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Call for tenders

Extract of the Terms of reference

ESPON Targeted Analysis “Challenges at EU’s North-East External Borders (CHANEBO)”

ESPON EGTC
31 January 2024

Implementation Framework: The Single Operation within the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme implemented by the ESPON EGTC. The ESPON 2030 Monitoring Committee approved the Single Operation on 26 September 2022. The Single Operation is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund via the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme.

This document details both the technical and administrative terms and conditions including its annexes and constitutes the dossier of this call for tenders. Its original is kept in the contracting authority’s records and is the only version that is deemed authentic.

Key Information on the Procurement

Title	Challenges at EU's North-East External Borders (CHANEBO)
Procedure	EU Open
Contracting authority	ESPON EGTC 11, Avenue John F. Kennedy L-1855 Luxembourg Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
Type of contract	Service contract
Duration	15 months (12 months for contract implementation + 3 months for administrative closure)
Maximum available budget	EUR 250.000,00 (excluding VAT)
Place of delivery	Luxembourg
Lots	This tender is not divided into lots
Variants	Not permitted
Market access	Participation in this tender is open to all economic operators established in the European Union, the European Economic Area and third countries signatories to international agreements in the field of public procurement by which the EU is bound
Tender submission method	Electronic submission via the Luxembourg Public Procurement Portal (www.pmp.lu)
Deadline for sending requests for information And/or reporting errors, omissions, ambiguities, or discrepancies	18 March 2024 at 10h59 CET
Deadline for submission of tenders	25 March 2024 at 11h00 CET

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1 What is to be done? (Purpose of the contract)

With this call for tenders, the ESPON EGTC intends to conclude a service contract for the provision of a Targeted Analysis which aims at further building up ESPON's stock of research development and enhancing the territorial evidence production in the framework of the [ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme](#).

The Targeted Analysis ESPON CHANEBO is being implemented within the framework of the ESPON Thematic Action Plan (TAP) "[Places resilient to crises](#)"¹ as it will explore the vulnerability of specific European territories, and will help the participating regions strengthen their resilience towards future challenges in relation to cohesion and security.

CHANEBO aims at producing new territorial evidence on possible reorientation of development trajectories of the north-eastern EU border regions - South Karelia (FI), Ida-Viru (EE), Latgale (LV), Euroregion "Country of Lakes" (LT) – as they have been negatively impacted by the closure of cross-border exchange with Russia and the termination of the cross-border cooperation programmes since the war on Ukraine in early 2022.

1.1 Context

The economic situation at the north-east external borders of the EU became challenging even before the crisis started in 2022. Back to 2014, the sanctions set by the USA and the EU, following the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, led to a decrease of trade and tourism across the external borders. During the last EU programming periods, several Cross-Border-Cooperation (CBC) programmes, including those implemented in the CHANEBO regions (see stakeholder's context below), have played a key role in the economic and social development of the respective areas. These cooperation programmes, implemented at the EU's borders, have significantly increased cooperation between cross-border communities and have helped create mutual trust.

Following the Russia invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and in line with the decision to fully implement all EU restrictive measures, the European Commission has suspended cross-border cooperation and transnational cooperation with Russia². The suspension had immediate effect for the programmes involving Russia that had an overall EU funding of 178 million EUR. The suspension included the cooperation with Russia in programmes under the programming period 2021-2027.

The invasion of Ukraine had significant consequences on the stakeholders' regions of the CHANEBO targeted analyses as well as other European cross-border regions. Recently³ local and regional leaders urged EU decision makers to increase the funding and the efficiency of cross-border programmes. On 29 November 2023, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) asked to set up a mechanism to compensate EU border regions affected by the drop in access to funding due to the conflict. Regional and local leaders underlined the crucial role that cross-border cooperation can play in achieving sustainable development, promoting mutual understanding and joint projects across external borders. This is also evident in the final outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which calls for strengthened cross-border cooperation in order to enhance cohesion and resilience in border regions⁴. The CoR also suggested that *"EU regions bordering the Russian Federation and Belarus, could be identified as special cases requiring greater attention, analysis and political action. Due to their exceptional situation,*

¹ This ESPON TAP aims to produce territorial evidence on the vulnerability of European territories to different types of crises, such as environmental, economic, social, health and digital disruptions <https://www.espon.eu/places-resilient-crises>

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2022/03/03-04-2022-commission-suspends-cross-border-cooperation-and-transnational-cooperation-with-russia-and-belarus

³ [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2023/2076\(INI\)#msdyntrtid=8ZFbRVSv8uhk1glDfTxNRUa4NhGelz-jRh5hYXzjlNE](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2023/2076(INI)#msdyntrtid=8ZFbRVSv8uhk1glDfTxNRUa4NhGelz-jRh5hYXzjlNE)

⁴ Report on the final outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220509RES29121/20220509RES29121.pdf>

and the restrictions imposed by border closures, it would be appropriate to design specific, tailored instruments to promote the development of these border regions⁵."

