

# **Evaluation of the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) programme**

Annexes to Final Report

*March 2013*

**Study coordinated by ADE**

This report has been prepared by ADE at the request of the European Commission.

The views expressed are those of the consultant and do not represent the official views of the European Commission.

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## Annex 1: List of Academic Experts involved in the ESPON evaluation

Name of expert	Company	Position	Thematics covered	Role in the evaluation
<b>SCIENTIFIC EXPERT GROUP</b>				
<b>ARMSTRONG Harvey (UK)</b>	University of Sheffield, UK	Professor Emeritus (formerly Professor of Economic Geography)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional and local economic analysis</li> <li>▪ Regional policy analysis and evaluation</li> <li>▪ Economics of small states and island economies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member of Scientific Expert Group</li> </ul>
<b>VIESTI Gianfranco (IT)</b>	Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bari, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professor of Applied Economics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Firms and industrial development policy</li> <li>▪ Territorial growth and regional economic development</li> <li>▪ EU Cohesion Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member of Scientific Expert Group</li> <li>▪ Peer reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>VOETS Joris (BE)</b>	Catholic University of Leuven, Public Management Institute, Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy evaluation and monitoring of spatial policy</li> <li>▪ Multi-level governance and spatial planning</li> <li>▪ Territorial governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Member of Scientific Expert Group</li> <li>▪ Peer reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>PEER REVIEWERS</b>				
<b>BRADLEY David (UK)</b>	CURDS, University of Newcastle, UK	Principal Research Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rural development</li> <li>▪ Urban and regional development</li> <li>▪ Role of ICT and innovation in regional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>

<b>BENNEWORTH Paul (UK)</b>	CHEPS, University of Twente, Netherlands	Senior Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Higher education policies</li> <li>▪ Regional development</li> <li>▪ Strategic planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>DWYER Janet (UK)</b>	Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), University of the West of England, UK	Professor of Rural Policy and Co-Director of CCRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rural development</li> <li>▪ Environmental sustainability</li> <li>▪ CAP and EU agricultural policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>GRECO Lidia (IT)</b>	Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bari, Italy	Lecturer in the Sociology of Economics and Labour Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ European regional development and policies</li> <li>▪ Industrial and labour sociology</li> <li>▪ Sectoral level analyses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>HERRSCHEL Tassilo (DE)</b>	University of Westminster, UK	Reader (Associate Professor) in Urban and Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political and economic geography</li> <li>▪ Urban Planning</li> <li>▪ Regional economic development and policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>MACLEOD Calum (UK)</b>	Independent expert (former academic at University of Highlands and Islands and policy practitioner), UK	Consultant based in Scotland, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ERDF practitioner experience working for Scottish government</li> <li>▪ Environmental and climate change policies</li> <li>▪ Territories with specific geographical features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>PELUCHA Martin (CZ)</b>	University of Economics in Prague, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Czech Republic	Lecturer in Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rural development and agriculture</li> <li>▪ Economic and social cohesion, especially in Central Europe</li> <li>▪ Planning, monitoring and project evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>RODRIGUEZ-POSE Andres (ESP)</b>	Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK	Professor of Economic Geography  Programme Director, LSE Spatial Economics Research Centre,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Innovation and regional growth in the EU</li> <li>▪ EU Cohesion Policy</li> <li>▪ Decentralisation and regional economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>

<b>SAPALA Magdalena (PL)</b>	Department of European Studies, Poznan University of Economics, Poland	Senior Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EU Cohesion Policy</li> <li>▪ Public support to business development</li> <li>▪ Territorial governance issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>
<b>SCASNY Milan (CZ)</b>	Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, Dept. of Social & Culture Ecology, Czech Republic	Head of the Unit on Environmental Economics and Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Environmental economics</li> <li>▪ EU Climate change and environmental policy</li> <li>▪ Environmental indicators and modelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer Reviewer</li> </ul>





## Annex 2: ESPON Peer Review Template (Task 2)

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### GUIDANCE NOTE TO THE PEER REVIEW EXPERT

1. **ADE has been commissioned by DG Regional Policy** to carry out the evaluation of the ESPON 2007-13 programme (the European Spatial Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion, [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)).
2. This evaluation involves several Tasks including a **peer review of 12 case study projects** that have been funded during the current period. Each project case study will be reviewed by 3 experts, remotely and independently, to ensure that each expert develops a familiarity with the methodology, is able to compare and contrast projects and will be able to provide higher quality feedback to ensure that the findings are robust.
3. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the research work carried out under the current ESPON programme has, in line with its mission, *'supported policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion...'*. We recognise that it is **not a straightforward or linear process to simply 'read-off' academic findings directly into policy relevant conclusions**. Moreover, the aim is not to assess the academic quality *per se* of the range of the particular projects. Rather, **the aim of the peer review is to assess the extent to which the project outputs and findings produced are 'fit for purpose' in policy related terms**.
4. The results from the peer review process will then be collated and combined with stakeholder interviews for each of the case study projects and a summary per project will be drafted. **The information that you provide, therefore, will not be attributed personally but rather used to inform the overall analysis of the respective case study summaries**.
5. The peer review will assess three main elements:
  - 1) **The quality of the project design and conception;**
  - 2) **The quality of the outputs;**
  - 3) **The policy relevance/applicability of the outputs.**
6. For each project, the expert will analyse the **relevant deliverables provided which span the whole project life cycle** (i.e Application Form, Inception, Interim and Final Reports and related documents) in order to complete the peer review template below.
7. **The template lists the different questions listed in the ToRs for the evaluation as well as a short guide summarising the key elements** that we would like you to consider for each response. Of course, please add any other relevant points that you think would provide useful feedback for the evaluation. Please read through the template in full prior to starting it to familiarise yourself with the questions and guidelines.
8. We are interested in **getting your feedback as a narrative on the particular project** – what works well (or not), what could be improved, elements of good practices, suggestions for improvement etc. in relation to the three main elements. **Overall, we expert responses to cover 4 or 5 pages of feedback**. Please add your detailed comments by placing your cursor actually inside the grey comment boxes provided, which will expand automatically as you add text.
9. At the end of each section please provide an overall assessment, indicating **a score from 0-5: Excellent - 5; Very good - 4; Good - 3; Average - 2; Poor - 1; Cannot be judged against the criteria due to missing or incomplete information - 0**. Please click on the 'choose an item' to add your score for the particular section.
10. The feedback that you provide is a crucial part of the evaluation of ESPON and will allow recommendations to be generated for the future funding round. In this regard, we really value your input and appreciate your help in completing the form as detailed as possible.

## ESPON PEER REVIEW REPORT

### 1. Project details

<b>Name of expert:</b>	
<b>ESPON Priority</b>	Choose an item.
<b>Project acronym:</b>	Choose an item.
<b>1.1 Key Parameters</b>	
<i>Principal</i> territorial cohesion focus of the project (e.g. role of cities, functional geographies, rural, environmental, specific geographical features etc).	
Was there also a specific geographical focus (e.g. (macro-) regional, EU27, southern or central Europe etc)?	
Did the project also seek to contribute as <i>subsidiary</i> goal to any other territorial cohesion dimension(s)? If so, which ones?	
Did the project make reference to its expected position, 'fit' and synergies within the wider ESPON family of projects	
Was the project acronym and title helpful and informative to the thematic focus of the project?	

### 2. Quality of project design and conception

#### QUESTION GUIDE

**ToRs question: What is the quality of the project design and conception (including project terms of reference)? Were the goals realistic?**

Please provide your assessment of the project's project design and conception, paying particular attention to the key points below. We are keen to get your feedback on the initial project design and the extent to which the policy relevance of the outputs was considered from the start of the project.

Please complete your response in the text box on the following page also providing appropriate scores.

<b>For Priority 1 and 2 projects <i>Applied research/targeted analyses</i></b>
<p><b><i>The key points to explore are listed below:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarity, relevance and quality of stated research goals, hypotheses, timescales and outputs;</li> <li>- Quality of the literature review and linkages made to other completed or ongoing research projects in the field (e.g. OECD, DG Regio, FP7 studies; national evaluations etc.);</li> <li>- Were the research methods used innovative or more in line with the ‘received wisdom’;</li> <li>- Assessment of quality of project design considering: financial; human resources (across research teams, work packages, countries, regions and territorial cohesion themes, role of Lead Partner); information exchange and coordination;</li> <li>- Assessment of the relevance of the work in relation to changing socio-economic and policy context (e.g. impact of the economic crisis; Europe 2020 strategy; ERDF programming cycle etc.);</li> </ul>
<b>For Priority 3 projects <i>Scientific platform/tools</i></b>
<p><b><i>The key points to explore are listed below:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriateness of research methods selected (quantitative/qualitative balance, limitations);</li> <li>- Quality of assessment in the design of availability and access to pre-existing quantitative and qualitative information resources;</li> <li>- Realism of project design for improving existing information resources and/or developing new primary information sets;</li> <li>- Quality of literature and previous research review and links to research goals;</li> <li>- Appropriateness of financial and human resources allocated to research methods proposed</li> </ul>
<b>For Priority 4 projects <i>Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement</i></b>
<p><b><i>The key points to explore are listed below:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality, relevance and realism of stated goals;</li> <li>- Appropriateness of financial and human resources;</li> <li>- Clarity and appropriateness of stakeholders identified for inclusion in awareness raising, empowerment and involvement elements of the project design;</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.1 Please provide your comments on the quality of the project design and conception? To what extent were the goals realistic? To what extent were the goals realistic?</b></p> <p><i>[Answer length: 1 to 2 pages of text]</i></p>	
<p><b>2.2 Please provide an overall assessment for the project below, providing a score as appropriate</b></p>	
Quality of project design, conception and goals	Choose an item.
Quality of the research methods, hypotheses and tools	Choose an item.
Quality of the project partners, time scales, management provisions	Choose an item.
Overall assessment of the project design and conception	Choose an item.

### 3. Quality of the outputs

#### QUESTION GUIDE

**ToRs question: What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria? This question is the most important for the experts to answer, and the area where they bring the most added value.**

Please provide your assessment of the quality of the outputs produced by the project, paying particular attention to the key points below.

The aim is not to assess the academic quality *per se* of the range of the particular projects. Instead, we are keen to get your feedback on the extent to which the project outputs and findings produced are 'fit for purpose' in policy related terms.

Please complete your response in the text box on the following page and also provide appropriate scores.

#### For Priority 1 and 2 projects *Applied research/targeted analyses*

***The key points to explore are listed below:***

- To what extent is there evidence from the project outputs that the specific research goals and hypotheses outlined were actually attained?
- What was the added value provided by these outputs (e.g. reports, academic articles, citations, books, policy papers, working papers etc)? Did they make a novel contribution to knowledge in the field?
- To what extent were the research methods used innovative? Were the timescales, financial and human resources appropriate? Could similar outputs have been achieved with less funding, in less time? Or, was there evidence of goals not being achieved due to insufficient resources?

#### For Priority 3 projects *Scientific platform/tools*

***The key points to explore are listed below:***

- To what extent were the research methods selected appropriate (quantitative and qualitative and balance of the two) to enhancing the quality of the project outputs? What were the notable successes or failures?
- What were the outputs produced from the project? To what extent were new findings generated from the project? If so, what was the significance of such new findings?
- To what extent were the financial and human resources allocated appropriate to achieving the project outputs?

#### For Priority 4 projects *Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement*

***The key points to explore are listed below:***

- To what extent were the stakeholders identified actually engaged in the project? How effective was the overall level of engagement?
- To what extent were the proposed methods used appropriate? What were the main successes and failures of these methods?
- To what extent were the financial and human resources allocated appropriate to achieving the project outputs?

<b>3.1 Please provide your comments on the quality of the outputs generated from the project? [Answer length: 1-2 pages of text]</b>	
<b>3.2 Please provide an overall assessment for the project below, providing a score as appropriate</b>	
<b>Quality of the planned research methods, hypotheses, tools and overall outputs achieved</b>	Choose an item.
<b>Quality of the overall contribution to academic and policy debates in the territorial cohesion field</b>	Choose an item.

**4. Policy relevance/Applicability of the outputs**

**QUESTION GUIDE relevant to all PROJECTS**

**ToRs question: What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned? Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What could have been done differently to improve project impact? Policy relevance and impact should be assessed not just in terms of the European level, but also in terms of impact on relevant regional and national policies (and territorial agenda process) in the Member States and countries concerned.**

Please provide your assessment of two main elements: 1) *the policy relevance* and 2) *the policy impact* of the outputs produced by the project, paying particular attention to the key points below.

We recognise that it is not a straightforward or linear process to simply ‘read-off’ academic findings directly into policy relevant conclusions. However, we are keen to get your feedback on the extent to which the project outputs have contributed to respective policy fields, had particular policy impacts and also what could have been done differently to improve impact.

Please complete your responses in the text boxes below (4.1 for Policy relevance and 4.2 for Policy impact) on the following pages and also provide appropriate scores.

**4.1 Policy Relevance**

**The key points to explore are listed below:**

- Did the project provide an initial assessment of the policy relevance of the project from the outset? How detailed was this?
- Were appropriate target audiences and policy stakeholders identified for outputs of the project (e.g. senior policymakers, politicians, academic, general public etc)?
- Were appropriate methods proposed for reaching the target audiences and policy stakeholders (e.g. website, publications, technical and popular media, social media, presentations etc)?
- Were appropriate financial and human resources devoted to the communications strategy to

- engage with policy stakeholders throughout the project?
- To what extent was there evidence that policy relevance was ‘mainstreamed’ throughout the project lifecycle and illustrated in the various outputs?
- What was the relevance to ongoing policy debates (at EU, national and sub-national level, regional) to the work of the project?

#### ***4.2 Policy Impacts***

***The key points to explore are listed below:***

- What policy proposals or recommendations (if any) were set out in the final project reports and/or in any subsequent publications or presentations?
- In what sense can the project’s results be deemed to represent progress for the territorial cohesion debate? For example:
  - Improved data and information sets;
  - Reinforcement of previous findings (e.g. convergence approach versus competitiveness, challenges facing islands, mountainous regions etc; nature of the European city system etc);
  - New and innovative results, throwing an entirely new light on the European spatial system;
  - New or improved application of quantitative or qualitative research methods;
- What is evidence of policy impact from the project? For example:
  - Citations in key supra-national policy documents (e.g. Regio Cohesion Reports, OECD, World Bank);
  - Citations of project results in key policy documents at national and sub-national level (e.g. Member State publications, regional operational programmes, local development plans etc);
  - Membership of national and EU committees and policy organisations of senior staff on the projects;
  - Citations in the academic literature (e.g. in high-impact journals);
  - Press and media releases produced at the end of the project;
  - Subsequent spin-off research taking the work forward and not EU funded (i.e. evidence that the work has led others to pay to take it forward);
  - Contribution to policy discussions, seminars and working groups (e.g. Regio Open Days, CoR expert groups, European Parliament committee hearings etc);
  - Number of visitors to a web platform;
- What could have been done differently to improve the impact of the project?
- What was the overall added value of the project to ongoing policy debates in the field of territorial cohesion? Was this achieved in your opinion?

**4.1 Please provide your comments on the POLICY RELEVANCE of the outputs generated from the project?**

***[Answer length: 1-2 pages of text]***

<p><b>4.2 Please provide your comments on the POLICY IMPACT of the outputs generated from the project?</b> <i>[Answer length: 1-2 pages of text]</i></p>	
<p><b>4.3 Overall assessment of the policy relevance and impact of the project</b></p>	
<p><i>Please provide an overall assessment for the project below, providing a score as appropriate</i></p>	
<p><b>Quality of the proposed policy relevance of the project and actual policy impact</b></p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><b>Quality of the planned policy engagement and the actual level of engagement achieved</b></p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><b>Quality of the overall contribution to policy debate in the territorial cohesion field</b></p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

## 5. Overall project assessment

<p>Building on the answers provided in the previous sections, the aim here is to provide an overall assessment of the project and its contribution to the field of territorial cohesion <i>[Answer length: c. 1 page of text]</i></p>	
<p><b>5.1 Overall assessment of the project</b></p>	
<p><b>Please provide an overall score for the project</b></p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><b>What were the strongest and weakest elements of this project?</b></p>	
<p><b>Which elements of the project (if any) could be highlighted as good practice for other projects?</b></p>	
<p><b>Any other comments about the overall quality of the project:</b></p>	





## Annex 3: Stakeholders interviewed for (Task 2)

Project	Name	Role
<b>FOCI</b>	Moritz Lennert	Lead partner
	Karl Peter Schön (German ECP)	Sounding Board
	Wiktor Szydarowski	Sounding Board
	Michaela Gensheimer	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio
<b>DEMIFER</b>	Joop De Beer	Lead partner
	Mats Johansson (Swedish ECP)	Sounding Board
	Sandra Di Baggio	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio
<b>TERCO</b>	Katarzyna Zawalinska	Lead partner
	Philippe Doucet	Sounding Board
	Marjan Vanherwijnen	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio
<b>SGPTDE</b>	Michael Parkinson	Lead partner
	Tomas Hanell	Sounding Board
	Kieran Kearney	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio
<b>ESPON Climate</b>	Stefan Greiving	Lead partner
	Eduarda Marques da Costa	Sounding Board
	Michaela Gensheimer	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio
<b>GEOSPECS</b>	Erik Gloersen	Lead partner
	Cliff Hague (UK ECP)	Sounding Board
	Kieran Kearney	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio
<b>EUROISLANDS</b>	Ionnais Spilainis	Lead partner
	Mathilde Konstantopoulou	Stakeholder
	Sandra Di Baggio	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio

<b>PURR</b>	Steinar Johansen	Lead partner
	Bjørn Frode Moen	Stakeholder
	Sara Ferrara	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio
<b>POLYCE</b>	Paul Grohmann	Stakeholder
	Rudolph Gissinger	Lead partner
	Michaela Gensheimer	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio
<b>INTERCO<sup>1</sup></b>	Hy Dao	Lead partner
	Marjan Vanherwijnen	ESPON CU
	Lewis Dijkstra	DG Regio
<b>HyperAtlas</b>	Jérôme Gensel	Lead partner
	Marjan Vanherwijnen	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio
<b>INTERSTRAT</b>	Julius Ursu	Lead partner
	Maria Prezioso (Italian ECP)	Project partner
	Cormac Walsh	Project partner
	Sandra Di Baggio	ESPON CU
	Philippe Monfort	DG Regio

<sup>1</sup> For both Priority 3 projects (INTERCO and HyperAtlas) there were no Sounding Board or stakeholders directly involved.

## Annex 4: ESPON Stakeholder interview guide (Task 2)

This template has been adapted according to the type of stakeholder (e.g Project Leader, ESPON staff member etc.) to be interviewed. It provides a guide to assist the interviewer to cover the range of relevant issues.

<p><b>ESPON Priority 1,2,3 or 4</b> <b>Project acronym:</b></p>
<p><b>1. Project design, conception and selection</b></p>
<p>1.1. What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process (e.g funding opportunity, repeat project, specific interest or expertise)?</p> <p>1.2. Would they participate in another ESPON project (or have they been involved again)?</p> <p>1.3. What was the project design, conception and selection process? How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?</p> <p>1.4. To what extent was the project acronym and title helpful and informative to the thematic work carried out during the project?</p>
<p><b>2. Quality of outputs</b></p>
<p>2.1. How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow up, seminars and workshops.</p> <p>2.2. Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs? If so, for what reasons?</p>
<p><b>3. Policy relevance and impact</b></p>
<p>3.1. What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs?</p> <p>3.2. What has been the follow up to the projects?</p> <p>3.3. Did the projects have a demonstrable policy impact? Is this impact at the European, national or regional/local level?</p> <p>3.4. What was the overall added value of the project to ongoing policy debates in the field of territorial cohesion? Was this achieved in your opinion?</p> <p>3.5. To what extent could policy relevance and the impact of the project have been improved?</p>
<p><b>4. Project management and support</b></p>
<p>4.1. Could the ESPON project process be improved? If so, in what ways?</p> <p>4.2. Are there appropriate quality management procedures?</p> <p>4.3. Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate?</p> <p>4.4. To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors</p>

appropriate?

- 4.5. Overall, is support from the ESPON team adequate? In what ways could it be improved? Do you think that the ESPON team capitalises enough on the research findings from the projects that are carried out?

#### **5. Good practice and recommendations**

- 5.1. What were the critical success factors that contributed to the completion of your project? Previous track record? Size of project? Combination of partners and expertise? Support from ESPON? Thematic area and expertise?
- 5.2. What elements of your project do you consider to be good practice that could be used to inform future projects?
- 5.3. What elements of your project did not work as planned? What could be improved in the future to resolve such issues?
- 5.4. Building on your own experience, what suggestions do you have to shape and refine the next round of ESPON funding? Should the projects be more tightly focused on helping to deliver the Europe 2020 targets? Should the balance of funding to the number of projects be modified to have more variation?
- 5.5. How could the policy relevance and impact of the projects be improved in the future?

