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# **ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme**

## **Operation Specification**

### **Final**

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## **Part I – Context and Content of the Operation Proposal**

### **1.1 Context of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme**

In the preparation of the proposal for an ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the 28 EU Member States and 4 Partner States participating in the programme have set out the strategy and mission with specific objectives and corresponding actions to be achieved by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Cooperation Programme submitted by the ESPON designated Managing Authority (ESPO MA) on behalf of 32 participating countries, and approved by the European Commission on 12 February 2015 is enclosed in Annex 1.

In order to fulfil the specific objectives and ensure the achievement of results, this Operation Specification (OS) for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme sets out the specifications for a leaner implementation framework of the Single Operation implemented by a designated Single Beneficiary, the ESPON EGTC.

The ESPON EGTC is invited by the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee (ESPO MC) to submit an **Operation Proposal** for the implementation of Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme as follows:

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

The ESPON EGTC shall in the preparation of an Operation Proposal addresses the specific objectives foreseen in the Cooperation Programme.

The framework for the development and submission, as well as the subsequent implementation, of this Single Operation by the ESPON EGTC is set out within this OS and in the annexed Operation Implementation Guidelines.

### **1.2 Strategy for the ESPON 2020 Programme**

The strategy and its background for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme are presented in full in the Cooperation Programme, and should form the starting point for elaborating an Operation Proposal to be prepared by the ESPON EGTC. Key achievements envisaged by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme which the Single Beneficiary shall have in mind when preparing the Operation Proposal can be expressed as follows:

- ***Contribute to the Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities of EU Cohesion Policy***

The Operation Proposal shall aim at providing support, in general, to the Common Strategic Framework Thematic Objective 11 and enhance institutional capacity and efficient public administration by offering relevant territorial evidence and knowledge. In this way, the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme can contribute to reinforcing the effectiveness of EU

Cohesion Policy and the achievement of all of the Europe 2020 thematic objectives through analysis of territorial development trends.

The corresponding selected investment priority is to strengthen the evidence base in order to reinforce the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy and the achievement of the thematic objectives through analysis of development trends (ETC Regulation 1299/2013, Art.7 (c)(iii)).

- ***Play a specific role within the ESPON 2020 Programme as provider of European territorial evidence***

European Territorial Cooperation 2014-2020, foresees a reinforcement of the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy by a promotion of *“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, specific support is given to *“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 Operation Proposal shall be aligned to this role providing analyses for Cohesion Policy and, by doing so, strengthen the European evidence base in support of well-informed policy development at all governance levels related to Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In doing so, the Operation Proposal should address all of the thematic objectives and investment priorities established for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

- ***Support to Policy Development at EU Level and in EU Member and Partner States***

The Operation Proposal shall be designed so as to contribute with territorial evidence to the current policy context, as follows:

- The Lisbon Treaty, which sets the overall objective of a harmonious and balanced European territory, characterised by economic, social and territorial cohesion. It defines specific types of territories that should achieve particular attention, such as islands, mountain areas, sparsely populated areas etc.
- The Europe 2020 Strategy promotes smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in principle where territorially defined place-based and endogenous potentials are located which can be enhanced by a stronger territorial sensitivity and cooperation.
- EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 as an investment policy establishes 11 Thematic Priorities for investments which all have a territorial dimension and which can benefit from

evidence support based on policy demand, in particular from answers on where investments, and in what, could be most efficient.

- The Territorial Agenda 2020, established in an inter-governmental process driven by EU Member States, sets out policy orientations towards specific types of territories.

The Operation Proposal is expected to be closely informed by these policy processes and to include recommendations on how the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme implementation can capture the policy demand for territorial evidence in an efficient and inclusive way.

- ***Respond to Needs and Challenges Faced by ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme***

In a process focused on renewal, refocus and upgrade of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the needs and challenges have been defined as follows:

- 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 promptly upon demand from a defined number of key target stakeholders at EU and national level.
- Provide stronger validation of the scientific quality of results and the comparability of data in support of policy innovation.
- Ensure effective outreach of ESPON 2020 evidence and outputs to new users through coordinated efforts, including an involvement of individual ESPON Contact Points (ECPs) and of the “Network of national ESPON Contact Point institutions” (ECP network)..
- Reinforce the scientific and communicative capacity of ESPON 2020 to match the delivery of prompt and timely knowledge transfer and outreach.
- Encourage other European Structural and Investment (ESI) funding programmes and bodies to use territorial evidence.
- Establish an institutional set up which significantly reduces the overall administrative burden of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme for Member and Partner State administrations, and for beneficiaries.
- Apply streamlined administrative procedures, including the use of service contracts that, through a low level of administrative burden, will promote further the academic interest in ESPON 2020 territorial evidence.

The activities included in the Operation Proposal are expected to address and respond to these needs and challenges when implementing the actions foreseen under each Specific Objective of Priority Axis 1 of the Cooperation Programme.

- ***Consolidate the mission of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme***

The Operation Proposal shall ensure that the benefits and achievements established thus far in building a European territorial knowledge base by the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes, are fully exploited. At the same time, the Operation Proposal shall support the intended renewal, refocus and innovation of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and contribute with territorial evidence aimed at enhancing institutional capacity and support efficient public administration at EU, national, regional and local levels.

The mission of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme is to provide European territorial evidence to policy development and in doing so pursue the following mission statement:

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

In fulfilling this mission, the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme shall:

- 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 within EU Member States and Partner States, their regions and cities, in relevant European and national sector policies and in relevant policy processes, such as, for example, the Territorial Agenda 2020.
- Implement applied research and analyses and facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange for policy development by delivering territorial evidence support to policy processes at the EU, national, regional and local level as well as in a trans-national and cross-border context.
- Monitor major European territorial trends, potentials and challenges, and contribute actively with EU-wide territorial evidence and experiences to relevant policy processes and political debates, including to territorial strategy building.
- Ensure effective, timely and prompt communication and maximisation of outreach and use by potential stakeholders together with facilitating ongoing coordination and cooperation with a wide range of target institutions at EU, national, regional and urban level as well as ESI funding programmes, in particular at transnational and cross-border level and macro-regions.

