

# ESPON 2013 PROGRAMME

European observation network on  
territorial development and cohesion

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for the approval of the European Commission

STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2007-2013, OBJECTIVE 3  
INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION NETWORKS

## **Abbreviations**

AA: Audit Authority  
AEBR: Association of European Border Regions  
CA: Certifying Authority  
CC: Concertation Committee  
CDCR: Committee for Development and Conversion of Regions  
CEMAT: Conférence Européenne de Ministres responsables de l'Aménagement du Territoire (Council of Europe)  
CoR: Committee of the Regions  
CPMR: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions  
CU: Coordination Unit  
ECOSOC: Economic and Social Committee  
ECP: ESPON Contact Point  
EEA: European Environmental Agency  
EP: European Parliament  
ESDP: European Spatial Development Perspective  
EuroMontana: European Association for Mountain Areas  
GoA: Group of Auditors  
JRC: Joint Research Centre  
MA: Management Authority  
MC: Monitoring Committee  
MOT: Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
SEA: Strategic Environmental Assessment  
SWOT: Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats  
SUD: Subcommittee on Spatial and Urban Development  
TA: Technical Assistance  
TIA: Territorial Impact Analysis

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## **I INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the ESPON 2013 Programme is to support the “reinforcement of regional policy with studies, data and observation of development trends”, seen as a necessity as part of Structural Funds 2007-2013, in particular related to actions under Objective 3, “European Territorial Cooperation”.

The ESPON 2013 Programme is presented in this operational programme document.

(1) The introduction sets the policy scene for the programme and challenges that call for more comparable evidence and information for regions and different types of territories.

(2) The following programme strategy analyses the present situation looking at strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, both in relation to the European territory and its evolution and in relation to the experience gained with the ESPON 2006 Programme. The overall objective for the ESPON 2013 Programme and the corresponding strategic and specific objectives are subsequently made clear, leading to 5 programme priorities, each with a number of actions to be implemented.

(3) The financial plan reflects the programme strategy and the actions envisaged informing on the breakdown of the total financial contribution envisaged.

(4) Provisions for the implementation are set out for the monitoring, management and audit of the programme as well as provisions for information and publicity actions.

Finally, provisions are included for the cooperation of EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries and non-EU Member States (neighbouring countries) in implementing the ESPON 2013 Programme.

### **I.1 Framework conditions related to the development of the European territory**

Results from the ESPON 2006 Programme confirm that the development of the European territory is facing several ongoing mega trends and impacts of policies.

- Market forces and evolution of society in general are supporting a geographical concentration of activities.
- The integration of the EU in the global economic competition is accelerating setting wider perspectives for regions and larger territories in deciding their development path as development is no longer a zero sum game for Europe.
- Growing interaction between the EU territory and the surrounding neighbour countries as well as the other parts of the world (such as migration pressure, population decline, access to and investment in new markets, climate change, water management in Mediterranean and Black Seas, fossil resources and pipelines).
- The ageing European population and migration is affecting the regions differently and enhance the competition for skilled labour.
- Hazards are increasing due to climate change while different parts of Europe experience different types of hazards.

- Increasing energy prices and the emergence of a new energy paradigm has significant territorial impacts, some regions being more affected than others, some of which have particular potential for production of renewable energy sources.
- The enlargement of the EU to 25 Member states, and later to 27 or more, presents an unprecedented challenge for the competitiveness and internal cohesion of the Union.

The ESPON results also give evidence that territorial capital and potentials for development are inherent in the regional diversity that is a characteristic of Europe. By providing comparable regional evidence the regions of Europe get the opportunity to address their strong and weak points in a European territorial context and to enrich their development strategies, project ideas and cooperation arrangements.

The ESPON 2006 Programme has provided integrated analysis and long term spatial scenarios which has enriched the European policy debate and provided observations on challenges and territorial structures that before were not fully evident. Interest is growing among policy makers and practitioners for the information, knowledge and understanding ESPON can offer.

## **I.2 Milestones in policy development relevant for regions and larger territories**

European policy development has moved towards recognising the territorial dimension of policy decision and the added value from an integrated territorial approach when searching for development opportunities.

The Commission and EU Member States have with the Structural Funds 2007-2013 included a territorial objective of cooperation and strengthened the strategic dimension of cohesion policy in order to ensure that Community priorities are better integrated into national and regional development programmes. European policy development related to Cohesion Policy will reach a number of milestones during 2007-2013 such as the discussion on the Community budget in 2008-2009, the revision of the Community Strategic Guidelines and the 5<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report. The ESPON 2013 Programme shall play a strategic role in supporting this policy process with evidence and information.

The key Community priorities are imbedded in (1) the renewed Lisbon Agenda aiming at mobilising all appropriate national and Community resources in the effort to contribute the maximum to raise growth and create jobs, and (2) a sustainable development strategy as agreed at the Gothenburg Summit. ESPON results so far show that all regions do not possess the same degree of potential for contributing to this agenda. Their diversity, particular in the economic base, implies that strategies different than opting for a knowledge-based economy might be more promising. Moreover, some regions seem to have under-used potential seen from a wider European perspective.

Cohesion policy shall “give effect to the priorities of the Community with a view to promoting balanced, harmonious and sustainable development” (COM(2004)492 final, art.23). By mobilising the existing potential for growth in all regions, cohesion policy can improve the geographical balance of economic development and raises the potential rate of growth in the Union as a whole. All regions of the EU Member States have their part to play in this respect, especially those with the greatest potential for higher productivity and employment.

The strategic objectives of key importance for an efficient and modern regional policy contributing to the renewed Lisbon strategy and its overall aims can be condensed as follows:

- Competitiveness, building on the existing assets and under-utilised potentials in the region related to the existing economic base.
- Attractiveness, building new assets for the region that can ensure the inflow of investments and skills, particularly in support of a knowledge-based economy.
- Liveability, ensuring cohesion and a sustainable community with a high level of quality of life and environment for the citizens and for existing as well as future activities.

The EU Commissioner and Ministers have stressed at meetings in Rotterdam, Luxembourg and Amsterdam during 2004-2006 that there is a need to ensure a coherent approach to the development of the European territory should respond to based on a continuous observation of European trends and developments as an instrument of support in pursuing territorial cohesion.

For regions, and larger territories, such as cross-border areas and transnational cooperation areas, a modern paradigm to an efficient regional policy should respond to ongoing mega trends and impact of policies and in particular take into account that:

- Potential for development need stronger focus as well as investment in areas of high growth potential and drivers of growth and employment.
- Disparities between regions rapidly are changing profile and new challenges are emerging, which change the scope for policies and increase the need for coherent strategies in the medium to longer term.
- Regions are enlarging their area of influence, some even active on the global scene, and often with territorial impact on neighbouring territories and covering both urban and rural areas.
- Governance structures need to be in place and be able to efficiently explore development potentials and regional assets.
- An integrated approach to territorial development and cohesion helping the creation of sustainable communities has become inevitable in order to ensure synergy and complementarity from all relevant sectors.

Implementing a modern policy paradigm to territorial development will apart from focusing on the Lisbon strategic objectives involve dedicated contributions from a number of other policy areas with territorial impact.

### **I.3 Expectations of the ESPON 2013 Programme**

The European-wide evidence provided by the ESPON 2007-2013 Programme will potentially benefit policy makers all over Europe at all levels. Policy makers dealing with development of regions and larger territories need for the design of their policies to be supported by evidence and comparable information on the regions as well as on long-term evolutions and perspectives, which draw the attention on changing framework conditions.

Cohesion policy and regional policy, with their objectives on cohesion and competitiveness as well as on European territorial cooperation, have to rely on solid and comparable regionalised information to meet the new challenges and become efficient. This holds true for all three objectives of Structural Funds 2007-2013. The ESPON 2013 Programme shall play a strategic role in supporting this policy process with evidence and information. The support will be carefully programmed in time in order to meet key moments of in the policy development.

The intergovernmental process defining politically a Territorial Agenda for Europe based on an analysis of the territorial state and perspectives for the European Union is making substantial use of existing ESPON results. Further activities and monitoring of the European territory in relation to the political agenda is also expected to require information stemming from ESPON 2013 actions.

In providing new evidence within the ESPON 2013 Programme a certain thematic flexibility should be ensured in order to (1) meet the demand for outputs from an ever changing political agenda of European cooperation, and (2) strengthen a territorial approach and focus on knowledge of importance for new policy development, alerting policy makers on (foreseen and unforeseen) trends, perspectives and policy impacts that might need policy response. The programme will base itself on the results achieved within the ESPON 2006 Programme and the territorial challenges facing Europe.

The outcome of ESPON 2006 Programme has made an important first step towards improving the European knowledge base. Further information and evidence covering the entire European territory and all regions shall support future evidence based regional policy that can help regions meet the renewed paradigm for European development according to the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy and to see potential for improving regional competitiveness and territorial cohesion.

Understanding the position of each region in comparison with other regions plays an important role in identifying new potentials for development. Key options have to be explored from a European perspective, providing the larger territorial context and making it possible to see new opportunities and under-used potential. Awareness raising and involvement of policy makers and practitioners are therefore very important elements in the ESPON 2013 Programme where a substantial communication and capitalisation is foreseen. Stakeholder events will be an important part of the programme implementation and include representatives from all administrative levels.

As a European dimension is becoming inevitable for the development of smaller or larger territories the ESPON 2013 Programme envisages making the ESPON evidence and analytical support available for relevant user groups. This would empower policy makers at different levels in defining comparative advantages and options for added value through “territorial” cooperation with other regions.

All in all, the European process moves towards a more integrated approach to policy making which makes the territorial dimension important for policy makers. The aim of territorial cohesion proposed by the Commission supports this approach by taking the territory as the unit or framework of policy making. By providing evidence based on territorial units of analyses the ESPON 2013 Programme is of strategic importance for the European cooperation.

#### **I.4 The ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to Structural Funds 2007-2013**

Structural Funds 2007-2013 shall through intervention support a regional policy aiming at convergence between regions, regional competitiveness and European territorial cooperation.

The ESPON 2013 Programme according to Art. 6 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of 5 July 2006 shall assist the Objective 3 of Structural Funds 2007-2013 on European Territorial Cooperation.

European Territorial Cooperation shall include the promotion of:

- Inter-regional cooperation focusing on innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention.
- Exchange of experience concerning the identification, transfer and capitalisation of best practice (including sustainable urban development).
- Actions involving studies, data collection, observation and analysis of development trends in the Community.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will carry out actions related to studies, data collection, observation and analysis of territorial development trends and carry through applied research and targeted studies providing observations and analysis of dynamics related to the entire territory of the Community (Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of 5 July 2006, Art 6). These will include addressing themes that provide relevant information for all programmes under Structural Funds and for the strategic process and dialogue envisaged between the Commission and Member States during 2007-2013 (Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, Chapter II).

The work will take account of the categorisation of Structural Funds assistance as described in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006, annex II, and in particular make use of territorial types codified for the territorial dimension, which include urban, rural-mountains, rural-islands, rural area (sparsely and very sparsely populated), rural-other, former external border, area dependent on fisheries, outermost region, transnational cooperation area, cross-border cooperation area and inter-regional cooperation area.

Moreover, knowledge support in relation to Objective 3 on Territorial Cooperation will create substantial added value. This objective will imply programmes for cross-border cooperation, transnational and interregional cooperation where comparable information and evidence at the level of regions can help define under-used potentials and comparative advantages for development of strategies, programmes and projects.

A special complementarity will be ensured with the interregional networking programmes INTERREG IV, URBACT II and INTERACT II through close cooperation and coordination during the programme implementation.

Synergies between the three network programmes INTERACT II, ESPON 2013 and URBACT II as well as the interregional cooperation programme shall be achieved through a strong coordination in elaborating the Annual Work Plans and also by providing information to the respective Monitoring Committees on activities as well as

results achieved in the programmes. Furthermore, a close cooperation is intended as regards technical programme implementation matters.

Strong links will be made to the network programmes INTERACT II and URBACT II, which can include delivery of thematic analysis for their activities and common actions in support of awareness raising, networking, dissemination of good practice and involvement of stakeholders in the development of different types of territories.

Both Interregional and Transnational Cooperation Programmes are considered as potential users in relation to the user oriented approach taken in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The results of the ESPON 2013 Programme will provide knowledge support to Structural Funds interventions in general, including considerations related to mainstream activities under Objective 1 and 2. This also includes analytical support to initiatives related to Regions for Economic Change, if demanded.

## **I.5 Joint programming process**

The ESPON 2013 Programme is the result of a process involving all EU Member States comprising the Monitoring Committee of the ESPON 2006 Programme and the European Commission. Discussions have been held in the process.

The Monitoring Committee and the sub committee to the CRDR Committee on Spatial and Urban Development (SUD) have at several occasions addressed the ESPON 2013 Programme by assessing the progress made by the ESPON 2006 Programme concerning results and implementation arrangements and conceptualising the strategic orientations for a ESPON 2013 Programme.

In addition, the experiences, lessons learned and future possibilities have been addressed at several ESPON seminars as part of the dialogue between policy makers, ESPON Contact Points and the academics in the Transnational Project Groups. Moreover, the ESPON 2013 programme has been on the agenda at several meetings of the ESPON Contact Points (ECP) and ESPON Lead Partner seminars (LP).

The process was supported by a study of the ESPON 2006 Programme and a strategy for the future undertaken by the Commission as well as a self-assessment made by the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

An overview of events in the joint programming process includes the following:

- 8-9 September 2005: MC meeting
- 18 October 2005: SUD meeting
- 7-8 November 2005: MC meeting
- 9-10 November 2005: ESPON seminar
- 9 November 2005: ECP
- 16 December 2005: SUD meeting
- 13 January 2006: LP meeting
- 2 February 2006: MC meeting
- 21 February 2006: SUD meeting

- 13-14 March 2006: ESPON seminar
- 15 March 2006: ECP meeting
- 15-16 March 2006: MC meeting
- 1 June 2006: ECP meeting
- 26-27 June 2006: MC meeting
- 27 July-8 September 2006: Web based consultation
- 20-21 September 2006: MC meeting
- 28-29 September 2006: SUD meeting including URBACT II
- 11 October 2006: Meeting with INTERACT II and INTERREG IV
- 17 October and 7 November 2006: Meetings with DG Regio
- 13 November 2006: MC meeting
- 15 November 2006: General Directors meeting at the ESPON Seminar
- 28 November 2006: A high-level ESPON conference in Bruxelles involving representatives of all EU Institutions, Member States and regions, including Commissioner Hübner and Mr. Halsdorf, Minister of Interior and Spatial Development of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.
- 1-8 December 2006: Final consultation of ESPON Monitoring Committee

A first draft ESPON 2013 Programme has been discussed by the Monitoring Committee of the ESPON 2006 Programme at a meeting on 26-27 June 2006, where EU Member States and the Commission as well as the current partner state Norway took part. The Monitoring Committee decided to comment the first draft and to start the discussion on the financial contribution of EU Member States.

A second draft programme document was sent on 25 July 2006 for comments by the EU Member States, the Commission and the Partner States already involved with a deadline of 21 August 2006.

A web-based consultation was launched on 27 July 2006 based on the second draft programme document involving a wide range of key stakeholders, including the EP, CoR, ECOSOC, etc. and well as future cross-border, transnational and interregional SF programmes, including the Managing Authorities of URBACT II, INTERACT II and other programmes on European Territorial Cooperation. In addition, the ECP network, Regional offices in Bruxelles, scientific organisations at European level with stated interest in territorial development such as OECD, JRC, EEA, Eurocities, Metrex, CPMR, MOT, AEBR, ETCP, EuroMontana, Rurality (RED) were asked for feedback on the draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

The consultation ended on 8 September 2006 and provided useful responses to the second draft. These have influenced the further development of the programme.

On 20-21 September 2006 the Monitoring Committee agreed in principle on a draft final version of the current programme document as a joint proposal on an ESPON 2013 Programme giving a series of comments for the finalisation of the programme document before submission to the Commission.

EU Member States meeting with the Commission in the SUD committee on 28-29 September 2006 addressed complementarities between ESPON and URBACT during 2007-2013 and proposed means of coordination and cooperation.

A meeting on 11 October 2006 and follow up with the upcoming Managing Authorities of INTERACT and Interregional cooperation and Urbact defined ways of coordinating mutual complementarities. A common text was agreed and included in the Programme document for each of the programmes.

Meetings on 17 October and 7 November 2006 with the Commission, DG Regio, clarified comments on the content as well as the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

A revised final draft programme was presented on 13 November 2006 in Helsinki for the ESPON Monitoring Committee that during its meeting made further comments on the draft and mainly dealt with implementation provision matters.

General Directors responsible for territorial cohesion and development gave additional direction to the finalisation of the programme document at the ESPON seminar on 15 November 2006.

Commissioner Hübner, Minister Halsdorf from Luxembourg, Sir Albert Bore of the Committee of the Regions and Mr. Joost van Iersel of the Economic and Social Committee and members of the European Parliament provided further guidance for the finalisation of the programme document at an ESPON Conference in Bruxelles on 28 November 2006 raising awareness about ESPON and the new programme.

The ESPON Monitoring Committee made their final remarks on the ESPON 2013 Programme document at a short hearing from 1-8 December 2006 and endorsed a joint submission of the programme. At the event, EU Member States asked the designated Managing Authority in Luxembourg on behalf of all Member States to process the proposal to the Commission for approval.

The process led to the submission of the current proposal for an ESPON 2013 Programme to the European Commission in January 2007 by the designated Managing Authority of the new programme, the Ministry of Interior and Spatial Development of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

## **I.6 Ex-ante evaluation**

An ex-ante evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the Council Regulation EC 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund, article 48(2). The ex-ante evaluation has been conducted based on an iterative and interactive process, run in parallel with the elaboration of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The ex-ante evaluation has also influenced the modalities and priorities laid down in the Operational Programme, and strengthened the overall consistency of the programme strategy.

In particular, the evaluation process has led to a fine tuning on the Operational Programme document concerning:

- The analysis of the socio-economic situation and needs of the eligible area, and the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified
- The internal coherence of the strategy

- The external coherence, with Community Strategic Guidelines
- The identification of the expected outputs, results and impacts
- The proposed implementation systems
- The identification of the likely environmental effects of the programme

All remarks and recommendations made by the evaluators on the above components of the ESPON 2013 programme strategy, have been taken into account and reflected in this Operational Programme document, thereby implementing the interactive principle of the ex-ante evaluation process, as described in the Final Report of the ex-ante evaluation.

In addition, target indicators for results, outputs and impacts of the programme priorities have been elaborated which should make it capable of monitoring the ESPON 2013 programme development. In that respect, the experience gained from the ESPON 2006 programme, and recommendations from the Ex-Ante evaluation process have been very valuable and resulted in indicators which should better match the particular nature of the ESPON 2013 programme, as a programme for applied research and studies.

The summary of the ex-ante evaluation report can be found in annex V.1, presenting in a synthetic way an appraisal of the evaluation process, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the analysis of the Operational Programme document, also considering the SEA Directive requirements.

## **I.7 Assessment of environmental impact**

As part of the Ex-ante evaluation process, a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening report (SEA Screening report) has been undertaken, to determine whether or not the ESPON 2013 programme required a full SEA, in accordance to the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on assessing the effect of certain plans and programmes on the environment, known as the SEA Directive.

As a programme for research and studies related to actions under objective 3 of the Structural Funds 2007-2013, the ESPON 2013 programme is indeed a programme in the sense of the article 2 of the SEA Directive, and therefore subject to its provisions. However, the conclusions of the screening report state that the ESPON 2013 programme does not set the framework for future development of projects (reference to article 3(4) of the SEA Directive) in the sense of annex I and II of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and therefore a full SEA is not compulsory.

In addition, the programme does not have the direct physical impacts that other programmes under Structural Funds may have, and it is not possible to detect with any reasonable degree of probability that it is likely to have significant environmental effects. The evaluation concluded that an environmental assessment under the SEA Directive is not required.

The Ministry of the Environment in Luxembourg consequently found the ESPON 2013 Programme exempt of a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. Following a consultation process involving designated authorities of EU Member States responsible for SEA issues for Structural Funds Programmes, the above decision has been endorsed. A full SEA has therefore not been conducted.

It should also be noted that the ESPON 2013 programme will contribute to European information and evidence by means of trends analysis and impact assessments, including key environmental issues such as climate change, nature and biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources. Therefore, the ESPON 2013 Programme can support the promotion of sustainable development. The information to be provided through integrated territorial analyses to support Territorial Cohesion policy objectives will have an environmental dimension and complement existing environmental monitoring and information contributing to decision making on more cohesive, balanced and sustainable forms of development.

A summary of the SEA Screening Report conclusions can be found as part of the Ex-Ante evaluation summary, set out in annex V.1 of this programme document. The full report is available on the ESPON website.

