

ESPON 2013 Programme

Work Programme 2010

**Approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee on 1 December 2009
Amended following MC decision on 16-17 February 2010**

I. General Outlook for 2010

The Work Programme 2010 includes the actions envisaged in 2010 as the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme continues. The planning of activities under the 5 Programme Priorities was started in 2008 and moved forward in 2009.

The Monitoring Committee and the Concertation Committee have been closely involved in this process. In particular, the committees are behind the selected themes and project specifications for the major round of open calls for up to 31 new projects, covering Applied Research, Targeted Analyses, the Scientific Platform and Transnational Networking Activities by the ECP Network that was carried through from 16 September to 11 November 2009.

It goes without saying that the process of ensuring the proper set up of formalities necessary for all 31 countries involved, as required by Structural Funds Regulations and the ESPON Agreement, was causing some delay in the beginning of 2009. As the entire implementation system is now in place, 2010 will be the year starting a large number of new projects. During 2010 the ESPON 2013 Programme will have around 17 Applied Research projects under implementation together with 8 Targeted Analyses with 10 more under preparation, 2 out of 3 major projects under the Scientific Platform plus a number of smaller projects on tools and update of data and maps.

In terms of communication and capitalisation of results the Communication Plan 2010 includes a substantial number of actions towards potential beneficiaries of the programme. Likewise, the capitalisation plan for 2010, which is an inherent part of this Work Plan 2010, will ensure a number of activities and events that should create increased awareness of European territorial dynamics and subsequent interest of stakeholders in using ESPON results in practice. An important new type of action within this programme priority will be started as up to 7 projects on Transnational Networking Activities are envisaged to be decided by the Monitoring Committee in early 2010.

Another important fact is that the first final results of major projects of Applied Research and Targeted Analyses will become available during 2010. This will accelerate the capitalisation under the Programme and provide a base for intensifying a pan-European dialogue related to European territorial development and Territorial Cohesion, which is a new objective of the ratified Lisbon Treaty. More ESPON publications on Territorial Observations will be published during 2010 and in particular, the first ESPON Synthesis Report is planned for late autumn 2010 based on the first final project results.

The major task for the ESPON Managing Authority and Coordination Unit of ensuring an impeccable formal implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme will be continued in 2010. It has to be repeated here that the positive involvement of 31 countries in the programme under the regulatory framework of Structural Funds 2007-2013 is a continuous challenge. By the end of 2009 the System Audit was concluded positively. It was agreed that the necessary elements and procedures set up comply with the rules and expectations and provide a sufficient framework of procedures etc. for the implementation of the Programme. In 2010, the yearly audit of operations will be carried through on a limited number of projects as the audit hitherto has revealed a proper functioning and low risk of the ESPON 2013 Programme procedural framework.

The Work Programme 2010 foresees decisions taken by the Monitoring Committee related to 2 rounds of calls. Calls are envisaged opened by beginning of May and end of August 2010.

The calls in May 2010 will include Call for Proposals on 2 Applied Research projects that failed to receive admissible applications in autumn 2009 as well as the new Targeted Analyses, which could already be specified in collaboration with stakeholders behind the Expressions of Interest selected. In addition, a call will be open for proposals on Transnational Networking activities from the groupings of ESPON Contact Points.

In the Call for Proposals opening in August 2010, the remaining Targeted Analyses, as well as Targeted Analysis which may not receive an proposal in the May call, will be included together with the continuation of the ESPON 2013 Database project which by 2011 shall enter into its second phase covering the remaining programme period.

Work Programme 2010 relates as closely as possible to the policy development process related to territorial cohesion and to the future of EU Cohesion Policy which will continue in 2010 under the influence of a newly installed Commission and the changes in political set-up and influence resulting from the Lisbon Treaty/Europe 2020 Strategy. In particular, the future EU Cohesion Policy is an important issue in this respect. It has to be remembered that the Operational Programme for ESPON 2013 mentions the support to EU Cohesion Policy in broad terms meaning the delivery of evidence and facts to all aspects and all Objectives of Structural Funds 2007-2013.

