

***Ex-ante Evaluation of the
Operational Programme ESPON 2007-2013***

***“European Observation Network on Territorial
Development and Cohesion”***

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by

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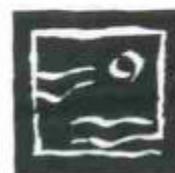
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ex-ante evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme has made use of a number of standard methods / techniques in the wider context of an interactive / iterative process, which allowed producing a substantial amount of results that are presented in the Main Report.

The **interactive and iterative process of the ex-ante evaluation as a whole** was characterised by a very open and constructive working climate. Despite the rather tight initial time schedule, it permitted both sides involved to organise a maximum of exchanges on crucial issues at stake during each phase of the programme elaboration process. The various “general observations” of the early evaluability assessment, the “first recommendations” resulting from the in-depth evaluation and the “key findings” of the progress evaluation were nearby all pro-actively taken into consideration in the subsequent versions of the ESPON 2013 programming document, thus leading to a progressive and steady improvement of the programme as such.

The following paragraphs only highlight a number of **summary conclusions with respect to the most recent situation (“Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme”, version of 1st December 2006)** that are presented alongside the prescribed “Main Evaluation Tasks”.

The analysis of the socio-economic situation and the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified

The key sectors of intervention identified in the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme are characterised by a high degree of relevance in relation to the wider socio-economic (and territorial) situation analysis and the specific needs identified in the concluding section of the programming document (II.2.4).

The ESPON 2013 Programme takes adequately into account the territorial challenges of the present situation and of coming decade. In this respect, it is more forward-looking than the ESPON 2006 Programme was and its usefulness for decision makers will therefore be higher. The SWOT-like analysis of the European territory is rather detailed and differentiated.

The analysis of the achievements and limitations of the ESPON 2006 Programme (SWOT-like analysis) is extensive and precise. It makes possible the conception of a new ESPON Programme which capitalises on the experiences made in recent years and departs from a number of shortcomings shown by the past programme.

The listing of “general needs” reflects correctly the expectations of policy makers towards a European programme delivering territorial information. It addresses the territorial potentials and the larger territorial context of regions, the territorial impacts of sector policies, the territorial challenges resulting from mega-trends, the possible evolution of the EU Cohesion Policy and the diversity of policy makers involved.

The strategy pays a great deal of attention to the use of ESPON results in practice and contains provisions regarding the identification of expectations of potential users, the need of making knowledge more operational, the dissemination of results up to the

generation of awareness-raising processes etc. This is likely to eliminate one of the shortcomings of the past ESPON 2006 Programme.

The programme strategy's rationale, its overall consistency and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities

An in-depth appraisal of the ESPON 2013 programme's objective system reveals that **the overall rationale of the strategy is characterised by a very high degree of internal consistency**. There is a logical progression from a limited number of general objective statements defining the main focus of the programme (i.e. one "overall aim" and 3 "overall objectives") towards a wider range of more targeted objective statements making further concrete the aforementioned ones (6 "strategic objectives" and 13 "specific objectives") and down to the 23 "operational objectives" defined across the 5 programme priorities, which specify what the programme interventions should actually achieve.

The intervention logic of the ESPON 2013 programme is valid, as the 5 programme priorities are strongly corresponding to the higher-ranking programme objectives ("overall aim", "overall objectives", "strategic objectives", "specific objectives") and because the envisaged actions are generally well linked to the "operational objectives" defined across the respective priorities.

The relations between the 23 higher-ranking programme objectives (i.e. "overall aim", "overall objectives", "strategic objectives", "specific objectives") **are characterised by a very high degree of interdependence** (i.e. primary relations in a downward direction) as well as **by an existence of strong additional support effects and cross-cutting effects** (i.e. secondary relations in an upward direction).

The relations between the 23 priority-level "operational objectives" and the higher-ranking programme objectives are generally characterised by an absence of objective-conflicts and by very strong mutual reinforcement effects. This overall situation clearly indicates that the different "objective strings" make - individually and jointly - a considerable contribution to achieve the overall aim of the future ESPON 2013 programme.

The 16 envisaged priority-level actions are generally characterised by a very high level of overall complementarity as regards an achievement of the stated higher-ranking programme objectives. This means, firstly, that no negative contributions of actions could be detected which might hamper an achievement of the wider programme objectives. Secondly, one can observe that each priority (and its related actions) as well as the combination of priorities (and of all actions) make a significant contribution to achieve the stated higher-ranking objectives of the ESPON 2013 programme.

Also the overall complementarity of the 16 envisaged priority-level actions as regards an achievement of the various "operational objectives" is at a very high level. Across the entire programme, no situation could be detected where an action partially or wholly tends to counteract the achievement of one or more of the stated operational objectives. Within the same programme priority, one can naturally find the highest contribution-levels of actions to achieve the respective operational objectives (primary relations). But also the additional support effects of priority-specific actions to achieve operational objectives under other programme priorities (secondary relations) are generally very high, which clearly indicates that substantial synergy effects do exist within the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Our attempt to quantify the hypotheses on potential synergy effects among the various actions at priority level has shown that already the 2nd Draft of the ESPON 2013 programme as a whole displays a very high synthetic coefficient of synergy (0.85). If one considers the

recent improvements / modifications realised in the subsequent versions of the programme, **one can certainly assume that the already high level of programme-internal synergy was even slightly further increased.** This generally positive situation underpins however again our general recommendation that existing synergy potentials should be carefully exploited and developed further by those managing / realising the implementation of the future ESPON 2013 programme.

After the improvements / modifications realised for the most recent version of the programming document, one can re-affirm that the future ESPON 2013 Programme **shows a good balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions that reflect in an appropriate way the new needs which had been identified at the end of the programme's SWOT-like context assessment.** This means that neither the combination of programme priorities nor the actual balance achieved between standard-type and new / innovative actions allows identifying major risks, which might seriously hamper the implementation of the future programme or compromise an achievement of its objectives.

Our appraisal of the financial allocations to the different programme priorities clearly shows that the budgetary distribution is generally adequate, as it tends to positively support a realisation of various aspects that are of strategic importance for the success of the future ESPON 2013 programme (i.e. achievement of all stated higher-ranking programme objectives; achievement of the stated "Operational Objectives"; potential realisation of programme-internal synergies; sufficient financial resource endowment for technical / analytical assistance in order to avoid a future capacity lack).

The external coherence of the programme strategy

The ESPON 2013 Programmes shows a high degree of external coherence with respect to the "Community Strategic Guidelines" (CSG). There are no evident conflicts in relation to the stated CSG-objectives and the most significant complementarity-relations can be observed in case of those "additional guidelines" that address the territorial dimension of cohesion policy (broad coverage, strong direct & indirect support effects). In case of the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy in general, a significant and widespread contribution can also be observed in case of Guideline 1 (*Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work*) and Guideline 2 (*Improving knowledge and innovation for growth*).

The ESPON 2013 Programme shows a very high degree of external consistency with respect to the entire set of wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies. However, due to the specific nature of the ESPON 2013 programme, one can "only" expect an indirect support to actions carried out elsewhere that aim at delivering elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies (focus on issues related to "sustainable development" and "infrastructure investment", but also to themes / objectives that are in a wider sense related to research & development, new technologies and the Information Society).

The expected outputs, results and impacts

Under all 5 programme priorities, the output-statements have to be considered appropriate. They are fully in line with the corresponding priority-level objectives and the planned priority-level actions.

Some weaknesses regarding the coherence of various result- and impact-statements in relation to existing higher-ranking programme objectives and/or operational objectives continue to persist under most of the existing programme priorities (Priority

1: result- & impact-statements; Priority 2: impact-statement; Priority 3: result- & impact-statements, Priority 4: result- & impact-statements).

The individual indicator types (i.e. output-, result- and impact-indicators) mentioned in the Annex V.4 to the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme are all very useful and show a high level of quality. This overall judgement can be confirmed for the large majority of quality assessment criteria applied, which examined for example the possible quantification of indicators at regular intervals (availability of data), the sensitivity of indicators, their reliability and credibility as well as the meaning of indicators. **Some improvements** should however be made to further strengthen the “normativity” and “validity” of some indicator types (i.e. sufficiently sound relation of indicators to a programme-specific normative concept; adequate reflection of this normative concept by indicators).

Seen as a whole, however, the entire programme indicator system displays very high level of quality. It is characterised by an extensive coverage (i.e. the system includes the 5 programme priorities and 100% of the planned expenditure), a good balance between the different indicator types, a well-developed selectivity (i.e. the system respects the future programme managers' capacity to absorb the related information) and a high level of relevance.

The proposed implementation system and its compliance with the Council Regulations governing the new Structural Funds period 2007-2013

The provisions elaborated for the designated programme authorities are generally in line with the prescriptions of the new EU Structural Funds Regulations. They clearly describe the specific roles / tasks / responsibilities of the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority, the ESPON-CU and the Audit Authority / Group of Auditors. The provisions also specify the co-operation mechanisms / working procedures between these individual components of the wider management system and the related reporting procedures.

Beyond these formally required programme authorities, the ESPON 2013 programme also defines **transparent provisions for setting up specific facilitating bodies / networks** (i.e. Concertation Committee, ESPON Contact Point Network) **and for clarifying the relationship between involved Partner States** (non-EU Member States) **and ESPON.**

In addition, **the provisions clearly describe a number of other programme-related implementation / management / control procedures** (i.e. selection & approval of operations, control system, eligibility of expenditure, mobilisation & circulation of financial flows, computerised exchange of data, delivery of additional information) **and define the context for a future evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.**

Finally, the ESPON 2013 Programme also contains detailed **provisions on “Information & Publicity” that are fully in line with the basic requirements as laid down in the Structural Funds Regulations and enable to increase the awareness on future ESPON work as well as to disseminate research results / findings to a broader audience.**

Considering the above-said, **one can say that the overall management and implementation system is convincing and appropriate for realising a smooth delivery of the future ESPON 2013 programme.** This means also that the entire set of provision elaborated is actually able to support a concrete realisation of the “strategic objective” mentioned in the programme that explicitly refers to this particular issue of crucial importance.

MAIN REPORT

PART I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1. Basic objectives and scope of the ex-ante evaluation

According to Article 48 (2) of the **Council Regulation EC 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund**¹, ex-ante evaluations have to be carried out for operational programmes that aim (...)

to optimise the allocation of budgetary resources under operational programmes and improve programming quality. They shall identify and appraise the disparities, gaps and potential for development, the goals to be achieved, the results expected, the quantified targets, the coherence, if necessary, of the strategy proposed for the region, the Community value-added, the extent to which the Community's priorities have been taken into account, the lessons drawn from previous programming and the quality of the procedures for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and financial management.

The **European Commission's "Draft Working Paper on Ex-ante Evaluation"** stresses that the main concerns are (...)

relevance (of the strategy to needs identified), effectiveness (whether the objectives of the programme are likely to be achieved) and utility (judging the likely impacts against wider social, environmental and economic needs). More specific evaluation questions for each ex-ante evaluation are (...) internal and external coherence and the quality of implementation systems. Internal and external coherence relates to the structure of the strategy and its financial allocations and the linkage of the strategy to other regional, national and Community policies. Of particular importance in relation to external coherence are the Lisbon Agenda and the Community Strategic Guidelines. The quality of the proposed implementation system is important to understand how it may affect the achievement of programme objectives. Finally, ex ante evaluation needs to examine the potential risks for the programme, both in relation to the policy choices made and the implementation system proposed.

Based upon these general prescriptions, **the Terms of Reference (ToR) have formulated six strategic questions** that should be addressed by the ex-ante evaluation of the ESPON 2013 programme. In addition, the ToR have also prescribed that the ex-ante evaluation should **include a proposal for an "examination of the likely significant environmental effects of the ESPON 2013 programme"**, based on the criteria defined by the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, Art. 3 (5) and Annex II.

In order to fully cover the above-outlined scope of the ex-ante evaluation, **the consortium EureConsult-TERSYN-ECOSYSTEMS has developed a comprehensive approach** that consists of the following elements:

- **Six "main evaluation tasks" were identified that group together the basic prescriptions of the ToR.** They cover both the six strategic ex-ante evaluation questions and the provisions on an "examination of the likely significant environmental effects of the ESPON 2013 programme". An overview on this re-grouping effort can be found in the overview table below (**see: Figure 1**).

¹ COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999

Figure 1: Main Evaluation Tasks and Strategic Questions in the ToR

Main Evaluation Tasks	Strategic Questions
Main Evaluation Task 1: Appraisal of the socio-economic situation of the eligible area and an analysis of the needs as well as of the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified	Does the programme represent an appropriate strategy to meet challenges confronting the area?
Main Evaluation Task 2: Evaluation of the rationale of the strategy, its overall consistency and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities	Is the strategy well defined with clear objectives and priorities and can those objectives be realistically achieved with the financial resources allocated to the different priorities?
Main Evaluation Task 3: Appraisal of the external coherence of the strategy with Community Strategic Guidelines	Is the strategy coherent with policies at Community level? How will the strategy contribute in particular to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives?
Main Evaluation Task 4: Evaluation of the expected outputs/results and impacts	Are appropriate indicators identified for the objectives and can these indicators and their targets form the basis for future monitoring and evaluation of performance? What the impact of the strategy is likely to be?
Main Evaluation Task 5: Appraisal of the proposed implementation systems, compliance with Council Regulation laying down general provision on the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund	Are implementation systems appropriate to deliver the objectives of the programme?
Main Evaluation Task 6: Screening of the likely significant environmental effects of the ESPON 2013 programme	Application of the SEA Directive (EC 2001/42) to the new programme.

- **A number of specific “sub-tasks” had been identified for these main evaluation tasks and various “evaluation questions” were formulated for each sub-task.** The sub-tasks were mainly derived from an in-depth review of the Commission’s “Draft Working Paper on Ex-ante Evaluation”, which contains clear expectations in this respect. The evaluation questions, in turn, were elaborated by reviewing previous experiences with the ESPON 2006 programme and the initial debate on a new ESPON 2013 programme. These questions aim at better taking into account the specific nature of the ESPON 2013 programme² and shall help focussing each step of the ex-ante evaluation process on key issues that are of a particular relevance for the future programme. A summary overview on the specific sub-tasks and the related evaluation questions can be found in **ANNEX 1** to this report.
- **The most appropriate “methods / techniques” were chosen for accomplishing the above-mentioned main evaluation tasks / sub-tasks.** In the actual choice, a number of methods / techniques suggested by the Commission in its working paper on ex-ante evaluation were not considered. This was either because their application would not be appropriate for a study programme such as ESPON 2013,³ or because

² The ESPON programme 2007-2013 will not involve activities that tend to directly change the socio-economic or spatial context of partners involved. It will concentrate – as the previous ESPON 2006 programme – on producing studies (e.g. in the context of applied research projects) that are meant to produce territorial information and knowledge as well as related tools of analysis. As a study and research programme, ESPON is therefore very different from other programmes supported under the EU-Structural Funds.

³ E.g. an analysis of administrative data on income levels, qualifications, labour market participation and market characteristics; more sophisticated statistical and macro-economic models to set up comparisons with comparable settings.

their use tends to create “double work” with respect to other and already available study-results.⁴ However, it has been ensured that the minimum standards required by the European Commission for any ex-ante evaluation of Structural Funds programmes for the 2007-2013 period were met.

2. Methods and techniques used by the present ex-ante evaluation

2.1. The ex-ante evaluation properly speaking

The ex-ante evaluation properly speaking covered all activities that had been realised in relation to Main Evaluation Tasks 1-5. In practice, the ex-ante evaluation has been carried out in three steps:

1. An “evaluability assessment”, realised at a very early stage of the programming process.
2. An “in-depth evaluation”, realised in relation to a sufficiently complete version of the ESPON 2013 Programme by applying the generally recommended standard methods and techniques for ex-ante evaluations.
3. A “progress evaluation” in relation to subsequent programme drafts and the formulation of “summary conclusions” on the most recent version of the programming document.

