

Open invitation to submit proposals for Targeted Analyses

Cut-off date: 29 March 2024

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Version 2 October 2023

1. Signatures of the documents

Question: We have a practical question regarding the letters of commitment. In the guidance and application form, ESPON mentions: Scanned copy of all letter(s) of commitment signed and dated by all participating stakeholders including the Lead Stakeholder and on the official letter paper of the stakeholders' institution. We and most of our partners use digitally signed documents. Is this alright to submit?

Answer: Yes, it is. ESPON works with digital signed documents.

Question: Can the lead stakeholder engage the institutions that are members of the network in the process by signing the Letter of Commitment? Can the lead stakeholder ensure that in case a new official representative of the network is elected he/she will have the leeway to decide to continue with the commitment to the analysis?

Answer: We assume that they would become Lead Stakeholder and engage the whole network. If yes, we consider that indeed, they can engage. They should inform us in due time about the intention of the next official representative to continue or to drop out of the agreement. Articles in relation with this issue can be found in the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement:

- § 6 establishes the conditions for termination. Thus, point e) indicates that the ESPON EGTC is entitled to terminate the Agreement if 'the LS drops out of the Targeted Analysis and does not foresee that any other stakeholder takes over its responsibilities'.
- § 9 point 3 indicates that 'in cases of legal succession (...) the LS or participating stakeholder is obliged to transfer all duties under this contract to the legal successor. The LS shall notify the ESPON EGTC about any change beforehand'.

Question: *The Government would link to sign off the letter of engagement via its Delegation in Brussels. Is this feasible?*

Answer: This is feasible if the internal rules of Government allow for this delegation, meaning that the Delegation in Brussels is entitled to legally sign on behalf of the Government.

2. Timeline for Targeted Analyses

Question: *When will be the next open periods and deadlines for Targeted Analyses?*

Answer: Stakeholder proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses can be submitted at any time. The ESPON EGTC evaluates twice per year all stakeholder proposals received by certain cut-off dates. The next cut-off date for the submission of stakeholder proposals is on 29 March 2024. The following cut-off date is envisaged to be in Autumn 2024; the exact deadlines will be advertised on the ESPON website.

3. Application form

3.1. Administrative part of the application form

Question: *Can partner stakeholders join after submission of the stakeholder proposal, or do all partners have to be declared with the submitted application?*

Answer: In principle, all partners that wish to act as stakeholders in a targeted analysis project need to be mentioned in the stakeholder application submitted to the EGTC and need to prove their commitment with a letter of commitment. After the selection of a stakeholder proposal the inclusion of additional stakeholders is not possible anymore. However, if all participating stakeholders agree, potential additional stakeholders could be invited to participate in steering committee meetings as observers.

3.2. Content part of the application form

Question: *What does it mean exactly that targeted analyses should refer to one specific thematic priority?*

Answer: Proposals for targeted analyses should be thematically related to the scope of one thematic action plan as presented on the [ESPON website](#).

Question: *Is there a preferable territorial dimension for a targeted analysis, e.g. should it cover a national territory or rather a larger territory like a macro-region?*

Answer: There is no preferable territorial dimension for a targeted analysis as such. Depending on the scope of the targeted analysis in question, the tasks to be implemented and the envisaged outcome, it can be an advantage to either limit or extend the territorial coverage of the analysis. It is ultimately up to each applicant to judge the appropriate territorial coverage of the targeted analysis in question.

4. Selection procedure

Question: *How many TAs can be selected ? Is the number of TAs selected defined by TAP?*

Answer: For the cut-off date of 29 March 2024, the ESPON EGTC can select up to 7 expressions of interest in total. The number of selected proposals is not defined by TAP. The selection criteria that are used for the evaluation of the proposals are indicated in “Guidance for Stakeholders” (See 7. What are the selection criteria?). Link: <https://www.espon.eu/participate/targeted-analysis-cutoff-march-2024>

Question: *Who is setting the date for the online exchange aiming at presenting the proposal to the EGTC? Who should attend this meeting?*

Answer: After the cut-off date (and only if all requested documents are complete), the ESPON EGTC will contact the lead stakeholder to schedule a one-hour online meeting in April 2024. The meeting will preferably take place via Teams. The date is set upon common agreement. The lead stakeholder must attend the meeting and can be accompanied by any stakeholder of his choice, provided the participants represent organisations that have signed a letter of commitment (see section 4. How to apply? in “Guidance for Stakeholders”).

