

## **ESPON 2013 Programme**

### **Work Programme 2014**

**Approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee on 3 December 2013**

The Work Programme 2014 includes the actions envisaged in 2014 being the final year of implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to content. In 2015 only the financial closure of projects and services is foreseen. The planning and implementation of activities under the 5 Programme Priorities that were started in 2008 has progressed according to plan.

The work on and output of new territorial evidence and tools will still deliver important results in 2014. The Monitoring Committee will continue being closely involved in the implementation process together with the other programme authorities. However, no more themes and specifications of new projects, covering Applied Research, Targeted Analyses, the Scientific Platform and Transnational Networking Activities by the ECP Network are relevant as the programme has committed all funds for these priorities.

The new results of 2014, together with the vast amount of new territorial evidence, maps and tools produced by the ESPON 2013 Programme, will be the basis for the substantial capitalisation activities during 2014 aiming at knowledge transfer into relevant policy development processes.

#### **I. General Outlook for 2014**

##### **I.1. Policy development and demand**

The year 2014 is important for ESPON in terms of continuing delivering territorial evidence in support of policy. The programme is recognised by Ministers and the Commission for providing important new territorial knowledge with a European dimension. With Territorial Cohesion as part of the aims for EU Cohesion Policy, and the EU 2020 Strategy aiming at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the integrated approach to policy and the territorial dimension of development have become more in focus.

EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 is focusing in investments along 11 thematic priorities where ESPON evidence can be important. It also promotes integrated and place-based policy approaches such as in the form of Integrated Territorial Investments. Ministers responsible for territorial development and spatial planning have agreed a Territorial Agenda 2020 setting a number of policy principles for the development of the European territory which are currently under implementation where pan-European territorial evidence can also be useful. The European Parliament has shown particular interest in the ongoing project on a Territorial Vision 2050 for the Europe and the Committee of the Regions are devoted to Territorial Impact Assessment using recent ESPON tools.

The definition and implementation of programmes financed by European Strategic Investment Funds 2014-2020 have been furnished with territorial evidence in order to ensure informed decisions on strategies and projects selection.

Member States supported by Partner States are consistent in requesting an enhanced territorial dimension and place-based approach being included in policy processes at all levels. This has created a positive environment for the uptake and capitalisation of the European territorial knowledge base that have been developed over more than 11 years by ESPON.

Indeed, during 2013 the demand towards ESPON evidence was increasing with new stakeholders from regions and cities as well as related organisations showing interest for ESPON results within different themes. This positive trend is expected to continue in 2014. Particular efforts have already been made to service the ongoing and future programming activities in other Structural Funds programmes. New interesting project results, such as on regional crisis resilience, long term territorial scenarios and vision and territorial potentials for supporting a greener economy, are expected to stimulate this up going trends and expand further the range of stakeholders at European as well as lower levels. In addition, the use of ESPON tools, data and indicators as well as tools for TIA quick checks and territorial monitoring are among outputs that may create new users of ESPON.

In policy perspective, the recognition by policymakers and stakeholders at all levels of the need to understand better the wider territorial context is foreseen to advance further. In today's quickly changing and connecting world the markets and competition lies increasingly outside the EU. At the same token, options for exploiting complementarities with other regions and cities through cooperation arrangements requires a wider European perspective to territorial development. Benchmarking based on comparison of strengths and weaknesses with other regions and cities can trigger of ideas of joining forces and create development that would not happen by staying apart.

In this policy context, the ESPON 2013 Programme is expected in 2014 to further strengthen the outreach and knowledge transfer by having a strong focus on capitalisation. A reputation for delivering solid and innovative, interesting and useful results is expected to be taken a step forward.

During 2013 the Monitoring Committee has conducted the very last call for proposals on a final capitalisation activity at transnational level by the ECP network that also will contribute to boosting the dissemination and uptake of ESPON evidence, also by regional and local authorities.

In parallel with the final steps of implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme, the process of shaping consensus and approval of a renewed ESPON Programme will continue into 2014. This is an additional important task for the ESPON CU. The Joint Working Group on the ESPON post 2013 that was established in 2012 will continue its work, at least in the first months of 2014 based on the key principles of improving and strengthening of the ESPON exercise that have been agreed in principle and endorsed by General Directors. These include the wish to improve the capacity of ESPON to transfer knowledge towards policy processes reinforcing the territorial dimension in policies, and a renewed institutional setting that is administratively lean and efficient. This renewal is among other foreseen to include an EGTC as single beneficiary and implementing the content by using service contracts only.

It is previewed that a proposal for an Operational Programme for ESPON post 2013 will be agreed among the 32 participating countries during February/March 2014 and submitted to the European Commission for approval shortly after. A new programme is supposed to be approved during summer 2014 and the institutional arrangements

completed which on an optimistic note could mean that the ESPON post 2013 will be able to launch a first call for tender by the end of 2014.

## **I.2. Strategic Avenues for 2014**

As the deliveries of results of ESPON projects continue, the emphasis in the programme implementation will stay as in 2013 highly devoted to capitalisation and communication of results. Relatively, the strongest weight related to the different programme priorities will in the remainder of the programme implementation lay on Priority 4 on Capitalisation. This will consequently be reflected in the work priorities of the CU.

