

ESPON

Terms of Reference Project 1.4.3

Study on Urban Functions

(i) Political challenges for the ESPON Programme

In the Second and Third Reports on Economic and Social Cohesion (published 2001 respectively 2004) the Commission addresses an approach on territorial cohesion within the European Union. Beside economic and social cohesion, territorial cohesion is essential for better co-ordination and policy-making in the relationship to a more balanced and sustainable development of the European Union.

In this context the Reports on Cohesion follow up the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted in May 1999. Territorial development within the above mention framework seizes an integrated approach in the way that it concentrates on the balance of areas and regions of the European territory considering all spatial applicable factors. From this outlook, territorial development covering a variety of factors stretching from economic to cultural, from natural to social. However, territorial development is a multifarious process and is a subject for continuous exploring.

The projects proceeded within the ESPON 2006 Programme shall follow the integrated approach as above mentioned as well as to cover a wide range of additional concerns, mentioned in the Interreg III Community Initiative- Art.53. Supplementary to this, the ESPON 2006 projects shall cover a wide range of issues on spatial development acknowledged in the ESPON 2006 Programme:

- Identifying the **decisive factors relevant for a more polycentric European territory**; accessibility of a wide range of services in the context of enlargement; integration of wider transnational spaces; promotion of dynamic urban growth centres; linking peripheral and disadvantaged areas with those centres; etc.
- Developing **territorial indicators and typologies** capable of identifying and measuring development trends as well as monitoring the political aim of a better balanced and polycentric EU territory.
- Developing **tools supporting diagnoses of principal structural difficulties as well as potentialities**, such as disparities within cities and regenerating deprived urban areas; structural adjustment and diversification of rural areas; strategic alliances between neighbouring cities at transnational, national and regional scale; new partnerships between rural and urban areas; potential support from infrastructure networks in the field of transport, telecommunication, energy; etc.

- Investigating **territorial impacts of sectoral and structural policies** in order to enhance synergy and well-co-ordinated decisions relevant for territorial development within policy fields such as Structural Funds, agriculture, transport, environment, research and development; developing methods for measuring the territorial impact of sectoral and structural policies; etc.

- Developing **integrated tools in support of a balanced and polycentric territorial development**; approaches to enhance the potential of cities as drivers of regional development, new tools for integrated urban-rural development and planning, etc.

With the results of all the ESPON projects, the Commission and the Member States expect in particular to have at their disposal: **a diagnosis of the principal territorial trends** at EU scale as well as the difficulties and potentialities within the European territory as a whole; **a cartographic picture of the major territorial disparities** and of their respective intensity; a number of **territorial indicators and typologies assisting a setting of European priorities** for a balanced and polycentric enlarged European territory; some **integrated tools and appropriate instruments** (databases, indicators, methodologies for territorial impact analysis and systematic spatial analyses) to improve the spatial co-ordination of sector policies.

In this respect, the ESPON projects are intended to serve as an evidence and knowledge base for further policy development, in particular at European level, in relation to the Structural Funds 2007-2013 and in relation to the ongoing inter-governmental process on the state and perspectives for the territory of the European Union.

ii) Relation to the ESPON 2006 Programme

The priorities for the ESPON 2006 Programme are as following (The ESPON work-program p.13f):

1. **Thematic projects** on major spatial developments on the background of typologies of regions and the situation of cities.

2. **Policy impact projects** on the spatial impact of Community sector policies and Member States' spatial development policy on types of regions with a focus on the institutional inter-linkages between the governmental levels and instrumental dimension of policies.

3. **Co-ordinating and territorial cross-thematic projects** represent a key component of the programme. These projects evaluate the results of the other projects towards integrated results such as indicators system and data, typologies of territories, spatial development scenarios, etc. The cross sections projects help to thematically co-ordinate the whole programme and add value to the results and to fill gaps which are unavoidable when different themes are dealt with in different projects.

4. **Scientific briefing and networking** in order to explore the synergies between the national and EU sources for research and research capacities.

The ESPON programme includes as well the possibility for studies deepening existing projects and preparatory studies providing for future applied research projects.

Project 1.4.3 on Urban Functions fits under the first strand and is a study envisaged to deepen the scientific achievements reached under the finalised ESPON project 1.1.1 on 'The role, specific situation and potentials of urban areas as nodes in a polycentric development'.

