

Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the cooperation programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Introduction

The ESPON 2020 programme aims at promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels.

The aim of the the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme is to support the reinforcement of the effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral policies and programmes under European Structural Investment (ESI) funds as well as national and regional territorial development policies, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial evidence covering the entire territory of the 28 EU Members States, as well as 4 Partner States of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The purpose is to contribute to a Cohesion Policy that has the maximum effect in supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy, strengthening the capacity of the EU economy to grow, innovate and generate employment, and to deliver a positive and lasting impact in promoting territorial cohesion and harmonious development across EU regions and Member States. Support to national and regional authorities in contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and to territorial cohesion is an inherent part of the Programme.

The Cooperation Programme seeks to build upon the very significant pan-European territorial evidence and research base successfully carried through during the ESPON 2006 and ESPON 2013 programmes, to further strengthen evidence informed policy making across the EU territory and to contribute to enabling regions and cities to develop place-based responses to the Europe 2020 challenges of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with a contribution of €41.3 million for the period 2014-2020.

The first section of this Cooperation Programme provides an overview of the context for the ESPON 2020 programme, the key lessons learned from the previous ESPON programme together with the needs and challenges ahead, and presents the overall strategy and objectives for the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Context for the Programme

Evidence is essential to inform sound policy development at European, national, regional and local level.

Contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and a reformed Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

Against the backdrop of increasing scarcity of public resources, overcoming the economic crisis together with addressing key environmental and social challenges, EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 recognises that a more integrated, focussed and results-orientated intervention logic to ESI funding is required for the forthcoming programming period.

Reformed Cohesion Policy now proposes concentrating funding on a smaller number of 11 thematic objectives, closely related to the Europe 2020 Strategy, through which ESI funding is to be mobilised and targeted to maximise efficiency and to ensure that each policy priority receives sufficient funding to deliver a significant and lasting impact.

Further, progress towards achieving country specific Europe 2020 targets will be more closely monitored with clear indicators, conditionalities and performance incentives, linked to economic governance, to measure the effectiveness of policy intervention and thereby contributing to the overall aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Europe 2020 Strategy gives today priority to four thematics, research and innovation, the digital agenda, support for small and medium sized enterprises (SME), and the low-carbon economy, all themes where territorial evidence including economic aspects needs to nourish policy decisions.

The recent “Investment Plan for Europe” presented by the European Commission on 26 November 2014 is another financially important investment initiative aiming at growth and jobcreation that will be able to benefit from territorial evidence in deciding where investments may have the highest return.

Moreover, the fact that the global context, international cooperation and competition are of growing importance calls for evidence that explore themes with a wider perspective, such as climate change causes, impacts and responses and fast and safe border processing of external trade which is vital for European regions and cities.

Supporting development towards economic, social and territorial cohesion and the Territorial Agenda 2020

Since the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, territorial cohesion has been elevated to a core goal of the EU, together with economic and social cohesion. Member States, their regions and cities as well as the territories of Partner States and other neighbouring countries play a crucial role in promoting territorial cohesion and a balanced and harmonious European territory, both in terms of setting national and European policy agendas and through national sectoral policy decisions that impact territories.

The Territorial Agenda (TA) 2020 underpins the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy and sets out policy orientations for the development of the European territory. There is now at intergovernmental level a clear high-level recognition that the major societal challenges faced by the EU today - globalisation, innovation, economic competitiveness, demographic change and migration, climate change and environmental

challenges as well as energy security and use have a clear territorial dimension, which will have different impacts in different regions and cities and different requirements to cope with the economic and social consequences of crisis situations.

The capacity of Member States, their regions and cities to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth therefore depends highly on their specific endogenous development potential and their assets in terms of human, physical and natural capital, knowledge, institutions and networks. This establishes a clear added value in including a territorial dimension for policy effectiveness.

In addition, the ever increasing inter-dependency of a larger territorial context due to globalisation trends makes the benefit of regions and cities joining forces and collaborating in territorial cooperation arrangements evident for an increasing number of policymakers. This points to a growing need for benchmarking regions and cities in a European, and even global context, and for jointly exploring comparative advantages within wider territorial contexts.

Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020 therefore proposes to move beyond a “one-size-fits-all” approach to reflect the varied diversity of European regions to deliver policies and ESI funding tailored to the specific place-based needs of individual regions. A clear example of the new focus on the territorial dimension is the introduction of Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) instrument and Macro-Regional Strategies which provides for the integrated delivery arrangements for investments under more than one priority axis which can be bundled into an integrated, cross-sectoral, place-based investment strategy for a certain territory or functional urban area, including cross-border regions and transnational cooperation areas.

Request for territorial evidence to support to policy development

The new shift in emphasis on investment, performance monitoring and the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy is likely to yield a significant increase in the need and demand from the European Commission, Member States, regions and cities for high-quality, relevant and up-to-date territorial evidence to inform policy decisions. In this context, the Cohesion Policy legislative package 2014-2020 requests the further improvement of territorial analyses and data at European scale. Moreover, the European process emphasises the importance of urban policy and the need to work towards an Urban Agenda which in turn requires an urban focus in the development of territorial evidence.

European Territorial Cooperation Regulation 1299/2013, Art. 2, litra (3d) calls for reinforcing the effectiveness of cohesion policy by promoting:

“analyses of development trends in relation to the aims of territorial cohesion, including territorial aspects of economic and social cohesion, and harmonious development of the European territory through studies, data collection and other measures”.

In addition, the ETC Regulation requests that interregional cooperation support the:

“strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends.”

The aim of the ESPON 2020 Programme is to take up this task and to meet this demand by producing, delivering and disseminating analyses and information on European, national, regional and local territorial trends and characteristics whether in terms of, for example, employment and labour market, business structures (such as SMEs) and investment patterns, the geography of digital roll-out, functional urban regions, commuting patterns, population ageing and demographic shifts, cultural, landscape and heritage features, climate change vulnerabilities and impacts, land use and resource constraints, institutional and governance arrangements, infrastructures, connectivity and accessibility, service provision, metropolitan regions, smaller and medium-sized cities and towns and linkages between rural and urban areas.

At EU level, sectoral policies, such as innovation, transport, agriculture, trade, environment, climate change, etc., have concrete territorial impacts. Policy efforts contributing to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy will therefore benefit significantly from a pan-European territorial evidence base in respect of thematic objectives that clearly identify the territorial dimension and impact of policy implementation. This will, together with other relevant information, contribute to considerations on where investments may have the highest yield and/or where unwanted negative impacts on territorial cohesion may occur.

In addition, tools for benchmarking and cross-country, inter-regional and inter-city comparison, illustrating joint development opportunities and challenges together with forecasting territorial impacts will support efficient and more effective use of resources while helping to avoid unforeseen adverse territorial impacts.

At the national and regional level, efforts to implement Cohesion Policy will imply that authorities for example will need to develop strategic spatial plans for local and regional development, integrated territorial investments, urban integrated development plans in cities, macro-regional strategies and transnational co-operation programmes, etc. In summary, regions and cities of Europe can make an important contribution to the objectives to the growth and jobs agenda of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to a European territory well-balanced in terms of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Such policy efforts will require robust, comparable and analytical territorial evidence.

This is where the ESPON 2020 Programme can bring added value by having a clear focus on evidence production, knowledge transfer, analyses support and outreach to potential users. The ESPON 2020 programme will, through this approach, contribute to continuous policy learning and uptake of a pan-European territorial perspective which will reinforce the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy through new insights on development opportunities and challenges at European level (including with a global context), in Member and Partner States or in cross-border, and in regional and local development strategies, and ultimately contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Lessons Learnt, Needs and Challenges

ESPON has through the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes substantially improved the European knowledge and evidence base related to territorial development, territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts. ESPON 2013 has gradually evolved as a recognised and authoritative network providing important pan-European knowledge and facts, observations and tools to policymakers at all levels. This has been delivered by engaging the cooperation of scientist and experts from throughout Europe, supported by a European network of ESPON Contact Points (ECP) in each of the participating states.

For ESPON 2020 to become fully effective in delivering upon its objectives it will be firmly based on the real needs of its overall target group – the public authorities and other policy actors at EU, Member State, regional and local level in Europe. Programme implementation and the individual activities will be defined by policy demand of the 32 countries behind the programme, and from European as well as regional and local level involved in early consultations. More than in the past, this will ensure that the ESPON results are eventually used by stakeholders concerned which will also be supported through the new capacity to have faster and timely delivery of analyses and evidence to policy processes.

Member and Partner States will ensure that ESPON 2020 innovates, continues and contributes further to evidence informed policy making. This view is shared by the European Commission (EC), the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee as well as a growing number of regions and cities as active stakeholders and users of European territorial evidence and by more and more Structural Funds programmes financed by the ERDF.

Renewal, Refocus and Upgrade of ESPON 2020

Needs for innovation through renewal, refocus and improvement of ESPON 2013 have been highlighted also by Member and Partner States as well as the EC. The key lessons are that ESPON 2020 must step up its effort to ensure better that its actions do in fact inform tangible policy development and changes.

A focal challenge at the policy level is the need for further improving a territorial dimension in policy development, which despite of the important improvements and support made by ESPON 2013, is still hampered by the lack of systematic, comparable and reliable European territorial evidence describing territories and functional areas at an adequate territorial level for effective policy-making.

Evaluations made of the ESPON 2013 Programme by the ESPON Monitoring Committee (MC) and by the EC have assessed needs and challenges and led to key recommendations for innovations of ESPON 2020:

- Improve substantially the transfer of territorial evidence, knowledge and results to the policy arena ensuring appropriateness, timeliness, clarity, relevance and quality of the evidence.
- Offer policy-relevant analyses upon demand from target stakeholders at EU and national, regional and local level. The analyses should provide territorial evidence to European, national and regional/local policy-making in a timely and responsive manner, being understandable and efficiently communicated.
- Provide stronger validation of the scientific quality of results and the comparability of data in support of innovative policy actions.
- Ensure the effective outreach of ESPON 2020 evidence to new users through coordinated efforts including the ECP Network.
- Reinforce the in-house capacity by strengthening senior scientific and communicative expertise in order to improve knowledge transfer and outreach, and make it feasible to “fast track” territorial evidence into the policy debate.
- Encourage other ESI funding programmes and bodies to use territorial evidence.

- Establish an institutional set up which significantly reduces the overall administrative burden of the programme for Member and Partner State administrations and for beneficiaries.
- Apply administrative procedures, including the use of service contracts that, through a lower level of administrative burden, will promote further the interest in being involved in delivering ESPON 2020 territorial evidence.

These needs for innovation in the ESPON 2020 Programme are in the SWOT analysis which is included in a Programme Annex [See Table 1: Innovation Needs for ESPON 2020 - a SWOT analysis].

[Note: the SWOT analysis table has been included in a Programme Annex due to formatting limitations in the SFC system which precludes the insertion of tables]

Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Programme

Mission of ESPON 2020

Taking into consideration the main territorial needs and challenges of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the lessons learnt identified above, the ESPON 2020 Programme will provide continuity in respect of the significant knowledge base built by the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes. At the same time, it will meet the needs expressed by Member and Partner States and the EC for renewal, refocus and innovation.

The strategy for the ESPON 2020 programme will ensure that ESPON 2020 plays the specific role in supporting policy development institutional capacity, effective policymaking and efficient public administration with European territorial evidence and in doing so pursue the following overarching mission:

- ***ESPON 2020 shall continue the consolidation of a European Territorial Observatory Network and grow the provision and policy use of pan-European, comparable, systematic and reliable territorial evidence.***

Building on this overall mission statement the programme strategy is further defined as follows:

- Contribute to enhancing the use of territorial evidence in policy development and programmes related to EU Cohesion Policy (economic, social and territorial cohesion) at EU level and in Member States and regions, in relevant European and national sectoral policies and in relevant policy processes, such as the Territorial Agenda 2020.
- Implement applied research and analyses producing new evidence and facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange for policy processes by delivering territorial evidence to support to policy development at the EU, national, regional and local level as well as in a transnational and cross-border context.
- Monitor major European territorial trends, potentials and challenges, and provide analytical tools in order to contribute actively with EU-wide territorial evidence and experience to relevant policy processes and political debates as well as to territorial strategy building.
- Ensure effective, timely and prompt communication, maximisation of outreach and use by potential stakeholders together with facilitating on-going coordination and cooperation with a wide range of target institutions at EU, national, regional

and urban level and ESI programmes, in particular at transnational and cross-border level.