## **Annex 5: 12 ESPON project case studies analysed (Task 2)**

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## Priority 1: FOCI

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:** The FOCI project focuses on European cities and urban agglomerations, analysing their current situation, trends and development perspectives. The project combined quantitative data analysis on a range of pan-European economic, social and environmental indicators with several qualitative case studies. The findings have potential policy implications because cities are increasingly acknowledged as important drivers of the European economy in a range of policy documents such as Europe 2020 as well as the Community Strategic Guidelines for EU Cohesion Policy.

**Lead Partner:** *Free University of Brussels – IGEAT, Brussels (Belgium)*

**Budget:** € 998 888,00

**Project's lifetime:** September 2008 – December 2010

**Stage of the project:** Final Report delivered on 15 December 2010

#### Main conclusions:

- The strongest element of this project was the scientific analysis, particularly the range of data collection and analysis on European urban development issues; the exploration of polycentric cooperation, different urban typologies and the index of connection between cities; and analysis of the current economic crisis and its impact on drivers of urban development.
- The outputs were viewed by the peer review experts as of good scientific quality and provide an interesting overview of the current situation and challenges faced by European cities. The breadth of data collected and analysed provides a potentially useful resource for other researchers to build on in future projects.
- By far the weakest element of the FOCI project was that the project specification was considered to be too broad and ambitious, covering a range of issues each of which could have been a single research project in their own right, rather than being combined into one overarching project.
- Consequently, the breadth of the research coverage ensured that it was very difficult to ascertain clear and concise policy relevant conclusions and messages. However, the point is that the project specification was beyond the control of the research team because it was formulated by the members of the Monitoring Committee and the ESPON CU.
- Overall, having said that, the research team did a fairly good job in tackling the project and delivering a range of quality scientific outputs. It is apparent, however, that the partners were much more adept at carrying out academic research in the field and

much less comfortable in developing policy recommendations, partly because they do not follow that closely the latest EU policy developments.

- The fact that the lead partner had previous experience in managing previous ESPON projects really helped in terms of project management and above all to manage the considerable ESPON administrative demands.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The feedback from both the peer reviewers and the interviewees was that project design and ToRs were too broad and ambitious, covering three main research areas: 1) the state of European cities; 2) cities and their hinterland; 3) opportunities for development through polycentric cooperation.
- It was felt, however, that the goals of the project were not very realistic because too much was included in the ToRs. This meant that the solidity and compactness of the overall project was somewhat diluted. Moreover, this made it much more difficult for the project team to really link the large quantity of data that was collected into clear and concise conclusions for policy makers to use.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The lead partner has good experience in carrying out ESPON projects and hence was well placed to put together a decent team to submit a proposal for the FOCI project. This was the main motivation for carrying out the project. In fact, the project team assembled included a mixture of leading scholars in the urban development field, together with some young and up-and-coming researchers in order to cover the main areas listed in the project specification.
- Moreover, the geographical distribution of the researchers, covering six European countries and with partners in central, southern and Eastern Europe was also a strength of the project. In addition, given the lead partner's knowledge of ESPON, good use was made of some current and previous projects in the field of urban development.
- In addition, the project partners were mentioned as having a very competent knowledge of the theories of urban development and some of the participants have been important figures in developing such these theories and hence have a good grasp of the main challenges facing urban areas in Europe.



### **2.1.3**     *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The intended policy goals were to shed more light on a range of issues related to Europe's urban areas, including how to encourage competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability; how to enhance accessibility as well as greater polycentric cooperation. The initial project proposal was well grounded in existing literature and the specific research questions and objectives for every section of the project were well laid out and clear.
- The main strength of the proposal lay in the scientific quality of the approach used to analyse a highly expedient topic and one that, given the salience of cities for economic development in recent theories, would deserve much greater attention in policy making circles.
- Overall, it was felt that the project outputs provide an excellent overview of the key issues affecting cities and leads to interesting and plausible scenarios. However, the feedback was that the project covered far too much ground which made it much more difficult to reach clear and well-targeted conclusions that met the intended policy goals.

## **2.2**     **Quality of outputs**

### **2.2.1**     *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The quality of the outputs was highlighted, particularly by the peer reviewers, as a strength of the FOCI project. Both the Final Report and the Scientific Report are viewed as solid scientific documents that contain a thorough list of findings.
- In particular, the peer reviewers praised the range of data collection and analysis on European urban development issues; the exploration of polycentric cooperation, different urban typologies and the index of connection between cities. In addition, the analysis of the current economic crisis and its impact on drivers of urban development was also welcomed.
- One peer reviewer noted that the project reports included a rich variety of interesting findings that are for the most part nicely mapped although a confusing array of different spatial scales was used. Another peer reviewer thought that the FOCI project provided a valuable analysis of what is happening in urban development in Europe, providing a rich and varied picture of the current situation.
- On the other hand, two of the three peer reviewers felt that the project was less sharp in providing explanations and interpretative frameworks of why certain phenomena are taking place and why they assume the features they do. In particular, one peer reviewer argued that the project results presented appear weak and this is especially due to the absence of a deeper analysis of the phenomena examined which could have increased the added value of the project and provided more useful policy recommendations.
- The project also made use of qualitative research methods, focusing upon several case studies of urban development across Europe. However, a criticism mentioned that

more could have been done with the findings from the case studies in order to highlight more policy relevant conclusions.

**2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops***

- The input from the Monitoring Committee and the SB was on the whole useful although not very extensive. In particular, the feedback from the Monitoring Committee was rather limited with only a few responses being received. The SB members noted that they did not have sufficient time to get into the detail of the project findings to really help shape the final outputs. Also, one SB member was appointed after the Inception Phase and not from the beginning of the project.
- The feedback from the CU was also taken on-board by the project team, especially revisions to the Final Report to improve the policy relevance of the project outputs. This was not a straightforward process, however, because the CU and the European Commission were very keen to have certain changes made to the main policy messages resulting from the project, some of which the research team did not fully agree with. This was due to a difference in opinion about the way in which the research findings should be used to inform current policy debates in the field of territorial cohesion.
- Dissemination of the project findings was cited as an issue by the lead partner because of the lack of a dedicated budget line and relative lack of flexibility to fund such activities. Moreover, the lead partner mentioned that the CU was very keen to shape the content of seminars based on its own key messages. The ESPON organised seminars were cited as being less focused on scientific debate and tackling substantive policy issues and more on publicising the programme itself.

**2.2.3 *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?***

- The level of data collection and analysis was considered by the peer reviewers as comprehensive providing detailed descriptions of the factors and challenges affecting European cities, including the demographic, economic, social, and environmental aspects.
- Both the peer reviewers and the interviewees cited the specific mention of the impact of the current economic crisis on European cities as a particular strength of the project. In particular, one peer reviewer welcomed the way in which the research team try to define the potential impact of the crisis on the drivers of urban development, distinguishing between those that should not be affected, remaining essentially unchanged in the medium term, from those for which new characteristics are emerging.
- The length of the Scientific Report was mentioned as being too long (almost 800 pages) which made it very difficult to pull out the main policy relevant findings. Moreover, the feedback from the Peer reviewers pointed to several important omissions in the Scientific Report, including the absence of an introduction explaining the structure of

the Report; a summary of the purpose of each individual chapter; and a conclusion highlighting what were the main contributions chapter and how they relate to the overall project.

- Overall, the view was that the Scientific Report was basically a compilation of individual papers which, despite their undeniable scientific quality, represented fundamentally isolated pieces of research. Again, this reflects the rather broad and ambitious nature of the original project specification.

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?***

- The feedback on the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs from the FOCI project was rather mixed. Two of the peer reviewers were more positive about the policy relevance and impact of the FOCI findings whilst another reviewer was much more critical.
- The policy related conclusions are viewed as relatively interesting, based on solidly constructed analyses but the main weakness is that they do not lead to a clear set of policy recommendations. The focus is more on describing ‘what’ is happening in Europe’s urban areas rather than on elucidating the factors accounting for the reasons ‘why’ such dynamics are taking place. The feedback suggests that the project partners seem to be much more adept in the field of academic description but less so in the field of developing policy recommendations.
- The main contribution to the policy field was the development of a comprehensive description of the factors and challenges affecting European cities, including the demographic, economic, social, and environmental aspects as well as a discussion of interesting and plausible future scenarios.

### **2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- The detailed nature of the outputs, which cover far too much ground, made it very difficult to reach clear and well-targeted policy conclusions. This was cited as a weakness of the project and hence it is difficult to trace specific policy impacts from the project.

### **2.3.3 *Are the stakeholders themselves still using the outputs (and how?)***

- As stated earlier, the lead partner is currently involved in another ESPON project which links to the work carried out for FOCI. Moreover, the lead partner is involved in various other projects in the field of urban development, including Framework Seven and nationally funded research.

### 2.3.4 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- The policy impact of the overall project was hampered by its sheer breadth of coverage. This reflects, on the one hand, a failure on the part of the research team in identifying appropriate target audiences and policy stakeholders, but also on the part of ESPON in developing a far too broad project specification from the beginning.
- Thus, policy impact could have been improved through a focus on a more detailed set of issues. In addition, the interviewee feedback stressed that the project findings could have been improved via more concise targeted summaries of the main findings aimed at a range of policy makers.

## 2.4 **Project management and support**

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The research team was able to make links with projects in the current programme as well as building on previous work carried out by the lead partner. However, some difficulties were noted in using the ESPON datasets and toolkits because of a lack of availability and suitability of the data needed for the FOCI project. This was stressed as something that needs to be improved for the next period.
- In addition, project administration and financial management was also mentioned as an area that needs to be improved. In particular, the level of financial scrutiny was far too detailed, with questions being made about claims for less than 1 euro. In addition, it took far too long for the project partners to be paid and this was highlighted as a real problem.
- The lead partner stressed that although the budget for the FOCI project seemed large, almost €1 million, in actual fact, the level of funding was not excessive, especially when divided between 7 project partners.
- The lead partner also explained that proportionately too much time was spent on dealing with financial and project management issues, which did impact upon the time available for the research work. This was stressed as an important area that needs to be addressed in the next programming period to ensure that the lead partner would consider carrying out another Priority 1 applied research, ESPON project.
- The fact that the lead partner had previous experience in managing previous ESPON projects really helped in terms of project management and above all to manage the considerable ESPON administrative demands.

## Priority 1: DEMIFER

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

Overall predictions point to labour shortages in the EU after 2010. The Commission Staff Working Document on Europe's demographic future observes that from around 2017 the shrinkage of the population of working age will lead to stagnation and, subsequently, a reduction in total employment. Against this backdrop the European Commission acknowledges the necessity for immigration from outside the EU to meet the requirements of the European labour market. The Fourth Cohesion Report indicates that even today population growth already depends on immigration. In the above-mentioned staff working document the Commission identified a need for further analysis of the effects of migration on Europe's demographic future.

In response to the above-mentioned key policy documents the project addresses the effects of demographic and migratory flows on European regions and cities and examines their implications for regional competitiveness and European cohesion.

#### **Lead Partner:**

*Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), The Netherlands.*

**Budget:** € 781.600,00

**Project's lifetime:** September 2008 –September 2010

**Stage of the project:** Final Report delivered 30 September 2010

#### **Main conclusions:**

- The feedback suggests that this project is perceived overall as very successful in all respects. Various factors contributed to this success, including the robust project design and conception, the overall quality of the research team and the constructive relationship with the different stakeholders involved.
- The thematic focus of the project is by nature policy-relevant because of its importance on the EU-agenda. The potential for the DEMIFER project to have future policy impact is reinforced by its distinct and customised deliverables and outputs targeting specific audiences.
- The peer reviewers, however, identified some shortcomings in the scientific research and analysis, including the lack of focus on informal immigration; the project's lack of differentiation of migration dynamics in rural and urban environments; and the weak linkages established between immigration and climate change.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The project design and conception was considered robust and very good overall by peer reviewers and others who assessed the project such as members of the SB and the CU, particularly in terms of clarity and articulation of the workflow, tasks and deliverables in well-defined, policy-relevant and academic questions. There are indications (mainly from the SB and the CU) that the quality of articulation improved during the project, thanks to constructive exchanges between the different stakeholders involved (project partners, CU, SB, and MC).
- Key elements in this successful design were noted by different interviewees and include the overall quality of the research teams, particularly the leader, and the previous experience of ESPON project members.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- An element which certainly contributed to attracting renowned scientists and helped maintain the momentum of the project is the high policy relevance in Europe of the subject tackled in relation to population ageing, labour force shrinkage and the linkage with immigration, with specific regional characteristics. The high expectations of the project, the selection pressure and close follow-up by the interested parties may have contributed to its enhanced design and achievements.

#### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- Overall predictions point to labour shortages in the EU after 2010. The shrinking population of working age will lead to stagnation and, subsequently, reduction of total employment in Europe. Against this backdrop the European Commission acknowledges the necessity for immigration from outside the EU to meet the requirements of the European labour market. There is a need for further analysis of the effects of migration on Europe's demographic future. In response to the above-mentioned key policy documents the project addresses the effects of demographic and migratory flows on European regions and cities and examines the implications for regional competitiveness and European cohesion.
- There are indications that a number of the project results may be used by end-users such as policy-makers in the form of stand-alone documents. However, according to some interviewees the main added value of DEMIFER in the ESPON context is the fact that it has the potential to provide insights for other ESPON projects, as well as

the shared database, with new data, information and findings, even though difficulties were reported concerning the configuration of the shared ESPON vector database.

## 2.2 Quality of outputs

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- While not particularly innovative in its scientific approach and methodologies, the project was grounded in well-documented state of the art and managed to provide an update of demographic and migration data in Europe. It delivered outcomes such as a typology of regions, maps and policy scenarios that overall were judged very useful, particularly for policy makers and other stakeholders. The main interest of this project for the scientific community lies in the fact that it identifies knowledge gaps and raises or clarifies new questions for research.
- However some shortcomings in the outputs and scientific design have been mentioned, including:
  - the fact that informal immigration is largely ignored by the project despite its recognised importance;
  - the difficulty of linking the project case studies undertaken at more local level (NUTS3) to other project building blocks such as the scenarios developed predominantly at NUTS2 level; more specifically, the project is limited in its capacity to differentiate migration dynamics in rural and urban environments;
  - The project's relatively weak results in terms of linking immigration with climate change, despite the fact that this is an explicit expected project outcome and in many respects a growing source of concern. One explanation for this comparative shortcoming is the too ambitious project terms of reference in relation to the limited overall budget.

### 2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the Monitoring Committee, Sounding Board, and the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- Despite rather well-detailed project specifications in terms of the distinction between policy and academic expectations, it seems that some confusion remained on these issues until late in the project lifespan. The reasons advanced in explanation are not always clear but relate to the difficulty of reconciling the two spheres. In this project, as in other ESPON projects, researchers are expecting clearer specifications on the concept of policy relevance, while the scientists were asked to make efforts in order to assimilate the policy issues at stake.
- Nonetheless resolution of this problem was successful in this project, probably due to a number of factors including:

- a rather intense exchange of views and clarifications between the project leader and other parties involved, mainly the CU, progressively leading to a common understanding that the project is not expected to provide policy solutions but rather tools for comparing policy options in different regional contexts;
  - The existence in the consortium of a partner (Nordregio) with a policy background and appropriate communication skills which gave the project a solid communication strategy. It should be noted however that evidence of effective implementation of this dissemination plan is missing.
- How to handle the sometimes contrasting views of the independent members of the SB was reported as challenging by the project representatives interviewed.

**2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The project delivered outcomes such as a typology of regions, maps and policy scenarios that overall were judged very useful, particularly for policy makers and other stakeholders.

**2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

**2.3.1** *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- As mentioned above the issues tackled by the project (ageing, fertility, labour, competitiveness and the links with immigration, taking account of regional variations) are by nature policy-relevant as they address an important policy challenge for Europe in the coming decades. These themes are as relevant now as they were when the project was designed, the aspects relating to climate change having become even more important than before, although this might be a coincidence as there is no evidence that special provision was made to ensure constant coherence between the project plan and the very rapidly changing policy context.
- The policy relevance of the project is generally ranked very high, thanks particularly to the existence of distinct and customized deliverables and outputs targeting specific audiences, among which the “policy briefs” are particularly well appreciated.

**2.3.2** *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- The policy impact of the project is difficult to judge, according to the peer reviewers and other people interviewed, primarily because the time needed to assess effective use of the project findings and the consequences in real life is much greater than the time-span of this evaluation. However there may be some initial evidence of effective policy



impact of DEMIFER, such as the use of project maps in the Cohesion Report drafted by DG Regio.

### 2.3.3 *Are the stakeholders themselves still using the outputs (and how?)*

- See point 2.3.2 above.

## 2.4 **Project management and support**

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- With high expectations from a challenging subject and with inherent difficulties in gathering data on immigration, the project managed to make good use of limited resources within the scheduled agenda. One of the reported reasons for this success is the quality of the TPG's leader, its management skills and critical mass, as well as the provision of a financial officer specially dedicated to dealing with ESPON administrative issues. The project leader justifies the relatively high share of the budget which was required to cover the high administrative costs generated by the cumbersome ERDF rules for the ESPON programme. In its Terms of Reference, the project was expected to fit into the broader ESPON programme and build close ties with other ESPON projects in terms of data exchange and complementarities. While this objective was reported to have been fairly well achieved in relation to previous ESPON projects, it appears to have been more challenging as regards ongoing projects, owing among other reasons to lack of time. In the same sense other forms of consultation during the project, that might have strengthened its quality, for example with local experts in case studies, seem to have been limited. The main contacts between the project and those outside it to discuss its content and orientations were essentially those with the CU, SB and MC.
- As regards the administrative procedures, the FP7 research programme was cited as an example of simpler and efficient management.
- The lead partner mentioned that the administrative costs are 15% of the budget of the lead partner (NIDI) and 4% of the total DEMIFER budget.



## Priority 1: SGPTDE

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:**

The SGPTDE project focuses on European Secondary Cities, analysing their role and economic importance, particularly in the European, national and regional growth process. It also analyses the policies adopted at different levels of government to maximize their role and contribution to territorial development.

The evaluation of the role played by secondary cities in the growth process, as well as in policies implemented at European, national and local levels to enhance their potential, is mostly based on the results of nine case studies that were carried out.

**Lead Partner:**

*European Institute for Urban Affairs*, United Kingdom

**Budget:** € 745 000,00

**Project lifetime:** February 2010 - December 2012

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered on 28 February 2012 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

**Main conclusions:**

- This project is clear, precise, well-structured and well-crafted. The quality of the literature is high. The case studies are very well designed. The quantitative analysis provides very good and robust results.
- Overall the outputs are both of high scientific quality and useful for policy-makers. The quantitative analyses of the performance of secondary cities, together with the nine case studies, represent the main added value of the project. On the scientific side they provide strong evidence of the importance of second-tier cities for economic development in Europe.
- The quantitative analysis, along with the case studies, presents simple but clear and well-defined results and policy messages consistent with ideas also recently expressed by the European Commission, according to which policies should be location-based and more strictly linked to the Europe 2020 objectives.
- Policy recommendations are clear and are drawn up taking proper account of differences between European Member-States in their economic structures and institutions.
- The project contributes in a significant way to the ongoing policy debate in the field of territorial cohesion.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The feedback from both the peer reviewers and the interviewees was that project design was very clear, precise, well-structured and well-crafted. The proposal conveyed very clearly what the project team intended to do and was clearly laid out. The quality of the literature review at the start was considered to be high. The case studies were very well designed.
- Another great strength lay in the quality of the team: the qualifications of the entire team permitted extensive, independent, critical analysis of urban policy.
- Nevertheless one peer reviewer emphasized the extremely broad scope of the Project Specifications (four questions, 19 sub-questions) and the lack of evidence, in the proposal, on how the project team would cut through the project complexity.

#### 2.1.2 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The intended policy goal was provision of concrete recommendations on how to enhance the role and economic importance of secondary European cities. The aim was to analyse policies adopted at different levels to maximise their role and contribution to territorial development. The project attempted to develop a common understanding of the opportunities and prospects for the territorial development of these cities.
- The project was relevant in that it explained why secondary cities matter, especially in the European Union. The key research questions were outlined very clearly, including a set of project questions, analytical questions, performance questions and policy questions.
- The main strength of the project was in its review, in a clear and accessible way, of both experience analysis and theoretical developments surrounding policy and planning.
- The methodologies were considered by the peer reviewers to be solid and innovative. They were based on a mix of approaches which provided a good balance between quantitative and qualitative methods: review of existing typologies, use of available data, expert assessment and stakeholder involvement. A key element in the analysis was the development of a compatible dataset of secondary urban growth poles to be used in the quantitative research: the proposal suggested the use of Eurostat, the Urban Audit, and the ESPON database.
- One peer reviewer thought the link between the theory used and the model proposed was tenuous.