Evaluability Assessment

A first analysis in form of an “evaluability assessment” was realised in relation to the 1st Draft of the ESPON 2013 Programme (version of 18th June 2006). According to the on-line guide for an evaluation of socio-economic development,⁵ this is (...)

an assessment prior to commencing an evaluation to establish whether a programme or policy can be evaluated and what might be the barriers to its effective and useful evaluation. It requires a review of the coherence and logic of a programme, clarification of data availability, an assessment of the extent to which managers or stakeholders are likely to use evaluation findings given their interests and the timing of any evaluation vis-à-vis future programme or policy decisions. In addition to assisting evaluators, 'evaluability assessment' has been acknowledged as useful for policy makers, programme managers and other stakeholders or partners. The process of undertaking an assessment early on can help clarify the logic of programmes and lead to fine-tuning or improvement before the programme has progressed too far.

This evaluability assessment was inspired by the logical framework technique (LOGFRAME) and focussed mainly on checking the “vertical logic” (or intervention logic) and the “horizontal

⁴ E.g. consultative and participatory methods, involving stakeholders at an early stage (i.e. focus groups, social surveys, local polls, public meetings, SWOT-analysis undertaken with different groups of stakeholders etc.). The use of consultative / participatory approaches was restricted by the limited budget available for the entire ex-ante evaluation and by the very tight time-schedule concentrating the bulk of evaluation work on the summer holiday season. In addition, two recent studies have – among other aspects - carried out surveys on the current experience with the ESPON 2006 programme as well as on future perspectives for an ESPON 2013 programme. These are the “ESPON-INTERACT Thematic Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios” (Summer 2006) and the Commission study on “Territorial cohesion – lessons from the ESPON programme projects and strategy for the future” (Summer 2006).

⁵ The evaluation of socio-economic development – The Guide. December 2003. (Information on: www.evaled.info).

logic” of the future ESPON 2013 programme. The results of this assessment were presented in form of “general observations”, providing practical suggestions for further fine-tuning the 1st Draft Programming Document.

In-depth Evaluation

An in-depth evaluation alongside the prescribed “Main Evaluation Tasks” 1-5 was realised for the 2nd Draft of the ESPON 2013 Programme (version of 25th July 2006), which showed already a significant degree of overall completion.

The appraisal of the **socio-economic situation / the needs and of the strategy’s relevance to the needs identified (Main Evaluation Task 1)** has been realised through a review of general text parts related to these issues and an in-depth examination of the programme’s SWOT-analysis through a “cross-referencing exercise”. For the latter, a number of documents with a significant direct/indirect relevance for the ESPON 2013 programme had been reviewed alongside the evaluation questions formulated for sub-task 1.1. This review has allowed isolating additional strategic issues that characterise the past/present situation (Strengths / Weaknesses) or describe future challenges and needs (Opportunities / Threats). These strategic issues were systematically compared to the ESPON 2013 Programme’s SWOT-analysis of the socio-economic / territorial situation. As a result of this cross-referencing process, suggestions for further improving the socio-economic / spatial context analysis of the ESPON 2013 programme were elaborated for issues showing considerable gaps and shortcomings. On ground of this, a qualitative appraisal of the relevance of the approach underlying the ESPON 2013 programme strategy was realised alongside the evaluation questions defined for sub-task 1.2.

For an evaluation of the **internal and external coherence of the ESPON 2013 programme strategy (Main Evaluation Tasks 2 & 3)**, we have generally made use of empirical methods and techniques that are generally recommended for analysing the synergy of programmes as well as their cross-impacts.⁶ The actual scope of their application had however to be adapted to the specific framework conditions characterising this ex-ante evaluation (i.e. limited financial resources and tight time schedule).

- Our analysis of **the ESPON 2013 programme strategy’s internal coherence** has applied a number of standard techniques that are normally used for preparing an identification of programme-internal synergies.⁷ Beyond a general assessment of the programme strategy’s rationale and the validity of its wider intervention logic, the ex-ante evaluation has mainly focussed on analysing the relationships between the various programme objectives (interdependencies)⁸ and the complementarity of envisaged priority-level actions with respect to an achievement of the different programme objectives.⁹ For actually localising and quantifying programme-internal synergy potentials, we followed - as much as possible - a generally recommended

⁶ See also European Commission: “Analysing the synergy and cross-impacts of programmes – an empirical method” (MEANS Handbook no. 7, 1996).

⁷ The issue of internal synergy implies that at least three constituent elements are analysed: (1) The interdependence of programme objectives, i.e. the way how objectives are related to one another. (2) The internal coherence, i.e. the extent to which the priorities / the related actions are relevant as regards the programme objectives. (3) The complementarity of priorities / related actions and programme objectives, i.e. the extent to which priorities / actions are mutually supportive in achieving the objectives.

⁸ By elaborating an “objective tree diagram” and a “matrix” showing mutual reinforcement effects between priority-level operational objectives and higher-ranking programme objectives.

⁹ By elaborating a “matrix” showing the complementarity of priority-level actions as regards an achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives and a “matrix” showing the complementarity of priority-level actions as regards an achievement of priority-level objectives.

step-by-step approach.¹⁰ The first step focussed on an interactive elaboration of a “matrix of cross-impacts among actions at priority level”,¹¹ which had been further finalised by the evaluators through calculating “coefficients of potential synergy”. In a second step, the evaluators have explained synergies / potential negative synergies and elaborated recommendations for improving synergy effects within the programme. Finally, also a simplified benchmarking exercise has been used for appraising the innovativeness of new programme priorities / actions and for identifying potential risks that could be associated to them.¹²

- Our assessment of **the ESPON 2013 Programme strategy’s external coherence with respect to key Community policies and objectives**, as reflected in the “Community Strategic Guidelines” (CSG) and in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies, has again used some of the above-mentioned evaluation methods / techniques. The analysis of the external coherence with respect to the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) has realised a matrix-based mapping of potential direct and indirect effects that priorities and actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme might develop in relation to the stated set of Guidelines, mainly to reveal relations of complementarity or conflict. For appraising the ESPON 2013 Programme’s potentials to deliver aspects that support an achievement of the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategies, a simplified “cross-referencing exercise” has been realised. It aimed at mapping potential indirect supportive effects of the envisaged programme priorities (and actions) with respect to a wider set of general and specific objectives stated in these strategies.

For verifying the proposed priority-level output / result / impact statements and their quantification, but also for assisting an identification of reliable indicators at priority- and action-level (Main Evaluation Task 4), different techniques had been used in a step-by-step approach. The main aim was to ensure an adequate response to each of the issues at stake (i.e. interactive elements, causality-relation analysis, quality assessment).

- In a **first step**, a working meeting was organised that involved the evaluators and representatives of the future programme management (i.e. Managing Authority & ESPON CU). The participants have jointly examined the relationships that exist between the already elaborated output-, result- and impact statements at the level of each programme priority. In parallel, also a number of potential indicators had been pin-pointed for the expected outputs, results and impacts at priority level.
- In a **second step**, a comprehensive cross-referencing exercise was realised by the evaluators to reveal the complex causality-relations between the already elaborated output/result/impact statements and the envisaged actions and objectives at priority-level (output/results) or the higher-ranking programme objectives (impacts). The main outcomes of this process were a suggestion of more fine-tuned output/result/impact statements and the identification of a coherent set of related indicators at priority- and action-level.
- In a **third step**, the finally chosen set of output, result and impact indicators was appraised alongside a specific “quality assessment approach”. This approach made

¹⁰ The third recommended step “empirical verification” involving a series of interviews with future beneficiaries of priorities / measures can not be realised in the context of this evaluation due to a lack of resources (workload involved, short time available before the summer brake etc.).

¹¹ During a “working meeting” involving the evaluators and the future programme managers, hypotheses on the effects of synergy were further developed.

¹² i.e. by comparing the new programme to the previous ESPON 2006 programme and its most recent state of experiences.

use of a number of quality control criteria, which are described in the on-line evaluation guide of the European Commission¹³.

Our appraisal of the proposed implementation system (Main Evaluation Task 5) was realised by a desk research based “cross-referencing process”. It compared in a systematic way the provisions suggested for the future ESPON 2013 programme with the formal requirements as laid down in the final version of the EU-Structural Funds regulations governing the period 2007-2013. Also previous experiences made under the ESPON 2006 programme had been considered in this cross-referencing process, however acknowledging eventual changes and new elements that were introduced in the ESPON 2013 programme management / implementation system.

Progress Evaluation

This part of the ex-ante evaluation process focussed mainly on appraising the progress achieved under the “Draft Final ESPON 2013 Programme” (version of 12th September 2006) and the “Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme” (version of 1st December 2006). The main aim of this progress evaluation was to assess whether the modifications in these drafts were generally improving the quality of the programme and / or putting into practice the recommendations resulting from the previously realised in-depth evaluation.

2.2. An assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the ESPON 2013 programme

The approach adopted for applying the Directive on “Strategic Environmental Assessment” (SEA-Directive 2001/42/EC) was based upon the assumption that the future ESPON 2013 programme does not fall into one of the two categories listed in Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, which makes the SEA *automatically* mandatory. Considering this basic assumption, **a screening of the programme** was realised (based on the criteria defined by Article 3(5) and Annex II of the SEA-Directive 2001/42/EC) in order to provide the responsible authorities with sufficient information to decide whether an SEA is required. **This screening focussed on two elements:**

- The **first** is whether the ESPON 2013 programme falls under the definition of programmes given in article 3(3) or 3(4) of the SEA-Directive.
- The **second** is whether the programme is likely to have a significant environmental effect. For the latter, a number of questions had to be asked according to Annex II of the SEA-Directive in order to determine whether the potential environmental effects of ESPON are likely to be *significant* or not (see ANNEX 1, Main Evaluation Task 6). If the answer to any of these questions was something other than *clearly negative*, these particular issues were investigated and analysed further in order to be able to make a more informed judgement on their significance in terms of the environment.

The conclusions of the screening process were consolidated and summarised in a report, and reasoning had been given for whether or not an SEA was required. This not only helped the responsible environmental authorities to make an informed decision on whether an SEA is required for the ESPON 2013 programme, but it also gave them the necessary elements for explaining *why* they decided not to undertake an SEA if this turns out to be the case.

¹³ Although there is no standard method for this quality control, an approach is proposed in the on-line guide that is based on two groups of different criteria: (1) Quality criteria applicable to each indicator and (2) quality criteria applicable to the entire system. More information on: www.evaled.info.

2.3. The work organisation for this ex-ante evaluation and a summary appraisal of the interactive / iterative process

The Commission's "Draft Working Paper on Ex-ante Evaluation" clearly states that (...) *ex-ante evaluation should be an interactive process whereby judgement and recommendations are provided by experts on the content of programmes drawn up by those responsible for their composition. It should be also an iterative process whereby the recommendations of the experts are taken into account by the planners in subsequent drafts of different parts of programmes. In this regard, it is important to facilitate a constructive dialogue between the people responsible for programme formulation and the experts.*

The **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for this ex-ante evaluation deliberately followed this general recommendation and **defined a very detailed time-schedule for the entire process (see: ANNEX 2)**, which also prescribed direct and regular contacts between the evaluators and the Managing Authority / the Coordination Unit (CU) of the current ESPON 2006 programme.

Based upon the above-mentioned recommendations of the Commission and the ToR-prescriptions, **the work-organisation for this ex-ante evaluation was initially structured alongside 3 operational phases:**

- **“Preparation Phase”, early June 2006:** The ex-ante evaluation started in early June 2006 with a kick-off meeting that was organised in Luxembourg between the evaluators and representatives of the ESPON Managing Authority / the ESPON Coordination Unit.
- **“Ex-ante Evaluation Phase”, mid June–beginning of August 2006:** At an early stage, the evaluators assisted the ESPON-Monitoring Committee discussion on a future ESPON 2013 programme (26th-27th of June 2006) and elaborated a first analysis of the 1st Draft of the ESPON 2013 Programme, which was presented at the very beginning of July in form of an “evaluability assessment” (June/July 2006). Subsequently, the evaluators started an in-depth evaluation of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme and formulated “preliminary recommendations” that should inform the elaboration of the Draft Final ESPON 2013 Programme. In parallel, also the “Screening Report on Environmental Effects” was finalised and delivered to the ESPON Managing Authority (July - beginning of August 2006). During the entire phase, a number of working meetings were organised in Luxembourg between the ex-ante evaluation team and representatives of the ESPON Managing Authority / the ESPON Coordination Unit.
- **“Synthesis Phase”, early August – mid October 2006:** During the rest of the month of August, the ex-ante evaluators further completed the in-depth assessment of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme and delivered their Draft Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report by the 1st September 2006. Very shortly after the delivery of this ex-ante evaluation report, a Draft Final Version of the ESPON 2013 Programme was elaborated and has been presented at the ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting in Brussels (20th-21st of September 2006). In the initial work plan, it was expected that the evaluators assess the progress made in this Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme and appraise the comments formulated by members of the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The results of this up-dated assessment should be included into the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report, which was initially due for the 13th of October 2006.

In practice, however, **the programme elaboration process as well as the ex-ante evaluation continued beyond the 13th of October 2006 (“Prolongation Phase”, mid October – December 2006)**. As a consequence of still ongoing discussions with DG REGIO

on content-related aspects / financial matters, but also due to necessary clarifications with respect to some operational / implementation-related issues, not all elements needed for a finalisation of the Ex-Ante Evaluation Report could be made available on due time to the ex-ante evaluation team. Considering these external circumstances and the delay that had occurred in the elaboration process of the ESPON 2013 Operational Programme, the deadline for a delivery of the Final Ex-Ante Evaluation Report was postponed to the 31 December 2006.

As a part of the **interactive ex-ante evaluation process**, the evaluators have attended two ESPON Monitoring Committee (MC) meetings and organised a number of working meetings with the ESPON Managing Authority / the ESPON Coordination Unit. A short summary of these events can be found in the overview table below (**see: Figure 2**). Beyond these formal meetings, an intense and regular informal exchange by phone has taken place between those involved in the programme elaboration process and the ex-ante evaluation team.