## **II PROGRAMME STRATEGY**

### **II.1 Introduction**

The ESPON 2013 programme will address the main challenges facing an efficient regional policy which can contribute to Community priorities laid down in the renewed Lisbon strategy opting for growth and jobs. In particular, the contribution of Cohesion Policy and European regions in meeting the aims of the Lisbon strategy is guiding the programme strategy.

The programme strategy will reflect the priorities set out in the Council Regulations governing Structural Funds 2007-2013 (Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006) and in the Community Strategic Guidance on the National Reference Framework Documents for the development of programmes.

The Programme Strategy will include the following:

- Analysis of the present situation concerning policy support by evidence and information, including a SWOT like analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing European territorial development and cohesion as well as the implementation of the ESPON 2006 Programme.
- Overall, strategic and specific objectives for the ESPON 2013 Programme responding to the analysis of the situation setting the targets for the programme.
- Five programme priorities governing the actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The geographical scope and detail of the programme will be set out, including the cooperation framework, the eligible area for ERDF funding and the code of sectors of intervention envisaged.

A concluding text will address the added value of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

### **II.1.1. Basic principles**

Behind the strategy a number of basic principles have guided the development of objectives and priorities, and will represent the inherent spirit of decisions on actions and the management of the programme. These basic principles guiding the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme are:

- Demand-drive: Actions shall be oriented towards the actual policy demand, including a sequential screening of demands.
- Usability: Results and outputs shall be made available for users, also through actions targeting a specific analytical demand for a European dimension for certain territories.
- Flexibility: Adaptation of themes for applied research projects and studies in the programme implementation to policy demand shall be guaranteed and resources shall be made available to meet new demands.
- Continuity: Actions shall build on the achievements of the ESPON 2006 Programme.
- Timing: Project output shall be available with the right timing in relation to the policy development process related to territorial cohesion.
- Transfer: Communication and capitalisation of results shall be ensured with relevant stakeholders at all administrative levels, through involvement, networking and raising awareness.
- Quality: Results of analysis shall have high scientific quality and the comparability of European data set properly validated allowing for multi-methodological, exploratory and experimental approaches in providing results.
- Complementarity: Synergy with other programmes and studies shall be ensured, in particular to INTERACT, URBACT and other Territorial Cooperation programmes under Structural Funds 2007-2013.

### **II.2 Analysis of the present situation**

The present situation concerning the development of the European territory and the diversity of trends and impacts in the regions will be addressed in following analysis, which begins by identifying some main territorial structures and characteristics. The analysis highlights strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the ESPON 2013 Programme should address in the objectives, priorities and actions of the programme strategy.

The analysis of the present situation concerning policy support will follow three steps:

- A SWOT-like analysis of the European territory and its evolution mainly based upon the results of the ESPON 2006 Programme.

- A SWOT-like analysis of the ESPON 2006 Programme and the experiences gained.
- A conclusion summarising the need for a ESPON 2013 Programme and lessons to be learned from the past programme.

### **II.2.1 Basic characteristics and dynamics of the European territory**

Europe is a continent of rich territorial diversity. All regions of the EU Member States have their part to play in making Europe a competitive, attractive and liveable place in the world.

Diversity represents positive assets that can be capitalised and which can contribute to making Europe the most competitive territory in the world. Diversity also takes the form of disparities which challenge, and in some case put at risk, European cohesion and integration.

European territorial diversity needs however to be discussed at different geographical scales in order to nourish policy thinking at all administrative levels, from general appreciations at European scale such as core-periphery, North-South, East-West to the more detailed insights at regional/local scale, such as functionality of urban regions, rural-urban relations of low or high population density, accessibility and hazard risks, cross-border territories and specific geographically handicapped areas.

European territorial structures are created through history providing the current settlements, cities, and infrastructures for transport, communication and leisure for the European citizens and businesses. These main structures tend to change slowly, however, sudden impacts, such as macro economic shocks, relocation of economic activities and hazards, can have more dramatic effects. Although changes of territorial structures take time, a proactive approach allows for impact that can make territorial objectives possible.

Today, the economic activities and the population of Europe utilises only a minor part of the territory to produce half the Gross National Product of the European Union. At present 46% of the GDP of the EU is produced on 14% of the territory of the EU by around 34% of the citizens [footnote on “pentagon”]. In opting for a harmonious and balanced territory a more polycentric development is being considered for Europe, for national and regional territories as well as for interregional cooperation areas.

Signs of major development outside this core area of the EU territory are clearly visible, in particular along corridors and in a number of metropolitan regions, challenging the traditional perception of Europe as a core and large periphery.

Conditions for the development of regions and larger territories are changing more rapid than before and in new directions. Mega trends often of a global nature are having impact on the territorial development of Europe. This influences the disparities between European regions which are changing in magnitude and in character, and this also changes the scope for policies.

Particularly, the accelerating globalisation and climate change will create new challenges for many regions and larger territories calling for stronger competitiveness and preventive measures. In addition, the immediate neighbourhood to the EU presents

economic opportunities and raises questions of migration that require socio-cultural integration policy responses.

## **II.2.2 The European territory and its evolution**

A SWOT-like analysis, based on ESPON results, of the general situation for the European territory and its evolution can be summarised as follows:

### ***Strengths***

- **Diversity:** The regional diversity in Europe offers a wide range of unique combinations of development potentials, basically every European region possesses a different set of potentials that can be exploited.
- **Disparities:** The evolution since 1995 has diminished disparities between the EU Member States and between regions with many of the weakest regions catching up; however in some Member States internal regional disparities have increased.
- **Strong urban areas:** Europe has many important urban agglomerations which are important locations at global, European, national and regional scale and home to SMEs which are of major importance to the European economy.
- **Rural-urban partnership:** In many cases rural and urban areas, particularly those in close proximity, become increasingly integrated and draw advantage of both the urban and rural characteristic as well as development potentials.
- **Basic infrastructure and networks:** The transportation, communication and energy infrastructure and networks are well developed in Europe and form good preconditions for development and comparative advantages of European regions.
- **Innovation and R&D:** Europe has strong R&D nodes in a wide range of locations and in particular the territorial distribution of university education facilities and the people working in creative businesses show a good distribution across Europe, offering excellent development conditions for many regions.
- **Ecological and cultural assets:** All across Europe, regions possess a wide range of ecological and cultural assets, some of which are already used for improving sustainable development and quality of life for citizens as well as for attracting tourism and strengthening the economic base.
- **Cooperation networks:** Territorial cooperation of areas in close proximity (regional enlargement) as well as across national borders and in wider geographical contexts is a reality for both European enterprises and administrative units. These networks are often vital to the territorial integration and economic development of an area.

### ***Weaknesses***

- **Regional economic development:** Employment and productivity growth has recently been disappointing partly due to the failure to take full advantage of the knowledge economy and information and communication technologies.
- **Innovation:** The innovation gap to USA and Japan is widening and persists also inside Europe as the Union often fails to transform technological development into commercial products and processes.
- **Dominant core in economic terms:** Although countries with weaker economies are catching up, the core and North of Europe will remain the economic backbone of Europe over the next decades, and this may lead to increasing territorial imbalances and dependencies.

- **Periphery:** There are very many different types of periphery in Europe, all of which facing severe challenges in terms of economic development. Whilst some manage to compensate these disadvantages being peripheral, others are struggling.
- **Accessibility favouring some regions:** Good accessibility is one of the major preconditions for economic development, which show clear territorial imbalance with peripheral and rural areas often markedly worse in accessibility than urban areas (particular in the core area of Europe).
- **Secondary networks:** In many countries, secondary road and rail networks are not well developed to provide the services needed for areas to develop as they are poorly connected to the major transportation networks.
- **Geographically disadvantaged areas:** Coastal, mountainous, rural and peripheral areas are often conceived as geographically handicapped. Although some perform just as well as other areas in Europe, other geographically handicapped areas suffer from their territorial situation.

### *Opportunities*

- **Regional diversity of potentials:** Regional diversity provides each region with a unique combination of assets and development potential, some of which are being explored while others are under-used and should be activated either by the individual region or through cooperation with other regions.
- **Disparities between regions:** Disparities are increasing between regions as regards economic development and the demographic composition of the population. This challenges both European cohesion as well as the development opportunities of some regions.
- **Cities as drivers of development:** Both the major urban agglomerations and the medium-sized and even smaller cities in Europe are important economic drivers, although it has to be acknowledged that this is not true for all urban areas and that there are some rural areas showing considerable economic success.
- **Rural development poles:** In particular in rural areas, urban centres can act as rural development poles and thus provide development opportunities for a larger territory.
- **Energy crops:** High potentials exist in rural areas for production of bio-fuels that could progressively bring new sources of income to rural economies and convert set-aside land into land for energy production.
- **Urban-rural partnership and city networks:** Territorial cooperation in form of rural-urban partnerships and city networks imply often huge development opportunities through joint solving of challenges and the creating of new comparative advantages.
- **The global world is opening new territorial potentials:** Flows and interaction between territories regions and cities are accelerating and creates new opportunities for growth and cooperation.
- **Empowerment and governance:** Government and integrated governance processes as well as the stimulation of local entrepreneurship through empowerment of local communities offer development opportunities for both urban and rural areas.

### *Threats*

- **Gap in GDP per capita:** Disparities in GDP per head between EU Member States remain marked and continued high growth will be needed for more than a generation in many Member States that joined in 2002 shall the gap be substantially reduced.
- **Market forces support geographical concentration:** At different geographical scales increasing geographical concentration of economic activities and population will challenge European cohesion and the development opportunities of many regions.

- Globalisation: In the context of accelerating globalisation, external competition is growing resulting in numerous asymmetric shocks, adding to the process of geographical concentration of activities and population.
- Ageing of the population: Demographic development in Europe will be a particular challenge; regions facing ageing and out-migration may lose their economic base. This development threat may hit peripheral and rural areas first.
- Hazards and climate change: Environmental and technological hazards are present in nearly all European regions and can threaten local development. In particular climate changes and their effects on the intensity and location of hazards will reinforce these threats.
- Energy prices increase: Increasing energy prices will threaten regions with energy intensive economies and a high sensitivity to energy prices as well as regions that depend largely on accessibility in form of affordable transportation, i.e. rural and peripheral areas. Particularly, peripheral regions dependent of transportation might lose competitiveness, a trend that works against territorial cohesion at European scale.
- The socio-economic integration: Integration of specific population groups progressively becomes a serious issue in numerous European countries, in particular in larger urban agglomerations.

### **II.2.3 The ESPON 2006 Programme and the experiences gained**

The ESPON 2006 Programme provided substantial improvement of comparable information, evidence and knowledge, often presented as European maps, and made it available for policy makers and practitioners at European, transnational, national, cross-border and regional/local levels, in particular at the end of the programme.

This improvement was ensured through applied research projects and studies carried through by transnational teams of researchers and consultants. A European network of academics was constituted to provide a basis for further consolidation of a European network of scientific competence in the field of applied territorial research. Furthermore, the progress made has been consolidated in a scientific platform including the ESPON database, mapping tools, models, methodologies, etc.

The Mid term evaluation of the ESPON 2006 programme and its later update confirmed the achievements reached and identified the limits and needs for improvements. In particular the provision of comparable regionalised data for the entire European territory was seen as a major challenge as Eurostat does not currently provide all relevant data for the ESPON exercise, which makes it necessary to continue a data acquisition from national and other sources and validation of these dataset. In addition, improvements related to the actual maturity of the ESPON results was proposed promoting the possibility of meeting user demand for targeted analysis of parts of Europe seen from a European perspective.

Observations resulting from the joint programming process have revealed points of experience and lessons to be learned related to the implementation of the ESPON 2006 Programme and the information and evidence support provided to regional policy development.

A SWOT-like analysis of the outcome of the ESPON 2006 Programme can be summarised as follows:

### ***Strengths***

- New comparable information and evidence in a number of thematic fields for all regions of EU Member States, including EU candidate countries, Romania and Bulgaria.
- Policy use of ESPON results and maps in policy documents, in particular at European and national level.
- The transnational character and results with a European perspective enhancing European thinking in the field of territorial analysis.
- Networking and dialogue between policy makers and the scientific community.
- First steps of awareness rising of decision-makers about future development perspectives and issues.
- Synthetic ESPON publications in time for policy events and the public access established to results, data and tools.
- Tools for territorial analysis including an ESPON Database, models and mapping facilities, etc.
- Building a European research community with academic interest in territorial development and cohesion in a European perspective, involving regional economists, geographers and spatial planners.
- Management and coordination of the ESPON 2006 Programme has been efficient and delivered in accordance to rules and expectations.

### ***Weaknesses***

- Basic evidence still missing for a number of themes.
- Thematic over-dependence on socio-economic issues on the expense of a social and environmental dimension of territorial development.
- Territorial analysis of macro economic development and shocks, in particular related to priorities of the Structural Funds main stream objectives, such as SME and clusters of innovation etc., have been rather absent.
- Lack of a longer time perspective for systematic analysis and observation.
- Limited European wide awareness about ESPON results partly due to a communication strategy with modest financial resources.
- Insufficient use by regional policy makers and practitioners use of ESPON results partly due to the strong academic orientation of numerous ESPON projects that hampers easy access and use of results.
- Low involvement of other EC programmes and Institutions.
- The ESPON Contact Point network not covering all countries.
- Independent scientific quality control not foreseen in the ESPON 2006 programme.
- Limited number of researchers from newer EU Member States involved.
- Limited number of tenders for each project.
- Insufficient availability of comparable regionalised data with European coverage.

### ***Opportunities***

- Meeting the existing demand for supporting policy development, in particular the European process on territorial cohesion and the implementation of Structural Funds 2007-2013, with evidence, information, maps and analysis based on comparable European knowledge on regions targeting policy priorities set out.

- Potential to further improve systematic evidence and information aiding the understanding of the territorial dimension of key challenges of the Lisbon strategy as well as the objectives of a harmonious and balanced European territory.
- Existing potentials for strengthening a European dimension in territorial development policy through a targeted and practical use of ESPON evidence and information, and by involvement and partnerships with policy makers and practitioners, especially at regional and local level.
- Opportunities for exploring better complementarities and synergies with European institutions, EU sector policies and relevant EU Programmes improving results and synergy.
- Potential for increased awareness, involvement, networking and use of an ambitious communication effort to strengthen the European dimension in policy development for regions and larger territories.
- Potential for enforcing the contribution of the ECP network to transnational involvement, empowerment an operational use of ESPON results as well as in awareness raising, dissemination and blunder checks.
- Demand for analytical delivery at policy level, often with short notice.
- Existing potential for deepening cooperation with EUROSTAT and the GIS services of the Commission, particularly in DG Regio, and in respect the Inspire Directive (COM (2004) 516 final), to improve the data situation on regionalised, validated and comparable European wide information.
- Potential for developing territorial indicators, including combined indicators and indexes, related to territorial cohesion, and for implementing a sequential European territorial monitoring and forecasting based on key indicators for territorial trends, including long time series.
- Potential for further consolidating a scientific platform and a multidisciplinary scientific community in the field of applied territorial research and studies as an investment for the future.

### ***Threats***

- Potential risk that lack of information on the European position of the individual regions in relation to other regions hampers the increasing need for regions to explore a wider territorial context and embark in cooperation based on comparative advantages.
- Lack of regionalised comparable data with full EU coverage delivered by EUROSTAT hampering the applied research, in particular related to the new territorial challenges identified which will have to be collected.
- Lack of continuous quality control on scientific output and data which can enhance future ESPON results.
- Uncompetitive budget for actions that could make the ESPON 2013 Programme unattractive for the best scientists and consultants.
- Risk of heavy procedures related to procurement, contracts and payments that decrease interest in tendering for contracts.
- Lack of sufficient analytical capacity to digest, filter and synthesise results of the applied research and to meet short term analytical demands from policy development.

## II.2.4 Conclusions: Main needs shaping the demand for an ESPON 2013 Programme

The analysis of the situation has highlighted the need for priorities and actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme, which are related to the territorial challenges facing Europe as well as the experiences from the ESPON 2006 Programme.

An efficient and modern regional policy obviously has to be based on necessary evidence and knowledge to ensure a solid policy implementation. The European cooperation within the ESPON 2006 Programme has made progress concerning the provision of comparable regionalised information for policy development. Together with European studies undertaken by other institutions, such as Commission Services, OECD, EEA, etc., there has been a significant improvement in the European knowledge-base for regional policy and territorial cohesion.

The ESPON 2013 Programme shall bring European knowledge on territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts one step further and the actions shall be decided in accordance to policy demand and the cycle of the relevant policy agenda. Particular attention will be given to the agenda for moving forward the objective of territorial cohesion.

The considerable impact of present and future changes in the global context and in Europe's neighbourhood will result in new territorial challenges that should be anticipated and studied in order to be able to raise awareness on new territorial dynamics. This necessitates the improvement of data collection and creates the need for prospective and explorative studies, involving forecasts based on long-term scenarios.

In general terms, the following **general needs** have been raised:

- Focus of regional policy requires validated evidence on the potentials of regions, cities and larger territories from ESPON actions.
- Regions need information on their larger territorial context, including Europe in the world, as their area of influence and dependence enlarge.
- Comparable evidence on sector policies with a territorial impact is needed for an integrated approach to development in support of synergies.
- The territorial challenges facing regional policy from mega trends, including ageing, a new energy paradigm and accelerating globalisation, and with a stronger focus on under-used potentials, disparities with changing profiles, increasing societal complexity and the enlarging territorial influence at all scales, etc., call for evidence based on analysis, data collection and observation of territorial trends and policy impact.
- The further evolvement of EU Cohesion Policy should be supported by territorial indicators that can help operationalise the objective of territorial cohesion.
- The use of analytical results and data shall be maintained and increased by involving a variety of policy makers related to the development of regions and larger territories.

Related to the specific **needs for analytical deliveries** the following can be concluded:

- The results from the ESPON 2006 Programme need deepening and widening depending of policy demand.
- The analytical themes to be embarked upon shall closely reflect the current political debate on territorial development and cohesion and the main challenges with clear territorial impact that face Europe.
- Applied research shall address existing themes from the ESPON 2006 Programme as well as new themes, and progress made shall be supplemented by systematic analysis of territorial flows.
- Complementarity and consistency is needed with studies carried through in relation to other Community Policies, such as analytical activities carried through under the seventh RTD framework programme for research and technological development and the framework programme on competitiveness and innovation.
- Applied research projects and targeted analytical projects shall be undertaken by competent transnational teams of researchers and consultants.
- The territorial typology decided for Structural Funds interventions shall be used where relevant.
- European observation and monitoring of territorial trends and policy impacts shall become systematic with a sequential reporting.
- Progress on the scientific platform shall continue by consolidating, maintaining and updating of existing tools, including core indicators, maps and scientific methods.
- Data collection and validation, and further development of the ESPON database and indicators linked to territorial development and cohesion shall continue and be intensified in a bid to overcome the difficulties. A special effort is needed to analyse the feasibility and limitations of collecting comparable European wide data sets.

Concerning an intensification of **the use of ESPON results in practice** the following needs have become clear from the analysis:

- Demand from potential users shall be mapped through intensive dialogue with relevant stakeholders to ensure relevant themes for analysis during the 7 years of programme implementation.
- The use of results in practice shall be supported through intensive awareness raising and involvement as well as communication activities embracing European Institutions, such as the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and Commission services as well as national and regional policy makers and practitioners and stakeholders representing the interest of urban, rural, coastal, mountain, and other areas.
- A strengthened network of ESPON Contact Points shall include members from all countries involved in ESPON 2013 supporting transnational awareness and quality of ESPON actions, transfer of knowledge and involvement of policy makers, practitioners and scientists, also from the national context.
- Knowledge embedded in the ESPON process shall be made more operational transposing scientific results to the policy context.
- Networking with existing national observatories in the field of territorial development shall be started ensuring synergy and complementarity of the ESPON actions.
- A consolidation of a scientific community in the field of applied territorial research shall be undertaken promoting a multi-disciplinary profile including regional economists, geographers, planners, political science, sociology, ecologists, etc.

The implementation provisions **needs to ensure a smooth operation** of the ESPON 2013 Programme by:

- A coordinated Communication Plan and Capitalisation Strategy from the outset supporting the necessary flow of information to potential beneficiaries and to support to an intensification of the use of results.
- Simple and easy application procedures, contracting and payments that ensures a substantial interest for ESPON actions.
- Competitive budgets for actions that can attract the best researchers and consultants
- Procedures for validating the scientific quality of results.
- Procedures for validation of comparability of data.

**Summing up**, the SWOT-like analysis of the situation concerning the European territory as well as the experience and lessons learned from the ESPON 2006 Programme points at two main conclusions and orientations for the ESPON 2013 Programme: (1) Continuity and (2) Change and Innovation.