The activities included in the Operation Proposal shall support the mission statement and implement the actions foreseen under each Specific Objective in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

- ***Meeting the Objectives of Defined Target Groups***

The ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme defines two levels of target groups. These policy needs of these target groups shall be served in the activities proposed in the Operation Proposal.

- ***Cover the Geographical Scope Envisaged in the Cooperation Programme***

In accordance with the approved ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme the activities proposed by the ESPON EGTC in the Operational Proposal shall cover the entire EU territory, meaning the territory of all 28 EU Member States plus the 4 Partner States of Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Moreover, in pursuing applied research, analysis, studies and data collection under each Specific Objective, the ESPON EGTC shall, where relevant, feasible and cost-efficient, include territories of EU candidate countries and other territories upon the approval of the ESPON MC.

Particular geographies to be considered, where relevant, are macro-regions and specific types of territories as mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty, including islands, border regions, sparsely populated territories, etc.

### **1.3 Priority Axis 1 and its Specific Objectives**

Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme includes specific objectives covering “Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach”.

The actions to be undertaken are further detailed within the four specific objectives of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, giving more detail and direction on the type of activities under each action that shall be included in the Operation Proposal and to be carried through by the ESPON EGTC.

The four content related specific objectives that are described in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme are as follows:

- ***SO 1: Continued European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.***
- ***SO 2: Upgraded knowledge transfer and use of analytical user support.***
- ***SO 3: Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses***
- ***SO 4: Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.***

In addition to the specific objectives related to content activities mentioned above, the ESPON EGTC through its implementation of the Single Operation is expected to contribute to the achievement of Specific Objective 5.

- ***SO 5: Leaner, effective and efficient implementation provisions and proficient programme assistance.***

This shall be an inherent objective for actions and activities both within Priority Axis 1 and Priority Axis 2 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The ESPON EGTC will have to ensure in its way of working as such and in particular in the management and financial set up, that the operation contributes to a leaner, effective and efficient implementation of the Single Operation.

Further information on how the Operation Proposal to be prepared by the ESPON EGTC is foreseen to contribute to these specific objectives is provided in the Operation Implementation Guidelines (OIG), which the ESPON EGTC shall comply with for the activities foreseen.

#### **1.4 Content of the Operation Proposal**

The Operation Proposal prepared by the ESPON EGTC shall be submitted via the ESPON 2020 E-Cohesion system and include proposals on the following:

- Overall operation strategy of the single operation indicating how it will contribute to achieving the objectives of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, including:
  - Framework for harvesting and monitoring policy demand in support of useful results.
  - Strategy for ensuring scientific quality standards.
  - An Outreach Strategy covering European, trans-national and national levels including target groups and cooperation with the ECP network.
- Multi-Annual Work Programme including:
  - An Implementation Strategy with main milestones to be achieved during the programme implementation.
  - Outline of the actions foreseen within each of the four specific objectives of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme Priority Axis 1 and the corresponding activities envisaged.
  - Target groups to be addressed by each action and the activities proposed.
  - Minimum target output indicators to be achieved for each action and for the related types of activities).
  - Result indicators expected to be achieved for each action.
  - Implementation of framework for proposing additional types of activities and/or target groups to the ESPON MC, including selection criteria.



- Framework for activities “upon request” e.g. how to treat demands from external actors, including selection criteria.
- Indicative overall budget 2014-2020 for the operation according to the budget categories defined and with additional details of the external expertise according to specific objectives.
- Description of overall management of the Single Operation, including the envisaged in-house capacity related to content, administrative and financial management.
- Annual Work Plan for the first year of implementation, including the concrete implementation during the reference year of the elements mentioned in the Multi-Annual Work Programme, and in particular:
  - Concrete activities foreseen within each action under the four specific objectives of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme Priority Axis 1.
  - Scoping notes for activities, in particular for applied research projects, to be decided by the ESPON MC.
  - Proposals on establishment of Project Support Teams (PSTs) for selected activities.
  - Yearly budget (breakdown of overall budget) and specific allocations under the external expertise budget line for each specific objective of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme Priority Axis 1, according to the budget structure provided in the application form.
  - Indicative time plan for launch of tenders and processing towards projects, including screenings of demand for targeted analyses.
- Documentation of the capacity, skills and management of the ESPON EGTC

Preparation of the Operation Proposal shall include consultations with the ESPON MC related to the Multi-Annual Work Programme and the Annual Work Plan for the first year of implementation<sup>1</sup>, the activities and necessity of ESPON MC involvement in Project Support Teams (PST) envisaged in the reference year. The composition of the PSTs is fully described in detail below.

This consultation is however not deemed necessary taking into account the preparatory work that has been done in the framework of the JWG and resulting in the Reference Note of the ESPON MC annexed to this Operation Specification.

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<sup>1</sup> The first year of implementation shall cover also the residual year of 2015.

Templates for submission of the Operation Proposal and subsequent reporting will be provided to the ESPON EGTC together with the invitation by the ESPON MC to submit the Operation Proposal.

## **Part II – Specific Objectives to be fulfilled by the Operation Proposal**

### **2.1 General Scope of Activities to be implemented**

The Operation Proposal to be prepared by the ESPON EGTC in the implementation of the four specific objectives, and their corresponding actions, relating to Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme is expected to follow the general scope and directions set out below.

The activities proposed by the ESPON EGTC for each action shall contribute to the production, transfer, monitoring and outreach of a pan-European territorial evidence and support, as follows:

- Understanding of the challenges and complexity of an enhanced European territorial dimension and integrated place-based approaches in policy and programmes.
- The implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and job creation in all sectors and specifically in respect of the sectors (such as R&D, ICT, SMEs and Low Carbon) included in the 11 thematic objectives of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.
- Policy development and implementation related to EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, in particular in relation to the EU objective of Territorial Cohesion and to the 11 thematic objectives guiding the programmes implementing the European Structural Investment Funds.
- Implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020 and the policy orientations decided by ministers for the development of the European territory.
- Development of EU and national sector policies, supporting with evidence on territorial contexts.
- Use of pan-European comparable evidence by operational programmes under ESI Funds in support of strategy building and project implementation.
- Use of pan-European comparable evidence by national, regional and local authorities for benchmarking their territories in the European context.
- Build on networking arrangements, activating transnational teams in the programme implementation.

