

Communicating Science

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How (not) to do it

1. Write reports of 500-1000 pages.
2. Make the cover look boring.
3. Use words that most people do not understand – e.g. “territoriality”, “polycentricity”.



Bore of the week

How (not) to do it

- There are different media through which you can communicate. One of these that is frequently used is Powerpoint presentations. These are often used at conferences like this. When using Powerpoint, try to get as much text on the screen as you can – and then read it out. Do not include any pictures or other distractions. Don't break the text into paragraphs or bullet points – that makes it easier to read. However bullet points by themselves don't say much, so you may still want to read from a script. Also it is good to keep the font quite small so that people really have to struggle to see what you have written. If you do this, those people in the audience who try to copy down everything you have written will never be able to copy it all down before you finish reading it out. Just to make it more difficult you can always press the wrong button so that you go back when you should go forwards – or jump forward a couple of slides by mistake then go back.

Who is the audience?

- Politicians / policy makers
- Practitioners
- Other professionals
- Other researchers
- General public
(national / local;
young / elderly etc.)



What Media?

- Face to face
- Print – reports, professional magazines, leaflets, newspapers.
- TV and radio.
- Web.

Scottishplanner

No 121 Feb 2008 Journal of the RTPI in Scotland

New European programme for Edinburgh

The UK Contact Point for a new six-year European planning research programme will be based at the RTPI's Edinburgh office. The RTPI has been contracted to provide this service for the European Observation Network on Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON). RTPI's Jimmy Crawford and Cliff Hague will carry out the work which will involve developing a new RTPI Network for people interested in ESPON. This new ESPON programme runs until 2013. A key feature will be the opportunity for local authorities to propose and participate in research work that will help them to develop visions and other planning policies.

What has ESPON found so far?
The first phase of ESPON ran from 2002 to 2006 and produced over 30 studies that mapped trends and policy impacts across 29 European countries at regional level. The reports include in-depth analyses of a range of topics: transport and accessibility; demography and migration; urban-rural relations; telecommunications and the development of information society; hazards; and the spatial impacts of key European policies - Structural Funds, Agriculture, R&D, the Environment.

ESPON's research highlighted regional divides across Europe as a whole but also within countries. It enabled countries and regions to compare themselves with others in Europe. For example, in terms of GDP, the regional divide in the UK is significantly wider than anywhere else in Europe. West London and the Isle of Anglesey sit at either end of the UK spectrum on this measure. In contrast, countries like Spain, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands recorded a much more homogenous pattern of regional incomes.

One particularly thought-provoking ESPON study developed scenarios for Europe in 2030. The trend scenario shows a Scotland with an aging population and facing increasing relative disadvantage in terms of transport access to European markets. Higher energy prices would increase the problems of peripherality both for Scotland vis-à-vis continental countries, and, within Scotland, for our more remote regions.

More positively, most of Scotland, like Scandinavia, would be expected to perform relatively well in terms of CO₂ emissions from inter-urban transport though the growth or traffic would be easy to see the current levels in the Central Belt get worse and spread beyond the Clyde Forth areas.

In this scenario, Glasgow and Edinburgh, like Dublin, but not Dundee or Aberdeen, become nodes in an extended European core where flows and activities are concentrated. However, in an alternative scenario, in which the EU, and nation states prioritise 'competitiveness', the edge of the European economic heartland would stop well short of Hadrian's Wall. And, in a third scenario where 'cohesion' is given priority, Scotland gets little benefit: here the main winners would be the peripheral regions in eastern and southern Europe.

ESPON 2008-2013 - what's new?
The new ESPON programme will be bigger and better. The funding has more than doubled and four more countries have now joined - Bulgaria and Romania, who joined the EU in 2007, and Iceland and Lichtenstein. The new 'ESPON space' will cover 31 countries as Norway and Switzerland are also included, and projects will also be encouraged, wherever possible, to include an overview of the Western Balkans and Turkey. By developing indicators, maps and spatial data on this epic scale, ESPON will create exceptional opportunities for those involved in strategic planning and work on Structural Funds.

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The Royal
Town Planning
Institute

RTPI
Rural and Town Planning Institute

KISS

- Keep it simple, stupid.
- Press release:
 - One basic message
 - Strong, interesting first sentence
 - Quote from somebody
 - One page
 - Contact details



Example



Commonwealth Association of Planners

Cities on a knife edge say Commonwealth bodies

The global financial crisis threatens to tip cities and local governments over an economic precipice, leaders of Commonwealth bodies warned on World Habitat Day, 6 October. Commonwealth countries were already facing a huge urban challenge before the events of recent weeks. In countries like Malawi, urban growth runs at around 5% a year but investment in essential services like water, sanitation and electricity lags far behind...

How do journalists work?

- Deadlines
- Stories
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?
- Visuals
- Buy them a drink!



TV and radio

- Is it live? News or a feature?
- What is the interview about?
- Think beforehand of the main message you want to get across – and make sure you get it in...and repeat it!