- The challenges for European competitiveness and cohesion have a territorial dimension. Responding to the challenges requires, as global factors increasingly provide shocks and impacts, European knowledge and evidence on territorial trends and policy impact. There is a need to continue the applied research in the field of territorial development and cohesion and to further improve results of the ESPON 2006 Programme. There is as well a need for further work on territorial indicators and indexes measuring territorial cohesion. By applied research being maintained and developed, and through additional methodological efforts, regions, cities and larger territories would become supplied with information on their position vis-à-vis other regions, their under-used potentials and their profiles, and be a knowledge base for contributing to the overall challenges of the Union of ensuring competitiveness, growth and jobs, and the internal cohesion and balance of the Union, also in territorial terms.
- The political reality has developed since the ESPON 2006 Programme started. Territorial cohesion and cooperation has become explicit issues for the policy agenda which will result in new policy driven demands for territorial evidence at different levels. The evidence needed for future policy development will have to reflect an increasing influence from the global context and be able to anticipate major new impacts for regions and the European territory. The importance of making analytical results useful for policy makers is another reason for adopting a clear user-oriented approach for the ESPON 2013 Programme. A new action shall support analytical deliveries based on ESPON findings that can meet specific policy demand. A strong awareness raising, involvement and networking shall support a common understanding of territorial trends, impacts and perspectives and be supported by a wide dissemination of synthesis of ESPON results to communities of policy makers and practitioners around Europe and to the supporting communities of academics and scientist. Events around Europe, including transnational activities partly organised by the network of ESPON Contact Points, shall provide for dialogue and publicity and communication efforts shall stimulate the interest and involvement among policy makers in decision making at all scales in support of territorial cohesion within the European Union.

## II.3 Objectives

The Council Regulation for Structural Funds 2007-2013 (Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006) emphasises the need of enhancing the efficiency of regional policy. For future European Territorial Cooperation it is made explicit that the reinforcement of regional policy requires studies, data and observation of development trends.

Community knowledge on regions and larger territories promoting a European perspective/context in policy development is gaining importance, both for European and regional competitiveness as well as for the fulfilment of the Lisbon objectives and for ensuring Community aims of cohesion.

The ESPON 2013 programme will through delivery of results from applied research and studies, including observation and data as well as awareness raising and involvement of policy makers, have the strategic objective of meeting the policy demand for information and evidence needed for reinforcing regional policies in the light of the challenges facing European regions. In parallel, the academic capacity for applied research on territorial development issues will be further strengthened in Europe.

### II.3.1 Overall aim and objectives

The overall aim of the ESPON 2013 Programme is to:

*“Support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory by (1) providing comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on territorial dynamics and (2) revealing territorial capital and potentials for the development of regions and larger territories contributing to European competitiveness, territorial cooperation and a sustainable and balanced development”.*

In promoting the overall aim the following overall objectives will be strived at:

- The ESPON 2013 Programme shall enhance European evidence, knowledge, data and indicators in relation to territorial cohesion and development. In that respect it shall build on what has been/will be achieved by the ESPON 2006 programme.
- Policy demand shall define the applied research actions and focus the themes and EU policies that need to be addressed. The progress made by the ESPON 2006 programme shall be further deepened and widened depending on demand expressed by policy makers involved. Exploratory efforts and perspective studies shall support policy relevant themes of the future. The applied research shall pave the way for integrated analytical activity in concrete territorial contexts.
- A user oriented approach shall be adopted for the ESPON 2013 Programme. The current ESPON knowledge base is already able to offer operational support to strategic processes in smaller or larger territorial settings and within the themes studied so far. The ESPON 2013 Programme shall through a strong involvement and awareness raising offer targeted analytical deliveries upon demand, responding to needs.

### II.3.2 Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives set out below operationalise the overall aim and objectives of the ESPON 2013 Programme by building on the potentials, strengths and opportunities evident in the analysis of the situation. Likewise, the strategic objectives reflect positively the weaknesses and threats observed.

The strategic objectives of the ESPON 2013 Programme are as follows:

- Support greater effectiveness of regional policy through actions involving studies, data collection and indicator development, and the observation and analysis of territorial development trends in the Community that position regions in the European context, and which can (1) support a better targeting of interventions aiming at improving regional competitiveness and territorial cohesion by evidence on territorial structures and types of regions at European level, and (2) improve synergies and added value from applying an integrated approach to territorial development, coordinating across sector policies based on evidence on their territorial impact.
- Evidence on themes of policy demand related to the European strategic guidance on territorial development and cohesion, also with an urban dimension, and to themes and types of territories eligible for ERDF intervention as well as phenomena related to European territorial policy orientations expressed by Member States in policy documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the “Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union”.
- A geographical coverage within the actions including new EU Member States and EU Candidate countries and their regions while neighbouring countries not participating as partners shall be covered in a limited number of outputs. For some action Europe in the world should be the coverage creating a greater awareness of this context.
- Synergy and complementarity to other Community activities, in particular other Structural Funds 2007-2013 activities and intergovernmental processes with a territorial dimension, and with relevant EU sector policies as well as research and studies outside ESPON.
- Initiate a policy dialogue and networking from the outset to raise awareness and involvement, which is supported by a publishing of synthesis documents, reports and material presenting evidence and policy options that can improve the overall understanding of European territorial dynamics, including cause-effect relations and future developments, and provide support to analysis targeting specific territories.
- A smooth implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme by establishing a simple management structure and mechanisms for financial management as well as by ensuring a competent technical assistance for efficient coordination and a sufficient programme-internal analytical capacity that is able to synthesise research results for policy development, which is accompanied by targeted communication activities to support awareness and use of results.

## II. 3.3 Specific objectives

The specific objectives will further specify strategic issues of relevance for the programme as such and in addition address important operational issues that are resulting from the SWOT-like analysis of the situation.

The Programme shall in an operational way serve policy making dealing with territorial and regional issues with European information and evidence. The results of an ESPON 2013 Programme shall provide added value to the policy processes targeting a sustainable and harmonious development of the European territory and the ambition of creating an EU with a strong knowledge based economy.

In order to achieve the overall aims the following specific objectives will be pursued in order to ensure a focused and operational programme implementation:

- Thematic orientations of applied research shall be based on strategic considerations and will be inspired by policy priorities of the Commission and EU Member States in order to meet the policy demand that is related to European policy processes, particular to progress on territorial cohesion policy, as well as to themes visible in Structural Funds Regulations and other European documents.
- The policy-demand approach involving policy makers and practitioners shall be further stimulated and supported through targeted awareness raising, involvement and creation of sensibility to European dimension of regional policy and territorial development among stakeholders across the Community at European, national and regional levels.
- Policy demand for applied territorial research and targeted analytical deliveries shall also be revealed by transparent consultations/screenings of interest that are addressed to key stakeholders at European and national level working on issues related to territorial development and in the context of European programmes related to Structural Funds 2007-2013 (in particular, other Interregional cooperation programmes).
- Analytical support to the initialisation of territorial cooperation, in clusters and networks, involving regions, urban and rural territories as well as territories with specific characteristics shall be provided through evidence on regional comparative advantages in a European perspective and joint strategies in favour of territorial development, which could have a demonstration effect for other areas. A geographical detail in the actions that can ensure the interest and dialogue previewed, in particular through targeted analysis including more detailed information on regional/local areas shall be ensured, in particular through a more intensive use of case studies.
- Quality control and validation of applied research and data as well as a check of their usability shall be an important part of the ESPON 2013 process and will be achieved through (1) programme-external knowledge and competence support for applied research actions on territorial development, (2) a continuous feed-back process on their actual usefulness in the context of targeted analysis, seminars and networking activities involving policy makers and practitioners, and (3) a reinforced programme internal knowledge support.

- Knowledge and competence support in relation to territorial development and cohesion shall be ensured and used for validation of results from applied research by task forces/“sounding boards” in an interactive process with the transnational project groups carrying through the projects. For targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results the validation and usability check is part of the process and involvement of practitioners.
- An ESPON Contact Point network, operative in all EU Member States, shall support awareness raising and involvement of national and regional policy makers and practitioners around Europe and ensure European wide correctness of information in applied research actions by means of blunder checks.
- Scientific and intellectual support in the short and long term for conducting applied research in the field of territorial development and cohesion shall be stimulated through cooperation with scientific organisations relevant for a multidisciplinary European community in the field of territorial research.
- The ESPON scientific platform shall be improved and maintained, including the ESPON database, indicators, necessary analytical tools and methodologies. Regionalised European dataset (including time series) shall in general be improved by using available sources at European and national level and by ensuring a thorough validation of the quality of results through the knowledge support within the programme and of the comparability of data by statistical support.
- A monitoring system for European territorial trends and policy impacts shall be established to ensure relevant information to the target groups on the territorial in relation to policy orientations for a harmonious and balanced EU territory and a territorial cohesion. A networking with national spatial observatories shall support this action.
- Public access to ESPON results shall be consolidated, in particular a transparent access to EU wide, comparable and regionalised information and analysis on regional competitiveness and territorial potentials, including under-used potentials of regions and larger territories as well as factors of improved attractiveness, focusing on opportunities for developing new assets, and on sustainable development, qualities of life and the environment.
- Conditions for Transnational Project Groups and procedures for applying for ESPON actions shall stimulate many offers and budgetary provisions that can ensure involvement of high qualified project groups.
- An efficient and competent coordination and a simple management structure and mechanisms for financial management as well as a sufficient analytical capacity available for providing synthesis of results for policy development shall be ensured.

#### **II.4 Priorities**

The situation analysis indicated different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to ESPON 2013 Programme. These elements were reflected in a

hierarchy of objectives. In order to fulfil these objectives a number of priorities and actions will be carried through.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will carry through activities within 5 priorities at programme level, which reflect the programme strategy and overall objectives defined.

The 5 programme priorities are the following:

1. Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion:  
Evidence on territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts
2. Targeted analysis based on user demand:  
European perspective to development of different types of territories
3. Scientific platform and tools:  
Territorial indicators and data, analytical tools and scientific support
4. Capitalisation, ownership and participation:  
Capacity building, dialogue and networking
5. Technical assistance, analytical support and communication.

The programme priorities will be set out as concrete actions by the ESPON Monitoring Committee as an integrated part of the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme. However, the operational objectives, main types of actions, operational provisions, target groups and beneficiaries as well as a tentative quantification of expected outputs, results and impacts, form part of each priority.

#### **II.4.1 Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on European territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts**

##### ***1. Introduction***

The SWOT analysis clearly indicated that more applied research action is needed for European policy development and that a thematic bias exists in favour of socio-economic knowledge. The themes explored by the ESPON 2006 Programme need further deepening and widening depending on the policy demands, emerging evolutions and challenges. Additional themes are needed to provide evidence support on the three factors of sustainable development. This is also the case with the concrete thematic priorities for Structural Funds intervention 2007-2013.

The applied research within the ESPON 2013 Programme will opt for information and evidence on territorial potentials and challenges focusing on opportunities for success for the development of regions. Cross thematic applied research will be a major activity integrating existing thematic analysis and adding future analysis of new themes. The impact of EU policies will be another area of analysis of importance. In support of the applied research actions a knowledge support system will be put in place to ensure high quality results.

##### ***2. Operational objectives***

The operational objectives for the applied research projects are the following:

- Continue building new evidence based on comparable information about European regions, including information on dynamics and flows.

- Provide information and possible policy options for enhancing positive effects of trends, anticipate and counter balance negative ones.
- Provide information supporting the assessment of the territorial impacts of policies and monitoring of policy achievements allowing a better understanding of cause-effects relationships at European as well as national, regional, cross-border, transnational levels.
- Contribute to the identification of spatial structures within the EU territory and options for synergy through territorial cooperation arrangements.
- Improve a future oriented time dimension in knowledge building.
- Improve the existing EU wide information, refining existing concepts, indicators, typologies, methodologies and define new ones.
- Contribute to the strengthening of knowledge and competence capabilities needed to ensure scientifically validated results of the applied territorial research by setting up task forces/"sounding boards".

### ***3. Main types of actions***

The actions envisaged fall within three main categories:

- Cross-thematic and thematic analysis (defining territorial potentials and challenges), including studies of territorial trends and prospective studies
- Territorial impact of EU policies
- Knowledge Support System

The applied research actions on **cross-thematic and thematic analysis** (as well as territorial impacts of EU policies) will lead to a greater European understanding of the complexity of territorial development. The provision of regionalised, updated thematic and cross-thematic information helps identify the potential synergies and/or conflicts among different policies and territorial assets and potentials.

By integrating different themes to regions and territories will add to the regional information base on sustainable development and prospective studies would add to a future-oriented time dimension. This is crucial for the preparedness of stakeholders at all levels to respond with territorial intervention to negative future perspectives and allowing them to discover and exploit new and/or under-used potentials.

For stakeholders at regional level, the information resulting from this type of analysis would also aid the consideration of the European perspective and, for example, contribute: a) to the identification and consequent exploitation of territorial potentials; b) the elaboration of policies intended to strengthen territorial attractiveness; c) facilitate recognition of the need for policy coordination between different administrative levels and between neighbouring territories.

Other programmes financed within the Territorial Cooperation objective could find inspiration for the elaboration of common strategies and support for the development and selection of projects that contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of these programmes.

New information on territorial trends and perspectives could help refine the vision of policy makers on strong and weaker points as well as effects on their territory in comparison to neighbouring territories encouraging alliances and strategic cooperation.

Such benefits can be obtained at cross-border, transnational and interregional levels as well as for urban policy development.

**Territorial impacts studies** will provide information supporting the monitoring of policy achievements ex-post and allow a better understanding of cause-effects relationships at national, regional, cross-border, transnational levels. Studies will also gradually as an assessment methodology is developed provide for ex-ante analysis territorial impacts of EU sector policy proposals, which in turn can support a territorial awareness in sector policies.

Evidence on territorial impacts of sector policies will make it possible over time to strengthen an integrated territorial approach. This would improve the coordination and mutual synergies between sector policies and create added value for regional policy and territorial cohesion. Impact studies will in particular be relevant for collaboration at Community level, but will as well be of use for national and regional authorities.

The **Knowledge Support System** comprises of a pool of scientists (specialists in many thematic fields), who can assist the applied research actions in an advisory role, providing continuous feed back and guidance. For the implementation of each action a small group of scientists will be engaged to act as a specific task force or sounding board during the implementation of the action.

Each task force or sounding board will ensure a scientific validation and high quality results. Acting together with the project consortia, providing continuous feedback and guidance on applied territorial research and strengthening the dialogue and cooperation between Transnational Project Groups and independent scientists, the Knowledge Support System will contribute to quality and usability of applied research result from the ESPON 2013 Programme.

#### ***4. Operational provisions***

Themes for the applied research studies and analysis will be decided on the basis of strategic considerations. The Concertation Committee will give guidance on the strategic approach to the definition and selection of themes, preparing for the decision on further themes (see IV.1.2).

The demand from policy development as noted by members of the ESPON Monitoring Committee will be the key selection criteria for the thematic orientations. Themes in support of territorial cohesion and cooperation will be given high priority along with themes related to the Lisbon strategy and a sustainable economic development.

The thematic framework for potential themes for applied research projects is presented in Annex V.2, to be considered in the selection of project themes in order to support the greater efficiency of regional policy in different territorial contexts.

The thematic framework includes policy orientations and priorities related to Structural Funds 2007-2013 and to the intergovernmental cooperation, which are set out in policy documents, such as the European Spatial Development Perspective and “Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union”.

The thematic orientation of the applied research shall as well be influenced of an assessment of the coverage and gaps within the ESPON 2006 Programme as well as the

choices made by the Monitoring Committee on preparatory studies, including on small and medium sized cities, the social dimension of territorial development and territorial impacts of environmental policies. In addition, other themes inspired from user demand etc. can be considered for additional applied research.

The thematic framework for applied research is organised in 3 thematic axes:

- (1) Territorial development and the competitiveness of regions, urban and rural territories.
- (2) Territorial cooperation.
- (3) Territorial impact of EU policies.

In order to facilitate an efficient the start up of the ESPON 2013 Programme, the thematic framework in Annex V.2 includes the priority themes for the first round of applied research projects.

Decision on applied research actions will be taken at several moments during programme implementation. The thematic orientations within an ESPON 2013 Programme should not, and can not, be fully decided in advance for a 7 year long programme period. Flexibility will have to prevail, giving the Monitoring Committee the opportunity to make thematic choices as policy develops. Applied research within the ESPON 2013 Programme will give priority to integrated analysis.

Consultations of stakeholders mapping the demand on thematic issues will be undertaken within the programme period 2007-2013. At least three major rounds of selection are envisaged in order to ensure an efficient operation. In addition, single actions might be also decided. .

Specification of actions will be developed by the Coordination Unit for each individual action in order to complement and further develop a variety of regionalised information covering the European territory.

All action within Priority 1 will be carried through by Transnational Project Groups following calls for applied research analysis/studies proposals responding to the specific research framework of the ESPON Programme. Transnational Project Groups will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real costs incurred for carrying out the analysis/study approved. The Managing Authority will therefore sign subsidy contracts according to the Lead Partner principle which will be applied.

Call for proposals will be open to public and public equivalent bodies complying with the selection criteria and minimum requirements established for each action. Based on the EU Public Procurement Law, public equivalent body refers to any legal body governed by public or private law (1) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (which does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial or commercial character), and (2) having legal personality, and (3) either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

Subsidy contracts will include competitive and attractive budgets for the foreseen actions. The indicative budget level per action shall offer an average of €6-700.000 in order to reach a competitive level. Transnational Project Groups will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real costs incurred for carrying out the analysis/study. The Lead Partner principle will be applied.

The geographical coverage will normally include the regions of all countries taking part in the ESPON 2013 Programme (with as much detail as possible depending on the availability of comparative data). However, within this priority a limited number of analysis and studies focusing on smaller geographical entities such as the entire Balkans, are optional as well as analysis/studies zooming-out in territorial terms addressing Europe in the world context and/or in a wider European context providing information on the regions of neighbouring countries not participating in the ESPON exercise.

The Knowledge Support System will operate as task forces or sounding boards of experts selected by the ESPON Monitoring Committee from a list of independent experts pooled through an open call for experts on different thematic fields of applied research. The call will be renewed as necessary during the programme implementation. Selected experts will be excluded from taking part in Transnational Project Groups for actions in relation to the themes for which they have been selected and contracted as experts. Following the decision of the Monitoring Committee on the selection of the experts, the Managing Authority will contract them individually for the provision of services.

Call for experts will be also open to members of the ECP Network. Those ECP members who wish to be included in the expert list will have to apply according to the procedure described above.

#### ***5. Target groups and beneficiaries***

The target groups for the results of the applied research projects are basically public authorities at all levels of administration as well as the research community. This includes the Commission, all EU Member States and countries participating in the ESPON 2013 programme, the corresponding national and regional/local authorities and the public universities and research institutes and other potential beneficiaries as mentioned above. In addition, groupings of public authorities responsible for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation under Structural Funds can be considered part of the target group for the outcome of the applied research undertaken.

The direct beneficiaries of the actions under this priority are the public and public equivalent bodies contracted for the implementation of the actions. Indirectly, the public authorities mentioned above will benefit from the results of all actions undertaken.

#### ***6. Expected outputs***

The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through around 30-40 actions during 2007-2013 and provide new information and evidence on a wide variety of themes which through the selection process conducted by the ESPON Monitoring Committee has been targeted to the policy demand for information and evidence. The actions may vary in size depending on demand.

An equal number of task forces/sounding boards will be also established and the sufficient number of experts contracted by the Managing Authority.

### ***7. Expected results***

The results will widen and deepen the existing knowledge base on European territorial development, provided mainly by the ESPON 2006 programme. The new and improved knowledge base will improve the information and awareness of territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts. The applied research may reflect different territorial entities, most often being European, national and/or regional and different territorial types. The results will reflect the current knowledge concerning science and provide for a practical use.

### ***8. Expected impacts***

Impacts will be better policy development due to an enhanced use of the applied research results and regionalised information on European maps in policy processes and documents dealing with the development of territories, territorial cooperation and cohesion, which will raise the efficiency of regional policy and help defining territorial potentials for development.

Impacts will as well benefit the European capacity in the field of territorial applied research.

## **II.4.2 Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories**

### ***1. Introduction***

The analysis of the situation also revealed that the ESPON results obtained were weakly anchored and little used by policy makers and practitioners working in different territorial contexts and types of territories. At the same time, a more extensive use of ESPON findings was seen as a major opportunity for the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels are the key stakeholders for ESPON that through their direct and indirect measures contribute to the achievement of European policy goals related to territorial development. It is therefore important that decisions taken include information and evidence on a European perspective on the regions or larger territories in question.

This priority responds to a clear demand of practitioners expressed during the final phase of the ESPON 2006 programme for user and demand driven actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme. However, it is evident that targeted analysis elaborated under the ESPON 2013 Programme shall have a truly European dimension.

The use of ESPON results in practice shall contribute to informed policy decisions by an analytical process integrating more detailed information from the territory of analysis and benefit from the practical know-how, which shall be obtained through partnership, dialogue and cooperation intertwining a top-down and a bottom-up approach..