The ongoing intergovernmental process on a “Territorial Agenda for the European Union” will also continue in 2010 and imply the use and involvement of ESPON. As the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011 is preparing for a review of the policy orientations included, a major work on updated evidence on the state and perspectives has been started where ESPON will offer and provide inputs.

The ambition of the ESPON 2013 Programme is to serve demands from both these policy processes. The Programme implementation will proceed in playing its role as delivering solid and profound knowledge on European territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts. The aim of delivering new comparable facts and evidence of indisputable scientific quality shall be fulfilled in the programme implementation in 2010 in order to ensure that the ESPON 2013 Programme fulfils its envisaged European role. In doing so, close correlation to the political events of the EU Presidencies during 2010, Spain and Belgium, will be ensured.

Strategic avenues for 2010

Four major objectives for 2010 will be devoted special attention in the implementation work of 2010 within which the main tasks are mentioned in the overview below. More detailed information can be found in the following chapters of the Work Plan 2010:

(1) Continuation in Projects start, implementation, development and closure

This avenue includes the starting up of a large number of new projects as well as the management and closure of a number of ongoing projects. The start of the new projects decided in early 2010 will dominate the first half of the year together with the preparation of the open call for proposals envisaged for May and August 2010. In addition the first final reports by Targeted Analyses will be delivered during the first half of 2010. Early autumn 2010, four more applied research projects will deliver their Final Reports.

During first half of 2010 a screening for research themes will provide input for the preparation process envisaged in autumn 2010 focusing on new themes for applied research projects for launch in 2011. As well, the evaluation of proposals submitted related to the call in late August 2010 shall take place.

(2) Enhanced Scientific Tool developments and Analytical support

The further consolidation of the ESPON 2013 Database is an important priority which will include regular update and dissemination activities via the ESPON Website as well as the specification of the continuation of the database development. The developed typologies of types of regions shall be filtered into the implementation of applied research projects and updates of mapping tools implemented. Further tools shall become available and territorial trends shall be analysed through updates of existing data and maps and analytical support given to the drafting of synthesis and content related information related to capitalisation via the ESPON website, such as the Map of the Month.

(3) Strengthened Capitalisation and Communication

The capitalisation activities will be boosted as the first final results from project under the ESPON 2013 Programme become available, both in terms of events and the publishing of ESPON reports and promotion material. On the events, a Conference on Targeted Analyses and an Open Seminar will be arranged as well as several ESPON Workshops. The production of ESPON reports and material promoting the ESPON 2013 Programme and its results will accelerate with more Territorial Observations, the first ESPON Synthesis report, the first Scientific ESPON Report and different material in support of communication activities, such as a leaflet on the programme and a project overview. Several ESPON Workshops, also at external events like the Open Days and a scientific conference will contribute. The media relations will be enhanced through support from a Media Bureau, which will also develop a Capitalisation Strategy. The Communication towards potential beneficiaries will continue in 2010 based on the original Communication Plan for the ESPON 2013 Programme, implementing actions during 2010 that matches the maturity of the programme and its project deliveries.

(4) Consolidated Management, Audit and Ongoing Evaluation

The consolidated formal setting up of the ESPON 2013 Programme will be the basis for ensuring the management of the programme and projects. The management of the calls