ESPON has contributed to the development of EU border and cross-border regions, as well as to long term visions, with research and policy briefs. ESPON CHANEBO could be supported by results of some of the following projects:

- ESPON CPS 2.0⁶ (2022) - Cross-border Public Services 2.0 and ESPON CPS⁷ (2019) - Cross-border Public Services, aimed to improve delivery practices of CPS in European border-regions and to increase awareness about the added value of CPS provision.
- ESPON BusDev⁸ (2021) - Business Development Opportunities at External EU Borders.
- ESPON policy brief (2019)⁹ "Cross-border public services in Europe".
- ESPON Possible European Territorial Futures¹⁰ (2018) that contributes to understanding possible territorial consequences, opportunities and challenges, of three "what-if" questions and with that to support policy development and agenda setting at relevant scales (European, national, regional and local).
- ESPON ET2050¹¹ (2014) - Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe – that supports policy-makers with a future oriented and integrated vision on the development of the European territory, by doing so ESPON started a territorial vision-building strategic process following a participatory process and involving relevant stakeholders at European, national and regional level.
- ESPON ITAN¹² (2014) - Integrated Territorial Analysis of the Neighbourhood- that investigates EU neighbour regions in order to support targeted policy development in the light of Cohesion Policy aiming (1) at improved regional competitiveness as well as sustainable and balanced growth of the European territory, (2) to promote European integration in a connecting world economy, and (3) to support evidence-based cross-border cooperation along external borders.
- ESPON ULYSSES¹³ (2013) - Using applied research results from ESPON as a yardstick for cross-border spatial development planning - an experimental project supported by 18 European border and cross-border areas that aims at using results from ESPON as a yardstick for decentralised cross-border spatial development concepts. It includes high-quality, comprehensive and multi-thematic cross-border territorial analyses and has been performed on six specific cross-border areas.

It is worth mentioning here that ESPON ULYSSES (2013) has conducted a territorial profile and performance analyses to understand how the borders function in different contexts and the impacts of the general challenges they pose. From this perspective, there are some aspects that can be highlighted and can be relevant for this targeted analysis:

⁵ CoR opinion "Boosting lasting and effective cross-border cooperation with our neighbours" <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-3418-2023>

⁶ ESPON CPS 2.0 - Cross-border Public Services 2.0 <https://www.espon.eu/cps-2>

⁷ ESPON CPS - Cross-border Public Services <https://www.espon.eu/CPS>

⁸ ESPON BusDev <https://www.espon.eu/bus>

⁹ ESPON policy brief (2019) "Cross-border public services in Europe" <https://www.espon.eu/cps-brief>

¹⁰ ESPON Possible European Territorial Futures <https://archive.espon.eu/territorial-futures>

¹¹ ET2050 - Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe <https://archive.espon.eu/programme/projects/espon-2013/applied-research/et2050-territorial-scenarios-and-visions-europe>

¹² ESPON ITAN <https://archive.espon.eu/programme/projects/espon-2013/applied-research/itan-integrated-territorial-analysis-neighbourhood>

¹³ ESPON ULYSSES <https://www.espon.eu/programme/projects/espon-2013/targeted-analyses/ulysses-using-applied-research-results-espon>

- the differences in the cross-border areas seem to be pretty much a consequence of their overall location and not so much of their border position. This means that the central European cross-border areas are performing at a similar level than other centrally located regions, while border regions in peripheral countries perform similarly as other peripheral regions.
- Borders keep playing a major role in explaining the behaviour of the different regions, but by dividing different national realities.
- The border condition seems to be more relevant at the regional than at the local level. For example, while the position of the total cross-border areas in the national or European context is clearly relevant, the settlement patterns at the LAU levels seem often to be indifferent to the border.
- The borders seem to keep functioning as a limit for the diffusion effects of development poles. This essentially indicates that, besides the European effort in promoting territorial cohesion, the national level maintains a prime role in regional development.

In addition to the above listed ESPON research outcomes, socio-economic data (EUROSTAT, national and local databases) are to be consulted and analysed. Further available data and source of data shall be provided by the stakeholders of ESPON CHANEBO.

Stakeholders' context

ESPON CHANEBO is aiming at responding to the challenges of regions of a precise geographical scope. It covers four regions in four countries at the north-east external borders of the EU: South Karelia, Ida-Viru, Latgale, Euroregion "Country of Lakes". These regions share similar features, having a small population compared to other regions, being located far from the respective capital regions and being at the external borders of the EU. This geographical position implies that they are the first regions exchanging cultural, economic, social influences with non-EU countries as well as the first entry points of migrants and refugees to the EU.