The study must comply with the integrated perspective and objectives of the ESPON Programme as such. In particular, the ongoing development of key/core indicators for monitoring territorial development at European level has to be considered. Consequently, a strong co-ordination is needed with relevant ESPON projects, in particular the coordinating project 3.2 and the ESPON Co-ordination Unit concerning the work on indicators.

iii) General objectives

The study should support the following general objectives:

- The study should be built and expand upon the existing ESPON research framework and objectives within ESDP with regard to balanced, sustainable development and territorial cohesion. This regards in particular the policy orientations on a polycentric development and the work done on Functional Urban Areas (FUA) and Metropolitan Economic Growth Areas (MEGA) by ESPON project 1.1.1.
- The study should build on comments made, in particular by Member States and the Commission, related to the typology provided by project 1.1.1 on Polycentrism and assess to what extent these comments should give rise to adjustments in the current delimitation of FUA's in the individual Member States.
- The study could propose (a limited number of) concrete adjustments consolidating the delimitation of FUA in the European urban system
- The study should investigate the feasibility for adding additional indicators to the existing 7 indicators compiled by project 1.1.1 for all 1595 defined FUA, which will include considerations on the availability of data within the 25 EU Member States as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Norway and Switzerland.
- The study should (preferably) collect data for all FUA, seeking to add at least two more indicators, which are related to the aims of the Lisbon strategy of making Europe a highly competitive, knowledge based economy.
- The study should update the existing typology of FUA's and MEGA's., and by doing so include necessary adjustment of the delimitation FUA and (preferably) some new indicators.

- The study should on the basis of the (adjusted) delimitation of FUA include a proposal for a applied research project within an ESPON II programme deepening further the functional and morphological understanding of the European Urban System, its FUA's and its MEGA's, and the options for providing territorial cohesion and a better balance through territorial cooperation.

iv) Thematic scope and primary research issues

As reflected in the general objectives for the study the further deepening of elements of the analysis of Functional Urban Areas carried out by the ESPON 1.1.1 project, should focus on four aspects:

1. Consolidate the delimitation of FUA's
2. Further measuring of functional specialisation
3. Update of existing typology of FUA's and MEGA's
4. Propose future research on the European Urban System

1. Consolidating the delimitation of functional urban areas

The work on an update and further development of the FUA typology needs foremost to start with a consolidation of the existing delimitation of functional urban areas assessing critics raised, particular by policy makers. Based on the work carried out by the ESPON 1.1.1 project efforts are necessary to consider adjusting current FUA delimitations that are under being questioned in relation to the work done by project 1.1.1. In carrying through this assessment a development towards a more EU-wide harmonized way of delimitating FUAs should be supported, being aware of the necessity to balance a diversity of national considerations and European wide perspectives.

How should the FUA delimitation be consolidated?

The project is not envisaged providing a new methodology for the delimitation of FUAs. The challenge is to review the existing methodology in relation to the public and scientific relevance of comments received, in particular from the ESPON Monitoring Committee, taking the methodology of project 1.1.1 for granted. The project needs to work on the current definition of functional urban areas and consider the results of its application in the Member States were comments are made. The ESPON CU will provide an up-to-date list of these comments.

In addition, the project should by own initiative assess each country covered concerning the application of the methodology for delimiting FUAs. In this context, the lessons learned from the work in support of mapping potentials for cooperation between neighbouring FUA's, the so called Potential Urban Strategic Horizons (PUSH) and Potential Integration Areas (PIA) should be taken into account.

On this basis, the delimitation of FUAs needs to be consolidated, if necessary, including (a limited) number of adjustments.

2. Measuring of functional specialisation

In the current ESPON projects the socio-economic specialisation of FUA's is not considered in-depth, although its importance for understanding territorial capital has been acknowledged. Knowledge on a broader range of indicators will support the challenge of seeing comparative advantages of FUA's, supporting the interest for strategic alliances and added value through territorial cooperation.

Which additional socio-economic indicators can be integrated in the FUA typology and how?

Further work on the FUA typology updating the current information on socio-economic functions and adding new key functions to them, should concentrate on indicators in fields related to the Lisbon strategy. The aim would be to provide evidence helping understand the potentials of FUA's related to the objective of the re-launched Lisbon agenda. In this respect the work done within ESPON project 2.4.2/Zoom, project 3.2/Scenarios and project 3.3/Lisbon will be of particular importance.

The work on additional indicators needs also to address the relevance the socio-economic functions currently used for the FUA definitions.

The existing functional information on FUA's should preferably be complemented by new functions, preferably by at least two new indicators. Even if it might only be possible to introduce a very few selected new functions into the FUA typology some work needs also to be done through this project on clarifying the feasibility of additional functions (considering methodology and data situation) that can realistically be introduced at a later stage (i.e. under ESPON II).

3. Update of existing typology of FUA's and MEGA's

The information on FUA's plays a major role in the understanding of basic European territorial structures. The acceptance of the delimitation of FUA's as well as ever enlarging information on their individual functionality supports processes in search of territorial potentials and competitive advantages.

What key messages could be conveyed based on the updated typology of FUA's and MEGA's and the corresponding updated European maps?