The actions will be relevant as their content is defined by demand for European wide evidence and/or a European territorial dimension in policy development for certain territories, allowing for integrated analysis of certain territorial contexts, cross-cutting

studies based on regional case studies, experiments and technical/methodological support to territorial planning and visions, which are undertaken in cooperation within other programmes.

Partnership and cooperation on targeted analysis can in addition create added value for the ESPON 2013 Programme itself by contributing to the process of defining themes for applied research.

## ***2. Operational objectives***

The operational objectives for this priority are the following:

- Provide evidence and knowledge based on ESPON results on the position of concrete regions and/or larger territories in relation to other European regions and in a global context, showing the strong points and challenges for the area, its cities and rural areas.
- Improve the usefulness of ESPON results by testing new, experimental and innovative options such as (1) analysis of themes of interest for groups of regions, partly based on case studies, (2) methodological frameworks for translating territorial development goals and policy aims into concrete actions and (3) technical, methodological and analytical support to territorial planning processes and spatial programming and visions.
- Provide analytical support and evidence based on ESPON results on thematic priorities in cooperation with other Structural Funds programmes.

## ***3. Main type of actions***

Three types of actions are foreseen to be financed within this priority:

- Integrated studies and thematic analysis
- Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions
- Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes

The envisaged actions shall have a European perspective and target a specific territorial context and remain of strategic nature. They shall include core methodological and procedural elements with a clear transferable character and a concrete implementation part, focussing on specific territories (also in the form of case studies), with highly applicative and demonstrative purposes. Therefore, even though these actions will have a more limited territorial coverage than actions under Priority 1, the results will benefit the entire ESPON territory. In addition, these actions will be implemented with the direct involvement of practitioners.

Through its particular implementation methodology, this priority will also contribute to bridge the gap between policy makers, practitioners and scientists.

**Integrated studies and thematic analysis** will provide evidence and knowledge that can add cross-thematic information on the position of a region or larger territory in the European context, showing the strong points and challenges of the area in relation to other European regions and in relation to a global context. The actions may also imply technical and methodological advice to countries, regions and other territorial entities. They will capitalise on existing results, from the previous and current ESPON and from

other available sources, but be more targeted and detailed to reflect specific territorial types mentioned in the Structural Funds Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006) or to specific thematic territorial potentials and/or challenges, in order to maximise usefulness and practical applicability. In some cases, it might however be necessary to undertake additional research and studies in order to meet the expectations from users.

**Knowledge and evidence support to experimental actions** on the application of ESPON results in transnational and cross-border contexts, for instance in the fields of spatial visions, planning and experiments related to territorial development, shall contribute to the improvement of the usefulness of ESPON results by testing new and innovative options. Actions can involve different types of territories, including cross-border areas and transnational cooperation areas.

**Joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes** providing analytical support on the European situation within relevant thematic priorities of the programmes. In particular, programmes dealing with European Territorial Cooperation will have priority, including cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes as well as INTERACT and URBACT. In addition, analytical support to actions promoting Regions for Economic Change could be envisaged, if necessary.

#### ***4. Operational provisions***

In carrying forward the ambition of user demand driven projects and studies the ESPON Monitoring Committee will conduct a European screening of the interest, in particular from relevant policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels, however related to EU Structural Funds programmes and territorial development in particular. The stakeholders will mainly represent authorities at the European, transnational, national, cross-border, and interregional level. For regions an option exists for raising particular themes of relevance.

Screening processes will be organised whenever needed during the ESPON 2013 Programme period in the form of call for expression of interests from stakeholders. Stakeholders expressing their interest will also have to declare their intention to perform as “action area” and their willingness to participate actively in the preparation and implementation of the action, if selected.

On the basis of the interest and ideas expressed in the screening process, the Monitoring Committee will be responsible for the actions to be carried through on which the Concertation Committee can provide advice.

The Monitoring Committee will ensure that selected actions will deliver a European added value and comply with the following criteria:

- Presence of a European perspective/dimension in the targeted analysis
- Transferability of the analytical results bringing added value for a broader user-group

Selected stakeholders shall be fully involved in carrying through targeted analysis by taking part in the definition and development of the action as well as by delivering information to the analysis, such as detailed data and qualitative inputs. The

involvement of stakeholders will provide for knowledge support and can be organised in the form of sounding boards following the implementation of the action.

With the support of the selected stakeholders, specific analytical framework will be developed for each individual action. Actions will be carried out through transnational project groups contracted by the Managing Authority. Here as well, Transnational Project Groups will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real costs incurred for carrying out the analysis/study costs approved and the applying the Lead Partner principle.

Call for proposals will be open to public and public equivalent bodies complying with the selection criteria and minimum requirements established for each action. Based on the EU Public Procurement Law, public equivalent body refers to any legal body governed by public or private law (1) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (which does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial or commercial character), and (2) having legal personality, and (3) either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

Where the theme and/or nature of the targeted analytical delivery make it appropriate and most efficient in obtaining the results envisaged, and whenever the foreseen budget is below €75.000, actions may be contracted as provisions of services and tendered according to Luxembourg public procurement rules.

No financial contribution will be requested from stakeholders in implementing selected actions. However, stakeholders will be expected to cover personnel and travel costs for their own active involvement in the implementation of the actions.

The geographical coverage of the actions will (normally) be less than the entire European territory and the geographical detail larger than within the applied research actions.

Actions are envisaged to vary in size and duration. Some might run for several years, while others might have more limited duration, meeting short term demands for delivery of results.

The usefulness and validation of results will be ensured by the direct involvement of selected stakeholders.

### ***5. Target groups and beneficiaries***

The target groups for the results of the user driven targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results are (1) policy makers and practitioners involved in carrying through programme and project activities within Structural Fund's funded programmes dealing with territorial development and cooperation, (2) research institutes and universities carrying through the analysis.

The direct beneficiaries of the actions under this priority are the public and public equivalent bodies contracted for the implementation of the actions. In addition, public

authorities at all administrative levels in EU Member States and participating countries in the ESPON 2013 Programme will also benefit from actions under Priority 2.

The particular target groups that can be considered by the Monitoring Committee are:

- Authorities at EU and Member State levels involved in processes implementing the territorial cohesion objective, including the Community Strategic Guidelines and National Strategic Reference Framework strategies as well as territorially relevant aspects of Structural Funds Programmes under the Objectives of Convergence and Competitiveness.
- Authorities at EU and Member State level as well as Partner States working in territorially relevant sector policies.
- Authorities responsible for implementing programmes under Structural Funds 2007-2013 dealing with cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation under the objective of European Territorial Cooperation. .
- Groups/clusters of regions and cities representing at least three countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme that has a common interest for support of ESPON analysis in gaining European experience and/or knowledge on common challenges related to their territorial and/or urban development.

#### ***6. Expected outputs***

The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through 20-40 targeted analysis during 2007-2013 based on user demand. The projects will represent both smaller and larger actions in terms of size and duration.

#### ***7. Expected results***

The results will cover a wide variety of themes, mostly in an integrated way, as selected by the Monitoring Committee to meet as best as possible the demand of potential users of ESPON results. The results will include European perspectives on territorial development to highlight territorial potential for the relevant territory, inspire strategy building and planning processes and stimulate creativity on new ideas for projects.

#### ***8. Expected impacts***

The impact is expected to include a greater European sensitivity in policy documents, strategy building and planning related to their territorial reality, including options for improving territorial cooperation and cohesion. In addition, there will be a better use of ESPON results at lower geographical scales.

### **II.4.3 Scientific platform and tools: Territorial indicators and data, analytical tools and scientific support**

#### ***1. Introduction***

The SWOT analysis revealed that a scientific platform and toolbox is necessary and in need of further development and improvement. Of particular importance is reliable, harmonized European wide data with as high a geographical detail as possible. In addition, a targeted use of key indicators makes a periodical monitoring of the European territorial development an opportunity.

The scientific platform and analytical tools represent a basal element in the knowledge base of ESPON for the preparation of effective territorial policies.

In this sense it is important to maintain, develop and expand existing scientific platform and analytical tools resulting from the ESPON 2006 Programme, particularly the database, indicators, mapping tools, models and methodologies developed. New actions shall be undertaken to maintain and develop current achievements and make use of the indicators, data and tools provided by ESPON. The further development of the scientific platform shall take into account the efforts made in a growing number of spatial observatories dealing with national and cross-border territories.

Also the internal consistency of ESPON results is dependent on the availability of a scientific platform and tools that can be relevant and support applied research and targeted analysis under Priority 1 and 2.

## ***2. Operational objectives***

The operational objectives for this priority are:

- Contribute to the consolidation of the territorial knowledge base needed for informed policy formulation and application
- Ensure data, territorial indicators and tools that are usable for policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels
- Respond to needs for public access to the ESPON data and tools
- Ensure availability of comparable regional data at as detailed geographical scale as possible as well as statistical quality control and data validation
- Support a concrete application and use of data for policy, strategy and planning processes, including tools and techniques for forecasting and modelling
- Continuously assess territorial development trends in relation to territorial policy objectives at European level

## ***3. Main types of actions***

Four types of actions are foreseen to be financed within this priority:

- ESPON Database and data development
- Territorial indicators/indexes and Tools
- Territorial Monitoring System and Reports
- Targeted actions for update of indicators and maps

Improvement of **data and territorial indicators** and further **development of the ESPON Database** will be central task for the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Availability of **comparable regional data** with a European coverage at a sufficiently detailed geographical scale has been a challenge for the ESPON 2006 Programme and even before. The European provider of such data is EUROSTAT. A deeper cooperation shall be undertaken in order to strive for improvement, which will be supported by Commission services. However, the thematic and territorial content of ESPON projects so far have made it evident that a major improvement is needed and should be pursued within the ESPON 2013 Programme. Improved access and use of other databases will be part of this process, including the OECD Territorial Database. European data sets at regional level will be further developed in order to feed into the ESPON Database. Statistical quality control will be continued and enforced in order to provide a second validation of data before new data sets from applied research action are uploaded in the ESPON Database.

The **ESPON Database** will be improved with regularly updated, validated and harmonised regional data, including time-series and data on territorial flows. The database will be made accessible not only to the scientific community, the policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels, but also to the general public via the ESPON website, and will undoubtedly contribute to the consolidation of the territorial knowledge base needed for informed policy formulation and application. The database is a basic knowledge component and the public access to the data provides transparency and enables policy makers, practitioners and ordinary citizens to make use of the information.

The configuration of **territorial indicators and indexes** supporting the objective of territorial cohesion will be a major area for improvement. The ESPON 2006 Programme did make some progress in filtering indicators that could be considered core indicators for territorial development. However, more work will be undertaken with the involvement of policy makers in order to reach operational synthetic/combined indicators that can inform the policy process related to territorial cohesion.

**Tools for territorial analysis** are necessary for the application and use of data for policy, strategy and planning formulation. This includes a wide range of different analytical tools such as mapping facilities, models and methodologies. Actions will include the further development and update of existing tools, including the HyperAtlas, the Web-based GIS, the basic methodology for Territorial Impact Assessment as well as the development of new applications such as forecasting models and innovative types of cartographic presentation to further develop the scientific platform.

Addressing more basic research questions, partly from the ESPON 2006 Programme, will also be an option. This may include further progress on definition/delineation of urban regions based on functional criteria. The further development of tools for territorial analysis will also reflect demands of particular importance to the achievement of useful actions within Priority 2.

Tool development will be targeted to the use of policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels (including cross-border and transnational groupings) and will enable the use of information and data by these particular groups of stakeholders (or participatory approach for the elaboration of policy, development strategies and plans). They will be made available via the ESPON website, and will also be at the disposal of the general public, including researchers and university students, thereby contributing to the formation and consolidation of a European research field on territorial development and cohesion. The dissemination of tools will respond to clearly expressed needs during the ESPON 2006 programme, in particular during the implementation of the ESPON-INTERACT cooperation during 2004-2006.

An **EU Territorial Monitoring System** for the continuing assessment of territorial development trends in relation to territorial policy objectives at European level will be financed within this priority. The monitoring will rely, integrate and subsequently build time-series of core territorial indicators and indexes as mentioned above. The monitoring will target different types of territories including metropolitan urban regions, rural areas and others as stated in the Structural Funds Regulation.

This activity will build on the experience gained and the result of the test phase implemented at the end of the previous programming period. This is also targeted at practitioners and policy makers asking for information on European territorial dynamics which could add this dimension to development considerations in their regions and larger territories. The ESPON territorial monitoring will provide an enlarged and cross-thematic territorial reference framework which will allow the evaluation of the wider territorial effects of trends and policy impacts through periodic reports 2-3 times during the implementation period.

In keeping the ESPON knowledge up to date a number of **targeted actions updating indicators, maps and corresponding tools**, if necessary, are previewed. Some actions might be based on urgent demand. Targeted actions will mainly relate to maintenance of tools and update of existing dataset and maps when newer information is available.

#### ***4. Operational provisions***

Actions financed under this priority will be decided by the ESPON Monitoring Committee on the basis of strategic considerations, demands from policy development voiced by its Members and in the Concertation Committee. The Monitoring Committee will also take into account particular needs arising from the implementation of selected action within Priority 2 and the awareness raising empowerment and involvement actions implemented within Priority 4.

At least three rounds of selections are envisaged in order to ensure an efficient implementation of this Priority. Single actions might also be needed according to specific needs.

The majority of actions within this priority will be carried through by Transnational project groups following calls for applied proposals responding to the specific applied research framework developed with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit. Transnational Project Groups will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real costs incurred for the implementation of the approved actions. The Lead Partner principle will apply.

Call for proposals will be open to public and public equivalent bodies complying with the selection criteria and minimum requirements established for each action. Based on the EU Public Procurement Law, public equivalent body refers to any legal body governed by public or private law (1) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (which does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial or commercial character), and (2) having legal personality, and (3) either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

Subsidy contracts will include competitive budgets for the foreseen actions.

Where the theme and/or nature of the activity make it appropriate and most efficient in obtaining the results envisaged, and whenever the foreseen budget is below €75.000, actions may be contracted as provisions of services and tendered according to Luxembourg public procurement rules.

The targeted actions for updating indicators, maps and corresponding tools, if needed, will be contracted by the Managing Authority as provision of services following a decision/request of the Monitoring Committee and according to the procurement rules of Luxembourg. Purchase of data could also be financed under this priority.

For the ESPON Database (version II) and the work on data improvement and validation one action is foreseen for the entire programme period. However, the service will be contracted for the 2007-2010 with a possibility of prolongation. As a preparatory measure a feasibility study will be undertaken exploring the possibilities and limits of comparable territorial data in Europe taking into account the results of the project on data acquisition and validation within the ESPON 2006 Programme.

For the work on territorial indicator and indexes major efforts are foreseen during the first three years of the programme implementation. This will include work on thematic indicators (accessibility, connectivity, services of general interest, regional economic structure (specialisation, enterprises structure, etc.), territorial governance as well as integrated composite indicators (territorial cohesion indicators and sustainable development indicators).

The further development of the scientific platform and analytical tools will require a number of smaller and larger contracts with teams of researchers.

The monitoring of European territorial development is envisaged as one contract for the entire ESPON 2013 Programme contracted for 2007-2010 with a possibility of prolongation.

#### ***5. Target groups and beneficiaries***

The target group include (1) policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels, (2) research institutes, universities and the scientific community and (3) the general public. In particular, public representatives of regions and larger territories involved in targeted analysis under Priority 2 can be considered a target group.

As concerns the activities that serve an internal purpose for the programme, the target group is mainly the public authorities behind the ESPON 2013 Programme. However, several actions for external use is envisaged widening the target group for this priority to include other public authorities taking stock of European evidence related to the territorial development, monitoring and forecasting envisaged or other groups and private persons taking the opportunity to explore European regionalised data and mapping facilities available free of charge together with ESPON publications at the ESPON web site within the limits and terms set by copyright provision.

The direct beneficiaries of the actions under this priority are the public and public equivalent bodies contracted for the implementation of the actions. Indirectly, the public authorities mentioned above will benefit from the results of all actions undertaken.

#### ***6. Expected outputs***

A major output will be one ESPON Database (version II) including 20-30 European wide, comparable data sets, duly validated and updated, giving information for all regions of Europe, provided that the data availability makes it feasible. The data set will include the data provided by projects under Priority 1 and 2. The time series of data and

the data behind the key indicators will be regularly updated during the programme implementation.

Important European maps from the ESPON 2006 Programme (10-20 maps) will be updated based on new data as well as maps from the ESPON 2013 Programme (5-10) in case more recent data becomes available during the programme implementation.

An index related to territorial cohesion will be developed based on territorial indicators using synthetic/combined indicators.

New tools for territorial analysis, including models and methodologies, that can support further an integrated analytical approach are envisaged within the ESPON 2013 Programme. New methodologies and models for Territorial Impact Assessment represent one potential innovation within the ESPON Scientific Platform. In total, 5-10 actions leading to new tools are envisaged. In addition, some existing tools, such as mapping facilities and models, will be maintained and updated.

The territorial monitoring will result in 2-3 reports during the ESPON 2013 Programme.

### ***7. Expected results***

Among the results will be the use of ESPON data and tools in policy making at different levels due to access, reliability and regular updates. In particular, the monitoring of territorial development will support regular stock taking of the development of individual territories and of the European continent as such.

### ***8. Expected impacts***

The impacts envisaged include a more intensive use of a European dimension in policy development for regions and larger territories as well as stimuli of the scientific interest in applied territorial research in a European context. Dialogue might as well improve on territorial issues due to access to data for the general public. In relation to the analytical deliveries from the ESPON 2013 Programme it will be possible to base analysis and maps on the most recent data and updated tools.

## **II.4.4 Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking.**

### ***1. Introduction***

The start of the ESPON 2013 Programme will put much emphasis on capitalisation of evidence and findings through awareness rising and involvement partly based on the results achieved by the ESPON 2006 Programme.

A participatory approach for the elaboration of policy development strategies and plans is fundamental to ensure their relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The strategy of the ESPON Programme would therefore be incomplete and unable to achieve its overall objectives without specific actions aiming at making the evidence and knowledge developed operational through actions raising awareness and involving stakeholders in the results and their practical use. Bringing together views of policy makers, practitioners and scientists has been a good experience within the ESPON 2006 Programme, also as dialogue on defining and guiding actions. This holds true for the

applied research projects, for targeted analysis and for progressing further the scientific platform

The SWOT analysis concluded that the capitalisation and awareness of ESPON 2006 Programme and the results obtained so far was too limited, and that the use of results should be improved by means of involvement, capacity building, dialogue and networking.

A substantial effort will be undertaken during the ESPON 2013 Programme to involve the target groups in order to ensure quality partnership and the highest possible acquaintance, understanding and use of the evidence and knowledge base developed.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will ensure the capitalisation of results by addressing mainly two target groups centred at (1) The European level involving policy makers in European Institutions and programmes, representatives of Member States dealing with territorial development and relevant sector policies, (2) Transnational, regional and local policy makers and practitioners involved in the development of territories. The scientific community related to territorial research will empower the capitalisation of results and be a target by itself in awareness raising activities.

As the first ESPON programme has resulted in a substantive output, an enhanced dialogue and involvement of policy makers and practitioners at all levels has become feasible from the beginning of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

## ***2. Operational objectives***

The operational objectives include the following:

- Capitalisation by raising awareness on ESPON findings, in particular by involving regional policy makers and practitioners in interactive and focused transnational dialogues
- Improving and consolidating the ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge
- Receiving feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice
- Ensuring the transferability of results by providing compact, written and long lasting, easy readable evidence of the territorial knowledge built within the ESPON exercise

## ***3. Main type of actions***

A targeted Capitalisation Strategy is foreseen ensuring a wide dissemination of results inevitable for creating awareness, involvement and to build capacity around ESPON findings. The Capitalisation Strategy will be developed during the start phase of the ESPON 2013 Programme leading to a plan for activities towards different target groups of stakeholders. An external support in the field of media, a media bureau, is foreseen. The ESPON website will play an important role in ensuring a wide dissemination and use of results and tools.

The following types of actions have been identified as suitable for the achievements of these specific objectives:

1. Media and Publications
2. European seminars and workshops
3. Transnational networking activities

A crucial factor for creating awareness and empowerment is to ensure a strategic support from **Media and Publications** stimulating the use of ESPON results. This cannot be achieved only by oral communication, but needs the support of specific outputs documenting the progress on evidence, the knowledge base and the experiences made.

The media activities will involve the further development of the ESPON web site and a flow of stories on key results targeting the different target groups presented in different media. The elaboration of compact and easy readable ESPON synthesis report and other publications will provide written and long lasting evidence of the territorial knowledge in an easily understandable language and is therefore a very important and necessary element for the achievement of the specific objectives of this programme priority and for the entire ESPON 2013 Programme. Publications might as well take the form of fact sheets, text books or similar.

The corporate graphic design of ESPON shall be ensured as part of the Capitalisation Strategy and in communication efforts of the CU and the ECP network during the entire programme implementation.