ESPON 2020 actions shall, in particular, promote the territorial dimension of EU 2020, EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 as well as other territorially-relevant, sectoral policies and programmes, at all levels of government.

Specific Objectives

In order to serve the target groups in the most efficient and effective manner, and in accordance with the mission for the ESPON 2020 Programme, the strategy for 2014-2020 is to pursue **5 specific objectives** that will guide the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme:

- **Specific Objective 1:** *Enhanced production of territorial evidence through applied research and analyses.*
- **Specific Objective 2:** *Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.*
- **Specific Objective 3:** *Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses.*
- **Specific Objective 4:** *Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.*
- **Specific Objective 5:** *Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.*

In respect of the Specific Objective 5 above, to ensure the most streamlined and efficient administration possible for the kind of activities that ESPON 2020 will implement, the organisational structure will comprise of an European Grouping of Territorial Cohesion (EGTC) contracted to a Single Beneficiary to implement Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Programme using public procurement and service contracts only. The required scientific and communicative capacity of the Single Beneficiary, including senior scientific and policy outreach capacity, shall, contrary to the ESPON 2013 programme, be provided in-house for ESPON 2020 to be able to achieve its objectives.

Continuous policy relevant guidance to applied research activities shall be provided throughout the ESPON 2020 Programme in order to achieve high-quality output results well timed and of the highest possible level of direct interest and relevance for policy development processes and target groups.

EC Thematic Objective and Corresponding Investment Priority

Programmes for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 are generally required to concentrate on a limited number of thematic objectives in order to increase the potential to make a significant contribution to regional policies across the EU. The eleven optional thematic objectives are as follows:

1. Research & innovation.
2. Information and communication technologies (ICT).
3. Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).
4. Shift towards a low-carbon economy.
5. Climate change adaptation & risk prevention and management.
6. Environmental protection & resource efficiency.
7. Sustainable transport & removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures.
8. Employment & supporting labour mobility.

9. Social inclusion & combating poverty.
10. Education, skills & lifelong learning.
11. Institutional capacity building & efficient public administrations.

The ETC Regulation 1299/2013, Article 6 does not set a specific thematic objective or limitation in the number of thematic objectives to be selected under interregional cooperation which the ESPON 2020 programme is part of. As all 11 thematic objectives have a territorial dimension or impact, they are all considered relevant for support by European territorial evidence produced, generated and disseminated by ESPON 2020. The ESPON 2020 Programme will aim therefore at providing support in general under the Thematic Objective 11 as follows:

“Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration.”

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall, in the production of territorial evidence, analyses, studies and data (pursuant to Article 2 (3d) of the ETC Regulation 1299/2013), be capable to serve all policy development programmes related to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, no matter what range of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities the individual programme has selected. This also covers specific investment priorities mentioned for ETC programmes in Art. 7 (1) a, b and c (i) (ii) of Regulation 1299/2013 ETC.

Against that backdrop, the investment priority selected for the ESPON 2020 Programme is referred in the ETC Regulation 1299/2013, Art. 7 (1)(c)(iii), states the need for:

“strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through analysis of development trends.....”

Target Groups for ESPON 2020

The contribution of ESPON 2020 to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and the support to economic, social and territorial cohesion lies in its ability to engage with and inform the real needs of key target groups in designing and implementing policies. Territorial evidence will support integrated, place-based approaches and deliver a wider European benchmarking of individual regions, cities and larger territories, which can help defining and exploring new opportunities for development and growth.

Target groups for the programme should be clearly defined in the preparation for each activity to be carried through ESPON 2020. In fulfilling its overall mission and objectives, the primary target groups for receiving and using the ESPON 2020 territorial evidence are:

- European policymakers, in particular in the field of Cohesion Policy as well as other relevant sectoral and thematic policies and programmes, particularly those currently not fully articulating their territorial approach.

- National policymakers and practitioners responsible for territorial cohesion, ETC programmes, macro-regional strategies and Cohesion Policy preparation and implementation at national level, as well as other relevant policy fields.
- Authorities implementing ESI Funding programmes and preparing periodical reporting.
- Regional and local policymakers and practitioners responsible for territorial development and planning and/or involved in cross-border, transnational and macro-regional cooperation.

As secondary target groups, the following actors are important as receivers and users of territorial evidence:

- Organisations promoting different regional/urban interests at EU level.
- University academics, both researchers and students as future decision makers.
- The private sector and wider European audiences.

As the providers of the research capacity and scientific excellence for ESPON 2020, academics, scientists and researchers are important for ESPON 2020 outputs. Indirectly, the actions and corresponding activities of ESPON 2020 will therefore benefit the scientific community within Europe in the field of territorial research.

Geographical coverage

With reference to the EC Regulation 1299/2013, Article 3 (5), interregional cooperation programmes shall cover the entire EU territory. The ESPON 2020 Programme will during 2014-2020 cover the territory of all 28 EU Member States.

Moreover, the geographical coverage of the 4 Partner States of Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland will continue from the previous ESPON 2013 Programme as partners to the programme.

The analysis, studies and data collection will where relevant, feasible and cost-efficient include territories of EU Candidate Countries and other countries upon acceptance of the ESPON MC.

Priority Axes of ESPON 2020

In order to fulfil the strategy, mission and objectives related to the ESPON 2020 Programme, two Priority Axes will govern the programme implementation:

- ***Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach***
- ***Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance (TA)***

The organisation of the programme implementation along two Priority Axes is closely related to the establishment of a Single Beneficiary for the implementation of Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Priority Axis 1 covers a single thematic objective of the ETC Regulation and will deliver in in relation to the Investment Priority: Institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.

However, in order to provide European territorial evidence relevant for all 11 thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities of the ESI funds and contribute to an enhancement of institutional capacity and effective public administration, the four mutually supportive content-related Specific Objectives will be guiding the implementation of Priority Axis 1. The Specific Objective 5 of administrative leaning will also indirectly be supported when implementing Priority Axis 1.

The implementation of Priority Axis 1 will be governed by an Operation Specification established and agreed by the ESPON MC and provided by the ESPON MA to the Single Beneficiary as basis for drafting an Operation Proposal. The Operation Proposal will include a Multi-Annual Work Programme and the first Annual Work Plan. The Operation Proposal will include proposals on activities related to the specific objectives and their associated types of actions. The Operation Proposal and its annual implementation shall be agreed by the ESPON MC.

The implementation of Priority Axis 2 will ensure a leaner, effective and efficient implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme through renewal of the administrative set up where a switch to public procurement only will lean the number of national financial first and second level control bodies from 32 to only 1 and make national checks of legal status and solvency of partners obsolete. In addition, having only one Single Beneficiary will have a substantive positive administrative effect, and the mode of implementation of activities by the Single Beneficiary will be guided accordingly. The Technical Assistance (TA) provided by the ESPON MA will ensure support to the renewed structure and organisational arrangements according to this objective.

1.1.2 Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities, having regard to the Common Strategic Framework, based on an analysis of the needs within the programme area as a whole and the strategy chosen in response to such needs, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure, taking into account the results of the ex-ante evaluation

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)	<p>EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral and thematic policies and programmes require high-quality territorial evidence at the pan-European scale in order to support the effective implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy and achieve the aims of economic, social and territorial cohesion.</p> <p>Evidence informed policy development, including a territorial dimension, will contribute to the efficiency of implementation of ESI funds and the Europe 2020 Strategy as well as other territorially relevant policies.</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (i.e. Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

The ESPON 2020 Programme will continue working on European territorial knowledge and evidence and continue the efforts of the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes. The purpose is to make a European territorial knowledge and evidence base available for policies and programmes related to economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe in support of Thematic Objective 11.

The renewal of the ESPON programme for 2014-2020 with a stronger capacity to deliver territorial evidence in time for policy processes requires resources that will partly be liberated from streamlining the administrative system.

Moreover, the outreach and use of the European territorial evidence provided by ESPON 2020 shall be further stimulated giving a wider group of stakeholder's analytical support with a European perspective.

This continuous progress, maintenance and update of a European territorial knowledge and evidence base will require financial resources. However, the renewal of ESPON is possible to implement within a budget for 2014-2020 that is only marginally higher than in the previous programme period.

The financial allocation to ESPON 2020 Programme will be split between two Priority Axes with the large majority of financial means allocated to Priority Axis 1 which will deliver actions and activities on content and the territorial evidence that is the specific reason for having the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Within the same logic, the financial allocation for Priority Axis 2 (Technical Assistance) will be kept at a level needed to implement the tasks and duties of the programme bodies as required by the EC Regulations.

Note: Regarding Table 3 on result indicators, the ESPON 2020 programme will not submit payment applications in relation to the relevant priority axis before the modification of the programme to include the required adjustments to the result indicators and its baseline and targets (See Action Plan for Setting the Baselines and Targets for the ESPON 2020 Results Indicators included in the Cooperation Programme Annexes)

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the cooperation programme

Priority axis	ERDF support (€)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Result indicators corresponding to the specific indicator
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)		
P1	39,276,145.00	94.92%	0.00%	0.00%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration ▼ 11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO1 - Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses. ▼ SO2 - Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support. ▼ SO3 - Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses. ▼ SO4 - Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence. ▼ SO5 - Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance. 	[RI01, RI02, RI03, RI04, RI05, RI06]
P2	2,100,874.00	5.08%	0.00%	0.00%	SO5 - Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.	[]

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	P1
Title of the priority axis	Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one thematic objective (where applicable)

Not Applicable

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Total

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	11f
Title of the investment priority	Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Specific Objective 1 builds on, maintains and further improves the maintenance of a systematic, comparable, consistent and reliable European territorial evidence base through applied research of territorial structures, trends and prospects, and supports the systematic implementation of territorial impact assessments in EU institutions and programming bodies.</p> <p>In support of this objective, activities to be carried through by the Single Beneficiary shall thematically respond to policy needs in practice, be focused and territorial (by looking across sectors) and result from transnational networking on research and expertise. Output and results shall be of high quality in terms of research, analyses, data, indicators and tools for ESPON 2020 to be recognised as a reliable and authoritative source of pan-European territorial evidence, observation and territorial impact assessment that is highly relevant for policy development and programming.</p> <p>The scope of the applied research should focus on key policy priorities for European territorial development, such as priority themes for the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Investment Plan for Europe, EU Cohesion Policy and the Territorial Agenda 2020.</p> <p>Continuous involvement and guidance by the ESPON MC in applied research from the definition of the activities to delivery of results, through Project Support Teams (PSTs) and through open access for the ESPON MC to all intermediate deliverables, shall ensure policy relevance of the themes and results of the applied research and analyses undertaken. The new territorial evidence achieved shall feed into the knowledge transfer and user support actions under Specific Objective 2, the observatory functions under Specific Objective 3 and the outreach to users under Specific Objective 4 which shall be all part of the ESPON 2020 Programme implementation.</p> <p>The target groups for this specific objective include policymakers and practitioners at European and national level as well as</p>

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<p>authorities implementing ESI programmes. Moreover, the results will be of interest for the secondary tier target group defined, in particular for policy officers and planners in regions and local authorities as well as organisations at EU level and academia in the field of territorial research.</p> <p>Project Support Teams (of a limited size) will be established for all applied research activities led by a senior scientist of the Single Beneficiary. At least one representative of the ESPON MC and one EC representative, upon interest, should together with experts from the Single Beneficiary follow and guide the implementation of the activities in order to optimise the policy relevance of the final delivery. The Single Beneficiary is the responsible contractor of the service and shall in case of different opinions within the PST document these in the Annual Implementation Report.</p> <p>The key results which Member States seek to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of medium and long term territorial trends, potentials and challenges of a wide range of territorial dynamics. • Better understanding of future perspectives for Europe through forecasting and territorial scenarios. • Improved pre-legislative and regulatory territorial impact assessments of EU policy proposals with a territorial impact.
ID of the specific objective	SO2
Title of the specific objective	Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Specific Objective 2 provides for the useful transfer of scientific evidence and knowledge to policy development and provides analytical input to policy processes of different actors at all administrative levels which can stimulate policy development informed by territorial evidence.</p> <p>Activities will include targeted analyses for single or groupings of national bodies, regions and cities, firmly based on stakeholder demand. The thematic focus will be defined by stakeholders reflecting their analytical needs and directly involve stakeholders and experts. The analysis shall provide a European perspective for the stakeholders and be related to their specific policy contexts. Representatives of organisations at European level interested in the specific theme as well as the inclusion of</p>

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<p>the private sector in targeted analyses will be possible.</p> <p>The implementation of other ESIF programmes shall also be supported actively with targeted analyses that can support the understanding of their territory and a European perspective in relation to their selected thematic objectives. This activity will build on positive experiences from the ESPON 2013 programme where territorial evidence support was provided to 65 ETC programmes and 10 programmes, regional, transnational and cross-border. Targeted analyses will normally include a collection of data and benchmark the territory in a European context, such as for cross border areas.</p> <p>As a new activity within ESPON 2020, the ability to feed relevant territorial evidence in a promptly and timely manner to selected policy processes will be strengthened through swift analytical deliverables, such as policy briefs, working papers or similar. This new type of ESPON support to policy development shall enhance a rapid transfer and uptake of the territorial knowledge and tools produced. For this activity to be feasible, the necessary in-house capacity will be ensured, including senior resources in science and experienced in policy oriented outreach.</p> <p>The output of the many activities related to the Specific Objective 2 will include analytical reports with policy options and maps related to stakeholder territories and ESIF programme areas as well as brief documents transferring European territorial evidence to important policy processes upon demand, such as EU Presidency priorities and debates related to territorial cohesion, the Europe 2020 Strategy, sector policy areas and the TA 2020.</p> <p>The key target groups for this Specific Objective 2 are policymakers and practitioners at European, national, regional and local level as well as authorities implementing ESIF programmes. In particular, the targeted analyses will involve groups of stakeholders and practitioners from national, regional and local administrations asking for adding a European territorial perspective in their policy development.</p> <p>The key results which Member States seek to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended use of territorial evidence adding a European perspective to policy development at national, regional and local levels. • Better integration of the territorial dimension in ESIF Programme implementation and in programmes after 2020.