Currently, the four stakeholder regions are struggling with a number of challenges, including depopulation, prudential attitude towards investments in the regions, raise of prejudice towards Russian speaking population, loss of both cultural and business connections, etc. During the last programming period, they have been benefiting from the purchasing power and economic impulses coming from the EU's north-east external borders. These impulses are not present anymore; the CBC Programmes have been suspended and the consequences are faced by both the public and private sector.

The four regions are:

South Karelia (FI) - is one of the smallest regions in Finland in terms of population. However, it has a strong industrial history, especially in wood processing. Population of the region has been decreasing for decades, being currently appr. 125.000 inhabitants. The area of South Karelia is of 6 873 km². The region has a border with Russia; St. Petersburg, with 5 million people, is some 200 km away.

South Karelia's tourism and business life had a significant boost from cross-border tourism and material sourcing. Some 10 years ago, South Karelia covered 30% of all tax-free sales in Finland. Still in 2021 Finnish paper and pulp industry received 10% of its wood from Russia. Wood import was the major cargo carried by water-born vessels via Saimaa canal. These connections to East are now lost for long following the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Additional info on South Karelia can be found in an earlier targeted analysis ESPON CPS - Cross-border Public Services¹⁴.

¹⁴ ESPON CPS - Cross-border Public Services <https://www.espon.eu/CPS>

South Karelia, a regional authority formed by 9 municipalities, is the lead stakeholder of ESPON CHANEBO. It has a statutory responsibility for regional development and planning. The Council also promote economic development and cultural well-being.

Ida-Viru (EE) is a region in the north-east of Estonia. The size of Ida-Viru is of 2,972 km² and it has 135.000 inhabitants. It has a border with Russia. As a result of mass migration from the Soviet Union, Ida-Viru County has a significant Russian speaking population. Ida-Viru has a strong industrial background, but also cross-border tourism has played an important role. Ida-Viru has Baltic Sea shore and access to Lake Peipsi. One problem for the region is the loss of Russian tourism, which counted almost 26% of overnight stays and cross-border shopping. This caused huge challenges for business environment. Another issue is the decreased amount of transport connections due to visa restrictions and sanctions. It is highly important from a security point of view to provide stable jobs and keep economy running normally at the border regions.

The stakeholder Ida-Viru consists of 8 municipalities, it is a non-profit organization, which operates on the basis of the Act on Unions of Local Government Units and the Act on Non-Profit Associations.

Latgale (LV) is the easternmost region in Latvia. It has a border with Russia and Belorussia. The region has a large population of ethnic Russians. The area of the region is of 14,825 km² and the population is of 255.000 inhabitants. Latgale has been inhabited for a long time as Daugava river running to the Baltic Sea provided means for logistics.

The stakeholder Latgale is a regional state structure and a planning authority.

Euroregion "Country of Lakes" (LT) consists of 4 districts (Utena, Ignalina, Švenčionys, Zarasai) in the northeast Lithuania. There are only 2 such structures in the whole country. The size of the region is of 5,702 km², with a population of about 92.000 inhabitants. This makes it the Lithuania's most sparsely populated area. The region borders Latvia in the north and Belorussia in the east. After the seaside, region is though the second most popular tourism destination in Lithuania.

The stakeholder Euroregion "Country of Lakes" Office in Lithuania is a regional state structure, including 4 municipalities. It is a non-profit regional public organization that operates for regional development, planning, social, cultural interests.

In addition, the stakeholders intend to involve the **Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)** in the dissemination of the results of the targeted analysis.

Even though the research area is limited to four regions, the results of ESPON CHANEBO can provide valuable information for a large area of border regions affected by the current crisis. In particular, the stakeholders have indicated the following regions: Lapland, North Ostrobothnia, Kainuu, North Karelia, South Savo, Kymenlaakso (in Finland); Kirde-Eesti as whole and Louna-Eesti (in Estonia); Vidzeme (in Latvia); Vilnius, Alytus, Marijampole, Taurage, Klaipeda (in Lithuania); three NUTS3 regions in Pomorskie and three in Warmia-Mazury (in Poland).

1.2 Objective

The objective of this targeted analysis is to identify, map and analyse the economic and social consequences that the new geopolitical context has set on the four border regions of the stakeholder partnership since the crisis in early 2022.