Moreover, in 2014 substantial efforts will be made to further develop the toolbox of ESPON under Priority 3 as a large number of new actions will be started and carried through during 2014.

In parallel, efforts are still needed to manage and guide the remaining ongoing projects towards the best possible results. However, during 2014 the inflow of reports will gradually become less than in the previous years. In terms of projects, in particular the activities carried through within the so-called MA led projects will be a matter requiring substantial attention and resources, not least related to the short-term services which have been tendered late in 2013 and which will deliver during 2014.

The financial management of the programme will receive continued attention in order to achieve and maintain an impeccable level. Following the successful avoidance of de-commitment of ERDF funds in 2013, meeting the spending target for 2014 will still need committed attention of all actors and programme authorities involved. Also, the very satisfying audits of 2013 will set the targets for 2014.

The following 4 strategic avenues will guide the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme during the year 2014:

- (1) **Emphasising capitalisation and communication activities and wide-spread use of ESPON territorial evidence** based on all results achieved with the ESPON 2013 Programme, **however with particular promotion of new evidence becoming available during 2014**, and including targeted activities and publishing publications according to the decided Publication Plan 2011-2014.
- (2) **Improving the ESPON toolbox** through a wide-range of actions on different issues that together contributes to a consistent and inter-related set of tools for territorial analyses based on ESPON results. Particular emphasis is on user-friendliness.
- (3) **Guaranteeing high quality, solid and useful outputs from active projects, both applied research and tools development within MA led projects**, supported by clear executive summaries and applications that can make ESPON even more useful as provider of interesting European territorial evidence and tools.
- (4) **Continuing efforts ensuring sufficient level of spending in 2014**, continuing sound financial management of the programme with finding-free audits and quality checks and preparing for the winding up of the ESPON 2013 programme in 2015.

More detailed information on the concrete programme implementation in 2014 is included in the following chapters of the Work Programme 2014.

The envisaged overall timing of activities in 2014 and the budget for 2014 are following decision by the MC on 3 December 2013 available as annex 1 and 2 respectively.

### I.3. Implementation status

The implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme is now well advanced. In total 32 projects (P1 and P2) (contracted following call for proposals) are final closed in 2013. For the same type of project under P3 and P4 the closed projects number 6. In total within the programme priorities 66 larger projects (found following calls for proposals) are final or ongoing, and (1 project just decided) under contracting. The status by 31 December 2013 for contracted and remaining projects under the ESPON 2013 Programme can be seen from the following table:

#### Project status by the start of 2014 (excluding MA led projects under P3 and P4)

<b>Projects</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Final, ongoing or under contracting	25	23	10	8	66
<b>Total projects</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>66</b>

In addition to the abovementioned projects, a significant number of additional ESPON activities are carried through based on service contracts. In total 16 MA-led projects within Priority 3 and Priority 4 has been decided by the MC. The implementation of these projects covers in total 68 actions, of which many require call for tenders. So far 40 actions have been finalised, while 17 are under implementation and 11 under contracting. An overview is presented in the following table:

#### Status on MA-led Projects by the start of 2014

<b>MA-led projects</b>	<b>P 3</b>	<b>P 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Final	4	5	9
Ongoing	3	4	7
<b>Total projects</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>
Total no. of actions	22	46	<b>68</b>

Adding the projects and actions, this means that the ESPON 2013 Programme in total during its entire lifetime will implement 134 contracted projects and actions.

As said, during 2014, the high volume of results and output continues to require a substantial and targeted effort on the processing, capitalisation and communication of the results to policymakers in an easy and targeted way. This will require that further resources of the CU will be allocated to capitalisation. In this context, a service contract for external expertise support will continue providing valuable support.

Transnational activities carried through by the ECP network under Priority 4 have contributed to the capitalisation efforts. Three contracted projects still running will end in the beginning of 2014. However, due to the possibility of reallocation funds within Priority 4, the MC decided during 2013 to launch an additional call for proposal for a Transnational Networking Activity, which ended in the decision of the MC on 3 December 2013 of contracting an additional project. This project will during 2014

implement wide-ranging and innovative capitalisation activities. The project will be carried out by a large network of ECPs covering most of Europe and aim at enlarging the outreach of ESPON territorial evidence to policy-makers as well as a wider public at transnational and local level.

Due to the final stages of the implementation of the ESPON 2013 programme, the administrative and financial management continues to be a demanding task. The closure of finalised projects is a significant task in 2014, in terms of closing the content part, but in particular in terms of closing the financial part of projects.

To ensure that the necessary spending of ERDF funds in 2014 remains an important task for the CU. The successful progress made in 2013 on the spending side was encouraging, however by the end of 2014 an additional spending and certification of ERDF funds of just below 6.5 mio. Euro will be necessary in order to avoid de-commitment of funds.

The audits carried through in 2013 showed a significant decrease of the error rate from 1,09 % in 2012 to 0,0008 % in 2013. Considering that the number of audits to be implemented in 2014 will still be important, the high level of support and quality assurance will be applied in order to ensure staying with a low error rate in 2014.

