other (are there any other reasons than ones mentioned above? please, precise):

**Question 13 – On the basis of the work done during the workshop, do you think that you will be using the tool XXXXX in the future?**

- Yes
- No (If no, please go straight to **question 15**)

**Question 14 – How would you use the tool XXXXX presented during the workshop?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- For policy shaping
- For evaluation studies
- For academic work
- Other (please, precise):

**Question 15 – What are the reasons that would prevent you on using the tool XXXXX presented during the workshop in the future?**

*Select **all answers** that apply:*

- I do not know the tool XXXXX before
- The tool XXXXX seems irrelevant to me
- My activities are not in relation with the tools XXXXX



- I disagree with the aim of this tool (please precise why?):
- Other (are there any other reasons than ones mentioned above? please, precise):

**Question 16 – Do you consider that the support material delivered before the workshop gives you the basic information needed to understand the tool XXXXX?**

- Yes
- No (please, precise why?):

**Question 17 - Does this workshop have met your expectation on how to use the tool XXXXX?**

- Yes
- No (please, precise why?):

**Question 18 – How do you evaluate the following aspects of the workshop?**

	Poor	Fairly Good	Good	Very good
Quality of the presentation				
Interactive character of the workshop				
Other element you would like to evaluate (please, precise):				

Please, add lines to the table below if you want to assess more elements than the ones mentioned above.

**Question 19 – On what kind of tools would you like more insights from ESPON?**

**Question 20 – Other comments and suggestions:**

## 5. QUESTIONS FOR THE EVALUATION BY PHONE CALLS

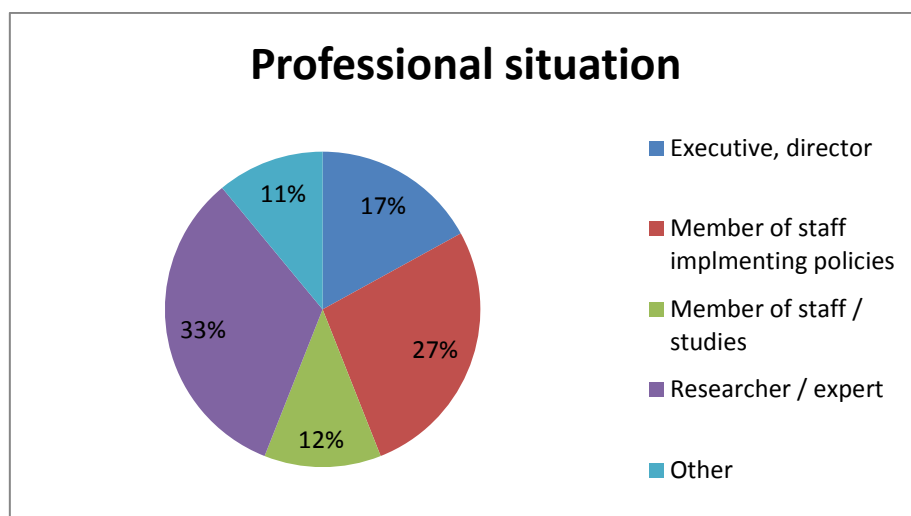
### Template for evaluation for phone calls

*The following questions can be used both to interview people contacted (2 to 3) and for organizing each ECP feedbacks synthesis on phone calls (no more than one page). Please send this synthesis to the French ECP in order to integrate it to the overall USESPON evaluation process.*

- General assessment: “What is your general appreciation of the work done by ESPON from an user viewpoint?”
- On capitalization:
  - “How do you think you can use ESPON tools in your daily work?”
  - “According to you, what would be the condition to able to use ESPON tools in your work?”
  - “Which obstacle would prevent you from using the ESPON tools in your daily work?”
- On dissemination: “According to you, what would be the more useful way for disseminating of ESPON tools (tools in relation with territorial evidences)?”
- On transnational approach: “Do you think that it would be useful to learn from other persons in other national context on the way they use ESPON tools?”
  - if yes: “What could you expect from that transnational approach?”
  - if no: “why?”