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger presence of European territorial evidence in the European policy debate and development. • Improved use of research and analyses in relevant territorial, urban and sector policy processes combining stakeholder and ESPON evidence.
ID of the specific objective	SO3
Title of the specific objective	Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Specific Objective 3 provides for the territorial observation and monitoring of structures, trends and dynamics in different European types of territories and for further development of analytical tools. Activities shall build on progress made by previous ESPON programmes.</p> <p>A territorial monitoring system at European scale shall on a regular basis inform policymakers and practitioners dealing with territorial development and cohesion at different administrative levels. Transnational territorial monitoring systems shall be offered linked to the web-based European territorial monitoring system.</p> <p>As tools, the web-based ESPON Database, developed since 2002, shall be continuously updated and made easier to use by visitors. Quality control of its reliability for users will be ensured. Coverage of all countries participating and geographical detail in data and map presentation, including the visibility of smaller countries in ESPON maps, such as islands states, shall be ensured. The ESPON Database will be fed by datasets from research and targeted analyses, e.g. on cities and cross-border areas. All tools shall be freely available.</p> <p>Tools development shall constitute an integrated online “ESPON toolbox”, a consistent set of tools for territorial analyses (database, analytical tools, tools for benchmarking and TIA, mapping). The toolbox can be directly used by external users, and is supporting applied research, knowledge transfer and outreach activities. Close coordination shall be ensured with European institutions, such as EUROSTAT, EEA, JRC, EIB etc., on European data.</p> <p>A review of existing tools shall result in a proposal on tools that will be maintained and/or developed or could be wound up</p>

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<p>due to little use. Supporting this review of tools a survey among ESPON users in all countries shall be carried through.</p> <p>A new ESPON activity related to the toolbox shall offer user support that can increase the application of the tools. This can involve “technical” support, concrete use of tools as well as training to users at all levels.</p> <p>The output of the activities shall include reporting on the state of the European territory 2-3 times during 2014-2020. Data and indicators on European territorial development will be available through the ESPON website. A coherent set of analytical tools and support of use of TIA and other tools, including more “technical” queries, will be provided.</p> <p>Target groups for this specific objective shall primarily be the key target group of policymakers and practitioners at all levels as well as authorities implementing ESI funding programmes for regions, cross-border or transnational or macro-regional territories. Moreover, the open access will make the entire second tier target group relevant for this objective, including the wider public.</p> <p>Project Support Teams including MC members and the EC giving policy advice on monitoring and the use of tools can be established within Specific Objective 3.</p> <p>The key results which Member States seek to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved territorial monitoring of policy implementation and periodical reporting. • Stronger presence of a territorial dimension at all levels, including territorial monitoring systems for macro-regions. • An improved and more useful toolbox for territorial analyses and impact assessment offering support and training to users at all levels as well as other ESIF programmes. • Increased use of ESPON data, indicators and maps in relation to relevant policy processes.
ID of the specific objective	SO4
Title of the specific objective	Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Specific Objective 4 ensures a wide outreach to potential users of European territorial evidence, stimulating interest for uptake of a European territorial perspectives at all levels of policy making.</p> <p>Effective, targeted and understandable outreach towards clearly defined target groups shall be carried through providing relevant information and data on territorial structures, trends, scenarios and policy impacts at European as well as transnational, cross-border, national, regional and local levels to inform policy development.</p> <p>The outreach activities will be guided by an Outreach Strategy for the entire programme period. Transnational and national activities will in particular be assisted by a network of ESPON Contact Points nominated by EU Member States and Partner States, where translation of shorter documents into recognised national and regional languages shall be used to improve the outreach and uptake.</p> <p>In support of complementarity, continued cooperation between ESPON and other pan-European European Cooperation Programmes e.g. INTERREG EUROPE, URBACT III and INTERACT III shall be implemented during 2014-2020. Good experience from joint capitalisation and activities, such as thematic workshops promoting crossing of exchange of experience with European territorial evidence, shall synergy in programme implementation.</p> <p>In terms of events, activities shall give priority include the organisation of “high impact” events, in the form of conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions etc., at European, transnational and/or national level, some in cooperation with other ESI funding programmes and other bodies. Active participation at events at European, transnational and national level organised outside ESPON shall play an important role.</p> <p>The outreach shall be supported by thematic and synthetic ESPON reports from applied research and analyses and related to tools and scientific progress, as well as by short easy-understandable reports of political interest and promotion material. Enhanced use of web-based communication and “campaigns” shall be applied, including use of social media, ‘apps’, e-learning, interactive e-books, e-publications, etc.</p> <p>The target groups for this specific objective are very broad. Policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders at all levels, international organisations, senior and young researchers and students, experts as well as citizens and the private sector are all to be targeted</p>

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<p>as part of the envisaged outreach activities. The target groups include all key target groups as well as the second tier target groups defined.</p> <p>Project Support Teams can be established within this specific objective offering the ESPON MC and EC to take part providing policy advice to outreach activities.</p> <p>The key results which Member States seek to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher level of outreach to a larger group of potential users of European territorial evidence, partly supported by exploring complementarities and synergies with the other pan-European ETC and ESI programmes. • Greater impact and presence with territorial evidence and arguments in policy debates at European, transnational and national levels. • Better uptake based on understandable outreach towards clearly defined target groups. • Strong support by the ECP Network at transnational and national level in reaching and engaging policymakers, practitioners, stakeholders, researchers, experts and citizens.
ID of the specific objective	SO5
Title of the specific objective	Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>The specific objective of a leaner, efficient and effective programme implementation will be embedded in all actions and corresponding activities of the ESPON 2020 Programme and will guide the implementation both in Priority Axis 1 and 2.</p> <p>Based on the administrative experience with the ESPON 2013 programme, the ESPON 2020 Programme will engage a Single Beneficiary, which shall receive a Grant Agreement based on a granting procedure, to carry through the content under Priority Axis 1 as a Single Operation under this Cooperation Programme. The role of Single Beneficiary will be awarded to an ESPON EGTC with a tailor-made set up to serve this role. The Specific Objectives 1-4 described above all belonging to Priority Axis 1 and shall be carried through by the Single Beneficiary.</p>

ID of the specific objective	SO1
Title of the specific objective	Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.
	<p>This renewed administrative structure also allows for only using public procurement and service contracts for the implementation of the activities envisaged and for involving the different target groups benefiting from the operation as such. The use of public procurement and service contracts will greatly reduce the administrative burden of ESPON, in particular at the level of Member and Partner States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an institutional set up which significantly reduces the overall administrative burden of the programme for Member and Partner State administrations and for beneficiaries.

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Specific objective		SO1 - Enhanced European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI01	Number of potential users within selected target groups affirming use of ESPON applied research outputs and results in policy and programming processes.	% Change	59% of potential users within selected target groups affirming use of ESPON outputs and results	2015	Increase by 15-25 % (to increase up to between 70% and 75%.)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

Specific objective		SO2 - Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI02	Number of potential users in selected target groups affirming	% Change	83% of potential users in selected target groups	2015	Increase by 15-25 % (to increase to at least to 95%)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

Specific objective		SO2 - Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
	they are satisfied with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.		affirming being satisfied		of potential users affirming being satisfied)		

Specific objective		SO3 - Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI03	Number of potential users in selected target groups affirming use of ESPON territorial observations and tools for territorial analyses in policy and programming processes.	% Change	40% of potential users affirming using of ESPON territorial observations and tools	2015	Increase by 15-25 % (To increase up to between 45% and 50%)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

Specific objective		SO4 - Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI04	Total number of potential users within selected target groups participating at ESPON events.	% Change	50%* of stakeholder respondents currently attend and/or participate at ESPON events.	2015	Increase by 15-25 % (To increase to between 58% and 63%.)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
RI05	Total number of potential users within selected target groups making use of ESPON publications.	% Change	62%* of stakeholder respondents currently making use of ESPON publications.	2015	Increase by 15-25 % (To increase to between 71% and 78%.)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