Question: *It is mandatory to use the PowerPoint template for the presentation during the online exchange?*

Answer: Yes, the stakeholders shall use the PowerPoint template provided along with the stakeholder documentation on the ESPON website. A maximum of 10 slides shall be presented. The objective is to keep the structure of the presentation similar for all proposals and to keep sufficient time for a Q&A session.

Question: *By when do stakeholders receive feedback on whether their proposal for a TA has been accepted or not?*

Answer: The ESPON EGTC plans to send feedback to stakeholders about 1 month after the cut-off date.

5. Stakeholders

5.1. Eligibility of the stakeholders

Question: *Is it possible to include more than one stakeholder from the same member state in a proposal for a targeted analysis?*

Answer: It is possible to include more than one stakeholder from the same member state in a stakeholder proposal for a targeted analysis.

Question: Eligibility of universities: *I was inspired by the announcement of the invitation of submission proposals for Targeted Analysis, because the university acts as research and analytics centre in connection with the degree programmes and the innovation projects.*

Answer: Universities, academic experts and private companies are not eligible to submit stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses. Nonetheless, they have the opportunity to submit tenders for expertise support in the framework of the call procedure following the qualification of stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses. In addition, they are welcome to submit tenders for open calls. Further information is available here <https://www.espon.eu/participate/calls>

Question: Eligibility of third countries: *Can associations from third countries (i.e. non-EU member states) participate in a targeted analysis and if so, under which conditions?*

Answer: Associations from third states can participate in a targeted analysis as observers in the project's steering committee, if the actively participating stakeholders wish so.

5.2. Number of stakeholders:

Question: Is there a recommended number of stakeholders that should get together to submit a stakeholder proposal? Is there a maximum number of stakeholders that can participate in a TA?

Answer: There is no recommended number of stakeholders as such. Depending on the scope of the targeted analysis in question, the themes to be addressed, the tasks to be implemented and the envisaged outcomes, it can be an advantage to involve either more or less stakeholders. Experience from previous targeted analyses has shown that stakeholders often benefited from the inclusion of other stakeholders and the cooperation in the implementation of the activity. Too large partnerships, however, can result in less time and resources dedicated to each stakeholder's territory. Nevertheless, it is up to each applicant to judge the appropriate number of stakeholders to be involved. The ESPON EGTC will not assess how many stakeholders are involved but rather how active their involvement will be and how much they intend to make concrete use of the results.

6. Funding of the Targeted Analysis

Question: How is the targeted analysis funded? Do stakeholders have to define a dedicated budget?

Answer: ESPON commissions and fully finances the experts that carry through the analytical work to provide territorial evidence to the stakeholders. Stakeholders don't contribute financially to the commissioning of these experts. However, stakeholders need to invest time in supporting the ESPON EGTC in:

- Drafting the terms of reference for the respective targeted analysis;
- Participating in the evaluation of tenders;
- Participating in regular project meetings with the ESPON EGTC and the team of experts carrying through the analysis: at least 3 steering committee meetings for all stakeholders (ca. 4-6 hours each) and monthly project reviews for the lead stakeholder (ca. 1 hour each);
- Supporting the team of experts by providing access to data/information and being available for interviews;
- Commenting on project deliveries;
- Supporting the uptake and transfer of results of the targeted analysis via dissemination and communication activities.

Most of the meetings are held online except key steering committee meetings (e.g. kick-off meeting, final meeting). For the latter, stakeholders need to cover their own travel expenses for attending meetings related to the targeted analysis.