- Support the foundation of academic expertise at European level in the field of territorial research, providing long-term continuity in territorial evidence production in Europe.

The above activities should be supported by a framework for monitoring the results indicators in accordance with the programme Evaluation Plan.

## **2.2 Specific Objective 1: Continued European territorial evidence production through applied research and analyses.**

Specific Objective 1 includes a single type of action to undertake and produce applied territorial research and analyses on European territorial development. The applied research activities carried through by the ESPON EGTC in support of this action shall contribute to developing the knowledge base of ESPON. At the same time activities shall also progress the development of European territorial evidence, based on policy demand for research themes and guidance from targeted policy makers on the European territorial evidence in need for policy making.

The Operation Proposal shall build on the existing ESPON knowledge base developed under the ESPON 2006 and 2013 programmes and further improve and maintain systematic, comparable, homogeneous and reliable European territorial evidence through applied research. Activities shall consider specific types of territories mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty such as islands, mountain areas, sparsely populated areas and cross-border regions etc. Activities shall also thematically respond to policy needs, be trans-disciplinary, and result from trans-national networking on research and expertise.

The ESPON EGTC shall seek to contract the most suitable, qualified and appropriate researchers and experts from within Europe in the thematic fields in question.

The evidence produced shall be of very high quality in terms of research, analyses, data, indicators and tools, in order to support the mission of ESPON 2020 to be recognised as an authoritative, reliable and solid European source of pan-European territorial evidence, observation and assessment which is useful for policy development and programming.

- ***Types and Examples of Activities envisaged***

The activities foreseen by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme under Specific Objective 1 cover applied research projects with the following broad characteristics:

- European wide, comparable information and evidence on territorial potentials and challenges focusing on opportunities for success for the development of regions and cities defined by the demand of policymakers.
- Cross-thematic applied research integrating existing thematic analysis and adding future analysis of new themes in areas including, for example, climate change and energy; demographic and migratory flows; economic crisis and resilience; spatial indicators for

European policy priorities; territorial analysis; impact of globalization for Europe and its Regions, green economy, territorial foresights, scenarios and visions for Europe, EU enlargement, etc.

- Territorial impact assessment of EU policies.

In the preparation of the proposal for the Multi-Annual Work Programme and the first Annual Work Plan (covering 2015 and 2016), the ESPON EGTC is envisaged to consider the 14 themes included in Annex 3. Once a year, in consultation with the ESPON MC, the ESPON EGTC is expected to consider and process themes and corresponding policy questions for applied research that may be included in Annual Work Plan for the subsequent year.

In order to ensure that applied research activities reflect policy demand the best possible, the ESPON EGTC shall offer continuous involvement of the ESPON MC throughout the life of the programme in the activities that the ESPON MC decide are required to be closely followed by policy advice. This will maximise policy relevance of the applied research and its results of the research and analyses undertaken. The involvement of ESPON MC shall be ensured, where necessary, through the establishment of the abovementioned Project Support Teams. In the preparation of the Operation Proposal, it is important for the ESPON EGTC to seek clear feedback from the ESPON MC on the need to establish PSTs and the scoping of the applied research activities from a policy perspective, including key policy questions to be addressed.

The territorial evidence delivered through applied research activities shall feed into the knowledge transfer and user support activities, the observatory functions and the outreach to users as envisaged under Specific Objectives 2, 3 and 4.

- ***Output and Results***

The key results which Member and Partner States seek to achieve are:

- 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.

The programme specific results indicators for Specific Objective 1 are set out in Table 3 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The expected output shall include scientifically solid reports on the research themes addressed that include short and easily readable executive summaries that can support the dissemination, uptake and use of the applied research. Applied research output shall also include maps,

indicators and data that can be incorporated into ESPON 2020 tools, knowledge transfer and outreach activities.

The ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme foresees the implementation of at least 22 Applied Research activities (projects). The Operation Proposal shall include details in the Multi-Annual Work Programme as to how this minimum target is proposed to be achieved, and the Annual Work Plan for the first year of implementation include the related more specific details.

### ***Target groups***

The main target group to be addressed by the ESPON EGTC in the framework of this specific objective are:

- Policymakers and practitioners at European and national level dealing with territorial development, planning, policies and perspectives, including authorities implementing ESI Funding programmes.

Moreover, the results of applied research activities will also be of interest to the secondary tier target groups as defined in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, in particular to policy officers and planners in regional and local authorities as well as to EU organisations and academia in the field of territorial development and research. The ESPON EGTC shall indicate in the Outreach Strategy of the Operation Proposal how it is planned to address and involve this target group.

### **2.3 Specific Objective 2: Upgraded Knowledge Transfer and Use of Analytical User Support.**

The ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme Specific Objective 2 foresees the implementation of two types of actions: (a) targeted analyses projects for different strands of stakeholders and (b) rapid production of thematic focus papers (e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc) on specific themes in response to demand from policy processes.

Policy processes and ESI Funding programme implementation shall in meeting policy demand be actively tracked and supported with territorial evidence that can support policy and programme development, synergy between different interests and cross-sectoral policy dialogue as part of integrated and place-based approaches.

The Operation Proposal shall provide details on how the ESPON EGTC intends to ensure the targeted and useful transfer of territorial evidence, knowledge and analytical input to policy development processes, at different administrative levels that can stimulate evidence informed policies and further demand for European territorial evidence.