In particular, the analysis will focus on the impacts of the ruptured cultural, touristic and business ties across the borders, which exacerbated the already severe depopulation and investment challenges, and altogether resulted in the loss of opportunities in economic and social development, also on account of halted EU funding for cross-border development. It will examine the effectiveness of the available policy tools to respond to the crisis and provide recommendations on strategies and policy measures on how to better manage the outcomes of the crisis towards a more resilient regional development. In addition,

the analysis should provide a basis for policy advice contributing to a long-term development strategy that shall envision the four regions in the future (in the mid and long-term: 10 year and 20 years).

Within this research, ESPON sets out to produce evidence on how cross-border regions can respond to external shocks. The outcomes of the research shall be relevant to other European border regions that are experiencing similar challenges. Through observations of the stakeholders' context, this targeted analysis shall (1) enhance the awareness of the consequences of the new geopolitical context and to assess the effectiveness of the available policy tools to respond to the crisis; (2) reflect and appropriately respond to the challenges of economic and social crisis; (3) provide advice on how to build a strategic vision of the area that can support timely responses, how to develop measures and strategies to turn the crisis into opportunities for an alternative, sustainable and positive development path by also looking for new partnerships with other regions, by learning to gain and use new funding tools.

Thus, in relation to the needs and priorities expressed by the stakeholders, in particular the need of understanding how they have been affected by the crisis due to their position at the external borders of the EU, at least the following evidence shall be collected and addressed within this targeted analysis:

- economic data: volume of cross-border projects, international exchange, volume of cross-border trade of SMEs and tourism;
- historical data on the number and value of cross border projects implemented in the stakeholder regions in the past until 2022;
- evidence on alternative programmes available for institutions that have managed CBC projects until 2022;
- policies to improve connectivity, mobility and transport (under the EU Cohesion Policy objective 3 "a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility" of the programming period 2021-2027);

This latter point has a particular importance as many connections were lost in 2022; evidence and proposals on this topic shall help look for new project partners, business and social connections and by doing so face economic and social isolation.

In this complex context, ESPON CHANEBO shall reinforce cooperation among all the actors and stakeholders involved in the studied area and contribute to the ongoing debate on strengthening cross-border cooperation and support to EU border regions. Thus, this targeted analysis should answer the following questions:

- How to differentiate and develop new growth pattern with near-by EU regions, to open new markets and to engage with new business partners?
- Which policies and tools can enhance the relations with regions located at the northern and southern part of the CHANEBO area, including cultural policies and mobility connections?
- How can Cohesion Policy further support the regions at EU's north-east external borders become stronger and resilient to future challenges? How to better involve Interreg-specific objective "Safer and more secure Europe" in these regions?
- What medium and long-term visions can be built in the studied area that can turn the crisis into an opportunity by also indicating how to develop success factors at regional and international scale?

The outcomes of the analysis shall support strategic development and vision in the stakeholders' border regions. The results of CHANEBO shall be of use and interest for many other European border regions that might face changes of their working environment with cross-border neighbours, such as regions in the Balkans, regions having external borders with North Africa or Turkey, etc.

Stakeholders' envisaged use of the Targeted Analysis

Stakeholders requesting this targeted analysis will use its results to, among others:

- Strengthen cooperation relations to better – and in a joint manner - respond to future shocks in the regions on the eastern flank of the EU;
- Promote adjustments in policy frameworks and instruments to better fit the situation in the regions on EU external borders, including improvements in the current Interreg programmes;
- Find alternative solutions for funding international cooperation.

CHANEBO will support the creation of a strategic vision for both a medium and a long-term period, behind the current programming period, i.e. 2028-2034 and even further. The strategic vision promotes deeper partnership among stakeholders and other regions as listed above. It shall also address connectivity in order to facilitate exchange among citizens and organisations.

CHANEBO will also help improve some policy tools, such as Interreg Baltic Sea Region and Interreg Central Baltic Programme, to fit better the external border regions. Regarding the Baltic Sea Region, its sea basin is of high value; however, the development for example of culture and economy may not be so depending on the sea, yet they are valuable for the external border regions.

South Karelia (FI) and Ida-Viru (EE) will use the results of ESPON CHANEBO in line with the above description.

Latgale planning region (LV) will use the results of CHANEBO to draw new strategic activities and to adjust the priorities of the existing development programme. The results of the research will be used to request active actions to strengthen the security, business environment, human resource capacity in the Latgale region, both at national level and at EU level.