for proposals and expressions of interest (guidance to applicants, eligibility checks and evaluations), the results of the calls (kick-off meetings, project contracting, seminars for financial managers), the follow-up of the second system audit and the first audit of operations, which most probably will include as well the Technical Assistance, will be major tasks in 2010. An additional major task will be the ongoing monitoring of the approved projects which includes not only the assessment and process of the projects' reimbursement claims but as well the needed ongoing guidance and control of the implementation of the rules by the contracted Lead Partners. The experience of 2009 showed that particular attention needs to be given to the correct and timely functioning of the first level financial control system in the different Member and Partner States. This task will be crucial in 2010 to avoid any risk of de-commitment which might arise not from a low level of programme financial commitment, but also from delayed project reporting and insufficient quality of the certification according to first level financial control accompanying the projects claims. According to the Management and Control System Description in 2010 the MA/CU and the Member and Partner States will have as well to start implementing the so-called "quality checks" on the ongoing projects and on the first level control systems. In relation to the audit work, the CU will have to provide support the AA during the entire audit of operations process and as well for the organisation of the GoA that as planned will take place during the second half of November 2010. The ongoing evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme will continue on the basis of plan in the Programme Manual and the Monitoring Scoreboard developed. A call for tender in spring 2010 will find the expertise for the evaluation foreseen starting in late 2010. Finally, the compulsory reporting duties to the European Commission do not have to be forgotten. The report on irregularities, the Payment Forecast and the Annual Implementation Report are all due during the first half of 2010.

The envisaged overall timing of activities in 2010 is available as annex 1. The entire programme implementation schedule envisaged, including the calls and budget allocations, is included as annex 2.

II. Detailed actions within the main avenues of activities 2010

The Work Programme 2010 and the 4 main avenues of activities each comprise a number of individual tasks of which only the major ones are mentioned in the following:

II.1 Projects start, implementation, development and closure

Priority 1: Applied Research projects

The first ESPON project from the 2013 Programme ended in 2009. In total, 5 projects are still in the process of implementation of which 4 will deliver their final results in 2010. The Climate project that was started a bit later will provide its draft Final Report in December 2010.

The call in 2009 is envisaged to bring up to additional 11 applied research projects. The MC will in February 2010 decide on the best proposals and the kick-off and contracting of these projects will take place in the first half of 2010. These projects will deliver their Inception Report 3 months after their kick-off.

The new applied research projects will deal with the following themes:

- Attractiveness of European regions and cities for residents and visitors
- European patterns of land use
- Territorial cooperation in transnational areas and across internal/external borders
- Accessibility at regional/local scale and patterns in Europe
- Secondary growth poles in territorial development
- European perspective on specific types of territories
- Territorial dimension of innovation and knowledge economy
- Continental territorial structures and flows (globalisation)
- Services of General Interest
- European Seas in territorial development
- Territorial and Regional sensitivity of EU Directives

Further Calls for Proposals for additional Applied Research project themes is not foreseen in 2010. However, the preparation of the next call in January 2011 will be done during 2010. The themes in policy demand will be found through meetings of the Concertation Committee and the Monitoring Committee. The process will be supported by a second ESPON stakeholder survey during first half of 2010.

Priority 1: Knowledge Support System (pool of experts for Sounding Boards)

The Knowledge Support System was extended in 2009 with experts related to the themes of the 11 new Applied Research projects. In the wake of the formulation of the themes and project specifications for the call for proposals in early 2011, it will be considered whether a call for expression of interest for becoming expert in future Sounding Boards is necessary. This will depend on the themes for the next round of applied research selected and the corresponding expertise among the 74 experts already included in the KSS.

Priority 2: Targeted Analysis

The first round of 6 Targeted Analyses with stakeholders will all terminate in 2010. The emphasis will then be on capitalisation of the results achieved concerning the use of ESPON results in practice.

Following the open Call for Proposals ending on 11 November 2009, two additional Targeted Analyses will start in early 2010 following the selection of best Project Proposals and the corresponding Lead Partners. These projects will be kicked-off after the MC meeting in February 2010 with the involvement of the stakeholders behind.

The second Call for Interest from stakeholders for this new type of ESPON projects resulted in the Monitoring Committee selecting 10 project ideas for Targeted Analyses. The Stakeholders behind the Expression of Interest will together with the ESPON CU develop Project Specifications during early spring 2010 trying to get as many projects as possible ready for the call in May 2010. The Concertation Committee will give advice on these Project Specifications before they are decided by the Monitoring Committee and used in the open Calls for Proposals scheduled for 2010.

