

ESPON 2030
Monitoring Committee meetings
3-4 June 2024

Decision notes

Welcome by the Chair for both meetings (Belgium)

ESPON 2030 Programme

1. Agreement on the Agenda

The MA and the BE Presidency welcomed the participants. The MA confirmed the quorum.

An additional topic under AOB was included about the consultation that the programme has to do in relation to the ESPON post-2027 and the future of Territorial Cooperation.

The Agenda was approved with this additional point by the ESPON 2030 MC.

2. Presentation of the on-demand study on the Quality of Life in the Alpine Convention space requested by Slovenia (by the service provider Mario Gualdi, Isinnova, Italy with the EGTC and Slovenian MC member/s)

The background and purpose of the on-demand territorial study dedicated to “Quality of Life in the Alpine Convention space” was presented. The MC members discussed the results and recommendations.

3. General Management Provisions for the ESPON 2030 Programme

1. Participation of candidate counties and Kosovo with the ESPON 2030 Programme

- Participation of Kosovo as observer in the ESPON 2030 Programme (document – provided already with the draft agenda - and decision)

The MA concluded that based on the positions expressed by the MC representatives, the conditions to accept the participation of Kosovo in the ESPON 2030 Programme as observer country are not met at this stage.

Should certain conditions and situation change, this subject might be presented again for discussion in future

- Feedback on the information meeting with observer counties on cooperation opportunities (ppt on information on cooperation opportunities - discussion)

The MA informed about the results of the meeting with the observer countries (with the absence of North Macedonia) that was organised to present them the programme and its activities.

4. Single Operation: implementation status (highlights based on the MC Info Note - discussion):

1. Key developments – TAPs and horizontal activities
2. Overall progress - Budget and output performance to date
3. Overview of targeted analyses proposals submitted by the third cut-off date
4. Takeaways from the 2023 stakeholder evaluation report

The EGTC shared highlights of the implementation process, with key developments since the last MC meeting (in March 2024), the progress in implementing evidence production and knowledge development activities under the eight ongoing TAPs, the overview of horizontal measures, and the budget and output performance to date.

5. Presentation of the recently launched new ESPON website

Due to time constraints this agenda point was not taken.

5. Further implementation of the Single Operation (documents and discussion)

1. Information on new evidence production activities (scoping note, ppt and discussion (decision in later written procedure))

- **European research project - collecting and analysing data for next generation of INTERREG programmes**

The EGTC introduced the new project in preparation.

On the basis of discussion, the MA concluded that the scope of this activity will be limited to the internal EU borders and the inland borders with the EFTA countries.

- **On-demand territorial study - Regional effects of housing shortage in urban centres**

The EGTC introduced this planned activity, and asked the MC about any geographical cases they would suggest being included in the ToR.

- **On-demand territorial study - The economic cost of Malta's insularity**

The EGTC introduced this planned activity, and no comments were raised.

2. Addressing data gaps in evidence production activities for Partner and Member States (ppt and discussion)

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this agenda item will be addressed in a separate online MC meeting.

3. Upcoming knowledge development events (arranged by ESPON EGTC and ECPs) (ppt and discussion)

The EGTC presented the upcoming knowledge development events. No comments were raised by the MC.

4. Update on the nomination and contracting of ESPON Contact Points, including the status of ECP work plans (ppt and discussion)

The EGTC presented an update on the nomination and contracting of ESPON Contact Points. No comments were raised by the MC.

5. Timetable on interaction with the MC (ppt and discussion)

The EGTC informed about the planned interactions with the MC members on new calls for tenders, deliverables etc. No comments were raised by the MC.

6. Workshops: discussion of each TAP in depth (4 sessions, 2 in parallel) (document, discussion and decision)

1. Places Resilient to Crises

2. Climate Neutral Territories

3. Governance of New Geographies

4. Perspectives for all People and Places

Overall conclusions

The MA suggested that the EGTC further process the collected key points and conclusions into a proposal for next steps, which may involve the revision and amendment of TAP implementation plans.

The EGTC confirmed commitment to developing scoping notes on new ERPs for the MC meeting in November 2024.

7. Developments in Territorial Cohesion, Urban Policy and Cohesion policy including Presidency programmes relevant for the ESPON 2030 Programme
presentation by BE, HU, PL Presidencies and inputs from EC (Q&A)

The respective Member and the Partner States as well as the EC were kindly asked to provide their eventual contribution to this Agenda point in written.

8. Timetable MC/MA and EGTC (two documents, one by the MA on 2030, one by the EGTC on SO (see point 10, third bullet) and decision on the MC timetable)

The MA introduced the joint timetable for the ESPON 2020 and ESPON 2030 Programmes. The timetable was approved by the Monitoring Committee.

Continued Point 3: General Management Provisions for the ESPON 2030 Programme

2. ESPON MA Info note on management (document, questions and answers)

No comments or questions were raised by the MC in relation to the info note.

3. Progress on the implementation of the Programme Evaluation (information and discussion together with the external evaluators and the members of the Evaluation Steering Group)

The evaluators presented the 1st short paper highlighting the work undertaken so far and the 3 key processes that will be at the core of the analysis of the evaluation in the forthcoming months, until the elaboration of the second input paper that will be presented at the November MC meeting.

4. State on setting up the audit work (information) Optional Agenda Point: Follow-up on Management Provision discussion and the Quality Check (information)

The MA indicated that the selection of the external auditor for the ESPON 2030 was finalised and that again EY was selected.

5. MA Quality Check of the Single Operation (document and discussion)

The MA briefly presented the document provided prior the meeting highlighted the main elements and underlining, in a positive note, that compared to the previous quality check, this one was characterised by a more cooperative atmosphere.

The MC decided to have a new Quality Check report for the MC meeting on March 2025.

6. Optional Agenda Point: Follow-up on Management Provision discussion and the Quality Check with ad-hoc invitation of the EGTC (information)

The MC decided that there was no need to further discuss the result of the quality check and of the report with the ESPON EGTC.

9. AOB

The MA briefly presented the framework for the questionnaire underlining the difficulties to adapt the questions provided in the EC Toolkit to the context of the ESPON Programme.

The MA also presented briefly the 9 questions and asked the support of the MC members to disseminate the link to the questionnaire in the respective Member and Partner States.