#### **• *Types and examples of Activities envisaged***

The activities foreseen by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme under Specific Objective 2 covers targeted territorial analyses based on ESPON knowledge and results that can:

- ***Support to groups of countries, regions and/or cities:*** Activities in the form of targeted analyses, that successfully were part of the ESPON 2013 Programme, shall be carried through based on stakeholder demand. The Operation Proposal should include the proposals of the ESPON EGTC for mapping stakeholder demand through calls for expression of interest or other transparent processes. Such screening processes shall in principle be part of the preparation of every second Annual Work Plan, starting in 2015. The concrete proposals to be included by the ESPON EGTC in the Annual Work Plans shall consider the results from screening the stakeholder demand and inform about the evaluation and proposed selection of targeted analyses. The thematic focus, as defined by stakeholders, in the targeted analyses put forward by the ESPON EGTC shall ensure that the analysis provides the stakeholders involved with a European perspective that can be transferred into their specific policy contexts and as well be of benefit for other countries, regions or cities. Openness for participation shall be ensured where representatives of related organisations at European level are interested in taking part. The targeted analyses shall be dedicated to an active transfer of territorial evidence and knowledge to groups of Member/Partner States, regions and/or local communities.
- ***Support to programmes under ESI Funding Programmes:*** Territorial evidence in support to other ESI Funding programmes was commenced by the end of the ESPON 2013 Programme. 65 European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes received ‘Territorial Fact Sheets’ for their programming purposes and 10 programmes, regional, trans-national and cross-border programmes, received a more analytical ‘Territorial Evidence Pack’. Based on the positive feedback for this type of evidence support, the Operation Proposal shall propose activities to continue such territorial evidence support to more ESI Funding programmes as well as to EU macro-regions. In this case as well, a transparent process shall be ensured in the selection of the programmes to be supported.
- ***Support to ongoing policy processes at European level:*** As a new activity, the Operation Proposal shall include activities with the ability to provide territorial evidence promptly to certain selected policy processes. This shall be ensured through timely analytical deliveries, such as policy briefs, working papers or similar short formats. This new type of ESPON 2020 output shall aim at enhancing the transfer and use of the territorial knowledge and tools produced. For this activity to be feasible, the ESPON EGTC shall propose details in the Operation Proposal as how this will be achieved, including proposals for the employment of the necessary in-house capacity of human resources, such as senior scientific and communication skills. The Operation Proposal shall also include an implementation framework for this type of action including criteria for decisions on these deliveries.

- **Outputs and Results**

The Operation Proposal is expected to provide results for policy development that:

- Extend the use of European territorial evidence in policy development at national, regional and local level.
- Integrate further the territorial dimension in other ESI Funding programmes, in their implementation and in the future generation of their programmes after 2020.
- Improve the uptake and use of ESPON 2020 results in relevant policy processes, in particular at European and inter-governmental levels.
- Provide a stronger presence of European territorial evidence and impact assessment in the European policy debate.

The programme specific results indicators for Specific Objective 2 are set out in Table 3 of the ESPON 20202 Cooperation Programme.

The expected output of the proposed activities shall include analytical reports, where appropriate, with maps, targeted to the needs expressed by stakeholders and covering evidence for their territories (including islands, cross-border and other states/regions having geographic specificities) and ESI Funding programme areas. The output shall also include the transfer of pan-European indicators for benchmarking ESI Funding programme territories. Furthermore, output should also include analytically based policy briefs and working papers etc. based on territorial evidence oriented towards important policy processes, such as EU Presidency priorities, debates related to territorial cohesion and EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, the Europe 2020 Strategy, Territorial Agenda 2020 and relevant EU sector policy areas.

In accordance with Table 4 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, a total of 25 targeted analysis (activities) and 45 thematic focus papers (e.g. policy briefs, working papers etc) are foreseen over the period of the programme. The Operation Proposal shall include details in the Multi-Annual Work Programme as to how these targets are proposed to be achieved, including any specific details on the implementation modalities foreseen. The Annual Work Plans will further detail how these specific activities are foreseen to be implemented year by year.

- **Target groups**

The main target groups to be addressed by the ESPON EGTC in the framework of Specific Objective 2 are:

- Policymakers at European, national, regional and local level as well as authorities implementing ESI Funding programmes.

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 (policy briefs/working papers).

### **2.4 Specific Objective 3: Improved Territorial Observation and Tools For Territorial Analyses**

Specific Objective 3 includes three types of actions to (a) undertake territorial observation and reporting, (b) develop tools for territorial analyses, and (c) stimulate the use of tools. Activities to be carried through by the ESPON EGTC in support of the actions proposed under Specific Objective 3 shall provide the analytical platform for all of the other activities carried out under Priority Axis 1. The Operation Proposal shall include details of activities that ensure the continuation and improvement of the territorial observation and monitoring of structures, trends and dynamics in different European territories and also countries which were commenced in the ESPON 2013 Programme. The aim is to explore potentials and challenges for future territorial development and for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

It shall be important to continue and further develop and maintain the online ESPON Database that has been developed since 2002, which shall be considered the backbone in implementing different activities to be undertaken by the ESPON EGTC. The Operation Proposal shall propose further indicator development and innovative data solutions; tools for territorial analyses and monitoring; and upgraded mapping interfaces etc. The ESPON EGTC shall further propose activities which ensure that an integrated system or online toolbox is freely available in support of the applied research activities, knowledge transfer and outreach activities proposed under Priority Axis 1. At the outset of the programme, the ESPON EGTC shall conduct a review of the current ESPON 2013 tools to determine policy demand and usefulness. The development of ESPON tools shall be fully coordinated with other European institutions, such as EUROSTAT, EEA, JRC, EIB etc., and be fully compatible with European data standards and operability. The Operation Proposal shall as part of the Overall Strategy clarify how the ESPON EGTC intends to cooperate and coordinate activities with other European Institutions.

#### **• *Types and Examples of Activities envisaged***

The types of activities foreseen by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme under Specific Objective 3 are outlined below:

- ESPON Database development with a focus on regular data update and user-friendliness.
- European Monitoring System with custom-made macro-regional sub-systems including demands from stakeholders.



