



## ESPON Open Seminar Prague 3-4 June 2009

### SESSION 4 - Workshop C – TIA in Peripheral Regions

#### Main conclusions

This workshop aimed to explore how EU policies are influencing peripheral regions and the sensitivities of peripheral regions that need to be explicitly assessed through TIA.

The context is the overall objective of improving the application of EU policies to diverse regions and demonstrating the added value of these policies.

#### General

- A major focus for the discussion was that of conceptual frameworks of regional diversity
- Geographical specificities do not equal economic peripherality. To what and for what is a region peripheral e.g. meetings in Brussels or sending fish to Japan? “Peripheral “ regions may be especially well-placed to exploit niche or specialist opportunities, for instance, in the global context.
- There is no common definition of peripheral areas that can apply to the whole of Europe. Diversity is a key word when referring to European peripheral regions.
- Policymakers require an efficient tool for TIA that can give quick answers to their questions.

#### Elements of regional sensitivity

- a robust debate about the nature of regional diversity which demonstrated that the further definition of regional typologies will be an essential input to the process.
- The differential sensitivities of areas, both in terms of vulnerability and receptivity, to policy interventions, will depend on factors such as:
  - settlement structure
  - labour market characteristics
  - access to urban nodes/commuter functions
  - cultural identity.

Understanding of these factors enables comparison of disparate regions. For example in the TeDi project, comparisons are being drawn between Malta, with a density of 12000 inhabitants/sq.km. and Iceland, which has 2 inhabitants/sq.km.



- The objective is to develop differentiated regional and spatial policies to achieve key objectives, such as “attractiveness” to enterprise and households.
- TIA is understood not as either an ex-ante or ex-post process but as both: an ongoing process of assessment and feedback within frameworks of territorial governance.

Some key issues arising:

- Do we need to redesign EU policies to achieve regionally sensitive outcomes or is the key change needed in the way in which EU policies are integrated at national, regional and local levels?
- Will TIA processes be different according to the types of territory to which they are being applied (eg. islands, mountain areas..), or should the fundamental process of TIA be the same for all territories? It was argued for instance that, as policies provoke different results according to the nature of different areas, the same assessment tool should be applied, within the context of a detailed understanding of the nature of territorial categories.
- Will this involve subsets of more specialized indicators?
- How does TIA address finite thresholds (regional carrying capacity)?