The evaluation of Project Proposals and Expression of Interest following the calls in 2010 will take place in July/August and November/December 2010.

II.2 Scientific Tool developments and Analytical support

ESPON 2013 Database

The ESPON 2013 Database will twice in 2010 be updated according to the implementation plan for the project. A 2nd Interim report will become available in February 2010 and the draft Final report in December 2010.

As the project is perceived as the first of two consecutive projects on the ESPON 2013 Database during the ESPON 2013 Programme the preparations for a second project on the Database will be undertaken during 2010. This will include a test of stakeholders on the usefulness of the achievements so far as an input for a Project Specification for a Call for Proposals on the second phase of the ESPON 2013 Database. The call is scheduled open from September 2010. The Concertation Committee will be giving advice and the Monitoring Committee decide the best proposal in December 2010.

The cooperation of European Territorial or spatial data will continue in 2010, integrating the ESPON Programme further into this European process. The Cooperation with EUROSTAT will continue on the basis of an updated Action Plan that should ensure mutual benefits in the development of pan-European regionalised information and European maps.

Territorial Indicators and Monitoring

The call in 2009 resulted in the Monitoring Committee selecting a proposal to be carried through. The project will be kicked-off in early 2010. Three months after the Inception report will arrive.

The third major project on the establishment of a Territorial Monitoring System, which is part of the ESPON 2013 OP, will be prepared during 2010 and made ready for a Call for Proposals in January 2011. This preparation of a Project Specification will relate to progress on territorial indicators and indices and involve the Concertation Committee and the decision of the Monitoring Committee in late 2010.

Scientific Tools

The implementation of 4 projects on scientific tools that were previewed started during 2009 will continue in 2010. These tools are the following:

- Further improvement of the Hyperatlas mapping facility.
- Update of Data Navigator, including Iceland and Liechtenstein
- Online Map Making Tool (ESPON MapMaker)
- Cartographic language for territorial cohesion policy.

In 2010, one additional project is foreseen:

- ESPON Online MapFinder,

This tool shall ensure an easy on-line access via the ESPON Website to ESPON Maps will be tendered as part of the MA-led Project 2010 under the name ESPON MapFinder.

Territorial trends through update of Data and Maps

The services updating existing Data and Maps will continue in 2010. The tendering process has been carried through respectively are in process for the following three already decided themes:

- Lisbon Economic Performance Indicators
- Telecommunication and IT roll-out
- Creative workforce as bearer of innovation.

The output on these two themes will be available early 2010 and form the basis for Territorial Observations. In order to have similar input for the next issues of Territorial Observations the following updates of Data and Maps will be tendered in 2010:

- Human Development Index
- Aggregated Natural Hazards
- Regional Economic indicators before and after the crisis (working title)

During the course of 2010, the CU might propose further actions related to the ESPON Scientific Platform on tools and update of maps.

II.3 Strengthened Capitalisation and Communication

Capitalisation Activities 2010

The Capitalisation Activities 2010 can as final reports from projects under Priority 1, 2 and 3 become available be based on new results. A Media Bureau will be set up early 2010 following a call for tender in late 2009 and elaboration of a Capitalisation Strategy take pace. This strategy will be made available for MC decision during early summer 2010. The following paragraphs reflect the main activities foreseen in 2010.

Media and Publications

The Capitalisation Strategy and its actions will boost further the media related activities that have already a substantial volume. More and enlarged direct mailing to key stakeholders is envisaged.

The new and updates ESPON Website that will be launched in January 2009 shall perform as an easy usable tool in the capitalisation and communication efforts of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The new updated ESPON 2013 Website will become fully operational in early 2010. In addition, the ongoing redesign and update of the ESPON Intranet will be mature and released in spring 2010.

The number of Press releases foreseen for 2010 will be minimum 6. The ESPON Newsletter will have 6 issues and the new and updated ESPON Website will display at least 9 Map of the Month including an analytical explanation produced by the CU.