## **II. Detailed actions within the main activities of 2014**

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2014 put emphasis on managing and winding up Applied Research projects, Targeted Analysis as well as projects within the Scientific Platform on Tools. All ongoing projects will deliver final results. In order to guarantee the required high quality and policy relevance, considerable efforts will be made to support and steer project development and implementation.

For a comprehensive overview on ESPON project, their scope, envisaged results, budget, and partnership, the final version of the ESPON Project Overview is available on the ESPON website and a final version was printed in early 2013. However, with the latest decisions on projects by the MC during 2013, a minor update has been necessary in the version on the ESPON website.

Many additional actions under 16 MA led projects related to tools and data as well as capitalisation will be carried through during 2014. In addition, the capitalisation through Transnational Networking Activities by the ECP network will continue during 2014 as 3 of the 8 projects selected are still active in 2014.

### **II.1 Applied Research projects (Priority 1)**

The implementation of Applied Research projects will in 2014 come to an end. The programme will manage to implement in total 25 Applied Research projects, all of which are contracted.

The flow of project implementation of these 25 projects looks as follows:

- 7 projects submitted their final deliveries by 31 December 2011.
- 8 projects delivered their Final Reports by 31 December 2012.
- 4 projects will have delivered their Final Reports by 31 December 2013.
- 6 projects will deliver their Final Report in 2014.

The specific action under Priority 1, the Knowledge Support System (pool of experts for Sounding Boards) (Priority 1), is complete. Following the last call for expression of interest the Knowledge Support System it currently includes 109 experts. No further calls will be implemented during the current programme period.

For concrete information on the individual applied research projects please consult the Project overview available on the ESPON website.

## **II.2 Targeted Analyses (Priority 2)**

Like with the Applied Research projects, the implementation of Targeted Analysis projects will in 2014 come to an end. The programme will manage in parallel 23 Targeted Analysis projects taking together all contracted projects.

The flow of project implementation of the 23 projects delivering Targeted Analyses to stakeholders looks as follows:

- 7 projects submitted their final deliveries by 31 December 2011.
- 10 projects delivered their Final Reports by 31 December 2012.
- 3 projects will have delivered their Final Reports by end of 2013.
- 3 projects will deliver their Final Reports by end of 2014.

There will be no more Calls for Expressions of Interest for Targeted Analysis during 2014.

For concrete information on the individual Targeted Analyses projects please consult the Project overview available on the ESPON website.

## **II.3 Scientific Tool developments and Analytical support (Priority 3)**

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2014 continue to make strong efforts to further develop and optimise the scientific platform and the ESPON tools for policymakers and practitioners. The majority of the last service contracts under the Priority 3 Scientific Platform project were launched in the last semester of 2013, a few remaining will take off in the very beginning of 2014. Focus will be put on enhancing the usefulness of ESPON results and tools and its practical use for policymakers at all levels.

Cooperation on European territorial data will continue in 2014, integrating the ESPON Programme further into this European process. In particular, good cooperation with EUROSTAT is crucial and cooperation will be developed further on key topics of common interest: time series, functional areas, urban data, maritime statistics and LAU1/LAU2 data. This approach will ensure mutual benefits in the development of pan-European regionalised information and European maps.

### ***II.3.1 Projects on scientific platform and analytical support (based on subsidy contracts following call for proposals)***

The following 8 Priority 3 projects will be running in 2014:

- ESPON 2013 Database (phase II)

The ESPON Database 2013 project – phase II (M4D Project) has delivered its Second Interim Report in June 2013 and will deliver a Draft Final Report in June 2014 and a Final Report in December 2014. The project will also deliver a new updated version of the ESPON Database Portal in December 2013 and in June and December 2014. This

ESPON tool is now more targeted to policy makers and non-experts, in particular by offering a search facility to easily query policy relevant indicators. The tool will include a continuously growing number of data and indicators on regions and cities resulting from projects and gathered and developed by the M4D project.

- ESPON Atlas on European Territorial Structures and Dynamics

The ESPON ATLAS project delivered the Inception Report in July 2012 and a revised Inception Report in October 2012. During the MC Meeting on 4 December 2012, the TPG carried out a workshop session in order to involve the MC in the further scoping of the thematic focus of the ATLAS. The Interim Report was delivered on 22 April 2013. A revised Interim Report was requested and was provided by the TPG on 30 July 2013. The project will run into the second half of 2014.

- Internet Online Mapping Tool

The Rich Internet Online Mapping Tool project (RIMAP) delivered their Draft Final Report and beta-version of the tool in October 2013. They will deliver their Final Report and Final version of the tool in December 2013. According to the plan, the project will test the tool during November and December of 2013 after which the final version will be made publically available in the ESPON website in 2014.

- Territorial Monitoring in a European Macro Region

This project is aimed at supporting evidence informed territorial development and cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) by developing an indicator based monitoring system in 6 main domains of high policy relevance and selected together with the group of stakeholders: economic performance and competitiveness; access to services markets and jobs; innovative territories; social inclusion and quality of life; environmental quality. During 2013 the project delivered the Interim Report and a draft version of the monitoring tool application which was made available through the following link: [http://bsr.espon.eu/TeMo\\_Presentation\\_Tool.htm](http://bsr.espon.eu/TeMo_Presentation_Tool.htm). The Final Report will be delivered by February 2014 and the group of stakeholders, mainly VASAB has been very participative during the project implementations and show great interest in carrying out other policy oriented case study analysis based on the monitoring system developed.

- Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes

The TerrEvi project will deliver its Final Report on 31 December 2013. A core part of this is the 10 Territorial Evidence Reports which were delivered in August 2013 covering four regional programmes, one Cross-Border Cooperation programme and five Transnational Cooperation programmes. The reports aims at providing Structural Funds programmes with insights on different types of territorial evidence ESPON with regard to the possible investment priorities of future programmes, and to stimulate a debate on how this evidence can be used in the programming process. The connection this has created between ESPON and the SF Programmes will be further strengthened through different capitalisation and dissemination activities during 2014.

- European Territorial Monitoring System

The main aim of the project is to develop a simple, easy understandable and policy relevant tool for European Territorial Monitoring and Reporting, capable of continuous assessment of territorial development trends and policy impacts in relation to policy objectives related to Territorial Cohesion (in particular the EU2020 Strategy, and the Territorial Agenda 2020). In general, this tool will mainly rely on, integrate and select time-series of territorial indicators and indexes developed by the INTERCO project and

included in the ESPON 2013 Database. During 2013 the project delivered an Inception Report, an Interim Report and in November it is expected to produce additional Intermediate Deliveries. The delivery of the Interim Report included also a draft version of the web application, made available under the following link: <http://81.47.175.201/etms-project/>. During 2014 the project will deliver the Draft Final Report and the Final Report.

- Detecting Territorial Potentials and Challenges

The project will deliver its Draft Final Report in January 2014 and the Final Report three months later. This will include a Handbook on detecting territorial potentials, which also will be made available as an application for mobile devices. In addition, the project will organize a Seminar in Brussels in February 2014.

- European Urban Benchmarking Web-tool

The main aim of the project is to develop the methodological concept of the 'quick-scan' web-tool and operationalise this into a fully functioning web-tool ready for use by the target group of policymakers and practitioners, as well as public and private investors. During 2013 the project delivered the Inception Report, the Intermediate Deliverables 1 and 2 including a draft version of the web application: <http://espon.geodan.nl/citybench/>. By November 2013 it is also scheduled the delivery of the Draft Final Report and in 2014 the project will deliver the Final Report.

### ***II.3.2 Tools (actions in MA-led projects based on service contracts)***

Currently, the following service contract under Priority 3 is ongoing and will be running for part of 2014:

- Innovation of ESPON Cartographic Language

This action is aimed at developing an innovative, accessible and practical approach to visualisation of territorial trends and dynamics across Europe. The tender was launched during the second half of 2012 and awarded to UMS RIATE from Paris later the same year. The preliminary results have been delivered during the first semester of 2013 and pointed out the need to improve the structure and components of the cartographic language currently applied by ESPON 2013. This has been further explored by providing guidance on cartographic elements, standards, and rules. The upcoming deliverables will include concrete proposals on the use of the new, innovative cartographic language by the ESPON CU. The same applies to the extensive use of new technologies and computer software. The final results will be delivered by the beginning of December 2013 and taken up in 2014.

In addition, the following 7 service contracts will be starting up, carried through and ended in 2014 under this action of Priority 3:

- Improvement of the usefulness of the ESPON HyperAtlas for European regions

The new update of the ESPON HyperAtlas will have as main focus what users want. Based on this, combined with the survey on the HyperAtlas V2 and the feedback received from various sources and policy developments in the field of territorial cohesion, an updated version of the HyperAtlas V3 will be developed. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

- TIA web application using the ARTS methodology



The TIA web application will be based on the methodology developed by the TIA related projects that have been carried out in ESPON 2013 Programme: TIPTAP, ARTS, EATIA and the TIA guidance that was published in 2013. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Online training platform with sessions focused on specific topics

This online learning platform will be building on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that the Priority 4 project ESPONTrain developed which was used for running teaching cycles for post-graduate students and practitioners/policy-makers using specially developed thematic teaching packs based on ESPON Priority 1 projects. This e-learning platform is currently being further explored in the ongoing Priority 4 project USESPON. This project is planned to start in early spring 2014.

- Regional typologies at LAU2:

At the moment nine regional typologies at NUTS3 level exist to be used for analytical purposes within ESPON projects and publications. A need is identified for similar regional typologies at LAU2 level to be used for comparable analytical purposes in case studies and targeted analysis. The results of the GEOSPECS project and the previous service contract developing the NUTS3 typologies can be used as a basis. The regional typologies to be considered further developed at a lower scale are: 1. Urban-rural regions; 2. Metropolitan regions; 3. Border regions; 4. Islands regions; 5. Sparsely populated regions; 6. Mountainous regions; 7. Coastal regions; 8. Regions in industrial transition. This project is in terms of reference drafting stage and will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Functional Indicators Tool

The aim of this tool is to give users the possibility to build indicators based on a limited number of core data. With this tool people should be able to calculate themselves more simple ratio indicators, such as different kinds of employment and unemployment rates, GDP per capita, etc. But also more advanced indicators related to accessibility and potentials. Examples for population are: population reached within 1 hour drive, distance needed to reach 2 million inhabitants, time needed to reach 1 million inhabitants, change over time for these indicators. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Upholding of the Baltic Sea Region – Territorial Monitoring System

