

ESPON 2013 Programme

Work Programme 2008

Approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee on 29-30 April 2008

The Work Programme 2008 is a further development of the planning discussed and decided at MC meetings in September and November 2007. It is building on (1) the first experiences with the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme, (2) the progress achieved in defining the formal setting of programme and project management issues required and (3) experience from the first 4 calls for Proposals and Expression of Interest.

The Work Programme 2008 also relates to the policy development process on territorial development and cohesion as it now emerges. It sets the moments for discussion and mapping the demand for evidence and facts from activities under the ESPON 2013 Programme.

I. Main avenues of activities

Work Programme 2008 includes the following 9 main avenues of activities, each comprised of a number of individual tasks of which only the major ones are mentioned:

1. Completing the Management system and Implementation provisions

The setting up and documentation of a system for programme and project management is a major requirement at the beginning of the programme implementation. This work includes the drafting and decision making by the MC on the following key documents:

- Agreement with Member and Partner States
- Rules of Procedures for the Monitoring and Concertation Committees
- Programme Manual, including Project Implementation requirements
- Management and Control System description, including all the annexes related to programme procedures, for example (the list is not exhaustive):
 - Description of the control systems under the responsibilities of the Member States
 - Description of the control system under the responsibilities of the Managing Authority
 - Procedure and criteria for approving the operations
 - Eligibility rules at programme level and applicable national rules
 - Setting-up of the Certifying Authority
 - Setting-up of the Audit Authority and the Group of Auditors
 - Internal procedures for the Coordination Unit
 - Internal procedure for the Managing Authority
 - Internal Procedure and flows for the cooperation between the Coordination Unit and Managing Authority
 - Internal Procedure and flows for the cooperation between the Certifying Authority and the Managing Authority
 - Audit trail for the ESPON 2013 Programme

- Computerised system for the management of the assistance
- Communication Plan
- Audit strategy
- Compliance Assessment
- Tendering of the externalisation of the controls
- ECP nomination

The description shall be submitted to the Commission at the latest by 6 November 2008 together with a satisfactory compliance assessment. However, due to the fact the Audit Strategy and the tendering procedure for the selection of the external independent auditor have a different scheduled due to the EU regulation, a complete draft of the Management and Control System Description shall be ready by mid May 2008 at the latest.

A close cooperation is in place with the other networking programmes (Interact, Urbact, Interreg IV C) in order to achieve synergies in the configuration and preparation of implementation provisions related to the EC Regulations. This cooperation will continue and be consolidated throughout the programme implementation.

2. Priority 1: Applied Research projects

The first round of projects will be launched in January 2008. The Call for Proposal will expire in March 2008 and the proposals received will be evaluated. Evaluations will first be done on eligibility criteria as decided by the MC. Eligible proposals and expression of interest will then be evaluated and scored on content, management and partnership related criteria, decided as part of the Programme Manual.

The first round of projects will address the following themes as defined in the ESPON 2013 Operational Programme:

- Cities and urban system
- Rural areas development
- Demography and migration
- Climate change
- Energy price increase
- TIA (territorial impact assessment)

The MC will take decision on the best TPG and the Lead Partner to contract for these projects in April 2008. At the same time, the MC will select the two experts that shall perform as Sounding Board for each project. The project implementation will begin shortly after when a contract is signed. A kick-of event for all projects are foreseen, where also the requirements in terms of financial management will be treated separately as a course in complying correctly with the rules.

During spring 2008 the formulation of project themes for the second round of applied research projects will begin. This process will include a screening of the demand based on a questionnaire to key stakeholders. During autumn 2008, project specifications are envisaged to take shape.

The second call for project proposals are envisaged to be launched in January 2009. The Concertation Committee will play an important role in preparing the project

specifications for these projects before the MC will decide on their launch in October 2008. In the process of mapping the demand for ESPON results the open ESPON seminar in Portoroz may as well as other events in 2008 provide interesting demands on possible themes for applied research projects.

3. Knowledge Support System (pool of experts for Sounding Boards)

The Knowledge Support System will be launched in January 2008 as a Call for Interest. The deadline for expressing willingness to perform as experts in sounding boards will expire in March 2008, after which the pool of eligible and qualified experts will be systematised in a database. The first experts will be selected in April 2008 by the MC for the Sounding boards related to the first round of Priority 1 projects. The individual experts will then be contracted by the Management Authority to provide the service envisaged.

Further calls for Expression of Interest for the KSS will depend on the match between the skills of experts in the system and the themes of the second round of Applied Research Projects. In case of need steps will be taken to prepare for an enlargement of the pool of experts.