- Territorial Monitoring Reports covering Europe related to policy orientations of Cohesion Policy, the Territorial Agenda 2020 and other relevant policy issues, as well as territorial monitoring reviews on interesting findings for policy development. This shall include a major report on the state of the European territory 2-3 times during 2014-2020.
- A reviewed ESPON toolbox and fine-tuning of analytical tools for territorial analyses.
- Support to users in terms of technical queries and help in the practical use of tools.

EU policy orientations for territorial development and cohesion shall guide the activities on the development and use of territorial indicators which should be as relevant as possible to current policy processes. In reviewing the current ESPON tools, the Operation Proposal shall consider the current use and potential overlaps and propose activities to ensure (1) the continuation of useful tools for territorial analyses from previous ESPON programmes, (2) the winding up of less useful tools, and (3) a coherent approach to potential new tools.

In relation to ESPON maps, efforts shall be made to improve the visibility of smaller countries, including island territories and Member and Partner States.

• ***Outputs and results***

The Operation Proposal is expected to provide results for policy development that include the following:

- Continuous time-series information at European level on territorial dynamics related to decided policy orientations.
- Improved territorial monitoring at macro-regional and trans-national territories based on a European monitoring system and customised to the macro-region or trans-national territories in question.
- Ensure stronger uptake of a territorial dimension at all levels and policy sectors.
- An improved, coherent and reviewed set of tools for territorial analyses offering better targeted user support to analyses aimed at all governance levels and to ESI Funding programmes.
- A systematic promotion and application of the tools, such as the ESPON Database, TIA tools, etc.
- Better uptake of ESPON data, indicators and maps in policy processes and documents.

The programme specific results indicators for Specific Objective 3 are set out in Table 3 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The expected output of activities under this specific objective shall also support Specific Objective 4 on the use, uptake and outreach of ESPON 2020 and the transfer of European territorial evidence to relevant policy processes at different scales.

In accordance with Table 4 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, a total of 8 tools are foreseen to be developed and/or enhanced and maintained over the period of the programme. This may include digital tools and other types of formats, including the upgrade and rationalisation of existing ESPON tools. The Operation Proposal shall include details in the Multi-Annual Work Programme as to how these targets are proposed to be achieved. The Annual Work Plans shall include specific details of the activities that will be launched in the reference year, starting from the Annual Work Plan for 2015.

- **Target groups**

The main target group to be addressed by the ESPON EGTC in the framework of Specific Objective 3 are:

- European, national, regional and local public authorities as well as authorities implementing ESI Funding programmes for regions, cross-border and transnational areas (including macro-regions).

Due to the online access to the ESPON database and other tools, which will be free of charge, all actors in the second tier target group as defined in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, and even the wider public and the private sector, will be able to benefit directly from the activities.

## **2.5 Specific Objective 4: Wider Outreach and Uptake of Territorial Evidence.**

Specific Objective 4 includes actions to (a) hold events, and (b) produce publications, in order to support outreach to users and the widest possible use of European territorial evidence in practice. The Operation Proposal shall propose activities that will ensure a wider outreach to potential users of European territorial evidence than in the ESPON 2013 programme, stimulating interest for uptake of a European territorial perspectives at all levels of policy and driving further demand.

An Outreach Strategy for the entire implementation period of the Operation shall be part of the Multi-Annual Work Programme. The Outreach Strategy should propose state of the art capitalisation activities at European level, at trans-national, cross-border and national levels that can increase the use, uptake and outreach of ESPON 2020 results and the ability to include European territorial evidence in relevant policy processes at different levels. A sound balance of printed publications and the use of internet based communication option should be struck.

The proposed activities shall result in an effective, targeted and understandable communications towards clearly defined target groups, stimulating a wider uptake and use of territorial evidence. The ambition shall be that the outreach activities make use of results achieved through Specific Objectives 1, 2 and 3, providing new evidence on territorial structures, trends, scenarios and policy impacts.

The Outreach Strategy is expected to include activities that will be coordinated and carried through in collaboration with the ECP Network. In this context, the Outreach Strategy shall prioritise issues relevant in the trans-national and national policy contexts. Translation of shorter documents into official national languages should be also used to enhance the uptake.

The Outreach Strategy of the operation shall be complementary to the Communication Strategy of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, as defined and approved by the ESPON MC.

- ***Types and Examples of Activities envisaged***

The activities foreseen by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme under Specific Objective 4 are expected, among others, to include the following:

- Events at European level, as seminars, conferences or workshops.
- Events at trans-national and national level carried through in cooperation with the ECP network.
- Active participation in debates with policymakers and practitioners at trans-national regional and local level.
- Publication of thematic and synthetic reports as well as short material and web-based communication, such as e-books and social media activity, giving policy processes up-to-date information based on big data or similar.
- Translated material to be used in outreach activities targeting regional and local policymakers and practitioners.

- ***Output and Results***

The results to be achieved by these activities shall include:

- An efficient and modern Outreach Strategy that can support a high level of transfer and uptake of territorial evidence in policy development.
- Higher level of outreach to a larger group of potential users of European territorial evidence, partly supported by exploring complementarities with the other pan-European ETC and ESI Funding programmes.

- Greater presence, with territorial evidence and arguments, in policy debates at European, transnational and national levels.
- Better uptake of ESPON 2020 Operation results based on clear, understandable communication towards clearly defined target groups.
- Strong cooperation with the ECP Network in reaching policy-makers, practitioners, stakeholders, researchers, experts and citizens, and building capacity at trans-national, national, regional and local level.

The programme specific results indicators for Specific Objective 4 are set out in Table 3 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The expected output is a flow of events, reports and briefs, web campaigns, many carried through in cooperation with the ECP network. In particular, the use of modern communication media such as social media, interactive e-books, e-publications, e-learning and training shall be considered in the Outreach Strategy.