A substantial number of ESPON publications are envisaged in 2010, in total 3 larger and 4-6 smaller publications are the level of ambition.

The First ESPON Synthesis Report will de elaborated during spring/summer 2010 and published in second half of 2010. This report will be elaborated mainly based on the final reports available by late summer 2010. The drafting will include external assistance in a mix with the concrete project expertise in the CU.

The first ESPON Scientific Report will follow ESPON Workshops at the RSA Annual Conference in May 2010.

The proceedings of the ESPON Stakeholder Conference on Targeted Analyses (see below) will be documented in an ESPON report.

In 2010, 4 volumes of the series of short publications, ESPON Territorial Observations, are envisaged. The volumes will focus on Territorial Trends related to Lisbon Economic Indicators, Telecom and IT roll-out, Creative Workforce and Human Development Index, respectively. The basis for these volumes will (as mentioned above) be the new results from the update of indicators and maps previewed under Priority 3. In addition, a printed volume may become realistic on the use of TIA in practice as a workshop follow up.

In addition, reports from ESPON Workshops and the Internal Seminar late 2010 will be drafted and made available on the ESPON Website.

ESPON Seminars and Workshops

In 2010, it is foreseen to carry through one Open Seminar in Spain in June 2010 as well as an ESPON Stakeholder Conference on Targeted Analyses in Bruxelles in early autumn 2010, addressing regional and municipal stakeholders on the use of ESPON results.

In addition 2 open ESPON Workshops are foreseen, one in spring 2010 on Territorial Impact Assessment capitalising on the Final Report of the TIPTAP project. The second ESPON workshop might pick a theme related to the application of ESPON scientific tools by projects.

At the Open Days in Bruxelles organised by DG Regio in autumn 2010, a workshop session is envisaged by ESPON fostering dialogue on ESPON results and evidence, as has been the case for the last three 7 years. The main target group for this Commission event are regional and local authorities and practitioners implementing Structural Funds. Further efforts to inform Commission services closer about ESPON results may eventually lead to a second information meeting in DG Regio, targeting a specific a theme related to territorial development.

In addition, the cooperation with scientific institutions in the field of territorial science has resulted in demands for ESPON workshops in connection with or incorporated in scientific events.

Transnational Networking Activities

The capitalisation at transnational level will begin in 2010. 2 projects proposed by the ESPON Contact Point Network including 30 countries have been selected by the Monitoring Committee by February 2010. These projects will be kicked-off and contracted early 2010 and their implementation begins as for other projects with a kick-off meeting ensuring the proper contracting of the projects. Depending on the content and activities of the contracted projects, the Monitoring Committee will during 2010 be involved in discussions of capitalisation at transnational level.

The Monitoring Committee has the wish to have many more projects driven by the ESPON Contact Point Network. It has therefore been decided to open a new Call for Proposals in May 2010.

Communication Plan 2010

The Communication Plan for the entire programming period was approved by the MC in November 2007. For the year 2010, the ESPON Managing Authority, with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit, intends to implement the following actions:

1. Events:

- Technical Meetings with FLC in FR and the UK
- Financial Seminar on Calls launched on September 2009 targeting the Lead and Project Partners of approved projects under the round of calls with the aim of informing the beneficiaries about e.g. eligibility rules, programme manual, subsidy contract, reporting and monitoring procedures, as well as about administrative, legal and practical matters of relevance concerning project coordination and management.
- Seminar for 1st Level Financial Controllers which aims at ensuring a better execution of the management and control system under the responsibility of the participating Member and Partner States of the Programme
- Info Days in May and September 2010 launching the new calls and presenting the conditions for applying. The event will target in particular stakeholders, potential beneficiaries and authorities.
- Participation to (at least) 3 external events to market the Programme, the projects, results (NTCCP in Madrid March, DG Meeting on TA in Sevilla May, Open Days in Brussels October).