## 2.2 Quality of outputs

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The quality of the outputs was highlighted by all the peer reviewers as a strength of the SGPTDE project. Both the Draft Final Report and the Scientific Report are considered solid scientific documents embodying a thorough list of findings. The analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, is also very good and the policy recommendations very clear. The project clearly aims to provide a broad overview and clear message for policy-makers and a more detailed picture for researchers.
- Nevertheless one peer reviewer considered the causal link between the degree of decentralization and the development of secondary cities to be not scientifically robust.
- According to the peer reviewers the outputs from the project are highly convincing and of high value, as well as excellently written and conveying a clear narrative. All outputs follow the same structure: they are organised around a number of key questions, the final section addressing policy messages. This structure gives the project strong internal coherence. The outputs are also well embedded in current debates on the literature relating to cities and provide good coverage of the roles of and interactions between large and second-tier cities.
- The use of qualitative research methods, focusing on several case studies of urban development across Europe, is considered as having brought strong added value: the messages from the case studies on individual cities and on national urban policies are woven into the narrative, with the main points clearly stressed. They are used not only as an instrument to illustrate the current situation and increase actual knowledge of the development of secondary cities across European Member States, but also to draw policy recommendations.
- And finally the Executive Summary presents the key messages in a way that makes them very useful for decision-makers.

### 2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the Monitoring Committee, Sounding Board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- The various features played quite a positive role at different stages of the project life-cycle:
  - During the Inception phase there was some uncertainty as to the hypothesis tested, but this was eliminated in the Interim Report where, following CU comments on the Inception Report, the authors precisely identified and listed the hypothesis.
  - When discussing outputs the use of certain SB members and expert advisers appears to have strengthened the project at little additional cost to the ESPON programme.

- When working on the main thematic aspects and undertaking the analytical work, the project benefited from both expert and stakeholder assessment.
- The fact that the SB's comments were made within three weeks of the due date for the Final Report indicates that it was submitted in a timely manner.
- There is evidence that the national contact points fed the findings back to their national policy communities: the UK ESPON contact point made repeated reference to SGPTDE in various presentations and briefs authored by the contact point rather than by the team, suggesting that the project was producing interesting and implementable findings capable of driving policy impact.

**2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- Both the lead partner and one SB member interviewed said the project had delivered a very good report, with relevant outputs.
- One SB member even said he thought it was the best ESPON project he knew.
- The response to the Draft Final Report highlights clear value added by the project, and the SB's comments again praised the project for employing an unusual reporting mode.

**2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

**2.3.1** *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- The feedback on the policy relevance and applicability of the outputs of the SGPTDE project was good. First the issue was clearly understandable and relevant as regards the current policy debate, namely on the role of second-tier and medium-sized cities in economic development. Second, the project clearly aimed to provide policy recommendations on the challenges and opportunities faced by secondary European cities.
- One peer reviewer commented that a key element was that the TPG team took into account the ongoing policy debates relating to the potential effect of the current economic crisis on the development of secondary cities.

**2.3.2** *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- One peer reviewer said that the conclusion of the project is still fairly recent and that it may therefore be too early to assess its policy impact.
- However all agreed that the project has considerable potential for impact at European, national and sub national levels. The report demonstrates that investing in secondary cities makes economic sense and should complement investments in first-tier and / or capital cities.

- The project and its findings were explicitly cited in the report “*Multilevel urban governance or the art of working together*”<sup>2</sup>. The report uses categories derived from the SGPTDE project as a concrete indicator of polycentricism.

### 2.3.3 What could have been done differently to improve project impact?

- According to two peer reviewers all the relevant factors were properly taken into account, and it is therefore hard to find much to criticise in the project.
- However two stated that the Scientific Report was too long, covering a total of 621 pages excluding annexes.
- It would have been useful to have the policy guidelines discussed in greater depth in different urban and national contexts, beyond those of the case studies presented in the project.
- Another minor issue which could have been handled better is the uneven representation of second-tier cities across the countries included in the quantitative analysis. Whereas countries such as the UK, Germany, Austria, Hungary, or Poland are extremely well represented in the sample (for example six Hungarian cities are included in the analysis), only three Swedish cities are represented.
- The project website was extremely rudimentary and quite difficult to actually locate.
- One peer reviewer found that tracing impacts and citations was not helped by the project using two different versions of the acronym (SGPTD(-E)).
- It is therefore hard to determine whether the weakness was poor communications or poor traceability of communications activity, although the project could certainly have done better in explaining its communications activities and their outcomes.

## 2.4 Project management and support

### 2.4.1 Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?

- The Final Report was submitted on time and took into account the comments made by the CU and SB.
- Both stakeholders complained that the project specification was considered unclear and too broad.
- It proved possible to use ESPON data and improve the database.
- The administrative process and financial management of the project were mentioned as unhelpful. In particular, the ESPON administrative processes were considered very heavy and the level of financial scrutiny far too detailed. In addition, it took far too long for the project partners to be paid and this was highlighted as a real problem.

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<sup>2</sup> “*Multilevel urban governance or the art of working together*”, Mart Grisel & Frans van de Waart, p.37 (commissioned by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union)





## Priority 1: TERCO

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:**

The challenge of TERCO is to bring policy insights on territorial co-operation (TC) as a contributing element to European cohesion. This is an important aspect of regional policy, with a large proportion of sub-national authorities and stakeholders motivated to network their localities and regions across borders and internationally. However, in order to develop policy-relevant suggestions for the future design of TC support programmes, it is necessary to address some shortcomings of current mechanisms, particularly with a view to improving the overall working of EU policies, which is the main aim of TERCO.

**Lead Partner:**

*EUROREG – University of Warsaw, Poland*

**Budget:**€ 849.710,00

**Project's lifetime:** February 2010 – March 2013

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered 2 March 2012 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

**Main conclusions:**

- The project addresses territorial cooperation (TC). It has to a large extent delivered in accordance with the plans and has made a substantial contribution to an understanding of European territorial cooperation, even though the presentation and organisation of the results was not always clear and structured, with crucial information often lacking visibility.
- In its implementation the project seems to have been hampered by its intrinsic complexity. It has been particularly difficult for the project partners to differentiate between the scientific and policy questions while at the same time ensuring a clear relationship between them.
- The back-and-forth communications between the CU and the project representative prior to agreement on final versions of the reports, albeit viewed as constructive by those involved, were consuming of time and effort, necessitating unpaid extra work.
- The project is in its final stages so it is too early to assess the magnitude and impact of the outputs which are at this stage limited to project reports. There is however quite strong concern as to the next dissemination steps owing to the lack of a strong communication strategy. As a start, a feedback seminar with the representatives of the different authorities interviewed during the study would be desirable for consolidating and disseminating relevant findings.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- Keeping in mind the difficulty of seizing and quantifying a concept such as territorial cooperation (TC), the project design and conception, as set out both in the ToR and in the project proposal, was judged rather positively by most interviewees. The three peer reviewers agreed that the project had an appropriate work plan and a good balance and coverage of tools and methods, despite the fact that in themselves they were not particularly innovative (document analysis, interviews and case studies used to build a model and indicators as well as a regional typology). The project's capacity to generate data in a cost-effective way in a field where data is difficult to obtain was particularly appreciated.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The research consortium is experienced in this field of research, and submitting a proposal came naturally to it. The respective project partners are used to working together and most have previous ESPON experience. The project leader is also the Polish ESPON contact point and is fully conversant with the programme. The different elements above contributed to motivation and to the success of the participatory process during the TERCO project.

#### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The challenge of TERCO is to bring policy insights on territorial co-operation (TC) as a contributory element in European cohesion. TC is an important aspect of regional policy, with a large proportion of (local) authorities and stakeholders motivated to network their localities and regions across borders and internationally. In order to develop policy-relevant suggestions for the future design of TC support programmes, however, it is necessary to address some shortcomings of current mechanisms, particularly with a view to improving the overall working of EU policies, which is the main aim of TERCO.
- The project seems to have encountered difficulties in terms of maintaining good coherence between the original objectives and hypothesis on the one hand, and the research conducted and its findings on the other. According to the CU, it was particularly difficult for the project leader to differentiate between the scientific and policy questions while at the same time ensuring a clear relationship between them, in accordance with the project specifications.

- Despite the impressive work undertaken including a large number of interviews and processed questionnaires, difficulties in project implementation such as those mentioned above led to internal fragmentation and a lack of clarity in, and visibility of, the messages delivered. Even so the project remains satisfactory overall and has contributed to improving the level of knowledge in this field of research.

## 2.2 Quality of outputs

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- First, according to the peer reviewers and other interviewees the project has to a large extent delivered in accordance with the plans and has made a substantive contribution to an understanding of European territorial cooperation even though, as mentioned above, the presentation and organisation of the results is not always clear and structured, with crucial information often lacking visibility.
- According to one peer-reviewer the two key project outputs are (i) the analytical model as a tool for better understanding a complex reality and (ii) the case studies as a rich source of information. While the model allows better understanding of the range of components involved in territorial cooperation and its limiting factors, it is less convincing in its potential use as a tool for decision-makers. As revealed by the case studies, many individual circumstances - probably impossible to incorporate in a model ultimately determine the success of territorial cooperation.
- The case studies were considered very interesting *per se* by the peer reviewers but the choice of them lacked justification and appeared not fully consistent with the objectives of other parts of the research such as identifying the factors influencing the success of TC.
- As for the case studies, the literature review was judged very interesting in itself but insufficiently used and integrated into the rest of the study.
- A member of the SB, supported by the CU, observed that the project focused on formal and institutionalized forms of TC led by public authorities, such as the Interreg programme, with insufficient attention to other “bottom-up” and less formal initiatives.
- At least one peer-reviewer also considered it a weakness that there was no back-and-forth interaction between the researchers and the people approached during the study via “one-way” interviews or questionnaires. For instance feedback seminars might have helped consolidate as well as improve the findings.

### 2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- Communications between the project leader, on the one hand, and the CU and the SB on the other hand were not straightforward but nonetheless constructive and facilitated

better understanding by the project leader of the policy component and expectations of this initiative, leading to better and more appropriate findings and reports. This process may have been complicated by the fact that the senior researcher, referred to as “leading scientist” in the project proposal, was represented by a less experienced member of the team in daily project management.

- The linkages between the project and other ESPON initiatives and the transversal consistency and integration of the project within the ESPON structure seem to have been successful. This seems to have been driven mainly more by the CU’s recommendations than the proactiveness of the TPG.

### **2.2.3 *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?***

- The project is in its final stages so it is too early to assess the magnitude and impact of the outputs which are at this stage limited to project reports. There is however quite strong concern, at least on the part of two peer reviewers, about the next dissemination steps due to the lack of a strong communication strategy and of a relative imbalance between the policy and academic foci of the project, in favour of the latter.

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?***

- The project addresses territorial cooperation (TC) and the policy relevance of the subject at stake is not put in question, particularly in the context of globalization and economic crisis, with the risk of marginalization of less favoured or peripheral regions of Europe.
- After rather extensive exchanges with the CU, the policy component of the project gained in consistency but the final balance between the policy and academic foci of the project remained in favour of the latter.
- However the project contains important findings which have the potential to feed the policy debate but they suffer from a poor visibility, being sometimes hidden away in report annexes and somehow lacking analytical backing beyond the summative analysis.
- If the policy targets and objectives of the project are well identified, effective conclusions and recommendations tailored to different decision-makers are scarce. The project is in its closing phase and it is too early to judge the policy impact; but in that respect there is already serious concern about the absence of a strong dissemination strategy going beyond the simple delivery of project reports, which are not always self-explanatory and of which the key findings are somehow dispersed.

### **2.3.2** *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- Nowadays project visibility remains rather low on the Internet and more widely. As a start, a feedback seminar with the representatives of different authorities interviewed during the study would be desirable for consolidating and disseminating the findings.

### **2.3.3** *Are the stakeholders themselves still using the outputs (and how?)*

- The project is in its closing phase and it is too early to make a judgement on impact in terms of use of the outputs, but at this stage they are essentially limited to project reports in a form hardly usable by policy-makers and deserving further dissemination via simplification, editing and other activities such as seminars. The CU also has a role to play to ensure that future outputs are part of the ESPON capitalisation and dissemination strategy.

### **2.3.4** *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- Certainly a more ambitious dissemination strategy designed and implemented prior to the end of the project and aimed at different types of policy audience, would have been preferable.
- Despite CU recommendations, the project participants may not have followed the latest developments in the policy debate on territorial cohesion as closely as they should have, leading to potential gaps between the project orientations and the evolving policy context.

## **2.4 Project management and support**

### **2.4.1** *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- In its implementation the project seems to have been hampered by its intrinsic complexity. The very definition of the notion of territorial cooperation seems to have been a source of difficulty and of some misunderstanding between the project leader and both the CU and SB.
- The project, however, was well managed and delivered as planned and on schedule.
- The back-and-forth communications between the CU and the project representative prior to agreement on final versions of the reports, while considered constructive by those involved, were consuming of time and effort, generating unpaid extra work.
- Moreover the administrative burden relating to project reporting and management was considered heavy by the project leader, adding to 'hidden' project costs.



## Priority 1: ESPON CLIMATE

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:**

The principal focus of the project is on identifying and comparing the relative vulnerability of ESPON regions to negative impacts from climate change. Specifically, it provides a comprehensive territorial assessment method, in contrast to previous studies which have largely been sectoral in focus.

**Lead Partner:**

*TU Dortmund University, Germany.*

**Budget:** € 999.418,60

**Project's lifetime:** March 2009 – April 2011

**Stage of the project:** Final Report delivered on 31 May 2011

**Main conclusions:**

- The feedback received from the peer reviewers confirms that CLIMATE was a successful project, highly innovative and it contributed to the mission of the ESPON programme.
- The study makes a novel contribution to knowledge by producing a composite index using a wide range of different types of data and providing a comprehensive output using easily readable and understandable maps.
- The strongest point is certainly the innovative methodological approach in terms of assessing regional climate change vulnerability and the associated maps based on the developed typology. The potential policy impact seems to be very high for this project and deserves attention on the part of policymakers and practitioners.
- The weakest elements of the CLIMATE project were: a lack in the transparency of how the indicators have been constructed and a limited review of other methods and approaches. The dissemination strategy is also perceived as lacking in ambition which is regrettable because of the high potential impact of the project results. The challenge will be to track how the findings are incorporated (or not) into future policy development.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- A peer reviewer states that the original application and the Inception Report do not clearly state the specific aims and objectives of the project. Nevertheless, the final output of the project contributes to the ESPON 2013 programme. The flexibility in the specifications of the project has been perceived positively by the project leader.
- The goals of the projects were realistic and the global design of the project appears logical, realistic and coherent.
- The peer reviewers emphasise that this project refers to a range of other ESPON projects and data sources. It therefore fits into the ESPON family of projects.
- The research method using both qualitative (participatory) and quantitative (modelling) methods is considered by all peer reviewers as innovative in many respects. First of all because of the breadth of coverage of information and issues. Secondly, because of the attempt of the TPG to produce regional level datasets and typologies of central relevance for considering the issues of climate change vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation potentials. The shift from a sector-specific climate change impact assessment towards a more integrated and holistic perspective is a basis for further research.
- Nevertheless, two remarks, raised by two different peer reviewers were less positive:
  - The robustness and rationale of the process can only be discovered and assessed by reading the Scientific Report while in the main Final Report, the approach to the assembly and computation of the indicators is only explained in broad terms. One peer reviewer suggests adding more details about the interview questionnaires would have been helpful.
  - Other approaches and models are quite poorly reviewed. Even if the approach chosen seems appropriate and relevant to the study objective.
- The project's title is mentioned as not being very informative for two peer reviewers. A SB member commented that the title of the revised Final Report did not correspond to the contents of the Report.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The German partner was leader for the first time as ESPON was really the only programme which would enable the research team to carry out this study combining applied research and policy relevancy.
- The TPG is considered to have a high level of both technical and climate-related knowledge. Their involvements in other related studies helped them to contextualise the project and underscore its contribution to knowledge.



### **2.1.3** *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The specific research goals of the project were attained and the classification of regions' territorial vulnerability to climate change is considered by the peer reviewers as a novel contribution to knowledge in this field. One peer reviewer thinks it is the first attempt to measure several climate change related problems at such detailed, regional level.
- According to the other stakeholders interviewed, the project has reached its goals and delivered valuable policy outputs.

## **2.2 Quality of outputs**

### **2.2.1** *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The overall quality of the outputs is perceived as very good to excellent by the Peer reviewers.
- The project timetable, even if it was challenging given the range of deliverables, was well respected.
- The presentation of the results in maps was certainly welcomed. But it would be useful to find the exact data for all indicators for free on the web. It seems that the website of the project ([www.espon-climate.eu](http://www.espon-climate.eu)) is not active.
- The added value is considerable because of the novel methodological approach described earlier.
- The cost-effectiveness of the study is perceived as very good by the peer reviewers. Although further investigations could be completed with additional resources.

### **2.2.2** *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- No information.

### **2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The stakeholders interviewed said the project delivered a good report even if the process of managing the different partners was not a straightforward task.

## 2.3 Policy relevance and impact

### 2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- The approach is probably more useable in a European policy context rather than at a more detailed level even though the maps and figures could be used by local policy makers.
- The peer reviewers propose to produce more focused reading materials (such as an FAQ) from the project in order to address policy makers.
- The project application did not provide very detailed information as regards the target audiences for the outputs of the project. The dissemination strategy was not ambitious enough by the TPG and the time dedicated to this function related to the resources is questionable.
- The policy relevance of the project appears, for one peer reviewer, to have been defined rather at the end of the project on request of the CU. It is although difficult to make direct linkage between research and policy. Another peer reviewer states that the project is, in itself, policy-relevant and that is not necessary to highlight it throughout the project lifetime.

### 2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- Regarding policy impact, the peer reviewers agree that the evidence provided by the study might be used in designing future criteria for funding programmes of EU policies. It is definitely worth considering within the context of planning for the new Structural Fund Programmes 2014-2020.
- The peer reviewers state that the impact of the results can only be noted in the future (i.e. by the study's contribution to the criteria for funding in the future programmes). It is therefore difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about the policy impact of the research at the moment.
- The project makes adaptive policy recommendations for different types of regions but these recommendations are somewhat general.
- On the other hand, the CU and lead partner cited that fact that the impact of the project has already been notable especially with the European Environmental Agency in Copenhagen using project data to model results.

### 2.3.3 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- One peer reviewer suggests discussing in more detail the weighting for the composite index.
- Another peer reviewer suggests producing shorter and more focused reading materials.

## 2.4 Project management and support

2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The relationship with the CU was quite intense and the TPG made an effort to modify the research approach and details during the study in order to take into account the remarks from the CU. Although the responses from the TPG were not really immediate and many points remained to be addressed at the draft Final Report stage.
- According to the peer reviewers, some points raised by the CU were significant and merited early response.



## Priority 1: GEOSPECS

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

GEOSPECS (“European perspective on specific types of territories”) focuses on seven specific geographical categories: cross-border; island, mountain; outermost regions; sparsely populated regions; coastal areas; and inner peripheries. The project has the following objectives:

- to develop a coherent perspective on territories with specific geographical features;
- to identify development opportunities in these parts of Europe;
- to assess the extent of socio-economic diversity within each category;
- to explore how one could facilitate achievement of the strategic targets of the European Union and of European countries by taking better account of the diversity of development pre-conditions linked to specific geographical features;
- to identify the potential role of territorial cooperation and partnership and assess the need for targeted policies for GEOSPECS areas, focusing on identification of the appropriate administrative level.

#### **Lead Partner:**

*University of Geneva - Geography Department, Switzerland*

**Budget:** € 899 950,00

**Project’s lifetime:** February 2010 – December 2012

**Stage of the project:** case study based on the Draft Final Report delivered on 2 March 2012 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

#### **Main conclusions:**

- The main overall added value of the project is the work undertaken at local level (LAU2, Local Administrative Unit 2, equivalent to communes or municipalities). At this level the project intended to collect and analyse a considerable amount of data. However, even if the findings are of high quality, the overall quality of the output was slightly reduced by the overly descriptive part of the text and somehow by the difficulties to obtain and manage all the necessary data at LAU2.
- The project specification was very detailed and extensive. However, the policy relevance is considered as being satisfactory. One of the problems seems to concern the structure and clarification of the conclusions in relation to different target groups of readers or users of the project results. Moreover the conclusions should be more explicit in the text and the recommendations clearer for policy-makers.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- According to all the peer reviewers, the overall quality of the project design was very good; the project was coherent in terms of its logical framework. Two of the peer reviewers noted that the project specification was very detailed and extensive.
- According to one peer reviewer both the original project application form and the Inception Report very clearly expressed the objectives of the study and the associated hypothesis.
- During the process the scope was extended and the project specifications rewritten three times.
- Nevertheless the quality of the research methods, hypotheses and tools was judged by two of the three peer reviewers as no better than good, even if they considered the approach was innovative, as mainly based on data collection at LAU2 level (Local Administrative Unit 2, equivalent to communes or municipalities). On the other hand, the third peer reviewer observed that the methods used mainly included traditional desk research, data collection, digital mapping, questionnaire surveys, interviews, cross-analysis and case studies.
- The literature review was assessed as good and precise, but maybe too extensive.
- The organisation of the project, time-scales and management provision was considered very good or excellent, as also was the quality of the project partners. The project partners were mentioned as having very thorough knowledge; most being from territories covered by the project and specialised in the development of areas with special geographical features.
- As regard the realism of the proposal, the report authors themselves pointed out that the collection and compilation of the data at LAU2 level (which was one of the main features of the project) has been revealed as an issue (gaps in the data available, over-stretched resources and heavy workload).