The objective is to make the macro regional territorial monitoring systems an integrated element of the ESPON Territorial Monitoring System to ensure that key data used are congruent in all monitoring systems developed by ESPON, and that they are generated from the ESPON Database. This action aims to ensure the upholding, continuation and long term operationability of the developed test case made on a Baltic Sea Monitoring System after the closure of the current project. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Feasibility study on analytical tools based on Big Data

Increasingly data and information from analysing internet activities or social media can be used for observing development trends in our society. Data in this field can be collected with very short notice and does not need to go through longwinded harmonisation and collection procedure which often imply that regional data in Europe is some years old before it can be used. This opens a new window of opportunity for territorial analyses bringing the latest up to date territorial tendencies to policy makers.

This feasibility study aims to explore innovative possibilities to develop a tool that could be used to generate and analyse data from the internet. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

### ***II.3.3 Update of Data and Maps (actions in MA led projects based on service contracts)***

The following 4 service contracts will be starting up and running as well as deliver results in 2014 under this action of Priority 3:

- Matrix on accessibility data between NUTS 3 in Europe and Neighbourhood

The main objective of this service contract is the production of matrices for accessibility, calculation of potential accessibility indicators and elaboration of corresponding ESPON maps by: collecting and harmonising the most recent data available; calculating travel time matrices between NUTS-3 regions for passenger travel for road, rail, air and multimodal (2001, 2006, 2011, 2014) corresponding to the already existing potential accessibility indicators in ESPON; calculating accessibility potential indicators for the most recent data available for road, rail, air, and multimodal; elaboration of maps; analysing the territorial dynamics on European territory, its regions and cities on accessibility patterns and trends. This project has started by the end of 2013 and run through most of 2014.

- Harmonised datasets on local units (LAU 2);

Following the work developed by ESPON 2013 to improve the comparison of data from different years and sources and thereby respond to the increasing demand for EU-wide harmonised analyses, the objectives of this service contract are to develop guidance to the ESPON research community on the main issues that users have to deal with when collecting and harmonising data at LAU level 2; further develop the ESPON 2013 Database at LAU level 2 with data for EU28+4 (i.e. EU28 plus Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) on thematically-oriented topics on the basis of the 2001 and 2011 population and housing censuses; improve data comparability over time and across data sources at LAU level 2 by applying the methodology developed in the framework of ESPON 2013; demonstrate that the methodology mentioned above can be replicated more broadly by the ESPON research community. This will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Filling in data gaps in the ESPON Database

The main objective of this service contract is to carry out a service contract for collecting count data and metadata, build up time series and fill in existing data gaps, related to the ESPON Database, on (1) population data, (2) employment by age group and gender and (3) employment by economic sector. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

- Feasibility studies on selected topics in relation to the maintenance and development of the ESPON Database

This is currently considered to be replaced by a map update related to “Update of Maps and Related Data on Climate Change” with the main objective to update and complete a number of maps and indicators from the ESPON Climate project by: collecting, transforming and harmonising the most recent data available in order to (1) update and fill the data gaps on climate change exposure of Europe’s regions, (2) update and fill the data gaps on climate change sensitivity and aggregated potential impact of climate

change on Europe's regions and (3) update and fill the data gaps of the adaptive capacity and vulnerability indicator of European regions to climate change. Based on the results achieved, this service contract shall analyse territorial trends of the European territory and its regions in regard to climate change with a special focus on the ESPON Partner States and EU Candidate Countries. This project will start in the beginning of 2014.

## **II.4 Capitalisation and Communication (Priority 4 and partly 5)**

The ESPON 2013 Programme will in 2014 further strengthen the efforts to capitalise and communicate the final results of the projects through a wide range of activities and channels, existing as well as new ones.

The Communication Plan (approved in 2007), the Capitalisation Strategy (approved in September 2010) together with the Publication Plan (approved in June 2011) and the MA-led project 4.1 for 2011-14 (approved in September 2011), provide the strategic framework for implementing a wide range of targeted capitalisation and communication actions aimed at policy makers, stakeholders and the media.

### ***II.4.1 Media and Publication (actions in MA-led projects based on service contracts)***

#### ***Publications and Design***

The implementation of the ESPON Publication Plan based on the strategic MA-led project 4.1a "Publications and Design 2011-2014", began during 2012 and is based on 3 service contracts related to:

- External Expertise, which provides a pool of in-house and/or sub-contracted expertise, that are activated by the CU upon request and deliver writing and editorial services as well as support on data handling and mapping. The external expertise are involved to various degrees in the majority of the planned publications, ranging from more substantial scientific and policy-oriented publications to easy accessible evidence briefs with a more journalistic touch as well as presentations. The service provider was contracted in October 2012.
- Layout and Design, which is based on the existing and updated coherent corporate graphic design as specified in the ESPON Corporate Identity Manual. The service provider implement layout and design related the various publications and other products. The service provider was contracted in April 2013.
- Printing, this covers the practical and technical execution of the printing of the ESPON publications, as well as the supporting printing and collaterals. The service provider was contracted in May 2013.