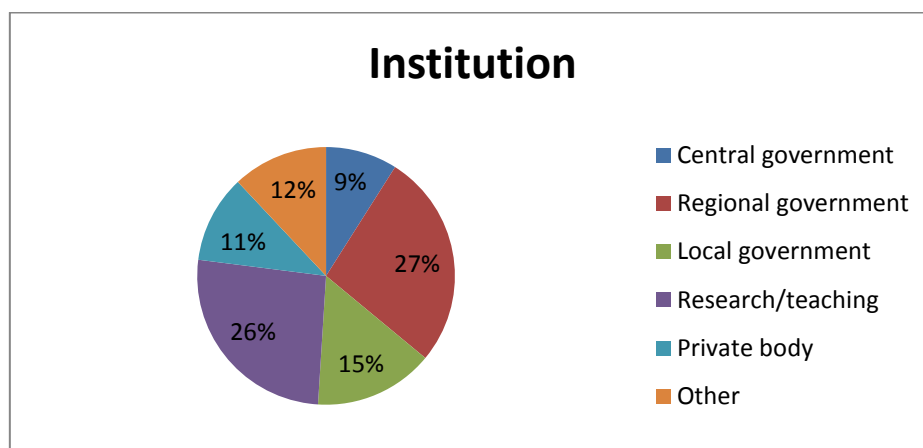
## 6 Results of the evaluation

### Question 1a - General information - Your work/professional situation? (%)



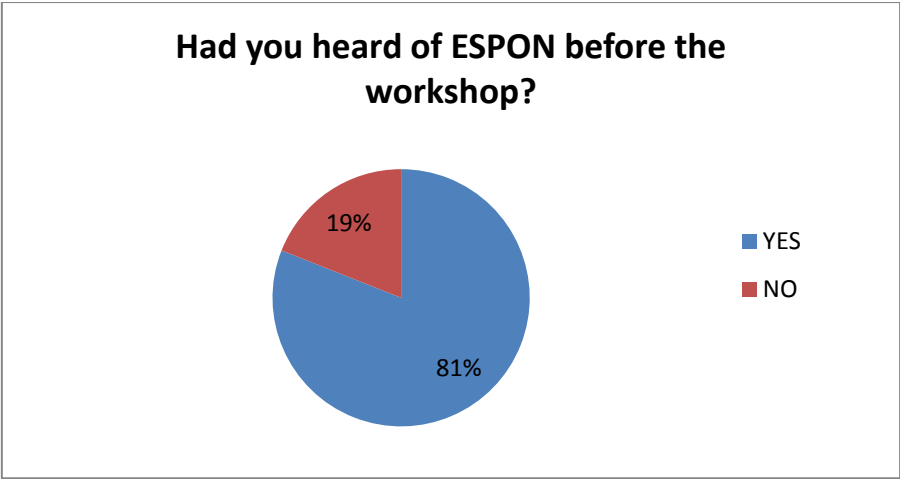
Total number of answers: 94 (100%); missing answers: 1

### Question 1b - General information - Your institution? (%)



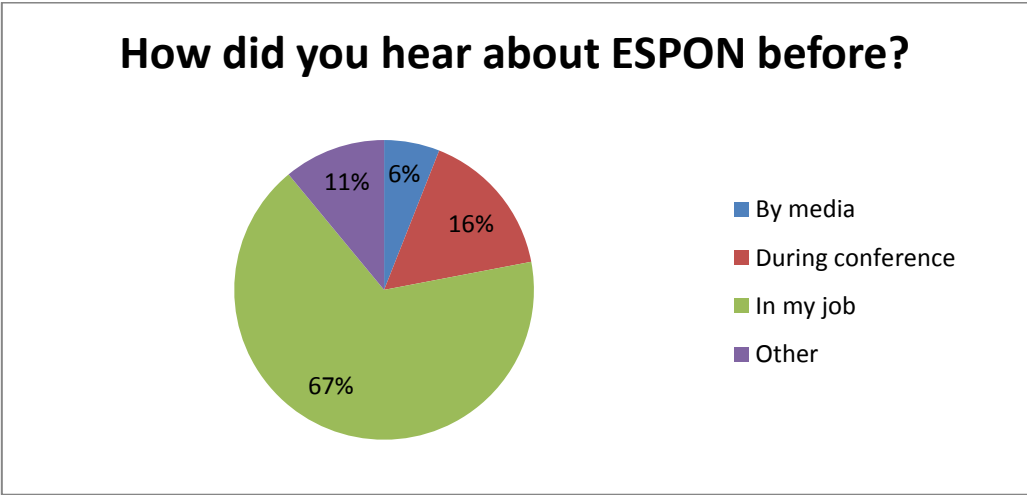
Total number of answers: 92 (100%); missing answers: 3

### Question 2 - Had you heard about ESPON before asking to participate to the workshop? (%)



Total number of answers: 64 (100%). The UK ECP used a shorter version that did not include this question (UK: 31 respondents)