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The lead partner had good experience of carrying out ESPON projects (lead partner for the “Polycentric urban development and rural-urban partnership” project) and hence was well placed to put together a decent team (which has good experience with ESPON) to submit a proposal for the GEOSPECS project.
- One member of the SB was also involved in other ESPON projects (EDORA, PURR) and is one of the Contact Points (ECP).

### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The project was generated by the Monitoring Committee. The intended policy goals were (i) to assess the conditions of selected types of lagging regions, and (ii) to provide a coherent transversal framework for analysing their role and potential. In the Draft Final Report (page 24) the project goal is described thus: “*the enquiry focuses on identifying hypothetical causal connections between the different concepts of geographic specificity and socio-economic performance*”.
- The capacity of regions with specific geographical features to take advantage of their potential rather than being disadvantaged by their geographical handicaps is a highly relevant issue in policy terms. This issue has for several years been explored by academic researchers and the time has now come to decide how to translate the findings into policies.
- Several elements may have limited the project’s capacity to achieve the intended goals, namely the data issue as already mentioned; the project coverage which was considered by one peer reviewer as inadequate, most particularly coverage of territories in the new EU Member-States.

## 2.2 **Quality of outputs**

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- According to two peer reviewers, the overall quality of the output was slightly reduced by the extent of the descriptive part of the text, which obscures the main essence of the findings and their structure. This creates the impression that the remaining elements of the project were somewhat neglected. According to the peer reviewers this seems to be due to the focus at LAU2 level (this level represents 150 049 administrative units and consequently it was difficult to obtain and manage all the available data).
- Indeed, the authors of the GEOSPECS project themselves mention in the project proposal (page 36) that it is generally not possible to go below the NUTS III level in the analyses.
- Nevertheless, one of the peer reviewers observed, regarding the objectives of the project, that GEOSPECS appears to have been successful in meeting the majority of the objectives in respect of the findings and analysis.
- As regards the results of the various approaches followed, the case studies were highlighted by two peer reviewers as well elaborated and providing interesting results.
- According to one peer reviewer the team wished to update the data (which are pre-crisis data) but in the event did not do it.

**2.2.2** *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- According to one stakeholder there was a positive relationship with the TPG and the SB.

**2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- All the peer reviewers praised the range of data collection (LAU2 level), which is the most innovative aspect of the study, even if the use made of it was rather complicated and problematic (see 2.3.3).
- The TPG is satisfied with the use of travel-time distance and potentials as a basis for analysing territorial structures and trends in Europe. They have demonstrated the feasibility of applying these methods to all of Europe on the basis of LAU2-data and their potential as an alternative to NUTS3-analyses.
- The length of the Scientific Report was mentioned by one peer reviewer as being excessive.

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

**2.3.1** *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- The quality of the policy relevance of the project was good although the connection with all key policy questions listed in the Project Specification was insufficiently strong. In the Inception Report it is difficult to find any concrete reference to the interests or needs of external policymakers and practitioners.
- One problem seems to concern the structure and clarification of the conclusions in relation to different target groups or users of the project results. The relationship between the project research questions and policy questions, as stated in the project specification, should have been made more explicit in the Executive Summary and the Draft Final Report.
- All of the peer reviewers mentioned the list of recommendations and conclusions as not being sufficiently clear. Moreover the link to the Europe 2020 strategy is not fully discussed. Issues concerning the macroeconomic environment and particularly the impact of the economic crisis on different types of region are not addressed in the project.
- The nexus model (used for the project) has yet to be fully developed within the context of the Final Report and this (as the CU has noted) is the main 'scientific gap' in the project. Neither is it clear from the Draft Final Report as to what are the main policy recommendations emanating from the study. The CU has requested that the TPG give



these issues more consideration in the revised version of the report in addition to restructuring and editing the text to make the policy messages clearer.

### **2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- All stakeholders mentioned that it is too early to evaluate the project's impact. They all agree that GEOSPECS has the potential to stimulate the interest of policymakers and so could make a good contribution to ongoing policy debates.
- The findings should therefore be better outlined in the text, the conclusions better presented and the recommendations clearer.
- The proposed methods for reaching the target audiences and policy stakeholders appear to have been appropriate. Dissemination activities and the tools envisaged for the project also seemed appropriate (website, newsletters, and meetings).
- One peer reviewer was more doubtful, opining that the report is very weak in terms of the conclusions and recommendations drawn out for policy-making. The reviewer thought that the overall conclusions should not summarize the main problems of regions with specific geographical features, but should rather highlight what politicians can or should do.

### **2.3.3 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?***

- One of the main problems is the way in which findings and conclusions have been communicated. Much could have been done at this level to improve the project impact, for example:
  - the Executive Summary should have been more to-the-point, avoiding useless general reflections and providing more information on the concrete achievements of the study;
  - one peer reviewer suggested that more targeted and to-the-point communication of the project's conclusions and recommendations is necessary to stimulate the interest of policy-makers.
- Better visualisation and representation of the project outputs through graphs or charts would be a definite improvement.
- The presentation of the main outcome of the project – the nexus model – should be followed by instructions to policymakers on how to use it in practice and on how it can be useful for the creation of a regional strategy.
- The lead partner considered that the project could have been much better targeted. For example, he mentioned the lack of adapted tools within the ESPON programme (they had to create new ESPON map templates adapted to the LAU2 level); it would have been more natural to assign this task to the ESPON Database project in the first phase of the 2007-2013 ESPON programme.

## 2.4 Project management and support

2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The administration and financial management of the GEOSPECS project was mentioned as an area that needs to be improved. It is very heavy and this created tensions with partners, mainly with the private company which left the project because of financial issues (e.g. late payments). The process is also too lengthy.

## Priority 2: EUROISLANDS

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

The aim of the EUROISLANDS project is to deliver an appropriate set of policy recommendations and strategic guidance to foster the sustainable development of European islands within the framework of the single market, ensuring equal terms and opportunities with other non-handicapped regions. The envisaged results were:

- in-depth knowledge of the state of islands and an evaluation of their divergence from the European average;
- an analysis of the future of islands from a European perspective;
- a general evaluation of existing policy measures for islands and an analysis of policy options to achieve territorial cohesion.

**Lead Partner:** *University of the Aegean (Greece)*

**Budget:** € 250.000,00

**Project's lifetime:** February 2009 – June 2010

**Stage of the project:** Final Report delivered on 1 March 2011

#### **Main conclusions:**

- In its design and conception this project seems to have been excessively ambitious and unrealistic in terms of its scope and the complexity of the questions to be answered with a too limited budget allocation.
- Even though the project produced some interesting policy relevant results, the quality of the outputs was judged to be limited, owing mainly to the lack of soundness and representativeness of the findings, as well as a rather superficial and unconvincing discussion of policy recommendations.
- An important flaw of this project is the disconnection between the first two parts devoted to an analysis of the situation, and the third part concerning policy recommendations. This problem unfortunately diverted the dialogue between the parties interested in the project from a constructive debate on policy options to a rather intense discussion of methodological soundness.
- This is a Priority 2 project and for that reason the group of stakeholders has a particular interest in the project architecture. Indeed the leading stakeholder in particular, and the group of stakeholders as a whole, followed the project closely, sometimes rather too closely but overall constructively.

- The project leader had never previously led an ESPON project and this lack of experience in the programme may have contributed to difficulties in project management and in the overall understanding of the ESPON scheme, its goals, and the role of the different parties and bodies involved, as well as its demanding procedures and administrative requirements.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- In its design and conception this project seems to have been excessively ambitious and unrealistic in terms both of its scope and of the complexity of the questions to be answered, in relation to the limited budget allocation (€250.000).
- In particular, there seemed to be a degree of misinterpretation and confusion from the inception of the project. The TPG's methodological approach was to use a sample of certain island case studies whilst the CU wanted to have broader results covering all aspects of island realities and situations around Europe.
- According to the TPG, however, this was very difficult to do given the diversity of EU island contexts (e.g. small vs. large). Consequently, the TPG adopted an approach to deal with this point, focusing on available data for all NUTS II and III islands to try to get results on two main points: the state of the islands and their attractiveness.
- The research team demonstrated that they were aware of the scientific state-of-the-art (literature review, citation of other ESPON projects) but the peer reviewers observed that they failed to make effective use of this knowledge to shape their own research.
- The methodologies and tools used were not innovative but, according to one peer reviewer, the tightness of the specification and the limited project budget restricted the research within a fairly traditional mould.

#### ▪ *2.1.2 What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The lead stakeholder, as initiator of the original idea, seems to have been very committed to this Priority 2 project since, and even prior to, its beginning. At all stages, the stakeholders endeavoured actively to help the project leader succeed in the enterprise, but in the event with mixed results.
- It is reasonable to believe that the project leader was motivated to submit a proposal by the momentum created by the lead stakeholder.

### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The situation of the EU islands, particularly in the south of Europe, including Greece where the lead stakeholder is located, is viewed as difficult in the context of a global crisis and of a corpus of EU laws insufficiently tailored, in the eyes of some, to these specific territories, despite the fact that islands have obvious assets that need to be enhanced. This context certainly motivated the launch of the EUROISLANDS project.

## 2.2 **Quality of outputs**

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- According to the three peer reviewers, even though the project produced some interesting results relevant to the policy context, the quality of the outputs was average, with weaknesses relating to (i) the choice and representativeness of case studies and the accuracy of some case study findings, as observed by some members of the stakeholder group, (ii) the soundness of the attractiveness indexes; (iii) the limited usefulness of the islands' monitoring systems; (iv) the quality of the island atlas; (v) sometimes conceptual and methodological confusion, and (vi) the lack of a coherent "storyline".
- It is important to note that although the TPG was familiar with the data issues that would inevitably arise, it was not possible to foresee that for even simple and available data there were considerable problems and uncertainties. For example, for Cyprus three different official figures were available - the ESPON database figure, the EUROSTAT database figure and the Cyprus stakeholder figure.
- For the TPG, this created a number of unforeseen obstacles regarding data handling which meant that too much time was lost in determining which figures could be trusted, used and why. This also added to the complexity of the project.
- The CU had somewhat similar views to the peer reviewers in relation to the quality of the outputs. The CU approved the project but they published it with a special disclaimer in the Final Report.
- An important flaw in this project is the disconnection between, on the one hand, the first two parts devoted to an analysis of the situation, and on the other the third part concerning the policy recommendations which, according to the CU and the peer reviewers, are not based on findings or evidence generated earlier in the project or found elsewhere in the broader literature.
- Following improvements to the Final Report, thanks to repeated requests from the CU, the policy recommendations still look rather like a manifesto based more on political convictions than on scientific evidence. This problem unfortunately diverted the dialogue between the interested parties from a constructive debate on policy options to a rather intense discussion of methodological soundness.

**2.2.2** *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- This is a Priority 2 project and for that reason the stakeholder group occupies a special position in the project architecture.
- As mentioned above the leading stakeholder, as initiator of the original idea, seems to have been very committed to this project from and even prior to the start. At all stages the stakeholders endeavoured to support and actively help the project leader succeed in the enterprise, but in the event with mixed results.
- More generally the stakeholder group as a whole followed the project closely, sometimes very closely but overall constructively. The case study of Cyprus is a good example of the relationship between the project manager and the stakeholders. This does not mean that the TPG was 'lead' by the stakeholders to endorse a particular 'political line'.
- In fact, the discussions between the TPG and the stakeholders during the lifetime of the project were full and frank, with constant complaints that the TPG did not take into account the "particularities" of respective islands. This is precisely the rationale behind Priority 2 projects to engender discussions and dialogue between researchers and policy makers.
- The project leader regrets that a large part of his time was spent dealing with administrative of which an important part was taken up with explaining ESPON's financial rules. As a newcomer to the programme, the project leader rather expected a more stimulating scientific and policy debate with the CU and the stakeholders.

**2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- There seems to be quite a consensus among the different parties involved in the project on the limited quality of the outputs, but it was also argued that the original set-up was largely too ambitious for the allocated budget, which somehow constrained the project to fail from its outset.

**2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

**2.3.1** *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- Overall the policy relevance of the project is judged to be limited, due mainly to the lack of soundness and representativeness of the outputs and findings, as well as to superficial and unconvincing discussion of policy recommendations.

- On the other hand the policy relevance of the topic itself - the EU islands, their situation, diversity and the exploration of innovative policy options to ensure their sustainable development and attractiveness - has been largely confirmed by the peer reviewers and other interviewees.
- According to one peer reviewer the policy recommendations of the project are to a large extent spatially blind and fairly traditional, in a sense running counter to certain other project orientations in relation to the need to develop innovative and customised island policies.
- On the other hand, another peer reviewer pointed out that the project contributed to increasing knowledge and raising awareness levels on issues such as (i) the diversity of situations in European islands and the interest in designing specific policies to enable them to exploit their potential, or (ii) the need to adapt more general and sectoral EU policies to their needs. However, these are not new concepts and one would have expected the project to shed more light on this ongoing policy debate.

### ***2.3.2 Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- Given the limited resources of the project coupled with extra expenditure to improve the reports, only limited funds were actually left for dissemination activities, which seriously limit the possibilities for discussing the project findings in broader arenas.
- Since the completion of the project, the lead partner has been very active in using the findings from the project to produce various publications, including two scientific papers as well as a book covering the project. In addition, a number of presentations to various academic and policy related fora have been given to disseminate the main findings from the project.

### ***2.3.3 Are the stakeholders themselves still using the outputs (and how?)***

- See point 2.3.2 above.

### ***2.3.4 What could have been done differently to improve project impact?***

- To quote one of the peer reviewers, the project might have had a more substantial policy impact if it had (i) attempted to address a more focused set of research questions within the time and other resource constraints of the ESPON programme; (ii) been written in a more concise manner using language more easily digestible by non-specialists; and (iii) linked research findings more closely to more specific policy recommendations for consideration by policymakers (rather than addressing vaguely defined, aspirational policy options).

## 2.4 Project management and support

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- As reported by the CU and the project leader, project implementation turned out to be a laborious exercise with persistent frustration and misunderstandings between the various interested parties.
- Only after more than ten communications between the project leader and the CU, coupled with CU visits to the premises of the project leader, were the final project reports accepted by the latter, along with a disclaimer stating that only the minimum contractual demands had been met. These exchanges gave rise to extra work and costs that clearly went beyond the project budget and were not refunded by ESPON, as well as delays in the final payment.
- The fact that the project leader had never previously managed an ESPON project contributed to the difficulties in the management as well as understanding of the ESPON programme and the role of the different parties and bodies involved.
- Clearly, having new project leaders within the ESPON programme is not a disadvantage but rather crucial in order to ensure a breadth of experience, expertise and knowledge is accumulated. The key point, however, is that there are certain 'barriers to entry' and challenges for new participants of which the CU needs to be aware.
- This is something that should be taken into account by the CU for the next programming period to help new project leaders navigate the administrative procedures.



## Priority 2: PURR

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

The PURR project focuses on creating and testing of new ways of exploring the concept of the « territorial potentials » of some rural areas and small and medium sized towns around the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea. The project aimed to develop methodologies for identifying and realising territorial potentials of selected types of rural regions.

#### **Lead Partner:**

*Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Norway*

**Budget:** € 209 605,00

**Project's lifetime:** February 2010 – November 2011

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered on 31 July 2011 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

#### **Main conclusions:**

- The feedback gathered confirms that this targeted analysis under Priority 2 has led to interesting results using data from another ESPON project (EDORA).
- The strongest element of this project was the dedication of the TPG to take into account the interests and concerns of the different stakeholder groups.
- The PURR project was affected by a timing problem (long delay between project specification and effective launch of the research) and the withdrawal of some initial stakeholders from the project.
- The methodology used was not assessed as “innovative” by the peer reviewers. The policy relevancy aspect of the project was a concern for the TPG throughout the process with a greater emphasis on the local/regional stakeholders than the EU-level. The policy recommendations in the Draft Final Report are also much more oriented towards the regional level.
- The peer reviewers’ opinion about the success of the PURR project is very different ranging from a very good project with few weak points to a poor project. The persons interviewed were more nuanced about the results and quite positive about the way the project has been carried out and its value for the regions involved.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The pre-specified goals of the project in the ToR were considered as realistic by the peer reviewers.
- The TPG did not formulate any hypothesis at the beginning of the project because of the inductive approach. The absence of a clearly identified hypothesis is reported by a peer reviewer as a missed opportunity because they could have given a sharper focus to the reflexive evaluation of the process ex-post, in the Draft Final Report.
- The timescale of the project initially proposed was not realistic because some stages took significantly longer to complete than foreseen. There was a long lead in time for the project prior to the release of the specification and a delay in the appointment of the consultants.
- The qualitative methodology used is rather general and lacks a level of detailed description to fully understand what has been done. A peer reviewer suggests that the sample of stakeholders seems rather small because of the homogeneous way in which their views are referenced in the report. The approach does not appear to be very innovative although there was some potential with the application of the same approach to the five areas.
- For another peer reviewer, the innovative side of PURR's methodology is the way of using methods i.e. emphasis on defining the current rural development policy, using the bottom-up method providing for "tailor-made recommendations".

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The lead partner's institute has been involved in many ESPON projects and is currently working on a Priority 1 project.

#### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The intended policy goals were to create and test new ways to explore the territorial potentials of some rural areas and small-medium-sized towns in peripheral parts of Europe around the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea. In addition, the project was supposed to develop a methodology applicable to all types of rural region.
- In the final output, one peer reviewer doubts the transferability of the methodology to other kinds of regions. Conversely, another peer reviewer is convinced that the developed methodology can be applicable anywhere in the EU, even beyond rural

areas. One peer reviewer thinks the aims of the project have not been fully achieved because of the lack of experience from the TPG, the limited contribution of the data from the previous ESPON projects, the project delay, the timescale and the small budget.

- The project proposal makes extensive use of previous data, typologies and methods from ESPON projects especially from EDORA project. This was due to the small budget available for the PURR project.

## 2.2 Quality of outputs

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- The project outputs (in the Draft Final Report) seem to be less developed than expected by ESPON in the original tender. The descriptive part for each of the five regions is relatively big compared to the comparison between them or a deeper analysis of what the process has revealed in relation to territorial potential.
- The study faced some timing problems due to the long delay between the ToR and the start of the research meaning that key personnel involved changed in the project stakeholders and hence a certain level of continuity, knowledge and commitment to the project was lost.

### 2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- The chosen methodology of combining the general perspective (top-down approach) and the stakeholder perspective (bottom-up approach) is a clear success according to one peer reviewer. On the other hand, it is not a novelty that stakeholders must be involved in effective policy analysis and development. Furthermore, the stakeholder participation (workshops, interviews...) seems to have been very “confidential” involving only a small group of hand-picked representatives. The investment in stakeholder’s participation could have been much more significant in order to ensure a broader involvement of local actors in each region.

### 2.2.3 *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs?*

- The lead stakeholder expressed satisfaction and said that it had been very useful to them, providing scientific insight into a range of policy relevant issues.

## 2.3 Policy relevance and impact

### 2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- The TPG focused on each of the case study regions in order to deliver outputs which were directly usable by respective local stakeholders. The target audience, therefore, was much more developed at the local than at the EU-level.
- The systematic interrogation of datasets combined with other research findings and their use as tools in themed packages to inform and assist local stakeholders in their development planning are the most novel aspects of PURR. The pity is that there is no direct feedback from a range of stakeholders about the utility/relevancy of this task.
- A peer reviewer was positive about the contribution of PURR to current territorial cohesion debates because it applies the “place-based” approach. The study presents options of approaching the assessment of territorial development but also demonstrated how to apply the approach through the case studies. The other peer reviewers believe the contribution to the territorial cohesion debate is limited but it might be because the project did not set itself such specific goals.
- One peer reviewer is surprised not to find any list of participants involved in the workshops confirming the participation from appropriate target audiences and policy makers.
- One stakeholder interviewed assesses ESPON tools as very valuable for the municipalities. PURR in particular was relevant to his region. The potential of impact seems to be great but he regrets that ESPON projects are often focused on a macro-level instead of locally focused.

### 2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- It seems too early to gather evidence of policy impacts from the project but a peer reviewer is optimistic about the fact local stakeholders will make use of the insights gained from the outputs. Another peer reviewer mentions he did not find any evidence of press releases or citations in any kind of policy documents of PURR but the fact that the Final Report has not been produced yet might explain this.
- A greater policy impact could arise if the TPG was able “to mine” the findings from the five areas more thoroughly in order to seek to answer some of the original questions posed by ESPON. The existing conclusions in the Draft Final Report could be more developed, deepened and firmed up in order to achieve this.
- The use of benchmarking is of essential value because it is important for the analysis and inspiring for local and regional stakeholders in their decision-making process.

