

ESPON Targeted Analyses - Guidance for stakeholders

Open invitation to submit proposals for Targeted Analyses

Cut-off date: 29 March 2024

1. ESPON Targeted Analyses – What are they?

Proposals for Targeted Analyses come from stakeholders at all levels whenever they are challenged with particular policy needs and require some territorial evidence and policy advice from the ESPON programme. Proposals for Targeted Analyses must relate to well-defined and area-specific policy problems, while being relevant also for other countries, regions or cities. Thereby, a potential Targeted Analysis may demonstrate a good replication potential.

The Targeted Analyses are meant to support stakeholders in their policy development and to add a wider European perspective to policy considerations related to their territories. Therefore, they are powerful means to share experience, transfer knowledge, and facilitate the use of European territorial evidence in real place-based policy processes.

Following the assessment and positive qualification of a stakeholder proposal, the ESPON EGTC will work with the stakeholders to further define the scope, procure external expertise via an open, EU wide procedure, and implement the respective Targeted Analyses.

In the framework of the ESPON 2030 Programme, stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses shall aim to collect and deliver new territorial evidence related to one of the programme's Thematic Action Plans (TAPs), whose descriptions are available on the ESPON website.

For this call, stakeholders may submit proposals related to the following TAPs:

- Climate neutral territories
- Governance of new geographies
- Territories resilient to crises
- Perspectives for all people and places
- European territories in global interactions
- Smart connectivity
- Living, working and travelling across borders
- Nature-Based Adaptation to Climate Change

2. How do they work?

As a first step, stakeholders describe their policy support need in their own territories, explaining why they require territorial evidence to cope with the policy challenges and why a European perspective promoted through a Targeted Analysis would be beneficial, outlining the results they envisage to receive, as well as how they intend to make use of the Targeted Analysis in practice.

Stakeholders submit their proposals to the ESPON EGTC by filling in a digital application form, available on the ESPON website. The stakeholder proposals need to be complemented by letters of commitment from all participating stakeholders' institutions. The ESPON EGTC also provides a template for letters of commitment on the ESPON website, together with the digital application form. Stakeholder proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses can be submitted at any time.

The process is the following:

- The ESPON EGTC evaluates stakeholder proposals received by certain cut-off dates, indicatively twice per year. The exact deadlines are advertised on the ESPON website.
- A stakeholder cooperation agreement is signed between the ESPON EGTC and the lead stakeholders of the qualified (selected) proposals (template is available on the ESPON website).
- Together with the stakeholders the ESPON EGTC then further develops the selected proposals into detailed terms of reference. This step can require dedicated meetings with the stakeholders to clarify policy needs and expected outcomes, also in terms of their timing to bring a strong ESPON footprint into the policy process in question.
- The qualified (selected) stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses are openly tendered EU-wide to commission highly qualified experts to carry out the Targeted Analysis.
- Stakeholders are involved in the evaluation of tenders and the selection of the best offer.

The contracted experts will closely cooperate with the ESPON EGTC and the stakeholders in the implementation of the Targeted Analysis.

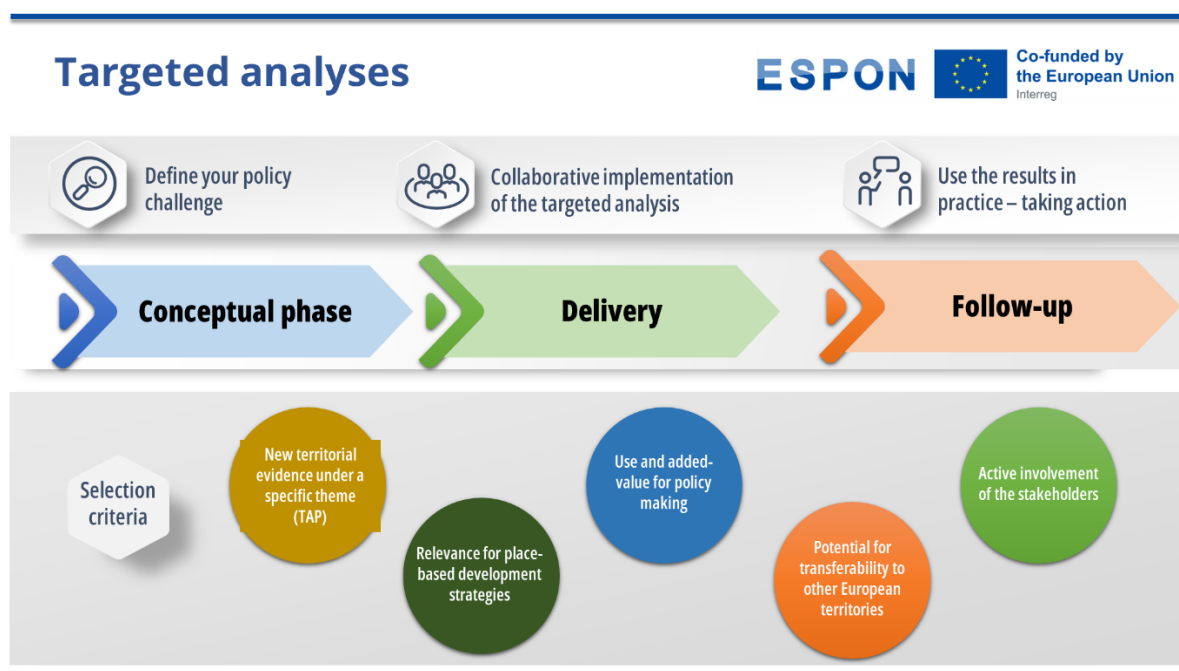
Stakeholders' engagement is key to ensure that they receive tailor-made outputs to be used in their policy processes. Each stakeholder shall designate one contact person responsible for active participation of their institution/organisation in the project.