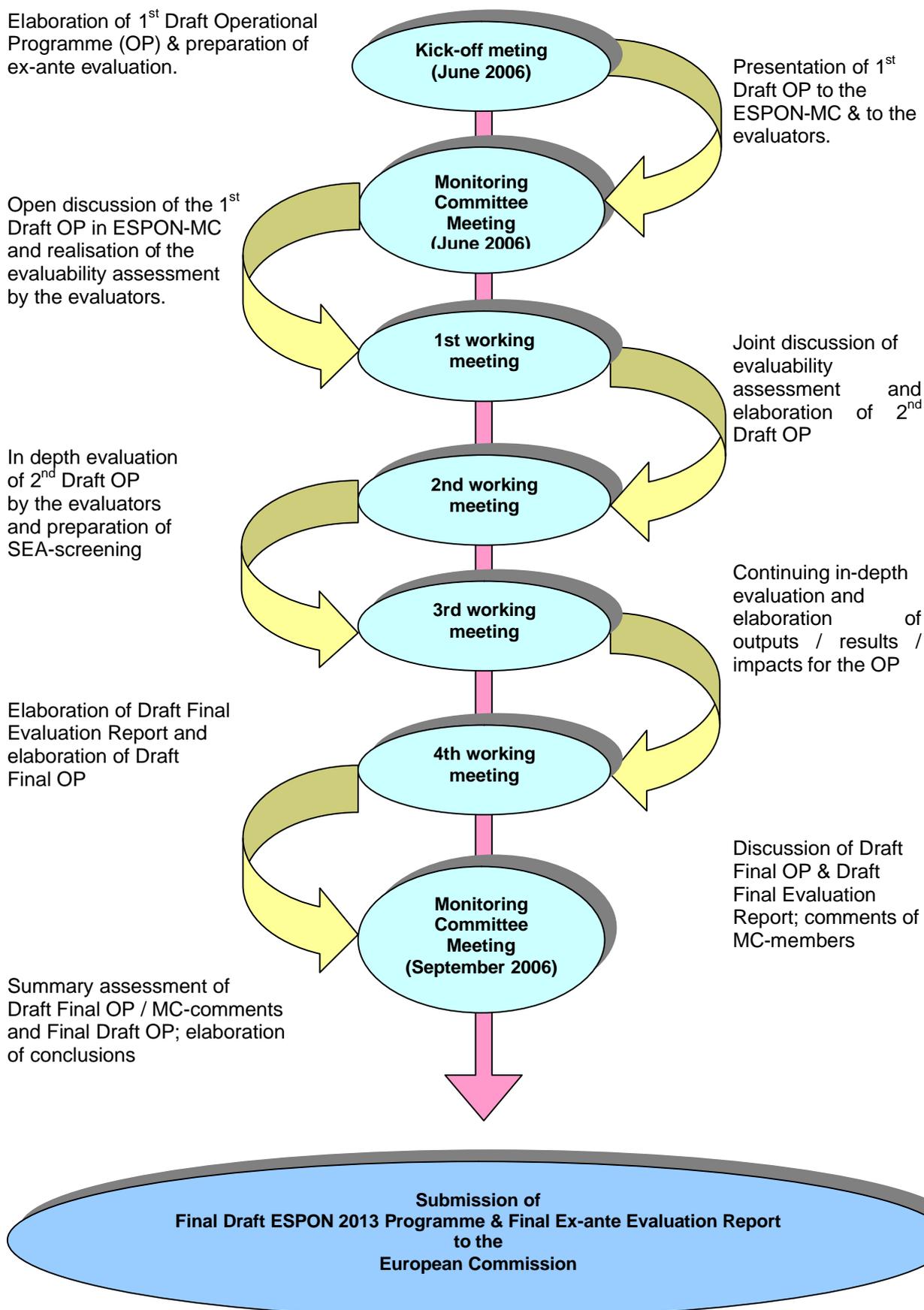
Figure 2: Overview on the interactive dimension of the ex-ante evaluation process

Meeting / date / place
Kick-off meeting , organised at the premises of the Ministry of Interior in Luxembourg (15 th of June 2006).
ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting , taking place in Amsterdam (26 th & 27 th of June 2006).
1st Working Meeting , organised at the premises of the Ministry of Interior in Luxembourg (30 th of June 2006).
2nd Working Meeting , organised at the premises of the ESPON-CU in Esch-sur-Alzette / Luxembourg (19 th of July 2006).
3rd Working Meeting , organised at the premises of the Ministry of Interior in Luxembourg (3 rd of August 2006).
4th Working Meeting , organised at the premises of the Ministry of Interior in Luxembourg (14 th of September 2006).
ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting , taking place in Brussels at the premises of DG-REGIO (20 th & 21 st of September 2006).

With respect to the **iterative ex-ante evaluation process**, one has firstly to remark that - from the beginning on - evaluation activities were always realised across all chapters elaborated in the respective versions of the ESPON 2013 programming document (i.e. 1st & 2nd Draft Programme, Draft Final Programme, Final Draft of the Programme). In other words, the evaluation process did not follow a progressive section-by-section analysis¹⁴, as already the 1st Draft Programme of June 2006 has shown a significant degree of overall completion. A short overview on the different steps of the iterative ex-ante evaluation process is given in the diagram below (**see: Figure 3**).

¹⁴ Elaboration of socio-economic analysis → evaluation → revision of socio-economic analysis & elaboration of the strategy → evaluation → revision of the strategy & elaboration of priorities → evaluation → revision of priorities & elaboration of implementation system → evaluation.

Figure 3: Overview on the steps of the iterative ex-ante evaluation process



The **interactive and iterative ex-ante evaluation as a whole** was characterised by a very open and constructive working climate. Despite the rather tight initial time schedule, it permitted both sides involved to organise a maximum of exchanges on crucial issues at stake during each phase of the programme elaboration process. The various “general observations” of the early evaluability assessment, the “first recommendations” resulting from the in-depth evaluation and the “key findings” of the progress evaluation were in most cases pro-actively taken into consideration in the subsequent versions of the ESPON 2013 programming document, thus leading to a progressive and steady improvement of the programme as such.

3. Presentation of the ex-ante evaluation results

Based upon a use of the above-described methods / techniques in the wider context of the interactive / iterative ex-ante evaluation process of the ESPON 2013 Programme, a substantial amount of results could be produced.

These evaluation results are presented in Part II of the main report alongside the prescribed “Main Evaluation Tasks” 1-5 (Chapters 4-8). In order to highlight better the interactive / iterative nature of the entire ex-ante evaluation process, each chapter adopts a relatively similar structure:

- The **first section** presents the “**general observations**” resulting from the **evaluability assessment** on the 1st Draft Operational Programme (17th of July 2006) and briefly appraises the follow-up action taken by the programming authorities with respect to the “general observations” elaborated.
- A **second section** presents the **in-depth evaluation** realised on those parts of 2nd Draft Operational Programme (25th of July 2006) showing already a significant degree of completion **and the related “first recommendations”**. The in-depth evaluation is elaborated alongside the main evaluation tasks and addresses the specific sub-tasks and evaluation questions outlined in our initial proposal. This analysis is the core part of the ex-ante evaluation and provides a baseline for judging the next steps of the programme elaboration process.
- The **third section** presents the “**key findings**” of the **progress evaluation**, which was realised in relation to subsequent versions of the ESPON 2013 Programme (i.e. Draft Final ESPON 2013 Programme of 12 September 2006; Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme of 1 December 2006). It also includes an appraisal of the comments formulated at the Monitoring Committee Meeting of September 2006 and an in-depth evaluation of those parts of the programme that had not reached a sufficient stage of maturity under the 2nd Draft Operational Programme.
- The **fourth section** formulates **summary conclusions** with respect to the most recent situation, which were also the main source for drafting the executive summary of this final ex-ante evaluation report.

PART II: EX-ANTE EVALUATION OF THE ESPON PROGRAMME 2007-2013

4. The analysis of the socio-economic situation and of the strategy's relevance to the needs identified

4.1. "General observations" resulting from the evaluability assessment

The evaluability assessment has extensively examined those parts of the **1st Draft ESPON 2013 Programme** that aim at describing the wider European policy context (Chapter I "Introduction", especially sections I.1 & I.2) and at assessing the current trends / future challenges to be met by the new programme (i.e. Section II.1 "Analysis of the present situation").

- The **introduction and Sections I.1 & I.2** already contained many text elements that describe the new context of the EU's Cohesion Policy (2007-2013) and identify specific needs for the new ESPON 2013 programme. Also references with respect to more general objectives for EU-policy that will play a major role during the years to come were included (i.e. Lisbon & Gothenburg agenda; Rotterdam agenda & follow up).
- The **analysis of the present situation (Section II.1)** briefly re-described the new context of the EU's Cohesion Policy, identified some of the future territorial challenges in the EU and tried to specify a number of strong and weaker points concerning the information / evidence support to regional policy development. In addition, it also highlighted some of the expected added value for the years 2007-2013, which can be derived from the experience gained under the current ESPON 2006 programme.

Our first analysis has allowed formulating a number of "**general observations**", which are summarised in **ANNEX 3 of this report (boxes 1 & 2)**. They aimed at further deepening / fine-tuning the introduction and Sections I.1 & I.2 and at initiating more substantial modifications in the context of Section II.1 (analysis of the present situation). These general observations were intensively discussed during a joint working meeting between the evaluators and representatives of the future programme (Managing Authority; ESPON-CU).

All suggestions of the evaluability assessment were - in a very pro-active manner - taken into consideration during the next step of the programme elaboration process. This openness has allowed presenting a significantly improved analysis of the socio-economic situation and of the existing needs with respect to applied territorial research in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

Due to these improvements, the evaluators were able to start their in-depth evaluation according to the suggested methodology.

4.2. The in-depth evaluation and related “first recommendations”

According to the overall approach adopted for this ex-ante evaluation, the evaluators were required

- to examine the preliminary analysis of the socio-economic (and territorial) situation of the European territory (SWOT-like) and the key sectors of intervention presented in the draft ESPON 2013 programming document (**sub-task 1.1**),
- to appraise and assess the relevance of the approach underlying the programme strategy, i.e. relevance of the programme priorities and objectives proposed, in relation to the needs identified (**sub-task 1.2**).

The main elements of the socio-economic and territorial situation analysis in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 programme are presented in the programme introduction (Chapter I, sections I.1-I.4) and in the programme-related SWOT-analysis properly speaking (Chapter II, sections II.2.1-II.2.4).

The following sub-sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 present an in-depth analysis of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme that was realised with respect to the above-mentioned ex-ante evaluation tasks.

4.2.1. An appraisal of the socio-economic (and territorial) situation analysis and of the key sectors of intervention

Due to the substantial progress that has been made between the 1st and the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme, one can generally observe that the analysis of the socio-economic and territorial situation and of future development perspectives has reached a very satisfactory level of quality.

Only a few further improvements are necessary in the respective sections of the 2nd Draft that will now be highlighted. For this purpose, the assessment is divided in two parts. The first part will briefly review some of the introductory sections of the programme that aim at describing the wider context in which the future ESPON 2013 programme will operate. The second part examines more in depth the assessment of the socio-economic situation / of the related needs and proceeds to a more structured evaluation of the programme's SWOT-analysis.

Review of programme's introductory sections

Our brief review focuses on the programme introduction properly speaking (Chapter I and sections I.1-I.4), but also on the introductory section of the programme-related SWOT-analysis (Section II.2.1).

In all these introductory sections of the 2nd Draft Operational Programme, **some weaknesses could be detected that should be eliminated during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process (see also: ANNEX 4, box 1)**.

In the current **Section I.1** describing the “Framework conditions related to the development of the European territory”, some minor text improvements should be realised:

- The first and last sentences of the section relating both to the contribution of the ESPON 2006 Programme for identifying territorial challenges could be grouped together and form an introductory statement to the section.
- The first and the last bullets are strongly correlated and address the global economic conditions of European territorial development. They could be grouped together, showing that internal market forces within the EU are not independent from the global economic competition. In addition, the issue of a “fragmentation of the European economy” could be added here.
- A new bullet point should be added, showing the growing interactions between the EU territory and its environment (neighbourhood, Europe in the world) in terms of demography (migration pressure, demographic decline), economy (access to EU markets, economic inter-penetration at intercontinental scale), environment (Mediterranean, Black Sea) and energy supply (fossil resources, pipelines).
- The bullet point stating that “energy prices are increasing which as well has more impacts on some regions than others” should be re-formulated. A suggestion can read as follows: *“Growing energy prices and the emergence of a new energy paradigm have strong territorial impacts, some regions being more affected and others showing substantial potential for the production of renewable energy”*.

In the present text of **Section I.2**, describing “Milestones in policy development relevant for regions and larger territories”, a clear link with respect to the afore-mentioned Section I.1 (“Framework conditions...”) is hardly visible. To improve this situation, the following suggestion is made:

- After recalling the main EU policy documents (p.6), such as the Structural Policies and the Lisbon Agenda, the three bullet points relating to the strategic objectives of key importance of (p.7) should be placed immediately after that (creating a logical follow-up). These bullet points should then be followed by the sentence “the EU Commissioner and Ministers...”.
- Only then, the section “for regions and larger territories ...” should be placed, however with a number of additional bullet points that provide policy answers to the challenges and issues identified in Section I.1.
- From this arrangement it would result that, in addition to the Lisbon Strategy, also other policy contributions are urgently needed. The last paragraph of Section I.2 could in fact become the first paragraph of Section I.3.

Also in the context of **Section I.3**, describing the “Expectations to the ESPON 2013 Programme”, some modifications should be made:

- The last paragraph (“The final beneficiaries”) should be put at the beginning. This change would better highlight that the expectations described afterwards are in fact those of the various policy makers.
- Beyond that a new paragraph should be added, indicating that policy makers need, for the design of their policies, substantial information on long-term evolutions and perspectives (which cannot all be derived from trends) and which draw the attention on changing framework conditions.

Section I.4 (“Structural Funds”) is well structured, but its title should be changed into “*ESPON 2013 in relation to Structural Funds*”.

Our review ends with a number of **more substantial remarks** that concern the **introduction to the programme-related SWOT-analysis (Section II.2.1 “Main European territorial structures and characteristics”)**. Despite the significant progress achieved with respect to the 1st Draft, there are several aspects in Section II.2.1 that should be revised in order to make it more homogeneous:

- The title of the introductory section is extremely ambitious compared to the description that follows. Some parts of the text actually correspond to the title, but they only enumerate a few characteristics of European territorial structures. Others are related to potential territorial dynamics and to policy aspects that should not be mentioned here. To convert this part into a sufficiently robust introduction for the following SWOT-like analysis of “the European territory and its evolution”, our suggestion is to summarise in a few paragraphs the basic characteristics and dynamics of the European territory.
- In addition, also the present and future changes in the global context (especially the accelerating globalisation and climate change) and in Europe’s neighbourhood (for instance growing in-migration pressure) should be better highlighted. Also the related impacts on changes of the European territory, generating new regional challenges such as the needs for stronger competitiveness, for prevention measures related to climate change, for better socio-cultural integration policies etc., should be better stressed.

Assessment of the programme’s SWOT-analysis

To prepare our in-depth evaluation of the SWOT-like analysis on the current socio-economic situation and of future territorial development challenges (Section II.2.2 “The European territory and its evolution”), **a number of strategic reference documents** have been reviewed (**see: text box 1 below**) alongside the basic evaluation questions that were elaborated in relation to sub-task 1.1.

Text Box 1

- *“Third Cohesion Report” (European Commission, February 2004).*
- *“Third progress report on cohesion: towards a new partnership for growth, jobs and cohesion” (European Commission, May 2005).*
- *“Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013: Cohesion Policy in support of growth and jobs” (European Commission, July 2005)*
- *“Facing the challenge: the Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment”. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok (November 2004).*
- *“Working together for growth and jobs. A new start for the Lisbon Strategy”. Communication of the European Commission to the Spring European Council (2005).*
- *“Time to move up a gear. The new partnership for growth and jobs”. Communication from the Commission to the Spring European Council 2006.*
- *“Creating an innovative Europe”. Report of the Independent Expert Group on R&D and Innovation appointed following the Hampton Court Summit. January 2006.*
- *Commission’s “Thematic Evaluation of the Structural Fund’s contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” (Synthesis Report, February 2005).*
- *“Mid-term evaluation of the ESPON 2006 Programme”. Prepared for the ESPON Co-ordination Unit (December 2003).*
- *“ESPON Mid-term Evaluation Update, Final Report”. Prepared by MVA for the ESPON programme (September 2005).*
- *Towards an ESPON II programme: Outline prepared by the ESPON Monitoring Committee as input for discussion in the SUD Committee on 16 December 2005 (Version 5 December 2005).*

- *ESPON-INTERACT “Thematic Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios” (May 2006).*
- *ESPON Synthesis reports 2004 and 2005.*
- *ESPON Project 3.2. on long-term scenarios related to territorial development in Europe*

Based upon this document-review, a **cross-referencing exercise was realised** to examine whether the programme-related SWOT-analysis sufficiently aware of the most important strategic issues related to territorial development and – if necessary – to identify complementary / additional strategic issues that should be mentioned in the analysis. The outcome of this exercise is presented in a SWOT-like cross-referencing table (**see : figure 4**), which lists a number of quotations from the documents reviewed in relation to which the programme-based SWOT-analysis could be further improved.

The cross-referencing exercise allows concluding **that the overall assessment in the 2nd Draft does already well reflect a wide range of strategic issues that should have been taken into consideration.** Most of the ex-ante evaluation questions formulated in relation to sub-task 1.1 are also sufficiently addressed by the current programme version.

