

What is ESPON about?

Since 2002 ESPON promotes and fosters 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 objective of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme is to support the reinforcement of the effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral policies and programmes under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), as well as national and regional territorial development policies, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial evidence covering the entire territory of the EU Member States, as well as the four Partner States of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

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ESPON 2020 primarily focuses on the support of policy making and is thus targeting the following stakeholder groups:

- European policymakers
- National policymakers and practitioners
- Authorities implementing ESIF programmes and preparing periodical reports
- Regional and local policymakers and practitioners.

However, ESPON 2020 sees also the importance to serve a wider public and in particular the following secondary target groups:

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

Academics, scientists and researchers are important providers of ESPON outputs, bringing in the necessary research capacity and scientific excellence. In that way, the ESPON 2020 Programme will benefit the scientific community across Europe in the field of territorial research.



The ESPON 2020 Programme is following the logic of ESIF programmes by having established a Cooperation Programme with two Priority Axis:

Priority Axis 1: Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach

This Priority Axis covers all content-related activities and is implemented through a Single Operation to produce territorial evidence, foster the knowledge transfer, deliver on territorial observation, develop tools for measurement and observation, and provide for a broad outreach in terms of territorial evidence and results. The Single Operation is implemented by the ESPON EGTC, who is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Programme and who was commissioned by the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

Priority Axis 2: Technical Assistance (TA)

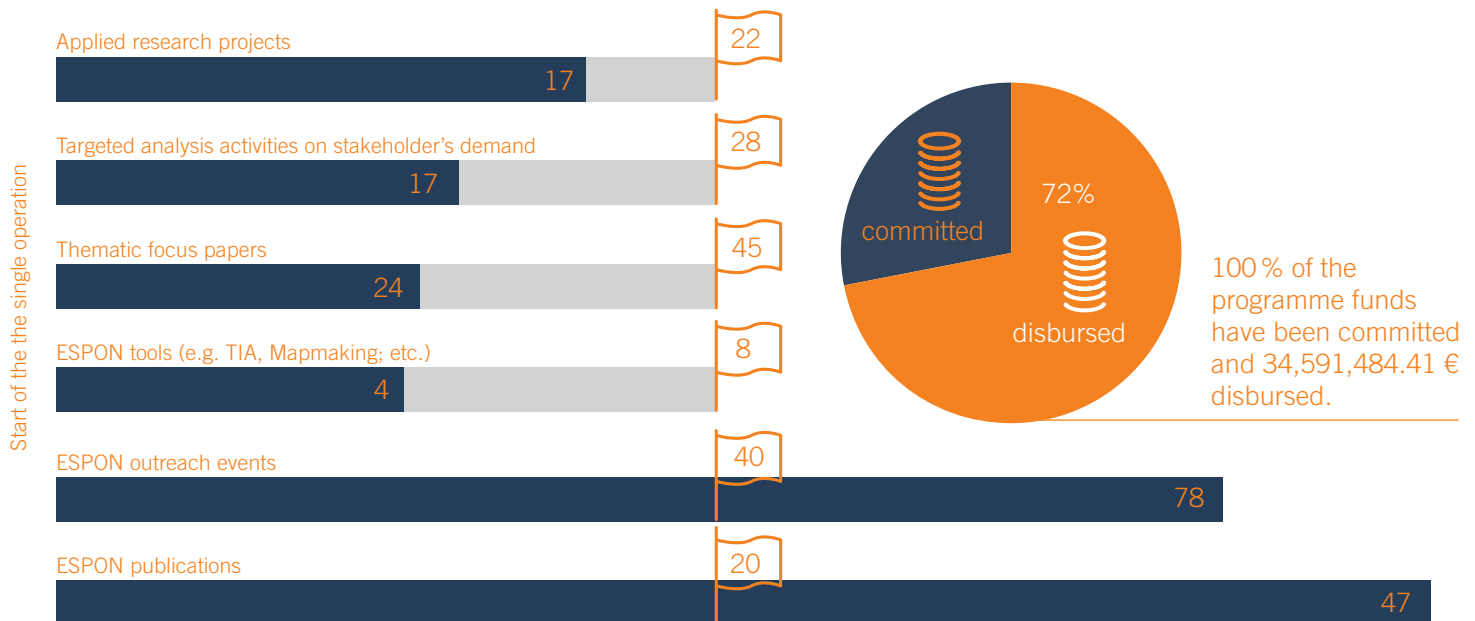
The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Department of Spatial Planning and Development in Luxembourg, in its function as Managing Authority, is ensuring a proper and efficient implementation of the Programme.



The approved total budget of the ESPON 2020 Programme for the period 2014-2020 amounts to € 50 528 851, of which the EU contributes € 41 377 019, the Member States contribute € 7 301 832 and € 1 850 000 are provided by the four Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Out of the total budget an amount of € 48 032 234 is attributed to the ESPON EGTC to implement the Single Operation.

Progress during 2020

During 2020 ESPON has continued the development of territorial evidence towards key ongoing and new policy processes at all levels. ESPON has continuously been involved in a debate with key EU, national, regional and local stakeholders for the identification of their main policy needs. In addition, the programme has supported EU sectoral policies as well as national and subnational regional development policies.



Sampled ESPON use in territorial policies 2020

Romanian Strategy for Territorial Development;
 Local urban resilience observatory of Thessaloniki;
 New Building Act of the Czech Republic;
 National spatial strategy of Slovenia;
 EU Strategy for the Danube Region;
 Territorial plan of Piemonte region;
 Flemish Spatial Report.

ESPON methodologies resonate with the scientific community

The Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) handbook published by Springer introduces a comprehensive analysis of TIA methodologies designed within ESPON since the mid-2000s.

<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030545017>

The National Spatial Planning Policy Programme of Portugal, PNPOT, references ESPON projects from two programme generations.

https://pnpot.dgterritorio.gov.pt/sites/default/files/SQ_Vconc_PNPOT_0.pdf



ESPON, the EU Green Deal and the Just Transition:

Global pioneer in sustainable economics and legend in economic transitions in Europe and worldwide Prof. Jeffrey Sachs is lauding ESPON for the efforts to reconcile territorial development with industrial decarbonisation; as well as the different interpretation of the 'just' epithet from different territorial angles.

“ Policymakers on their experience with ESPON targeted analyses:

Great arena for pan-European cooperation.

Very useful to develop fitting research.

Valuable network and follow-up activities.

Enlightening.

A unique European instrument in the field of territorial cohesion; it offers a flexible and low-threshold approach for knowledge exchange and transfer.

Great opportunity for learning and cooperation with experts at the EU level.