Euroregion "Country of Lakes" (LT):

1. will use the evidence to initiate large-scale regional projects, including international ones, and justify their interregional and international needs. International cooperation, especially with northern countries, and new opportunities, and experiences are relevant. Those will be applied in the fields of tourism, culture and sports, healthcare, energy, and civil protection, including municipal institutions, NGOs, communities, and youth organizations in the project activities. The research data will also be used to evaluate the development possibilities of certain areas, success factors on a regional and international scale. Also, to raise awareness and strengthen the image of the region as active, and interested in common European progress which is based on international research analysis data.
2. Expect that the recommendations look into the development of international cooperation with neighbouring and northern countries; cover sustainable energy sectors, manufacturing, tourism, cultural tourism, recreational and health services. This will support the recognition of a region with a clean nature and the conservation of natural resources.
3. Will use the research data and evidence as a reliable instrument in shaping the development of international cooperation especially with the northern countries, including partnerships activities related to renewable energy resources, as well as in the preparation of new regional development strategies.

4. Finally, Euroregion “Country of Lakes” will use CHANEBO to stimulate awareness of civil society about today's challenges in the studied area.

1.3 Description of tasks

In pursuing the objectives outlined above, the following tasks shall be carried out within the framework of this Targeted Analysis. Tenderers are requested to describe how they intend to implement the following tasks, to include in their proposal a description of their foreseen organisation and planning, to detail the proposed deliveries and to explain how the necessary resources shall be broken down between the different tasks.

These tasks provide an overall framework foreseen for the delivery of the projective objective and policy questions but can be broken down into sub-tasks or reorganised as the tenderer deems appropriate, consistent with their preferred methodological approach.

1.3.1 Task 1: Methodological framework

The tenderer is expected to develop a methodological framework, including an overview of the stakeholders' objectives and policy needs, in order to have a reference model for further analysis. The methodological framework should include at least the following:

- policy needs,
- description of key concept and methods,
- sources of data, data to be collected and used,
- proposal to overcome limited data availability.

The tenderer shall apply a flexible approach to data collection and consider using different types of documentation methods.

Outcomes of the task:

1. Methodological framework, accompanied by interactive visualisations like story-maps, infographics (as agreed at a later stage with the ESPON EGTC).
2. Dynamic and static maps, if relevant.
3. Short and effective one-page summary intended for the presentation to the general public and decision makers.

The tenderer shall provide details on the nature and format of this delivery already in the tender.

1.3.2 Task 2: Review of current policies, tools and practices of cooperation in border regions

The service provider is requested to deliver a brief review at EU, national, regional level of existing policies, tools and practices of cooperation at EU border regions, with a particular focus on instruments, tools, policies that can provide “learning from practices”. The review should consist of at least the following:

- impact analysis on some current practices and policy tools in EU border regions, including INTERREG programmes (Central Baltic programme, Baltic Sea Region, etc.), and how the stakeholders have benefitted from them;

- recommendations on how border regions can respond to a new geopolitical context to ensure a harmonious and sustainable growth;
- how these recommendations could be applied in the four stakeholders' regions.

Outcomes of the task:

1. Above-mentioned review, accompanied by interactive visualisations like story-maps, infographics (as agreed at a later stage with the ESPON EGTC).
2. Short and effective one-page summary intended for the presentation to the general public and decision makers.

The tenderer shall provide details on the nature and format of this delivery already in the tender.

1.3.3 Task 3: Analysis and mapping the socio-economic situation

The aim of this task is to analyse, identify and map the main socio-economic consequences that the new geopolitical context has brought to the four stakeholders EU border regions since the crisis of 2022. The analysis shall include an assessment of the impact of the decision to suspend funds of the cross-border cooperation programmes on the regions.

The service provider is requested to collect new and relevant territorial evidence in order to create an up-to-date picture and trend of the economic and social situation in the four regions. A list of non-exhaustive topics to be addressed is:

- volume of cross-border projects and investments, volume of international exchange, volume of cross-border trade of SMEs and tourism;
- historical data on the number and value of cross border projects implemented in the regions;
- transport and mobility connections;
- evidence on alternative programmes available for institutions that have managed CBC projects until 2022;
- policies to improve connectivity, mobility and transport (under the EU Cohesion Policy objective 3 “a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility” of the programming period 2021-2027).

The involvement of the steering committee in the validation of the analysis carried out in this task is a key element. The stakeholder institutions are committed to support the work on the targeted analysis, providing access to data and documents, in addition to the official sources.

Outcomes of the task:

1. Abovementioned analysis, accompanied by interactive visualisations like story-maps, infographics (as agreed at a later stage with the ESPON EGTC).
2. The database at NUTS 3 and LAU level when suitable, populated with the variables and indicators pulled from public and private sources and uploaded within the ESPON portal.
3. Dynamic and static maps.

The tenderer shall provide details on the nature and format of this delivery already in the tender.

1.3.4 Task 4: CHANEBO vision

This task aims at developing a medium and a long-term territorial vision and scenario envisioning the four regions in 10 and in 20 years. The process shall involve the four CHANEBO stakeholders and any other relevant actors at national and regional level. The vision should provide a coherent framework to formulate development policy actions and to support economic and social policy initiatives. This task

aims also at providing policy recommendations and suggesting tools for the future at regional, national and EU level.