The cross-referencing table points however to **some strategic issues that need to be better taken into consideration during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process (see also: ANNEX 4, box 2):**

- In the paragraph on Strengths, it should also be mentioned that the catching up process of the weakest regions of the EU has been significant in recent years.
- In the paragraph on Weaknesses, some aspects under the 1st bullet point should be re-considered. It is true that regional disparities in the EU have been increasing as a result of the recent EU enlargement. But it should also be considered that overall disparities have been falling across the EU since 1995. The second bullet point (p.15) concerns more the future than the present situation and is therefore rather “threat” than a “weakness”. Finally, there are also some other important aspects that could be better highlighted in the context of weaknesses (i.e. weak productivity and employment growth after 2000; widening of Europe’s innovation gap compared to the USA and Japan).
- In the paragraph on Opportunities, it should be added in a bullet point that the increasing production of renewable energy will provide substantial development opportunities for a number of rural regions throughout the EU.
- In the paragraph on Threats, it should be considered that disparities in GDP per head between Member States remain marked and that continued high growth will be needed for more than a generation in many new Member States if this gap is to be substantially reduced. This would also converge with the content of the 2nd bullet point of the “Weaknesses”, which should in fact be transferred here. In the context of the 1st bullet point (“Market forces support geographical concentration”), it is worth adding a sentence indicating that, in the context of accelerating globalisation, external competition is also growing, bringing with it numerous asymmetric shocks and adding to the process of geographical concentration of activities and population. It is finally worth adding a sentence under the bullet point “Ageing of population”, indicating that immigration from outside Europe, which may partly compensate for declining European population, is also likely to increase the issues of socio-cultural integration, especially in large cities.

Figure 4: SWOT-like cross-referencing table

Evaluation Questions	Strengths *)	Weaknesses *)
Situation and evolution of the European territory	<p>“Overall disparities have been falling across the EU since 1995. This fall has been more rapid between countries than between regions with internal regional disparities in several Member States increasing”. (See “Third progress report on cohesion: towards a new partnership for growth, jobs and cohesion” European Commission; 2005);</p>	<p>“After a promising start in 2000, employment growth slowed sharply, while productivity growth has been disappointing throughout, owing partly to the failure to take full advantage of the knowledge economy and information and communication technologies (Community Strategic guidelines 2007-2013);</p> <p>“Europe’s innovation gap is widening: the European Innovation Scoreboard shows that Europe lags behind the US in 9 out of 11 innovation indicators. Also within Europe, the innovation gap persists, as the Union too often fails to transform technological development into commercial products and processes” (Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013).</p>
Evaluation Questions	Opportunities *)	Threats *)
Long-term perspectives and challenges of territorial development in Europe	<p>“High potentials exist in rural areas for the production of bio-fuels. The production of energy crops will progressively bring new sources of income to farmers, alleviating somewhat the problems of agriculture in peripheral rural regions. Set aside land will be reconverted into energy production.” (See ESPON Project 3.2., Synthesis Report June 2006, Baseline Scenario).</p>	<p>Regarding increasing energy price: “At European-wide scale, peripheral regions the economy of which is more dependent upon transportation, are likely to lose a part of their competitiveness because no major substitution possibilities to road and air transportation are possible. This trend works against polycentricity at global European level.” (See ESPON Project 3.2., Synthesis Report June 2006, Baseline scenario)</p> <p>“Disparities in GDP per head between Member States remain marked and continued high growth will be needed for more than a generation in many new member states if this gap is to be substantially reduced” (Third progress report on cohesion).</p> <p>“The socio-economic integration of specific population groups (in many cases young generations of non-European origin) progressively becomes a serious issue in numerous European countries and generates socio-cultural manifestations.” (See ESPON Project 3.2., Synthesis Report June 2006, Baseline Scenario)</p>
<p>*) The text quotations only indicate aspects requiring further improvement in the programme-related SWOT-analysis</p>		

With respect to the **SWOT-like analysis of experiences gained with the ESPON 2006 Programme (Section II.2.3)**, already the mid-term evaluation and the up-date of mid-term evaluation have shown a number of aspects that worked out well, while others required immediate improvements or changes in the medium-term (especially in case of a potential successor programme).¹⁵ In addition, a policy-document of December 2005 entitled “Towards an ESPON II programme”¹⁶ has also capitalised on previous ESPON 2006 experiences and

¹⁵ “Mid-term evaluation of the ESPON 2006 Programme”. Prepared for the ESPON Co-ordination Unit (December 2003). “ESPON Mid-term Evaluation Update, Final Report”. Prepared by MVA for the ESPON programme (September 2005).

¹⁶ Towards an ESPON II programme: Outline prepared by the ESPON Monitoring Committee as input for discussion in the SUD Committee on 16 December 2005 (Version 5 December 2005).

enumerated a large number of aspects that were successful or that will require further improvements and changes under a future ESPON 2013 programme (challenges / needs). Finally, also the “Thematic Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios”¹⁷ has extensively reviewed the actual take-up of ESPON 2006 results by transnational and cross-border spatial visioning processes and formulated practical recommendation for further improving stakeholder-ownership, usability and demand-orientation under a future ESPON 2013 programme. Beyond these sources, more recent and further up-dated reference documents expressing opinions on the experiences with and the wider achievements of the ESPON 2006 Programme were not available at date of this in-depth evaluation.¹⁸

A cross-referencing of key messages in the above-quoted documents in relation to the programme’s SWOT-analysis has shown that nearly all aspects are actually covered by the respective Section II.2.3. Therefore, an elaboration of a SWOT-like cross-referencing was not considered necessary. There are however **some suggestions for further improvements** that relate mostly to formulations / text presentation, which should be taken into consideration during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process (**see also: ANNEX 4, box 3**):

- In the paragraph on Strengths, the important role of awareness rising of decision-makers about future development perspectives and issues should be added.
- In the paragraph on Weaknesses, it should be highlighted that the currently strong academic orientation of numerous projects tends to make the access to ESPON 2006 results difficult for decision-makers and planners.
- In the paragraph on Opportunities, the related statements are mostly formulated like policy objectives. This should be changed through adopting a new type of formulation (e.g. Existing demand for support to policy documents in particular the implementation of Structural funds...; Existing potential for further improving systematic evidence...; Existing potential for strengthening a European dimension in territorial development policy ... etc.).
- In the paragraph on Threats, some statements seem to be related more to the 2000-2006 period than to the future period 2007-2013 (e.g. Heavy procedures...; Insufficient analytical capacity...; Insufficient continuous quality control...etc.). It should be checked in how far these issues are also risks for the future and if - on the contrary - improvements in this respect are expected. In addition, it should be mentioned in relation to the lack of data that the new territorial challenges identified above will also require new territorial data, which still have to be collected and elaborated (i.e. on energy issues, impacts of globalization and of climate change, socio-cultural integration etc.).

Our in-depth examination of the section on “**Conclusions and main orientations for an ESPON 2007-2013 Programme**” (Section II.2.4) shows that **the various needs listed do well reflect the range of issues already highlighted in the policy-document “Towards an ESPON II programme”¹⁹ and are also linked in a very logic manner to programme’s SWOT-like analyses (Sections II.2.2 and II.2.3). The only points requiring minor**

¹⁷ ESPON-INTERACT “Thematic Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios” (May 2006).

¹⁸ Unfortunately, the Commission study on “Territorial cohesion – lessons from the ESPON programme projects and strategy for the future” (forthcoming publication of the final report expected by summer 2006) could not be reviewed, as the final version was not completed at date of the in-depth evaluation.

¹⁹ “Towards an ESPON II programme - Outline prepared by the ESPON Monitoring Committee as input for discussion in the SUD Committee on 16 December 2005 (Version 5 December 2005).

changes, to which we would like to draw the attention of those elaborating the final Draft programme, are the following (**see also: ANNEX 4, box 4**):

- The first point is of rather marginal importance. While comparing the section-title with its actual contents, it could be wise to slightly change the overall title of this section. A suggestion for a more appropriate solution could be the following: *“Conclusions on main needs shaping the demand for an ESPON 2007-2013 Programme”*.
- A second point is more important and refers to an issue that should be better highlighted in the context of the “general needs”: The considerable impact of present and future changes in the global context and in Europe’s neighbourhood will result in new territorial challenges that have to be anticipated and studied. This creates new needs for the ESPON 2013 Programme in terms of data collection and substantial needs with respect to prospective and exploratory research, also involving forecasts based upon long-term oriented scenarios.

4.2.2. An appraisal of the relevance of the approach underlying the programme strategy.

Considering the substantial improvements that have been made between the 1st Draft and the 2nd Draft Operational Programme, but provided that the above-made suggestions are also pro-actively taken into consideration, **one can already state that the proposed strategy as outlined in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme largely corresponds to the needs identified in the concluding analysis of the socio-economic and territorial situation (Section II.2.4).**

There are however a number of points that were already raised above in our assessment of the programme’s SWOT-analysis (see: 4.2.1), **in relation to which more concrete “connecting-points” within the programme strategy should be created:**

- A first point relates to the need to make possible exploratory investigations (new driving forces, future territorial challenges, changes in the global context), even if these are not strictly based on an immediate policy demand. An important function of such research activities is namely to contribute to awareness-raising, which will lead at a later stage to changes in policy demand.
- A second point relates to the need to explore more systematically territorial flows throughout Europe and to develop the ESPON data base consequently.
- A final and important point relates to the realisation of a feasibility investigation on further comparable territorial data in Europe (before contracting a project for improving the data base). The objective is to gain more knowledge on what is feasible and where are the limits of comparability, so as to better define the terms of reference of the data base project itself.

The above-raised points would require a punctual fine-tuning and clarification of some statements for strategic and specific objectives (Section II.2) as well as a number of text-improvements in the description of the suggested main types of action at the level of the priorities concerned (Section II.3).

Due to this, a number of recommendations is elaborated that should be considered in a further revision of these parts of the programme (**see also: ANNEX 4, box 5**), which will also

have to be realised on ground recommendations formulated in other parts of the in-depth evaluation.

4.3. “Key findings” of the progress evaluation

For the **elaboration of the Draft Final ESPON 2013 programme (12 September 2006)**, a larger number of modifications were realised throughout the various introductory sections (Chapter I, sections I.1-I.4) and within the programme-related SWOT-analysis (Chapter II, sections II.2.1-II.2.4). **The progress realised by these modifications and the concrete effects regarding a quality-improvement of the programming document** can be summarised as follows:

- **The modifications have further improved the socio-economic (and territorial) situation analysis in the programme and increased the overall relevance of the approach underlying the programme strategy.** The recommendations formulated by the ex-ante evaluators on the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme (ANNEX 4, boxes 1-5) have extensively been taken into consideration, including those suggesting a further fine-tuning / clarification of some programme objectives (Section II.2) and of several programme priorities (Section II.3).
- **Only in the context of the SWOT-analysis, minor shortcomings do persist.** These shortcomings can however be easily be eliminated. The third bullet point under “weaknesses” (*Dominant core in economic terms: ...*) and the second bullet point under “opportunities” (*Disparities between regions: ...*) should both be transferred to “threats”, as they are much more related to the future than to the present situation.

The comments formulated by delegations attending the **ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting (20-21 September 2006)** did not suggest many changes that aimed at further improving the analysis of the socio-economic situation and the relevance of the strategy in relation to the needs identified. The delegations from Germany, Finland and Sweden suggested that the introductory chapter should place the existing intergovernmental spatial development co-operation and related strategy documents in a more prominent position.

The Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme (1 December 2006) has been improved in several respects with regard to the relevance of the programme strategy for the needs identified. **The following changes made are considered as appropriate:**

- **In the section on “general needs”:** The addition of a reference to the further evolvement of EU Cohesion Policy needing support by territorial indicators takes account of the fact that the EU Cohesion Policy may be modified and may need additional territorial indicators for its definition and implementation.
- **In the section on “needs to ensure a smooth operation of the ESPON 2013 Programme”:** The inclusion of a reference to a Capitalisation Strategy is important, as the results already achieved in terms of research and collection of relevant territorial information should actively be used in addition to the carrying out of further research.
- **In the “Summing up” section:** The reference to a need for further work on territorial indicators and indexes measuring territorial cohesion is important, as the concept and objective of territorial cohesion is so far insufficiently precise and its measurement remains difficult for this reason.

Yet, however, **we suggest a number of additional changes** to further improve the quality of the existing text in the most recent version of the programming document: (1) The third “general need” (p.22) “Comparable evidence on sector policies with a territorial impact is needed” should be formulated as “Comparable evidence on the territorial impacts of sector policies influencing the territory”. The evidence needed refers to the territorial impacts of such policies and not to the sector policies themselves. (2) Second bullet point of “Summing up” (on p.24), second sentence: “Territorial cohesion and cooperation has become explicit issues” should be “Territorial cohesion and cooperation have become explicit issues”. (3) Specific objectives (tenth bullet on p.28): “A monitoring system for European territorial trends and policy impacts shall be established to ensure relevant information to the target groups on the territorial in relation to...”. Either a word is missing or it should be “on the territory”.

4.4. Summary Conclusions

If one considers the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme (1 December 2006), **the following summary conclusions** can be formulated with respect to the socio-economic (and territorial) situation analysis and to the relevance of the approach underlying the programme strategy:

- **The ESPON 2013 Programme takes adequately into account the territorial challenges of the present situation and of coming decade.** In this respect, it is more forward-looking than the ESPON 2006 Programme was and its usefulness for decision makers will therefore be higher. The SWOT-like analysis of the European territory is rather detailed and differentiated.
- **The analysis of the achievements and limitations of the ESPON 2006 Programme (SWOT-like analysis) is extensive and precise.** It makes possible the conception of a new ESPON Programme which capitalises on the experiences made in recent years and departs from a number of shortcomings shown by the past programme.
- **The listing of “general needs” reflects correctly the expectations of policy makers towards a European programme delivering territorial information.** It addresses the territorial potentials and the larger territorial context of regions, the territorial impacts of sector policies, the territorial challenges resulting from mega-trends, the possible evolution of the EU Cohesion Policy and the diversity of policy makers involved.
- **The strategy pays a great deal of attention to the use of ESPON results in practice and contains provisions regarding the identification of expectations of potential users, the need of making knowledge more operational, the dissemination of results up to the generation of awareness-raising processes etc.** This is likely to eliminate one of the shortcomings of the past ESPON 2006 Programme.

5. The rationale of programme strategy, its internal coherence and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities

5.1. “General observations” resulting from the evaluability assessment

The evaluability assessment has extensively examined those parts of the **1st Draft ESPON 2013 Programme** that refer to the strategy properly speaking, i.e. the introduction to the programme strategy and Section II.2 on “Objectives” as well as Section II.3 on “Priorities”.

- The **introduction** contained a clear and short description of the main elements that make up the strategy of the future ESPON 2013 programme, highlighting also six “*basic principles*” that have guided the elaboration of the programme strategy.
- In the section on **Objectives**, a clear hierarchy had been established between the three types of programme objectives²⁰ and also a larger number of statements were elaborated that aimed at further specifying each of these objective-types.
- The entire section on **Priorities** was already well-elaborated and contained a broad variety of information on the operational part of the future ESPON 2013 Programme. Throughout the various sub-sections, the objectives for the individual priorities were more or less well elaborated and also a detailed description for the envisaged programme actions was given (at that stage, 15 actions in total).

As concerns the **introduction**, only **one general observation** relating to the basic principles had been formulated (i.e. they could stronger focus on some important strategic aspects²¹ that were already mentioned in several policy documents²² issued during the initial debate on the future programme). With respect to the **other sections** (Objectives & Priorities), an already larger number of **general observation** had been formulated that are summarised in **ANNEX 3** of this report (**boxes 3 & 4**). They provided suggestions for further improving and fine-tuning the objective system in order to strengthen its overall coherence / logic and for improving the overall presentation of the programme priorities in order to sharpen the overall intervention logic. These general observations were intensively discussed during a joint working meeting between the evaluators and representatives of the future programme (Managing Authority; ESPON-CU).

Subsequently, nearly all suggestions made in the evaluability assessment were - in a very pro-active manner - taken into consideration during the next step of the programme elaboration process. Due to this positive attitude, a substantially improved strategy section could be presented in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

This has enabled the evaluators to start with their in-depth assessment according to the suggested methodology.