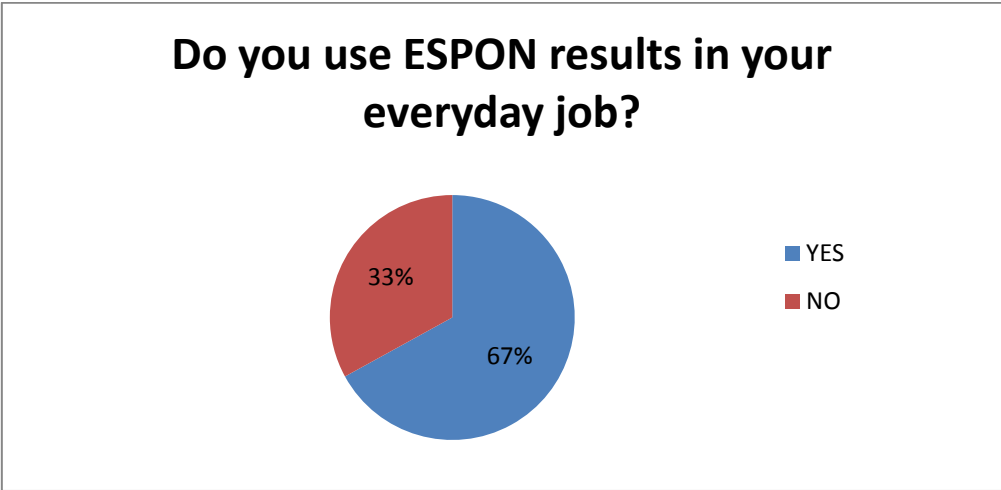
**Question 3 - How did you heard of ESPON before? (%)**



Total number of answers: 64 (100%)

The UK ECP used a shorter version of the evaluation grid that did not included this question (UK: 31 respondents)

**Question 4: Do you use ESPON results in your everyday job?**



Total number of answers: 52 (100%)

The UK ECP used a shorter version of the evaluation grid that did not include this question (UK: 31 respondents)

NB: 12 respondents who answered “no” to Question 2 are not included in the total

### Question 5 - Do you or have you ever used?

(number of answers, multiple choices)

ESPON Scientific reports	ESPON Database	Other ESPON materials
27	19	6*

\* Online publications, maps, HyperAtlas, materials from conferences

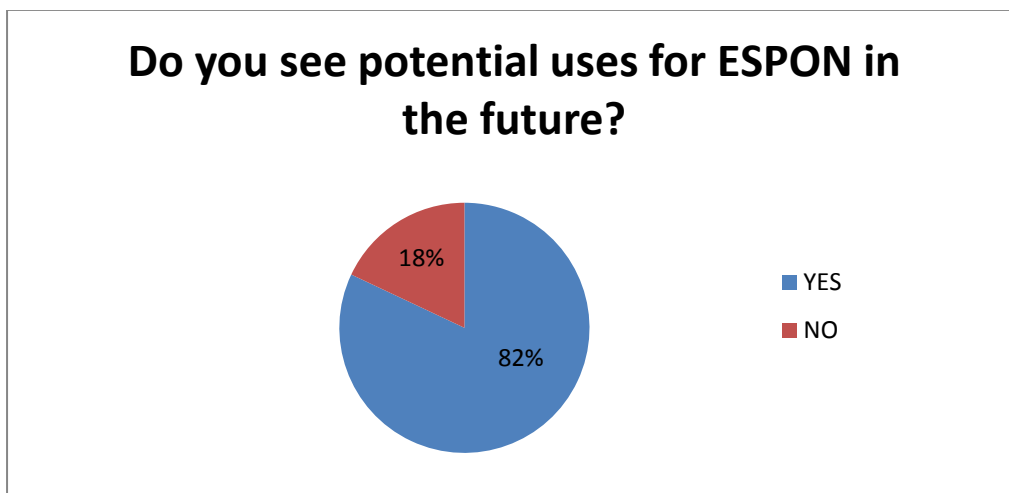
### Question 6: What kind of information do you use from ESPON?

(number of answers, multiple choices)

General knowledge on the European territory	Data	Basis for development of policy orientations	Methods of analysis	Other
21	20	17	9	1*

\* material for lectures at university

### Question 7: According to your knowledge of ESPON, do you see other potential uses in the future?



Total number of answers: 35 (100%)

The UK ECP used a shorter version of the evaluation grid that did not include this question (UK: 31 respondents)

NB: 29 respondents who answered no to the question 4 are not included in the total