### 2.3.3 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- In order to improve the policy impact, one peer reviewer suggests to spend time and resources on developing accessible, concise summaries, a user friendly toolkit guide, written and visual aids (e.g. video) to present them to a wider audience of local stakeholders and stimulating discussions and debate about future development options.
- Make sure that stakeholder participants are fully aware of timescales and have taken measures to ensure commitment and continuity of understanding from the original idea till the finalisation of the research and publication of the Final Report.

## 2.4. Project management and support

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The timescale is considered by one peer reviewer as too short to allow significant involvement and feedback but also too long to keep the participating regions interested.
- The communication between the various project stakeholders and the TPG was not as successful as the lead stakeholder would have liked. This was due to several reasons, including the fact that no common workshops with all stakeholders involved were organised; and that the people involved when launching the project were different from those involved during the actual research phase. This was due to changes in personnel and the restructuring of several public authorities in the partner countries involved. The result was that the lead stakeholder often met alone with the TPG, which developed into a fruitful working relationship, although this was not as originally planned.
- A weak point mentioned by one peer reviewer is the lack of reflexive capacity of the research team in respect of the approach, including both the elements from ESPON and those developed by the TPG, in conjunction with the stakeholders.



## Priority 2: POLYCE

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

POLYCE analyses the functional relationship between five capital cities (Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague, and Vienna) and their wider hinterlands and the implication for cohesive, sustainable spatial and societal development.

#### **Lead Partner:**

*Vienna University of Technology - Centre of Regional Science (AT, Austria)*

**Budget:** € 349 957.26

**Project's lifetime:** September 2010 – August 2012

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered on 27 February 2012 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

#### **Main conclusions:**

- The assessment of this project by the peer reviewers is rather unequal leading to an overall assessment spread from “average” to almost “excellent”. The other persons interviewed have been rather positive about the outputs and methodology of the POLYCE project.
- The provision of a comparative approach to analyse the 5 cities is considered as a strong point of the study just as the consultations and coordination process with the stakeholder cities.
- The research methodology is not considered as innovative and is perceived by the peer reviewers as relatively weak because it is based too much on stakeholders' opinions.
- The TPG has included the policy relevancy since the beginning of the project and has involved the stakeholders during the whole project. Nevertheless, the recommendations are not easily readable by non-researchers and there is a lack of explanation on how they should be implemented. This suggests that the policy impact could be rather low even if it is too early to assess it.
- The concept of “smart regional development” is interesting and has a potential to lead to further research.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The overall assessment of the project design and conception has been rated from “average” to “excellent” by the three peer reviewers. These non-consensual assessments are expressed as much as possible in the remarks below.
- A peer reviewer notices that the goals and objectives, working hypotheses and expected output are set out clearly and in a concise manner in the proposal.
- This is contradicted by the other peer reviewers who noticed that the overall goal of the project is not formulated the same way in the different reporting documents. The « mission statement » oscillates around one idea but one would expect more stable, precise, coherent project objectives. Furthermore, there is a lack of focus on the interactions and interconnections amongst the five capitals. The aim of the project is not addressed enough in the Work Packages of the research and this influences the overall outcome of the project.
- The literature review in the proposal is considered by two peer reviewers as appropriate and relevant but lacks publications in the respective national languages of the project partners. This suggests a weak link between the study with the results of earlier research conducted in the Danube region. The third peer reviewer states that the proposal is weakly embedded in the extant literature of urban interconnections, networking and polycentricity.
- In the project design, the TPG has paid attention to risk management and team coordination which is considered positively by a peer reviewer. This is especially because of the size of the team (1 leader + 7 partners) which is relatively large compared to the size of the overall budget.
- The existing website ([www.polyce.eu](http://www.polyce.eu)) contains a lot of documents related to this project.
- The methodological framework is not considered as innovative or sophisticated by two of the peer reviewers. The proposal is assessed as particularly weak by the third peer reviewer on methodologies and justifications as to why some approaches are adopted and not others.
- The term “smart metropolitan development” appears in the Executive Summary and the Final Report and becomes a “key word” of the research for a peer reviewer. Another peer reviewer finds this notion of particular interest and a novel approach.



### **2.1.2** *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- It is the first time that the lead partner participated in an ESPON project. It was a good experience to participate in a Priority 2 project although it proved to be a lot of work. The lead partner was “invited” to take on the role from the other more experienced partners that did not want to take on the responsibility and work in leading a TPG.

### **2.1.3** *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The intended goal is to strengthen the economic position of the five capital cities in the mid-Danube valley and their hinterlands fostering greater integration for the whole region.
- One peer reviewer is sceptical regarding the achievement of the goals of this study because of the different shortcomings listed above (lack of focus on interaction between the cities, absence of solid methodological approach, weak integration of the literature in the proposal, weak team work and coordination between the five teams of the five cities).
- A peer reviewer notes that based on the stated primary objectives of the Inception Report, the project clearly delivers. The project is well documented; it provides a detailed analysis of identified relevant variables and a good attempt at developing an analytical and explanatory model. The Draft Final Report lacks a conclusion summarising the main lessons from the project.

## **2.2 Quality of outputs**

### **2.2.1** *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- According to two peer reviewers, the expectations of the project specifications have been met to a large extent. The quality of the Draft Final Report differs positively from the other documents which lack of structure and coherence.
- The material presented has mostly merits in terms of description of the situation but did not lead to any particularly original discoveries or models.
- The four groups of questions that the project was expected to answer have been insufficiently answered in the research. The key findings could have been presented in a summary using the “question-answer” formula.
- According to one peer reviewer, the project provides a sound comparison of the five cities using a common theoretical framework and a methodology. However:
  - The Draft Final Report tends to study individual cities and their comparisons which is rather to the detriment of the analysis of their mutual interrelationships and interdependencies. A greater effort could have been

made in order to gather more socio-economic data and bring the whole polycentric and networking aspect of the project to the fore.

- The report is overly concerned with concepts and definitions devoting a lot of pages to methodological aspects. The manner to address crucial problems derived from the analysis is not central enough.

### **2.2.2** *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- In the opinion of one peer reviewer, similar outputs could have been achieved in less time and with less money.
- The fact that the study's results are partially based on the stakeholder discussions raises concerns about the ambition of going beyond the compilation of conferences and seminars.
- The presence and inputs from the stakeholders (e.g. consultation process to build the conceptual framework) throughout the process is very clear according to one peer reviewer. Another peer reviewer regrets that the summaries from the five local conferences held in the five cities say relatively little about the utility and/or impact of these conferences.

### **2.2.3** *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs? If so, for what reasons?*

- The lead stakeholder interviewed was satisfied with the results of the project. It is a unique project because of the cooperation between the different partners of the project and the implication of the stakeholders.

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1** *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?*

- The policy relevancy of the project was clearly an ambition of the TPG from the beginning and has been assessed positively by two peer reviewers. The implication of the stakeholders, giving their point of view to make the project's conceptual framework policy-oriented is certainly an added-value in terms of policy applicability of the outputs. As said earlier, the third peer reviewer is very critical regarding the issue of stakeholder involvement.
- The project contribution to knowledge is positive for one peer reviewer. It offers new insights and understanding at both the practical policy as well as analytical, conceptual levels. It addresses a less well researched geographical area of metropolitan development.

- One peer reviewer regrets not to have read lessons from the communication strategy in order to feed other ESPON research projects.
- The compilation and presentation of all conclusions in the Draft Final Report in the form of “Metropolitan agendas” and “Central European Development Agenda” is a plus. These recommendations are relevant to the stakeholder cities’ needs.
- More practical considerations relating to policy documents such as EU 2020 and new regulations for EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 would provide useful material for the decision-makers from the project stakeholder cities (the Danube Region) and for other parts of the EU. The POLYCE project results, if given proper resonance, could as such become part of the wider cohesion policy-making process and debate.
- The further impact of the project will depend on the dissemination of the results. A clear forward-looking strategy of likely events (international conferences at EU level and beyond, policy oriented workshops) including other publications and publicity would have been very useful in the Draft Final Report.
- According to one peer reviewer, the outputs achieved differ significantly from the intended objectives. There is nearly no policy advice about how the cooperation and networking can be achieved between the five cities whilst there is a lot of policy advice targeted on individual cities in isolation.

### **2.3.2** *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?*

- The project has a definite potential to impact policy makers. The fact that the TPG has written a considerable number of papers, participated to international workshops and conferences is certainly positive but it is difficult to assess the impact of those on policy making. A peer reviewer notes that the impression is that they have not planted the seeds for greater debate and future cooperation.
- A main remark concerning the potential of dissemination of the results is related to the language used (English or German). It seems important that the project message would be better disseminated in the language of the concerned countries (Hungarian, Slovak, Slovenian, and Czech) in order to reach targeted policy makers.
- The project dissemination strategy deserves good marks because of the project website, the project’s logo and the newsletters. The dialogue with the stakeholders has been maximised.

### **2.3.3** *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- The Executive Summary and the Final Report are likely to be the most relevant documents for policy-makers. It is important to stress that recommendations included in these texts should be formulated in the form of understandable messages for non-researchers.
- One peer reviewer proposes to categorise the statements into conclusions from empirical research and recommendations (how and what to change? Which instruments

should be used in order to achieve a goal? How to implement the strategy proposed?). Secondly, the recommendations have to be more concrete and operationally usable, customized to the day-to-day work of cities. This is a very strong criticism of the project made by two peer reviewers.

- In order to improve the impact, as already mentioned, the use of national languages has been recommended by several stakeholders.

## 2.4 Project management and support

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The project fits into the wider ESPON family of projects because it aimed to build on results of former projects (ATTREC, INTERCO, DEMOFER, CLIMATE, EUROSTAT, FOCI, Urban audit).
- The administration and financial management of the POLYCE project was mentioned as an area that needs to be improved. In particular, the first level of financial control was too strict.
- Overall, the lead partner explained that proportionately too much time was spent on administrative process taking a long time to fill in the documents. This time spent on this area had a negative impact upon the time available for the research work although the support from the ESPON CU was helpful in this regard.

## Priority 3: INTERCO

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:**

The INTERCO project focuses on bringing together a wide range of data related to territorial cohesion in a systematic fashion, framed in a clear, multi-layered framework (3 dimensions; economy/society/environment decomposed in 8 sub-dimensions), including stakeholder inputs and with a clear goal of policy relevancy. A case study in three specific regions was carried out.

**Lead Partner:**

*University of Geneva, Switzerland.*

**Budget:** € 396 400.00

**Project's lifetime:** February 2010 – February 2012

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered on 30 November 2011 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

**Main conclusions:**

- INTERCO is a project with ambitious goals because of the high expectations in the initial Call for Proposal.
- The strongest point of the project is the contribution to the territorial cohesion debate through the creation of data, graphical presentations and indicators.
- The outputs provided, considering the budget and timescale available are very appropriate according to the peer reviewers.
- The weakest points concern the issue of communication which could have been given more attention by the TPG; the lack of sophisticated quantitative analysis of drivers and effects through more advanced statistical methods; and the rather light coverage of environmental indicators.
- Policy makers have been involved throughout the process making the results very much policy oriented. However, the influence of stakeholders on the final indicators has to be kept in mind. The policy proposals are rather oriented towards academic and technical audiences than towards the broader public.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The project design and conception is well-done and strong according to the peer reviewers even if the goal to finally bring together a wide range of data seems to be very ambitious and perhaps not completely realistic considering the budget and limited timescale.
- The goals of the project are linked to the Call which was also rather ambitious in terms of expectations.
- The main criticism of the project design is that the choice of indicators for territorial cohesion is a profoundly political task. Thus the “best” indicators for cohesion might not command widespread political support, or it might be difficult to find the necessary data to measure cohesion. There is a real risk that the project would not make a step forward in the state-of-the-art and create the desired scientific platform because it fails to deal with these political problems in the search for “ideal-type” indicators.
- The proposal is not very easy to grasp for one peer reviewer, but it might be explained by the technical complexity of the topic. The fact that the TPG uses summarising schemes and tables makes it more comprehensible.
- The research methods are well balanced using both qualitative, interactive (stakeholder participation) and quantitative methods. Nevertheless, a peer reviewer mentioned a few weaknesses:
  - The lack of explanation about the most appropriate method to analyse the questions of the study related to convergence.
  - The lack of advanced statistical methods (econometric analysis) in order to analyse territorial indicators.
  - The “light covering” of environmental indicators excluding “biodiversity or ecosystem services” even if the measurement of the latest is still a challenge for researchers. At least, the TPG could have included some spatial-specific indicators which are informative and relevant for territorial issues.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The TPG has clearly a very detailed knowledge of available data sets as well as their use for the development of indicators for spatial planning.
- The lead partner was already involved in ESPON 2006 and thus was well placed to carry out the INTERCO project.

### **2.1.3** *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- The INTERCO project is the follow-on of a previous ESPON project – the ESPON Database.
- The final output resolves the problems of the complexity of the demands in the original specification. It avoids the problem of attempting to measure regional governance as a component of cohesion.
- According to the peer reviewers, the goals of the project have certainly been reached. Furthermore, it provides valuable inputs for future ESPON research.
- The stakeholders interviewed have mentioned the interference of the MC and DG Regio in the choice of the indicators to monitor territorial cohesion.

## **2.2 Quality of outputs**

### **2.2.1** *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- Overall, the quality of the outputs is scored “excellent to very good” by the peer reviewers.
- The appropriateness of the research methods has been demonstrated in the Draft Final Report. The method gives useful information and outcomes that can be communicated effectively. The use of the “five storylines” seems to be a very interesting method to bridge the challenge between the needs of policy makers for information and differences in policy makers over the way they chose to define “cohesion”.
- The TPG succeeded in generating a database integrating substantial amounts of data from other ESPON projects (like GEOSEPCS, KIT 2013, ESPON CLIMATE) and making the data available for other users.
- The resources have been allocated in a highly effective way, according to the peer reviewers, given the impressive outputs produced.

### **2.2.2** *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, sounding board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- One stakeholder mentioned that the absence of a SB or Steering Committee to support the TPG was a pity.
- The TPG set up a participative approach to capture the concrete demands from the policy makers. This was made through the organisation of workshops and questionnaires. The approach is very much appreciated by a peer reviewer because of its potential to minimise arbitrariness in the process of indicators selection.

- Another peer reviewer questions the fact that the impact of policy makers might have been too important. Citing the rejection by the policy makers of composite indicators or contextual indicators. In order to avoid this dilemma, the reviewer suggests a clear positioning from the beginning of the project by answering the question: are we building indicators to observe trends and the extent to which there is con- or divergence between regions OR indicators to evaluate policy actions?

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?***

- The Draft Final Report is extremely convincing in its presentation and provides clear academic and policy messages. The fact that the information is provided in spread sheets, in databases and user-friendly/visually attractive formats is an added value of INTERCO.
- The close interaction with the stakeholders during the process ensuring that the indicators are most relevant in the field increases the chance that policy makers will actually use the information in their activities. On the other hand, one peer reviewer mentions the risk of transferability and scalability of the findings beyond the immediate stakeholder group into the wider policy community.
- The TPG has come up with a set of 32 indicators which seem easy to use in the policy context. This is certainly a success of INTERCO to have been able to come up with indicators linking the stakeholder's expectations and the theories and literature. The question raised by one peer reviewer is to avoid simplicity in policy debates and have a critical reading about this complex framework.
- The outputs are not only relevant to policy makers but also to researches, think-tanks and other actors through the valuable information provided by the research.
- INTERCO seems to be relevant to ongoing EU-policy debates including EU 2020 agenda and "Beyond the Growth and Stiglitz-Sen-Fittoussi" study. The challenge will be the use of INTERCO in regional and local debates.

### **2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- The peer reviewers mention a lack of information on the dissemination strategy and communication aspects. Outside the formal stakeholders' engagement, the audience engagement seems to have been more modest. Furthermore, the communication plan has been questioned by the MC and has been insufficiently addressed in the Draft Final Report.
- The impact of the project can only be measured after the communication activities have taken place. A peer reviewer makes the hypothesis that the TPG expected the ESPON CU to communicate the findings as it has happened before.



- One peer reviewer has pointed out the contribution of INTERCO in ongoing policy debate because of the mention of the project in several articles<sup>3</sup>.
- The project certainly contributes to progress on the territorial cohesion debate through bringing together different dimensions, perspectives and policy agenda's. Also through supplying improved data, new opportunities for territorial cohesion-research, additional visualization tools and reinforcing previous findings on convergence and divergence and ideas on relations and explanations.

### 2.3.3 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?*

- A suggestion from a peer reviewer would be to discuss the study outputs with the target audience and especially the policy makers. The impact could also be measured by the TPG through interviewing the stakeholders about the selected indicators, the analytical approach, the gap and areas for which data are not available.
- Another suggestion relates to the target audience: why not broaden the debate to a larger public and use media actors and international organizations to communicate about INTERCO? The existing communication seems to be a more targeted to the experts 'community rather than the general public.
- The communication strategy should have been integrated more strategically from the beginning of the project and not entrusted to a minor project partner and subcontractor. The lead partner could have taken this role as a central task of the project.
- Now that the scientific infrastructure has been developed and successfully delivered, it is the role of ESPON CU to encourage the use of the platform in future projects.

## 2.4 **Project management and support**

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The project leader is positive about the feedback received from the CU. It brought definitely some added value to the project output.
- The administrative part was difficult for the lead partner but once you have understood the process it is easier to fulfil the requirements.
- The major difficulty for the lead partner was the fact that the money did not come at the start of the research (like in FP7 projects) and that they received less money than expected because of a disadvantageous exchange rate EUR/CHF.

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<sup>3</sup> The *Key Indicators for Territorial Cohesion and Spatial Planning (KITCASP) project brief* currently being assessed as being two (?) of twelve projects providing useful data. *Towards A Spatial Monitoring Framework For The Island Of Ireland: A Scoping Study*, where several pages are devoted to reproducing the indicator framework developed in INTERCO. It is cited in Chapter 7 of *Europe2020 Towards a more social EU*, a volume prepared as a contribution for the Belgian EU Presidency, in planning the next decade of European policy.



## Priority 3: HyperAtlas

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### 1. Executive Summary

#### **Thematic scope:**

The HyperAtlas project belongs in the ESPON Priority 3 category, a group of projects intended to become shared tools and resources available for all other programme users and contributors for their own needs. The ESPON HyperAtlas tool was initially elaborated for ESPON 2006 and this relatively small “service contract” project is intended to endow the original tool with new functionalities. The thematic coverage of this project is quite large in terms of the data used and policies covered. It offers the possibility of creating a wide range of cartographic maps in support of decision-makers. Using the HyperAtlas tool it is for instance possible to evaluate and compare the comparative level of development of European regions over time.

#### **Lead Partner:**

*Université Joseph Fourier Grenoble (LIG laboratory), France*

**Budget:** € 74.937,00

**Project’s lifetime:** February 2010 – February 2011

**Stage of the project:** Final report delivered in February 2011

#### **Main conclusions:**

- The project is an extension of the initial HyperAtlas tool designed in the ESPON 2006 programme. It has been an occasion for improving the functionalities, usefulness and user-friendliness of the software so as to increase its use by potential users such as policy-makers and territorial managers.
- Overall the scientific and technical qualities of the outputs are ranked very high.
- The excellent working conditions characterising project implementation are due to special conditions such as (i) the initial impetus given by the previous successful experience in ESPON 2006; (ii) the fact that this project was fully under control thanks to its small size, its clear and precise specifications and the fact that it is a service contract; and (iii) a clear common vision on the expected results shared by the CU and the project leader, as well as the appropriateness of the project management team and its capacity to deliver according to the plans.
- Despite major efforts in the design and user-friendliness of the interface created, the tool might remain relatively little known owing to its still limited visibility in the policy sphere and its relative complexity.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The ESPON HyperAtlas tool was initially elaborated for ESPON 2006 and this relatively small “service contract” project is intended to endow the initial tool with new functionalities.
- By nature this project is more a mapping and analytic tool requiring IT and programming capacities and reliance on available data than a research effort building on scientific knowledge and expertise, supported by literature, and generating data to test hypotheses.
- According to the peer reviewers the project seems to have a very clear and precise specification, with a realistic and cost-effective project design building on the previous HyperAtlas instrument with appropriate financial and human resources.

#### 2.1.2 *What motivated participants and stakeholders to participate in the process?*

- The Terms of Reference of the project are tailored as an extension of the initial HyperAtlas tool designed during the ESPON 2006 programme. Not surprisingly, the winning tender for this service contract is that prepared by the creator of the initial HyperAtlas tool. The very specific nature of this project certainly motivated the project leader to bid.
- For the scientist in charge the motivation also reflected the fact that this project presented a unique opportunity to improve the functionalities, usefulness and user-friendliness of his software so as to increase the range of potential users including policy-makers and territorial managers.