In accordance with Table 4 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, a total of 60 events and other capitalisation activities, including publications, are foreseen over the period of the programme. The Operation Proposal shall include details in the Multi-Annual Work Programme as to how these targets are proposed to be achieved, including any specific details of activities to be launched in the Annual Work Plan for 2015.

- **Target Groups**

The target groups for this objective that the ESPON EGTC shall address cover both the defined primary and secondary target groups as defined in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme including:

- National, regional and local policy makers and public authorities.
- European policy makers, EU Presidencies, European Institutions and ESI funded programmes (including macro-regions).
- Organisations, practitioners, policy officers and planners.
- University academics, researchers and students.
- Wider public and the private sector.

## **2.6 Framework for the Single Beneficiary proposing additional Activities**

The ESPON EGTC has the possibility to propose other types of activities related to the implementation of Priority Axis 1 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, which comes in

addition to those indicated above, that could support the ESPON 2020 Programme implementation in accordance with its strategy, mission and specific objectives.

Justifications shall be provided in relation to the need of adding additional activities by indicating how the proposed new activity will contribute to the ESPON 2020 mission, strategy and specific objectives. Any additional activities shall be approved by the ESPON MC, normally as part each Annual Work Plan.

Corresponding output and results indicators shall, where relevant, be updated and provided. The proposal of additional activities should, unless the MC decides differently, stay within the budgetary provisions for the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme (see Part IV of this document).

## **Part III – Minimum Requirements for the Single Operation**

### **3.1 Minimum Requirement for mapping Policy Demand and Usefulness of Results**

During the entire operation, implementation efforts should be made to align the implementation of the activities, in particular the availability of the final outputs/results of the individual activities, to the European/national/regional policy cycles in order to ensure that results are available when debates/decisions are taking place.

The expected outcomes of the activities need to be explicitly and clearly defined as well as the contribution previewed to ongoing and, as far as possible, to future policy debates. In this sense, links should be provided in each Annual Work Plan between activities belonging to Specific Objectives 1-3 and activities within the Specific Objective 4 “Wider Outreach and Uptake of Territorial Evidence”.

In order to ensure the usefulness and take-up of results of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, the Single Beneficiary shall include proposals in the Operation Proposal on how to involve the target groups identified in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme in accordance with the programme intentions.

Research themes and analysis shall, in general, focus on the territorial dimension of the most relevant issues in European policy processes. The Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU Cohesion Policy and its 11 thematic objectives as well as the Territorial Agenda 2020 with its 6 policy orientation shall be in focus of these considerations, including updates or new policy initiatives that might come during the implementation of the project. In order to identify and define policy demand for activities to be implemented, the Single Beneficiary, in the preparation of the proposal for the Multi-Annual Work Programme and each Annual Work Plan, shall consult with the ESPON MC and obtain advice from the European Commission through appropriate and active participative process (e.g. at meetings, workshops, etc).

As there might be a trade-off between involving and consulting stakeholders and the need to align activities to the policy cycle, the Single Beneficiary shall propose the most appropriate transparent consultative measures with the aim of achieving the highest possible degree of use and uptake of outcomes and results.

### **3.2 Minimum Requirements for the involvement of the ESPON MC**

The Single Beneficiary shall implement the Single Operation in close collaboration with the ESPON MC.

In particular, the Single Beneficiary shall respect the following procedural framework for involving the ESPON MC:

- Include consultations around ideas for activities, their thematic scope and content, as part of preparing each Annual Work Plan.
- Involve ESPON MC members or policy experts nominated by them, in Project Support Teams (as set out in Section 3.4 below), where the ESPON MC decide that their provision of policy guidance to selected activities is necessary.
- Inform the ESPON MC on implementation progress through bi-annual reporting.
- Provide opportunities for the MC members for direct feedback on output from activities, in particular applied research activities.

The ESPON EGTC will propose the principles for the criteria to be applied in relation to selection of service providers for activities as well as for the selection of targeted analyses suggested by stakeholders.

### **3.3 Minimum Quality Standards to be Achieved**

In term of geographical coverage, in general, each of the specific objectives of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme shall cover the entire territory of the countries that have signed the agreement for participating as full members of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, including the participating Partner States (the 'ESPON space'). In the case of selected activities, for example, targeted analyses and/or policy briefs/working papers produced at the request of specific territories and authorities pursued under Specific Objective 2, these may cover a specific subset of national territories as required.

If relevant, the geographical coverage can be extended to additional territories beyond the ESPON space. Additional territories, such as EU accession and candidate countries, countries in the European neighbourhood as well as other countries and continents of the World can be considered included when relevant and needed for an activity or theme in question.

The Single Beneficiary shall be aware of the following minimum standards related to the quality of deliveries which should guide the implementing of activities:

- Ensure high quality of research, analyses and tools.
- Emphasis on useful and relevant project results meeting policy demand.
- Importance of convincing transfer of scientific results to policy, reconciling the academic and policy spheres.
- Realistic focus and feasibility of terms of reference for contracted activities.
- Targeted project summaries, concise executive summaries and short reports, especially for the final reporting of activities.
- Clear communication in plain English and full map coverage.
- Openness for some activities to have a different geographical focus than the entire area of participating countries to allow the overcoming of lack of data/information.
- Encouragement of researchers to approach certain themes with data limitations and to overcome these constraints.

The ESPON EGTC shall in the Multi-Annual Work Programme inform how these standards will be managed in the sub-contracting of activities with service providers.

### **3.4 Framework for establishing Project Support Teams (PST)**

Activities relating to Specific Objectives might involve a PST, if the ESPON MC so decides. The ESPON EGTC shall in this context respect the following framework:

- The need for PST related to a particular activity shall be addressed as part of the preparation and consultation of each Annual Work Plan. The ESPON MC shall be invited by the ESPON EGTC to discuss activities where the establishment of a PST could be relevant. If wanted by the MC, the PST details shall be included as part of a 'Scoping Note' for the respective activity.
- Each Annual Work Plan shall include proposals on the establishment of a PST, where relevant. When the ESPON MC decides upon the Annual Work Plan, including the activities where a PST shall be established, the ESPON MC will at the same time designate one rapporteur for each PST to take up the envisaged role as policy expert. The rapporteur has the task of following the activity from commencement to completion.
- The PST shall support the respective activities from the drafting of the terms of reference to the checking of final deliveries, and in this process provide feedback and advice in writing and/or at meetings with the service provider(s).