**European seminars and workshops**, mainly targeting policy makers and practitioners, the objective is to widen and consolidate their ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge, also through the exchange of the experiences acquired with the participation in the targeted analysis financed under Priority 2. These seminars and/or workshops would provide valuable inputs for the Monitoring Committee on the specific needs of different target groups in terms on information, tools and guidance that should be given priority when deciding on actions to be financed under the other programme priorities. In addition, they will provide feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice allowing for an ongoing improvement of the overall usefulness of the ESPON Programme deliveries towards actors of highly relevance for territorial development and cohesion. Workshops on scientific issues can be part of the activities ensuring the usefulness of future results.

The European seminars and events will basically involve seminars, workshops and other joint events with the following main groups of stakeholders and collaborators:

- European Commission Services (such as DG Regio, DG Research, DG Agri, EUROSTAT, JRC, EEA, etc.)
- European Institutions (European Parliament, the Committee for Economic and Social Cohesion, the Committee of the Regions)
- International cooperation structures (OECD and CEMAT)
- Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013, in particular dealing with European Territorial Cooperation (including INTERREG IV, INTERACT II and URBACT II).
- European Associations of stakeholders relevant for territorial cohesion (CPMR, Eurocities, Metrex, MOT, AEBR, Rurality (RED), ETCP, EuroMontana, etc.)
- Scientific organisations at European level (including AESOP, ERSA, EUGEO, RSA, etc.)
- Spatial Observatories of EU Member States and Partner States

**Transnational networking activities** have in the ESPON 2006 Programme contributed profoundly to the capitalisation of results by raising the awareness on ESPON findings, in particular by involving national and regional policy makers, practitioners and scientists in transnational dialogue on the position of their area in the European territorial reality. The transnational activities have largely been undertaken by European network of ESPON Contact Points (ECP).

The transnational networking activities under the ESPON 2013 Programme shall provide a targeted transnational capitalisation, awareness rising and dissemination of ESPON results with the specific objective of involving policy makers, practitioners, scientists and young academics and promote the European perspective of territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion. It is an aim to activate transnational interest in ESPON by involvement of policy makers, practitioners and scientists that would otherwise not be informed about ESPON.

The transnational networking activities shall in particular ensure an operational approach that can lead to new initiatives within the area. The transnational networking shall consider potential new actions within the transnational territory, which can provide additional development of its regions, cities and other types of territories and promote territorial cohesion. In this context, the transnational networking could lead to an interest for targeted analytical deliveries under Priority 2 of this programme.

The ECP network is foreseen to play an important role also in the ESPON 2013 Programme and to support the ESPON 2013 Programme by undertaking the transnational networking activities envisaged.

The transnational networking activities will be carried through by groupings of members of the ECP network based on a strategy including a package of numerous activities. Among the activities envisaged are seminars organised in close cooperation with the CU. Other activities envisaged include feed back for improving ESPON studies and result. The transnational network should also provide feedback to the programme on results prepared by project groups, in particular under Priority 1 and 2, in order to raise awareness about blunders and misinterpretations from a national point of view. Moreover, the transnational activities could contribute to the scientific consistency the applied research actions by via the CU giving feed back to the Transnational Project Groups based on national information.

The tasks envisaged and the possible involvement of the ECP network in the ESPON 2013 Programme is included in Annex V.3.

#### ***4. Operational provisions***

The implementation of Media and Publication actions, including the elaboration of ESPON synthesis reports and publications, and of the European seminars and workshops actions will vary in content, size and duration. Actions will be contracted by the Managing Authority, following the early Work Plan approved by the Monitoring Committee, as provision of services in accordance to Luxembourg law for public procurement. Tendering procedures will be launched on the basis of Terms of Reference approved by the Monitoring Committee and developed with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit.

The carrying through of transnational activities with the assistance of the ECP network will be based on clear strategies for each activity proposed by groups of national ECP selected by the EU Member States participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

A major involvement of the Coordination Unit is envisaged for the implementation of actions under this priority.

All **media activity and ESPON publications** shall be closely targeted to the development of the policy agenda and might include products such as synthesis reports, briefings, scientific reports, presentation folders, fact sheets, etc. and media actions such as a newsletter, direct mailing, press briefings, articles and press releases. A media bureau will be contracted to carry through dissemination and media actions. The ESPON website will be used as a central information tool and will be maintained and updated in order to serve as a user-friendly portal for ESPON users. A targeted inclusion of information on ESPON progress and events in the Commission website InfoRegio will be pursued as well as dissemination of ESPON material at relevant events with the participation of the Commission.

The translation of key texts in all Community languages is important in order to reach regional and local actors across Europe. However, as translations are expensive it is only foreseen to carry through translation of a few, short texts. The ECP network may be able to support a translation. In particular in relation to the targeted analysis under Priority 2 the language question might be important. The contracted ESPON team will in these cases work in English and the participating stakeholders, policy makers and practitioners, asked to contribute to the action by translating results into the language(s) required for having an optimal impact of the ESPON action in practice.

The **European seminars and workshops** will, in order to support the best the capitalisation for policy development, be organised in close cooperation with the bodies mentioned. In particular, a broad approach shall be taken in relation to different sector policy areas and in relation to European associations representing urban and rural areas, maritime regions etc. as well as organisations promoting specific sectoral interests. European professional and scientific organisations such as AESOP, RSA, ERSA and EUGEO will be considered as well.

Common events with other Structural Funds programmes shall take the first pilot experience of cooperation between ESPON and the INTERACT Programmes within the previous programming period into consideration. A yearly coordination of work programmes will be undertaken between INTERREG IV, INTERACT II, URBACT II and ESPON 2013 to ensure complementarities, which may include common events.

The establishment of a competent and long-lasting intellectual capacity in Europe in the field of territorial development and cohesion shall imply scientific events targeting territorial research and analysis. Events, scientific conferences and workshops on specific issues shall involve the network of scientist in the field of territorial research and related fields established under the ESPON 2006 Programme as well as operating spatial observatories of Member States.

**Transnational activities carried through by the ECP network** will be selected by the Monitoring Committee on the basis of targeted Call for Proposals that will be launched at least at three different moments during the Programme implementation period. Calls

will be open to public and public equivalent bodies which are members or the ECP Network and will respond to identified targeted needs prioritised by the Monitoring Committee and follow an operational approach. Proposals will have to be submitted by a grouping of at least 3 ECPs and be formulated in the form of a strategy with objectives and actions. The Lead Partner principle will apply to this type of actions.

Eligibility and selection criteria will be established and approved by the Monitoring Committee together with standardised application and reporting procedures. Direct beneficiaries will be anyhow

Transnational activities will be selected in order to ensure a complete coverage of all relevant actors within the European territory during the implementation of the programme. The transnational activities shall be well prepared and involve a broad range of stakeholders, including the mobilisation of potential national scientific networks.

### ***5. Target groups and beneficiaries***

The target groups related to capitalisation of results, awareness raising, empowerment and involvement include a wide variety of target groups. The principal target group include policy makers and practitioners related to territorial development and sectoral policy at different administrative levels, from the global to the local scale. In addition, other European programmes as well as the European network of scientist in the field of territorial development are targets as well as students and the general public as such.

The direct beneficiaries of media intervention, publication production and organisation of European seminars and workshops are the users of media and publications and the participants of workshops and seminars. In order to prepare these activities service providers shall be contracted. For the ECPs Transnational activities the beneficiaries in the sense of the regulation are the Transnational Project Groups built by members of the ECP network.

### ***6. Expected outputs***

Capitalisation and media activities will imply a large amount of smaller and bigger targeted efforts creating visibility of ESPON results among different groups of stakeholders.

**Media activities** will include 10-15 eye openers per year implemented as direct mailing, articles in magazines, e-mailed newsletter, press releases etc. The ESPON website will continue its role as key information source having the home page conceived with a story and map of the month, changing 10-12 times per year. The website of the Commission will as well foresee playing an important role as media for ESPON.

The **ESPON synthesis reports and publications** in support of this priority will result in 5-6 larger reports and 5-6 smaller publications during the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The organisation of **European seminars and workshops** targeting specific Community actors, actors at European level and within relevant Structural Funds financed programmes as well as the scientific community and national spatial observatories will result in 14-20 smaller and bigger events during 2007-2013, equivalent to 2-3 per year of operation. It is planned to arrange 1 bigger seminar per year targeting in particular

policy makers and practitioners at European level, working in European Institutions and International Cooperation Structures. It is as well foreseen to carry through some events and workshops in cooperation with other relevant bodies, sharing the costs.

Concerning **Transnational ECP activities** it is foreseen that within the period of programme implementation around 14 transnational actions should be financed so to ensure a capitalisation, transnational exchange of experiences, participation, awareness rising and empowerment. Each action will be documented in a report, including proposals for operational actions.

### ***7. Expected results***

The number of policy makers and practitioners contacted and that has become aware of ESPON and the comparable European evidence available is expected to rise profoundly. This may result in an increase of requests for additional information and assistance from ESPON, such as interest for actions under Priority 2.

The number of scientist interested in European territorial applied research is expected to increase as well, also among young researchers. The number potential Lead Partners interested in ESPON applied research projects and targeted analysis under Priority 1 and 2 is likely to increase as a result.

A number of proposals for action resulting from the transnational networking activities are expected to be implemented by the relevant authorities and institutions involved.

### ***8. Expected impacts***

The impact of ESPON in support of evidence based policy development will be visible in many policy documents, through references and reproduction of ESPON maps in the corporate design. In the scientific community a similar greater visibility will appear in scientific journals etc. The European perspective on territorial development and cohesion will be more visible in policy development of regions and larger territories.

## **II.4.5 Technical Assistance, Analytical Support and Communication**

### ***1. Introduction***

Technical assistance and communication on the programme modalities are necessary and inevitable components of all Structural Funds programmes. The distinct feature of an applied research programme and the strategic nature of the ESPON 2013 Programme makes in addition a capable analytical support necessary. ESPON work is generally based on the clear definition of project ideas formulated in terms of reference which go far beyond the usually undertaken call for proposal, where potential beneficiaries propose their project idea under a priority. Analytical support requires staff with content related research skills, which do not overlap with the skills necessary for providing technical and administrative assistance. In this respect the ESPON 2013 Programme is special and unique compared to other programmes under Structural Funds 2007-2013.

In a programme involving the participation of 27 Member States, sufficient Technical Assistance is needed to ensure the smooth implementation of the Programme, the correct fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Managing, Certifying and Audit Authorities, and the implementation of the Communication Plan. In particular,

extraordinary efforts will be required to comply with the minimum requirements foreseen in relation to the implementation of the Management and Control Systems as they will be defined and described, according to the regulations, within the first year of programme implementation.

The SWOT analysis revealed that fulfilling the programme strategy and overall objectives for the ESPON 2013 Programme requires special analytical skills within the programme coordination in order to meet the particular demands for research administration guidance of applied research projects. Analytical Support is necessary to ensure the thematic and research internal and external consistency of the programme and a number of actions taken to coordinate the programme.

The experience from the ESPON 2006 Programme clearly showed that the capacity needed for the preparation of project specifications, coordinating the research activities, follow-up applied research actions and transposing and synthesising scientific output to policy messages is substantial. Such skills have to be available for the programme management.

In addition, the set objectives and modus operandi described for each of the Priorities, indicate that particular skills and resources are needed to guide and implement the screening process needed for the selection of actions to be implemented within Priority 2 and 3; the implementation of the Knowledge Support System as well as and the ECP transnational activities and the Capitalisation Strategy in Priority 4 require particular staff which is able to present and discuss the ESPON outputs and results in a competent and skilled manner.

The ESPON 2006 mid-term evaluation and the SWOT analysis have also underlined some shortcomings in respect to the dissemination of information in relation to the application procedures. In line with the requirements of the ERDF regulation major efforts will be undertaken related to the specific requirements of a Communication Plan in order to disseminate the information on the application procedures to ensure the widest possible participation of research institutions and/or organisations.

The Communication Plan is complementary to the capitalisation activities under Priority 4 as it directly responds to the technical requirements in information and transparency set out in the Regulation. The Capitalisation Strategy under Priority 4 goes far beyond as these activities, apart from information about the ESPON 2013 Programme, aim at creating awareness and application of ESPON evidence by actors involved through an interactive process.

## ***2. Operational objectives***

The operational objectives can be described as follows:

- Ensure the correct administrative and financial implementation of the programme in the full respect of EU and national rules by providing the necessary support and to programme authorities and the programme's beneficiaries,
- Provide for the simplest possible management procedures related to call for proposal, contracting, reporting and payment procedure also through the implementation of standardised procedures to ensure the widest possible

participation of research institutions and organisations into the ESPON 2013 Programme.

- Ensure the internal coherence of actions through internal coordination and events and by providing the necessary support to translate stakeholder's needs into concrete actions to be financed under the different priorities of the programme,
- Ensure the analytical capacity necessary for high quality synthesis of results transposing scientific results for use by policy makers.
- Provide potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and the public with transparent information on
  - Conditions of eligibility to be met to participate in the application procedure;
  - Description of the procedures for examining applications;
  - Criteria for the selection of the actions to be financed;
  - Contacts at national (regional and local level, as far as possible) that can provide information of the ESPON 2013 Programme
  - The beneficiaries and the operations (and the amounts involved) that have received community assistance under the programme.
  - The achievements of the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the indicators set
- Ensure the visibility of the role played by the Community and ensure that the value added of the Community assistance is explained to the public and awareness is raised on the achievements of the operational programme as a community programme.
- Ensure that the assistance is transparent and that the procedures to access to the co-financed actions are made clear to potential beneficiaries.

### ***3. Main types of action***

Ensuring an efficient implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme in line with the operational objectives the following three main categories of actions is envisaged:

- Technical Assistance
- Analytical Support
- Communication

For giving efficient and proactive **Technical Assistance** to the programme implementation and the actions foreseen in Priority 1-4, the types of actions to be undertaken will include:

- Tailored support to the all relevant authorities and beneficiaries involved in the programme, in particular to the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee.
- Definition of efficient implementation provisions and elaboration of guidelines for their correct implementation and follow-up.
- Elaboration of a monitoring system ensuring a correct programme and project monitoring throughout the implementation period.
- Administrative and financial follow-up of all actions financed in the framework of the programme, including the on-the-spot checks foreseen.
- Implementation of the Communication Plan.

- Implementation of Call for Proposals and Public Procurement procedures

**Analytical Support** ensuring internal consistency and synergy related to the content of projects within the different programme priorities will imply a number of actions that are not strictly related to financial and administrative requirements, but supporting the distinct applied research character and strategic nature of the ESPON 2013 Programme. These actions relate in principle to the ESPON 2013 Programme activities as such, however in particular to actions in Priority 4 and the work of synthesising and transposing results into documents suitable for the different groups of stakeholders. This will due to the experiences from the ESPON 2006 Programme require direct involvement of the ESPON Coordination Unit.

The following main types of actions are therefore foreseen:

- Preparation of sound and consistent terms of reference for call for proposals under Priority 1-5.
- Support to for the transmission of the stakeholder needs on content into actions for Priorities 1-3.
- Content oriented follow-up of selected actions, including assistance to the sounding boards envisaged.
- Direct involvement in the implementation of Priority 4 actions including analytical activities related to communication activities and production of synthesis reports and documents.
- Internal seminars MC-ECP-Project Groups on actions under Priority 1, 2 and 3 (a continuation of the current ESPON seminars).
- Internal ECP meetings ensuring coordination of activities of the programme at national level.

The **Communication Plan** will provide information on the ESPON Programme, the actions implemented and the provisions for participating in the selecting procedures. The plan will support a wide awareness and transparent information on the actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme through measures of communication to ensure the visibility of the Programme and to increase the participation of potential beneficiaries to the application procedures for each individual action. In addition, the Communication Plan will contribute to ensure the internal coherence of actions.

A detailed Communication Plan will be elaborated and submitted for the approval of the Commission within four months of the adoption of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The Communication Plan will include the necessary indicators for its evaluation.

The plan will include different types of actions:

- Seminars and other major events aimed at providing transparent information on the ESPON 2013 Programme and the actions foreseen as well as on the conditions for participating.
- Seminars for lead partners, financial managers and appointed controllers to ensure a correct understanding of implementation provisions and reporting requirements.
- Guidelines addressed to all relevant actors describing the conditions and procedures applicable to the ESPON 2013 programme.

In order to ensure synergies, important effort will be made to coordinate the actions foreseen in the Communication Plan with actions financed under Priority 4 as part of the Capitalisation Strategy. The close coordination envisaged of the two plans will ensure that transparent information on the programme and the role of the Community will be provided to potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries as identified in this programme document as well as to all stakeholders and the general public.

The corporate graphic design of ESPON shall be ensured as part of the communication efforts of the CU and ECP network during the entire programme implementation.

#### ***4. Operational provisions***

The technical assistance and analytical support will be mostly undertaken by the Coordination Unit set up by the Managing Authority but all authorities of the programme will be involved in the implementation. The Coordination Unit will be staffed with the necessary skills related to programme and project management, including research administrative and financial skills as well as skills ensuring certain analytical and communicative capacity. For more information on the tasks envisaged for the CU please see chapter IV.1.3.

The Managing Authority will ensure that a sufficient number of meetings of the Monitoring Committee is organised and support provided.

A Communication Plan covering the entire programme period will be elaborated in the first half of 2007. For the dissemination of the results achieved at programme level, the Communication Plan will be developed by taking into account the aims and objectives of the Capitalisation Strategy foreseen in Priority 4. Specific indicators will be defined for the Communication Plan in the context of its development.

#### ***5. Target group and beneficiaries***

Priority 5 will be implemented entirely by the Managing Authority and all actions and support foreseen are targeted to the programme direct and indirect beneficiaries and authorities of the programme.

#### ***6. Expected outputs***

The output envisaged can be described as follows:

The **Technical Assistance** is previewed to provide the following output which is however subject to further detailing:

- Elaboration and implementation of a complete set of guidelines for the administrative and financial implementation of actions.
- Development, implementation and operation of an internal monitoring system for the follow-up of programme's implementation.
- Elaboration, implementation and follow up of a set of standardised procedures and forms for application and reporting.
- Elaboration of risk analysis and implementation of on-the-spot checks covering at least 1 of each type of action per year.
- Organisation of one meeting of the Group of Auditors per year

- Organisation and preparation of at least 2 Monitoring Committee meetings per year

For the **Analytical Support** the following output will be implemented and subject to further detailing:

- Elaboration of detailed project specification for each of the actions foreseen within Priorities 1-3.
- Preparation and support to meetings in the Concertation Committee on project content and themes of applied research and analysis.
- Elaboration and follow up of content oriented assessment for each interim and final output of each action.
- Direct involvement in the implementation of Priority 4 actions including analytical activities related to communication activities and production of synthesis reports and documents.
- Animation at capitalisation, awareness raising and networking actions foreseen within Priority 4.
- Organisation of 2 internal seminars per year (MC-ECP-Project Groups on actions under Priority 1, 2 and 3).
- Organisation and animation of 2 internal ECP meetings per year.
- Organisation of Lead Partner seminars when adequate

The **Communication Plan** is envisaged to provide the following output:

- One major event launching the programme towards the potential beneficiaries
- One major event per year presenting the implementation progress of the ESPON Programme to be combined with events targeting potential beneficiaries in connection to the launching of the selection procedures.
- At least one Lead Partner seminar, including a workshop with financial officers and appointed controllers per round of selection procedure.
- Elaboration of a set of guidelines on the ESPON 2013 Programmes procedures for participation and implementation.
- At least two seminars during 2007-2013 involving financial controllers at national level.

### ***7. Expected results***

The implementation of the foreseen three strands of Priority 5 will ensure a correct and efficient implementation of the ESPON 2013 programme, strengthen its internal cohesion, and enlarge the active participation of potential beneficiaries from all Member Countries including the new Member States. In addition, the implementation of the Communication plan will contribute to the visibility of the European Union towards the beneficiaries, target groups and the general public.

### ***8. Expected impacts***

The correct implementation of Priority 5 strands and action will ensure the achievement of specific priorities and programme impacts.

## **II.5 Cooperation framework**

The European Commission and the 27 EU Member States, including the new EU Member States Romania and Bulgaria, will constitute core partners carrying through the programme. EU Candidate Countries will be invited to join the ESPON II programme as observers.

Neighbouring countries that were already invited as partners in the ESPON 2006 programme will be invited to continue cooperation within the ESPON 2013 Programme. These countries, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Lichtenstein intend to join the ESPON Programmes as full members by signing a mutual agreement with the Managing Authority (see IV.1.2.c) setting out conditions for their participation, which will be similar to the conditions for EU Member States laid down in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

During the programme implementation it is the intention to consider involving further countries in the applied research and studies. Potential EU Candidate Countries and direct neighbours of the EU will be primarily considered.

