

ESPON 2030 Programme

Monitoring Committee meeting

19 March 2026, 09h00-17h00

Online (Luxembourgish time)

Decision notes

Welcome by the Chair (Cyprus)

The Chair and the Managing Authority (MA) welcomed the participants. The MA confirmed the quorum. New members of the Monitoring Committee (MC) were introduced.

Sessions without the ESPON EGTC

1. Agreement on the Agenda

The MC approved the agenda with the addition of two points: one under AOB regarding the organisation of a Transnational Network meeting on Simplification, and one concerning the discussion of scoping notes.

2. General Management Provisions for the ESPON 2030 Programme

1. ESPON MA Info note on management (including TA Progress Report of 2025) (ppt, questions and answers)

The MC took note of the information provided by the MA, including the update on the Technical Assistance Progress Report for 2025. No comments were raised by the MC.

2. Update on the programme communication activities (ppt and discussion)

The MC took note of the overview of communication activities implemented in the previous year and the planned actions for 2026. The MC acknowledged the continued efforts to enhance visibility and outreach of the ESPON Programme.

3. Update on the travel reimbursement rules (document and decision)

The MC approved the updated travel reimbursement rules as presented by the MA. The MC acknowledged the adjustments made to better reflect current market

conditions, including updated thresholds and the introduction of additional reimbursement elements.

4. Liability Report 2025 (document and discussion)

The MC took note of the Liability Report 2025. The MC acknowledged that no liability requests were submitted and that the financial situation of the Liability Mechanism remains unchanged.

5. MA Quality Check of the Single Operation (update on the follow-up)

The MC took note of the information provided by the MA regarding the follow-up to the Quality Check. The MC acknowledged the identified solution and the need for further procedural steps, including updates to internal documents and procurement of external legal support. The MC invited the MA to report on further progress at a subsequent MC meeting.

6. Additional Point on scoping notes of the EGTC

The MC discussed the foresight-related initiative and the associated scoping notes. The MC acknowledged the strategic importance of the initiative in light of the ministerial mandate and upcoming Presidency activities. At the same time, the importance of ensuring compliance with programme rules, including a clear distinction between evidence production and knowledge development activities, as well as transparency in governance and financial implications were underlined.

The MC invited continuation of the exchange with the ESPON EGTC under the relevant agenda item 5.1.

Sessions with the ESPON EGTC

3. Developments in Territorial Cohesion, Urban Policy and Cohesion Policy including Presidency programmes relevant for the ESPON 2030 programme presentation by CY, IE, LT Presidencies and inputs from EC (Q&A)

The MC took note of the presentations by the Cypriot, Irish and Lithuanian Presidencies. The MC acknowledged the outlined priorities and ongoing activities, including the contribution of ESPON to Presidency objectives.

The MC also took note of the information provided by the European Commission and the MA regarding ongoing policy developments, legislative discussions and preparations for the post-2027 period.

4. Single Operation: implementation status (MC Info Note, ppt and discussion)

1. Overall progress: global performance figures, the stock of activities
2. Management risks
3. Targeted analysis – state of affairs after the fifth cut-off date

Commented [TE1]: There is nothing said, should we have one sentence like in the meetings before?

4. EGTC annual evaluation report (2025)

The MC took note of the information presented by the ESPON EGTC on the state of implementation of the Single Operation. This included updates on global performance figures, the stock of activities, management risks, targeted analyses and evaluation results.

The MC acknowledged the strong stakeholder interest in targeted analyses and supported continued efforts to promote engagement, including through information activities such as webinars.

5. Single Operation: planned implementation actions (ppt and discussion)

1. New evidence production activities for decision (scoping notes) or information (ppt)

The MC analysed and discussed the scoping notes for new future activities and approved them (some under conditions).

2. Upcoming knowledge development events (by the EGTC and ECPs)

The MC took note of the information presented by the ESPON EGTC on upcoming knowledge development events planned by the EGTC and the ESPON Contact Points. No comments were raised.

3. ESPON Seminar in Larnaca – draft programme

The MC took note of the information provided by the ESPON EGTC on the state of preparations for the ESPON Seminar in Larnaca, including the draft programme.

4. Timetable on interaction with the MC

The MC took note of the information presented by the ESPON EGTC on the planned timetable for publications, knowledge transfer activities and calls for tenders. The MC also took note of the proposed arrangements for interaction with the MC and the ESPON Contact Points.

6. Update on ESPON Contact Points (ppt and discussion)

a. Information on nomination and contracting. Status of ECP work plans and grant spending

Commented [TE2]: dito

b. Debriefing on the follow-up measures implemented to accelerate the spending of ECP grants

The MC took note of the information presented by the ESPON EGTC on the nomination and contracting of ESPON Contact Points, as well as on the state of budget implementation, including overall spending and spending per ECP.

The MC also took note of the information provided by the MA regarding ongoing trilateral discussions with the countries concerned to identify tailor-made solutions and support the acceleration of grant budget implementation.

7. Timetable MC/MA and EGTC (document and decision)

The timetable presented was approved.

8. AOB

The MC took note of the additional information shared, including upcoming meetings and initiatives such as the Transnational Network meeting on Simplification. The MA reminded MC members of ongoing and forthcoming activities requiring their attention.