#### 2.1.3 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?*

- HyperAtlas is one of the ESPON Priority 3 projects designed to become shared tools and resources available to other programme users and contributors for their own needs.
- The team leader has a perception that successive ESPON programmes have evolved progressively from more traditional research projects addressing fundamental questions and generating basic knowledge, to more practical applications - of which HyperAtlas is one - based on the research results and more directly adapted to policy-makers-.

## 2.2 Quality of outputs

### 2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- Overall the scientific and technical qualities of the outputs were ranked very high by the peer reviewers as well as by the CU.
- According to the peer reviewers the existing HyperAtlas software has, thanks to this project, improved in terms of interactivity and usefulness to the user, particularly with respect to incorporation of new and useful data and the possibility of building time series and working on different geographical scales, including coherent territorial areas other than fixed administrative units, and the means of comparing them.
- Among the expected outputs was an interactive user manual which, according to one peer reviewer and the CU, is of particularly good quality.
- HyperAtlas is an integral component of the ESPON family and, thanks to its specific position in the priority 3 category, is both making use of other projects developed in the programme and being used by them. The value and usability of the project is expected to increase as a result of the data provided by other ESPON contributions.

### 2.2.2 *How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, Sounding Board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops*

- This was a service contract with features differing from those of the usual grant schemes employed for ESPON projects. Therefore the parties involved in the project during its implementation were essentially restricted to the project team and the CU, with highly technical and specific exchanges between them.
- This high technical content of the exchanges is due to the nature of this Priority 3 project which is intended to deliver an open, flexible and interactive tool hosted by the ESPON web platform.

### 2.2.3 *Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?*

- Despite important efforts in the design and user-friendliness of the interface created by the project, a concern was raised by a peer reviewer and shared by one interviewee, to the effect that the tool might remain relatively little known owing to its still limited visibility in the policy sphere and its relative complexity. The project leader responded by arguing that it should be up to the CU to ensure higher publicity for the tool and better integration with other ESPON tools such as their main database.

## **2.3 Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?***

- The project allows automatic generation of maps, thanks to queries made on an existing database. In its nature it is not intended to make advances in the basic understanding of territorial development and cohesion, it being instead an operational and practical tool with which policy-makers and practitioners can test options or make comparisons, leading to better-informed decisions in their work. Given the large coverage of the database and the variety of options available, the range of possible policy fields and end-beneficiaries is large.

### **2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- The project ended with a final report delivered in February 2011 and it is too early to judge its actual policy impact; moreover at this stage the visibility of the tool remains limited. A larger database feeding into the analytical tool, made possible for example by appropriate integration with the ESPON project INTERCO - an option considered by the ESPON managers - would contribute to increasing its usefulness but might still not be sufficient of itself and might need to be accompanied by active dissemination in policy arenas to ensure wider impacts.

### **2.3.3 *Are the stakeholders themselves still using the outputs (and how?)***

- See point 2.3.2 above.

### **2.3.4 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?***

- See point 2.3.2 above.

## **2.4 Project management and support**

### **2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?***

- Project implementation went very well, almost 100% according to the plan and schedule which provided for useful intermediary steps and deliverables, with only minor deviations or delays that were finally all resolved between the CU and the project leader thanks to very constructive exchanges in a relaxed atmosphere.
- These excellent working conditions relied, according to some interviewees, on particular conditions such as (i) the fact that an initial impetus had already been generated by the previous successful experience in ESPON 2006, (ii) the fact that this project was fully under control on account of its small size, its clear and precise specifications and the fact that it is a service contract, and (iii) the clear common vision of the expected results shared by the CU and the project leader, as well as the appropriateness of the project management team and its capacity to deliver in accordance with the plans.

## Priority 4: INTERSTRAT

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### 1. Executive Summary

**Thematic scope:**

The overall goal of the project is to promote the development of integrated territorial development strategies and to encourage the use of ESPON research findings in those strategies.

INTERSTRAT focuses on active learning and aims at maximizing transnational cooperation by facilitating the use of ESPON findings in the creation and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies and supporting transnational learning about the actual and potential contribution of ESPON to integrated policy-making.

**Lead Partner:**

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), United Kingdom

**Budget:** €881, 973.00

**Project's lifetime:** February 2010 - March 2012

**Stage of the project:** Draft Final Report delivered on 22 December 2011 (Final Report not available at the time of evaluation)

**Main conclusions:**

- For the INTERSTRAT project, judging the level of policy relevance is somewhat more difficult given the different aims and objectives for Priority 4, which differ considerably from Priority 1 and 2.
- It is important to recognise that the aim of the project, and all of Priority 4, was not to carry out research but rather focused on “raising interest”, “stimulating awareness”, feeding back to ESPON and developing ECP skills and networking.
- The workshop organized took into consideration the specific national and regional features and the demands of the stakeholders and practitioners.
- However there was an absence of any approach to analysing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the methods and tools. The quality of the objectives is mixed and varies greatly.
- The policy relevance appears to have suffered from a lack of strategic clarity at the outset.
- The website appears weak, providing very poor information without thematic areas, and is only useful for those stakeholders already involved. Nevertheless the interactive events (16 in total, all transnational, with 1,350 participants overall) were a success for the project.

## 2. Main evaluation questions

### 2.1 Project design, conception and selection

#### 2.1.1 *What is the quality of the project design and conception (including ToRs)? Were the goals realistic?*

- The feedback from the peer reviewers provides a mixed picture of the quality of the project. Overall the project design was considered as average which is mostly below the score for the other ESPON projects under review.
- It is important to recognise that the aim of the project, and all of Priority 4 projects, was not to carry out research but rather focused on “raising interest”, “stimulating awareness”, feeding back to ESPON and developing ECP skills and networking.
- Having said that, the main weaknesses appear to be first the way in which the objectives were defined: too vague, too broad and too ambitious according to one of the peer reviewers. Second, there is a lack of a consistent approach to analysing the effectiveness and usability of the methods and tools to be disseminated.
- Moreover, the sample selection of stakeholders should have been better described and the findings might then have been better grouped. According to two peer reviewers it is unclear how stakeholders were identified for inclusion; policy-makers and practitioners were the key potential stakeholders, including a mix of individuals and institutions.
- Stakeholder involvement was not well thought through at the start, possibly due to a lack of strategic clarity as to the goals of the project. Having said that, the TPG agreed from the outset that a single approach to stakeholder involvement was not predetermined before the project began because partners recognised that there would be great diversity in institutional structures and governance traditions amongst the countries in the partnership. Once the project commenced, each partner followed a common template to identify relevant stakeholders from their own country
- The third peer reviewer commented that stakeholders were clearly identified and properly involved in the main activities.
- According to one peer reviewer the Draft Final Report indicates that a common methodology for identifying stakeholders is fully explained in Annex I, whereas in fact there is only one page table of statements without any methodology and explanation.
- The TPG did jointly discuss the issue of how to identify and communicate with stakeholders and developed an eighteen-page ‘Draft template for Engagement Strategies’ document.
- Two of the peer reviewers noted that the financial and human resources were appropriate.



### **2.1.2 *How did the project come to be and what were the intended policy goals? Have those goals been reached? If not, why?***

- The intended policy goals were (i) to focus on active learning aimed at maximizing transnational cooperation by facilitating the use of ESPON findings in the creation and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies, (ii) to support transnational learning of the actual and potential contribution of ESPON to integrated policy-making.
- The project had two main aims: on the one hand to extract from ESPON projects the main findings that could feed into regional, national and European territorial development strategies; and on the other hand to make the main stakeholders aware of these tools, instruments and recommendations.
- As far as involvement of stakeholders was concerned, a relatively large number of workshops were organized. The partners tried to involve all the relevant stakeholders. The Draft Final Report indicates the scale and scope of the activities, but not the effectiveness of the involvement (though this issue is discussed in the Final Report).
- The first step of the project aiming at extracting and selecting useful findings to feed integrated territorial development strategies seems not to have achieved as much as could have been expected. Moreover, the CU commented on the Draft Final Report stating that the INTERSTRAT project has achieved important results in terms of capitalisation activities based on ESPON findings.
- In addition, INTERSTRAT was the first Priority 4 project to be conducted which meant that at the time of the project's main work, very few Priority 1 and 2 projects had published a Final Report and thus the range of findings was rather limited. This is an important issue that needs to be borne in mind for the next period in terms of the timing and effectiveness of ESPON's dissemination activities.

## **2.2 Quality of outputs**

### **2.2.1 *What is the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?***

- The quality of the outputs was judged by the peer reviewers to be average.
- Several problems were highlighted by the peer reviewers as well as by the people interviewed. First it is quite difficult to assess the quality of outputs, because of the rather confused construction of the project. The project is divided into ten sub-objectives: their quality is mixed and varies greatly in the way they have been set out. There is a lack of a clear strategic framework, while the construction of the work packages and the project flow charts give no sense of how the strategic objectives were arrived at. Second the focus was more on minor aspects of activities than on key content and crucial issues.
- The quality of concrete outputs that have been developed is an issue:

- The project team developed a database containing details of key stakeholders; however the diagrams show great variability in country representation (for example, there are more than 1,000 in Greece but fewer than 100 in Belgium).
- The team also developed a website and a shared portal that contains links to the main ESPON website and most of the partners' websites, along with information about the INTERSTRAT project. Nevertheless, all the peer reviewers are doubtful about the website; it seems to have been useful only for the stakeholders involved, and much less so for the whole range of potentially interested actors. It is easy to navigate but its content is poor, and it is hard to discern any added value. Moreover, there are only 59 reports in the library, including very general information and few practical handbooks. By March 2012, one hundred documents had been uploaded to the Library – the most popular page on the website according to the analytics.
- Finally, the Draft Final Report mentions nine Engagement Strategies that should be shown in Annex II. There is, however, no Annex II in the Draft Final Report and thus the engagement strategies cannot be assessed.

***2.2.2 How did the various other features, built into the lifecycle of the project, impact on the quality and timeliness of the output? These features include the monitoring committee, Sounding Board, the expert follow-up, seminars and workshops***

- The workshop organized took into consideration the specific national and regional features and the demands of the stakeholders and practitioners, which is a positive finding. Moreover, it appears from the INTERSTRAT self-evaluation that it enhanced stakeholders' knowledge of ESPON findings and demonstrated the relevance of ESPON results to practitioners' day-to-day activities.
- One peer reviewer mentioned that it is a difficult project to evaluate properly in the absence of a flow of detailed information throughout the project's life.

***2.2.3 Are the stakeholders satisfied with the quality of the outputs, measured as objectively as possible and benchmarked against appropriate criteria?***

- According to the lead partner, the stakeholders have generally been open to listening to what ESPON had to offer. The three events in the UK were well-attended and one event in particular was over-subscribed.

## **2.3. Policy relevance and impact**

### **2.3.1 *What is the policy relevance/applicability of the outputs? Does the output make a contribution to the policy field concerned?***

- For the INTERSTRAT project, judging the level of policy relevance is somewhat more difficult given the different aims and objectives for Priority 4, which differ considerably from Priority 1 and 2.
- Having said that, the project appears to have suffered from a lack of strategic clarity from the outset. Nevertheless some of the activities at least appear to have been adapted to emerging policy issues to ensure that something useful emerged.
- As it is not clear what the project did aim to achieve, it is extremely difficult to assess rationally whether the methods used for reaching stakeholders were appropriate to the project aims.
- The web portal is unconvincing because of its thin content.
- Given what has materially been achieved – a website, demonstration materials and a series of 16 partner events - the allocated resources appear to have been appropriate to those activities. But in terms of effective outcomes, concerns may justly be raised on the efficiency of the project.
- The effectiveness of the demonstration materials as a dissemination tool and stakeholder aid was highlighted by the CU as being particularly positive and a useful bridge between the ESPON findings at European level and the work of practitioners.

### **2.3.2 *Do the experts know of policy impacts from the project outputs? What has been the follow-up to the projects?***

- According to one peer reviewer, the dearth of documentation greatly hindered the identification of the policy impacts of the outputs generated by the project.
- The project had to explore the usefulness of ESPON findings in the development of Integrated Territorial Development Strategies (ITDS); one peer reviewer mentioned that the ITDS conclusions reported in the final report appeared trivial. In general, the information provided seemed to be the result of a “*copy and paste exercise*” from the ESPON reports.

### **2.3.3 *What could have been done differently to improve project impact?***

- One peer reviewer mentioned that the quality of the project results might have been increased if a pre-survey, based on a literature review and several one-to-one interviews with potential stakeholders, had been performed and further activities designed on the basis of its results.

## 2.4 Project management and support

### 2.4.1 *Could the ESPON project process be improved? Are there appropriate quality management procedures? Are the outputs timely? Is the administrative burden proportionate? To what extent are contacts between stakeholders and project contractors appropriate?*

- The administrative burden of the INTERSTRAT project was mentioned by the lead partner as an area that needs to be addressed. The lead partner also expressed the view that the timeframe for delivering the project was too short for it to be possible to go further into detail and to allow follow-up on the implementation of ESPON outputs by stakeholders. Nevertheless, one wonders whether this would have been less of an issue with a better structured strategy.
- The lead partner mentioned that nine partners are perhaps too many. It is difficult to have the partnership agreement signed by everyone. Five or six maximum would be easier to manage.

## Annex 6: Task 3: Further review of the ESPON synthesis report, territorial observations and Priority 1 projects

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This section presents the findings for Task 3 of the ESPON evaluation. It has two main sections. The first focuses on of the ESPON Synthesis Report and Territorial Observatories to assess the policy relevance of the findings<sup>4</sup>. The second section provides a summary of the remaining nineteen Priority 1 projects that were not included in the case study analysis to assess the clarity, focus, feasibility and policy relevance of the results.

### 4.2.1 ESPON Synthesis Report

#### 4.2.1.1 Introduction

- The first ESPON 2013 Synthesis Report was published in September 2010. The following authors are named as contributors to the Report: Kai Böhme, Cliff Hague, Sabine Zillmer and Peter Schön but the main authors are the ESPON Co-ordination Unit based on comments from the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The Report is approximately 100 pages long, and is freely available to download via the ESPON website.
- The main aim of the Report is to take the findings from the first 12 ESPON projects, a mix of six Priority 1 (applied research) and six Priority 2 (targeted analysis) projects, and to make their findings accessible to, and useful for, a wider policy community. This is stated both in the project website as well as in the Foreword to the Report itself.

*“The ambition has been to contribute with territorial dimensions of the Europe 2020 Strategy and provide evidence that can support policy development at all levels, from European to regional /local” (ESPON Website<sup>5</sup>)*

*“The report is the first in a series of three ESPON synthesis reports which all aim to communicate major ESPON results on numerous ongoing research themes relevant for integrated place based policy considerations” (Synthesis Report, p. 3)*

- The Report is structured into four main sections, with a brief Executive Summary and a short concluding chapter (“Use and debate of ESPON results”). The Report includes 26

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<sup>4</sup> The various documents were reviewed by one of the academic peer reviewers that was involved in Task 2 of the ESPON evaluation. This ensures continuity and as well as comparisons to be drawn between individual ESPON projects and the other types of outputs produced by the ESPON programme.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Publications/Menu\\_SynthesisReports/index.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Publications/Menu_SynthesisReports/index.html)

Maps produced by the respective ESPON projects. Each chapter starts with a section headed “Policy relevant key findings” (*sic*) and is both subdivided into sections as well as a series of shaded boxes which loosely correspond to particular sections (and provide more detail on project findings).

- The full Report was launched in Brussels in October 2010 with a press release providing a very brief summary of it. Both the full Report as well as its chapters can be downloaded from the ESPON website. All 26 Maps are also available through the website although in the absence of a central index accessing them involves a time-consuming process of clicking on a ‘next’ button up to fifteen times to access the various maps.

#### 4.2.1.2 *Review of document quality and utility*

- The overall impression of this Report is not very favourable. The main criticisms are listed below.
  - 1) The fundamental flaw is that it is actually not a synthesis in the commonly-understood sense of the word. It merely presents back a very long list of findings from the twelve respective projects in a rather superficial way.
  - 2) It seems that not much effort was made to consider whether the findings have any utility to potential users nor to translate or communicate those findings to make them *more* useful to users. For this reason, it is hard to say that the Report met the ambitions set out in the Foreword to communicate the major ESPON research results.
  - 3) The Report reads as if there has been no single author responsible for it. There are a number of topics that repeatedly ‘pop up’ with no clear logic behind their appearance suggestive of someone interested in these topics e.g. mountain regions, islands, simply adding sentences to a text with no central orchestration.
  - 4) There is no clear policy message in the document. This is contrast to some of the more successful Priority 1 projects such as SGPTDE, DEMIFER or ESPON CLIMATE in which the Executive Summaries were message-based and constructed a crafted narrative to convey the key messages. The Executive Summary in the Synthesis Report is a rather more a disjointed collection of facts drawn from the respective projects.
  - 5) It is not clear how the main findings reported in the document and claimed by DG REGIO relate to the projects undertaken. Each chapter has a broad thematic focus but consists of individual sentences often linked disingenuously with words that claim links that do not bear logical examination (such as furthermore, moreover, even, by contrast). The problem this yields can be nearly illustrated with the section Rural globalisation and rural business networks (p. 44). What it says is neither conceptually novel (of interest to academics) nor clearly written enough to be useful to policy makers. Whilst the section concludes with an apparent typology of the global connections of rural areas, it is not clear what message this has for policy-makers at any level.
  - 6) The document contains several confusions including:
    - Objective facts versus normative beliefs;

- Concepts vs. the realities they are trying to explain;
- Typologies of regions vs. the real regions they are trying to explain;
- Metaphors (e.g. spotlights, enabling spark) vs. technical terms framed in theory;
- Theory as a coherent framework vs. theory as a way of explaining particular facts;
- The logic in the document is somewhat deficient, too often assuming correlation implies causality. For example, the section relating to Map 9 suggests that rising car use in rural areas has caused falling public transport provision, rather than being a result of more obvious causes such as rural depopulation and the rise of mass trunk public transport.

6) The document appears to have been driven by the availability of the maps, rather than the maps being produced to illustrate some kind of synthesis message. At the same time, one of the map projections is incredibly unhelpful (the world map view) and is not helpful in trying to communicate the messages in the text, such as they are, clearly.

7) The language of the document could be improved. There is one section on p. 37-78 which reads like a technical report and is concisely and crisply written in good English. This section stands out from the rest of the document which appears to have been prepared without regard to contributors' language skills. This seriously undermines the integrity of the document and contributes to the sense of an ill-thought out and unhelpful document that does little to deliver its stated goals.

#### 4.2.1.3 Policy relevance of the document

- The policy relevance of the document appears to be rather low. The fundamental issue is that what are claimed as policy relevant findings could better be described as findings that might have some kind of policy implication.
- What the Report does not do is to do anything with the findings, least of all synthesise them, to create a clear set of policy implications. An example is on page 11 – the shortest of the findings there is

*“Regions less reliant on export-industries and financial services seem to have been less severely affected by the economic crisis that hit Europe in 2008” (p. 11)*

- The policy relevance of that finding is not clear beyond it being something that policy makers might be interested to know. Moreover, findings that are not clear are of little or no policy use – in this case, regions *seem* to be affected – but it is not clear if they actually are.
- There is a repeated presentation of different scenarios without suggesting which are more likely than others and if so what policy-makers could do to affect which of those scenarios could emerge or how to deal with them if they do actually happen.
- At the same time, there is no suggestion of how the information presented might be useful to policymakers, whether there should be special action targeted on these regions (for national users), whether regions dependent on export and financial services industries should try to do something different (for regional users), or

whether European regulation/action/co-ordination is warranted (for European users).

- There *are* what might euphemistically be called policy exhortations which urge policy-makers to take particular courses of action, but these are unfortunately not linked with the underlying analysis. The most egregious example of this is the section entitled “Governance Matters” (p. 53-4) in which there is a list which appears to be a précis of the academic state of the art of firm location theory c. 1993 relates more to a desire to encourage multi-level governance than that emerging from the theory.

A further example is the sentence:

*“Sustainable Europe means creating a synergy between [growth, environmental protection and social inclusion].” (p. 83)*

This is at best an *ex ante* definition rather than a research finding. The cliché might almost be acceptable were the following chapter to give some insights into how this synergy might be achieved. This unfortunately does not happen.

