Reinforcing territorial cooperation and addressing challenges to European integration

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About ESPON

• ESPON bridges research with policies

• We are one of EU Interreg programmes and are in service for over 20 years

We provide territorial analyses, data and policy advice to 27 European Union countries + 4 partner states (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland)

• We help public authorities to benchmark their country, region or city, identify new challenges and potentials, and shape successful policies for the future
Dedicated ESPON service to cross-border, transnational and macroregional stakeholders
Key stakeholder takeaways from the ESPON work

- No access to granular data and empirical knowledge to prosper from geographical proximities
- Interest to monitor, compare and benchmark territories (Are we in the same class? Are we on a good track?)
- Understand/measure flows, interrelations and dependencies – functional approach to cross-border integration
- From ‘policy shadow’ to ‘policy spotlight’
- Agile governance of cross-border realms based on shared visions and strategies
- Low awareness of territorial impacts
- Ownership and institutional memory
Multi-level and place-based approach by ESPON

- Common perspective (vision, strategy, plans)
- Smart directionality (striving for harmonisation and integration while maintaining the diversity)
- Lighthouse for territorially sensitive policies
- Territorial integration on local terms
- Territorial quality of life
- Better understanding of citizens’ needs and aspirations

Territorial quality of life
Better understanding of citizens' needs and aspirations
ESPON advice on tackling persistent cross-border obstacles

✓ Support and finance European-wide studies, analyses and territorial research on the subject

✓ Provide a European framework for integrated data collection and support the exchanges on cross-border obstacles

✓ Tackle cross-border obstacles in a concerted way, e.g., via macroregional strategies/ transnational projects and/or good practice transfer via interregional cooperation

✓ Counteract fragmentation by promoting the development of common public services and other forms of cooperation on borders lacking the appropriate measures
ESPON advice on incentivising cooperation

✓ Provide smart directionality to encourage a holistic approach to the management of shared resources and sectors critical to cross-border convergence:
  o Common visions and strategic plans for cross-border areas
  o Places-based inventory of shared resources as well as sectors susceptible to/resistant to convergence
  o Local experimentation for best solutions
  o Innovative funding schemes (e.g., strategic cross-border investment envelope to facilitate convergence, combining cross-border Interreg, sectoral programmes and territorial instruments)

✓ Consider favouring CPS-related actions in the regulation
ESPON advice on future priorities

- Strengthen the governance of cross-border areas, with due attention to their different typologies (maritime / mountainous / insular/ river-based, lake-based, outermost or within macro-regions)

- Brace for governance arrangements on new functional areas (flow-based) – e.g., stemming from transborder migration of pollution and the associated environmental hazards, the spread of communicable diseases and the resulting health risks, or the natural progression of green infrastructure

- Enhance a better territorial distribution of common public services and promote new types (e.g., e-governance, e-health and interoperability)

- Promote Territorial Impact Assessment for cross-border investments

- Defragment data collection on cross-border flows, drivers, trends and patterns, and integrate methodologies
ESPON role in 2021-2027

Deliver evidence-based knowledge on:

✓ Convergence status on internal and external EU borders, including maritime borders or outermost
✓ Territorial governance of cross-border functional areas
✓ Emerging types of functional border areas due to transborder flows, and their optimal governance arrangements
✓ Unexplored cooperation opportunities and potentials resulting from physical proximity
✓ Citizens’ perception and needs for cross-border integration
✓ Effective cross-border public services in different types of territories
Thank you

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