A project Steering Committee is set up for each Targeted Analysis to discuss and give feedback to the service provider and provide guidance to the latter for the successive steps of service implementation.

Generally speaking, the Steering Committee aims at:

- Ensuring the involvement and active participation of stakeholders in the implementation and steering of the project;
- Safeguarding the policy relevance of the Targeted Analysis' outputs for the stakeholders;
- Facilitating the information and data flow between the service provider's team, the stakeholders and the ESPON EGTC;
- Allowing other relevant institutions/organisations to take part in the project implementation and monitoring.

The process of developing and implementing an ESPON Targeted Analysis is visualised in the figure below:



3. Who can apply?

In line with the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme documents, the following stakeholders will be eligible for submitting proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses, either as lead or participating stakeholders:

- EU-level, macroregional, cross-border, national, regional and local bodies in the EU member states and the ESPON partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) - having legal mandate or specific tasks in developing, evaluating and/or implementing public policies with a territorial dimension. They may also involve stakeholder networks at a broader scale (i.e. networks of local authorities, intergovernmental associations, advocacy organisations, chambers of commerce, associations of trade unions, citizen groups, etc.).

- Managing Authorities and joint secretariats in the EU member states and the ESPON partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and other territorial cooperation bodies responsible for implementing EU-funded programmes for transnational, cross-border or macro-regional areas.

The ESPON EGTC welcomes proposals either by single or several stakeholders acting jointly. This is to encourage a wide geographical coverage and that the numerous countries, regions and cities can benefit of territorial evidence.

However, it is not a prerequisite to set up a stakeholder consortium. Targeted Analyses can also be selected if they are proposed by only one eligible stakeholder.

Universities, academic experts and private companies are not eligible to submit stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses. Nonetheless, they have the opportunity to submit tenders in the framework of the open procurement procedure following the qualification of stakeholder proposals for Targeted Analyses.

4. How to apply?

Applications can be submitted by filling in an application form accessible via the ESPON website (<https://www.espon.eu/participate/targeted-analysis-cutoff-march-2024>).

When submitting a stakeholder proposal, the following eligibility requirements shall be fulfilled:

- Proposals include the completed application form and the scanned, signed and dated letters of commitment of all participating stakeholders (including the lead stakeholder);
- The application form shall be completed in English.

5. What happens if the proposal is incorrect or not complete by the submission deadline? (correctable omissions)

In case of missing or incomplete documents, stakeholders will be given the possibility to complete the submitted proposal within 5 working days after being notified by the ESPON EGTC.

6. How does the selection process work ?

Each lead stakeholder whose proposal have passed the initial assessment (all documents requested have been submitted and are complete) is invited to an online exchange with the ESPON EGTC.

For this cut-off date (29 March 2024), this exchange will be scheduled in April 2024. The date is set by a common agreement between each lead stakeholder and the ESPON EGTC.

For this exchange, the lead stakeholder can be accompanied by any other stakeholder who has signed a letter of commitment (see 4. above).

The meeting will last one hour maximum during which stakeholders will be required to give a presentation (max 30 minutes session) summarizing their proposal, highlighting key points, objectives, expected outcomes and how they intend to use the results, indicating their involvement throughout project lifetime.

A PowerPoint template is provided together with the stakeholder documentation on the ESPON website (<https://www.espon.eu/participate/targeted-analysis-cutoff-march-2024>).

This template shall be used for the presentation by the stakeholders, which will be followed by a Q&A session (questions and answers) with the ESPON EGTC.

The stakeholders are not allowed to change their proposal during their presentation or at any point after the ESPON EGTC submission deadline.

The presentation itself will not be evaluated, but is meant as a first step to connect with the stakeholders and allow the ESPON EGTC to better understand the overall approach regarding the potential new targeted analysis and clarify any statement in the application form if need be.

Following the meeting, the ESPON EGTC will proceed with the proper assessment of the proposal, according to the criteria detailed below.

7. What are the selection criteria?

When putting together a proposal for an ESPON Targeted Analysis, stakeholders should be aware of the following selection criteria, which are used for the evaluation of all stakeholder proposals.

These selection criteria are all of equal importance:

- Collecting and delivering new territorial evidence under a specific TAP theme

The Targeted Analysis shall aim to collect and deliver new territorial evidence / analyses aligned to the content of a specific ongoing Thematic Action Plan, (cf. information available on the ESPON 2030 website).