²⁰ In the 1st Draft: “strategic objective” → “overall objectives” → “specific objectives”.

²¹ Clearer focus on “demand-orientation”, the user-friendly approach and the transfer-orientation (communication, networking, dialogue and awareness-raising). Further widening of the “quality” principle.

²² “Dialogue on an ESPON II programme” (April 2006). “Towards an ESPON II programme” (December 2005)

5.2. The in-depth evaluation and related “first recommendations”

According to the overall approach adopted for this ex-ante evaluation, the evaluators are required

- to examine the programme strategy’s rationale and its validity (**sub-task 2.1**),
- to realise an in-depth cross-analysis of the relationships and complementarities between the different priorities and assess the adequacy of the financial allocation to each priority (**sub-task 2.2**),
- to appraise the degree of policy risk involved in the choice of priorities and to examine the level of innovativeness of the programme (**sub-task 2.3**).

The main elements of the ESPON 2013 Programme strategy are presented in Chapter II of the 2nd Draft, i.e. the basic programme objectives (in section II.2) and the different programme priorities (in section II.3) are defined.

The following sub-sections 5.2.1-5.2.4 present an in-depth analysis of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme, which was realised with respect to the above-mentioned ex-ante evaluation tasks. Only an appraisal of the adequacy of financial allocations to the different programme priorities could not be realised at this stage, as the financial tables in Chapter 4 of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme were not yet completed. This specific aspect will therefore be addressed at a later stage of the ex-ante evaluation (see: section 5.3).

5.2.1. The rationale of the programme strategy and the validity of its intervention logic

The rationale of the ESPON 2013 programme strategy is spelled out through an initial statement on the wider programme purpose and through various objective statements at different levels of hierarchy (i.e. wider programme objectives; objectives at priority level). These objective statements altogether make up the wider “objective system” of the programme.

The **overall purpose** of the ESPON 2013 Programme is (...) *to support the “reinforcement of regional policy with studies, data and observation of development trends”, seen as a necessity as part of Structural Funds 2007-2013, in particular related to actions under Objective 3, “European Territorial Cooperation”.*²³

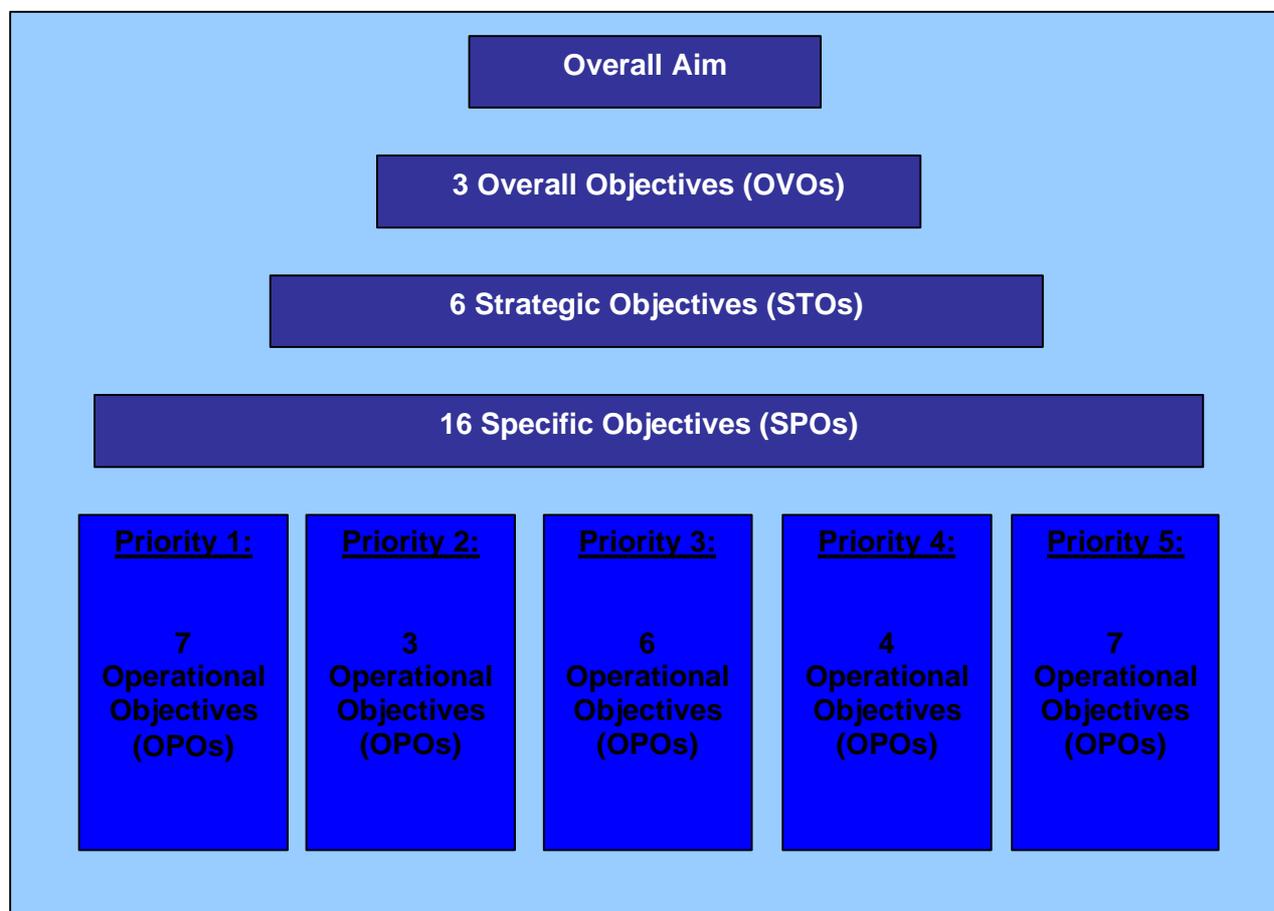
In relation to this main purpose, the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme defines an **objective system that covers two main hierarchical layers (see: figure 5)**:

1. **An “Overall Aim” and a set of 25 higher-ranking objectives (Section II.2)**, with the latter split up into 3 “Overall Objectives” (OVOs), 6 “Strategic Objectives” (STOs) and 16 “Specific Objectives” (SPOs).
2. **A set of 27 “Operational Objectives” (OPOs) defined at the level of the 5 programme priorities (Section II.3)**, which are distributed as follows: Seven OPOs under Priority 1, three OPOs under Priority 2, six OPOs under Priority 3, four OPOs under Priority 4 and finally seven OPOs under Priority 5.

²³ Second Draft ESPON 2013 Programme (25th of July 2006), p. 5

A comprehensive **presentation of all objective statements** mentioned in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 programme can be found in **ANNEX 5** of this report.

Figure 5: “Objective System” of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme



An in-depth appraisal of all objective statements shows that **the overall rationale of the ESPON 2013 programme strategy is already characterised by a significant degree of consistency**. One can observe a logical progression from a limited number of general objective statements defining the main focus of the programme (i.e. overall aim; overall objectives), over a wider range of more targeted objective statements making further concrete the aforementioned ones (strategic objectives; specific objectives), down to objectives at priority-level specifying what the programme interventions should actually achieve (operational objectives). Within the wider objective system, especially the strategic and specific objectives (STOs, SPOs) have to be considered the “core element” of the programme strategy. Altogether, they establish an integrated meta-level of objectives with clear links towards both the more general objectives and the lower-ranking operational objectives (i.e. defined for the 5 priorities).

Despite this generally positive situation, **there are still several cases where the clarity and quality of objective statements could be further improved (see also: ANNEX 12, box 1)**.

- **Substantial improvements are considered necessary at the level of the “overall aim” and the 3 “overall objectives” (OVOs)**. The overall aim should normally contain the most general objective-statement, which is then further specified by the

objectives at the next lower levels. In case of the 2nd Draft of the ESPON 2013 programme, this clear hierarchy regarding the level of concreteness of the statements is not yet fully realised. In addition to that, the different OVO statements in the 2nd Draft all make reference to the previous ESPON 2006 programme. In fact, a single reference on ESPON 2006 could be made at the level of the “overall aim” in order to make the 3 OVO-statements more straight-forward. As a consequence, we suggest re-formulating slightly the “overall aim” and the three OVOs.

- **Minor improvements are also required in the context of the 6 “strategic objectives”.** In fact, the current statements for STO 2 - 6 still lack of a sufficiently straight-forward formulation that clearly indicates what the respective objectives are expected to achieve. As a consequence, we suggest that a number of minor text modifications for the above-mentioned STOs are made.

The above-suggested changes will – according to our judgement – neither affect the basic nature of the programme objectives concerned nor the overall orientation of the strategy’s rationale. The main effect of these changes is mostly to further strengthen the hierarchical positioning of individual objectives within the wider programme objective system and/or to improve the straight-forwardness of individual objective-statements (i.e. increased clarity on what should actually be achieved by the programme).

The intervention logic of the ESPON 2013 programme is made up of the “objective system” as well as of the envisaged actions that shall be realised in the context of the different programme priorities and the related implementation provisions (operational provisions, target group & beneficiaries).

Across the five programme priorities, **a total of 14 different actions are envisaged to be realised in the future (see: figure 6)**. Regarding the description of actions and of other provisions (i.e. operational provisions, specification of target groups/beneficiaries), **some improvements are however considered necessary (see also: ANNEX 12, box 2):**

- **Priority 1:** In case of the detailed description of the first action (P1-A1), the title in bold should correspond to the above-mentioned one in the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions. In fact, the current reference to “territorial impacts” should be eliminated and be replaced by “studies of territorial trends and prospective studies. In the description of P1-A1, the last paragraph could be linked to the second one in order to provide a more comprehensive description for future trends analyses/prospective studies.
- **Priority 2:** The first larger paragraph after the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions could actually go to the sub-section on operational provisions, as it specifies aspects that apply to all actions under this priority. One could also give a thought to including a reference on “European associations representing local/regional authorities” in the description of the target group / beneficiaries, as they might be one specific group of actors that is considered in a future “European screening of interest” (see operational provisions of P2).
- **Priority 3:** The first two paragraphs of the description of P3-A1 should in fact form one single paragraph that adopts the same title as outlined in the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions above. The current split tends to create confusion in the identification of this action. Within the new paragraph, however, the individual elements (Territorial Database, Tools) could again be highlighted separately (e.g. by underlining or putting into bold characters).

Figure 6: Envisaged actions under the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme

Priority	Reference	Title of the Action
Priority 1: Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on territorial trends and policy impacts	P1-A1	Cross-thematic and thematic analysis (defining territorial potentials and challenges), including studies of territorial trends and prospective studies
	P1-A2	Territorial impact studies on EU policies
	P1-A3	Knowledge Support System
Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories	P2-A1	Integrated studies and thematic analysis
	P2-A2	Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions
	P2-A3	Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes
Priority 3: Scientific platform and tools: Comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support	P3-A1	ESPON Territorial Database, including data validation and improvement
	P3-A2	Tools development and maintenance
	P3-A3	Territorial Monitoring System and Reports
Priority 4: Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement: Capacity building, dialogue and networking	P4-A1	European seminars and events
	P4-A2	Transnational networking activities
	P4-A3	Synthesis reports and publications
Priority 5: Communication and technical/analytical assistance	P5-A1	Implementation of Communication Strategy
	P5-A2	ECP national networking and dissemination carried through by the ECP network

- Priority 4:** The basic difference between “European Seminars” (P4-A1) and “Transnational Networking Activities” (P4-A2) should be better highlighted, as the current description tends to create some overlap between them. This could be achieved by better stressing the differences with respect to the basic purpose / the geographical scope / the themes addressed (in the description of each action), but also by further differentiating the operational provisions and the target group orientation for each of them (in the respective sub-sections of Priority 4). The current listing of main stakeholder groups to be addressed by P4-A1 could be further improved. OECD and the Council of Europe’s CEMAT should be grouped under a common heading “international organisations”. The MOT is in fact an advisory structure set up by the French central government, which should not be brought into relation with European associations / networks of local and regional authorities (it could be included into the last bullet point). The target group specification for the entire Priority 4 should be further improved, which could support our first remark in this paragraph. This could be achieved by transferring the current listing of main stakeholder groups to be addressed by P4-A1 under this sub-section and by creating a similar one for P4-A2.
- Priority 5:** The entire description in the various sub-sections of this priority needs to be reviewed and further completed. With respect to the sub-section “main types of action”, a major inconsistency exists between the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions and the following in-depth description. In fact, there are 7 bullet-pointed actions foreseen and only 2 in-depth descriptions provided. We therefore suggest creating only three bullet points (merger of bullet points 2 & 3 into one; merger of bullet points 4-7 into one) and at providing a comprehensive description for all

activities related to administrative & financial programme management, technical assistance, analytical activities etc. (introduction of a new action P5-A3 in the context of the detailed description). In addition to that, also other sub-sections need to be reviewed / changed (i.e. “operational provisions”) or further elaborated (“target groups & beneficiaries” in relation to the communication strategy and the ECP-networking).

In case of Priorities 1-4, the above-suggested changes will – according to our judgement – not affect their basic nature, as they only aim at correcting smaller errors and at strengthening further their consistent presentation. In case of Priority 5, however, the suggested improvements will however lead to a major change in the programming document. They add another action (P5-A3) and increase the total number of envisaged actions across all priorities to 15.

By relating the priorities and envisaged actions to the entire objective system, **one can conclude the following: The 5 priorities of the programme are strongly corresponding to the higher-ranking programme objectives and the envisaged actions are generally well linked to the objectives defined under the respective priorities.** Provided that the above-recommended improvements are largely taken into consideration at a later stage of the programming process, **it appears that the ESPON 2013 programme’s intervention logic as a whole can be considered valid.**

In addition to this more general judgement, **some specific observations** should however be added:

- Although **the ESPON 2013 programme refers** at various occasions **to the renewed Lisbon Agenda and the Gothenburg Strategy, its interventions will not directly contribute to promote the related objectives on economic growth, social cohesion and sustainability.** This is a result of the ESPON 2013 programme’s specific nature, i.e. a programme realising “only” immaterial interventions that focus on improving existing and generating new European-wide knowledge in relation to territorial development (studies, international seminars & other events, scientific networking etc.).
- **The ESPON 2013 programme strategy explicitly provides for a pronounced “openness” with respect to other EU-programmes addressing similar / related aspects,** i.e. the future Objective 1 & 2 programmes and in particular the future programmes of the Objective 3 on “European Territorial Co-operation”. The issue of synergy and complementarity with other EU-activities (including neighbouring programmes) is even made a “strategic objective” (STO5) and appears to be at the very heart of several programme activities (P2-A3; P3-A2; P4-A1).

5.2.2. The relationships between the various programme objectives (interdependencies)

The present section focuses on an analysis of the relationships between the different programme objectives and generally aims at revealing how programme objectives condition one another (interdependencies) and to what extent programme objectives are supporting each other (mutual reinforcement). On ground of this relationship-analysis, one can also pinpoint potential inconsistencies or objective-conflicts within the objective system and highlight potential synergies that exist within the wider programme.

In our case, the relationship-analysis will focus on examining the interdependencies that exist among the higher-ranking programme objectives and on exploring effects of mutual

reinforcement between operational objectives at priority-level and higher-ranking programme objectives.

Relations between higher-ranking programme objectives

In a first step, the relationship-analysis makes use of an objective tree diagram to illustrate existing interdependencies among the different types of higher-ranking programme objectives (SPOs, SPOs, OVOs), both in a downward and in an upward direction (**see: ANNEX 6**).