TV and Radio

- Think of a soundbite - write it down and use it: “Fair access to jobs, hospitals and schools – that’s better than log-jammed cities and empty villages”.
- Look smart (TV), be relaxed, speak clearly and don’t ramble.



Websites and leaflets

- Internet is a key medium.
- Refresh it with news.
- Cross-links to www.espon.eu and other sites.
- Blog – Cliff’s Blog on www.innovationcircle.net
- www.espon.org.uk

CHANGING UK REGIONS
IN THEIR EUROPEAN
CONTEXT: ESPON 2002-
2006 AND 2008-2013

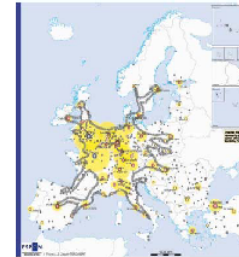


Figure 1: Trend Scenario - Spatial structure and urban hierarchy in 2030

WHAT IS ESPON?

The European Observation Network on Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) maps and analyses development trends and policy impacts across Europe. In its first phase (2002-2006) it tackled topics such as the pattern of natural and technological hazards; accessibility and transport; natural and cultural heritage; urban-rural relations; and the territorial implications of European policies on competitiveness and sustainable development, to mention just a few.

ESPON is funded by national governments and the EU.

KEY FINDINGS FROM ESPON 2006

Over 30 projects were undertaken by international research teams who looked at data across 29 countries – the then 25 EU member states, Bulgaria and Romania who have since become EU members, and also Norway and Switzerland. Full reports can be found on www.espon.eu. Some are very large files which are best downloaded on broadband.

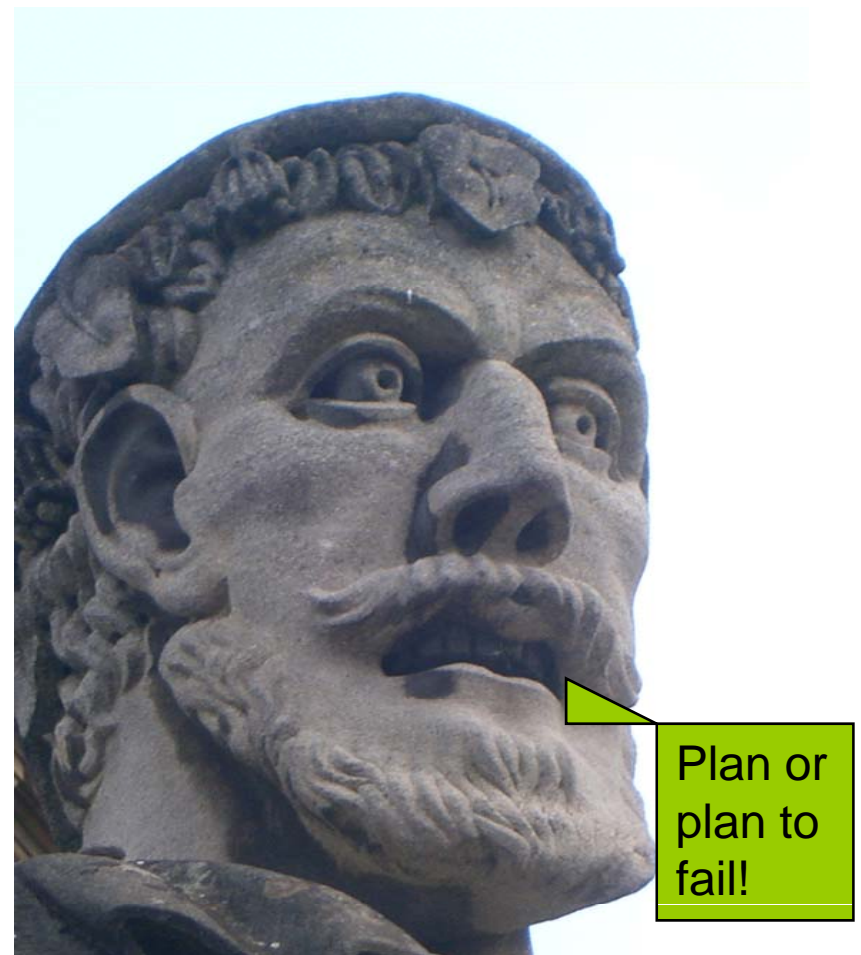
Europe's spatial structure

Disparities are developing between capital city regions and the rest of the country, and also between urban and rural areas. However, the traditional model of a Europe divided between a rich core and a poor periphery is now misleading. There are poor areas within the heartland – e.g. towns where traditional industries have closed. There are also economic success stories around Europe's edge, notably in Ireland and Scandinavia.

The core has been called "the pentagon" – the area bounded by London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg – which comprised 14% of ESPON's land area but contributed 46% of the GDP and 75% of investment in Research and Development. However this area is

Make a plan

- Who are you aiming to reach?
- What media are the appropriate ones?
- When are the windows of opportunity –e.g. Seminars or reports?
- Monitor the results.



Communicating science

- Media want drama and controversy – science is complex and ESPON seeks consensus.
- Practitioners want local data – ESPON is NUTS 3.
- Policy makers want popular solutions – scientists seek to test assumptions.



