

ESPON 2030 Programme

Monitoring Committee meetings

4 November 2024, 08h45-17h30

5 November 2024, 09h00 -13h00

MagNet Community Center

Address: Andrássy út 98, H-1062 Budapest, Hungary

Final Minutes

Welcome by the Chair for both meetings (Hungary)

ESPON 2030 Programme

Sessions without the ESPON EGTC

1. Agreement on the Agenda

The MA and the HU Presidency welcomed the participants. The new members from ES, DE and IE were introduced. The MA confirmed the quorum and the MC agreed on the Agenda without any additional Agenda points.

2. General Management Provisions for the ESPON 2030 Programme

1. ESPON MA Info note on management (ppt, questions and answers)

An update to the Info note was presented by the MA confirming that the contributions from MT and IE for 2024 were received. No questions were posed by MC members.

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

The evaluators presented the second paper on the evaluation of the ESPON 2030 Programme, focusing on the main challenges and the proposed remedial actions to address the identified shortcomings.

The recommendations of the Note of the Steering Committee to this point were acknowledged:

- To Engage in a constructive approach with the EGTC to address jointly the shortcomings and recommendations proposed by the evaluators in their report
- Further increase the active participation of the MC members during the MC meetings and up-taking active roles as members of Advisory Boards to strengthen the steering of the Single Operation.

The MA concluded by noting that the evaluation report includes several recommendations relevant for discussions on the next programming period. These shall be considered by the Joint Working Group, which will need to be set up in the second half of 2025 to draft the ESPON post 2027.

3. Report on the results of the consultation (ppt and discussion)

The MA presented the main results of the consultation conducted during the summer, which was requested by the EC to assess the contribution of all Interreg programmes to the cooperation objectives of Interreg (see presentation). The MA highlighted some of the most noteworthy comments, which underscore concrete contributions ESPON is making through its activities. Based on the input received and the instructions provided during the Interact meeting on December 5 regarding the Harvesting Event, the MA will prepare a report to be submitted to the EC by December 31, 2024.

4. Liability fund – Claim of the EGTC (documents and decision)

The MC took note of the report of the Managing Authority on the claim of the Single Beneficiary and agreed to activate the Liability Mechanism.

Sessions with the ESPON EGTC

5. Feedback and exchange on points addressed in the session without the EGTC

The MA summarised the discussion on the previous agenda points for the ESPON EGTC.

3. Latest developments and Interact initiative regarding cooperation with candidate countries

The MA informed about the initiative by Interact to propose an ESPON study on Interreg programmes along the EU external borders with the view of the post-2027 programming period. It is intended to involve the EU regions of those programmes, in cooperation with the candidate countries and the IPA countries, to analyse change in value chains

across the borders, and identify cooperation priorities. The official request to the EGTC, if not submitted yet, will be made soon.

On the request of an MC about the geographical area of this proposed study, the MA responded that the candidate countries and the IPA countries would be the first priority.

4. Single Operation: implementation status (Document MC Info Note – presentation and discussion):

- 1. Key developments – TAPs and horizontal activities**
- 2. Overall progress - Budget and output performance to date**

The EGTC presented highlights on the key developments in the TAPs and horizontal activities, and the budget and output performance to date. The presentation was based on comprehensive information included in the MC Info Note.

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

The EGTC presented follow-up steps on the outcomes of the MC meeting in Mons in June 2024, with an emphasis on the preparation of new implementation plans for TAP 1-4, the work on scoping notes for new European research projects, and adjustments in the design of TAP info-packs and the workshops for the present meeting.

1. Follow-up of the MC discussion in June 2024 on TAP 1-4

- **Updated Implementation Plans of TAP 1-4 (documents, Q&A and decision)**

The MC approved the revised implementation plans for TAP 1 to 4.

- **New major evidence production activities and one extension to the existing ERP Housing4all (scoping notes and ppt; discussion and decision)**

➤ European research project - Regional Contributions to Climate Neutrality (ReCoCliN)

The EGTC explained the rationale for this new ERP and mentioned that following the approval of this scoping note, the project could be kicked off about summer 2025.

The MC approved the scoping note under the condition that the with small calibration of the geographical scope will be calibrated (broader than originally intended). The amended scoping note will be distributed with the draft minutes.

The following MC members will support the further scoping process: BE, IE, LV, NO.

➤ Territorial study: Making space for the renewable energy transition (MAKRES)

The MC approved the addition of more case studies to this project.

➤ • Additional cases in the ERP House4All

The MC approved five additional case studies and the budget extension for this project.

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

The EGTC provided information on the upcoming EGTC and ECP events.

3. 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, stressing the importance of preparing by the ECPs the work plans for 2025.

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

The EGTC informed about the planned interactions with the MC members. No questions were raised.

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

1. European Territories in Global Interactions
2. Smart Connectivity
3. Living, Working and Travelling across Borders
4. Nature-Based Adaption to Climate Change

Part C: Plenum: Presentation on the conclusions all 4 TAP (discussion and common conclusions)

1. European Territories in Global Interactions

The EGTC reported that a different implementation pathway and scope of the new ERP were recommended by the group discussion.

2. Smart Connectivity

The EGTC reported that the proposed implementation pathway was accepted.

3. Living, Working and Travelling across Borders

The EGTC reported that the proposed implementation pathway was accepted.

4. Nature-Based Adaption to Climate Change

The EGTC reported that the proposed implementation pathway was accepted.

7. Developments in Territorial Cohesion, Urban Policy and Cohesion policy including Presidency programmes relevant for the ESPON 2030 Programme presentation by HU, PL, DK 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 presenting their Presidency programmes respectively the latest developments in cohesion Policy.

8. Timetable MC/MA and EGTC (two documents, one by the MA on 2030, one by the EGTC on SO (see point 5) and decision on the MC timetable)

The MA presented the timetable and noted that the date of the next MC meeting needed to be changed due to a scheduling conflict with the NTCCP meeting. The new date for the online MC meeting is 18-19 March 2025. Additionally, the dates for the ESPON Week in Denmark have been confirmed as 17-21 November 2025.

9. Invitation of the Hungarian Presidency to join the INTERREG 35 Declaration (documents and decision)

The HU Presidency presented the Interreg Declaration and the conference that will be held in Budapest, which will serve as a platform for all Interreg Programs. During the conference, participants will be asked to adopt a declaration regarding the future of Interreg Programs. While ESPON is not participating in the conference, it was asked whether it would support the declaration.

The MC agreed to mandate the ESPON Managing Authority, in principle, to sign up for the declaration, however, on the condition of MC members confirming their support within two weeks of the MC meeting. Specific messages will emphasize the need not to jeopardize the long-term strategic approach of Interreg and the utmost necessity for Interreg to maintain its regulatory independence.

10. AOB