The strategic vision of the studied area shall support timely responses, develop measures and strategies to turn the crisis into opportunities for an alternative, sustainable and positive development path by also looking for new partnerships with other regions, by learning to gain and use new funding tools.

The vision resulting from this task should be used to identify and understand the whole range of possibilities and consequences that are relevant for developing and testing alternative plans, policies and practices for cross-border regions. This task shall be developed in a participatory setting in which a close collaboration with the four stakeholders is crucial.

Outcomes of the task:

1. Presentation of the abovementioned "Strategic Vision", accompanied by interactive visualisations like story-maps, infographics (as agreed at a later stage with the ESPON EGTC).
2. The database at NUTS 3 and LAU level when suitable, populated with the variables and indicators pulled from public and private sources and uploaded within the ESPON portal.
3. Dynamic and static maps.

The tenderer shall provide details on the nature and format of this delivery already in the tender.

1.4 Expected outputs and deliverables

The following outputs and deliverables shall be provided covering the tasks of the requested service as specified above in section 1.3.

1.4.1 Expected outputs

By responding to the research questions, the project contributes to the stakeholders plans and activities and will be used by members of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

The main outputs of the service shall be:

- Methodological framework, including an overview of the stakeholders' objectives and policy needs, in order to have a reference model for further analysis;
- Review of current policies, tools and practices of cooperation in border regions;
- Analysis and mapping the socio-economic situation in the four stakeholder regions;
- A medium and a long-term vision, including a validated set of conclusions and policy recommendations for alternative, sustainable and positive development of the regions.
- Data and interactive maps and graphs resulting from the research and provided in the format compatible with the environment of the ESPON Portal¹⁵.

¹⁵ <https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/sites/#/espon-hub>

1.4.2 Deliverables

The technical offer shall include a description of the format and the content of all deliverables according to the methodological concept the tenderer proposes to implement. The technical offer shall also indicate to which task(s) each deliverable is referring to.

The technical offer shall indicate the time schedule for all the intermediary deliverables proposed by the tenderer.

During the contract implementation, based on the project's progress, risk assessment, stakeholders' inputs and service provider's performance, the contracting authority may request an adaptation of the time schedule and the content of the proposed intermediary deliverables.

1.4.2.1 Predefined deliverables

The selected service provider is requested to submit at least 3 predefined deliveries, linked to foreseen payments in the contract (2 interim and 1 final payment):

- One inception deliverable
- One progress report
- One final deliverable

The table presented in section 1.5 below indicates the time schedule for the predefined deliverables.

1. An inception deliverable containing at least:

- Report (approximately 30 pages, excluding annexes) including:
 - Description of the conceptual framework to be applied.
 - Definition of the most important concepts and aspects of the research, including how to implement the four tasks.
 - Description of the process to consult key European, national, regional and local stakeholders.
 - Status of the process for building the medium and the long-term vision.
 - Overview and evaluation of validity and reliability of data and data sources to be used. A plan for overcoming potential challenges in relation to data collection and missing data.
- Work plan presenting the next steps foreseen in the project's implementation, including meetings with selected target groups.
- Description of the format and content of the next intermediary deliverables.

2. A final deliverable containing at least:

- Final main report (40 to 80 pages) including:
 - *Final version of the analysis of policies, tools and practices of cooperation in border regions.*
 - *Final version of the analysis and evidence from the mapping the socio-economic situation of the four stakeholder regions.*
 - *Results of the long-term vision process, including policy recommendations and suggesting tools for the future development of the border regions at regional, national and EU level.*

- Presentation of the research results in the format and specific form agreed with the ESPON EGTC¹⁶ and – whenever related to maps and other interactive forms of data visualisation - compatible with the environment of the ESPON Portal.
- Data, maps and figures:
 - Source files for the maps and figures (incl. map project/design and vector formats).
 - Shapefiles, geodatabase(s), for all the static and interactive web-maps, dashboards or apps.
 - Data gathered according to the ESPON metadata template, corresponding to the principles of ESPON data strategy and integration of the collected data in the ESPON database, in cooperation with the ESPON EGTC.

3. One progress report

In addition to the above, the service provider will be requested to submit one progress report, corresponding to foreseen interim payment in the contract.

This brief report (max. 10 pages) shall provide an overview on the progress of the implementation of the project, highlighting the status of the different tasks and the challenges and risks associated for the good achievement of the research. Furthermore, the report shall list the meetings held and the intermediary deliveries submitted between the progress reports.