2. Information tools:

- Applicants' Packages will be compiled prior the opening of the Calls to be launched in May and late August 2010. They will be published on the ESPON website and disseminate during the info day event and on demand.
- The Calls will be announced at the Official Journal in two steps: the pre-announcement and the announcement.
- Development of additional features of the Programme Management Supporting System (PMSS), which became operational during 2009, in order to make the system more efficient and useful.
- Elaboration and dissemination several times during the year of the ESPRESSON containing the latest news in plain text with link to the relevant web pages at the ESPON Website in order to enable the flow of information between the CU and the ECPs.

3. Communication tools:

- Implement the new Corporate Identity Manual to every publication.
- Elaboration of short article for each ESPON Newsletter disseminated in the framework of the Capitalisation Activities during 2010, targeting the launch of the call as well as the timetable of events.
- Elaboration of the relevant sections of the ESPON Website targeting beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, including the publication of the list of beneficiaries.
- Update of the ESPON Intranet in order to enable further the flow of information from the authorities of the programme and between the different members of a group.

- Elaboration of Press Releases, also related to the launch of the call.

4. Promotional material:

- Production of the following promotional materials, including a promotional brochure, the first video clips for the ESPON Website and an ESPON pen and mouse pad.
- The objective of the ESPON promotional brochure is to provide an overview of the Programme (mission, objectives, bodies) and promote its activities, content, projects. It will target broadly decision makers, beneficiaries and the general public.
- The successful tenderer on “CAP Strategy and Media Bureau” will be asked creating at least two video clips to be releases on the ESPON Website (can be distributed by DVD). The theme of the first one will be along the lines of ‘What ESPON can do for you’. This can involve short stories from people who have participated in different roles in ESPON. The second video clip will aim at highlighting how policy makers have benefited from ESPON and how the Programme is being used to help support and contribute to the policies. The structure (story board, text, content) of the two video clips will be presented for the MC for approval.
- During 2010 the preparation of a European-wide open competition under the theme “European MapArt” will start. The aim is to use the process and results in communicating ESPON wider and with new target groups. In addition, the output is intended used for promotional material, such as an ESPON Calendar 2012 for wide distribution. The competition will aim at inviting for (computer) manipulation of ESPON Maps creating cartographic images with a distinct artistic appeal that will create attention to ESPON. The selection of the best entries in the compwttition may include high-level policy makers as selection panel and an event in Bruxelles publicising the result. Within this framework, during 2010 the CU will develop a proposal to be approved by the MC.

Communication Plan 2010 is available as a separate document decided by the Monitoring Committee in December 2009 and has been sent to the Commission for information.

II.4. Consolidated Management at Programme and Project level, Audit and Ongoing Evaluation

II.4.1 Programme Management

From the programme management side during 2010 the main milestones are related on one side to the reporting duties to the European Commission and on the other side to the implementation of the specific programme management verifications that are foreseen in the approved management and control system description.

From the reporting side, two main report will have to be submitted to the European Commission via the SFC-2007:

- Forecast Payment for 2010 and 2011, by the 30 April 2010
- Annual Implementation Report for 2009 which will have to be submitted to the European Commission by 30 June 2010 following its discussion and formal approval of the MC.

The Managing Authority and the Coordination Unit will have as well to cooperate and coordinate with the Certifying Authority for the submission of the report on irregularities due by the 31 March 2009.

In relation the management verifications, during 2010 the Managing Authority will have to start implementing quality controls on ongoing projects and as well support Member States for the implementation of their quality checks on their respective first level financial control system.

An important element for 2010 will be the follow up of the simplification process started by the COCOF. Taking into account that the decision on whether implement any simplification belongs to each individual Member States, the Managing Authority and the Coordination Unit will have to approach the representative of the Member and Partner States and enforce as far as possible a close coordination. Member and Partner States will have to be made aware that taking into account the level reached by the programme in terms of financial commitments requires a careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of opting for a simplification. In case of a favourable decision towards simplification, important efforts will have to be dedicated to ensure that common simplified rules can be agreed by all Member and Partner States and decided at programme level. A too different approach to simplification across the different Member and Partner States could jeopardise the financial implementation of the programme. With regards to this particular issue, cooperation with the other networking programmes has been established and will continue as well during 2010. This cooperation will not be limited to the aspects of the simplification.