The objective tree allows revealing the following **main features that characterise the relations between higher-ranking programme objectives**:

- Most of the higher-ranking objectives share a similar focus that connects themselves through solid primary relations in a downward direction (OVOs → STOs → SPOs). This clear logic link between those objectives allows grouping them into 3 “objective families”, for which the main reference base is one of the 3 OVOs. The first family regroups all objectives that focus on “enhancing European evidence and knowledge in relation territorial cohesion and development” (OVO1 & STO1 & SPOs 6-11). The second one regroups all objectives that focus on realising a “policy-demand driven approach for defining themes and policies to be addressed by applied research actions” (OVO2 & STO2 & SPOs1-3). Under the third family, all objectives are regrouped that focus on “adopting a user-oriented approach for the ESPON 2013 programme” (OVO3 & STOs 3-4 & SPOs 4, 5, 12-14).
- There are a few higher-ranking objectives that can not directly be related to one of the three above-mentioned “objective families” (STOs 5 & 6, SPOs 15 & 16). They develop a somehow cross-cutting effect in relation to these objective families and have therefore to be considered horizontal objectives. The upward effects of these horizontal objectives are partly directed towards the 3 OVOs (in case of STOs 5 & 6) and partly towards other STOs belong to one of the objective families (in case of SPOs 15 & 16). The fact that these horizontal objectives are located at different levels within the objective system indicates however a certain inconsistency that needs to be further examined during the next steps of the analysis.
- The large majority of STOs and SPOs belonging to one of the three “objective-families” are also characterised by strong secondary links in an upward direction (SPO → STOs → OVOS). This means that they make an additional contribution to the achievement of other objectives. Secondary links are either developed in relation to objectives of another “objective family” or in relation to some of the horizontal objectives (STOs 5 & 6).

This layer of the programme objective system is characterised by a high degree of interdependence among the objectives concerned and by an already well-developed level of overall consistency. The large majority of higher-ranking objectives (21 out of 25) are linked to one another through logical links that allow grouping them together into 3 objective families (primary relations, in a downward direction). Nearby all higher-ranking objectives (23 out of 25) establish also a wide range of secondary relations in an upward direction, which indicate either an additional support effect towards another objective-family or a cross-cutting effect in relation to these objective families.

There are however still some weaknesses that should be addressed during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process in order to further increase the internal consistency (**see also: ANNEX 12, box 3**):

- The two STOs that are currently linked to the user-oriented approach (STO 3 & 4) do not yet represent a sufficiently robust concretisation of OVO 3. Both objective statements have a rather precise focus and should therefore be transferred to a lower level, i.e. be converted into “specific objectives”. A simple transfer that maintains the current statements has the advantage that the secondary links of both objectives would be maintained (now in relation to STO 1 & 2). The transfer would however create a gap in the representation of “objective families” at the level of STOs, wherefore a new STO-statement should be elaborated that links up better to the formulation of OVO 3.
- Improvements of individual objective-statements should also be considered in the case of SPOs 1-3: The current statements tend to create confusion, as two different terms are used in relation to the policy-demand approach (policy-demand & user-demand). It is therefore suggested making use only of the term mentioned under OVO 2 (policy-demand). In addition, the focus of SPOs 1-3 is not yet fully clear, as they seem to address different types of actors / interests or aspects in relation to the policy-demand approach that should be better differentiated. It is therefore suggested to elaborate more clear-cut statements that precisely highlight the focus that should actually be addressed in each case.

The above-suggested changes will add value to the important role of some objectives and help streamlining the entire set of specific objectives (by reducing their total number).

Relations between priority-level operational objectives and higher-ranking programme objectives

The second step of the relationship-analysis aims at identifying the potential magnitude of mutual reinforcement effects that tend to exist between both layers of the wider programme objective-system. For this purpose an extensive cross-referencing exercise is realised, which compares the relations between all operational objectives at priority-level and all higher-ranking programme objectives.

The matrix-based mapping of reinforcement effects (**see: ANNEX 7**) allows revealing the following **main features that characterise the relations between both layers of the wider programme objective system:**

- **With respect to an enhancement of European evidence and knowledge in relation territorial cohesion and development, the strongest mutual reinforcement effects (core relationships) do exist between the operational objectives of Priorities 1-3 and the higher-ranking objectives jointly sharing this particular focus (OVO1 & STO1 & SPOs 6-11).** Across all core relationships, the effects are very widespread at the level of OVO 1 / STO 1 and tend to become more selective if one looks across the specific objectives (SPOs 6-11). This selectivity also indicates a priority-specific division of labour in relation to the wider aspect of knowledge generation. Within this wider context, one has however to highlight the comparatively weak position of the specific objective focussing on a “quality control / validation of results and data through knowledge support within the programme” (SPO 9). Beyond the above-mentioned core relationships, some isolated but still very strong reinforcement effects do exist in the context of Priorities 4 and 5, especially at the level of some specific objectives (SPOs 7, 9, 11). These are clear indications for synergic effects within the programme that should be exploited during the future programme implementation process.

- **As regards a realisation of the policy-demand driven approach that shall define themes and policies to be addressed by applied research actions, the strongest mutual reinforcement effects (core relationships) do exist between the operational objectives of Priorities 1 and 2 and the higher-ranking objectives jointly sharing this particular focus (OVO2 & STO2 & SPOs1-3). The effects of these core relationships are comparatively more widespread under Priority 2 than under Priority 1, with the latter becoming more selective at the level of SPOs. Beyond these core relationships, some isolated and very strong reinforcement effects do exist in the context of Priority 3 (at OVO and STO-level) and of Priority 4 (with respect to SPOs 2 & 3). Especially the latter relationship is interesting, as it highlights clear synergy potentials of awareness-raising & empowerment activities in relation to a realisation of the policy-demand driven approach that should be carefully explored in the future.**

- **Concerning the realisation of a user-oriented approach under the ESPON 2013 programme, the strongest mutual reinforcement effects (core relationships) do exist between the operational objectives of Priorities 2, 3 and 4 and the higher-ranking objectives jointly sharing this particular focus (OVO3 & STOs 3-4 & SPOs 4, 5, 12-14). The mutual reinforcement effects of these core relationships are comparatively more widespread under Priorities 2 and 3 than under Priority 4, with the latter becoming more selective already at the level of STOs and further on in the context of SPOs 12-14. Beyond these core relationships, a number of additional and very strong reinforcement effects do also exist in the context of Priority 1 (for STO 14) and especially of Priority 5 (with respect to SPOs 5, 12-14). According to this, there are clear synergy potentials between applied research generation and communication / technical assistance activities on the one hand and some specific components making up the user-oriented approach under the programme on the other hand (i.e. role played by the ECP-network; publishing of synthesis reports; consolidation of public access to ESPON results and data).**

- **With respect to the horizontal strategic objectives cutting across the above-mentioned “objective families” (STOs 5 & 6; SPOs 15 & 16), the mutual reinforcement effects can briefly be described as follows:**
 - The strongest mutual reinforcement effects for achieving a “wide geographical coverage of ESPON activities” (STO 5) do exist under Priority 1 and confirm its strategic role in this respect (core relationships). At a less generalised level, however, very strong effects can also be observed under Priorities 3-5. They stress the important role played by a consolidated territorial knowledge base, a continuous assessment of territorial development trends, a European-wide policy dialogue, a publication of written evidence and communication measures as well as by ECP national networking to ensure internal coherence and co-ordination.

 - In case of an achievement of “synergy and complementarity with respect to other Community activities” (STO 6), strongest mutual reinforcement effects do exist under Priorities 3 and 4 (core relationships). More isolated but still very strong reinforcement effects do also exist in the context of Priority 1 (i.e. identification of spatial structures & options for synergy through territorial co-operation) and of Priority 2 (analytical support & evidence for other Structural Funds programmes).

 - The “horizontal issues relating to the management and implementation system” (SPO 15 & 16) show the strongest mutual reinforcement effects only in the context of Priority 5 (core relationship), however with considerably varying degrees of intensity. This variation of effect-intensity can in both cases be explained by the different levels of concreteness adopted in the respective objective statements.

The highly focussed statement of SPO15 results in a relatively weak core relationship at the level of Priority 5 and in more widespread secondary support relations with respect to a larger number of other operational objectives. The less specific statement of SPO16 results in a widespread core relationship at the level of Priority 5 and in a generalised coverage of all other programme priorities (P1-P4) with secondary support relations. The above-said clearly indicates the precise nature of the inconsistency that characterises both horizontal objectives: The SPO 16 should in fact be a horizontal objective at the same level as STOs 5 & 6, whereas SPO 15 should be moved further downwards in the hierarchy of programme objectives (i.e. at priority level).

The relations between higher-ranking programme objectives and priority-level objectives are generally characterised by very strong mutual reinforcement effects. In most cases, these mutual reinforcement effects are becoming increasingly selective (or less widespread) at the level of SPOs and confirm that this objective-type is generally well fulfilling its intended function. The very strong reinforcement effects also clearly indicate that the different “objective strings” make - individually and jointly – a considerable contribution to achieve the overall aim of the ESPON 2013 programme. **At a more general level, the above-said allows concluding that no conflicts do exist in the wider objective system and that both layers are already characterised a high level of overall consistency.**

There are however still some weaknesses that should be addressed during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process in order to further increase the internal consistency (see also: ANNEX 12, box 4):

- The relatively weak position of SPO 9 in the wider context of an enhancement of European evidence and knowledge related to territorial cohesion and development should be eliminated. Quality control and a validation of results are of major importance for all territorial research actions that will be realised under the ESPON 2013 programme. This important aspect is addressed by various objectives (SPOs 6 & 9, OPO 1.7 and partially OPO 4.3), however with a different perspective in each case (i.e. programme-internal direct; programme-external). Due to this, the above-mentioned objective statements should be used to elaborate a new and more comprehensive SPO-statement. The specific perspectives currently mentioned should however be maintained in the new SPO-statement and an additional link towards a usability check should be created. The more specific text references in SPO 6 (i.e. task forces / sounding boards) could be included into OPO 1.7, which seems to be the most appropriate location for this.
- The inconsistency existing at the level of the two horizontal SPOs 15 & 16 needs to be eliminated. The less specific SPO 16 should be moved further up in the hierarchy of programme objectives (as a strategic objective). This requires however that a new and even wider objective statement is elaborated for this new STO, which also covers other aspects directly related to Priority 5 (e.g. communication activities). The highly focussed SPO 15 should be included as an operational objective under Priority 5, e.g. by merging it with OPO 5.5 that addresses the same aspect.

The above-suggested changes will further strengthen the important role of some objectives / issues addressed and help streamlining the entire set of specific objectives (by reducing their total number).

5.2.3. The complementarity of envisaged priority-level actions and potential synergies among them

This section of the ex-ante evaluation focuses mainly on analysing the complementarity of actions envisaged at priority level. A complementarity-assessment generally intends revealing whether / to what extent several actions contribute to achieve the same objective and thus are aimed at solving the same problem.

In our case, complementarity of priority-level actions is analysed in relation to both layers of the programme objective system. It will examine their contribution to an achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives and to a realisation of operational objectives defined at priority-level. In addition, this section also aims at localising and quantifying potential synergy effects that might emerge from the mutual relations among envisaged actions at priority level.

Complementarity of priority-level actions as regards the achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives

In a first step, the complementarity-assessment shows how each priority (and its actions) as well as the combination of priorities (and their actions) contribute(s) to achieve the higher-ranking objectives of the ESPON 2013 programme. For this purpose, an extensive cross-referencing exercise has been realised that aimed at determining a degree of contribution for each of the 14 actions with respect to all of the 25 higher-ranking programme objectives. The overall result is presented in a **specific matrix (see: ANNEX 8)**, in which only the highest contribution levels were earmarked by colours in order to facilitate a quick visual appraisal of the most significant complementarities.

This matrix-based mapping approach allows revealing the following **main features that characterise the complementarity-relations between programme actions and higher ranking objectives**:

- If one looks across all of the different priority actions and objectives individually, one can observe that 10 out of 14 priority actions are characterised by very high levels of complementarity.²⁴ These highly complementary actions can be found under Priority 1 (A1 & A2), Priority 2 (A1), Priority 3 (A1-3), Priority 4 (A1 & A2) and under Priority 5 (A1 & A2). Without reducing the importance of other programme priorities / actions, one has to consider the above-mentioned actions the “backbone” of the programme. They bear the most significant potentials for achieving the defined higher-ranking programme objectives. The different priority-level actions contribute at a particularly high level to the achievement of 13 programme objectives at various levels (out of 25)²⁵. These objectives are OVOs 1-3, STOs 1-4 and SPOs 1-4, 12 and 14.
- With respect to the entire objective-family focussing on an “enhancement of European evidence and knowledge in relation to territorial cohesion and development” (OVO1 + STO1 + SPO 6-11), the highest levels of complementarity can be observed for the actions of Priority 1 and 3. They tend to make the most significant contribution to achieve these objectives and should therefore be in the centre of attention when implementing and monitoring this aspect of the future programme. The actions of Priorities 2, also contribute to an achievement of these objectives, however at a significantly lower level.
- The actions of Priority 2 and 1 are generally characterised by the highest levels of complementarity with respect to the objective-family that focuses on realising a

²⁴ Coverage of 17 or more high-ranking programme objectives (out of 25) per action at levels of +++ and ++.

²⁵ Each objective is addressed by more than 10 actions at once at levels of +++ and ++.

“policy-demand oriented approach with respect to applied research actions and the themes / EU policies that need to be addressed” (OVO2 + STO2 + SPO 1-3). But also Priority 4 contributes to an achievement of these objectives, however at a slightly lower level. The individual actions that are of major importance for the success of this approach are P2-A1, P2-A2, P2-A3, P1-A1, P1-A2 and P4-A1.

- In case of the objective-family that focuses on realising “the user-oriented approach to be adopted for the ESPON 2007-2013 programme” (OVO3 + STO 3 & 4 + SPO 4 & 5, 12-14), the highest levels of complementarity can be observed for actions under Priority 2 and 3, followed at slightly lower levels by the actions of Priority 4 and 5. Also the first two actions of Priority 1 tend to contribute to an achievement of these objectives, however at a significantly lower level.
- With respect to the horizontal objectives (STO5, STO6, SPO15 &16), the following situation becomes evident when looking into the matrix: In relation to the objective addressing a “wide geographical coverage of ESPON activities” (STO5), the highest levels of complementarity can be observed for actions under Priority 3, 4, 5 and 1. In case of the horizontal objective advocating for a “synergy and complementarity to other Community activities” (STO6), the highest levels of complementarity can be observed for individual actions under Priority 2, 3 and 4 (P2-A3, P3-A1, P4-A1). The other Priorities (4 & 5) generally contribute to its achievement, however at a significantly lower level. The horizontal objectives that are jointly addressing “issues relating to the management and implementation system” (SPO15 &16) are only very weakly addressed by the different priority actions (some contribution of P1-A3, P5-A1 and P5-A2). This apparent weakness points out the need to realise additional modifications under Priority 5, which should result in a higher contribution to these two higher-ranking programme objectives.

To conclude on this first step of the complementarity-assessment, one can firstly observe that **no negative contributions of actions to an achievement of the wider programme objectives could be detected.** Secondly, one can also observe that **the programme strategy is generally characterised by a high level of overall complementarity.** This means that each priority (and its related actions) as well as the combination of priorities (and of all actions) make a significant contribution to achieve the stated higher-ranking objectives of the ESPON 2013 programme. **Only in case of Priority 5, some improvements should however be envisaged** for further strengthening its contribution to some of the higher-ranking programme objectives.

Complementarity of priority-level actions as regards the achievement of operational objectives

This second step of the complementarity-assessment examines to what extent each action of the ESPON 2013 programme contributes to achieve the operational objectives of its own priority and the objectives of other programme priorities. For this purpose, **a second cross-referencing matrix** has been elaborated that relates the 14 priority-level actions to the 27 operational objectives of the five programme priorities (**see: ANNEX 9**). Again only the highest contribution levels were earmarked by colours, this time however for similar priority combinations.