#### 4.2.1.4 Policy impact of document

- The press release for the document seems to suggest that DG Regio have found the document very useful, which suggests the potential for a high policy impact:

*Dirk Abner, Director General European Commission DG Regio emphasised the importance of ESPON for the Commission saying "this report is a milestone in the contribution of ESPON to the development of Cohesion Policy...The evidence presented clearly underlines the importance of a territorial and place based approach to policy making". (RTPI Website)<sup>6</sup>*

- However, the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (19<sup>th</sup> May 2011) does not specifically mention ESPON or the Synthesis Report. This is obviously not ideal.
- What is not clear from the Synthesis Report is the role that it has played in the bringing together of these conclusions, or whether it simply presents positions that have been decided to be used within DG Regio. Certainly the headline findings claimed in the Report and the press release do not obviously emerge from the findings actually presented in the Synthesis Report.
- Whilst it is clear that ESPON 2013 as a programme of activity has had a substantial policy impact through the ongoing development of the European territorial agenda, it is not clear that the Synthesis Report has played any positive role in this process. This again raises the suggestion that it is a report that simply attempts to justify *ex post* (and through the use of 26 incidentally-available maps) a set of points that the authors made for their own reasons.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/research/espon/espon-publications/espon-2013-projects-and-summary-reports/>



- This suggestion is further underscored by the relatively limited citation of this document. Normally ESPON reports are relatively well-cited in follow-up literature, but it is only possible to find one reference to this where it is substantively cited, namely:

Faludi, Andreas and Peyrony, Jean, 2011, *Cohesion Policy Contributing to Territorial Cohesion – Future Scenarios*, Refereed article No. 43, September, 2011, *European Journal of Spatial Development*<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, this paper points more to the fact that the Synthesis Report highlights particular important issues rather than forming the basis for any kind of policy action.

*As such, the next guidelines will, amongst other things, need to address the territorial dimension of 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', a point receiving strong support from the 'territorial club'. A new ESPON Synthesis Report (ESPON, 2010) has already homed in on the issues, claiming that attention to good governance and territorial co-operation are vital at every geographical scale, including partnerships at the level of city-regions and larger macro-regions, as well as across policy sectors; themes that are central to territorial cohesion. (Ibid., p.7).*

This does not suggest that the Report has had any kind of policy impact (although one might claim that having Faludi read and cite the document is likely to lead to indirect impact).

## 4.2.2 ESPON Territorial Observations (TOs)

### 4.2.2.1 Introduction

- This section paper provides a review of the six TOs published to date by ESPON. Each of the TOs presents a mix of existing findings from a range of projects; the first five were produced to update earlier ESPON projects with additional data. This it difficult to easily trace the findings back to particular original research. These reports, their date of publication, and the participating ESPON projects are shown below.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nordregio.se/Global/EJSD/Refereed%20articles/refereed43.pdf>

**Table 1: ESPON Territorial Observations**

Title	Date	Projects involved
<b>1. Trends in population development</b>	Nov 2008	Update of demography/migration
<b>2. Trends in Accessibility</b>	Nov 2009	Updates of accessibility indicators
<b>3. Regional economic trends 2000-06</b>	Sep 2010	Map updates of Lisbon indicators
<b>4. Trends in internet roll-out</b>	April 2011	Map updates of ICT's & telecoms
<b>5. The creative workforce</b>	Nov 2011	Map updates of creative industries
<b>6. Regions &amp; cities in global economy</b>	May 2012	TIGER, KIT, SIESTA

- The review has been prepared on the basis of an analysis of all six TOs on the basis of four dimensions, their content, their quality, their policy relevance and their policy impact. Summary tables of these analyses are presented below.
- What follows is a review of the six TOs as an integrated whole, as indicative of the policy relevance and utility of ESPON projects more generally, and the added value of the Territorial Observation work package.

**Table 2: Introduction to the TOs**

Title	Short content summary
<b>1. Trends in population development</b>	Focuses on territorial dynamics of demographic change and migration in EU Offers a regional typology for overall demographic change Compares and analyses annual population changes Considers population change using DG Regio urban-rural typology Looks at future (2030) population development territorial perspectives
<b>2. Trends in Accessibility</b>	Explores the territorial structure of regional accessibility in Europe Summarises ten points of particular relevant to regional policy-makers Sets out recent European trends in air, road, rail and multi-modal transport Relates multimodal accessibility to economic development and migration flow
<b>3. Regional economic trends 2000-06</b>	Reports against seven benchmarks set for territorial economic performance Provides maps of those variables and highlights the main trends Provides a summary of findings of potential interest to policy-makers Argues for the development of a wider indicator set to better capture nuances
<b>4. Trends in internet roll-out</b>	Provides a global picture of the development of the internet Visualises the evolution of the internet in Europe and its consequences Analyses internet usage in European regions using five indicators Provides a disaggregated analysis for specific kinds of region
<b>5. The creative workforce</b>	Provides an overview of creative industries' growth globally and in Europe Identifies the key locational factors driving the emergence of creative workers Explores place-specific opportunities for attracting creative workers Provides evidence for policy-makers to improve creative industry strategies
<b>6. Regions and cities in the global economy</b>	Identifying territorial dimensions to benefit Europe's place in the world Identifying territorial structures best for European competitiveness & cohesion Identifying potential & challenges for regions & cities as global activity sites


**Table 3: Review of document quality and utility**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Short content summary</b>
<b>1. Trends in population development</b>	The quality of the document is generally good. There is a clear structure and argumentation, and the summary points made clearly relate to the evidence presented in the text. The report concludes with a set of 13 observations for policy reflections. The utility of these reflections for policy-makers is not immediately clear, nor is it clear why these 13 are the most important observations for policy makers.
<b>2. Trends in Accessibility</b>	The quality of the document is generally good. There is a clear structure and argumentation, and the summary points made clearly relate to the evidence presented in the text. Observations for policy consideration are included in the sections with the evidence, but are missing from the section comparing economic development and migration to accessibility. The document is sensibly considered with extensive use of “topic sentences” to structure paragraphs. The quality of language is not always of the highest quality nor fluent which hinders message communication.
<b>3. Regional economic trends 2000-06</b>	The quality of the document is generally low. There is not an obvious structure that conveys a message – the structure reports against an indicator set. The policy implications do not obviously flow from the findings (e.g. targeting European actions on the most disadvantaged areas). There is a lot of superfluous text which breaks up the flow of the report and hinders its readability. The quality of language is generally poor given that this is supposed to be about communication rather than a scientific report for academic peers.
<b>4. Trends in internet roll-out</b>	The quality of the document is generally good. There is a clear structure to the report, although some of the sections are a little superfluous. There is a good presentation of evidence although the surrounding commentary is primarily descriptive rather than analytic. There is an effort to have an overall narrative style for the Report. There is a summary of policy implications at the start in a haphazard way that undermines the clear message which could be distilled from the research
<b>5. The creative workforce</b>	The quality of the document is very good, and offers a good vision of what a Territorial Observation should be like. The only shortcoming is the implication that creative industries are highly determining in GDP levels and GDP growth levels which the evidence does not support. The quality of the language is good, reads like a native speaker has been involved in its preparation, and helps in the conveying of its punchy message. The TO has a clear vision for how it will be of use to policy makes, and the key messages for policy makers are well articulated in that framework. The TO uses a “question and answer” approach in the body text that helps to give a sense of how they think their research might be useful.
<b>6. Regions and cities in the global economy</b>	The quality of the document is not good as it is not clear what the purpose of the document is. There is a lot of factual information which is neither particularly novel nor particularly interesting. There are a number of maps for which the point is not evident. The quality of the language is generally good, although not of native quality and this does hinder the communication of the message. There is an attempt to use a Q&A framework, but this fails because the questions that are asked appear to be ones that the data can answer rather than questions that are relevant and useful to authors.

**Table 4: Policy relevance of TO**

Title	Short content summary
<b>1. Trends in population development</b>	The policy relevance of the document is limited by its ambition to inform and enlighten a community who will later be involved in their own policy process. Therefore it is not clear whether the observations selected do indeed relate to issues of interest to policy-makers nor how they could be of utility to policy makers.
<b>2. Trends in Accessibility</b>	The points for policy consideration are not always clear – the point about airports is that only regions with large international airports have a stable air accessibility – but this point comes at the end of a lengthy bullet point. The ten bullet points are not a good summary of the “observations for policy considerations” (sic) in the text – “Regional; strategies including development of regional airports involve some risk for long-term improvement of air accessibility”. This is a good and relevant policy finding.
<b>3. Regional economic trends 2000-06</b>	The policy relevance of this document is low: the findings for consideration are very vague and no use in decision-making. Relevance is further undermined by the fact the data dates from before the economic crisis, whilst policy-makers are primarily concerned with solving problems emerging in the crisis.
<b>4. Trends in internet roll-out</b>	This TO has a very simple policy message which can be summarised thus: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Everyone needs more, faster internet. Large infrastructure investments should be targeted at the hubs, then at the regional level there needs to be good connectivity to the backbone. Everyone needs access to the internet, and investing in these infrastructures is likely to create welfare gains in all regions and contribute to European cohesion.</p> This is not immediately clear, and the Territorial Observation should have been structured around the underlying point. In particular, trends related to specific kinds of regions in Section 6 add little value.
<b>5. The creative workforce</b>	The 11 key messages to policy makers help to deliver this vision – they are well argued, have a clear set of policy messages, and meet the aim of providing policy-makers with evidence they can use to produce effective creative industry strategies for their regions. There is some overselling of the importance of creative industries in an attempt to create clear messages, and the only risk is that this might arouse scepticism amongst a potential audience.
<b>6. Regions and cities in the global economy</b>	There is no obviously stated aim to be policy relevant in this TO, and that is carried through in a lack of clear policy relevance. It is not immediately clear what the report seeks to achieve for policy-makers, other than to encourage urban and regional policy-makers to ensure that European urban fabric and infrastructures are geared to an efficiently support globally oriented economic activities as well as the necessary interaction and exchange of commodities, people and information. Chapter 2 seems excessively lengthy and it is only at the end of the section that the European dimension emerges. Likewise, the policy relevance of the remaining chapters is not immediately clear. It appears to be a summary of findings rather than an attempt to communicate their policy relevance.

**Table 5: Policy impacts of TOs**

Title	Short content summary
1. Trends in population development	Only point made of substance in policy context is that transport linkages affect regional development (Bogataj and Drobne ; Bruil et al. 2011; Champion 2012; Ferry and Vironen 2011; Zillmer and Böhme 2010)
2. Trends in Accessibility	(Bentlage et al. ; Bogataj et al. 2012; Van Acker et al.) Commission White Paper on Transport, cited 2010 draft version <sup>8</sup> lost from final version but one finding on accessibility remains.
3. Regional economic trends 2000-06	Distributed at <b>ESPON 2013 Programme Internal Seminar "Crossing Knowledge Frontiers - Serving the Territories, 7-18 November 2010, Liege, Belgium</b> The Czech Ministry of Spatial development may have an interest in it – number of citations found suggesting they are aware of it. 2 Maps used in Sectoral Report “Economy” by ESPON project ET2050, Politecnico di Milano (see Faludi point)
4. Trends in internet roll-out	 <p>Interesting data/maps! RT @ESPON_Programme ... Trends in Internet roll-out' in Europe <a href="http://ow.ly/4X7L1">http://ow.ly/4X7L1</a></p> <p>2 RETWEETS</p> <p>Cited by Lichtenstein Institute in a report, saying that L is embedded in a dynamic economic space. European Broadband Port II (DG ISM) is broadly enthusiastic about the report and has cited it a lot but it is not a real organisation.</p>
5. The creative workforce	(Drejerska), 2012 <a href="http://www.uv.es/econcult/pdf/Sostenuto_Volume1_EN.pdf">http://www.uv.es/econcult/pdf/Sostenuto_Volume1_EN.pdf</a> (Culture as a factor for economic and social innovation, ERDF/ ISPA funded) <a href="http://sostenutoblog.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/sost-2-gb-j-intcouv1.pdf">http://sostenutoblog.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/sost-2-gb-j-intcouv1.pdf</a> Seems to be picked up in INTERREG partnerships ( <a href="http://interreg.no/IREG/Web.nsf/ShowNews?OpenForm&amp;ID=C024AEF6C20AF74EC1257959004192D8">http://interreg.no/IREG/Web.nsf/ShowNews?OpenForm&amp;ID=C024AEF6C20AF74EC1257959004192D8</a> ) Also features in Midnordic Film Region bid Features in the Tromso Commune Kunstplan Norwegian government regional ministry does little piece on it <a href="http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/krd/dok/tidsskrift_nyhetsbrev/2011/regionalnytt-nr-11-2011.html?id=663789">http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/krd/dok/tidsskrift_nyhetsbrev/2011/regionalnytt-nr-11-2011.html?id=663789</a> Fast for date of publication (Nov 2011) – timely, good piece
6. Regions and cities in the global economy	Too soon for an obvious policy impact to be achieved.

<sup>8</sup> [http://extranet.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/2975D540-8EEE-4584-AD60-C542A8BA7E06/0/pteg\\_Bulletin\\_20101105\\_attachments.pdf](http://extranet.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/2975D540-8EEE-4584-AD60-C542A8BA7E06/0/pteg_Bulletin_20101105_attachments.pdf)

- Bentlage, M., Lüthi, S., and Thierstein, A. "Knowledge creation in German agglomerations and accessibility – An approach involving non-physical connectivity." *Cities*(0).
- Bogataj, M., Domborsky, M., Vidučić, V., and Vodopivec, R. (2012). "Does the Accessibility of CE Regions Influence Investment Attractiveness?" *Industrial Engineering: Innovative Networks*, 49-57.
- Bogataj, M., and Drobne, S. "DECISION MAKING IN COMPETITIVENESS OF REGIONS." *Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR)*, 194.
- Bruil, C., van Schie, P., and van de Velde, M. (2011). "THE DYNAMICS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE."
- Champion, A. (2012). "Europe's Rural Demography." *International Handbook of Rural Demography*, 81-93.
- Drejerska, N. "LOOKING FOR FURTHER DETERMINANTS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT." *ACTA SCIENTIARUM POLONORUM*, 37.
- Ferry, M., and Vironen, H. (2011). "Dealing with Demographic Change: Regional Policy Responses." *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*(1), 25.
- Van Acker, V., Allaert, G., Boussauw, K., Zwerts, E., and Witlox, F. "Mobiel Vlaanderen in een mobiel Europa." *DE SOCIALE STAAT VAN VLAANDEREN 2011*, 311.
- Zillmer, S., and Böhme, K. (2010). "EU Regional Policy–Territorial Cohesion Objectives and Realities (DRAFT)". City.

#### 4.2.2.2 Introduction to Territorial Observations

- The TOs are documents which aim to assist with the communication of findings of ESPON research projects to policy makers and to inform policy deliberations. This aim is set out in the introduction to TO1.

*“ESPON Territorial Observations aim at giving policy makers and practitioners short and concise information on important new evidence related to various dynamics of the European territory, its regions and cities. By publishing several issues of Territorial Observations per year, ESPON will promote its role as provider of comparable facts and evidence on territorial dynamics in support of EU Cohesion Policy” (TO1, p. 4).*

- The TOs are relatively short documents, c. 20 pages with around 12-16 pages of substantial content. Each report includes an executive summary which typically also includes the main messages from ESPON which could be useful to policy makers.
- Each TO has three main chapters which present data, evidence, maps and arguments from (usually unnamed) ESPON projects although in the first five TOs the maps were produced through ‘Update Projects’. They usually do not have a conclusion, but finish at the end of the last substantive section. They have been

published at roughly annual intervals since November 2008, and are available via the ESPON website, although a number of national ESPON contact points have separately made them available.

#### 4.2.2.3 *Review of document quality and utility*

- The quality of the documents is relatively mixed: four of the six are relatively good in their quality whilst two of the documents are a little bit weaker.
- One of the TOs (“The creative workforce”) was actually very good, which is related to the fact that it clearly met a policy need and interest and has achieved very good impact in the ten months since its publication.
- This was not just a result of choosing a ‘lucky’ subject – the report was clearly well-thought through and communicated a clear policy message. The TO was structured around a clear vision of how it was to be useful to policy-makers, and used a refreshing “policy question and evidence answer” approach. These communications were clearly supported by a very polished use of native quality language. This report offers a positive and valuable vision of what the TOs could *potentially* become.
- The good TOs are characterised by a clear structure and argumentation, and a strong correspondence between the summary points and the body of the text. The observations for policy emerge clearly from the way the information is presented. The quality of language is often the weakest point of these reports: given that the aim of these reports is to communicate findings, it is not clear whether any kind of communication experts have been involved in their preparation.
- The other weakness of even the good TOs is that it is not clear why the various pieces of evidence that are selected for policy relevance are the most policy relevant – the TOs tend to overview and précis rather than synthesise and present clear messages. The good TOs have targeted policy relevance as an explicit aim and have achieved uptake in either applied academic research or policy documents/consultancy.
- The weaker TOs replicate the weaknesses of several other ESPON reports in communicating their messages poorly and having neither a clear rationale for the report nor a list of potentially useful policy messages. Moreover, they tend to data driven rather than message driven: they have some data that they want to present because it might be interesting rather than making a strong argument and using the data and maps to corroborate that evidence. The weaker TOs also achieved a much more limited impact than the better TOs.

#### 4.2.2.4 *Policy relevance of document*

- The policy relevance of these reports is highly variable: for the series as a whole it is clear that policy relevance is not one of its strengths. It is not clear as to whether the approach does lead in general to “policy relevant” knowledge being presented.

- This ‘relevance problem’ appears to stem from a relatively limited idea of what policy-makers want and need. In particular, these TOs seem to think it is sufficient to provide general background information rather than at the same time to make the point as to why that information is relevant to the decisions that policy-makers at all levels are facing.
- Most of the TOs have some kind of utility buried in the material that is presented: the TO series could have been strongly improved if the six reports had all been written from the perspective of understanding which policy processes they wanted to inform, and understanding how their data and analysis could inform those processes.
- A majority of the TOs do state some kind of aim to be relevant, whilst TOs 2 and 6 do not. There is thus not always a direct correlation between a stated intent to be policy-relevant and the quality and relevance of the documents as judged above. The four statements of desire to be policy-relevant are given below:
  - *“Reading the new evidence gathered in this issue of ESPON Territorial Observation may contribute to creating new awareness on demographic development and migratory trends and might eventually inspire new policy initiatives – for the benefit of Europe, its regions and cities” (TO 1, p. 4).*
  - *“This ESPON TO3 intends to give policy makers and practitioners short and concise information on territorial dimensions of these strategies by comparing the position of regions around Europe” (TO3, p. 3).*
  - *“The intention is to provide policy makers and practitioners at all geographical levels engaged in the development of their territorial with short and concise information on trends shedding light on the following questions...”(TO4, p. 3)*
  - *“The purpose of this report is to present territorial evidence, trends and dynamics of European regions related to the creative workforce.... [aiming to give policymakers information] about the position of their territory in a European context, to be able to benchmark their region or city...an ever more important input for considerations on the most appropriate tailor-made development path to take” (TO5, P. 3).*
- From this analysis the clearest indicator of what leads to good policy relevance is that there is a clear statement in the introduction of *how* the report will be useful, that is to say the authors understand what the users are interested in and give them information that fits with that criteria.
- In this regard, TO5 distinguishes itself by saying its role is to provide territorial evidence to policymakers to allow themselves to benchmark their performance in terms of creative industries as part of *their* economic development policy process. This leads to 11 clear policy messages as well as a hint of how to use the data set effectively in that process.
- Conversely, an ambition to be policy relevant that simply seeks to provide information that might potentially be useful to those who are later involved in



policy formulation leads the TOs to very general and descriptive “policy relevant key findings” which are driven by the data available rather than user needs.

#### 4.2.2.5 Policy impact of document

- The policy impacts of the TOs has been extremely varied, from one that appears to have had no tangible policy impact whatsoever (possibly due to its recent publication) to one TO that appears to have been adopted in at least one national setting (Norway) as a useful evidence base.
- Without knowing the exact resources involved in the TOs, it is hard to evaluate the additionality of the TOs (i.e. which impacts have been achieved beyond those that would have been achieved directly by the ESPON research projects directly). However, there are some areas where traces of policy impact can be found.
- Several of the TOs have been cited in academic papers – whilst this is not directly evidence of policy impact, it is suggestive that the reports have a rigour to them, and that the idea is circulating in the ESPON community and therefore, may through other routes, achieve a policy impact.
- When one considers the outlets where the TOs have been cited, these are primarily in policy- and trade journals rather than in top academic journals, so it is reasonable to see the dissemination through further citation as being suggestive of moving towards a wider impact. The following papers all cite one or more TO:

- Bentlage, M., Lüthi, S., and Thierstein, A. "Knowledge creation in German agglomerations and accessibility – An approach involving non-physical connectivity." *Cities*(0).
- Bogataj, M., Domborsky, M., Vidučić, V., and Vodopivec, R. (2012). "Does the Accessibility of CE Regions Influence Investment Attractiveness?" *Industrial Engineering: Innovative Networks*, 49-57.
- Bogataj, M., and Drobne, S. "decision making in competitiveness of regionS." *Croatian Operational Research Review (CRORR)*, 194.
- Bruil, C., van Schie, P., and van de Velde, M. (2011). "the dynamics of demographic decline."
- Champion, A. (2012). "Europe's Rural Demography." *International Handbook of Rural Demography*, 81-93.
- Drejerska, N. (2012) "looking for further determinants of regional development." *acta scientiarum polonorum*, 37 11 (1), 37–45.
- Ferry, M., and Vironen, H. (2011). "Dealing with Demographic Change: Regional Policy Responses." *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*(1), 25.
- Zillmer, S., and Böhme, K. (2010). "EU Regional Policy–Territorial Cohesion Objectives and Realities (DRAFT)". *City*.