- Relevance for place-based development strategies in the stakeholder territories

The analysis needs to be related to the specific policy opportunities and challenges in the territories of the stakeholders. In this sense, the new territorial evidence should feed into and support the integrated and place-based approaches to the socio-economic development in the stakeholders' areas.

- Use and added value of expected territorial analyses for policy making

Stakeholders should have a clear view on what they want to do with the outputs of the Targeted Analysis and dispose of the necessary competencies and capacities for applying them in policy-making processes. Therefore, they should specifically indicate how and when they plan to make concrete use of the results, coming out of the Targeted Analysis they request, in policymaking and/or strategic planning processes. Results should, for instance, feed into specific policy planning documents and/or a territorial development strategy.

- Presence of a wider European perspective and transferability

Even though Targeted Analyses focus on specific study areas (i.e. the stakeholders' territories), they need to reflect a wider European perspective. This means that the stakeholders should describe the prominence of the proposed Targeted Analysis theme in the current EU policy context or the relevance of the topic for other countries/territories involved in the ESPON 2030 programme; or they should propose benchmarking of the stakeholders' territories in relation to other regions in Europe.

- Active involvement of the stakeholders in the analytical process and in steering of the activity

Stakeholders proposing an ESPON Targeted Analysis need to bear in mind that their active involvement in the analytical process is required to receive meaningful and useful results.

This means that stakeholders shall commit to provide regional/local data, relevant documents and contacts, and proactively and continuously engage with the ESPON EGTC and with the experts that are contracted to perform the analysis. Stakeholder engagement also includes the uptake of the Targeted Analysis's outputs in policy processes. In addition, it involves some travel and other related costs (e.g. for attending Steering Committee meetings).

Stakeholder proposals will be evaluated according to the above-mentioned criteria on a scale from 0-10. On each of the criteria the proposal has to receive a minimum of 6 points, otherwise it will not be selected. Proposals that will receive a minimum of 30 points will be ranked from the highest to the lowest.

8. How many proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses will be selected?

For this cut-off date (29 March 2024), up to 7 proposals can be selected.

9. What are the duties of stakeholders once their proposal is selected?

Lead stakeholders behind selected stakeholder proposals will receive a selection letter from the ESPON EGTC, together with the following two documents:

- A Declaration of No Conflict of Interest. This needs to be dated and signed both by the lead stakeholder and by the participating stakeholders (one form each), and sent back to the ESPON EGTC as a scanned copy.
- A Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement, which needs to be dated and signed by the lead stakeholder and sent to the ESPON EGTC. The ESPON EGTC then countersigns the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement and sends a copy to the lead stakeholder.

By signing the Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement, the lead stakeholder will commit to:

- Designate a contact person within the institution/organisation who will be responsible for coordinating the participation of staff and – when possible and/or relevant – elected officials in the project.
- Participate at own costs in the steering of the Targeted Analysis. This commitment entails at least monthly online meetings to review the progress in the implementation of the project with the ESPON EGTC and the participation in regular on-site Steering Committee meetings with the services provider performing the study (this will, for instance, incur some travel costs).

- Deliver regional/local information and data (if needed) and provide contact details/access to colleagues, who can support the analytical work;
- Support (at own expenses) the uptake and transfer of results of the Targeted Analysis via communication activities after having consulted the ESPON EGTC. In line with the publicity requirements, a reference should be made in all communication activities that the Targeted Analysis was financed by the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme.

10. What happens with stakeholder proposals that are not selected?

If a proposal is not selected, stakeholders have the possibility to improve and resubmit it at a later stage. Upon request, the ESPON EGTC will provide information on the reasons why the proposal was not selected, as well as advice on how to improve the proposal in case the stakeholders wish to resubmit it.

Stakeholders that wish to lodge a complaint against a decision of the ESPON EGTC to not have selected a proposal may do so within 10 working days counting from the reception date of the rejection letter by email. The complaint should be lodged by the lead stakeholder to application@espon.eu in the format of a duly signed scanned letter and it needs to indicate the reasons behind the complaint.

The ESPON EGTC will refer the complaint to the ESPON Managing Authority (ESPON MA). Provided the complaint is lodged within the given deadline, refers to procedural aspects and contains valid and reasonable arguments, the ESPON MA will investigate the complaint. Should the ESPON MA consider that the complaint is founded, it will draft a report to the attention of the ESPON EGTC requesting the latter to re-evaluate the proposal(s). The complainant will be informed about the final decision by the ESPON EGTC within 15 working days counting from the date of the reception of the complaint by the ESPON EGTC.

11. Where to get further information?

Staff at the ESPON EGTC is available to answer queries on developing stakeholder proposals. Please email your query to application@espon.eu.

All reports from previously implemented and ongoing Targeted Analyses are available for download at the ESPON website (<https://www.espon.eu/targeted-analyses>). They may provide some useful inspiration for stakeholders in developing their proposals. Additionally, you can also find a list of the projects approved in the previous two cut-off dates <https://www.espon.eu/new-targeted-analyses-proposals-approved>

12. Indicative timeline

Targeted analyses