The cross-referencing matrix allows highlighting some of the **main features that characterise the complementarity-relations between the envisaged programme actions and the set of operational objectives at priority level:**

If one looks at the **“primary relations” (support of actions to achieve operational objectives under the same priority),** one can normally expect to find here the highest

contribution-levels of actions to an achievement of operational objectives. In case of the ESPON 2013 programme, this can clearly be validated for Priorities 1-4. In case of Priority 5, however, one can observe a clear mismatch between the stated objectives and the envisaged actions. In more concrete terms this means that the currently envisaged actions P5-A1 and P5-A2 contribute only at a very low degree to an achievement of those Priority 5 objectives relating to programme management issues and technical assistance (OPOs 5.2, 5.4-5.7). This also confirms the observations and conclusions that have been made in the context of the first step of the complementarity-assessment.

But also with respect to the “**secondary relations**” (**support of actions to achieve operational objectives of other priorities**), there are a number of interesting key messages and indications for potential synergy effects that can be derived from the matrix:

- The highest degree of overall complementarity can be observed for all actions of Priority 3 and 2. This means that these actions tend to contribute most to an achievement of other operational objectives that are “outside” their own priority. The above-mentioned actions are then followed by the actions of Priority 1 and 4, which display however comparatively lower levels of overall complementarity.
- A strong symmetrical complementarity²⁶ can be observed for the combinations P2-P4 and P1-P2, which also points on substantial synergic effects that might exist within the programme. In the first case (P2-P4), integrated studies and experimental actions as well as joint actions with SF-programmes tend to enhance further awareness raising / empowerment / involvement, whereas capacity-building and networking activities will provide an additional support to the policy-demand based realisation of targeted analysis. For the second combination (P1-P2), this means that applied research actions (i.e. thematic / cross-thematic analyses, trends studies, prospective studies) and the knowledge support system tend to stimulate significantly the various forms of targeted analysis based on policy-demand, whereas integrated studies / thematic analyses / experimental actions / joint actions with SF-programmes will provide an additional support to achieve the applied research objectives.
- Strong asymmetrical complementarities²⁷ can be observed for the combinations P3-P1 and P3-P2, which means that also here partial synergy potentials tend to exist. In the first case (P3-P1), all actions related to the Scientific Platform / Tools (i.e. Territorial Database, tools development, Territorial Monitoring System) tend to strongly support an achievement of applied research objectives under Priority 1. For the second combination (P3-P2), this means that all actions related to the Scientific Platform / Tools (i.e. Territorial Database, tools development, Territorial Monitoring System) tend to provide a strong/very strong additional support for achieving the objectives related to a policy-demand based realisation of targeted analysis. Within this context, it could be wise exploring where the design / orientation / description of priority-level actions could be improved in order to further increase their degree of inverse complementarity (P1→P3, P2→P3).

To conclude on the second step of the complementarity-assessment, one can observe that across the entire programme **no situation could be detected where an action partially or wholly tends to counteract the achievement of one or more operational objectives (→ absence of potential negative synergies).**

²⁶ When actions of the same priority generate positive / supportive effects on objectives of another priority, with the opposite also being true.

²⁷ When actions of the same priority generate positive / supportive effects on objectives of another priority, without the opposite being true.

- In general, **Priorities 1-4 of the ESPON 2013 programme envisage sufficiently robust actions that allow achieving the operational objectives defined in this context.** With respect to the secondary relations, most of the actions show high levels of overall complementarity. Some priority combinations are even characterised by a strong symmetrical or asymmetrical complementarity, which clearly indicates the existence of substantial synergy potentials that should be fully exploited and further developed in the future.
- **In case of Priority 5, however, the analysis clearly revealed the need to create a new and appropriate action P5-A3.** In order to eliminate the current mismatch in the primary relations between envisaged actions and priority-internal objectives, this new action must cover all issues related to programme management and technical / analytical assistance that are mentioned in the yet weakly addressed operational objectives. In addition, it should also contain clear operational prescriptions with respect to a programme-internal co-ordination / follow-up of actions, which allows exploiting as much as possible the already visible synergy potentials within the programme (**see also: ANNEX 12, box 5**).

Potential synergies among the envisaged actions at priority

In order to further explore the above-made indicated synergy potentials that might exist within the ESPON 2013 programme, we will finally analyse more in-depth the relationships between the different actions at priority level. To prepare this, an interactive synergy-screening had been realised between the evaluators and representatives of the Managing Authority and the ESPON-CU. The results of this exercise were inserted into a cross-impact matrix and subsequently further fine-tuned by the evaluators.

In the next step of the synergy-assessment process, the specific nature of synergy effects was further clarified (i.e. symmetrical synergy with reciprocal effects; asymmetrical synergy with non-reciprocal effects) and areas within the programme that are characterised by very strong symmetrical / asymmetrical synergies were highlighted. After this, the cross-impact matrix was further extended to calculate the coefficients of potential synergy (of potential negative synergy) for individual actions and the synthetic coefficient of synergy (of negative synergy) for the whole of the programme²⁸. The overall result of this process is presented in a specific matrix showing the quantified hypotheses on potential synergy among the envisaged actions at priority level (**see: ANNEX 10**).

Based upon this matrix-based mapping of potential synergy effects, the following **main features of synergic relationships among the envisaged actions at priority level effects** can be highlighted.

Above all, one can observe that the ESPON 2013 programme as a whole shows a very high synthetic coefficient of synergy (0.85) and is characterised by an absence of any negative synergy. This confirms the prior results of the objective-relationship analysis (i.e. interdependencies & mutual reinforcement effects between the programme objectives) and of the complementarity-assessment (i.e. contribution of actions to the achievement of the various programme objectives).

If compared to the synthetic coefficient of synergy for the entire programme, half of the programme actions show a synergy coefficient (0.92-1) that is significantly above this value

²⁸ For calculating positive synergy, the following formula is applied: **Coefficient of synergy (CS+) = sum of positive marks (s+) / number of positive marks (n+) x 2**. For calculating negative synergy, the following formula is applied: **Coefficient of negative synergy (CS-) = sum of negative marks (s-) / number of negative marks (n-) x 2**.

(P1-A1, P1-A2, P2-A1, P2-A2, P2-A3, P4-A1, P4-A2). These actions also develop widespread synergic relationships with many other programme actions, whose effects are mostly at a very high level. The synergy potentials among these actions need to be fully exploited in the future, as they are closely associated to a larger number of those “backbone-actions” that make the highest levels of contribution to an achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives²⁹.

A few actions (P3-A1, P3-A3, P4-A3) show a synergy coefficient around the average or clearly below it (0.75-0.86). These actions develop however generally widespread synergic relationships with many other actions (> 10 relations), with a high share of relations showing synergic effects that are at a very high level (for each action: half / more than half of the relations). Also here the synergy potentials should be fully exploited in the future, as several of the actions belong to those “backbone-actions” contributing most to an achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives (Priority 3: A1-A3).

The synergy effects of the remainder actions (P1-A3, P3-A2, P5-A1, P5-A2) are comparatively weak, wherefore they do not play a vital role for ensuring the overall success of the ESPON 2013 programme. The relatively weak position of Priority 5 actions could - at a first view - be somehow astonishing, but this can be explained by the yet not existing action covering all issues related to programme management and technical assistance (i.e. suggested new action P5-A3).

Very strong and widespread symmetrical synergies (reciprocal effects among the various actions) can mostly be observed for actions belonging to the priority combination P2-P4 and to the combination P1-P2. This confirms the above-made observation that actions under these priority combinations make a very significant and mutually reciprocal contribution to achieve the operational P1 and P2 objectives (symmetrical complementarity) and also verifies the assumption made on substantial synergies.

The localisation of asymmetrical synergies (non-reciprocal effects among the various actions) within the matrix allows formulating the following observations: Firstly, a larger group of non-reciprocal synergy effects concentrates on the relations between actions of the priority-combinations P3-P1 and P3-P2. This confirms that priority-level actions under the combinations P3-P1 and P3-P2 show strong asymmetrical complementarities with respect to an achievement of some of the concerned operational objectives. It also verifies the above-made assumption on partially existing synergies in this context. Secondly, a less pronounced but interesting asymmetrical synergy exists in case of actions belonging to the combination P4-A1. It seems that especially the Priority 4 actions “European Seminars/Events” and “Transnational Networking” can develop significant synergies in relation to the “Knowledge Support System”. This can be explained by their envisaged role as a feed-back platform with respect to the usability of ESPON-results. Thirdly, nearby all of the remainder non-reciprocal synergy effects are concentrated on the relations between Priority 5 actions and actions of all other priorities (P1-P4). This is not very astonishing, as the main purpose of the horizontal Priority 5 is to facilitate a smooth implementation of all other thematic programme priorities and to ensure a more general capitalisation on their outcomes.

²⁹ The actions identified by the complementarity-assessment are: P1-A1, P1-A2, P2-A1, P4-A1, P4-A2 (see above).

5.2.4. An appraisal of the innovativeness of the ESPON 2013 programme and of the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities

Based upon a brief review of previous ex-ante evaluation findings, the innovativeness of the programme and its intervention mix as well as the associated risks is assessed. Our appraisal of the innovativeness of ESPON 2013 programme is realised on ground of a simplified benchmarking exercise, i.e. a comparison of the new constellation with respect to the situation prevailing under the ESPON 2006 programme.³⁰ Against this background, the overall adequacy of the balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions as well as the potential risks associated to this choice under the ESPON 2013 programme are evaluated.

The previous steps of the ex-ante evaluation have pointed out that the overall approach of the ESPON 2013 Programme shows a very high relevance with respect to the identified current and future needs prevailing in the context of applied territorial research. The overall rationale of the ESPON 2013 programme strategy is already characterised by a significant degree of internal consistency and the wider intervention logic of the programme is also considered valid. The various objective strings of programme are generally characterised by very strong mutual reinforcement effects, which reveals that the entire objective system is already highly consistent in itself. With the exception of Priority 5, all other programme priorities (P1-P4) of the ESPON 2013 programme envisage sufficiently robust actions that allow achieving the respective operational objectives at priority level and the higher ranking programme objectives. The complementarity-relations between the envisaged actions and the individual layers of programme objectives have also revealed various synergy potentials within the programme that should be fully exploited in the future. Considering the above-said, one can state that the envisaged actions are generally well linked to the wider programme objective system and are largely adequate and capable of assuring the overall success of the ESPON 2013 programme.

An impression on the innovativeness of actions envisaged under the ESPON 2013 programme can be obtained by analysing the changes that have occurred with respect to the situation prevailing under the ESPON 2006 programme. Although both programme strategies are based upon 5 priorities, a simple **juxtaposition of both programme strategy profiles (see: ANNEX 11)** shows that the specific focus and the nature of the envisaged actions are considerably different from one another. By briefly recalling some weaknesses detected during the previous steps of the evaluation, a number of punctual improvements are also suggested in the context of the following assessment that aim at further increasing the overall innovativeness of the ESPON 2013 programme.

- **Priority 1 of the ESPON 2013 programme (*applied research on territorial development, competitiveness & cohesion*)** regroups most of the actions that were carried out under the ESPON 2006 programme in the context of Priority 1, Priority 2 and Priority 3 (i.e. measures 3.2-3.4). As such, P1-A1 and P1-A2 can therefore be considered more standard-type actions that demonstrate the ESPON 2013 Programme's continuity with respect to the previous experience. To strengthen further this element of continuity, one could better stress in the description of P1-A1 the possibility to carry out prospective investigations exploring emerging territorial evolutions and future challenges. There are however also a number of new aspects that are introduced in the context of P1-A1 and P1-A2. The focus of applied research actions (i.e. themes and policies to be dealt with) is less "pre-defined" in the ESPON 2013 programme, which is a logic consequence of the policy-demand oriented approach that shall be applied. Also varying levels of territorial coverage now become

³⁰ THE ESPON 2006 PROGRAMME. Programme on the spatial development of an enlarging European Union. Approved by the European Commission on 18 December 2004.

possible in the context of applied research, wherefore two different objective statements (STO 5 and SPO 4)³¹ and specific operational provisions had been defined in the ESPON 2013 Programme. Our previous evaluation results also suggest introducing an additional new and somehow innovative aspect, which is the “building of new evidence in relation to territorial flows, including transnational ones” **(see also 4.2.2 and box 5 under ANNEX 4)**. A clearly innovative element of Priority 1 is the “Knowledge Support System” (P1-A3), which aims at ensuring the quality and usability of applied research results. The envisaged establishment of an advisory task force / sounding board composed of highly specialised scientists is a reaction to an already existing policy demand that was expressed on ground of experiences gained under the ESPON 2006 Programme.

- **The actions under Priority 2 of the ESPON 2013 programme (*targeted analysis based on user demand*) are all new and** have to be considered innovative if one compares them to the ESPON 2006 experience. The focus for the newly introduced integrated studies / thematic analyses (P2-A1), experimental / innovative actions (P2-A2) and joint actions with other Structural Funds Programmes (P2-A3) is again deliberately kept open for allowing “policy demand” to fully play its strategic role in this respect. The innovative aspect properly speaking is that all of the envisaged actions shall make use of results produced in the context of applied research under Priority 1 in more reduced spatial settings (i.e. less than the entire European territory). On ground of our previous evaluation findings, we suggest however that the objective statements and / or the action-descriptions also provide for generating evidence on territorial flows, including those of a cross-border and transnational character. This would further sharpen the innovative profile of all actions and address a real need that had been expressed with respect to the current ESPON 2006 experience.
- With the ESPON Territorial Database (P3-A1) and a maintenance/development of new tools (P3-A2), **Priority 3 of the ESPON 2013 programme (*scientific platform & tools*)** intends further deepening and widening a set of actions that were already included in the ESPON 2006 programme (Measure 3.1 on “Integrated Tools”; Measure 4.1 on “Data Navigator”). Before continuing the work on data collection / data improvements for the ESPON Territorial Database, it is however advised to launch an investigation that explores the real possibilities (and limits) for generating comparable territorial data in Europe. Future action on this important element of the ESPON 2013 programme should be based upon a sound work programme that formulates realistic expectations on ground of previous ESPON 2006 experiences, considers other territorial information sources that were developed in the meanwhile by EU or international institutions (to avoid double work) and focuses on the newly emerging themes that result from a screening the actual policy-demand. In addition, the provisions for the ESPON Territorial Database should include a new text-reference relating to “information-gathering on territorial flows”. This could open up an additional innovative perspective within the Database, which also address an existing need **(see also 4.2.2 and boxes 3-5 under ANNEX 4)**. The action “Territorial Monitoring System & Reports” (P3-A3) is clearly an innovative element of the ESPON 2013 Programme, although a test phase had already been implemented under the ESPON 2006 Programme. The envisaged development of such a user-friendly tool is again a deliberate reaction to an already visible policy demand expressed on ground of the ESPON 2006 experience.

³¹ STO 5: A geographical coverage within the actions including new EU Member States and EU Candidate countries and their regions while neighbouring countries not participating as partners shall be covered in a limited number of outputs. For some action Europe in the world should be the coverage creating a greater awareness of this context. SPO 4: A geographical detail in the actions that can ensure the interest and dialogue previewed, in particular through targeted analysis including more detailed information on regional/local areas, in particular through a more intensive use of case studies.

- **Under Priority 4 (*awareness raising, empowerment and involvement*)**, only the “European Seminars & Events” (P4-A1) can be considered a new and innovative action. The envisaged organisation of seminars and events is a clear demonstration of will to make the user-oriented approach and a continuing high-level policy debate a key issue under the future ESPON 2013 Programme. Compared to this, the “Transnational Networking Activities” (P4-A2) involving the ESPON Contact Points Network (ECP-network) and the “ESPON Synthesis Reports & Publications” (P4-A3) are mostly a continuation of actions that were already realised – at a more limited scale - under the ESPON 2006 programme.³² On ground of an undergone learning process³³, especially the transnational activities clearly demonstrate a continued recognition of the ECP-network which has also motivated to further extend its important role and its tasks in relation to the user-oriented approach under the new programme. Yet, there is still a need to highlight better the basic difference between “Transnational Networking Activities” and “European Seminars & Events” in order to further sharpen the respective profiles and to avoid eventual duplication effects (**see also 5.2.1 and box 2 under ANNEX 12**).
- **Under Priority 5 (*communication and technical / analytical assistance*)**, the “Implementation of the Communication Strategy” (P5-A1) can clearly be considered an upgraded continuation of previously realised activities (measure 5.2). Although the ECP-network already existed under the ESPON 2006 programme, an innovative step forward is made by the new operational provisions for “ECP National Networking Activities” (P5-A2). Compared to the rather weak direct linkage ECPs-ESPON 2006 and a rather “optional” production of results depending upon their available own resources, the new prescriptions establish a more solid relationship ECPs-ESPON 2013 and define clearer requirements with respect to deliverables that will have to be produced on ground of the financial support coming from the programme. However, Priority 5 could have a more pronounced innovative profile if the current mismatch in the primary relations between the envisaged actions and the priority-internal objectives is eliminated and if a new action covering all issues related to programme management and technical / analytical assistance is created (**see also 5.2.3 and box 5 under ANNEX 12**).