Specific objective		SO5 - Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.					
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
RI06	Total number of potential users within selected target groups affirming dissatisfaction with the implementation provisions of ESPON 2020 Programme	% Change	32%* of respondents currently affirm they are 'very dissatisfied' (14%) or 'somewhat dissatisfied'	2015	Reduce by 35-50% (To reduce to between 16% and 20%.)	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>Action related to Specific Objective 1: <i>Enhanced Production of Territorial Evidence through Applied Research and Analyses.</i></p> <p>Actions</p> <p>The action to be carried out related to SO 1 shall be to undertake and produce applied territorial research and analyses on European territorial development.</p> <p>This action will contribute to the knowledge base of ESPON and produce new European territorial evidence in response to focused policy demand, steered by policymakers. Contracting of the most qualified, suitable and appropriate researchers and experts within Europe in the thematic field in question shall be sought.</p> <p>Expected Contribution of related Activities</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>The type of activities which may be carried out include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European wide, comparable information and evidence on territorial potentials and challenges focusing on opportunities for success for the development of regions and cities. • Cross-thematic applied research integrating existing thematic analysis and adding new themes in areas, for example research and innovation, climate change mitigation and adaptation; energy; demographic and migratory flows; economic crisis and resilience; connectivity and service provision; spatial indicators for a Europe 2020 Strategy; territorial analysis; impact of globalization for Europe and its Regions, green economy, trade and customs issues, territorial scenarios and visions for Europe, EU enlargement, etc. • Territorial impact studies of EU policies. <p>The concrete activities decided by policy makers will further develop the European territorial knowledge base focusing on most policy relevant themes.</p> <p><i>Main Target Groups</i></p> <p>The main target group is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymakers and practitioners at European and national level, including authorities implementing ESI programmes. <p>Moreover, to the secondary tier target groups will benefit, in particular to policy officers and planners, EU organisations and academia in the field of territorial research.</p> <p><i>Specific Territories Targeted</i></p> <p>This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. Specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as neighbouring territories and the world will be part of activities. The different types of territories, such as islands, mountain areas, sparsely populated areas, cross-border, transnational and macro-regional territories etc. will as far as statistically possible be considered.</p> <p>The output indicator is 22 applied research activities. The result indicator is to increase by 15-25% the total number of potential users within selected target groups.</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>Action related to Specific Objective 2: <i>Upgraded Knowledge Transfer and Analytical User Support.</i></p> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <p>The action to be carried out related to SO 2 shall be (a) to undertake targeted analyses and (b) to produce thematic papers, on specific thematic areas in response to stakeholder demand.</p> <p>These types of actions will contribute to knowledge transfer and support the use of European territorial evidence on the ground in concrete policy development processes. In stimulating the use of this territorial evidence support, targeted analyses for stakeholders from, national, regional and local level as well as targeted delivery of territorial evidence to ESIF programmes will be important actions, including for ETC programmes. The evidence produced through applied research and analyses with a European territorial dimension shall also inform ESIF programmes.</p> <p>Moreover, actions within the SO 2 will focus on delivering prompt policy-relevant analytical responses drawing from the ESPON evidence. In this context, focus will be on becoming an authoritative and relevant platform for contributing to policy formulation. ESPON 2020 will take up demand expressed by policymakers across Europe, including at European and national levels related to EU Presidency priorities, to contribute effectively to debates on territorial cohesion, the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Territorial Agenda 2020.</p> <p><i>Expected Contribution of related Activities</i></p> <p>In order to ensure an upgraded knowledge transfer and the practical use of the evidence support provided to the policy field, the type of activities which may be carried out include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted analysis for and defined by stakeholders at national, regional and local level enhancing their understanding of the larger context and providing a European perspective to the development of their territories. • Territorial evidence briefs and packs to ETC Programmes, ESIF Programmes and EU macro-regions. • Short policy briefs/working papers, fast and timely, benefiting from increased in-house senior scientific and outreach capacity at the Single Beneficiary, to European policy processes providing insight on territorial dynamics, impacts, prospects, etc. affecting territories, regions and cities. 	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>The concrete activities will target all levels of government as well as other ESIF programmes and transfer knowledge and analyses to European policy making and programme implementation. All activities will be using ESPON evidence to meet the real needs demanded and defined by the receivers.</p> <p><i>Main Target Groups</i></p> <p>The main target group is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymakers at European, national, regional and local level as well as authorities implementing ESI programmes. <p>In particular, policy officers and practitioners from national, regional and local authorities selected for targeted analytical support will become actively engaged in activities. Likewise, it is expected that EU Presidencies and European policymakers will become a special target group for rapid analytical deliveries.</p> <p><i>Specific Territories Targeted</i></p> <p>This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. However, targeted analyses for stakeholders and programmes will be zooming-in on smaller territories (including on island Member States). Specificities of smaller countries and the different types of territories, such as islands, mountain areas, sparsely populated areas, cross-border, transnational and macro-regional territories, neighbouring territories and the world can be part of the activities, depending on demand and the availability of the necessary territorial evidence, both in thematic and statistical terms.</p> <p>The output indicator is 25 targeted research activities and 45 thematic papers produced. The result indicator is to increase by 15-25% the total number of potential users affirming satisfaction with ESPON knowledge transfer and analytical user support.</p> <p>Action related to Specific Objective 3: <i>Improved Territorial Observation and Tools for Territorial Analyses</i></p> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <p>The actions to be carried out related to SO3 shall be to (a) undertake territorial observation/ reporting (b) develop tools for territorial analyses and (c)</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>stimulate the use of tools.</p> <p>SO 3 shall provide the scientific platform for all activities carried out under the ESPON 2020. In observing and monitoring territorial trends and publishing reports providing reviews of related to policy orientations for European territorial development, mainly in relation to territorial cohesion and the Territorial Agenda 2020, this objective will contribute to policymakers understanding of European territorial dynamics compared to policy orientations.</p> <p>By further improving the ESPON Database, becoming more up-to-date, reliable, user-friendly and with accurate time-series/ indicators of higher geographical detail, the fundamental information source for other ESPON 2020 activities will be available. It will include key territorial indicators with pan-European coverage and indicators with a more limited geographical coverage, which for example can be related to cities, regions or cross-border areas.</p> <p>Appropriate tools for territorial analyses will contribute to reliable results and support policymakers and practitioners at all levels in their daily work.</p> <p><i>Expected Contribution of related Activities (Non-Exhaustive)</i></p> <p>Related to the SO3, examples of activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPON Database development with focus on data update and user-friendliness. • European Monitoring System with custom-made macro-regional sub-systems meeting stakeholder demand. • Territorial Monitoring Reports and Reviews related to European policy orientations and strategies. • A reviewed and fine-tuned ESPON set of tools for territorial analyses. • Support to users in terms of technical queries and help in the practical use of tools. <p>Activities will ensure that the necessary data, indicators and tools are in place, well-understood and functioning in support of wide use. Observation and monitoring of territorial dynamics require a solid and reliable base to be useful in practise.</p> <p><i>Main Target Groups</i></p> <p>The main target group is:</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public authorities at all levels, authorities implementing ESI programmes for regions, cross-border, transnational areas / macro-regions <p>The online access to the ESPON database and other tools, free of charge will benefit the second tier target group as well the wider public and the private sector.</p> <p><i>Specific Territories Targeted</i></p> <p>This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States. Monitoring specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as indicators including neighbouring territories and the world will be part of the activities.</p> <p>The output indicator is 8 ESPON tools maintained and created. The result indicator is to increase by 15-25% the total number of potential users affirming use of ESPON territorial observations and tools for territorial analysis in policy and programming processes.</p> <p>Action related to Specific Objective 4: <i>Wider Outreach and Uptake of Territorial Evidence.</i></p> <p><i>Actions</i></p> <p>Actions to be carried out related to SO4 shall be to (a) hold events and (b) produce publications, in order to support outreach to users and the widest possible use of ESPON 2020 territorial evidence in practice.</p> <p>Activities related to the action shall be guided by an Outreach Strategy for the ESPON 2020 implementation ensuring the highest possible capitalisation. The ECP Network, nominated by each participating country, will be an important collaborator in ensuring the outreach to policymakers in all parts of Europe, promoting transnational collaboration with regional and local stakeholders and building capacity.</p> <p>In reaching out to all target groups, private sector/wider public, widening further the audience, ESPON 2020 will host a website with additional means of web communication (such as social media, ‘apps’, interactive e-books, etc.), and which is friendly for policy use. The range of events, such as conferences, seminars and workshops, both at European and transnational and national level, will contribute, as material can be translated. Publications, printed or available digitally, aimed at the different audiences will also contribute to the general outreach of European territorial evidence and shall be supported by media related activities, such as PR and promotion activities.</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p><i>Expected Contribution of related Activities</i></p> <p>Related to the SO 4, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events at European level, as seminars, conferences or workshops. • Events at transnational / national level in coordination the ECP network. • Active participation in debates with policymakers and practitioners. • Publication of thematic and synthetic reports, short material and web-based communication. • Translated material to be used in outreach activities targeting regional and local policymakers and practitioners. <p>Actions will contribute to reaching better to policy makers needs at European, transnational and national levels. Enhanced senior science and outreach in-house capacity will contribute here. A shift towards more digital communication and use of translations will support wider outreach and awareness of a European dimension to territorial policy making.</p> <p><i>Main Target Groups</i></p> <p>The target groups of SO 4 are covering the defined primary and secondary target groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers and public authorities at all levels. • European policy makers, EU Presidencies, European Institutions and ESI funded programmes / macro-regions. • Organisations, practitioners, policy officers and planners. • University academics, researchers and students. • Wider public and the private sector. <p><i>Specific Territories Targeted</i></p> <p>This specific objective shall cover the entire EU territory and the territories of Partner States, including transnational territorial contexts. Specificities of smaller countries and regions as well as outreach to transnational, cross-border, neighbouring territories etc. will be part of the activities.</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>The output indicator is 40 ESPON outreach events and 20 outreach publications. The result indicator is to increase by 15-25% the total number of potential users participating at ESPON events and making use of ESPON publications.</p>	
<p>Action related to Specific Objective 5: <i>Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient programme assistance</i></p>	
<p>Actions</p>	
<p>The action to be carried out in relation to SO 5 is based on the administrative experience with the ESPON 2013 programme. The ESPON 2020 Programme will engage a Single Beneficiary, receiving a Grant Agreement to carry through the content under Priority Axis 1 as a Single Operation under this Programme.</p>	
<p>The role of Single Beneficiary will be awarded to an ESPON EGTC with a tailor-made set up. In carrying through SO 1-4, all belonging to Priority Axis 1, the Single Beneficiary shall contribute to the fulfilment of SO5. This action represents an organisational change with no particular budget for the Single Beneficiary in relation to SO 5.</p>	
<p>The output indicator is the establishment of the EGTC as Single Beneficiary implementing the single operation. The result indicator is to reduce by 35-50% the total number of potential users affirming dissatisfaction with the implementation</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>The ESPON MC will detail the application procedure for the Single Operation under Priority Axis 1 implemented by the Single Beneficiary and will establish the Operation Specification, the Operation Implementation Guidance and the template for the submission of the Operation Proposal including a Multi-Annual Work Programme and the first Annual Work Plan.</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>The Operation Specification will set minimum requirements for the Operation Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strategy to fulfil all the objectives by specific objectives and main milestones for the operation. – Description of the proposed types of actions for the four identified specific objectives. – Strategy for achieving scientific and policy oriented standards. – Description of how the primary and secondary target groups shall addressed. – Indications on how all output and results indicators shall be fulfilled. – An overall budget according the budget categories. – Description of the overall and financial management. – A Multi-Annual Work Programme, an Annual Work Plan for the first year of operation and a further detailed budget corresponding to the Annual Work Plan for the first year (to be repeated every year). <p>Based on these provisions the Single Beneficiary will draw up the Operation Proposal and submit it to the ESPON MA. The MA on behalf of the ESPON MC will assess the proposal according to eligibility criteria related to the completeness of the dossier both from an administrative point of view but also from a content point of view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Completeness – regarding the requested elements indicated in the Operation Specification and Operation Implementation Guidelines – Compulsory activities addressed and minimum requirements respected. <p>The ESPON MC, or a delegated group of the ESPON MC, shall apply the selection criteria or ‘evaluation criteria’ (as there is only the Single Beneficiary</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
<p>and the Single Operation). The evaluation shall assess the degree of fulfilment of the provisions given for the formulation of the Operation Proposal. If needed, improvements have to comply with before the signing of the Grant Agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Related Evaluation Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Soundness and consistency of the proposed implementation strategy, adequacy of the objectives and targets set and the actions and activities and their mix. – Considerations of target groups and how they are addressed. – Geographical balance of the implementation of the activities. – Appropriateness and innovation of the overall approach. • Management Related Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appropriateness and clarity of the management and the implementation plan. – Transparency of procedures related to ERDF requirements. – Appropriateness and justification of the allocation of resources. <p>The ESPON MC may decide that an amendment of the Operation Proposal itself or an addendum to the proposal is necessary. The compliance check with those recommendations can be delegated by the ESPON MC to the ESPON MA.</p> <p>The Grant Agreement approved by the ESPON MC will be signed by the ESPON MA and the Single Beneficiary and amended by the Multi-Annual Work Programme and annually by the Annual Work Plans</p> <p>The Single Beneficiary will every year submit a detailed Annual Work Plan for approval to the ESPON MC via the ESPON MA which will be assessed, negotiated according to the evaluation criteria mentioned above and specified in the provision made to the Single Beneficiary. Recommendations for</p>	

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
improvements may have to be complied with before amending the Annual Work Plan to the Grant Agreement.	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
Not Applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)
Not Applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators (by investment priority)

Table 4: Common and programme-specific output indicators

Investment priority		11f - Strengthening the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through the analysis of development trends pursuant to point(3)(d) of Article 2 (ETC-IR)			
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
OI01	Number of applied research outputs produced under SO1	Number	22.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI02	Number of targeted analysis activities undertaken under SO2	Number	25.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI03	Number of thematic focus papers produced under SO2 e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc	Number	45.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI04	Number of ESPON tools maintained and created under SO3	Number	8.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI05	Number of ESPON outreach events held under SO4	Number	40.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI06	Number of ESPON outreach publications produced under SO4	Number	20.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years
OI07	Establishment of the ESPON EGTC implementing the single operation	Number	1.00	ESPON MA	Every Two Years

2.A.7 Performance framework

Table 5: Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach
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ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
FI01	F	Absorption of Priority Axis 1 Programme Budget	Euros	5,600,000	45,758,109.00	ESPON MA	This indicator is based on the total Priority Axis 1 budget for the programme using the auto decommitment target for 2018
OI01	I	Number of applied research outputs produced under SO1	Number	0	22.00	ESPON MA	<p>As no actions will be fully implemented by 2018, a Key Implementation Step is provided below.</p> <p>The launch for the first call for service providers under SO1 is planned for September 2015. Given the time needed for the tendering process and for the implementation of activities, the key implementation step is to launch at least 14 applied research activities by 2018.</p> <p>Together with OI02 and OI03, this indicator represents more than 50% of total programme budget.</p>
OI02	I	Number of targeted analysis activities undertaken under SO2	Number	0	25.00	ESPON MA	<p>As no actions will be fully implemented by 2018, a Key Implementation Step is provided below.</p> <p>The launch for the first call for expression of interest under SO2 is planned for November 2015. Given the time needed for the selection, contracting and implementation, the key implementation step is to launch at least 15 targeted research activities by 2018.</p> <p>Together with OI01 and OI03, this indicator represents more than 50% of total programme budget</p>
OI03	O	Number of thematic focus	Number	15 thematic	45.00	ESPON MA	Together with OI01 and OI02, this indicator represents

		papers produced under SO2 e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc		focus papers produced			more than 50% of total programme budget.
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Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.8 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support