4. Priority 2: Targeted analysis

The Call for Interest from stakeholders for this new type of ESPON projects will be launched in January 2008, at the same event as mentioned above. The Call for Interest will be open until March 2008 followed by an evaluation process, synchronic to Priority 1, and lead to the decision of the MC in April 2008 on the best ideas for targeted analysis in partnership with the stakeholders.

Hereafter, the projects will start with the detailed specification of the targeted analysis in cooperation with the stakeholders behind the project ideas. Call for Proposals for the Targeted Analysis will be pre-announced in May 2008 and opened in July 2008. The deadline for presenting proposals will expire in September 2008 and the decided evaluation steps undertaken leading to the decision of the MC in October 2008 concerning the first round of Priority 2 projects. This round is considered as a test phase to get experience from a manageable number of projects. The CC will provide advice on the project specifications during this process.

The next Call for Expression of Interest resulting in further Targeted Analysis is previewed launched by January 2009.

5. Priority 3: Scientific Platform

Under this Priority a first project on the ESPON 2013 Database will be launched in January 2008. It will follow the same procedure and timing as the first round of Priority 1 projects.

The following additional project is envisaged launched in a call for Proposals in July 2008 under Priority 3:

- Exploratory project on territorial indicators and indices for launch in July 2008 (conceptual design etc.)

The exploratory project on Territorial Indicators and Indices will be followed up by a project of implementation in 2009. The specifications for the project on territorial indicators and on territorial monitoring system will be nourished by open seminars in spring and eventually in autumn respectively. Project specifications for a project producing a Territorial Monitoring System will start being prepared during 2008 for launch during 2009. The CC will provide advice on the development of these project specifications.

In addition, a number of actions will be engaged under service contracts following Calls for Tender in accordance with Luxembourg law. In spring 2008 the following actions are envisaged:

- 2 projects on the tools:
 - Further improvement of the functionality of the Hyperatlas mapping facility
 - Handbook on standard typologies for types of regions with specific territorial features (rural, mountain, islands, coastal, etc.)
- 2 projects on update of indicators and maps in order to observe territorial trends:
 - Accessibility of air and multimodal transport
 - Demography and migration typology.

During the course of 2008 the MC might decide further actions related to the ESPON Scientific Platform on tools and update of maps.

6. Priority 4: Capitalisation, publications and analysis

The first actions under this Priority will include the setting up of a preliminary ESPON 2013 website that should be ready by January 2008, capable of providing the information necessary for potential beneficiaries interested in ESPON projects.

The necessary actions for establishing a smooth operation related to capitalisation will be undertaken in spring 2008 and put for decision of the MC in April. These actions will be launched as contracts for service provision according to Luxembourg law and include:

- A Capitalisation Strategy envisaged giving guidance and concrete actions for the capitalisation of ESPON results during 2008-2015.
- A Corporate Identity and Lay-out development for the ESPON 2013 Programme that shall ensure the continuation to the existing identity and provide for an immediate recognition of the new programme. The corporate identity and lay-out shall be documented in a Manual and be easily applicable for the new website, publications, promotional material, etc as well as for beneficiaries of the Programme..
- An ESPON Webservice including the structuring and programming of the ESPON 2013 Website and the integration of other web facilities. A particular outcome will be that the current ESPON 2013 section on the old ESPON website during 2008 will be transformed into a real ESPON 2013 Website.
- Printing of ESPON publications and other ESPON materials for promotion, press use, stationary etc.

In order for the ESPON 2013 Programme to stay visible in 2008 a short publication is envisaged in a new series of publications, called ESPON Territorial Observations. The basis for the first two volumes will be the new results from the update of indicators and maps previewed under Priority 3.

Concerning European conferences and events, it is foreseen to carry through one open seminar in Slovenia, Portoroz in June 2008 as well as 1-2 open ESPON workshops at the CU.

For the Transnational Activities foreseen implemented by the ECP Network, the launch of the first round of projects has so far been scheduled for July 2008. However, as the formalities necessary for confirming the ECP Network may need more time, the launch of the first call for projects on Transnational Activities will probably be postponed to January 2009.

However, in order to allow for starting the ECP networking, the MC will have to appoint and document the selection of the national ECP, constitute the ECP Network as soon as possible. In any case, the CU foresees to inform and start meetings during 2008 with the ECP Network, probably in June 2008 for the first of two previewed.

7. Priority 5: Technical Assistance, Analytical Support and Communication

The Management and Control System description will require the completion of a series of individual documents, such as the complete applicants' pack (including the computerised application forms for all type of actions, including for the KSS), subsidy contract template, partnership agreement template, cooperation agreement template, evaluation procedures, internal procedures, in particular internal procedures for all programme authorities and their cooperation (including public procurement procedure and standard service contract), financial control procedures (first and second level), and complete programme audit trail (which this time includes as well the selection and approval procedure of the operations, differently from the previous programming period).

