

15 December 2009

## ESPON 2013 Programme

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## ESPON takes major step on innovative knowledge and practical tools for regions and cities

**Researchers, stakeholders and policy-makers from all over Europe gathered in Malmö for the Seminar "The ESPON Knowledge Base as Potential for Territorial Analysis and Policymaking at Regional Level".**

The ESPON Coordination Unit organised in close co-operation with the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union the second internal Seminar under the ESPON 2013 Programme on 2 and 3 December 2009.

Sverker Lindblad, Chair of ESPON Monitoring Committee (Sweden) opened the Seminar together with Christer Larsson, City of Malmö, Charlotte Lindström, Director General of the Regional Development Directorate of the Skåne Region, Mikael Stamming, the Öresund Committee and Lewis Dijkstra, European Commission / DG Regio.

More than 150 researchers, stakeholders and policymakers discussed how regional territorial analysis can give added value to policy making and development by using European wide territorial information from the ESPON knowledge base.

Peter Mehlbye, Director of the ESPON Coordination Unit, said *"The Seminar is an arena for the main actors of ESPON, an opportunity to stimulate a lively cross-cutting dialogue between policy makers from the ESPON Monitoring Committee, stakeholders participating in Targeted Analyses, experts involved in project Groups and the network of ESPON Contact Points. The first results of the ESPON Applied Research and Targeted Analyses projects show that regions benefit from looking at development opportunities in their larger territorial context. "In this era of accelerating globalisation, the larger territorial context is an important angle for regions to better understand development potential, also through territorial cooperation arrangements. The ESPON projects help regions in detecting specific characteristics, comparative advantages, network positions and spheres of influence"* he added.

ESPON has already produced many interesting and recognised results. Currently, 75 Lead and Project Partners from the running projects are generating additional results. Thimo Eser, from the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures of Luxembourg, Managing Authority of ESPON, added *"During its first 2 years, the Programme's bodies have been working hard in finishing and fine-tuning the operational set up and strategic management of the Programme. Now fully in motion, 2010 will see the contracting of a second wave and a large number of new projects"*.

During the seminar, plenary sessions provided for inspiration and a debate on potential use of results from the ESPON Programme. New upcoming results from ongoing projects were unfolded during 3 sessions that presented the following issues:

- The opportunities that ESPON Applied Research and the ESPON Scientific Platform offer for regional analysis and policymaking.



- The research approaches, techniques (e.g. spatial positioning or benchmarking) and tools that can be used to make the European knowledge base operational for regional territorial analyses.
- Targeted Analyses as good examples of using the European knowledge base of ESPON by authorities at national, regional and municipal level, adding a European perspective on their development.

At the concluding session, Isidro Lopez, representative from the incoming Spanish Presidency, unveiled the priorities in relation to territorial development and cohesion: (1) Commitment to working in the Territorial Agenda process in the period 2007-2011, (2) Follow up the First Action Programme, (3) Facilitation of the debate about the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, (4) Taking advantage of Territorial Agenda as a framework for promoting European territorial policy and strengthening a territorial dimension of EU Sectoral Policies.

The seminar made it clear that ESPON fact and knowledge through applied research with a European coverage offers important opportunities for unleashing territorial development potential for regions and cities. The first Targeted Analysis projects have already initiated new forms of territorial co-operation and have introduced the European dimension into regional and local policymaking.

**For more information:**

The presentations given during the Seminar are available at the ESPON Website. [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu) A Seminar Report will be made available early 2010.

**Interested in ESPON?**

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department of Spatial Planning and Development of Luxembourg. More information: [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)