Tables 6-9: Categories of intervention

Table 6: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	
	Code	Amount (€)
	096. Institutional capacity of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the ERDF or actions supporting ESF institutional capacity initiatives	39,276,145.00

Table 7: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	
	Code	Amount (€)
	01. Non-repayable grant	39,276,145.00

Table 8: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		39,276,145.00

Table 9: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	
	Code	Amount (€)
07. Not applicable		39,276,145.00

2.A.9 A summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries and, where necessary, actions to enhance the administrative capacity of relevant partners to participate in the implementation of programmes (where appropriate)

Priority axis:	P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	
Not Applicable		

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

ID	P2
Title	Technical Assistance

2.B.2 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	Total

2.B.3 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
SO5	Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.	<p>Technical Assistance shall also contribute to Specific Objective 5 complementary to what is described on the contribution of Priority Axis 1 to the Specific Objective 5 by the establishment of the Single Beneficiary.</p> <p>The renewed administrative set-up with a Single Beneficiary as described earlier allows for only using public procurement and service contracts for the implementation of the activities envisaged.</p> <p>The use of public procurement and service contracts will greatly reduce the administrative burden of</p>

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
		<p>ESPON, in particular at the level of Member and Partner States. Furthermore, the management of a single Grant Agreement with the Single Beneficiary by the ESPON MA, steered and monitored by the ESPON MC will be much more streamlined, effective, lean and efficient in comparison to the situation under the ESPON 2013 Programme. This will require a much reduced TA budget in comparison to the previous programming period. Member and Partner States together with the Managing Authority seek to achieve by using the TA budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct administrative and financial implementation of the programme in the full respect of EU and national rules providing the necessary support to programme Single Beneficiary and programme authorities. • Sufficient coordination among the programme actors and between the programme actors and the Single Beneficiary for a correct steering and monitoring of the Single Operation. • Transparent assistance providing the Single Beneficiary the necessary conditions for the support of the Single Operation, including the specific requirements concerning products and/or services to be delivered under the Single Operation, the financing plan and the time-limit for execution. • Visibility in the role played by the EC ensuring that the value added of the EC assistance is explained to the public and awareness is raised on the achievements of the Cooperation Programme as EC programme, also in relation to the indicators set. • The setup of a correct programme implementation mechanism and delivery system which can be monitored and improved during its implementation. • A minimum level of administrative burden for all involved actors still in full respect of the EU and national legal and regulatory frameworks. <p>As the Technical Assistance remains below 15 million Euro results, indicators regarding the contribution to the achievement of the Specific Objective 5 are not required.</p>

2.B.4 Result indicators

Table 10: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)

Priority axis	SO5 - Leaner, and more effective and efficient implementation provisions and more proficient programme assistance.						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting

2.B.5 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.5.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance
<p>With regards to actions contributing to the specific objective of a leaner, effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient programme assistance, the distinct feature and strategic nature of the ESPON 2020 Programme with only one content related Priority Axis and one Single Beneficiary already identified in the Cooperation Programme, the Technical Assistance will focus on the smooth implementation of the Programme, the correct fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Managing, Certifying and Audit Authorities and the fulfilment of the evaluation and communication requirements.</p> <p>Considering the limited number of actors involved in the programme implementation and their proximity (also in geographical terms) the efforts needed to ensure the compliance with the minimum requirements foreseen in relation to the implementation of the Management and Control System will be simpler to implement. Efforts will also be provided to ensure sufficient coordination and steering of the Single Operation and guidance to the Single Beneficiary from the ESPON MC and the ESPON MA.</p> <p>The Technical Assistance will support actions among others (no exhaustive list) related to the implementation of the regulatory duties of the ESPON MA (who will also take up the tasks of the joint secretariat) and the MC, of the Certifying Authority and of the Second Level Audit and, if needed, of auditors coordination meetings.</p> <p>The elaboration of an Operation Specification document accompanied by an Operation Implementation Guidance to provide guidance to the Single Beneficiary on how to propose, set up and implement the Single Operation will be provided. This action will contribute to ensuring the correct administrative and financial implementation of the programme and will ease the understanding of the legal and regulatory framework required by all involved actors as well as facilitate the implementation of the required management verifications and audit in full traceability and transparency. The documents will contribute to a sufficient coordination among the programme actors and between the programme actors and the Single Beneficiary for a correct steering and monitoring of the Single Operation including provisions for regular meetings between the ESPON MA, the ESPON MC members and the Single Beneficiary.</p> <p>Therefore, the coverage of meeting costs of the ESPON MC including the travel costs of one representative per country for every second meeting is</p>	

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance
<p>foreseen. In addition costs for the participation to a maximum of two seminars/events per year when organised back to back with MC meetings will be reimbursed. Otherwise the need for meetings of the committee shall be limited by use of decision by written procedures. Travel costs for dedicated sub-committees of the ESPON MC, such as an Assessment Committee for the Single Operation, can also be covered.</p> <p>Furthermore the action to support travel costs for policy experts nominated by the ESPON MC to participate in the Project Support Teams will support the Programme coordination and policy uptake.</p> <p>Foreseen actions will include the implementation of the Communication Plan in compliance with Art. 110 and 116 CPR. A seven year Communication Strategy and yearly Communication Action Plans shall be adopted by the ESPON MC in this respect. Taking into account that the Cooperation Programme will finance only a Single Operation, which includes a Specific Objective 4 about outreach, the activities of the ESPON MA and ESPON MC will be closely coordinated to ensure complementary to the Single Beneficiary and be resource efficient. The Communication Strategy will be developed with the view of reaching the widest possible media coverage, using various forms of communication. The elaboration and implementation of the Communication Strategy will contribute to the visibility of the role played by the Community, explain the value added of the Community assistance to the public and awareness, show the achievements of the Cooperation Programme.</p> <p>In this context also the action of covering ECP meetings of up to twice a year including the coverage of travel cost of one representative per country in relation to the coordination of transnational and national communication and outreach activities has to be mentioned. The ECP network nominated by the participating countries will support the communication in Member and Partner States in a focused and coordinated way.</p> <p>Actions related to the implementation of the programme evaluation in compliance with Art. 56 of the CPR shall also be supported by Technical Assistance. An Evaluation Plan shall be approved at the first meeting of the ESPON MC supporting for a correct programme implementation mechanism and delivery system, which can be monitored and improved during its implementation by an ongoing monitoring of the programme implementation mechanism. The strategy for the use of the evaluation results will consider a pathway to necessary corrections and improvements, if needed.</p> <p>Further action is related to the set up and maintenance of the computerised system ensuring the electronic exchange of data between programme authorities and Single Beneficiary according to Art. 125 (2) d of the CPR. No later than 31 December 2016, all exchanges of information between the ESPON MA, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the Single Beneficiary shall be carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems.</p> <p>The action of the creation of a lean and efficient Management and Control System will comply with the minimum requirements required by the EC regulations, including the setting up of a grant agreement template; the implementation of quality checks; ongoing coordination between the Single</p>	

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance
<p>Beneficiary and the ESPON MA; and, the setting up of up a computerised system for the electronic exchange of data between the programme authorities, the Single Beneficiary and the EC. The Management and Control System will therefore contribute to ensuring the minimum level of administrative burden for all involved actors in full compliance with EU and national legal and regulatory frameworks. The combination of a clear and lean Management and Control System, together with the use of service contracts within the Single Operation, will considerably simplify the implementation of the Cooperation Programme and reduce the administrative burden for all actors involved. Therefore the amount of controls and checks needed to ensure the correct implementation of the Cooperation Programme will be considerably lower than in the past.</p>	

2.B.5.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results (by priority axis)

Table 11: Output indicators

Priority axis		P2 - Technical Assistance		
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data
OI08	Guidance documents elaborated for the Single Beneficiary	Number	1.00	Management and Control System
OI09	Computerised system set	Number	1.00	Management and control system
OI10	Communication strategies elaborated	Number	1.00	Annual Implementation Report
OI11	Evaluations carried out	Number	2.00	Annual Implementation Report

2.B.6 Categories of intervention

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 12-14: Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance	
	Code	Amount (€)
	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	1,909,624.00
	122. Evaluation and studies	102,000.00
	123. Information and communication	89,250.00

Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance	
	Code	Amount (€)
	01.Non-repayable grant	2,100,874.00

Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	P2 - Technical Assistance	
	Code	Amount (€)
07.Not applicable		2,100,874.00

3. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in €)

Table 15

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF	2,052,334.00	2,996,684.00	4,279,456.00	7,775,738.00	7,931,253.00	8,089,878.00	8,251,676.00	41,377,019.00
Total	2,052,334.00	2,996,684.00	4,279,456.00	7,775,738.00	7,931,253.00	8,089,878.00	8,251,676.00	41,377,019.00

3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in €)

Table 16: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	For information	
					National public funding (c)	National private funding (d)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
P1	ERDF	Total	39,276,145.00	6,931,089.00	6,931,089.00	0.00	46,207,234.00	84.9999915598%		
P2	ERDF	Total	2,100,874.00	370,743.00	370,743.00	0.00	2,471,617.00	84.9999817933%		
Total	ERDF		41,377,019.00	7,301,832.00	7,301,832.00	0.00	48,678,851.00	84.9999910639%		
Grand total			41,377,019.00	7,301,832.00	7,301,832.00	0.00	48,678,851.00	84.9999910639%		

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

3.2.B Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Table 17

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
P1	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration	39,276,145.00	6,931,089.00	46,207,234.00
Total		39,276,145.00	6,931,089.00	46,207,234.00

Table 18: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
Total	0.00	0.00%

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development, taking into account the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, including in relation to regions and areas referred to in Article 174(3) TFEU, having regard to the Partnership Agreements of the participating Member States, and showing how it contributes to the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results

ESPON will, in its implementation logic, be “territorial” and support an integrated territorial approach through provision of comparable evidence covering a wide range of themes and issues relevant for authorities and bodies deciding the development of regions, cities and larger territories. Due to the specific objectives of the Community Programme, ESPON 2020 will directly offer other programmes under ESI Funds its territorial evidence support. Moreover, the targeted analyses envisaged to groups of national authorities, regions and cities based on their evidence needs will be able to contribute to an integrated approach, e.g. in ITI and development of functional urban areas etc.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and principles for identifying the areas where they will be implemented

Not Applicable

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Principles for identifying the urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented and the indicative allocation of the ERDF support for these actions

Not Applicable

Table 19: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF support

Indicative amount of ERDF support (€)
0.00

Indicative amount of ERDF support (€)

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

Approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis

Not Applicable

Table 20: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
Total	0.00

4.4 Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the relevant Member States and taking into account, where applicable, strategically important projects identified in those strategies (where appropriate)

(Where Member States and regions participate in macro-regional and sea basin strategies)

Not Applicable

5. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

5.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 21: Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures Department for Spatial Planning and Development (DATER), Division for European Affairs, Luxembourg	Head of Division
Certifying authority	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department for Spatial Planning and Development (DATER), Division for General Affairs and Budget, Luxembourg	Deputy Head of Division
Audit authority	Ministry of Finance, General Inspection of Finance (IGF), Luxembourg	Director

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

- the Managing authority
 the Certifying authority

Table 22: Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Ministère des Finances, Direction du Contrôle financier	Director
Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks	Ministry of Finance, General Inspection of Finance (IGF), Luxembourg	Director

5.2 Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Due to the size and the organisational structure of the ESPON 2020 Programme with only one Single Operation and in order to keep the administrative and financial burden as low as possible, the ESPON MA shall assume the function and tasks of the Joint Secretariat relevant for the implementation of the programme and shall assist the ESPON MC and the Certifying Authority in carrying out its tasks.

On-going information and assistance to the Single Beneficiary shall also be provided in order to support a sound and correct implementation of the Single Operation.

Limited staff necessary to support the ESPON MA will be contracted via the GIE LERAS and the work space will be available at the location of the ESPON MA for a smooth functioning of the secretarial function with the MA.