The publication activities during 2014 are very extensive and planned to include:

- ESPON Scientific Report (No. 2)
- ESPON Synthesis Report (No. 3)
- ESPON ATLAS
- Territorial Vision and Scenarios 2050 Report
- Territorial Monitoring Report
- Territorial Monitoring: Facts and Figures
- Territorial Governance Handbook
- Detecting Territorial Potentials Handbook
- Seminar Report (No. 3)

- 5-6 ESPON Territorial Observations
- 6-7 ESPON Evidence Briefs
- Posters

In addition a number of various printed products/collaterals related to ESPON activities and events as well as promotional material.

#### Capitalisation strategy

The following capitalisation activities are planned for 2014:

- At least 6 press releases in relation to major publications launches and events.
- 6 ESPON Newsletters.
- Delivering speeches at external major events.

#### ESPON Website

The ESPON Website II was contracted in 2012 and ensures that website is regularly updated and continuously developed by the CU through additional pages and new tools such as videos, ESPON database and the online MapFinder.

#### **II.4.2 European Seminars and Workshops (actions in MA-led projects)**

The following 6 events in 2014 are envisaged under the MA-led project “4.2 European Seminars and Workshops 2011-2014”:

- 4 European Seminars and Conferences:
  - Conference on Partner States and EU, scheduled for 4 March 2014 in Brussels.
  - Territorial Vision Conference, scheduled for 29 April 2014 in Brussels.
  - ESPON Open Seminar will be arranged 4-5 June 2014 in Greece.
  - ESPON 2013 Final Event scheduled for October 2014, if possible back-to-back to the Open Days.
- 2 ESPON Workshops

Two ESPON Workshops will be organised during 2014, one in the spring and one in the fall. The themes will be considered based on policy demand. As previously the Workshops will consist of thematically oriented workshops based on specific ESPON projects/topics engaging scientists and policy-makers/practitioners in interactive exchanges of knowledge and experiences.

Other workshops might be arranged as stand-alone events, in co-operation with pan-European ETC programmes, scientific organisations/bodies, such as the annual Regional Studies Association Conference, and in relation to the Open Days arranged by the European Commission.

#### **II.4.3 Transnational Networking Activities**

As part of the Transnational Networking Activities (TNA) the European Contact Point (ECP) network will be asked (in February 2014) to report their national activities carried out during 2013. Their reports will be added to the compiled report started in 2008 and made available to the MC. In addition, as part of their obligatory activities, the ECPs will carry out blunder checks on Draft Final Reports of ESPON Priority 1 projects.

In 2014 two TNA projects, ENECON and USESPON, will deliver their Final Reports. An additional TNA project ESPONontheRoad will become active in January 2014 and until the end of the year deliver a number of tailor-made capitalisation activities at transnational and national scale, well distributed to different part of Europe.

#### ***II.4.4 Communication Action Plan 2014***

The planned communication activities are outlined in details in the ESPON Communication Action Plan 2013.

### **II.5. Management of Programme and Projects, Audit and Evaluation (Priority 5)**

The main challenge in relation to the Programme Management in 2014 will be to meet the commitment targets and prepare for a smooth closure of the programme in 2015. During 2014 additional 6.484.159 EUR of ERDF will have to be certified to the Commission by the end 2014 (by the end of the year 2014 a total cumulative of 27.065.662<sup>1</sup> EUR of ERDF will have to be certified to the Commission).

Reaching the commitment targets for 2014 will require a close monitoring of projects and of the respect of the reporting deadlines, as the ESPON CU will have to assess and process in one year a high amount of progress reports, similar to the level in 2013 although cumulating to a lower amount of ERDF due to the fact that several projects will be in their closing phase with lower expenditure declared to the programme.

#### ***II.5.1 Programme Management***

From the programme management side, the main milestones during 2014 are related on one hand to the reporting duties to the European Commission, and on the other hand 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 reports will have to be submitted to the European Commission via the SFC-2007:

- Forecast Payment for 2014 and 2015, by the 30 April 2014
- Annual Implementation Report for 2013 which will have to be submitted to the European Commission by 30 June 2014 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 2014.

In relation the management verifications, during 2014 the Managing Authority will have to continue 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. More information on this can be found in the section related to the Audit activities.

Finally, as said, an important milestone for 2014 will be to make sufficient progress with the financial implementation leading to a no de-commitment risk for the years 2014 and prepare a smooth closure of the programme in 2015. This will include a

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<sup>1</sup> This amount does not consider the 7% advance payment that has to be deducted for the de-commitment target.

dedicated effort on the preparation and certification of the costs related to the Technical Assistance.

### ***II.5.2 Call for tenders***

In 2014, the MA and CU will have to launch still 5 call for tenders under public procurement related to the implementation of actions in the framework of priority 3 and priority 4 (see sections II.3 and II.4) as described in the MA led project proposal approved by the MC. In parallel, the MA and CU will ensure the contracting and implementing the service contracts launched late in 2013 in the framework of Priority 3 and Priority 4.

### ***II.5.3 Project Monitoring***

In relation to project monitoring during 2014 there will be a major increase related to the monitoring of ongoing projects together with the winding up of the contracting procedure for the last contracted project selected following the call closed on 18 October 2013 for the last Priority 4 project.