For other neighbouring countries that officially express interest in joining the ESPON 2013 Programme as full partners a mutual agreement (see IV.1.2.c) can be established. The Monitoring Committee will decide full partnership on a case by case basis.

Involvement and information can be extended on request to other countries, such as the member countries of the Council of Europe (CEMAT), the Mediterranean neighbouring countries and Eastern neighbours as well as to countries worldwide showing interest in ESPON.

With regard to possible enlargement of the geographical coverage of future ESPON projects to more than EU 27 plus Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland, priority will be given to the potential EU candidate countries.

Filling the “white hole of the Balkans” will be the general rule for actions under priority 1 as this would increase the relevance of ESPON results in regions of the EU bordering this area.

However, the wider coverage will depend partly on the countries ability to deliver regional data for relevant themes. The area for analysis and data collection might as consequence have a larger geographical coverage, at least for some projects, providing a wider territorial insight than the Community territory.

## **II.6 Eligible area and sectors of intervention**

### ***Eligible area***

The geographical scope for the ESPON 2013 Programme will in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, Art. 35, relate to the entire territory of the Community. This means that regions of the European Union will be included in the analysis and data collection undertaken. The entire territory of the Community is therefore eligible.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will include the participation of all EU Member States, all benefiting on equal footing from the information, evidence and knowledge produced as the applied research normally has a geographical coverage over the entire EU territory.

The participation of neighbouring states already included in or invited for the ESPON 2006 Programme shall continue and may further include countries to the East and South of Europe.

In accordance with Art. 21(3) of the Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of 5 July 2006, 10% of the programme budget can finance expenditure incurred in implementing actions (in whole or in part) in a country outside the EU, if this will benefit of the regions of the Community. In any case, necessary implementation provisions due to the Structural Funds regulation have to be established (see IV.1.2.c). The Monitoring Committee will consider this option, when relevant, on an ad-hoc basis.

### ***Sectors of intervention***

The intervention financed under the ESPON 2013 Programme fall within the priority theme for the strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level as defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006, annex II (code 81). Actions include mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation at national, regional and local level, capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes.

## **III FINANCIAL PLAN**

### **III.1 Breakdown per each year of the total financial contribution envisaged from each fund.**

At European level, the ESPON 2013 Programme will only receive financial contribution from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The yearly contribution as well as the total contribution can be seen from the table below:

**Table 1: ERDF contribution for ESPON 2013 Programme, per year in €**

| Priority     | ERDF               |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 2007         | €3.550.259         |
| 2008         | €3.786.941         |
| 2009         | €4.200.661         |
| 2010         | €4.801.786         |
| 2011         | €5.425.275         |
| 2012         | €5.892.450         |
| 2013         | €6.376.140         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>€34.033.512</b> |

### III.2 Breakdown for the entire programming period and for each priority of the total financial contribution of the Community fund, the public national counterparts and the rate of contribution from the funds.

The total financial contribution of European and national funding can be seen from the following table that displays the breakdown of the total contribution for each priority during the entire programming period 2007-2013:

**Table 2: Total funding of the ESPON 2013 Programme with breakdown by Priority and Source, in €**

|              | Community Funding  | National counterpart | Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart |                          | Total funding (e) = (a)+(b) | Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e) | For information   |               |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
|              | ERDF               | (b) (= (c) + (d))    | National Public funding                          | National Private funding |                             |                                 | EIB contributions | Other Funding |
|              | (a)                |                      | (c)  | (d)                      |                             |                                 |                   |               |
| Priority 1   | €17.317.512        | €1.924.000           | €1.924.000                                       | €0,00                    | €19.241.512,00              | 90,00%                          | €0,00             | €0,00         |
| Priority 2   | €5.229.000         | €1.307.250           | €1.307.250                                       | €0,00                    | €6.536.250,00               | 80,00%                          | €0,00             | €0,00         |
| Priority 3   | €5.225.500         | €922.500             | €922.500   | €0,00                    | €6.148.000,00               | 85,00%                          | €0,00             | €0,00         |
| Priority 4   | €4.356.000         | €1.158.100           | €1.158.100                                       | €0,00                    | €5.514.100,00               | 79,00%                          | €0,00             | €0,00         |
| Priority 5   | €1.905.500         | €6.032.650           | €6.032.650                                       | €0,00                    | €7.938.150,00               | 24,00%                          | €0,00             | €0,00         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>€34.033.512</b> | <b>€11.344.500</b>   | <b>€11.344.500</b>                               | <b>€0,00</b>             | <b>€45.378.012,00</b>       | <b>75,00%</b>                   | <b>€0,00</b>      | <b>€0,00</b>  |

## IV IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS

### IV.1 Management, monitoring and control

#### IV.1.1 Designation of programme authorities

Member States participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme, in accordance with Article 14 of Council Regulation (EC) 1080 /2006, appointed the required programme managing authority and certifying authority on the 21 May 2005 during the Luxembourg informal Ministerial meeting.

##### *1. Managing Authority (MA)*

The **Luxembourg Ministry for the Interior and Spatial Development– DATer** is the Managing Authority of the ESPON 2013 Programme vis-à-vis the European Commission.

According to Article 15 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 60 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 the Managing Authority is responsible for the management and implementation of the programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. In particular the Managing Authority will:

- Ensure that operations are selected for funding in accordance with the relevant criteria applicable for each of the identified programme priorities as described in section II.4.
- Ensure that expenditure of each participating beneficiary in an operation has been validated by the controller referred to in Article 16(1) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- Ensure that the implementation of a system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting record of each operation and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring verification, audits and evaluation is collected.
- Ensure that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of the operations maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions related to the operation without prejudice to national accounting rules.
- Ensure that the evaluations of the operational programmes are carried out in accordance with Article 47 and Article 48 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.
- Set-up procedures complying with the requirements of Article 90 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083 /2006 requiring the establishment of an adequate audit trail for all documents regarding expenditures and audits.
- Provide the certifying authority with all the necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certifications.
- Guide the work of the Monitoring Committee by providing the required documents to allow for a quality monitoring of the implementation of the operational programme in the light of the specific objectives of the programme.

- For the first time in 2008 and by 30 June each year, draw-up annual report and at the latest by 31 March 2017 a final report on implementation and submit them to the Commission after approval of the Monitoring Committee.
- Ensure compliance with the information and publicity requirements laid down in Article 69 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083 /2006.

In addition, the Managing Authority may implement verifications on-the-spot of individual operations. In this case, verifications will be carried out on a sample basis in accordance with the detailed rules to be adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 103(3) of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

In order to enable the Managing Authority to assume this responsibility an Agreement with all participating Member States will be signed.

After consultation with the Member State, the Managing Authority has set up a Co-ordination Unit which shall assist the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority in carrying out their respective duties, according to Article 14(1) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006.

Detailed provisions on the setting up of the Coordination Unit and function that will be performed by the Coordination Unit will be provided in the specific section below.

According to Article 71 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, within 12 months from the approval of the Operational Programme or before the submission of the first interim payment application, a detailed description of the internal organisation of the Managing Authority will be submitted to the European Commission. The description will follow templates provided in the Annex IX(d) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 and include a detailed description of the procedures and an organisational chart including a specification of the functions of units involved.

## **2. Monitoring Committee (MC)**

In accordance with Article 63 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, a Monitoring Committee will be set up within 3 months from the date of the notification of the decision approving the operation programme.

The Monitoring Committee, as established in agreement with the Managing Authority, will be composed by the following members:

- The Managing Authority
- Representative(s) of each EU Member State
- Representative(s) of other fully participating States
- Representative(s) of the European Commission with an advisory capacity.

Representatives from EU Candidate Countries may participate as observers. Representatives of the European Commission shall participate in the work on the Monitoring Committee taking an advisory role.

The members of the Monitoring Committee shall be appointed by the respective governments of each participating country at the latest within 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision approving the operation programme.

The Certifying Authority can participate in MC meetings as observer.

Experts supporting the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme can participate as guests upon request.

The Monitoring Committee shall have a chairman (usually the country of the EU Presidency) and a co-chairman (the Managing Authority), which shall be nominated according to the procedure and for a period to be defined in the Rules of Procedure.

The Monitoring Committee is considered the only decision-making body within the programme with the overall responsibility also for steering the programme. For facilitating and preparing its decisions the Monitoring Committee can establish other formats of cooperation between the countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The Monitoring Committee will:

- Consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operation financed within six months of the approval of the operational programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs.
- Review periodically the progress made towards the achievement of the specific targets of the operational programme on the basis of the documents submitted by the Managing Authority.
- Examine the results of the implementation, in particular the achievements of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations.
- Consider and approve the annual and final report on implementation.
- Be informed of the annual control report and of any relevant comments the Commission may take after examining the report.
- Propose to the Managing Authority, if needed, any revision or examination of the operational programme likely to make possible the attainments of the ERDF objectives or to improve its management, including its financial management.
- Consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution of the ERDF.
- Perform tasks related to the steering of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Referring to the tasks of the Monitoring Committee listed in Article 65 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 for programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation objective specific provisions exist. Due to Article 19 (3) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council, the Monitoring Committee shall be responsible for selecting operations.

Besides the formal tasks mentioned of the Monitoring Committee, countries participating in the programme will involve themselves in guiding the elaboration of synthetic ESPON products and in projects that will require the commitment of national authorities (like the Territorial Monitoring System, etc.).

After its institution, the Monitoring Committee will adopt its rules of procedures and adopt them in agreement with the Managing Authority in order to exercise its mission in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

The Monitoring Committee shall meet at least 2-3 times a year. Decision-making in the Monitoring Committee will be by the consensus of national delegations (one vote per delegation). Decisions should be well coordinated with the European Commission.

The use of written procedure will be implemented as much as possible in order to limit the number of Monitoring Committee meetings and whenever required.

The Monitoring Committee will be assisted by the Co-ordination Unit. The Co-ordination Unit will be responsible for the preparation of all documentation relating to the meetings.

### **3. Certifying Authority (CA)**

The **Budgetary Unit of the Luxembourg Ministry for the Interior and Spatial Development – DATer** acts as Certifying Authority of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The Certifying Authority will:

- Draw up and submit to the Commission the certified statements of expenditures and application for payment.
- Certify that i) the statement of expenditure is accurate, relies on reliable accounting system and is based on verifiable supporting documents and ii) expenditure declared complies with applicable Community and national rules and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with criteria applicable to the programme and complying with Community and national rules.
- Ensure for the purpose of the certification that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in the statements of expenditure.
- Take into account the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority for the purposes of the certification.
- Maintain accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the Commission.
- Keep an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation.

In addition, the Certifying Authority has been designated as the competent authority for receiving payments from the Commission and for making payment to the beneficiaries.

The Certifying Authority will be assisted by the Co-ordination Unit in the implementation of its functions. The support tasks undertaken by the Coordination Unit will be clearly identified and will be executed following precise instruction provided by the CA and under its authority in order to ensure that the separation of tasks between MA and CA is fully respected. The tasks and functions that will be delegated/performed by the Coordination Unit in its role of support to the Certifying Authority are described in the specific section below.

According to Article 71 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083 /2006, within 12 months of the approval of the Operational Programme or before the submission of the first interim payment application, a detailed description of the internal organisation of the Certifying Authority will be submitted to the European Commission. The description will follow templates provided in the Annex IX(d) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 and include a detailed description of the procedures and an organisational chart including specification of the functions of units involved.

### **4. Coordination Unit (CU)**

According to Article 14(1) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council a Co-ordination Unit will be set up in order to provide technical support to the Monitoring Committee and the Concertation Committee as well as to the

Managing Authority and the Audit Authority in relation to the management of the ESPON 2013 Programme. In addition, the Coordination Unit will support the Certifying Authority for the execution of specific tasks and under its supervision in order not to get in conflict with the separation of functions between MA and CA.

In addition, due to the specific nature of the ESPON 2013 Programme, the Coordination Unit will also perform additional tasks of analytical nature to ensure the achievement of the programme objectives as defined in this programming document in section II.

The Managing Authority has established a Convention with the Centre de Recherche Public Henry Tudor (CRP-HT), in Luxembourg for the hosting of the Coordination Unit. The CRP-HT will according to the Convention be appointed as legal employer of the staff of the Coordination Unit. The staff will be under instruction of the Managing Authority. The independence of the Coordination Unit from the CRP-HT is indicated in the Convention with the Managing Authority.

The Coordination Unit will have its offices in premises of the CRP-HT located in Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg. The address of the Coordination Unit is:

ESPON Coordination Unit  
CRP-HT  
70, Rue de Luxembourg  
L-4221 Esch-sur-Alzette  
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

With regard to the technical support to the designated authorities of the Programme, the ESPON Coordination Unit will:

- Take the responsibility for the operational day-to-day management of the programme.
- Support the Managing Authority in meeting its tasks, in particular the elaboration of draft annual reports.
- Prepare and provide to the Certifying Authority, on expressed request, information on the programme monitoring and on the task undertaken by the MA, information needed by the Certifying Authority to meet its responsibilities.
- Prepare and implement decisions of the Monitoring Committee including written procedures.
- Provide support to the Concertation Committee.
- Fulfil the usual work of a secretariat, i.e. organisation of meetings, drafting of minutes, etc.
- Organise tendering procedures for all operations foreseen in the programme priorities and ensure the application of the applicable Luxembourg law on Public Procurements.
- Organise the call for proposal foreseen in the programme priorities and prepared all standardised form of application and reporting procedures.
- Organise and support evaluation session for tendering and call for proposal procedures.
- Assist applicants during the project development process, including guidance on technical and financial matters.
- Follow-up and assists contracted Transnational Project Groups during the operations implementation phase.
- Monitor progress made by operations through collecting and checking monitoring/intermediate reports.

- Implement the Programme Communication Strategy.
- Liaise with the ESPON Contact Points Network and monitoring the correct implementation of their transnational operations.
- Support co-operation between EU and Non EU Member States as well as among Non EU Member States in co-ordination with the ESPON Contact Points of the concerned Member States.
- Liaise with the European Commission and other cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation areas.
- Co-operate with organisations, institutions and networks relevant to the objectives of the programme in order to achieve the programme objectives.
- Implement the Technical Assistance budget adopted by the Monitoring Committee.

In relation to the analytical support related tasks, the ESPON Coordination Unit will play a major role in achieving the objectives of Priority 3 and 4 in particular by providing:

- Guidance to the development of the Scientific Platform in all its aspects in order to ensure its concrete application and use by policy makers and practitioners.
- Filtering feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice.
- Supporting the ownership of ESPON results by presenting and discussing content and results of the ESPON programme at seminars, workshops and transnational activities with policy makers and practitioners and with the scientific community.
- Contributing to operational and easy accessible evidence from the ESPON 2013 Programme by transposing scientific results to the policy context.
- Contributing to the provision of written and long lasting evidence based on the territorial knowledge built within the ESPON exercise.
- Responding to urgent policy demands and requests on analytical matters where profound insight in different results is necessary.

##### ***5. Audit Authority and Group of Auditors (GoA)***

In accordance with Article 14 (1) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council, the participating Member States have decided to appoint as Audit Authority for the ESPON 2013 Programme the **Inspection Générale de Finance (IGF) of the Ministry of Finance of Luxembourg**. The Audit authority will be assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) comprising a representative of each Member State participating in the operational programme carrying out the duties provided for in Article 6 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006. The GoA will be chaired by the Audit Authority of the ESPON 2013 programme and will be formally set-up within three months from the decision approving the ESPON 2013 Programme. The Audit authority and the GoA will draw up its own rules of procedure.

According to Article 6 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 the Audit Authority assisted by the GoA will:

- Ensure that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the operational programme.
- Ensure that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declared.
- Present to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the operational programme an audit strategy covering the bodies which will perform the above

indicated audits, the methods to be used, the sampling methods for audits on operations and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period.

- Submit to the Commission annual control reports according to the requirements and timetable set in Article 62 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083 of 11 July 2006.
- Issue an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits that have been carried out, as to whether the management and control system functions effectively.
- Submit the declaration for partial closure.
- Submit to the Commission at the latest by 31 March 2017 a closure declaration.

The Audit Authority shall ensure that the audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards. Where the audits indicated in the above points a) and b) are carried out by a body other than a member of the GoA, the GoA will have to ensure that such bodies have the necessary functional independence.

The Audit Authority is also designated to state an opinion on the compliance of the system description according to point (d) of Article 62(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006.

#### **IV.1.2 Strategic coordination mechanism, contact point network and partners**

##### ***1. Concertation Committee (CC)***

Due to the strong strategic character of the ESPON 2013 Programme related to policy development a Concertation Committee (CC) will be established, which can ensure and drive an optimal decision making related to applied research projects and targeted analysis as well as the monitoring of territorial dynamics.

The CC will undertake the following functions:

- Map and condense the demand for new evidence and knowledge that could be provided by ESPON 2013 actions.
- Propose strategic issues and give guidance for the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the European political agenda.
- Propose themes for applied research action (Priority 1) and provide advice for targeted analysis (Priority 2) and monitoring (Priority 3).

The CC will be composed by the ESPON Managing Authority, three members of the Monitoring Committee representing the countries of the respective current and the two following EU Presidencies and the representative from the European Commission. The CC will be assisted by the CU.

##### ***2. ESPON Contact Point Network (ECP)***

An ECP network will play an important role in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The ECP network will support the ESPON 2013 Programme by undertaking specific supportive tasks and will contribute to a sound implementation of the programme. The network will contribute to the improvement of the transnational sensibility and awareness of policy makers and practitioners and amplify an involvement in ESPON

from all parts of Europe. The network will also provide an important contribution to ensuring a long term base of intelligence in Europe in the field of territorial science by mobilising and adding to the transnational/national networks of actors and scientists.

The selection of the national ECP will be the responsibility of each EU Member State. Each individual Member State will devise the method of selecting one institution (and employee) to fulfil the role envisaged of the ECP network. The Monitoring Committee will formally confirm the entire ECP network based on Member States selection. Change of a national ECP during the programme implementation will follow the same procedure with the Member State making a proposal for the MC.

The skills and competences of the ECP members shall correspond the best possible to the tasks for the ECP network tabled as Annex V.3. The EU Member States shall ensure academic/scientific profiles of the members of the ECP network ensuring an efficient networking and implementation of transnational activities under Priority 4.

Members of the ECP network can participate in ESPON projects under Priority 1, 2, 3 and 4. However, all ECP members will be obliged to endorse a Code of Conduct in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

### **3. Involvement of Partner States (PS)**

The Member States have invited the Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein to participate as Partner States to the ESPON 2013 Programme. Partner States will be considered full members of the programme and participate in decisions of the Monitoring Committee.

Specific Mutual Agreements will be established between the Managing Authority and the Partner States. In these agreements Partner States will engage themselves to fulfil the provisions of this Operational Programme and of the applicable EU regulations. Partner States will provide a financial contribution to the ESPON 2013 Programme, payable annually to the Certifying Authority following the same conditions as applied for EU Member States. The contribution of Partner States can be used to finance all types of expenditure defined in the programme.

The contribution provided by Partner States, and operations carried out within the territory of Partner States, will be managed separately from the ERDF budget.

The Managing Authority and the Partner States will agree on the terms for the participation of legal entities located in the countries of the Partner States in relation to the call for proposals, calls for expression of interest and to tendering procedures.

The EU Member States can decide to invite further countries to participate as Partner States as stated in section II.5.

The ESPON Programme will make use of the flexibility rule according to Article 21(3) of the Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 and allocate up to 10% of the Programme budget outside the EU programme area. However, this ability will be limited to countries that have signed a Mutual Agreement with the ESPON Managing Authority, to ensure compliance with all relevant community regulation on financial management and control.

### **IV.1.3 Provision for setting up the Management and Control systems**

#### ***1. Procedures for the selection and approval of the operations***

In the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, the interpretation of the term “beneficiary” needs the precision provided by the following.

In fact, due to the particular nature of the ESPON 2013 Programme, target groups and beneficiaries have been distinguished between direct and indirect beneficiaries. Direct beneficiaries correspond to the definition of Article 2 (4) of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, while the indirect beneficiaries in this Programme document are the public authorities at administrative level that will receive the knowledge, results, data, tools, etc. from the programme and no direct subsidies.

The majority of operations, in the sense of the individual actions as described in Priorities 1 and 2, and partly 3 and 4, will be implemented by one or a group of direct beneficiaries as defined in section II.4 and contracted by the Managing Authority through subsidy contracts following the decision of the Monitoring Committee based on the results of the call for proposals and their evaluation.

The majority of operations described in Priorities 2, and partly in 1, 3 and 4, will be carried through by Transnational Project Groups (or by individual beneficiaries as foreseen in Article 19 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006) following calls for applied research and studies, proposals responding to the specific framework decided by the Monitoring Committee of the ESPON Programme and developed with the support of the ESPON Coordination Unit. Transnational Project Groups (or the individual beneficiary) will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real costs incurred for the implementation of the approved actions. The subsidy granted will include contributions from ERDF, EU Member States and Partner States.