5.3 Summary description of the management and control arrangements

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall be implemented through the following main implementation structures: a ESPON MC, the ESPON MA also assuming the function of a joint secretariat, a Certifying Authority, and the Audit Authority.

Role and Tasks of the ESPON MC

In accordance with Article 47 (3) CPR, the Member States and Partner States shall set up within three months of the date of notification of the Commission decision adopting the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the ESPON MC to monitor the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme in agreement with the ESPON MA. The ESPON MC shall draw up its Rules of Procedure and unanimously adopt these Rules of Procedure during the first meeting of the ESPON MC.

In accordance with Article 48 (1), (3) and (5) CPR, the ESPON MC shall be composed of the following members:

- (a) Representative(s) of each EU Member State with one vote per delegation.
- (b) Representative(s) of each Partner State with one vote per delegation.
- (c) Representative(s) of the ESPON MA of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme who shall have no voting rights but can make reservations on any concerns of a legal nature.
- (d) Representative(s) of the European Commission, participating in the work of the ESPON MC in an advisory capacity.

The members of the ESPON MC shall be appointed by the participating country at the latest within 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision approving the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. Once appointed, the national authorities and contact persons responsible for representing a Member or Partner State in the ESPON MC shall be promptly notified to the ESPON MA. Substitutes are allowed and shall be appointed accordingly.

The ESPON MC shall have a chairman (usually the country of the EU Presidency). A vice- chairman (the ESPON MA) will be nominated according to the procedure to be defined by the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

Partnership and multi-level governance will due to the specific character and mission of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme involve competent urban and other public authorities or economic and social partners or other relevant bodies and non-

governmental organisations representing various societal issues. This will be ensured by consultations, hearings, surveys, seminars and workshops, and other communication efforts. In order to ensure efficient and effective meetings these organisations shall not become members in the ESPON MC, but representative partners can, when appropriate, participate as guests in specific meetings of the ESPON MC.

Representatives from EU Candidate Countries and from the Certifying Authority may participate in ESPON MC meetings as observers. Upon request, also external experts supporting the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and representatives of the Single Beneficiary may participate in ESPON MC meetings as guests.

The ESPON MC, as the only decision-making body within the ESPON 2020 Programme, shall have the overall responsibility for monitoring the Programme. For this purpose and in accordance with Article 49 CPR, the ESPON MC shall regularly meet twice but at least one time per year. The ESPON MC shall establish rules for ESPON MC Meetings written procedures and silent consent in the Committee's Rules of Procedure.

The ESPON MC shall review the implementation of the Cooperation Programme and Cooperation Programme's progress made towards achieving its objectives. In doing so, it shall have regard to the financial data, common and programme specific indicators, including changes in the value of result indicators and progress towards quantified target values, and the milestones defined in the performance framework referred to in Article 21(1), and, where relevant, the results of qualitative analyses.

Pursuant to Article 49 (2) (3) (4) CPR and to Article 110 CPR, while taking into consideration the specific context of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the ESPON MC shall assume all functions, and in particular:

- (a) Examine any issues that affect the performance of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and of the Single Operation;
- (b) Examine and approve the annual and final implementation reports of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme;
- (c) Examine the evaluation plan drawn up by the ESPON MA for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme at its first meeting, approve it or amend the evaluation plan at a later stage;
- (d) Examine progress made in implementing the evaluation plan and the follow up given to findings of evaluations;
- (e) Examine and adopt a seven year Communication Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and the yearly Communication Action Plans as well as any amendment of this communication strategy or of a given yearly action plan;
- (f) Examine implementation of the communication strategy of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme closely coordinated with the outreach activities of the programme;
- (g) Examine and approve any proposal by the ESPON MA for any amendment to the ESPON 2020 Programme;

- (h) Assess, negotiate and approve the Operation Specification which shall guide the preparation of the Operation Proposal;
- (i) Establish minimum criteria for approving, if necessary under conditions, the proposal for the Single Operation elaborated by the ESPON EGTC in its role as Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme;
- (j) Assess, negotiate and approve the Single Operation proposal submitted including the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2015-2020 for the Single Operation and the respective proposed financial allocations;
- (k) Discuss and approve the Annual Work Plans for the Single Operation, including general principles for selection criteria, the respective proposed financial allocations and scoping notes for those activities the ESPON MC considers to be of particular importance;
- (l) Discuss and approve the Annual Implementation Report for the Single Operation and related actions and activities of the Single Beneficiary;
- (m) Ensure monitoring of activities of the ESPON EGTC as Single Beneficiary, according to the modalities stipulated in the Grant Agreement;
- (n) Ensure the nomination of representatives of the ESPON MC to participate in Project Support Teams, for accompanying and giving policy advice to the implementation of major projects mainly on applied research and for acting as a rapporteur to the ESPON MC, and addresses the proposals made by Project Support Teams;
- (o) Provide, via the rapporteur, direct feedback to the Single Beneficiary on important activities related to the Specific Objectives 1-4.

The ESPON MC shall seek to make decisions on ground of consensus. Should a consensus not be reached, a qualified majority voting shall apply for which further details are provided in the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

Members of the ESPON MC having a conflict of interest in respect of any subject matter up for consideration by the work or by decision of the ESPON MC shall declare such interest to the meeting and shall not take part in the decision. The details of this procedure shall be set out in the ESPON MCs' Rules of Procedure.

If necessary for facilitating and preparing its decisions, the ESPON MC may establish separate (Sub-) Committees or formats of cooperation between the Member States and Partner States.

The representatives of the ESPON MC will ensure that on the national level all relevant partners are involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme as referred to in Article 5(2) the CPR.

Role and tasks of the ESPON MA

The ESPON MA will be responsible for managing the cooperation programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management as described in Article 125

of the Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 CPR and Article 23 ETC Regulation. It will ensure that the different programme bodies interact in a smooth way.

The ESPON MA assuming the function of the joint secretariat assisting the ESPON MC shall undertake all tasks mentioned in Art. 125 of the Regulation 1303/2013 (EU) and Art. 23 of the Regulation 1299/2013 (ETC). More specifically for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme the MA shall in addition undertake to:

- Cooperate with organisations, institutions and networks relevant for the objectives of the programme.
- Ensure a programme website and events.
- Develop for approval by the ESPON MC a transparent procedure for the establishment of the Operation Specification, the applications form, and the funding rules in the form of Operation Implementation Guidelines.
- Manage the operation application process and to advise the Single Beneficiary organise the checking and assessment of the Operation Proposal towards the decision of the ESPON MC.
- Coordinate the dialogue and cooperation between the ESPON MC and the Single Beneficiary in the preparation of the Annual Work Plans by the Single Beneficiary to be submitted by the Single Beneficiary for approval by the ESPON MC.
- Monitor the progress made by the Single Beneficiary through collecting and checking the Single Operation progress reports, including monitoring outputs, results and financial implementation.
- Carry out the verifications pursuant to Article 23 (4) ETC Regulation.
- Fulfil the usual work of a programme secretariat, i.e. organisation of meetings, preparation of documents.
- Support the Audit Authority by organising and following up of meetings, following the procurement procedure for the externalisation of audits, ensuring a good communication flow between the Audit Authority, audited bodies and the external audit firm, making relevant data available to these actors to allow for a smooth implementation of their tasks.

With regard to the management of the Single Operation, the ESPON MA has the following discretionary powers:

The ESPON MA can decide on changes as long as the purpose and the other basic features of the Operation are not altered. It can also decide on changes in an activity which does not have consequences on the eligibility or the results of the project. In particular the ESPON MA can decide on:

- Additional minor conditions to the approved Single Operation minor corrections, errors or clarification requests are found during the phase of fulfilment of conditions
- Changes in activities which do not change the overall objectives of the project;
- An extension of the date by which progress reports have to be presented by the Single Beneficiary;

The ESPON MC shall be informed on the above actions and will decide in cases of doubt and in all other cases.

Role and tasks of the Certifying Authority

In accordance with Article 21 ETC-Regulation, the Certifying Authority shall assume all functions as set out by Article 126 (a) – (h) CPR and shall establish all procedures referred to in Annex XIII (3) (B) CPR. The Certifying Authority shall also

- (a) Draw up and submit to the EC all payment applications according to Article 131 CPR and on the amount as defined by Article 130 CPR laying down common rules for calculating interim payments and payment of the final balance;
- (b) Observe and comply with the proceedings and deadlines as set out by Article 135 CPR for a presentation of interim payment applications and for their payment;
- (c) Receive the payments made by the EC;
- (d) Receive the national co-financing of the Member States and the contributions of the Partner States;
- (e) Make payments to the Single Beneficiary, in accordance with Article 132 CPR, and to any other recipient of a payment.

A Euro-currency (EUR) bank account for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme shall be available at the Certifying Authority in the name of the Trésorerie de l'Etat du Luxembourg at the latest 30 days from the date of the notification of the decision approving the Programme. The single bank account shall be used by the Certifying Authority for receiving the ERDF-contribution from the Commission, the Member States' co-financing and the Partner State contributions and for making all payments to the Single Beneficiary or to any other recipient of a payment.

Role and tasks of the Audit Authority

The Audit Authority shall assume the functions as set out by Article 127 (1) – (8) CPR. The Audit Authority shall also contribute to the Commission's cooperation with audit authorities in accordance with the provisions as set out by Article 128 (3) CPR.

In agreement with the provision of Article 124 (2) CPR, the Audit Authority is responsible for drawing up the report and opinion assessing the fulfilment by the ESPON MA and Certifying Authority of the criteria related to the internal control environment, risk management, management and control activities and monitoring, on the basis of the Annex XIII of the CPR.

With reference to Art. 25 ETC-Regulation, the setting up of a Group of Auditors is not required considering that the only two grant-receiving bodies of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme (the ESPON MA and the Single Beneficiary) are located in Luxembourg. However, on demand of Member and Partner States, a Consultative Group of Auditors of may be established at own cost of the sending countries. In order ensure a well-coordinated approach of the audits with other Interregional Programmes the Audit Authority may search for cooperation with the Group of Auditors of these programmes.

The Audit Authority shall within eight months of adoption of a Cooperation Programme, prepare an audit strategy for performance of audits. The audit strategy shall set out the

audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on projects and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years.

The Audit Authority, (in agreement with the ESPON MC for the budgetary provisions), may decide to contract an external audit firm to carry out audits on the proper functioning of the management and control systems and on an appropriate sample in compliance with Article 127 CPR. The quality and completeness of the audit work carried out will be ensured by the Audit Authority assisted by the ESPON MA strictly in a secretarial function. The ESPON MA will inform the ESPON MC of the results of the audit work and necessary follow-up.

Organisation of the assessment of the Single Operation

The Operation Proposal will be submitted by the Single Beneficiary following the invitation by the ESPON MC to submit an Operation Proposal with reference to the Operation Specification decided by the ESPON MC.

Details of the assessment criteria and procedure will also be made available through the Operation Specification and the Operation Implementation Guidelines. The Operation Proposal submitted by the Single Beneficiary will be made available to the members of the ESPON MC. If the ESPON MC so decides it shall set-up an Assessment Committee with a limited number of representatives of the ESPON MC, which can be reimbursed for travel costs. The ESPON MA supports the process by organising the assessment procedure based on the eligibility and quality criteria approved by the ESPON MC, and prepares in line with the assessment of the Assessment Committee a proposal for a decision on the Operation Proposal to be taken by the ESPON MC.

The chair of the ESPON MC together with the Chair of the Assessment Committee and ESPON MA will guide the process towards a decision on the Operation Proposal presented by the Single Beneficiary which can be an acceptance of the Operation Proposal without conditions or under conditions or a rejection of the proposal combined with recommendations for a resubmission.

Once the Operation Proposal is accepted by the ESPON MC the ESPON MA will sign the Grant Agreement with the Single Beneficiary using template approved by the ESPON MC, which is laying down further details concerning the responsibilities, obligations and liabilities of the Single Beneficiary.

The ESPON MA shall ensure that the Single Beneficiary will produce all documents relevant for the Grant Agreement and its implementation, will provide necessary information and will give access to their business premises to any authorised body of the EU, to the Audit Authority, the Certifying Authority, the ESPON MA itself for control and audit purposes in compliance with Article 132 CPR. The Grant Agreement makes reference to the control systems set up in accordance with Article 23 ETC regulation .

Financial control of the Single Beneficiary

According to Article 23 (4) ETC Regulation and considering that the ESPON MA does not carry out verifications under Article 125 (4) (a) CPR, Luxembourg designated the body responsible for carrying out such verifications in relation to the Single Beneficiary on its territory. The body responsible for the approbation of the First Level Control of the Single Beneficiary is defined in Chapter 5.1 of the Cooperation Programme. The full

description will be included in the description of the management and control system in accordance with Article 72 CPR.