The work within the project on delimitations of certain FUA's combined with the additional indicators foreseen should lead to a update of the results of project 1.1.1 and a recalculation of the information behind the maps produced so far showing an updated delimitation and classification of FUA's, MEGA's and the individual functions included in the updated typology.

A comparative analysis should reveal the changes between the results of project 1.1.1 and the results of this project.

4. Proposal(s) on future research on the European Urban System

The evidence related to urban areas will play an important role in the development of policies related to urban spaces. In policy terms a major emphasis is put on the role of urban areas as drivers of economic development of regions and larger territories as well as their social, environmental and cultural endowment. In particular, the possibility of urban areas to contribute to the Lisbon objectives is relevant in this respect.

How could a further deepening of the analysis of the European Urban system?

The study should be based on the findings concerning data feasibility propose elements of applied research that could meet in projects within an ESPON II programme. The potential for an enhanced cooperation among urban areas in clusters (neighbouring areas) and networks (thematic cooperation) should be considered in this respect, based on the findings on the feasibility of including more functional information on FUA's in the future.

Proposals for further deepening the analysis of the urban system should as well address the challenge of a methodology for adding FUA's and MEGA's across borders (such as Copenhagen-Malmö) and for considering larger transnational agglomerations in a European perspective (such as Randstad, Ruhr, Midlands, etc.) as zones for the global integration of Europe.

v) Expected results and timetable

The deliverables of this study should be as far as possible highly operational and coordinated in time and fit into the relevant political agenda. The following timetable for deliveries is supposed to reflect these priorities:

Interim Report, 31 May 2006

- a) Review of comments made on the results of ESPON project 1.1.1/Polycentrism, from Member States and the Commission, the ECP network as well as the scientific world.
- b) Assessment of the delimitation of FUA's and MEGA's used by project 1.1.1, including a focus on weak points in the delimitation of FUA's as well as critical points made from policy makers and scientist.
- c) A proposal on (a limited number of) adjustments and corrections of the current FUA delimitation, moving a further step towards a European definition/standard.
- d) The results of the investigation of feasible additional indicators that could be collected deepening the functional understanding of the FUA of Europe, including an overview of the feasibility of European wide dataset that could be collected and increase the number of functional indicators for the FUA of Europe.
- e) Preferably, a proposal for at least two that could be collected in the next phase of the project.

Final Report, 31 October 2006

The final results should include the abovementioned results and additionally include:

- e) An executive summary of the main results of the study, including a presentation of the adjusted delimitation of FUA and recalculated European maps of FUA's and MEGA's.

h) A recalculation based on the adjusted delimitation of the FUA and the additional indicators showing European maps on FUA's and MEGA's as project 1.1.1, using the same legends.

i) An analysis of the results including interpretation of the new maps and an explanation of differences to the results stated by project 1.1.1 based on a comparative analysis.

j) Presentation of proposals elaborated for future European applied research that can support current policy orientations on urban areas as drivers of development and on territorial cohesion (ESDP, Third Cohesion Report, Revised Lisbon Agenda and Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion and scoping documents on the Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union). The proposal should also include considerations on possible methodologies that could be used in understanding the opportunities for building clusters of FUA's embarking in a 'functional' cooperation (cross border urban clusters such as Basel-Mulhouse-Mullheim and Copenhagen-Malmö and transnational clusters such as Randstad, Ruhr, Rheine and the Baltic Palette (Stockholm, Helsinki, St. Petersburg, Tallinn and Riga).

vi) Existing access points

The access points listed below will serve and provide the tender with constructive information in the process of preparing a proposal for this study. It is not meant to be exhaustive information; however it can serve as a guide in tracing additional existing information in this field. This list is presenting a majority of social studies and should be extended and complemented with more "territorially" oriented documents.

The ESPON 1.1.1 project on Polycentric Development will serve as the starting point for the project.

The ESPON website (www.espon.lu) can serve as a helpful starting access point. All needed documents on how research studies within the ESPON 2006 programme are conducted and previous research projects which can be helpful. Moreover, the relevant links to the mentioned European policy documents can be found. Finally, the feed backs given by Member States and the Commission as well as the ECP network are annexed to this tender.

On the ESPON website, the ESPON Data Navigator can be downloaded serving as a tool for the feasibility analysis on additional data and indicators.

In addition **scientific sources** and experience from single countries need to be taken into consideration. This may involve the results from the transnational ESPON seminar in La Rochelle in 2005 or the Finnish centres of expertise programme.

The **Urban Audit** reflects aspects of quality of life in European cities, providing indicators, covering different domains, including socio-economic aspects.

More information at: <http://www.urbanaudit.org/index.aspx>

vii) Budget

Amount allocated to the project: 100.000 €max.