Finally, an important milestone for 2010 will be the application to the ESPON 2013 Programme of the automatic de-commitment rule. By the 31 December 2010 the programme will need to certify to the European Commission at least €4.733.678,67 to avoid automatic de-commitment. This is a major goal taking into account that by the end of 2009 a total of €793.070,76 has been certified.

II.4.2 Management of calls for proposals, calls for expression of interest and call for tenders

During the first half of 2010 the ESPON CU will still be busy managing the call closed on the 11 November 2009. The eligibility checks (including the treatment of eventual correctable omissions cases) and the evaluation of the Management and Financial capabilities of proposals received for P1, P2, P3 and P4 will be closed only during the month of January 2010. Following the decision of the MC kick off meeting with the selected Lead Applicants will have to be organised. During the kick off meetings the remarks of the evaluations will be considered which in most of the case results in the compilation of an annex to the standard subsidy contract and the resubmission of the Part A of the application form. Taking into account the experience of 2009, it is foreseen that process will last at least two months starting from the date of the kick off meeting.

In parallel, the CU will have as well to finalise the formalisation of all the contracting with the selected KSS experts as their inputs will be needed already for the Inception Report phase (for the ones that have not been involved already as from the phase of the evaluation of proposals).

With regards to the EoI, during the second half of 2010 the CU will have as well to start the preparation of the elaboration of the stakeholder's cooperation agreement which will have to be sent for signature to the respective successful lead stakeholders and be received signed prior the launch of the call for proposal foreseen for 1 September 2010. The signature process will only be able to start as soon as the MC has taken a final decision on the project specifications and on the respective budgets as these elements are integral parts of the stakeholder cooperation agreement.

Finally, the MA and CU will have well to manage the call for tenders related to the implementation of actions in the framework of priority 3 and priority 4 (see sections II.2 and II.3) as described in the MA led project proposals approved at the MC meeting held in Malmo the 1 December 2009. .

II.4.3 Project Monitoring

In relation to project monitoring during 2010 there will be a major increase of the work related to the monitoring of ongoing projects together with the contracting of the new projects selected following the call closed on 11 November 2009. Particular attention will be provided to the timely and correct submission of projects reimbursement claim, taking into account the important deadline with the application of the de-commitment rule by the end of the year. The experience of 2009 showed an extremely low level of successful reimbursement claim. Out of the six reimbursement claim that were to be submitted by the end of June 2009 one has still not been received by the 15 of November despite the several reminders sent by the managing Authority and only one of the remaining five received could be approved due to serious weaknesses detected in the certification according to first level financial control.

In order to avoid de-commitment at the end of 2010, the ESPON CU will have to reinforce the support to Lead and Project Partners, but as well to the first level financial controller. As indicated in the section related to the Communication Plan, specific events have been planned in order to treat with the needed urgency this issue.

Close contact with the Lead Partners and the first level financial control will be reinforced and as well projects will be encouraged to send to the CU the draft reimbursement claims before they are sent to the first level financial controller for verifications.

By the end of 2009 the PMSS became fully operation with the exception of the section dedicated to the management of the Technical Assistance which development is in course of discussion with the programmers and the other TCP programmes.

II.4.4 Audit activities

Following the two system audits of 2009, during 2010 the audit activities will start with the audit of operations, which most probably will include the audit of the Technical Assistance. The GoA that will be held in Lille on the 18 and 19 November 2009 will define the confidence level of the ESPON 2013 programme and set the size of the sample to be audit. However, due to the limited expenditure certified so far to the EC and that can be taken as the basis for the sampling, the AA and the GoA might decided

for a complementary sample so to be able to conclude and provide a meaningful opinion to the EC by the 31 December 2010.