The relevant authorities will ensure that the expenditure is verified and confirmed by the controllers within a period of three months after the end of each reporting period (to be specified by the ESPON MC) so that the Single Beneficiary is in a position to submit the Progress Reports to the ESPON MA at the dates set in the Grant Agreement and so that the ESPON MA/Certifying Authority can declare regularly expenditure to the EC.

The cost of these verifications of the Single Beneficiary will be carried by itself. These costs are considered eligible for an ERDF reimbursement and thus reported within the progress reports. The template of documents (such as standard control confirmation, control reports incl. checklist) shall be decided by the ESPON MC.

With regard to Technical Assistance payments to the ESPON MA the body as described in Chapter 5.1 will carry through verifications and will ensure that the expenditure is certified in line with the control system set up of the Cooperation Programme.

The result of any verification of the proper functioning of the first level control system carried out by the Certifying Authority shall be communicated to the ESPON MA. The ESPON MA will also inform the ESPON MC of the results and follow-up of any checks carried out by other programme bodies or the EC or European Court of Auditors.

Monitoring of the Single Operation

The ESPON MA shall monitor the implementation and financial progress of Single Operation. For this purpose, three main types of information need to be considered:

- The use of the ERDF subsidy for the purpose mentioned in the Grant Agreement and the approved application;
- The progress made in implementing the Operation in compliance with Grant Agreement and the approved application;
- The confirmation of expenditure by the Single Beneficiary controller in compliance with the system set up in Luxembourg according to Article 23 (4) of the ETC Regulation.

The ESPON MA shall assess the reports and monitor the proper implementation of the approved Operation referred to in the Regulation according to the procedure laid down in the description of the management and control system.

Programme Monitoring

The monitoring of this programme will provide information on the implementation at any given time. It will cover financial issues and achieved results considering the targets fixed for the different milestones in the performance framework.

Monitoring will encourage high quality, effective implementation by monitoring the progress of the Single Operation against the goals and intended results of the programme. Monitoring will be based on regular reports from the Single Operation.

The Programme specifies a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating its progress. The programme specific result and output indicators are presented in Section 2 of this

document. They relate directly to the specific objective of the programme. In particular, result indicators are the cornerstone of the performance analysis of the programme. They relate to parts of the intended results that can be captured.

The Single Operation will be obliged to report twice a year at a minimum on the results achieved. The ESPON MA will collect and compile the data of these reports in order to allow for conclusions on the programme level. The ESPON MA will use this documentation – together with additional information on the financial implementation – to draft the annual and final reports and submit them to the ESPON MC.

Annual and Final Implementation Reports and Closure of the Programme

The ESPON MA will, in accordance with Article 14 ETC Regulation submit to the Commission implementation reports in accordance with the requirements of Article 50 CPR. Prior the submission these reports will be approved by the ESPON MC. A final report on implementation will be submitted to the Commission by 31 December 2022. The closure of the programme will be carried out in compliance with Article 141 CPR by the competent programme authorities. The programme closure will be prepared to a maximum within the eligibility period of the 2014-2020 programme to limit the closure activities and costs to be financed by the Partner States or the successor programme afterwards.

Evaluations

The programme has been subject to an ex-ante evaluation by an independent evaluator with the aim of improving the overall quality of the programme and to optimise the allocation of budgetary resources and the quantification of target values in the performance framework. The recommendations of this evaluation have been taken into account during the drafting of this programme.

In accordance with Articles 56 and 114 CPR Regulation the ESPON MA will draw up an evaluation plan for the programme. The evaluation plan shall be submitted to the first meeting of the ESPON MC.

One or several evaluations will be carried out to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme on the basis of the evaluation plan. All evaluations will be examined by the ESPON MC and sent to the Commission.

By 31 December 2020, the ESPON MA will submit to the Commission a report summarising the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period, including an assessment of the main outputs and results of the programme.

Computerised Exchange of Data

Computerised systems for the management and monitoring of programme and operation data will be set up no later than 31 December 2015. The Online Operation reporting systems will also be set up in compliance with the requirements set out in Article 122(3) CPR. This will allow all exchanges of information between the Single Beneficiary, the ESPON MA/Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and the Monitoring Committee to be carried out by means of an electronic data exchange system. This system will provide full access for the involved bodies, facilitate interoperability and allow for the beneficiary to submit all information as referred to in Article 122 (3) CPR only once.

The contribution of the Member and Partner States to the financing of the programme

The ESPON 2020 Programme shall be based on a co-financing rate of 85 % ERDF and 15 % national contribution at the level of the Cooperation programme. Member States will provide the co-financing of the total programme according to the distribution agreed with the submission in annual instalments for the years 2014-2020 transferred to the Certifying Authority.

The Partners States will provide an additional budget agreed with the submission of the programme, which will be administered by the Certifying Authority in a separate budget in full transparency of the ESPON MC.

The payment of the national annual contribution is due by end of February of the year to be funded. An extension of this deadline is possible only in duly justified cases. The ESPON MA shall send a written request three months prior to the due date in accordance with the financial tables of the national contributions. The written request will indicate the account number, the amount of the annual contributions and the payment due dates. A report on the payment situation will be given by the Certifying Authority to the ESPON MC on a regular basis. The transferred national contribution will neither produce any interest nor shall interest be due as long as the transfer will be activated until the end of the respective year.

In the case that – at the end of the programme implementation period – the Member and Partner States have transferred more funds than have actually been used the Certifying Authority will reimburse these funds unless any other indication is given either by decision of the ESPON MC or the information of the respective State.

Payments to the Single Beneficiary

The Single Beneficiary shall receive an advance payment together with the transmission of the signed Grant Agreement in conformity with Art. 81 (2) of the CPR. The level of the advance payment will be decided by the ESPON MC as part of deciding on the Operation Specification (established by the MC).

The advance payment will allow the Single Beneficiary to pre-finance its activities. The claim for reimbursement within the progress report certified by the First Level Controller shall be sent to the ESPON MA. The reimbursement is paid by ESPON MA through the Certifying Authority to the Single Beneficiary. All amounts referred to in the subsidy contract are expressed in EURO (EUR). Funds will be disbursed in EURO (EUR) to the bank account specified by the Single Beneficiary in the project application.

The ESPON MA and Certifying Authority ensures that the Single Beneficiary receive payment in full and as quickly as possible, i.e. within 6 weeks on average after approval of the reports by the ESPON MA provided that the funds are made available by the European Commission and sufficient national contributions are transferred. No deduction, retention or further specific charges which would reduce the amount of the payment shall be made.

Should there be any suspicion of irregularities, the ESPON MA or the Certifying Authority in compliance with the description of the management and control system shall suspend the reimbursement of the ERDF contribution until the issues are solved.

Arrangements regarding the examination of complaints

With reference to Art. 74 (3) CPR on the requirements for arrangements regarding the examination of complaints, the ESPON 2020 Programme foresees the following procedure. The ESPON MA identifies itself as the body receiving complaints regarding the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme.

A complaint should be lodged in writing to the MA in a registered way. The complaint shall include an argumentation about where a violation of which procedure was identified from the viewpoint of the complainant. Any person or institution having legitimate grounds can address a complaint to the ESPON MA.

The ESPON MA will assess the complaint and the consequences of the complaint with the in-house legal service. The result of the assessment will be laid down in a report for the ESPON MC. It shall contain recommendations to the MC on possible necessary legal or any other action as a consequence of the complaint as well as a recommendation for answering the complainant.

The complaint together with the report will be made available within maximum 15 working days to the ESPON MC. The MC will in written procedure reply to the recommendations within 10 working days. Based on the feedback from the MC the ESPON MA will respond the complainant.

The same procedure will apply to external requests which have been forwarded to the ESPON MA by the European Commission. The timing shall count from the day the complaint is arriving at the ESPON MA. The Commission shall be informed about the outcome of the complaint procedure at the same time as the response to the complainant is dispatched.

The complaint arrangements set out above are without prejudice to any mechanism or process for legal redress at national level, in particular with regard to unsuccessful applications.

Information and communication

The ESPON MA will draw up a Communication Strategy in accordance with Article 116 CPR, which will be discussed and approved by the ESPON MC no later than 6 months after the adoption of the Cooperation Programme. The Communication Strategy shall be closely coordinated with the capitalisation and outreach activities of the EGTC in order to avoid any overlap and allow reducing them to the appropriate level. Any revision of the Communication Strategy shall be discussed in, and approved by the ESPON MC.

The ESPON MA will inform the ESPON MC once a year about the progress in the implementation of the Communication Strategy and its assessment of the results, as well as on the planned information and communication activities to be carried out in the following year.

The ESPON MA will designate one person to be responsible for information and communication at cooperation programme level and shall inform the Commission of this designated person. This person shall participate in any network(s) set up by the Commission to exchange on the results of the implementation of the Communication Strategy, as stipulated in Article 117(4) CPR.

The Communication Strategy will be implemented by the ESPON MA in close coordination with the capitalisation and outreach activities implemented by the Single Beneficiary. It will work in partnership with the Member and Partner States and other bodies identified in Annex XII (3) CPR. Member and Partner States via their members of the ESPON MC will support a simple dissemination of information on communication activities, when necessary.

A budget for the implementation of the Communication Strategy will be made available as part of the programme's budget for technical assistance, in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

The Communication Strategy aims in particular to inform about participation opportunities under this Cooperation Programme and to publicise to citizens the role and achievements of cohesion policy through information and communication actions on the results and impacts of the programmes and the Single Operation. It will take into consideration the elements detailed in Annex XII CPR.

To ensure transparency in the support of the Funds, the information set out in Annex XII (1) CPR about the Single Beneficiary will be published on the programme website, updated at least every six months in an exportable format which allows the data to be easily published on the internet.

5.4 Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Reduction and recovery of payments from the Single Beneficiary

The ESPON MA shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the Single Operation. The ESPON MA shall also recover funds from the Single Beneficiary in case of a termination of the Grant Agreement in full or in part based on the conditions defined in the Grant Agreement. In principle, if the Single Beneficiary does not succeed in securing repayment, the Member State where the Single Beneficiary is located, e.i. Luxembourg where the EGTC is registered, shall reimburse the ESPON MA based on Article 27 (3) ETC regulation. Details on the procedure will be included in the description of the management and control system to be established in accordance with Article 72 CPR.

The ESPON MA with the support of the Certifying Authority shall be responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union in accordance with the apportionment of liabilities among the participating Member States as laid down in the Cooperation Programme and in Article 27 ETC Regulation.

In the case of irregularities discovered, for example, by the Court of Auditors or by the EC, which result in certain expenditures being considered ineligible and in a financial correction being the subject of a EC decision on the basis of Articles 136 to 139 CPR, the financial consequences for the Member and Partner States are laid down in the following section "liabilities and irregularities".

Any related exchange of correspondence between the EC and the Luxembourg as the state where the Single Beneficiary is located will be posted to ESPON MA, Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority where relevant.

If the ESPON MA or the Certifying Authority is becoming aware of irregularities, it shall without any delay inform the other body and respectively Audit Authority where relevant. In compliance with Article 112 CPR, Luxembourg as seat of the Single Beneficiary is responsible for reporting irregularities committed by the Single Beneficiary.

Appointment of Liabilities

The situation regarding ESPON 2020 and the establishment of a Single Beneficiary is particular as only two entities will receive subsidies so the cases of liability can be rather clearly allocated:

- (1) The *Single Beneficiary* under the Grant Agreement will receive the all funding allocated under the *Priority Axis 1*.
- (2) The *ESPON MA* will receive all funding under the *Priority Axis 2* (Technical Assistance).
- (3) On principle a third case of liabilities is possible by imposition of *flat-rate correction on the programme level* affecting both, the Single Beneficiary and the ESPON MA.

Liability of the Single Beneficiary - Priority 1

In case of occurrence of ineligible expenditure or irregularities with financial impacts in the use of funding by the Single Beneficiary the financial liability shall be borne by the ESPON EGTC. In case the EGTC is not able to cover these costs the members of the ESPON EGTC are liable. In order to support the members of the ESPON EGTC regarding a financial burden resulting from their unlimited liability in relation to the implementation of the ERDF-funding allocated under the Grant Agreement, an “ESPON EGTC Liability Mechanism” is set up (hereinafter referred to as Liability Mechanism).