The service provider will receive written feedback from the ESPON EGTC on each mandatory delivery (inception, final and progress report) including approval or request for revision and/or addressing identified challenges (indicatively within two weeks after receiving them and one month for the final delivery).

1.4.2.2 Intermediary deliverables

In addition to the predefined deliverables, service providers are expected to provide intermediary deliverables. These can take different forms, depending on the profile and content of the requested tasks. Their exact quantity, format and content shall be proposed in the technical offer, then agreed between the ESPON EGTC and the service provider at the kick off meeting. They shall be submitted on a scheduled basis corresponding to the progress of the implementation of the different tasks described above (see sections 1.3).

While leaving freedom to the tenderers to define the intermediary deliverables in their technical offer, the following shall be considered:

- 1) intermediary deliverables shall be planned throughout the project's life cycle and are expected in between each of the pre-defined deliverables.
- 2) compulsory elements of the intermediary deliverables are: the data resource that shall be steadily acquired processed and submitted to the ESPON EGTC, a detailed overview of the data collection process and data structure, and adjustments related to the data strategy when necessary (see dedicated section about data deliverable process below).

The service provider will receive feedback from the ESPON EGTC on each deliverable.

¹⁶ This involves the concise and easy-to-grasp summary of overall research findings in an analogue or digital format by means of (a non-exhaustive list of forms): policy brief, infographics, dashboard, story map, simple video clip, apps, etc.)

1.4.2.3 Data deliverable process and digital deliverables

Data and data visualisations are an integral part of all the above-mentioned deliverables. When it comes to data deliverables, it is important to document and provide associating metadata and all the data possible that would allow to reproduce the results. It is important to keep the potential reuse of data in mind when collecting and structuring them, therefore, detailed spatiotemporal granularity is important. Visualisations need to be adapted both for static representation in reports as well as interactive web-based content. The project is expected to deliver both static and interactive web-based maps and figures, when relevant also dashboards, applications or similar, suitable for ESPON website and Portal¹⁷.

The delivery of data and (web)maps and/or any other relevant interactive content mentioned above shall be delivered and integrated throughout the implementation of the project as they are completed, finalised and agreed with the ESPON EGTC.

ESPON Portal is built upon a software system for web-based GIS, powering mapping and visualization, analytics, and data management. It is the backbone for creating and running the interactive web-maps, data stories, dashboards and any custom GIS applications the project may propose or what ESPON may request. Hence, all proposed/requested interactive visualisations or solutions must be compatible with the system. Access to the environment can be provided by ESPON.

1.4.3 Common requirements for all deliverables

All deliverables should be delivered in electronic (editable) format and the text – whatever the format of the deliverable, as relevant, should have gone through a thorough language check, preferably by an English native speaker. ESPON EGTC will provide the generic templates for the maps, however, the service provider shall adjust the templates if necessary, depending on the geographic extent or the relevant peculiarities.

1.5 Project management

1.5.1 Mandatory meetings foreseen during the contract implementation

The service provider shall ensure participation (of at least with one team representative) in all mandatory meetings mentioned below. Costs related to these meetings must be included in the Annex B financial offer of this call for tenders. No other expenses will be paid by the contracting authority to the service provider.

Most of these meetings are held online. In case of a physical meeting (up to 4 physical meetings shall be organised during the lifetime of the project), it will normally take place at the ESPON EGTC's premises in Luxembourg. However, physical meetings may also take place at other suitable locations, upon agreement between the service provider, the involved stakeholders if relevant and the ESPON EGTC.

Kick-off meeting

It will consist of a general presentation and dialogue regarding the objectives and tasks of the service contract. The kick off meeting will also address more precisely the organisation of the project and the plans for the intermediary deliverables. The service provider will receive guidelines on how to use the ESPON portal interface for data delivery and digital deliverables, on how to design the maps in line with the main elements of the ESPON layout, as well as all relevant information concerning the proper application of the ESPON Corporate Identity.

See: <https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/sites/#/espon-hub>

Coordination meetings

Project coordination meetings are organised to discuss the service contract implementation, the deliverables submitted and to provide related feedback. They take place on a regular basis (e.g. monthly basis or more frequently if deemed necessary) by a common agreement between the service provider and the ESPON EGTC. Their agenda and duration are agreed in advance. Written minutes are prepared by the service provider to document key decision points and shared with the ESPON EGTC after each meeting.

Steering Committee meetings

Partnership and cooperation are central to the implementation of ESPON Targeted analysis projects and are prerequisites for ensuring useful results and meeting stakeholders' research demands. The successful accomplishment of the objectives of this project will be achieved by proactive collaboration of the group of stakeholders, the ESPON EGTC and the service provider at every stage of the implementation.