The audit of operations will be implemented by the external contract during the month of March and April 2010 taking into account the need of giving all audits closed by the 30 June 2010.

It is foreseen that the GoA will meet in Paris during the second half of November 2010.

II.4.5 Ongoing Evaluation

By the end of 2009, the first internal evaluation including the Monitoring Scoreboard was tabled for the MC. The conclusion was that the programme implementation is moving in the right direction with up going trends related to project realisation and capitalisation. For the budget spending however additional efforts are necessary, which are part of the Work Programme 2010.

The Ongoing Evaluation will continue in 2010 with internal evaluation reports by June 2010 in relation to the Annual Report, and by late November 2010 in relation to the MC decision on the Work Programme for 2011.

By the end of 2010 an External Evaluation will be carried through as stated in the ESPON Programme Manual. The MA/CU will in early 2010 start the process of tendering the service by elaborating Terms of Reference. The MC shall approve the Terms of Reference before a call for tender is launched in order to find the external experts that shall be contracted for the evaluation.

II.4.6 Technical Assistance

In relation to the Technical Assistance, all the tasks related to it representing the three main strands “Technical Assistance”, “Analytical Support” and “Communication Plan” and which have been described in the other section of this Work Programme.

During 2010 the CU and MA will have as well to prepare reimbursement claims related to the Technical Assistance for 2009 and for 2010 and to organise for their certification according to first level financial control.

The same procedure will have to be applied as well to the MA led projects in the framework of Priority 1 (KSS), Priority 3 and Priority 4. In these latter cases, the reimbursement claimers will have to cover the entire 2008 and 2009. The MC will be involved for the approval of the activity reports related to those MA led projects.

In relation to the financial management of the Technical Assistance budget, the CU is currently exploring, together with other Territorial Cooperation Programme, the possibility to extend, by adding an additional module, the PMSS to the monitoring of the Technical Assistance Budget.

II.4.7 Closure of the ESPON 2006 Programme

Following the submission of the closure documents for the ESPON 2006 (the final implementation report had been already submitted for the approval of the EC in June 2009), it is not excluded that the MA and the CU will have to deal with additional clarification requests from DG REGIO.

III. Time planning 2010

The main activities and meetings foreseen in 2010 are envisaged to follow the timing indicated in the following, which is presented in the indicative Calendar 2010 included in Annex 1.

1. Monitoring Committee meetings

In 2010, four MC meeting are scheduled on 16-17 February 2010 in Bruxelles, on 7-8 June 2009 in Alcala, Spain, on 29 September in Bruxelles and on 15-16 November 2010 in Liege. Written procedures are foreseen during the year and will be conducted when needed for an efficient programme implementation.

2. Concertation Committee meetings

The CC will convey a meeting on 16 February 2010 in Bruxelles starting the discussion on new applied research themes and the second stakeholder survey envisaged. The CC meetings normally conveyed at least 6 weeks in advance of each MC meeting will be held on 26-27 April 2010, on 19-20 August 2010 (tbc) and on 26-27 September 2010, all meetings from lunch to lunch.

3. ECP meetings

The ECP Network will meet twice during 2010, on 11 June 2010 in Alcala and on 19 November 2009 in Liege, Belgium.

4. Group of Auditors meetings

The meeting of the GoA will take place, due to the timing of the reporting to the EC, during November 2010. This year, the GoA meeting will be organised by ESPON in Luxembourg, and will concern like before jointly the three network programmes IVC, URBACT and ESPON.

IV. Indicative budget 2010

The implementation of the Work Programme for 2010 is envisaged to imply expenses according to the indicative budget inserted as Annex 3.

IV. Annexes:

Annex 1: Indicative Calendar 2010 and 2011

Annex 2: Implementation Calendar 2007-2015

Annex 3: Budget 2010

[ANNEXES WILL BE ADDED FOLLOWING THE MC DECISION ENVISAGED RELATED TO NEW CALENDARS AND BUDGET 2010 AS DECIDED ON 1 DECEMBER 2009]