The purpose, size of financing and practical operation of the Liability Mechanism is described in a specific “Reference Document on the Liability Mechanism” which shall be an Annex to the Agreement between Luxembourg and the Member and Partner States on the ESPON 2020 programme.

By the definition of the chain of liabilities any potentially occurring recovery of irregular expenditure from the Single Beneficiary to the ESPON MA is ensured.

Liability Related to ESPON MA - Priority 2 (Technical Assistance)

For financial consequences of possible irregularities occurring in the use of funding for Technical Assistance under Priority Axis 2 of the ESPON 2020 Programme, two approaches shall be applied:

- (a) For irregularities with financial impacts related to the administration of Technical Assistance, the financial liability shall be borne by the ESPON MA alone.

(b) For irregularities with financial impacts regarding the use of Technical Assistance, which is a consequence of a decision of the Member States and the Partner States in the ESPON MC, the liability shall be borne jointly by the Member States and Partner States proportionally to their financial contributions to the ESPON 2020 Programme.

Liability Related To Flat-Rate Corrections on the Level of the Cooperation Programme

Considering, that the ESPON 2020 Programme provides for a lean and clearly defined management and control structure and only two beneficiaries, the ESPON MA and the ESPON EGTC, any liability, in principle, shall be possible to be attributed. Therefore the probability of an application of flat-rate corrections is very low. Nevertheless, a rule shall be defined regarding the financial consequences of flat-rate corrections at the programme level:

(a) For the proportion of flat rate corrections relating to the funding under the Grant Agreement under for Priority Axis 1, the Liability shall be borne by the Single Beneficiary, which can recur on the Liability Mechanism.

(b) For the proportion of flat rate corrections relating to Technical Assistance (Priority Axis 2), the liability shall be borne jointly by the Member States and Partner States proportionally to their financial contributions to the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. Member and Partner States shall not be liable for irregularities, including ones having a systemic nature, and for flat rate corrections related to the administration of Technical Assistance. In the latter case, the liability rest with the ESPON MA.

5.5 Use of the Euro (where appropriate)

Method chosen for the conversion of expenditure incurred in another currency than the Euro

Expenditure incurred in a currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which that expenditure was incurred. The conversion shall be verified by the Managing Authority or by the controller in the Member State in which the beneficiary is located, which means Luxembourg.

5.6 Involvement of partners

Actions taken to involve the partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in the preparation of the cooperation programme, and the role of those partners in the preparation and implementation of the cooperation programme, including their involvement in the monitoring committee

A participatory process has been organised according to the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), Art. 5, and implemented in accordance with the principle set out in the European Code of Conduct for Partnership (ECCP).

The ESPON Managing Authority (MA) and the ESPON Joint Working Group (JWG) have identified the relevant partners for open consultations as the main target groups identified in the current Cooperation Programme, in particular competent institutions and authorities at European, national, regional and local level as well as relevant economic and social partners whose sectors and decisions can benefit from the results of the programme.

In the process of elaborating the Cooperation Programme, several consultations with relevant national administrations have been undertaken and the results have been used for the initial phase of the programming exercise, such as creating a common narrative for the new programme. These consultations have helped to better identify the needs to be addressed by the ESPON 2020 Programme.

On the basis of a draft final Cooperation Programme, a Europe-wide, open web-based Public Consultation including a questionnaire was organised from 4 March 2014 to 2 April 2014. The consultation gave competent institutions and bodies at all levels, stakeholders and citizens interested in ESPON the possibility to state their views, ideas and demands to the ESPON 2020 Programme. The consultation focused on the main areas of involvement set in the ECCP:

- Definition and selection of the priorities and related specific objectives
- Definition of programme specific indicators.
- Proposed allocation of funds.

This consultation resulted in 185 answers on the questionnaire.

Participating Member and Partner States conducted in the same period national consultations using a format that they found most adequate and made the key results available for the further programme development.

A dedicated feedback session targeting EU stakeholders from European institutions, bodies and organisations were organised in Brussels on 27 March 2014 to ensure that opinions and ideas of a wide range of EU level users of territorial evidence was fed into the final considerations on the ESPON 2020 Programme.

The results of the three different consultations carried through on the ESPON 2020 Programme were documented and made public on the ESPON website. Direct feedback was provided to participating partners.

The main conclusions of the consultation are considered to be as follows:

- The overall appreciation of the Draft Cooperation Programme was generally positive. Overall, the large majority of respondents intend to either be involved in ESPON 2020 research or to make use of the findings. A huge number of the submissions included thematic areas recommended for further research. These represent an important resource for the ESPON 2020 programme in ensuring that the output is tailored towards the needs to targeted stakeholders.
- Again there was generally strong agreement that the needs and challenges to be addressed by the ESPON 2020 Programme were clear, relevant and complete. A comment was included that a basic glossary of terms (EGTC, ETC etc) should be included. Furthermore, the scope of ESPON 2020 should be broadened to explicitly address not just Cohesion Policy but all ESI funds.
- The most important outcome from the consultation process is that a clear picture emerges from the comments received of the need for ESPON 2020 to focus more on outreach, including through Specific Objective 2 (Targeted Analysis) and Specific Objective 4 (Outreach and Capitalisation), in order to concretely transfer results into practice.
- A clear example of how Specific Objective 2 could be operated in practice is through making use of European organisations as intermediaries between the ESPON EGTC and national/regional/local authorities. This would help in shaping the Specific Objective 2 tailored to the needs of policymakers, to ensure there is less duplication in research effort and to create better synergies between EU level partners. There is also a clear need for ESPON to have greater interaction with other EU research networks, and other academic and applied research networks, so as to maximize synergies, joint-effort and complementarities.

The results of the entire Public Consultation have been taken up in the Cooperation Programme. The consultation largely confirmed the programme architecture and the intentions of Member and Partner States for ESPON 2020.

More specifically, the most important messages from the consultation have led to adjustments in the Cooperation Programme in the following way:

- The budget allocation and the Draft Cooperation Programme text is reflecting the strong focus and wish for further resources on Specific Objective 2 and 4.
- A glossary of key terminology related to the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme will be made available on the ESPON website to aid public reading of the programme.

The Public Consultation also resulted in a list of themes for territorial evidence production that would be useful for Europe. This list will be included in the Operation Specification and be addressed by the Multi-Annual Work Programme and the Annual Work Plans used in the further process selecting the most demanded themes for applied research by ESPON 2020.

These results of the Public Consultation were considered by the ESPON JWG on 28 April 2014 in the process of the finalisation of the Cooperation Programme before its submission to the EC for approval.

6. COORDINATION

The mechanisms that ensure effective coordination between the ERDF, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and other Union and national funding instruments, including the coordination and possible combination with the Connecting Europe Facility, the ENI, the European Development Fund (EDF) and the IPA and with the EIB, taking into account the provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework as set out in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. Where Member States and third countries participate in cooperation programmes that include the use of ERDF appropriations for outermost regions and resources from the EDF, coordination mechanisms at the appropriate level to facilitate effective coordination in the use of these resources

Not Applicable

7. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce the administrative burden.

The ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme will only have one beneficiary, the ESPON EGTC. In renewing and setting up the implementation architecture, it has been a firm objective to reduce the administrative burden of the former ESPON 2013 programme in accordance with the advice given in evaluations and critics voiced from external users. The ambition of ensuring a lean, effective and efficient programme implementation is in particular articulated in a shift to public procurement and service contracting of all content activities related to the specific objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

This reduces the administrative costs substantially compared to before. Financial first and second level control arrangements as well as checks of legal status and solvency become obsolete in 31 Member and Partner States. Only Luxembourg, the host country of the ESPON EGTC, will have to establish first level financial control. Due to this change, the current level of around 2400 Progress Reports being certified in the country of project lead partners will disappear.

Moreover, by reducing the need for first level control substantial, there is a corresponding reduction in second level financial control as well as no liability to beneficiaries in any of the 31 countries.

This is considered a major leaning of the administrative burden compared to the ESPON 2013 Programme.

8. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

8.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

Not Applicable

8.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of the specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the cooperation programme and, in particular, in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination, and in particular, the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Not Applicable

8.3 Equality between men and women

Description of the contribution of the cooperation programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at cooperation programme and operation level.

The horizontal principle of gender equality is not considered to be a primary focus of the ESPON 2020 programme. ESPON 2020 does not intend to develop specific activities uniquely aimed at the promotion of gender equality. The reason that this horizontal principle is not pro-actively supported primarily lies in the nature and scope of the programme of providing European territorial evidence and the corresponding strategy adopted.

Tenders for service contracts will be invited to explain in their application how their proposal will address gender equality. At the end of the project the partners will be asked to report how their project activities and outputs actually contributed to this horizontal principle. Based on the aggregated contributions reported by service contracts, ESPON 2020 will be able to monitor and demonstrate how the programme concretely contributed to gender equality. However, no specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of activities dealing with this issue.

No specific selection criteria are foreseen to favour the development of activities dealing with gender issues. However, the implementation of the programme may include applied research and/or analysis taking up gender issues depending on the demand from the policymakers involved.

The Single Beneficiary and the MA will be an equal opportunities employer.

9. SEPERATE ELEMENTS

9.1 Major projects to be implemented during the programming period

Table 23: List of major projects

Project	Planned notification / submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority axes / Investment priorities
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9.2 Performance framework of the cooperation programme

Table 24: Performance framework (summary table)

Priority axis	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)
P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	FI01	Absorption of Priority Axis 1 Programme Budget	Euros	5,600,000	45,758,109.00
P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	OI01	Number of applied research outputs produced under SO1	Number	0	22.00
P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	OI02	Number of targeted analysis activities undertaken under SO2	Number	0	25.00
P1 - Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach	OI03	Number of thematic focus papers produced under SO2 e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc	Number	15 thematic focus papers produced	45.00

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

EU Member States have been engaged in a Joint Working Group (JWG) with the mandate to elaborate the proposal for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. In this process several working group meetings have taken place. All EU Member States participated actively in shaping the programme for a renewal of ESPON. Only Spain did not participate in meetings of the JWG.

General Directors of the responsible ministries of EU Member States have at all their bi-annual meetings during the preparation period discussed the progress made by the JWG and made agreements in principle and taken decisions on relevant points in support of the work of the JWG.

The four Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, have also been involved and participated in the JWG. Only Liechtenstein has not been physically present at meetings of the JWG, however covered by the Swiss representative.

The European Commission took part in the preparation process both at meetings of the JWG and at DG level.

The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme will be steered by the ESPON Monitoring Committee where all 28 EU Member states and the four Partner states will be members. The European Commission will participate in meetings of the Monitoring Committee observing and giving advice.

The partners involved in the preparation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme include the following:

–Representatives of the 28 EU Member States.

–Representatives of the 4 Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

–EU stakeholder organisations (European Commission (DG Mare), Committee of the Regions, European Environmental Agency, CEMR (local and regional authorities), CPMR (maritime and peripheral regions), Euromontana (Mountain areas), AEBR and MOT (cross-border cooperation), Eurocities (urban), Metrex (metropolitan regions), RED (rural areas), EUKN (urban knowledge), Purple (peri-urban areas), and JTS Interreg IV A (Greater region).

–185 participants in the online Public Consultation.

A list of partners involved is included as annex.

9.4 Applicable programme implementation conditions governing the financial management, programming, monitoring, evaluation and control of the participation of third countries in transnational and interregional programmes through a contribution of ENI and IPA resources

Not Applicable

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Confirmations of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme	Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme	04-Dec-2015		Ares(2015)5590755	Confirmation agreements from MS	04-Dec-2015	nsinneje

Submitted annexes by the Commission implementing regulation laying down the model of the programme

Document title	Document type	Programme version	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
02 ESPON 2020 draft ex ante report FINAL VERSION	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	1.2	13-Jun-2014	ESPON 2020 draft ex ante report FINAL VERSION	Ares(2014)4237857	ESPON 2020 draft ex ante report FINAL VERSION	16-Dec-2014	nsinneje
Programme Snapshot 2014TC16RFIR004 2.0	Snapshot of data before send	2.0	04-Dec-2015		Ares(2015)5590755	Programme Snapshot 2014TC16RFIR004 2.0 fr Programme Snapshot 2014TC16RFIR004 2.0 de	04-Dec-2015	nsinneje
Confirmations of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme	Confirmation of agreement in writing to the contents of the cooperation programme	2.0	04-Dec-2015		Ares(2015)5590755	Confirmation agreements from MS	04-Dec-2015	nsinneje