**Table 1 - Potential uses quoted** (when précised)

	<b>Data, database, indicators</b>	<b>For comparison</b>	<b>For policy analysis, shaping, recommendat ions</b>	<b>For scientific purposes</b>
Based on current data to expand statistical tools capacities	√			
Database	√			
Benchmarking		√		
Comparative analysis of similar cases		√		
Urban development: perspectives and European analyses for comparison		√		
Comparison of cities and implementations of their strategies		√	√	
Comparison of data at regional level		√		
Policy recommendations			√	
Stronger integration of database and policy studies	√		√	
ESPON could deliver indicators for the INTERREG programming phase and identify the most relevant ones (e.g. in innovation, are patents a useful indicator for INTERREG?). ESPON could also help during the monitoring phase in relation with data	√		√	
In regional spatial development plans			√	
Analysis of local government needs, networking and partnerships related with common problems			√	
For analysis related with new regional development plan			√	
Preparing spatial development plans, development strategies			√	
Methods in relation with decision making			√	

Scientific articles on regional metropolises				√
Adaptation (implementation) of the research methodology				√
Methods (quoted 6 times)			√	√

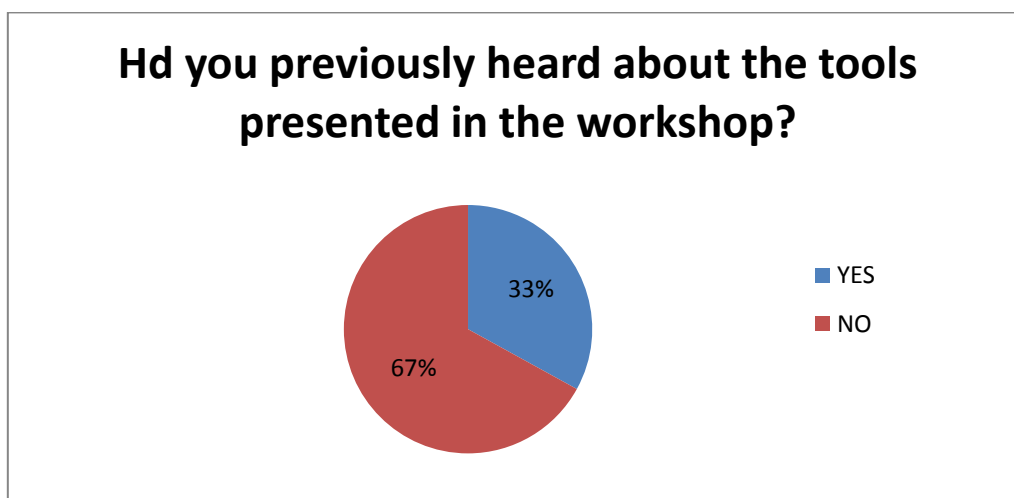
**Question 8 - Why do you not use ESPON in your job?**

(number of answers, multiple choices)

Other	ESPON works are too difficult to understand	My activities are not in relation with ESPON works	Too strong language barrier	I do not know ESPON works	ESPON works seem irrelevant to me
6*	5	5	3	3	2

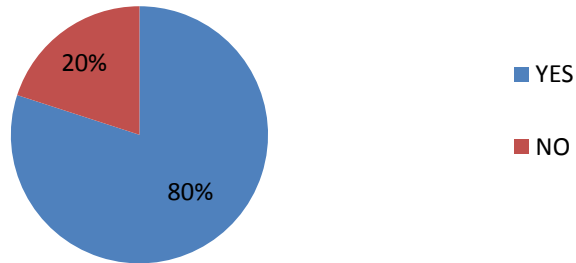
\* when précised: Matter of time; Difficult to apply to actions, but also lack of general knowledge about ESPON works; ESPON works do not provide consistent indicators across a sufficient range of countries; Too little information is available at fine spatial scales (NUTS 3, LAU)

**Question 9 – Have you ever heard about the tools presented during the workshops?**



**Question 13 – On the basis of the work done during the workshops, do you think that you will be using the tools in the future?**

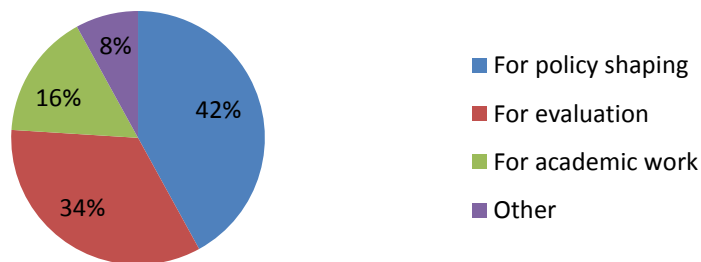
### Based on the workshops do you think you will be using the tools in the future?