- The ESPON MC member(s) participating in the PST shall during the entire process provide policy guidance in the PST in order to optimise the policy relevance of results. The relation between the MC and the PST shall be both ways. The ESPON MC member(s) may delegate the role as member in a PST to colleagues fully able of providing policy guidance to the activity in question. Nomination of national ECP institutions or contact persons will be avoided. Indicatively, in average 3-4 meetings involving the PST shall be envisaged during the implementation of an applied research project
- The ESPON EGTC shall act as secretariat for the PSTs and collect input from other ESPON MC members, if received, and filter them into the activity implementation process.
- PSTs shall be normally composed by the following representatives:
  - One members of the ESPON MC acting, also as rapporteur.
  - One representative of the European Commission, upon interest.
  - One, or two, experts of the ESPON EGTC with a high scientific and/or policy advisor profile.
  - Additional members of the ESPON MC, upon interest.
- The secretarial tasks related to a PST, and the coordination of the process, shall be undertaken by the ESPON EGTC.
  - The ESPON EGTC is also responsible for providing the necessary scientific capacity within the PST for the activities in question. In exceptional cases, external scientific expertise may be contracted to participate in the PST, if needed and agreed with the ESPON MC.
  - Recommendations of the PST shall be carefully considered by the ESPON EGTC. However, as contractor of the service, the ESPON EGTC may disregard opinions of members should particular opinions be contrary to contractual obligations. In such cases, and if consensus cannot be reached within the PST, the ESPON EGTC shall explain the reasons why opinions voiced in the PST could not be followed. Such explanations shall be included in the Annual Implementation Report to be presented to the ESPON MC.

### **3.5 Specific Conditions for Outreach Activities (including co-operation with nominated ESPON Contact Points)**

It shall be a key objective for the ESPON EGTC to ensure that knowledge transfer and outreach activities produce the highest possible uptake and use of results from the different activities carried through. As support to these efforts, all Member and Partner States involved in the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme have nominated an institution (or a network of institutions with a clear leader) as ESPON Contact Point (ECP) in their country. The ECP institutions will be nominated by the participating countries.



The ESPON EGTC shall collaborate with the ECP network in the implementation of relevant activities of the Outreach Strategy, which will in particular be related to transnational and national outreach efforts. The relevant activities shall be indicated in each Annual Work Plan.

The ECP network shall be supportive in relation to the trans-national and national activities that can benefit from a deeper national knowledge and context. Member and Partner States have, in their nominations, given priority to ECP network institutions capable of supporting outreach activities based on ESPON results at trans-national and national scale. This includes the ability to activate and involve relevant national policy makers, with the support of the national members of the ESPON MC.

The ECP network of institutions will, up to twice a year, be invited by the ESPON MA for coordinating meetings together with the ESPON EGTC on outreach activities in order to maximise synergies and ensure the strongest possible capitalisation effect of ESPON results. These meetings will be financed by the Technical Assistance of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

Outreach activities to be implemented by the ESPON EGTC shall be entirely covered by the budget of the Single Beneficiary. Activities related to outreach activities may include costs for the organisation of events, costs of venues, external expertise, translation costs for promotion material and shorter documents, etc. The implementation of outreach activities will be implemented by the Single Beneficiary also via external service contracts. ECP institutions, that are considered admissible as service providers, can participate in tendering launched by the ESPON EGTC as any other service provider.

### **3.6 Framework for Activities on “fast Analytical Deliveries Upon Request” (Specific Objective 2)**

The adopted ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme includes a new activity related to the Specific Objective 2, providing the capability for the ESPON EGTC to promptly feed territorial evidence into certain selected policy processes at EU level. It is foreseen that this new type of analytical ESPON 2020 support to ongoing policy development processes shall contribute significantly to enhancing the transfer and use of the territorial evidence produced by ESPON 2020. This activity shall be ensured by the ESPON EGTC through activities providing fast analytical responses and be delivered as policy briefs, working papers or similar formats.

This new activity delivering analytical policy briefs/working papers shall base itself on the mature evidence and knowledge base and analytical insight available for ESPON 2020 which includes what has been built and achieved in previous ESPON programmes. To become important and recognised by policymakers, the output shall be well timed to coincide with ongoing policy processes, responding to demand expressed by policymakers across Europe, primarily at European and national level.

The ESPON EGTC shall apply the following framework for activities upon request in the Operation Proposal:

- Due to the nature of this type of service, the delivery time will normally be short. Therefore the necessary in-house human resource capacity shall be ensured by the ESPON EGTC for elaborating policy briefs/working papers.
- This type of activity covering policy briefs/working papers shall give priority to needs expressed at EU-level, such as EU Presidency priorities, debates on territorial cohesion, on the Europe 2020 Strategy and related to the Territorial Agenda 2020.
- In total during 2014-2020, it is envisaged to deliver 45 territorial policy briefs/working papers (c.10 pages) to policy processes based upon demand.
- Requesting the ESPON EGTC to provide policy briefs/working papers shall normally be for institutions, bodies and organisations as well as policy processes at EU level. Requests from the 32 countries in the ESPON MC and from European institutions (EP, CoR, EESC and EC) shall be considered subject to the capacity of the ESPON EGTC.
- Each year a certain number of requests can be accepted, processed and delivered by the ESPON EGTC. The ESPON EGTC shall each year investigate the likely demand and include known requests for policy briefs/working papers in each Annual Work Plan and in this context judge the feasibility of the ESPON EGTC in delivering upon these requests.
- In line with the dynamic logic behind these activities upon request of bringing territorial evidence swiftly to ongoing policy processes, the ESPON EGTC shall define and propose criteria which, depending on resources, shall be used for selection of requests coming in that are not foreseen in the Annual Work Plan. The ESPON EGTC can based on these criteria decide to produce and deliver a policy brief, working paper or similar, and afterwards inform the ESPON MC/MA of the choices and selection made in the bi-annual implementation reports.
- The ESPON MC shall automatically receive all policy briefs/working papers produced.