- There were a number of examples where the reports were cited in policy development projects, which suggest that there was a degree of added value in the TOs beyond the original research projects.
- TO2 (accessibility) was cited in *The social state of Flanders* policy document as well as being cited in an early draft of the Commission White Paper on transport: although

the citation disappeared from the final text, the sentiments supported by the TO were retained.

- TO3 was distributed at an ESPON seminar as well as being used in a subsequent ESPON project: an unverified suggestion was found that the Czech government were influenced by it.
- The European Broadband Port II (a project of DG Information Society) was very enthusiastic in publicising TO4, although not a policy impact.
- TO5 was picked up in a number of INTERREG IVB projects as well as being cited in the Midnordic Film Region bid and Tromsø's arts development plan: that is a quick development given that the TO was published only ten months previously.

### 4.2.3 Analysis of Priority 1 projects

#### 4.2.3.1 The list of 19 Priority 1 projects

For each of the remaining 19, a fiche summarizing their content is presented below.

Priority 1	Project Title	ARTS - Assessment of Regional and Territorial Sensitivity		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
247 787,50 €	31 May 2011	February 2010 – November 2011	Austrian institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning, Austria	3
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARTS aims to develop a tool allowing for analysing the impact of EU legislation (through 12 EU directives representing a sample of EU legislation) against the background of the different sensitivity of regions.</li> <li>• Regions and different types of territories are not equally affected by new EU policy and legislation: that's why the project is expected to identify which types of legislation will have high or low territorial impacts.</li> <li>• Policymakers need evidence-based information that supports them in creating awareness on possible territorial impacts during the policymaking processes of sectoral EU policy and legislation.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	ATTREG - Attractiveness of European Regions and Cities for Residents and Visitors		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
840 067.69 €	30 April 2012	February 2010 – October 2012	University 'Rovira i Virgili', Spain	8
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractive, competitive and dynamic regions and cities have been a major issue for the development of respective policies. The need to support regions and cities in becoming more competitive and attractive is essential.</li> <li>• This project focuses on attractiveness for residents and visitors (residential economy, retirement services, conference and tourism facilities, cultural and natural attractions...); it has to identify factors of attractiveness, the role of sectors, to take an interest in the contribution of attractiveness to economic performance. They also expect to know which instruments could be proposed for enhancing attractiveness.</li> <li>• Finally, the project has to investigate in which way policy makers can improve the attractiveness of their city or region by reconciling the interests of both, residents and visitors.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	EDORA - European Development Opportunities in Rural Areas		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
699 816 €	26 August 2011	September 2008 – September 2010	University of the Highlands and Islands, UK	15
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural areas cover 90% of the EU territory and 60% of the European population. Therefore, their impact is continually decreasing. Depopulation is the main issue, with damaging effects on their prospects for economic development.</li> <li>• To face this problem, rural areas and the strengthening of Rural Development Policy has become an EU priority.</li> <li>• This report is expecting to highlight the present state of European rural areas (strengths, weaknesses, based on economic, social and environmental indicators) and set up different types of rural areas.</li> <li>• Once this diagnostic established, the report has to identify broad development perspectives / opportunities and trends for the different types of rural areas, with a view to achieving improved competitiveness.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	ESaTDOR - European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
799 716 €	16 January 2013	September 2010 – September 2013	University of Liverpool, UK	8
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Europe's seas have become important in terms of policy making on both European and national level. The exploitation of sea and coastal areas for economic purposes is becoming increasingly important but there are also growing concerns on environmental issues.</li> <li>In order to better understand the impact, the project has to map patterns of sea use and types of coastal regions, then to identify development opportunities and finally to explore best practice examples of terrestrial-marine and maritime governance.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	TANGO - Territorial Approaches for New Governance		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
749 849 €	30th November 2013	June 2011 to May 2014	Nordregio, Sweden	5
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project is expected to focus on mechanisms to co-ordinate the territorial precipitation of EU sector policies and national and sub-national policies. The goal of this endeavour is to provide evidence to support future territorial development policies in general and Cohesion Policy that improves regional competitiveness, social inclusion and sustainable and balanced growth of the European territory in particular.</li> <li>It has to develop a typology of current territorial governance practices in Europe, to assess these current practices, to develop a general framework for good territorial governance and finally to extract best practices for territorial governance.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	ET2050 - Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
1 199 969,94 €	Final Report: 30 June 2014	June 2011 – March 2015	Mcrit, Ltd, Spain	11
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ET2050 aims at supporting policy makers in formulating a long-term integrated and coherent vision for the (smart, sustainable and inclusive) development of the EU territory.</li> <li>The project has to elaborate prospective territorial scenarios that define a range that could support the policy makers in creating a vision using a proactive approach.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	EU-LUPA - European Land Use Patterns		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
788 668 €	05 October 2012	July 2010- April 2013	Labein-Tecnalia- Technology Centre, Spain	4
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main objective of the EU LUPA project is to provide a methodology to analyse comparable information about European regions based on data from different sources and different levels, integrating physical dimension (land cover) with social-economic (land use) and environmental.</li> <li>This methodology aims to understand and obtain a clear view on land use changes identifying main challenges and defining policy options to cope with those challenges.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	GREECO - Regional Potential for a Greener Economy		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
749 780.02 €	Final Report: 31 October 2013	June 2011 - July 2014	Foundation Tecnalia Research, Spain	4
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This project seeks to identify the territorially relevant aspects of a green economy to highlight particular opportunities for European regions through implementation of strategic territorial development and cohesion policy actions.</li> <li>GREECO allows a deeper understanding of the territorial dimensions of the green economy; it assesses the current state and future perspectives of the green economy and provides efficient policy actions to strengthen the economy and competitiveness of the European territory.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	KIT - Knowledge, Innovation, Territory		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
750 000 €	June 2012 (draft final report)	February 2010 – December 2012	Polytechnics of Milan, Italy	5
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globalisation of research and technology is accelerating and new scientific and technological powers outside the European territory are attracting and increasing amounts of Research and Development investments. That's why the innovation and knowledge economy (e.g. research and development, knowledge intensive services) has become a significant part of the European economic structure.</li> <li>KIT aims to help the setting up of strategies on innovation that are consistent with the overall reforms of EU Cohesion Policy.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	<b>SIESTA - Spatial indicators for a Europe 2020 Strategy Territorial Analysis</b>		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
400 000 €	31 October 2012	June 2011– April 2013	University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain	7
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim of the project is to illustrate the territorial dimension of the EU2020s<sup>9</sup>; it is envisaged to show how the EU2020S acts territorially, particularly on a regional scale (NUTS 2 level and, when possible, NUTS3).</li> <li>• The main output of the project is to elaborate an Atlas expressing the most significant aspects of this produced cartography. It will demonstrate the current territorial state and, when possible and applicable, the recent trends of the EU regions.</li> <li>• The output of the SIESTA project is not the Atlas alone, but the latter is essential to express spatial patterns across the Union in terms of the EU2020s implementation.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	<b>TIGER - Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions</b>		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
899 801€	30 June 2012	February 2010 – December 2012	Free University of Brussels, Belgium	5
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project raises the impact of globalization on European territories.</li> <li>• The first main objective is to assess the territorial structures of Europe. It identifies the spatially participation of European territories in the global economy as well as the abilities of European territories to resist global competitive.</li> <li>• Then TIGER assesses how Europe, its regions and cities participate in the global flows and networks (trade, finance, knowledge, human mobility) and how the global processes impact on the territorial structures of Europe. Finally, it defines how Europe and its territories position themselves in the world.</li> </ul>				

<sup>9</sup> “Europe 2020. A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth”, COM(2010) 2020.

Priority 1	Project Title	TIPTAP - Territorial Impact Package for Transport and Agricultural Policies		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
347 000 €	11 February 2010	July 2008 – February 2010	Polytechnics of Milan, Italy	3
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project has to develop a Territorial Impact Assessment tool in order to better understand how a certain policy can impact the economic base as well as the social and environmental situation in different types of territories.</li> <li>• The approach to the definition and testing of a tool for territorial impact assessment shall consider the identification of the policies for which territorial impact should be assessed, the development of hypothesis on cause-effect / impacts relations, the reference to cause-effect / impacts relations in the past as a basis for predicting likely effects of future interventions and the designation of the type of analysis to be used.</li> <li>• The TPG also has to assess the data situation for their field of research in the EU candidate countries, the Western Balkans and Turkey, and report on the possibility of including these areas in the inception report.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	SeGI - Services of General Interest		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
988 942.50 €	25 February 2013	November 2010 – September 2013	Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Sweden	10
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services of general interest traditionally comprehend electronic communications, postal services, electricity, gas, water and transport.</li> <li>• The policy ambition regarding services of general interest focuses on “ensuring the provision of services of general interest to all citizens and enterprises in the European Union”.</li> <li>• The EU Member States and also the ESPON Partner States apply various policy approaches to services of general interest. The focus may vary between a focus on redistribution, fostering efficiency, privatization of public services and so on. Territorial cohesion and development policies integrated these general policy ambitions and developed a territorial approach towards services of general interest. The territorial evidence to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of territorial policy measures regarding services of general interest remains nevertheless insufficient. The project is expected to provide the territorial evidence filling this gap</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	ReRisk - ReRisk - Regions at Risk of Energy Poverty		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime	Lead partner	Project partners
699 250 €	July 2010	July 2008 – July 2010	Innobasque, Spain	2
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Europe is becoming increasingly dependent on imported fossil fuels, which negatively affects the security of energy supply. With current trends and policies, the EU's energy import dependence will jump from 50% of total EU energy consumption today to 65% in 2030.</li> <li>• This report has to analyse the European situation, its consumption of energy, its dependency and the impact of an increase in energy prices on the competitiveness and cohesion of European regions.</li> <li>• Moreover, energy supply and demand will have to make significant greater use of renewable energy sources and focus more on energy-efficient methods. That's why the project must partially focus on renewable energies and their implementation.</li> </ul>				

Priority 1	Project Title	TIPSE - Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
749 825 €	31 May 2014	February 2012 – November 2014	Nordic Centre for Spatial Development, Sweden	5
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project has to better understand the territorial pattern of poverty and social exclusion in European regions as well as its development over time.</li> <li>• In order to answer this question, TIPSE will identify territories confronted with high degrees of poverty or social exclusion; it will give policy recommendations follow from a territorial analysis of poverty and social exclusion and finally it will try to explain how poverty and social exclusion can be monitored at territorial level.</li> </ul>				



Priority 1	Project Title	TRACC - TRansport ACCessibility at regional / local scale and patterns in Europe		
Budget	Final report	Project's lifetime:	Lead partner	Project partners
699 790,50 €	31 October 2012	February 2010 – October 2012	Spiekermann & Wegener Urban and Regional Research (S&W), Germany	6
Detailed description of project				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of accessibility is essential for a dynamic territorial development. It depends on an optimal combination of access to available services. That is why this project will focus on transport accessibility within the EU territory.</li> <li>The main objectives of TRACC are to take up and update the results of existing studies on accessibility at the European scale, to extend the range of accessibility indicators by further indicators responding to new policy questions, to extend the spatial resolution of accessibility indicators and to explore the likely impacts of policies at the European and national scale to improve global, European and regional.</li> </ul>				

**Contractual phase (no further information):**

European Neighbour Regions	Neighbour Regions	750 000€	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet
Small and Medium Sized Towns in their Functional Territorial Context	Towns	650 000€	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet
Territorial Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis	Economic Crisis	759 153€	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet

The table below provides a list of all 25 projects undertaken under Priority 1 with their main characteristics in terms of themes covered, budget, time frame and partners involved. Six of them have been more deeply analysed in Task 2 of the evaluation (those underlined in the table).

**Table 6: Main characteristics of Priority 1 projects**

Priority 1 Project	Theme	Budget	Final report on	Lead partner	No. of partners
<b>ATTREG</b>	Attractiveness	840 067.69 €	February 2010 – October 2012	University ‘Rovira I Virgili’, Spain	8
<b>FOCI</b>	Urban Areas	998 888 €	September 2008 – December 2010	Free University of Brussels – IGEAT, Belgium	6
<b>SGPTDE</b>		745 000 €	February 2010 - December 2012	European Institute for Urban Affairs, UK	2
<b>Small and Medium Sized Towns in their Functional Territorial Context*</b>	Urban Areas	650 000 €	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet
<b>CLIMATE</b>	Climate	999 418,60 €	March 2009 – April 2011	TU Dortmund University, Germany	12
<b>DEMIFER</b>	Demography	781 600 €	September 2008 – September 2010	Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), Netherlands	6
<b>GREECO</b>	Economy	749 780.02 €	June 2011 - July 2014	Foundation Tecnalía Research, Spain	4
<b>Territorial Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis*</b>		759 153 €	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet
<b>ReRisk</b>	Energy	699 250 €	July 2008 – July 2010	Innobasque, Spain	2
<b>ARTS</b>	EU Directives	247 787,50 €	February 2010 – November 2011	Austrian institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning, Austria	3
<b>ESaTDOR</b>	European Seas	799 716 €	September 2010 – September 2013	University of Liverpool, UK	8

Priority 1 Project	Theme	Budget	Final report on	Lead partner	No. of partners
<b>TIGER</b>	Globalisation	999 801€	February 2010 – December 2012	Free University of Brussels, Belgium	5
<b>TANGO</b>	Governance	749 849 €	June 2011 to May 2014	Nordregio, Sweden	5
<b>SIESTA</b>	Indicators for a EU 2020 Strategy Analysis	400 000 €	June 2011– April 2013	University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain	7
<b>KIT</b>	Knowledge, Innovation	750 000 €	February 2010 – December 2012	Polytechnics of Milan, Italy	5
<b>EU LUPA</b>	Land use patterns	788 668 €	July 2010- April 2013	Labein-Tecnalia- Technology Centre, Spain	4
<b>European Neighbour Regions*</b>	Neighbour Regions	750 000 €	April 2014	Not selected yet	Not selected yet
<b>TIPSE</b>	Poverty and Exclusion	750 000 €	February 2012 – November 2014	Nordregio, Sweden	5
<b>EDORA</b>	Rural Areas	699 816 €	September 2008 – September 2010	University of the Highlands and Islands, UK	15
<b>ET2050</b>	Scenarios and visions	1 199 969,94€	June 2011 – March 2015	MCRIT, Ltd, Spain	12
<b>SeGi</b>	Services of General Interest	988 942,50 €	November 2010 – September 2013	Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden	10
<b>GEOSPECS</b>	Specific types of territories	899 950 €	February 2010 – December 2012	University of Geneva, Switzerland	9
<b>TERCO</b>	Territorial Cooperation	849 710 €	February 2010 – March 2013	EUROREG, Poland	5
<b>TIPTAP</b>	Territorial Impact Assessment	347 000 €	July 2008 – February 2010	Polytechnics of Milan, Italy	3
<b>TRACC</b>	Transport accessibility	699 790,50 €	February 2010 – October 2012	Spiekermann & Wegener, Germany	6
<b>Average</b>		<b>765 759,30 €</b>	<b>32 months</b>		<b>6</b>

#### 4.2.3.2 Key findings of the analysis

- The main focus of the analysis was to explore the extent to which the respective project specifications evolved and changed through time from the start of the programming period until the end.
- This is to test the hypothesis that the specifications became more targeted towards the end of the period, building on feedback about the earlier projects being rather too broad.
- The analysis focused, therefore, on three sample projects – one which started at the beginning of the period; one in the middle and the third, which was approved towards the end of the period.
- The table below summarises the main findings and actually confirms that, to an extent, the project specifications did become more targeted than those that started at the beginning of the period.

**Table 7: Main findings of the project specifications**

FOCI: 15/01/2008	SeGI: 15/04/2010	TOWN: 23/08/2011
Short bibliography	Bibliography a bit longer	Long bibliography
Part 1: territorial challenges relevant for ESPON 2013 projects: similar		
Part 2: general objectives of applied research projects under Priority 1: similar		
Part 3: Relation of this project to the ESPON 2013 Programme: similar		
Part 4: Thematic scope and policy context: 1.5 pages (European policy context; goal statement)	Part 4: Thematic scope and policy context: 4.5 pages (European policy context; goal statement; connecting factors in European territorial policy documents; policy questions)	Part 4: Thematic scope and policy context: 2 pages (goal statement; European policy context; policy questions)
Part 4: Analytical framework and deliveries expected: (starting point from existing ESPON projects; key research questions; expected deliveries to enhance the scientific platform of ESPON)	Part 4: Analytical framework and deliveries expected: (starting point from existing ESPON projects; key research questions; expected deliveries to enhance the scientific platform of ESPON)	Part 4: Analytical framework and deliveries expected: (general framework; key research questions; analytical approach; elements of the research process; use of existing ESPON Data; research output); results/questions expected are more developed in here; the analytical approach is detailed
Part 5: Outputs and timetable: same structure		
NO Part 6: Budget for the applied research project:	Part 6: Budget for the applied research project: YES	Part 6: Budget for the applied research project: YES
Part 7: Existing access points: same structure		

## Annex 7: Monitoring Committee Members and other Stakeholders interviewed (Task 4)

Stakeholder	Name
<b>Monitoring Committee (MC) Members<sup>10</sup></b>	
Espon MC (Sweden)	Sverker Lindblad
Espon MC (Greece)	Mathilde Konstantopoulou
Espon MC (Netherlands)	Yoni Dekker
Espon MC (Portugal)	Maria José Festas
Espon MC (Romania) - substitute member	Teofil Oliver Gherca
Espon MC (Spain)	Rocio Wojski Perez
Espon MC (UK)	Chris Poulton
Espon MC (Finland)	Satu Tolonen
Espon MC (Luxembourg)	Romain Diederich
Espon MC (Norway)	Odd Godal
Espon MC (Denmark) - substitute member	Bue Nielsen
Espon MC (Belgium, Walloon region)	Mireille Deconinck
<b>Other Stakeholders (including ESPON, EU institutions and others)</b>	
Director ESPON CU	Peter Mehlbye
ESPON CU staff	Michaela Gensheimer
ESPON CU staff	Sandra Di Baggio
ESPON CU staff	Kieran Kearney
ESPON CU staff	Marjan Vanherwijnen
ESPON CU staff	Sara Ferrara
ESPON CU Staff	Jozsef Szarka
ESPON Managing Authority, Luxembourg	Timo Eiser
ESPON Sounding Board and consultant	Cliff Hague

<sup>10</sup> Two focus groups were carried out involving all MC members on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 during an ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting in Brussels.

ESPON Sounding Board and consultant	Karl Peter Schön
Spatial Foresight, Luxembourg, Consultant	Kai Bohme
DG Regio	Eric Von Breska
DG Regio	Christian Svanfeldt
DG Regio	Lewis Dijkstra
DG Regio	Philippe Montfort
Committee of Regions, Forward Studies Unit	Andrea Forti
European Parliament, Committee on Regional Development	Dagmara Stoerring
ex-DG Regio staff responsible for liaison with ESPON	Patrick Salez
Director General of Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)	Jean Perony

## Annex 8: ESPON MC and other Stakeholders Interview Guide (Task 4)

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This template will be adapted according to the type of stakeholder to be interviewed (e.g. ESPON staff, Monitoring Committee or external stakeholder). It provides a guide to assist the interviewer to cover the range of relevant issues.

<b>ESPON Monitoring Committee and Staff Interview Guide</b>	
<b>1. ESPON's 'institutional setting':</b>	
	<p><b>1.1.</b> An assessment of the role of the monitoring committee. Is the right balance struck between strategy on the one hand and detailed or administrative tasks (such as project selection and management) on the other? Is the committee considering an appropriate level of detail or is there room for delegation?</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> An assessment of the composition and activity of the monitoring committee. Is this appropriate and are the right people (including right skills, right level) represented?</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> What other improvements could be made to ESPON's current 'institutional setting' for future funding rounds to make it more 'fit for purpose'?</p>
<b>2. ESPON's 'institutional learning':</b>	
	<p><b>2.1.</b> Is the ESPON team appropriate? Are there enough staff and do they have enough scientific skill? Would it be appropriate to boost the scientific capacity of the team?</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Are current ESPON processes appropriate? Are the administrative elements (including financial control) proportionate? Are they producing the desired results for the applicants? Could they be rationalised?</p> <p><b>2.3.</b> How useful are the ESPON seminars? What do attendees take away in terms of policy lessons, what evidence is there of implementation?</p>
<b>3. ESPON's 'institutional impact':</b>	
	<p><b>3.1.</b> What are the possibilities for adapting ESPON to produce concise and policy relevant documents in a shorter timetable?</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> What skills and capacity would be necessary to enhance the role of ESPON as a resource for territorial development within cohesion policy? What are the main constraints (administrative, scientific etc) standing in the way of this?</p> <p><b>3.3.</b> To what extent has ESPON's mission and role in support of territorial cohesion across the EU been achieved and in what ways;</p>