Efficient and ethical communication

- Clarity – don't hide behind jargon.
- Empathy – understand your audience.
- Look for opportunities for interaction and dialogues: e.g. use of quiz rather than reading information; stage a debate.
- Reference original sources.



Develop a simple message

- Message needs to be relevant and short.
- Provoke people to think in new ways.
- Simple statistics can be effective.
- Use the message and repeat it at every opportunity.



Commonwealth Association of Planners
www.commonwealth-planners.org

**No sustainable
development without
sustainable urbanisation**

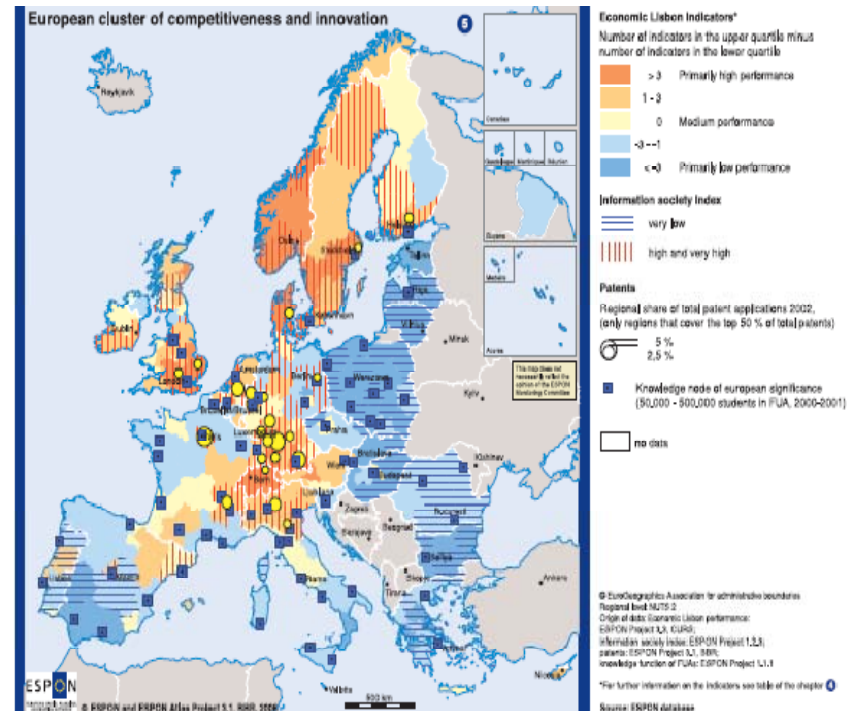
Every day another
60,000 people are
living in urban
areas in the
Commonwealth.
Today 300 million
Commonwealth
citizens are living
in slums. There will
be more tomorrow.



**No sustainable
urbanisation without
effective planning**

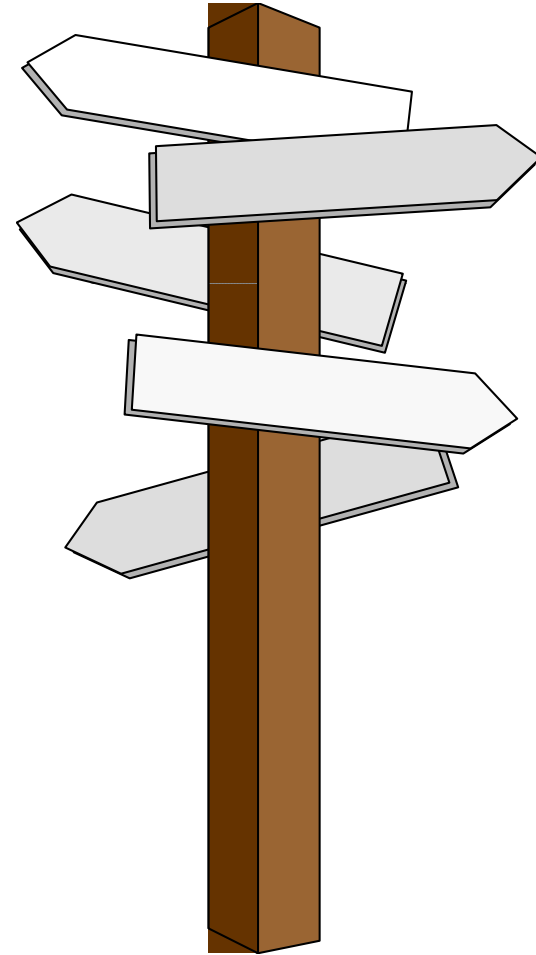
Maps

- The basic ESPON “product”.
- Provide a lot of information.
- Need short, clear interpretation.
- Success of the ESPON Atlas (2006).



Indicators

- A powerful tool for communicating science.
- However, if you have too many indicators you leave people confused.
- A key challenge for ESPON.



Scenarios

- Strong means of telling a story and communicating to non-scientists.
- Scope to use the ESPON 2006 Scenarios project.
- Build in use of new ESPON 2013 Cities project and their scenarios.

The last word



Snooze and
you lose! Be
proactive!