## **Part IV – Implementation Expected By the Single Beneficiary**

### **4.1 Expected Output of Activities under the Single Operation**

The Single Operation is expected to carry through a total of at least 160 activities during the lifetime of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. This will be done to provide new pan-European territorial information and evidence on a wide variety of research themes stemming from (1) applied research defined through consultative processes conducted by the Single Beneficiary with the ESPON MC, (2) targeted analyses provided for interested groups of stakeholders in order to target the use of territorial evidence to their policy demand, (3)

territorial monitoring of dynamics and efforts on analytical tools, and (4) activities to ensure the outreach and uptake of the territorial evidence produced. The activities decided for implementation may vary significantly in size, budget, duration and scope depending on demand and objectives.

Activities implemented shall cover the Specific Objectives 1-4 of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation is expected to reach, by the end of the implementation period in 2021, at least the following output targets as specified for each Specific Objective in the Cooperation Programme:

<b>Specific Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Minimum Output Target for Activities</b>	
SO1: Continued production of territorial evidence.	Territorial Applied Research	22	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>22</b>	
SO2: Upgraded knowledge transfer and analytical user support.	Targeted Analysis	25	
	Policy briefs/working papers	45	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>70</b>	
SO3: Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses	Territorial Monitoring Tools	8	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8</b>	
SO4: Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence.	Events & Publications	60	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>60</b>	
	<b>Total number of Activities</b>	<b>160</b>	

#### **4.2 Results expected**

The new performance monitoring requirements are a key innovation of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 and it is essential that the performance of ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme is correctly monitored to ensure it is achieving on its objectives. Like all ERDF funded programmes, the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme has defined its own performance framework. The programme specific results indicators and performance framework for ESPON 2020 is set out in Table 3 and Table 5 of the Cooperation Programme.

The two key results which the European Commission, Member States and Partner States wish to achieve are (i) increased satisfaction with the quality of ESPON 2020 results and their delivery, and (ii) and increase use by targeted stakeholders of ESPON results results. The ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme includes these two main milestones.

In this context, the Single Beneficiary shall in the Operation Proposal include specific measures for the implementation of the performance framework as defined in the Cooperation Programme, including qualitative result indicators to measure the satisfaction and use of ESPON 2020 outputs and results.

In addition, the Single Beneficiary is expected to detail in the Application Form the Evaluation Strategy that it intends to implement in order to report once a year to the ESPON MA on the progress with the implementation of the Single Operation and the follow up on possible findings of internal and external evaluations.

#### **4.3 Overall budget and minimum targets for each specific objective**

The maximum budget available for the implementation of the Single Operation is of 48.032.234 EUR, which includes:

- 39.276.145 EUR from the ERDF and with a maximum co-financing rate of 85%
- 6.931.089 EUR as national contribution from the MS to co-finance the ERDF share
- 1.825.000 EUR as contribution from the participating Partner States

The budget of the Operation shall be detailed per budget line, and the budget line “External expertise/services” further detailed in accordance with the provision in the Operation Implementation Guidance (Annex 2, Section 15).

The Operation shall in its entire implementation period respect the following minimum financial allocation to each Specific Objective, which reflects their percentage of the total budget:

- Specific Objective 1: 32 %
- Specific Objective 2: 13%
- Specific Objective 3: 7 %
- Specific Objective 4: 9 %

As the Single Beneficiary is operating using service contracts only, where the price is one of the competitive components, deviations from these budget targets can occur during the individual years.

#### **4.4 Minimum requirements for the capacity, skills, administrative and financial management of the ESPON EGTC**

For the Operation to be efficiently implemented, the ESPON EGTC needs to demonstrate that organisational and procedural provisions and overall governance arrangements are in place that can ensure the expected performance of the Operation and transparency in decision making related to the implementation including relevant stakeholders where envisaged.

A description of the designation of responsibilities within the ESPON EGTC as well as organisational charts showing management and financial flows should be included in the Operational Proposal.

The ESPON EGTC shall document that the appropriate and qualified experienced staff is present, including sufficient level of analytical and programming capacity to ensure the design and quality implementation of activities foreseen, and a sufficient level of administrative capacity able to deal effectively with EU and Luxembourg administrative rules, in particular related to public procurement.

In particular, internal measures envisaged to avoid corruption and fraud should be described.

The administrative and financial management of the ESPON EGTC should be designed in a way that it delivers all information and offers the access to respond to the requirements necessary according to the ESIF regulation, taking into account that the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme and the equipment of the ESPON MA is designed in a lean and efficient way.

The organisation of the administrative and financial management should be designed in a way that the ESPON MA is in the position to:

- Satisfy itself, before the approval of the Single Operation that the Single Beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the conditions referred in Art. 125 (3) c.
- Satisfy itself that, were the operation has started before the submission of an application for funding to the ESPON MA, applicable law relevant for the operation has been complied with.
- 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.
- Verify that the co-financed product and services have been delivered, that the expenditure declared by the Single Beneficiary has been paid and that it complies with

applicable laws, the cooperation programme and the conditions for support of the Single Operation.

Furthermore the administrative and financial management has to provide for an efficient way of organising responses to the administrative verifications by the ESPON MA in respect of each application for reimbursement by the Single Beneficiary by foreseeing:

- On the spot verifications of the Single Operation where the frequency and coverage shall be proportionate to the amount of public support to the Single Operation and to the level of risk identified by such verifications and audits by the Audit Authority for the management and control system as a whole.
  - Put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures based on a risk assessment and taking into account the risk identified.
  - Set-up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required are available to ensure an adequate audit trail and are held in accordance with the requirements of Art. 72 (g) of Regulation 1303/2013 (EU).
-