A computerised management system is as well a requirement of the regulation and shall be in place at the moment of the approval of the first operations and its functioning described in the document.

The Communication Plan for the entire programming period was approved by the MC in November 2007. The Communication Plan includes as well the Action Plan for 2008 which foresee the following elements:

- One major event launching the Operational Programme and the first call for proposals and call for expression of interests
- Elaboration of the relevant sections of the website targeting potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries, including the elaboration of the list of beneficiaries that have to be published on the website according to the requirements of the regulation (together with the name of the operation and the amount of public funding allocated)
- Completion of the programme management database
- Elaboration of short articles on the launch of the call for proposals and call for expression of interest to be included in the newsletter

- Elaboration of press releases related to the launch of the Operational Programme and to the second round of calls foreseen for July 2008
- Participation to at least four external events to present the Operational Programme and the funding and cooperation opportunities available
- Between two and three seminars for potential beneficiaries
- Between two and three Lead Partners seminars
- Between two and three Financial workshops (which participation is mandatory for the financial managers of Lead and Project partners of approved operations)
- The elaboration of information and promotional materials on the funding opportunities and the conditions to apply for them

The Communication Plan as approved by the MC shall be submitted to the Commission for approval by 7 March 2008 at the latest.

In support of an efficient programme and project management, and as required by the regulation, a computerised Financial Management and Monitoring System will be established and programmed early 2008. The computerised system shall be fully operational by end of June 2008 in order to allow for the AA to check its compliance with the regulation. The system shall as well be verified by the external auditor that will be contracted for the implementation of the system audit which will take place in the autumn 2008.

In order to valorise the dialogue between MC members, ECP network and the Lead and Project Partners involved in the contracted projects from the first round of calls an internal ESPON seminar will take place in October 2008 in Grenoble, France.

Setting up the ESPON Contact Point Network will be implemented as soon as MC member countries have nominated their national ECP and documented the selection process accordingly. The obligation to nominate ECP's is included in the MA Agreement. The complete ECP network should be in place as early as possible in 2008.

Two ECP meeting are envisaged organised in 2008: the first as soon as the nomination is confirmed of the MC which will take the form a kick-of meeting; a second one after the closure of the first call for the transnational activities and the decision of the MC on the projects approved by late October 2008.

Finally, the CU will start elaborating the Annual Report for 2008 which will have to be submitted to the European Commission by 30 June 2009 following a formal approval of the MC.

By the 30 April 2008 the Managing Authority will have as well to submit to the European Commission the Forecast Payment for 2008 and 2009.

8. Audit requirements

The first meeting of the Group of Auditor is scheduled for the 18 March 2008. During this meeting the GoA will approved the Rules of Procedure, take a decision on the externalisation of the implementation of the on-the-spot checks, discuss and approve the Terms of Reference for the selection and contracting of the external independent auditor and debate on the main elements of the audit strategy, in particular the sampling methodology.

The Audit Strategy and the Risk Analysis will be elaborated by the AA with the support of the ESPON CU and as well the ToR for the selection of the external auditor. The tendering procedure will be launched no later than May 2008 to have a decision on the contracted external auditor at the latest by the end of the summer 2008.

By the beginning of August 2008 the Audit Authority will have to submit to the Commission the final Audit Strategy. By that time the Management and Control Description needs to be finalised also to allow the Audit Authority to prepare the Compliance assessment that needs to be submitted together with the Management and Control System Description.

According to the timetable of the regulation, a system audit of the ESPON 2013 Programme and an audit of the Technical Assistance and Managing Authority expenditure (in the framework of Priority 1 – KSS and Priorities 2-3-4) will have to take place already in autumn 2008. The exact period will be decided following the tendering procedure for the selection of the independent external auditor but most probably will take place during the month of November.

A second meeting of the Group of Auditors is as well foreseen to take place in November 2008 to approve the audit methodology, the results of the system audit and of the on-the-spot-checks, and the sample of projects to be checked during the first half of 2009.

9. Planning of activities for 2009 and beyond

During 2008 the long term planning of activities will be further detailed. It is envisaged to implement yearly rhythms for the implementation of different Priorities and actions. The planning is necessary to ensure a smooth and efficient implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

II. Calendar for 2008

1. Monitoring Committee meetings

A written procedure will be conducted in December 2007 or January 2008 in order to launch the programme and the first calls for proposals and interest in January 2007 in Bruxelles. More written procedures are envisaged, in particular in the first part of 2008 until the basic procedural elements are in place in order for the programme to decide and contract actions.