Stakeholder involvement commenced with the definition and development of the specific theme for this targeted analysis and will continue throughout the implementation of the research and beyond. Authorities of all stakeholder institutions are determined to continuously support the work on the project, providing all necessary documents and data they possess, as well as contacts that shall be consulted. As some of the documents to be considered for this targeted analysis might be available only in the languages of the stakeholder territories, the service provider should dispose of the relevant language skills.

To allow for a framework that facilitates successful cooperation, a Steering Committee shall be established for the lifetime of this Targeted analysis. The main purpose of the Steering Committee is to ensure the involvement and active participation of stakeholders in the implementation and steering of the project and to safeguard the policy relevance of project outputs for the stakeholders.

The goals of the Steering Committee meetings are, as follows:

- To closely follow and advise the implementation of the research, making sure that it meets both research objectives and policy demands;
- To discuss and give feedback to deliverables from the service provider and provide guidance for the subsequent steps of the research and service contract implementation;
- To facilitate the information and data flow between the service provider's team, the stakeholders and the ESPON EGTC;
- To discuss and agree upon how to deliver - at each stage of the implementation - the results of the research to selected target groups.

Indicatively, three steering committee meetings shall be foreseen.

- The first one shall take place ca. 1 month after the kick-off meeting, preferably as a physical meeting.
- The timing and location of the other Steering Committee meetings will be discussed and agreed during the kick-off meeting and may be amended during the project implementation.

The Steering Committee shall consist of representatives of all stakeholder institutions, the service provider and the ESPON EGTC. Other stakeholders and/or relevant organisations (e.g. AEBR, ESPON

Member and Partner States) may also take part in the Steering Committee as observers, should the Steering Committee decide so.

The Regional Council of South Karelia, Regional vitality (Finland) is the lead stakeholder in this targeted analysis. The other partners in the stakeholder consortium are:

- Union of Municipalities in Ida-Viru county (Estonia);
- Latgale planning region (Latvia);
- Euroregion "Country of Lakes" (Lithuania).

1.5.2 Indicative time schedule

The table below presents the indicative time schedule for the predefined deliverables and kick-off and steering committee meetings.

The exact deadlines for the predefined deliverables as well as indicative time schedule for all other intermediary deliverables and for coordination and steering committee meetings will be agreed during the kick-off meeting.

The minutes of the kick-off meeting, containing a record of the agreed dates, will be signed by the representatives of both, the service provider and the ESPON EGTC, and will be subject to article 4 - "Performance of the contract and subcontracting" of the service contract.

Meetings	Predefined deliverables	Indicative deadline ¹⁸
Kick-off		As soon as possible (and normally within 2 weeks) after the award of the contract
	Inception Deliverable	T + 1 months
1st Steering Committee		T + 2 months
	Progress report	T + 4 months
2nd Steering Committee		T + 6 months
	Final Deliverable	T + 11 months
Final Steering Committee		T + 12 months

1.6 Competences and skills required

The service provider must have proven, European/transnational scale research expertise and multidisciplinary experience relevant to the contract subject matter in order to ensure the successful implementation of the service. The competences and experience of the service provider within the fields outlined below shall be clearly demonstrated and documented, as requested in Sections 3 and 4.

¹⁸ The letter "T" in this table stands for the date of the kick-off meeting. Timeframes are indicative.

- Proven experience in studies addressing territorial development issues, including experience from policy-relevant and comparative analyses, preferably with a European or transnational coverage and including multi-disciplinary approaches.
- At least three of the proposed team members of the service provider shall have at least five years of experience and academic background in analysing functional territories and territorial governance mechanisms in a pan-European context, including experience with external border of the EU.
- Advanced GIS and web-based GIS, and data visualisation skills (QGIS, ArcGIS or equivalent) to carry out the necessary analytical work on the data resource, configure ESPON mapping templates when necessary, and present the research results in the digital format both in static and interactive manner by means of the forms agreed with the ESPON EGTC (e.g. maps, figures, webmaps, dashboards, story maps, infographics, simple video clips, apps, etc.
- Advanced data management, data quality checking, statistics, statistical programming skills (R, Python or equivalent). ESPON emphasises the importance of data quality, and highlights the complexity of data sourcing, harmonisation, data gap filling, especially when dealing with innovative, non-conventional or multitude of sources.
- At least 2 of the proposed team of experts shall have at least five years of experience and academic background in the fields of computer science, data collection and management, data quality check, web-based GIS and spatial data analysis.
- At least one member with a communication/journalistic background and experience in visualising and presenting research findings in an easy-to-grasp way.
- Team members shall demonstrate a very good linguistic ability to draft and communicate research findings in high-quality English.

(...)

End of extract

Consult www.pmp.lu for downloading the full tendering documentation from the Portail des marches publics and submit your tender via the same platform.