The Lead Partner Principle will be applied to these actions. A Lead Partner will have to be clearly defined when submitting a proposal to the ESPON Coordination Unit. The primary task of the Lead Partner will be to ensure that the action is delivered in accordance with the provisions laid down in the subsidy contract for the transnational activity.

Call for proposals will be open to public and public equivalent bodies complying with the selection criteria and minimum requirements established for each action. Based on the EU Public Procurement Law, public equivalent body refers to any legal body governed by public or private law (1) established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (which does not exclude bodies partly having an industrial or commercial character), and (2) having legal personality, and (3) either financed, for the most part, by the State, or regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law, or subject to management supervision by those bodies, or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities or by other bodies governed by public law.

Procedures may vary according to the nature and size of the specific action. The entire procedure, including the contracting will all be done in English language. Subsidy

contract templates will be prepared in advance and provided to the European Commission as annex to the description of the management and control system.

General selection criteria for the different types of studies/actions and specific to the different priorities will be defined and approved by the Monitoring Committee within 6 months from the approval of the operational programme. Selection criteria and minimum requirements will be defined for the following elements:

- Financial capacity.
- Technical capacity.
- Professional capacity.
- Minimum requirements for the composition of the Transnational Project Groups, if applicable.

Specific criteria for each of the study/action will be as well established. They will be prepared by the ESPON Coordination Unit and approved by the Monitoring Committee before being launched. The action specific criteria will include the definition of specific minimum requirements.

Actions foreseen for the implementation of the Knowledge Support System, of maintenance and update in relation to the Priority 3 as well as of the Capitalisation Strategy and other activities related to Priority 4 will be implemented as provision of services and contracted directly by the Managing Authority according to Luxembourg Public Procurement law.

## ***2. Control system***

In accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of Regulation (EC) 1080 /2006 of the European Parliament and the Council, each Member State will set-up a control system in order to validate the expenditures incurred in their territory. Such system will make it possible to verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the soundness of the expenditure declared for operation or part of operations implemented in its territory, and the compliance of such expenditure and of related operations, or part of those operation, with Community and its national rules.

For this purpose, each Member State designates the controllers responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each beneficiary participating in the operation.

The control system at programme level may be organised in the form of a network chaired by the designated controller for Luxembourg.

Each Member State will ensure that expenditure is validated by the designated controllers within a period of three months.

The Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee will ensure the quality of the implementation of the operation programme and shall carry out and implement the monitoring by reference to the financial indicators and the indicators specified in Annex V.4 of the operational programme in accordance with Article 48(3) of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

### ***3. Eligibility of expenditures***

As a general rule, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 56(1) of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, expenditures will be eligible if actually paid between the date of the submission of the operational programme to the Commission or from 1 January 2007 whichever is the earliest, and 31 December 2015. Operations co-financed must not have been completed before the starting date for eligibility.

Expenditure shall be refunded only where incurred for operations decided by the Monitoring Committee according to the criteria and procedure defined in this operational programme.

New expenditure, added at the moment of the modification of the operation programme referred to in Article 33 of the Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, shall be eligible from the date of the submission to the Commission of the request for modification of the operational programme.

According to Article 13 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 where Article 7 of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 provides different rules of eligibility of expenditures in different Member States participating in an operation programme under the European territorial cooperation objectives, the most extensive eligibility rule shall apply throughout the programme area. In order to comply with the provision of this article Member States may decide a common set of rules covering the entirety of the expenditure declared under the operation programme and established by decision of the Monitoring Committee.

### ***4. Mobilisation and circulation of financial flows***

Member States have decided to ensure at programme level (and not at operation level) the necessary co-financing to the ERDF contribution for the ESPON Programme. Participating Member States have therefore decided to share the necessary co-financing among them according to a set of agreed criteria.

Each Member State will transfer annually to the Certifying Authority of the Programme the agreed yearly contribution upon reception of the official request from the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority will request to all Member States the agreed contribution by the end of February each year.

These provisions imply that for all approved operations the Managing Authority will establish and sign contract for the entire cost of the selected operation.

### ***5. Computerised exchange of data***

According to Article 76 (4) of the Council regulation (EC) 1083/2006, all exchanges concerning financial transactions between the Commission and the authorities and the bodies designated by the Member States shall be made by electronic means using the newly developed SFC-2007 system. Only the case of a *force majeure*, for example in cases of common computerized system malfunction or lack of a lasting connection can the statement of expenditure and the application for payment be submitted in hard copy. Paper version will only be accepted as proof of submission date and as soon as the system connection has been re-established, the information shall be provided electronically.

The ESPON Programme has been defined as an independent Node in Luxembourg. The hierarchy of Nodes have been identified for the country. The Managing Authority has

taken the necessary steps to allow access and sending right to all relevant programmes key authorities. The ESPON Coordination Unit will be granted view and uploading rights to all types of documents.

#### ***6. Evaluation during the programming period***

During the programme period, and in accordance with Article 47(3) of the Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, Member States participating in the programme will carry out evaluations closely linked to the monitoring of the programme, in particular where the monitoring of the programme reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of this programme, as referred to in Article 32 of the General Regulation.

During the implementation of the programme, one or two evaluations will be made. The scope of the evaluations will be targeted to specific needs of the programme identified in the monitoring, e.g. to impacts of the finalised operations and the programme.

The Monitoring Committee shall decide on the execution of such evaluation. The evaluations shall be carried out by external experts. The results of the evaluations will be sent to the Commission.

#### ***7. Additional provisions***

Before the submission of the first interim payment application or within twelve months of the approval of the operational programme, Member States shall submit to the Commission a short description of the systems, covering the organisation and procedure for:

- The managing and certifying authorities and intermediate bodies.
- The audit authority and any other bodies carrying out audits under its responsibility.

That information shall be submitted in accordance with the model set out in Annex XII of Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006 and will be accompanied by a report as described in Article 71(2) of the Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006.

### **IV.2 Information and publicity**

Member States participating in the programme and the Managing Authority will in accordance with Art. 69 (1) of Council Regulation 1083/2006 provide and publicise information on actions financed by the ESPON 2013 Programme. The information will address the beneficiaries of the programme as well as citizens of the European Union. The aim is to make the role of the Community visible and to ensure transparency.

A contact person will be designated within the CU to be responsible for information and communication as well as for the required information of the Commission.

#### **IV.2.1 Communication Plan**

A Communication Plan will be elaborated by the Managing Authority with the assistance of the CU and in consultation with the Monitoring Committee. The draft Communication Plan will be submitted to the Commission within four months of the date of the adoption of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

In line with the requirements of the ERDF regulation and in particular with the specific requirements of the communication plan, particular efforts will be made within the ESPON 2013 programme in order to:

- Ensure the awareness and visibility the role played by the Community and ensure that the value added of the Community assistance is explained to the public.
- Ensure that the assistance is transparent and that the procedures to access to the co-financed actions are made clear to potential beneficiaries.
- Ensure that awareness is raised on the achievements of the operational programme.

Major efforts will be made to disseminate the information on the application procedures to ensure the widest possible participation of research institutions and/or organisations.

The Communication plan will support wide dissemination and transparent information on the actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme through measures of communication to ensure the visibility of the Programme and to increase the participation of potential beneficiaries to the application procedures for each individual action. This will in addition contribute to the internal coherence of actions

The Communication Plan will provide potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and the public with transparent information on:

- The conditions of eligibility to be met in order to qualify for financing under an operational programme;
- A description of the procedures for examining applications for funding and of the time periods involved;
- Criteria for selecting the actions to be financed;
- Contacts at national, regional or local level who can provide information on the ESPON 2013 programme.

In addition the managing authority shall inform potential beneficiaries of the publication provided for in point (d) of Article 7 (2) of Commission Regulation (EC) 1828/2006.

To maximise synergies, a substantial effort will be undertaken to coordinate foreseen actions in the Communication Plan and the awareness raising actions financed under Priority 4 as part of the Capitalisation Strategy. The close coordination of Communication Plan and the Capitalisation Strategy will ensure (1) that transparent information on the programme and the role of the Community will be provided, (2) that the new knowledge, evidence, data, indicators and tools resulting from activities of the ESPON 2013 Programme will be disseminated, to potential beneficiaries, beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries, as well as to all stakeholders identified in this programme document and to the general public.

## V ANNEXES

### V.1 Summary of the Ex-Ante evaluation

The following summary is part of the final report on the Ex-ante evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme document:

“The ex-ante evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme has made use of a number of standard methods / techniques in the wider context of an interactive / iterative process, which allowed producing a substantial amount of results that are presented in the Main Report.

The **interactive and iterative process of the ex-ante evaluation as a whole** was characterised by a very open and constructive working climate. Despite the rather tight initial time schedule, it permitted both sides involved to organise a maximum of exchanges on crucial issues at stake during each phase of the programme elaboration process. The various “general observations” of the early evaluability assessment, the “first recommendations” resulting from the in-depth evaluation and the “key findings” of the progress evaluation were nearby all pro-actively taken into consideration in the subsequent versions of the ESPON 2013 programming document, thus leading to a progressive and steady improvement of the programme as such.

The following paragraphs only highlight a number of **summary conclusions with respect to the most recent situation (“Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme”, version of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006)** that are presented alongside the prescribed “Main Evaluation Tasks”<sup>1</sup>.

#### V.1.1. The analysis of the socio-economic situation and the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified

**The key sectors of intervention identified in the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme are characterised by a high degree of relevance** in relation to the wider socio-economic (and territorial) situation analysis and the specific needs identified in the concluding section of the programming document (II.2.4).

**The ESPON 2013 Programme takes adequately into account the territorial challenges of the present situation and of coming decade.** In this respect, it is more forward-looking than the ESPON 2006 Programme was and its usefulness for decision makers will therefore be higher. The SWOT-like analysis of the European territory is rather detailed and differentiated.

**The analysis of the achievements and limitations of the ESPON 2006 Programme (SWOT-like analysis) is extensive and precise.** It makes possible the conception of a new ESPON Programme which capitalises on the experiences made in recent years and departs from a number of shortcomings shown by the past programme.

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<sup>1</sup> The version of 1 December 2006 has undergone language check and minor editorial editing without changing the basic content and structure in comparison to the current version.

**The listing of “general needs” reflects correctly the expectations of policy makers towards a European programme delivering territorial information.** It addresses the territorial potentials and the larger territorial context of regions, the territorial impacts of sector policies, the territorial challenges resulting from mega-trends, the possible evolution of the EU Cohesion Policy and the diversity of policy makers involved.

**The strategy pays a great deal of attention to the use of ESPON results in practice and contains provisions regarding the identification of expectations of potential users, the need of making knowledge more operational, the dissemination of results up to the generation of awareness-raising processes etc.** This is likely to eliminate one of the shortcomings of the past ESPON 2006 Programme.

### **V.1.2. The programme strategy’s rationale, its overall consistency and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities**

An in-depth appraisal of the ESPON 2013 programme’s objective system reveals that **the overall rationale of the strategy is characterised by a very high degree of internal consistency.** There is a logical progression from a limited number of general objective statements defining the main focus of the programme (i.e. one “overall aim” and 3 “overall objectives”) towards a wider range of more targeted objective statements making further concrete the aforementioned ones (6 “strategic objectives” and 13 “specific objectives”) and down to the 23 “operational objectives” defined across the 5 programme priorities, which specify what the programme interventions should actually achieve.

**The intervention logic of the ESPON 2013 programme is valid,** as the 5 programme priorities are strongly corresponding to the higher-ranking programme objectives (“overall aim”, “overall objectives”, “strategic objectives”, “specific objectives”) and because the envisaged actions are generally well linked to the “operational objectives” defined across the respective priorities.

**The relations between the 23 higher-ranking programme objectives** (i.e. “overall aim”, “overall objectives”, “strategic objectives”, “specific objectives”) **are characterised by a very high degree of interdependence** (i.e. primary relations in a downward direction) as well as **by an existence of strong additional support effects and cross-cutting effects** (i.e. secondary relations in an upward direction).

**The relations between the 23 priority-level “operational objectives” and the higher-ranking programme objectives are generally characterised by an absence of objective-conflicts and by very strong mutual reinforcement effects.** This overall situation clearly indicates that the different “objective strings” make - individually and jointly – a considerable contribution to achieve the overall aim of the future ESPON 2013 programme.

**The 16 envisaged priority-level actions are generally characterised by a very high level of overall complementarity as regards an achievement of the stated higher-ranking programme objectives.** This means, firstly, that no negative contributions of actions could be detected which might hamper an achievement of the wider programme objectives. Secondly, one can observe that each priority (and its related actions) as well as the combination of priorities (and of all actions) make a significant contribution to achieve the stated higher-ranking objectives of the ESPON 2013 programme.

**Also the overall complementarity of the 16 envisaged priority-level actions as regards an achievement of the various “operational objectives” is at a very high level.** Across the entire programme, no situation could be detected where an action partially or wholly tends to counteract the achievement of one or more of the stated operational objectives. Within the same programme priority, one can naturally find the highest contribution-levels of actions to achieve the respective operational objectives (primary relations). But also the additional support effects of priority-specific actions to achieve operational objectives under other programme priorities (secondary relations) are generally very high, which clearly indicates that substantial synergy effects do exist within the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Our attempt to quantify the hypotheses on potential synergy effects among the various actions at priority level has shown that already the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft of the ESPON 2013 programme as a whole displays a very high synthetic coefficient of synergy (0.85). If one considers the recent improvements / modifications realised in the subsequent versions of the programme, **one can certainly assume that the already high level of programme-internal synergy was even slightly further increased.** This generally positive situation underpins however again our general recommendation that existing synergy potentials should be carefully exploited and developed further by those managing / realising the implementation of the future ESPON 2013 programme.

After the improvements / modifications realised for the most recent version of the programming document, one can re-affirm that the future ESPON 2013 Programme **shows a good balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions that reflect in an appropriate way the new needs which had been identified at the end of the programme’s SWOT-like context assessment.** This means that neither the combination of programme priorities nor the actual balance achieved between standard-type and new / innovative actions allows identifying major risks, which might seriously hamper the implementation of the future programme or compromise an achievement of its objectives.

**Our appraisal of the financial allocations to the different programme priorities clearly shows that the budgetary distribution is generally adequate,** as it tends to positively support a realisation of various aspects that are of strategic importance for the success of the future ESPON 2013 programme (i.e. achievement of all stated higher-ranking programme objectives; achievement of the stated “Operational Objectives”; potential realisation of programme-internal synergies; sufficient financial resource endowment for technical / analytical assistance in order to avoid a future capacity lack).

### **V.1.3. The external coherence of the programme strategy**

**The ESPON 2013 Programmes shows a high degree of external coherence with respect to the “Community Strategic Guidelines” (CSG).** There are no evident conflicts in relation to the stated CSG-objectives and the most significant complementarity-relations can be observed in case of those “additional guidelines” that address the territorial dimension of cohesion policy (broad coverage, strong direct & indirect support effects). In case of the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy in general, a significant and widespread contribution can also be observed in case of Guideline 1 (*Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work*) and Guideline 2 (*Improving knowledge and innovation for growth*).

**The ESPON 2013 Programme shows a very high degree of external consistency with respect to the entire set of wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies.** However, due to the specific nature of the ESPON 2013 programme, one can “only” expect an indirect support to actions carried out elsewhere that aim at delivering elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies (focus on issues related to “sustainable development” and “infrastructure investment”, but also to themes / objectives that are in a wider sense related to research & development, new technologies and the Information Society).

#### **V.1.4. The expected outputs, results and impacts**

**Under all 5 programme priorities, the output-statements have to be considered appropriate.** They are fully in line with the corresponding priority-level objectives and the planned priority-level actions.

**Some weaknesses regarding the coherence of various result- and impact-statements in relation to existing higher-ranking programme objectives and/or operational objectives continue to persist under most of the existing programme priorities** (Priority 1: result- & impact-statements; Priority 2: impact-statement; Priority 3: result- & impact-statements, Priority 4: result- & impact-statements).

**The individual indicator types (i.e. output-, result- and impact-indicators) mentioned in the Annex V.4 to the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme are all very useful and show a high level of quality.** This overall judgement can be confirmed for the large majority of quality assessment criteria applied, which examined for example the possible quantification of indicators at regular intervals (availability of data), the sensitivity of indicators, their reliability and credibility as well as the meaning of indicators. **Some improvements** should however be made to further strengthen the “normativity” and “validity” of some indicator types (i.e. sufficiently sound relation of indicators to a programme-specific normative concept; adequate reflection of this normative concept by indicators).

**Seen as a whole, however, the entire programme indicator system displays very high level of quality.** It is characterised by an extensive coverage (i.e. the system includes the 5 programme priorities and 100% of the planned expenditure), a good balance between the different indicator types, a well-developed selectivity (i.e. the system respects the future programme managers' capacity to absorb the related information) and a high level of relevance.

#### **V.1.5. The proposed implementation system and its compliance with the Council Regulations governing the new Structural Funds period 2007-2013**

**The provisions elaborated for the designated programme authorities are generally in line with the prescriptions of the new EU Structural Funds Regulations.** They clearly describe the specific roles / tasks / responsibilities of the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority, the ESPON-CU and the Audit Authority / Group of Auditors. The provisions also specify the co-operation mechanisms / working procedures between these individual components of the wider management system and the related reporting procedures.

Beyond these formally required programme authorities, the ESPON 2013 programme also defines **transparent provisions for setting up specific facilitating bodies / networks** (i.e. Concertation Committee, ESPON Contact Point Network) **and for**

**clarifying the relationship between involved Partner States (non-EU Member States) and ESPON.**

In addition, **the provisions clearly describe a number of other programme-related implementation / management / control procedures** (i.e. selection & approval of operations, control system, eligibility of expenditure, mobilisation & circulation of financial flows, computerised exchange of data, delivery of additional information) **and define the context for a future evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.**

Finally, the ESPON 2013 Programme also contains detailed **provisions on “Information & Publicity” that are fully in line with the basic requirements as laid down in the Structural Funds Regulations and enable to increase the awareness on future ESPON work as well as to disseminate research results / findings to a broader audience.**

Considering the above-said, **one can say that the overall management and implementation system is convincing and appropriate for realising a smooth delivery of the future ESPON 2013 programme.** This means also that the entire set of provision elaborated is actually able to support a concrete realisation of the “strategic objective” mentioned in the programme that explicitly refers to this particular issue of crucial importance”.

The final report on the Ex-Ante evaluation can be found on [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu).

## **V.2 Framework for identifying and selecting themes and territorial issues for applied territorial research**

The selection of themes and territorial issues for research under Priority 1 of the ESPON 2013 Programme will be identified and selected on the basis of four main sources of information:

- The body of law of cohesion policy 2007-2013. This includes the Community Strategic Guidelines for cohesion, the general regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the specific regulations for the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund, and the resulting NSRF and operational programmes;
- The intergovernmental process on a Territorial Agenda for the EU;
- The implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme; and
- The ESPON 2006 Programme: a catalogue of research needs based on the recommendations from projects carried through under the ESPON 2006 Programme will be made available shortly after all final reports have been delivered in their final version.

The themes for the applied research during the ESPON 2013 Programme shall be structured according to 3 thematic axes, which are important in relation to territorial cohesion.

Themes and territorial issues will be organised under three main headings with a view to ensure overall coherence and prevent dispersion of research effort, as follows:

- Territorial development and the competitiveness of regions, urban and rural territories.
- Territorial cooperation.

- Territorial impact of EU policies.

The themes and territorial issues identified under each heading shall cover trends, perspectives and policy impact studies and applied research activity, focussing both on short term dynamics and long term evolutions.

This thematic framework includes, at the end of this annex, the themes of the first rounds of applied research projects to be launched by the ESPON 2013 Programme.