Altogether 41 Project Progress Reports are expected to be submitted to the ESPON CU in the course of 2014. It has been concluded that the 'targeted financial manager seminar' that was organised in line with the Road Map to avoid de-commitment and which had a specific focus on supporting the Lead Partners with the submission of their pending progress reports proved to be useful and the results are tangible with a series of reports de-blocked and submitted after the meeting. Several projects managed to catch up with the delays in their financial reporting and with the submission of the pending reports many projects have been closed from the financial point of view. It is therefore foreseen that additional events of this type will be organised in 2014 to support the smooth reporting of the projects and facilitate the closure of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The ESPON CU will continue with a close follow up of the projects and will provide special effort towards Lead and Project Partners with additional guidance to ensure that impeccable financial reports are prepared and submitted.

In order to avoid de-commitment at the end of 2014 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. If needed, specific sessions at the ESPON seminars will be organised.

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.

### ***II.5.4 Audit activities 2014***

The main audit activities within the year 2014 will mainly include:

- Audit of operations during the first half of the year to be finished by 30 June 2014,
- Annual control report and opinion during the second half of the year to be delivered to the EC by 31 December 2014.

The audit of operations will be implemented on behalf of the Audit Authority by the external auditor between February and April 2014, taking into account the need of

giving all audits closed by the 30 June 2014. The methodology of the audit of operation performed by the external auditor will remain the same as the previous years. Based on the previous experience, the preparatory phase of the audit of operations will still start already in December 2013 by informing the audited beneficiaries and planning the on-field interventions by the external auditor.

The Group of Auditors meeting held in Paris on the 14 and 15 November 2013 has taken into account the new guidelines approved by the COCOF on the sampling methodology for the audits of operations that should already be applied in the current programming period. Taken into account the relatively small size of the ESPON Programme, the well-advanced implementation of the programme by the end of 2013 and the fact that the population as basis for drawing the sample will remain below 150 units, the AA and GoA members decided not to change the audit strategy and sampling methodology of the ESPON 2013 Programme for the remaining years of the current programming period. However, in order to comply with the new requirements of the guidance, the random mandatory sample will have to cover at least 10% of the operations and 5% of the total certified expenditures of the reference year. In addition, at least one operation from the high-value stratum (i.e. with certified expenditure above the 2% of the total certified expenditure in 2013) will have as well to be audited. A complementary sampling is also foreseen by the AA/GoA to increase the country and priority coverage of the mandatory sampling and previous audit works. The consideration of the new audit guidelines have as a result to increase the audit work needed to 10% of operations, when so far the AA/GoA decided to audit no more than 7,5% of the operations due to the confidence level.

On the basis of the number of operations paid and certified by the Certifying Authority in 2013 (51 operations reported costs during 2013), the sampling size of the audit of operation will be of 10% corresponding to 5 operations selected, therefore 5 Lead Partners and 4 Projects Partners as part of the compulsory sample. An additional operation was selected as complementary sample to give a better geographical coverage of the audit implemented so far. Therefore a total of 9 on the spot audits will be implemented during February-April 2014 (compared to 8 on-the-spots performed last year) which increases the audit work in relation to the previous year (due to the higher sample size (from 7,5% to 10%) and numbers of operations having declared expenditures (from 40 in 2012 to 51 operations in 2013) while having the costs of the audit works under control.

The AA and the GoA have decided and approved both the mandatory random sample and the complementary sample during the meeting on 14 and 15 of November 2013. As mandatory sample the SEGI, GREECO, ECR2 and ESATDOR projects of priority 1 and the MA led project Website 2008 of priority 4 have been randomly selected. Of these five operations, the LPs located respectively in Sweden, Spain, Luxembourg and two in the United Kingdom will be audited. The project partners randomly selected from the operations SEGI, GREECO, ECR2 and ESATDOR are located respectively in Poland, Denmark, Estonia and Spain.

The complementary sample is left to the AA and GoA's discretion according to the results of the mandatory sampling and professional judgment in order to conclude and provide a meaningful opinion to the EC by the 31 December 2014. For this reason the AA and GoA have decided to add an operation as complementary sample. The selection methodology of the complementary sample has been the following:

- Countries not already covered by previous audits by the external auditors

- Operations and beneficiaries having the highest expenditure declared under priorities not covered by the mandatory sampling.

According to result of the above mentioned analysis, the AA/GoA decided to audit a project partner located in Romania as this being the country with highest expenditure declared not yet covered by an audit from the project M4D, operation of priority 3 (priority not covered in the random sample).

In addition to the new sampling guidance, the AA/GoA members, as well as the external auditor, have been informed about the new guidance issued by the EC by the end of 2013 for determining financial corrections for non-compliance with the rules on public procurement. This new guidance will be taken into account during audit works in 2014.

The annual control report and opinion of the reference year 01/07/2013-30/06/2014 will be prepared by the external auditor and approved by the Audit Authority and Group of Auditors during the GoA meeting planned for the week of the 17 November 2014 in Luxembourg under the organisation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

#### ***II.5.5 MA Quality checks***

Taking into account the good results of the audit and the increased audit work in 2014, the Managing Authority and the ESPON Coordination Unit will in 2014 focus the MA quality checks only on operations presenting serious reporting problems in the view of supporting the road map to avoid de-commitment. After the closure of the audits in April 2014 the MA and ESPON CU will evaluate the de-commitment risk and draw a plan for MA quality checks to support the Lead and Project partners. The amount of quality checks to be implemented in 2014 will depend on analysis made by the end of April 2014. The MA and CU will also undertake a risk analysis as in the previous years to evaluate any additional need for quality checks.