The Monitoring Committee is envisaged to convey ordinary meetings on 29-30 April 2008 in Luxembourg and on 13-14 October 2008 in Grenoble.

In order to be able to ensure an efficient rhythm in the programme implementation written procedures are foreseen in June and December. The MC can eventually decide on additional MC meetings in stead of written procedures.

2. Concertation Committee meetings

The CC will convey ordinary meetings normally at least 6 weeks in advance of each MC meeting in order to prepare for the meetings. At the spring meeting in 2008, the CC

will give its first advice related to projects to be launched in July 2008 under Priority 2 and 3. During autumn 2008 the CC will in particular address the themes and project specifications for the next round of applied research projects under Priority 1.

3. ECP meetings

Depending on the national nomination and documentation of the ECP selection, it is envisaged to stage two meetings of the ECP during 2008. The first will be a meeting informing and discussing the role of the ECP Network in the implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme. A second meeting might, depending on the timing of the launch of the first call for Proposals for Transnational Activities under Priority 4, address the draft specification of projects.

4. The CU in Luxembourg

The organisational support for the ESPON 2013 Programme is established in Luxembourg. The Management Authority has undertaken the clarifications necessary related to establishing a Certifying Authority and Auditing Authority related to the programme.

The ESPON Coordination Unit will during 2008 welcome the colleagues remaining and become fully staffed. In early 2008, three colleagues selected as Project Expert and Cluster Coordinator for Capitalisation, Publications and Analysis, the Project Expert/Capitalisation and Communication and the Assistant for CA support (half time).

During spring 2008 the post as Project Expert for Data, Statistics and Mapping will be processed as well as the post provided by the Partner States will be defined and advertised.

III. Timetable for 2008

The tentative timing of activities envisaged setting up the ESPON 2013 Programme can be summarised in a table showing the major milestones.

(Abbreviations:

AA=Audit Authority
AP=Applied Research
CC=Concertation Committee
Deadl.=Deadline
ECP=ESPON Contact Points
FM=Financial Management
FinDraft= Final Draft
GoA=Group of Auditors
KSS=Knowledge Support System
MC=Monitoring Committee
P1, P2, P3 and P4=Priorities of the ESPON 2013 Programme
Preann.=Pre-announcement
PS=Project Specification
Subm.=Submission
TA=Targeted Analysis
TA-WG=Territorial Agenda Working Groups
TerObs=Publication on Territorial Observations)

Milestones 2008	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Policy Events			X Council Summit	7-8 Future CohPol	14-15 DG Sloven.					6-9 Open Days	25-26 Min France	
TCUM-T COCOF-C	29-C	26-T 27-C		23-C	20-T 21-C	25-C			23-T 24-C	22-C	25-T 26-C	
TA-WG (NTCCP)		6	18-19		16, 20, 22, 28		2					
MC	-10 WP	5-19 WP		29-30 Lux		23-4 WP				15-16 Grenobl		15-12/1 WP
CC		20 Brx			27 Lux				5 Brx			
GoA/ AA			17-19 Paris								X (tbc)	
ECP meetings						4 (tbc)				15 (tbc)		
ESPON seminars						2-3 Portoroz (open)				13-14 Grenoble		
Workshops (open)		25 Advert		2 CU			X Advert		X CU			
P1: AP-Call1 6 projects	21 Launch		22 Deadl.	9-11 Eval. 29-30 MC	Kick-of			30 Incept. reports		13-14 Semin.		
P1: AP-Call2 X projects							PS Drafts		5 CC	15-16 MC	21 Preann.	
P1: KSS- Call1	21 Launch		22 Deadl.	29-30 MC	Kick off							
P2: TA-Call1 Interest	21 Launch		22 Deadl.	9-18 Eval CU								
P2: TA-Call1 Proposals				29-30 MC	11 Preann.		11 Launch		5 Deadl.	15-16 MC	Kick off	
P3 Indicators				29-30 MC	11 Preann.		11 Launch		5 Deadl.	15-16 MC	Kick off	
P3 Tools				29-30 MC								
P3 Update				29-30 MC								
P4 TransActivity				29-30 MC						15-16 MC	21 pre- ann.	
Q and A Beneficiaries	21						2 CU					
LP seminars FM seminars						X X						X X
Eligibility check			24-31 CU						8-22 CU			
Evaluation Committee				8-11					24-26			
Capitalisat. Strategy				29-30 MC						15-16 MC		
Publications										1 TerObs Briefing		
Programme Manual	21 P1-3						23-4 P4-5					
Annual Report 2007				29-30 MC			30 Subm.					
System Audit											X	
Man+Control System			3 Draft		15 FinDraft		X Final					