Total number of answers: 79 (100%); missing answers: 16

#### Question 14 - How would you use the tools presented during the workshops?

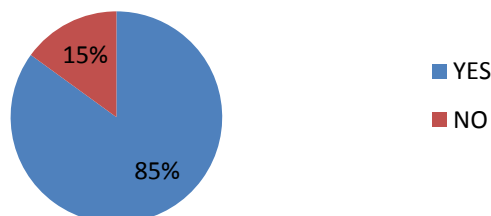
### How would you use the tools presented during the workshops?



Total number of answers: 101 (100%); multiple choices

#### Question 16 – Do you consider that the support materials delivered before the workshops give you the basic information?

### Did the support materials give the basic information?

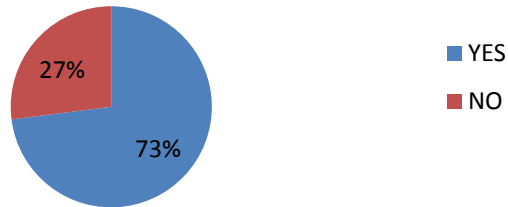


Total number of answers: 59 (100%); missing answers: 36

#### Question 17 – Did these workshops meet your expectations?



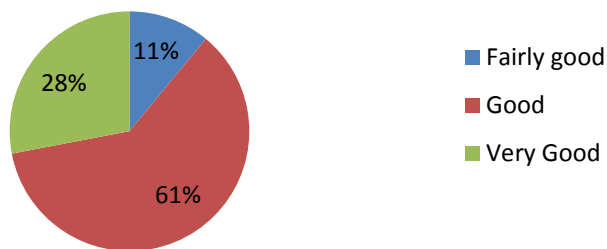
## Did these workshops meet your expectations?



Total number of answers: 75 (100%) Missing answers: 20 (taking into account that no workshop was organised in France)

### Question 18 – How do you evaluate the following aspects of the workshops: Quality of the presentations

## Quality of the presentations



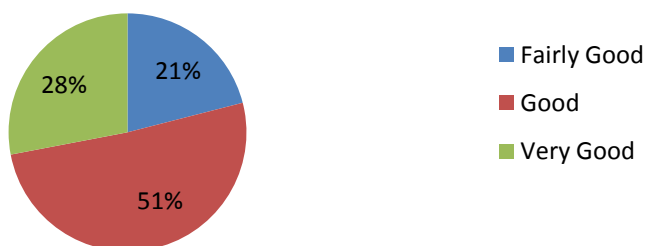
Total number of answers: 72 (100%). None answered "Poor".

Missing answers: 23 (taking into account that no workshop was organised in France)

### Question 18 – How do you evaluate the following aspects of the workshops:

#### Interactive character of the workshops

## How do you evaluate the interactive character of the workshops?



Total number of answers: 72 (100%) None answered "Poor"

Missing answers: 23 (taking into account that no workshop was organised in France)

22 respondents indicated other elements :

- clarity and the intelligibility of the workshops was appreciated by them as "good" (14) and "very good" (8)
- the time schedule was considered by them as "fairly good" (3), "good" (14) and "very good" (8)
- the opportunity to broaden professional contacts was considered as "poor"(3), "fairly good" (10) and "good" (9).
- 

**Question 19 – On what kind of tools would you like more insights from ESPON?**

Apart from answers as "all of them" that can reveal a great appetite for ESPON tools, ESPON tools that already exist, as the HyperAtlas, are quoted. Some respondents would like more insights on the three already presented tools in USESPON – reminder: each ECP selected only one tool from the three used in the framework of the project.

Other more general tools, non-specific to ESPON, are quoted as:

- tool to assess territorial policies,
- SWOT analysis type,
- tools that allow to combine (measurement, to chose of policy options...): growth, sustainable development and quality of life
- tools for participatory planning,
- benchmarking of governance,
- benchmarking for non-urban space.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**ECPs** – ESPON (National) Contact Points

**EDORA** – European Development Opportunities for Rural Areas (ESPON Applied Research project)

**DEMIFER** - Demographic and Migratory Flows Affecting European Regions and Cities (ESPON Applied Research project)

**FOCI** – Future Orientation of Cities (ESPON Applied Research project)

**GDP** – Gross Domestic Product

**KIT** – Knowledge, Innovation and Technology (ESPON Applied Research project)

**R&D** – Research and Development

**RDI** – Research, Development and Innovation

**SGPTD** – Secondary Growth Poles in Territorial Development (ESPON Applied Research project)

**TERCO** – European territorial Co-operation as a factor for growth, jobs and quality of life (ESPON Applied Research project).

**TIGER** – Territorial Impact of Globalisation for Europe and its regions (ESPON Applied Research project)

**TNAs** – Transnational Networking Activities

**TPG** – Transnational Project Group

**VLE** – Virtual Learning Environment

[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

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