In any case, as indicated above, the main focus of the MA Quality checks in 2014 will be put on the improvement of the reporting and of a complete audit trail. In addition, taking into account the results of the audits and the type of irregularities detected by the CU while assessing the progress reports, the calculation of staff costs and the public procurement compliance will also be monitored carefully. In addition, as in the view of supporting a smooth reporting of costs to the MA/CU attention will be given to the improvement of the quality of documents submitted to the FLC and the ESPON CU. Involvement of the MC members, First Level Controllers and Central Approbation Body representatives in relation to the beneficiaries concerned by MA quality checks will be demanded from the preparatory phase until the implementation of necessary corrective actions, if any. The support of the GoA members for their respective member/partner states will also be asked by MA/CU if needed, when referring to national regulations.

Results of the MA quality checks will be presented to the central authorities of the Programme, MC and CA over the year 2014, once the final reports are ready. The follow-up on implementing corrective actions, should be the case, will be controlled by the First Level Controllers concerned and reviewed by MA/CU.

#### ***II.5.6 Member and Partner State Quality checks***

The Member States and Partner States will still be strongly recommended by the MA/CU to perform Quality checks of their First Level Control Systems. During 2013 Quality checks have been implemented by Belgium Flemish region, Bulgaria, Cyprus,



Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden ,and UK.

The MA/CU will continue supporting the Members States and Partner States via internal manuals, interview guidance and an overview by country of their First Level control system and issues encountered during desk review performed by the CU on behalf of the MA. Involvement of the MC members, First Level Controllers and Central Approbation Body representatives in relation to MS/PS quality checks will be demanded from the preparatory phase until the implementation of necessary corrective actions, if any.

The main focus of the MS/PS Quality checks in 2014 will be put on the improvement of the certifying process, in particular the improvement of the First Level Controllers' qualifications and of the quality of control documents submitted and the verification controller's implements on the audit trail and on the calculation of staff costs.

Due to the fact that each Member States and Partners States must perform at least one quality check of their First Level Control System in place during the programming period according to the regulation, further MS/PS quality check must be planned for the entire year 2014. The assistance of the ESPON CU/MA to the MS/PS has been identified as essential for the successful implementation of these quality checks. During 2014 the following countries not having yet implemented their quality checks will be asked to undertake these controls: Austria, Belgium Brussels capital, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

#### ***II.5.7 Certifying Authority Quality checks***

The Certifying Authority will perform two CA quality check on operations in the first half of 2014 in order to compensate the year 2013, where the CA quality check of the ATTREG project selected in 2012 was performed. The delay encountered in this CA quality check is explained by the high number of partners reviewed during the quality check (LP and 8 project partners). The selection of operations will be made based on the list of operations paid and certified between 01/07/2011 - 30/06/2012 and 01/07/2012 and 30/06/2013 prepared by the MA/CU.

Two operations will be sampled randomly by the CA in accordance with the defined methodology, which has been updated in October 2013 under the supervision and approval of the Audit Authority. The CA will perform CA quality checks on two operations in 2014, the POLYCE project from priority 2 and one MA-led Project from priority 3 (Tools 2008).

Results of the CA quality checks will be communicated to the central authorities of the Programme via final reports before the 31 December 2014. Follow-up on implementing necessary corrective actions, should this be the case, will be given to the MA/CU in case of irregularities and to MC members and First Level controllers concerned.

#### ***II.5.8 Ongoing Evaluation***

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme is according to EC Regulation 1083, Art. 47 conducted as an ongoing evaluation during the entire programme implementation. Hence, the ongoing evaluation will continue in 2014 with internal evaluation reports in spring and autumn 2014 using the created Score Board with key indicators related to the progress of implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

### **III. Time planning 2014**

The detailed indicative time planning for 2014 is made available in annex 1. However, the key meetings for the programme authorities and bodies are as follows:

#### **III.1 Monitoring Committee meetings 2014**

The ESPON Monitoring Committee is currently scheduled to meet on 26 March 2013 (tbc) in Bruxelles, on 3 June 2014 in Greece and in December 2014 in Italy (tbc).

#### **III.2 Concertation Committee activity in 2014**

The Concertation Committee will not be active in 2014.

#### **III.3 ECP meetings 2014**

In 2014, the ECP network will be gathered for meetings on 3 June 2014 in Greece and most probably in December 2014 in connection with an ESPON seminar in Italy.

#### **III.4 Group of Auditors meetings 2014**

The next meeting of the GoA is scheduled for November 2014.

### **IV. Budget 2014**

The implementation of the Work Programme for 2014 is envisaged to imply expenses according to the indicative budget inserted as Annex 2. During 2014, the MC will be presented for budget updates corresponding to the contracting, spending and absorption of funds.

### **IV. Annexes**

- Annex 1: Indicative Calendar 2014
- Annex 2: OP Budget 2014