### **V.2.1. Three headings of ESPON 2013 applied research**

While a degree of flexibility is needed to ensure that new priorities can be accommodated under Priority 1, the following provides an indicative overview of the themes and territorial issues which can be covered under each heading:

#### **a. Territorial development and the competitiveness of regions, urban and rural territories**

Under this heading, research activity will concentrate on studying factors determining territorial competitiveness and attractiveness; (inter)relations between different types of territories; and emerging territorial and location patterns such as:

- Demography (e.g. ageing and migration flows);
- Globalisation (e.g. international division of labour, location of economic activity, specialisation and flows related to Europe in the World and its neighbourhood)
- Innovation and knowledge economy (R&TD and innovation capacity, entrepreneurship and SME, creativity and new ideas, governance, science/technological networks)
- Accessibility (e.g. transport, telecommunication and energy, secondary networks, ICT for SME, information society, services of general interest)
- Climate change, environment, natural resources, hazards and risk prevention (e.g. physical environment, biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites, energy efficiency and renewable sources, public transport, particular in urban areas, natural and cultural heritage, tourism)
- Social dimension in territorial development;
- Urban areas, small and medium sized cities and metropolitan urban regions (e.g. economic drivers, functionality and potentials, entrepreneurship, local employment, community development, physical environment, social cohesion, plan for urban regeneration)
- Rural areas (e.g. accessibility, services of general interest, integrated approach, development poles, economic clusters)
- Specific types of territories (coastal areas, islands, border areas, highly populated areas, sparsely populated areas);
- Polycentric development (e.g. urban-rural links, balanced regional development, sustainable development, networks, growth poles);
- Governance (e.g. social capital, capacity building,)

## **b. Territorial cooperation**

Research activity under this heading will help clarify territorial and thematic issues relevant to cooperation, in particular under the new "European territorial cooperation" objective of cohesion policy as follows:

- Transnational cooperation, including cooperation with neighbouring countries (e.g. polycentric development, river basin management, risk management, urban-rural partnerships and services of general interest, balanced territorial development, TEN-transport, ICT and energy and their links to secondary networks, rural development poles, maritime cooperation)
- Cross-border cooperation (e.g. links between urban and rural areas, entrepreneurship in SME, tourism, culture and trade, joint use of infrastructures, clusters of competitive and innovative activities, maritime cooperation);
- Agglomeration economies through cooperation (e.g. metropolitan zones of global integration, polycentric cities);
- Governance in cooperation settings (e.g. governance models for territorial cooperation)

## **c. Territorial impact analysis of EU policies**

Under this heading, research activity will examine EU policies, their evolution, and their impact on territorial cohesion, competitiveness and attractiveness, as follows for example:

- Economy (e.g. EMU, competition, trade);
- Energy (TEN-E, renewable and energy efficiency, dependency, diversification);
- Employment strategy;
- Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies;
- Transport (TEN-T, accessibility including connectivity to secondary networks)
- CAP (rural development pillar).

## **V.2.2. Themes and territorial issues for the first rounds of applied research**

The first round of projects to be launched under Priority 1 (call for proposal launched before summer 2007) will include some of the following themes. A second call is envisaged for mid 2008 and will include the remaining themes.

a. Under the first thematic axes, **Territorial development and the competitiveness of regions, urban and rural territories**, the following thematic orientations have priority:

- Services of general interest, access and affordability
- Institutional and social capital for learning regions (governance)
- Economic clusters and functional specialisation of regions
- Metropolitan areas (MEGA), their functionality and potentials for European competitiveness and cohesion
- Natural risk prevention and its implementation in national and regional spatial development and planning processes

- Migration flows at interregional and intraregional levels; approach to and interpretation of demographic phenomena like urban sprawl, ruralisation, etc..
- Role and functions of competitiveness poles in rural areas; functional links with urban areas.
- Shaping competitiveness advantages for specific types of territories (mountains, islands, low density), including common definition of specificities and benchmarking in national contexts.

b. Under the second thematic axes, **Territorial co-operation**, the following theme will have priority:

- Strategic and thematic potentials for (current and new) transnational cooperation areas (including neighbouring areas);

c. Under the third thematic axes, **Territorial impact analysis of EU policies**, the impact of the following policies has priority:

- Competition policy
- Trade policy
- Energy policy

### **V.3 Tentative list of activities of the ECP network**

#### **V.3.1. Possible involvement in Priority 1, 2 and 3**

Individual ECPs can participate and be part of:

- Actions carrying through applied research action under priority 1.
- Actions carrying through targeted analytical actions under priority 2.
- Actions carrying out scientific work under priority 3.
- The Knowledge Support System.

ECPs will not have a privileged position for participating in these actions. They will have to apply and take part in the competitive processes organised for the selection of the research teams and the experts included in the Knowledge Support System.

ECPs participating in applied research, targeted analysis and scientific work shall endorse a Code of Conduct to avoid any conflict of interest that could arise from their role as ECP.

#### **V.3.2. ECP transnational networking activities under Priority 4**

ECPs will be key players in the operational transnational efforts under this priority and contribute to the achievement of the awareness raising objective, transfer and transposition of results to national, regional/local key players, through the implementation of transnational networking activities.

Transnational activities should support capitalisation, awareness and involvement of stakeholders in the area and be based on an operational approach leading to proposals

for activities in support of territorial cohesion. Proposed actions shall be included in reports on the outcome of the activities as well as support material for seminars, workshops and other activities carried through, based on ESPON results and tools.

The transnational activities of the ECP network shall support dissemination and networking within the programme and contribute to a successful implementation of the ESPON programme activities by involving, informing and empowering national actors and research networks.

These transnational networking activities should be implemented by groups of minimum 3 ECPs. The Monitoring Committee will select the proposals for implementation through a call for proposals on transnational activities by groupings of ECPs.

The scope of the activities shall obligatorily be transnational (covering transnational areas) and address mixed audience of policy makers, practitioners and scientists at national, regional/local level within the relevant area.

Proposals for transnational networking activities are expected to include a package of activities, among which, the proposal should consider the following tasks:

- **Information on programme activities** to relevant regional, sectoral and academic stakeholders, e.g. seminars, conferences, and publications. (Dissemination of information to their national networks could be done by regular mailings, organization of national “info-days” or workshops, etc.). Information on ESPON results should always seek to increase the national networks around the ESPON 2013 Programme, and by doing so, the potential partners in ESPON actions. Support to the translation of some short texts on ESPON results might be part of the dissemination of information.
- **Dissemination of open call for proposals on actions** decided by the ESPON Monitoring Committee, transmitting the information to targeted scientific community within the country. This should be the case each time a new tendering procedure is launched by the programme. The ECP network should support a larger number of offers following procurement procedures for ESPON actions.
- **Feedback on national activities**, where the ECPs should report twice a year to the CU on the status and development of their national network and potential demands and expectations formulated. Messages from the ECP network will be communicated to the Monitoring Committee to be informed about the national activities and networks.
- **Report on factual mistakes and misinterpretations** from a national viewpoint (so called “blunder checks”) where the ECP network in preparation for transnational activities by reading final reports of ESPON projects shall note and inform the CU. By avoiding factual mistakes concerning the countries involved in ESPON a European level quality control will emerge. The CU will compile any blunders and report these to the Transnational Project Groups for correction.

The transnational networking activities will be carried through in close cooperation and liaison with the MA and CU.

Regular meetings will ensure the internal coherence and share of experience. ECP network meetings are envisaged 2 times per year. The number of meetings can be subject to modification, in order to ensure sufficient flexibility and to properly answer the needs of the programme.

The ECP network would be reimbursed for travel costs incurred in relation to their participation in Internal Seminars and ECP meetings.

#### **V.4. Quantitative indicators for the evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme**

According to Article 37 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the ESPON 2013 Programme shall include quantitative/qualitative indicators at priority level for the output, results and impacts foreseen. It is not obligatory ex ante to include indicators at action level.

The Ex-Ante evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme proposed indicators for outputs, results and impacts for each of the 5 Priorities of the ESPON 2013 Programme, which are included in chapter 7.2.3 and 7.2.4 of the Ex-Ante report.

##### **V.4.1. Output indicators for the ESPON 2013 Programme**

The proposed output indicators for the programme priorities are all of a quantitative nature and data on them could easily be generated by the ESPON Coordination Unit. A number of “general indicators” aim at determining the total number of actions realised or the amount of individual actions realised under a given Priority. There are also proposed more “specific indicators”, addressing particular aspects in the context of a priority that can be measured (e.g. number of stakeholder/user consultations realised; number of stakeholders/users contacted; number of indicators covered; number of seminars/events per year of operation).

The output indicators that will be used in ensuring a correct implementing of the Priorities set out in the ESPON 2013 Programme are the following:

| <b>ESPON 2013 Programme: Output indicators at Priority level</b> |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Priority</b>  | <b>Output statements</b>   | <b>Output indicators</b>  |
| <b>P1</b>  | The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through around 30-40 actions during 2007-2013, which will be selected by the ESPON Monitoring Committee in line with the existing policy demand. All applied research actions will provide targeted information and evidence that is elaborated alongside a continuous guidance / feed-back process, to be realised in the context of specific task forces / sounding boards. The actions may vary in size depending on the actual demand expressed. Each action will be documented in a report, including numerous illustrations and maps. Documents may reflect different territorial entities, however most often being the European context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of actions realised &amp; number of small / medium / large actions.</li> <li>• Number of cross-thematic / thematic analyses and trends / prospective studies realised.</li> <li>• Number of territorial impact studies realised.</li> <li>• Number of experts involved in task forces / sounding boards.</li> </ul> |
| <b>P2</b>  | The ESPON II programme expects to carry through 20-40 targeted analyses during 2007-2013, which will be selected by the ESPON Monitoring Committee to meet in the best possible way the demand expressed by  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of actions realised &amp; number of small / medium / large actions.</li> <li>• Number of stakeholder / user</li> </ul>  |

|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
|           | potential users of ESPON results. The projects will represent both smaller and larger actions in terms of size and duration. Some will be analysis based on ESPON results; others may be of a more experimental nature. Each action will be documented in a report including numerous illustrations and maps.   | consultations realised and number of stakeholders / users contacted.  |
| <b>P3</b> | The ESPON Database will create at least 20-30 additional European-wide, comparable data sets, which are duly validated and give information for all regions of Europe. The Database with time series of data and the data behind the key indicators will be regularly updated. Approximately 5-10 new tools, models and methodologies will be generated by the actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme, whereas a number of already existing tools such as mapping facilities and models will be maintained and updated. The work on territorial indicators is supposed to produce at least 1 territorial cohesion index. The Territorial Monitoring System will select and build time series on at least 10-15 key indicators and publish 23 reports during the ESPON 2013 Programme period.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of actions realised.</li> <li>• Number of new, updated and improved tools, models, methodologies developed.</li> <li>• Number of territorial indicators defined</li> <li>• Number of periodic territorial monitoring reports published.</li> </ul>      |
| <b>P4</b> | The action "Media and Publications" will support of this priority through visibility supported by direct mailing, articles, e-mailed newsletter, press releases and the ESPON website and in addition include the issuing of 5-6 larger ESPON reports/publications and of 56 smaller ESPON reports/publications. The action "European Seminars & Workshops" will result in 14-20 seminars/workshops organised during 2007-2013, which corresponds to 2-3 events per year of operation, of which one will be a larger event. Under the action "Transnational Networking Activities" it is foreseen that within the programme period at least 14 transnational activities will be financed. Each action will consist of a package of actions and be documented in a report.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of actions realised.</li> <li>• Number of European Seminars/workshops realised.</li> <li>• Number of Transnational Networking Activities realised.</li> <li>• Number of press releases and larger and smaller reports / publications issued.</li> </ul> |
| <b>P5</b> | The action "Technical assistance" will ensure the correct implementation of the programme following the simplest possible procedures. At least 2 MC meetings are envisaged per year as well as on-the-spot checks of at least 1 project per each type of action per year and 1 meeting of the Group of Auditors per year. Under the task "Analytical support" shall provide internal consistency and synergy to the content of actions within the programme. It is envisaged to elaborate project descriptions for actions under Priority 1-4, all together around 60-90, including feed-back on interim reports and final reports. For the Concertation Committee around 20 meetings will be organised during the programme period. In addition, 2 Internal ESPON seminars and 2 ECP Meetings are foreseen per year. Under the action "Communication Plan" information on the actions of the programme and provisions for participating as beneficiary will be provided. It is foreseen to convey one major informative event per year targeting potential beneficiaries. In addition, at least 2 seminars for financial controllers at national level are foreseen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Monitoring Committee meetings</li> <li>• Number of CC meetings organised</li> <li>• Number of Internal ESPON seminars</li> <li>• Number of ECP meetings</li> <li>• Number of events for potential and selected beneficiaries</li> </ul>              |

#### V.4.2. Result indicators for the ESPON 2013 Programme

The proposed result indicators for Priorities 1-5 are partly quantitative and partly of a qualitative nature. Also here, the necessary data / information can in principle be generated easily by the future Coordination Unit. The quantitative result indicators

mostly aim at measuring the intensity of a use of ESPON data and results (e.g. number of users, number of document downloads from the ESPON-website, number of participants in seminars/events etc.). The qualitative result indicators - in turn - focus on generating information on improvements / progress achieved with respect to the ESPON 2006 programme and on the quality of results or the profile of ESPON-data users. The indicators that will be used in measuring the results of the Priorities set out in the ESPON 2013 Programme are the following:

| <b>ESPON 2013 Programme: Results indicators at Priority level</b> |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Priority</b>   | <b>Result statements</b>  | <b>Result indicators</b>   |
| <b>P1</b>   | Applied research actions will - one the one hand - deepen the existing knowledge base on the European territorial dimension, which has to some extent been generated by the ESPON 2006 programme. On the other hand, applied research will provide new information, evidence and policy options on a wide variety of themes and policies related to European territorial development, including an assessment of territorial development trends, impacts of EU policies and a prospective exploration of long-term challenges. The results of applied research have to be of a high quality, reflecting the current knowledge concerning science, and will be presented in a way to stimulate their practical use.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of themes and policies that have been deepened and widened compared to ESPON 2006 results.</li> <li>• Number of partners, institutes and scientists involved in applied research actions.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>P2</b>   | The actions will cover a wide variety of themes, mostly in an integrated way, and include European perspectives on territorial development that can reveal territorial potentials for the specific territories in question. A testing of new, experimental and innovative options that inspire strategy building and planning processes or stimulate creativity on new project ideas will improve the overall usefulness of ESPON results.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of stakeholders directly involved in the implementations of the actions</li> <li>• Number of themes, topics and experiments covered by actions realised.</li> <li>• Number of types of specific territories covered by actions realised</li> </ul> |
| <b>P3</b>   | The actions will lead to a more widespread use of ESPON data in practical policy making at different levels, which is stimulated by an increased availability, a stronger reliability and more frequent updates of data as well as by a wider access to these data. A more extensive use of ESPON data will also be enhanced by an elaboration of new support tools and the improvement of existing ones. In this context, territorial indicators/indices linked to the political aim of territorial cohesion as well as new methodologies and models for Territorial Impact Assessment will be potential innovations within the ESPON Scientific Platform. Regular stock taking of the development of individual territories and of the European continent in the context of the Territorial Monitoring System will allow creating a user-friendly tool that supports practitioners and policy makers in their practical work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of downloads for support of data and tools (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users.</li> <li>• Number of downloads for territorial monitoring reports (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users.</li> </ul>      |
| <b>P4</b>   | Media activity supported by publications based on results of actions under priority 1-3 will provide the basics for achieving results within this priority. European Seminars/Workshops and Transnational Networking Activities will ensure capitalisation and a wide participation of policy makers and practitioners from International Organisations, European Institutions, European co-operation structures (i.e. European associations of regional/local authorities,   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of participants in all European Seminars / Workshops and average number of participants per seminar/event.</li> <li>• Number of participants in all Transnational Networking Activities and average number of participants per action.</li> </ul>  |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
|           | European networks, EU-programmes) as well as from national and regional administrations. Also the number of scientist (and among them also young researchers) interested in European territorial applied research is expected to rise through these actions. European events and transnational networking activities will increase significantly the awareness and involvement of these actors about comparable evidence on the European territorial dimension generated by ESPON and stimulate further their ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge. In addition, these actions will increase a feedback on the usefulness and practical use of ESPON results and stimulate requests for information / assistance from ESPON or additional offers on actions under Priority 2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of stakeholders reached by mailing lists and by visiting the ESPON website</li> </ul>  |
| <b>P5</b> | The Technical Assistance will ensure an optimal decision making within the MC and will also result in an improved administrative and financial project implementation. The communication plan will result in a higher committed participation of actors into the ESPON 2013, while the Analytical Support will support quality, delivery, presentation, capitalisation and dissemination of results.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of on-the-spot-checks showing no significant results</li> <li>• Number of participants in Internal ESPON seminars</li> <li>• Number of participants in information events for potential and selected beneficiaries and the volume of mailing list</li> </ul> |

### V.4.3. Impact indicators for the ESPON 2013 Programme

The proposed impact indicators for programme priorities are mostly of a qualitative nature. This is rather understandable for a programme with an overall intervention logic that focuses on generating knowledge in support of policy-demand (via applied research, data collection, targeted analysis) and on capitalising/disseminating/creating awareness about this knowledge towards potential users.

A few quantitative indicators are related to some expected impacts for which a measurement approach seems to be possible. Compared to the output/result indicators, efforts will be made to establish feasible arrangements that allow generating data and information on the issues addressed by the impact indicators. For issues that relate to the proper achievements of priority-level actions, i.e. thus being under a “direct” control of the programme management, it is envisaged introducing specific provisions in the future project-reporting template in order to retrieve the necessary baseline information.

Less controllable aspects related to the “external environment of stakeholders” such as own actions taken/opinions expressed by the wider community of users and policy-makers e.g. increased awareness of external users; practical usefulness of ESPON-deliveries for stakeholders / practitioners; external take-up and/or transfer of ESPON-evidence, will require other solutions. Here the generation of information will imply diffusing short questionnaires to participants of seminars/events or of networking activities and creating a “virtual opinion board” on the ESPON-website (accessible to all), eventually as a precondition for some information downloads from the ESPON-website, with an answering of a short questionnaire. Finally, also the network of ESPON Contact Points will be entrusted with functions in this respect, as they are an

ideal interface to the national/regional context that can gather/pool information on the specific national situations.

The indicators that will be used in measuring the impacts of the Priorities set out in the ESPON 2013 Programme are the following:

| <b>ESPON 2013 Programme: Impact indicators at Priority level</b> |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Priority</b>  | <b>Impact statements</b>   | <b>Impact indicators</b>  |
| <b>P1</b>  | Applied research, which is defined on ground of a screening of policy demand existing at various levels and subsequently validated / checked with respect to its usability, will present evidence that supports a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and help defining territorial development potentials. Research-related policy options as well as an enhanced use of applied research results and regionalised information on European maps in policy processes and documents dealing with the development of territories can raise the effectiveness of regional policy at various levels - thus strengthening territorial cohesion – and enhance further territorial co-operation among regions, urban and rural territories as well as among territories with specific characteristics.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for European, national-level / regional-level policy processes (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> <li>• Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for transnational and cross-border co-operation (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>P2</b>  | Targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results, which are defined by policy demand and subsequently checked with respect to their usability and transferability, will support strategic processes in smaller or larger territorial settings and thus put into practice the user-oriented approach of the ESPON 2013 programme. By stimulating a better use of ESPON results in the context of territorial policy development and strategy building or territorial planning at lower geographical scales, the actions will generate a stronger sensibility to the European dimension of regional policy and territorial development, enhance involvement and stimulate innovation. The actions will also provide analytical support to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges and help – through their demonstrative effect for other areas - revealing options for improving further different types of territorial co-operation across Europe. Finally, targeted analytical deliveries might also be an inspiring source for strategic ESPON-publications that present evidence and policy options able to support a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and related cause-effect relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of analytical support provided by targeted actions to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges (with levels: strong, medium, low).</li> <li>• Extent to which the outcomes of actions producing targeted analytical deliveries are cited in strategic publications at European, national and regional level (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> </ul> |
| <b>P3</b>  | Through maintaining and improving the ESPON Scientific Platform, which also covers an elaboration of new support tools and a widening of public access to all these elements, it will be possible to base applied research and maps as well as targeted analytical deliveries on the most recent data and further refined methods. Easy access to  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of usefulness (expressed for the different Scientific Platform components) in the context of ESPON applied research actions and policy development processes (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> <li>• Number of ESPON-external documents making reference to</li> </ul>   |

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|           | <p>elements of the ESPON Scientific Platform, further stimulated by focussed communication activities, will allow regions or larger territories to use more intensively thoroughly validated and comparable data in policy development processes and to be better informed about specific policy impacts and emerging European territorial trends. Territorial indicators and indices related to territorial cohesion will be able to inform policy development at the European level in particular. Finally, the ESPON Scientific Platform will also be an important source for elaborating strategic ESPON-publications that support a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and can act as a reference base that stimulates scientific interest in applied territorial research on a European-wide scale.</p> | <p>ESPON data, tools or reproducing ESPON maps.</p>  |
| <b>P4</b> | <p>A realisation of these different actions at a wider or more reduced geographical scale is fundamental for putting into practice the user-oriented approach of the ESPON 2007-2013 Programme. They will raise awareness about the European dimension of regional policy and territorial development and stimulate - from the outset - a policy dialogue among Community-, national- and regional level decision-makers and practitioners around Europe. They will also help strengthening a multidisciplinary European community in the field of territorial research, also leading to a more widespread take-up of ESPON results by scientific activities outside of ESPON.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of capitalisation and increased awareness achieved among the participants of European Seminars/Workshops (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> <li>• Degree of capitalisation and increased awareness achieved among the participants of Transnational Networking Activities (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>P5</b> | <p>[To be completed]</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of importance of audit findings as reported in annual auditing reports (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> <li>• Degree of satisfaction with information, services and support provided to the MC, ECP and partners (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> <li>• Degree of satisfaction of potential partners with the information given on ESPON (with levels: high, medium, low).</li> </ul> |