The following **concluding observations on the 2nd Draft Operational Programme** can be elaborated on ground of the above-said: The ESPON 2013 programme **already shows a good balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions that reflect in an appropriate way the new needs which are identified at the end of the SWOT-like assessment of the wider programme context. Neither the combination of programme priorities, nor the actual balance achieved between standard-type and new / innovative actions, allows identifying major risks that might seriously hamper the implementation of the future programme or compromise an achievement of its objectives.**

Beyond these rather general and positive observations, **some more specific additional remarks need to be added:**

- The **first additional remark** relates to the above-made suggestions for punctually improving further the innovative dimension of the programme. A gain in overall innovativeness is certainly desirable under any programme and in case of ESPON

³² i.e. measure 4.2: co-ordination of ESPON Contact Points Network; measure 5.2: production / dissemination of printed publications; discussion about ESPON results.

³³ The important role of networking activities has already been highlighted in the mid-term evaluation of the ESPON 2006 Programme, which subsequently also stimulated a pro-active reaction on that issue by the Monitoring Committee (i.e. mobilisation of additional financial resources).

2013 it would certainly raise its wider added value. While a number of issues are rather optional in terms of necessary improvements, at least those referring back to more substantial weaknesses which have been detected during previous stages of the ex-ante evaluation process should be considered carefully. If the latter are neglected, also the probability of emerging risks with negative impacts on the implementation side is likely to increase.

- The **second additional remark** addresses the rather ambitious approach of the ESPON 2013 Programme. It is characterised by highly interwoven interventions (in terms of interdependencies and complementarity), a considerable degree of programme-internal synergy potentials and a relatively pronounced overall innovative profile. Although very positive, these aspects will directly and indirectly generate new needs at a later stage of the programme implementation process that challenge the programme management and especially the technical / analytical assistance unit (Priority 5). It is therefore of outmost importance that the related operational provisions in the programme document as well as the future resource-endowment (financial & human resources) offers sufficient capacity to tackle these future programme-internal needs. If this is not considered in time (at the programming stage), a latter resource- or capacity-lack that prevents the programme from reacting to such needs might convert itself into a real risk.

5.3. “Key findings” of the progress evaluation

5.3.1. An appraisal of the modifications realised in the subsequent programme versions

For elaborating the **Draft Final ESPON 2013 programme (12 September 2006)**, a larger number of modifications were realised in the Chapter setting out the essence of the ESPON 2013 Programme strategy (Chapter II: section II.2 on “Objectives” and section II.3 on “Priorities”). **The progress realised by these modifications and the concrete effects regarding a quality-improvement of the programming document can be summarised as follows:**

- **The modifications have punctually increased the consistency of the overall rationale of the ESPON 2013 programme’s strategy:** The basic structure of the wider programme objective system has remained unchanged (i.e. hierarchy, type of objectives), but some isolated text improvements were realised in the context of higher-ranking programme objectives (e.g. Overall Aim, OVO 2, STO 2, SPO 14) and priority-level objectives (e.g. OPO 1.1; OPO 2.1. OPO 4.4). The most substantial modifications can be observed under Priority 5, where more precise formulations for some management- and implementation-related objectives were elaborated. This has also led to an increase of the number of operational objectives for this priority (from 7 to now 9 OPOs). Seen as a whole, however, these modifications have put into practice only a few of the recommendations that were derived from the in-depth evaluation of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme (**see also: ANNEX 12, box 1**).
- **The modifications have substantially improved the overall validity of the programme’s intervention logic:** This effect is mostly attributable to the significant changes in the text segments specifying the contents of the four thematic programme priorities (P1-P4). These modifications provided - in most cases – a much more detailed description for individual programme actions (sub-section: “main types of actions”) and for the “operational provisions” under each priority. Seen as a whole,

one can say that these improvements have indirectly put into practice most of the recommendations that were derived from the in-depth evaluation of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme (**see also: ANNEX 12, box 2**). Only in the context of Priority 5, substantial weaknesses continue to persist in this draft of the ESPON 2013 Programme (i.e. inconsistency between the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions and the following in-depth description; need to review / further elaborate the sub-sections on “operational provisions”, “target groups & beneficiaries”).

- **The modifications have not further improved the overall consistency of the programme objective system (interdependencies, mutual reinforcement) and the complementarity of priority-level actions with respect to an achievement of the various programme objectives beyond the already existing levels:** This is mainly due to the fact that the recommendations suggesting a revision of certain programme objectives / a more streamlined objective system as well as the creation of a new action under Priority 5 have not yet been put into practice (**see also: ANNEX 12, boxes 3-5**). Due to this overall situation, the detected shortcomings and the related needs for further changes in the programming document have still to be considered valid.

At the **ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting of September 2006**, only a few comments were made by the delegations present that tend to improve the internal consistency of the future programme. It was argued in favour of establishing a closer relation to other Structural Funds programme, namely Objective 1 and 2 (Austria, DG REGIO), of mentioning under Priority 4 that national seminars as an important tool for communication (Austria) and of providing methodological / technical advice to regions and local authorities (DG REGIO).

For the **Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme (1 December 2006)**, a large number of modifications have again been made in the document. They have led to a **substantial quality improvement** of the Chapter setting out the essence of the ESPON 2013 Programme strategy (Chapter II: section II.2 on “Objectives” and section II.3 on “Priorities”). **The basic trends of the progress realised can briefly be summarised as follows:**

- **The modifications have strongly increased the consistency of the overall rationale of the programme’s strategy:** Although the basic structure of the wider programme objective system has remained unchanged, one can observe a reduction of the number of higher-ranking objectives (i.e. now 13 SPOs instead of 16 before) and priority-level objectives (i.e. 3 objectives under Priority 5 instead of 7 before). Also the contents of many objective-statements were further improved, both at the level of higher-ranking objectives and of priority-level objectives. In the first case, more substantial re-phrasing was realised mainly for “strategic objectives” and “specific objectives”. The modifications followed closely the suggested formulations in our recommendations resulting from the in-depth evaluation (e.g. former STOs 3 & 4 and new STO 6; former SPOs 1-3 and new SPO 5). In the second case, punctual improvements were realised for various “operational objectives” under Priorities 1, 3 and 4. The most substantial changes can however be observed under Priority 5, where 3 more robust and coherent operational objectives now replace the rather weak and isolated OPOs in the previous programme versions.
- **The modifications have considerably improved further the overall validity of the programme’s intervention logic:** These modifications have first of all changed the focus and total number of envisaged programme actions (**see: figure 7 below**). As such, the programme now foresees 16 different actions instead of previously 14. Under Priority 3, the increase of actions (from 3 to 4) and their slightly changed focus can mostly be explained by a need to better adapt them to actual operational

necessities that will arise in the future. Priority 5 now envisages 3 different actions (instead of previously 2), with two of them having a clearly revised focus that is better oriented towards the stated priority-level objectives (P5-A1, P5-A2). The new action on “*Technical Assistance*” (P5-A1) puts into practice our recommendation made in the context of the in-depth evaluation and eliminates the previously detected major inconsistency. The new action “*Analytical Support*” (P5-A2) aims at strengthening the content-related capacities of the future ESPON-CU beyond its purely managerial tasks. The previous action “*ECP national networking and dissemination carried through by the ECP network*” does not further exist under Priority 5, but its basic aspects were transferred to action 3 under Priority 4 (“*Transnational networking activities*”). This shift illustrates that the apparently marginal re-orientation of activities under Priority 3 (i.e. modification of the title and of the positioning of actions) also encompasses a more profound change, which indirectly puts into practice our recommendation to further sharpen the individual profiles of “European seminars and workshops” (P4-A2) and “Transnational networking activities” (P4-A3). Secondly, the numerous modifications realised within the different sub-sections of the five programme priorities have again contributed to further specify their respective operational contents. In the context of the thematic programme priorities 1-4, an improved description for the envisaged programme actions, for “operational provisions” and for “target groups / beneficiaries” has been elaborated. This effort has also led to a slight re-phrasing of the title of Priority 4. The most significant changes have however been made under Priority 5 “*Communication, technical and analytical assistance*”. The current text of section II.4.5 presents a revised description within the different sub-sections that is now fully consistent in itself (i.e. extensive “introductory section”, coherent “operational objectives”, in-depth description of expected “main types of action”, elaboration of “operational provisions” and of “target group / beneficiaries”).

Figure 7: Envisaged actions under the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme

Priority	Reference	Title of the Action
Priority 1: Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts	P1-A1	Cross-thematic and thematic analysis (defining territorial potentials and challenges), including studies of territorial trends and prospective studies
	P1-A2	Territorial impact of EU policies
	P1-A3	Knowledge Support System
Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories	P2-A1	Integrated studies and thematic analysis
	P2-A2	Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions
	P2-A3	Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes
Priority 3: Scientific platform and tools: Comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support	P3-A1	ESPON Database and data development
	P3-A2	Territorial indicators indexes and Tools
	P3-A3	Territorial Monitoring System and Reports
	P3-A4	Targeted actions for update of indicators and maps
Priority 4: Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking	P4-A1	Media and Publications
	P4-A2	European seminars and workshops
	P4-A3	Transnational networking activities
Priority 5: Communication, technical and analytical assistance	P5-A1	Technical Assistance
	P5-A2	Analytical Support
	P5-A3	Communication Plan

- The above-mentioned revision of certain programme objectives and the realisation of a more streamlined objective system as well as the modification of envisaged programme actions and the profound re-elaboration of Priority 5 have - all in all - resulted in **a further improvement of the overall consistency of the programme objective system (interdependencies, mutual reinforcement) and an increased complementarity of priority-level actions with respect to an achievement of the various programme objectives.** Additional positive trends that can be associated to this progress made are certainly also a slight increase of the already high level of programme-internal synergy and an improved overall balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions.

5.3.2. An appraisal of the adequacy of financial allocations to the different programme priorities

A document specifying the financial allocations across the different priorities of the future ESPON 2013 programme was provided to the ex-ante evaluators on the 6th of December 2006. It consists of an overall and detailed financial plan for the programme, of a detailed budget for action P4-A1 on “Media and Publication” and finally of a detailed budget for all actions envisaged under the profoundly revised Priority 5.

The total budget of the future ESPON 2013 programme amounts to € 45,378,012, of which € 34,033,512 are expected to come from the ERDF (75%) and 11,344,500 from Member State contributions (25%) Without going into the very details of each budget line, **the overall distribution of the total cost across the various programme priorities can briefly be summarised as follows:**

- **Priority 1** (Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts) **is allocated with 42.4% the highest share of the total budget** (€ 19,241,512) and also shows the highest ERDF co-financing ratio (90%).
- **Priority 2** (Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories) **is allocated 14.4% of the total budget** (€6,536,250) and is co-financed by the ERDF at a level of 80%.
- **Priority 3** (Scientific platform and tools: Comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support) **is allocated 13.5% of the total budget** (€ 6,148,000) and is co-financed by the ERDF at a level of 85%.
- **Priority 4** (Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking) **is allocated with around 12.2% the lowest share of the total budget** (€5,514,100) and is co-financed by the ERDF at a level of 79%.
- **Priority 5** (Communication, technical and analytical assistance) **is allocated with 17.5% the second highest share of the total budget** (€ 7,938,150), but it also shows the lowest ERDF co-financing ratio (24%).

Our appraisal of the adequacy of financial allocations to the different programme priorities takes into consideration some of the previous results stemming from the in-depth evaluation (i.e. complementarity assessment; potential programme-internal synergy effects, innovativeness / risk assessment) as well as the progress achieved under the most recent version of the programming document.

In line with this, **the main findings of our budget analysis can be summarised as follows:**

- **The financial distribution is highly adequate for achieving all of the stated higher-ranking programme objectives (i.e. “Overall Aim”, “Overall Objectives”, “Strategic Objectives”, “Specific Objectives”).** The bulk of the total programme budget (app. 85.4%) is clearly allocated to those priorities and actions that bear the most significant potentials in this respect (i.e. those showing the highest levels of complementarity). This “backbone” of the programme is made up by actions 1 and 2 under Priority 1 (allocated: € 18,741,512), action 1 under Priority 2 (allocated app.: € 2,178,750³⁴), all actions under Priority 3 (allocated: € 6,148,000), actions 2 and 3 under Priority 4 (allocated: € 3,750,000) and by all actions under Priority 5 (allocated: € 7,938,150).
- **If one looks only at the potential achievement of the three “Overall Objectives” (OVOs), the current distribution of the programme budget also seems to be largely adequate.** The financial allocations strongly support a realisation of the “policy-demand oriented approach with respect to applied research actions and the themes / EU policies” (OVO 2, mostly achieved through actions of Priorities 2 & 1: 56.8% of the budget) as well as of an “enhancement of European evidence and knowledge in relation to territorial cohesion and development” (OVO 1, mostly achieved through actions of Priorities 1 & 3: 55.6% of the budget). Compared to this, however, the above-shown budget distribution does not this strongly support a realisation of the “user-oriented approach” that shall be adopted under the ESPON 2007-2013 programme (OVO 3, mostly achieved through actions of Priorities 2 & 3: 27.9% of the budget).
- **The current financial distribution of the programme budget is adequate to support an achievement of the stated “Operational Objectives”.** This adequacy is naturally very strong in case of all “primary relations”, i.e. the support of priority-specific actions to achieve the operational objectives under the same priority. It is however less pronounced in case of the “secondary relations” (i.e. support of priority-specific actions to achieve operational objectives of other priorities), as only a smaller share of the budget is allocated to those actions showing the highest degree of overall complementarity (all actions of Priority 3 and 2: allocated together 27.9% of the total budget) and to the priority combination P2-P4 displaying a strong symmetrical complementarity (allocated together 26.6% of the total budget).
- **The distribution of the programme budget is also adequate for supporting a potential realisation of programme-internal synergies.** In fact, a very high share of the programme budget (app. 64%) is allocated to those priority-level actions that show the highest synergy coefficients and thus develop the most widespread synergy relationships with other programme actions. These are actions 1 and 2 under Priority 1 (allocated: € 18,741,512), all actions under Priority 2 (allocated: € 6,536,250) and actions 2 and 3 under Priority 4 (allocated: € 3,750,000). This observation also holds true for the Priority 1 & 2 combination (allocated together: 56.8% of the budget), which shows very strong symmetrical synergies and thus tends to develop strong reciprocal effects among the various actions concerned.
- **Finally, the considerable share of the programme’s total budget that is allocated to Priority 5 (17.5%) also has to be considered adequate.** This position

³⁴ This value is obtained by assuming that each of the three different actions (A1: Integrated studies and thematic analysis; A2: Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions; A3: Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes) might obtain an equal share of the total priority-level budget that is at € 6,536,250.

might at a first glance be astonishing, as the share under the ESPON 2013 Programme it is beyond the level prescribed by Article 46 (1) in the General Regulation of the Structural Funds (EC No 1083/2006)³⁵. Yet, the specific and unique nature of the ESPON 2013 Programme³⁶ if compared to other Structural Funds Programmes and our second additional remark elaborated at the end of the innovativeness / policy risk assessment (see: 5.2.4) strongly support this “*exceptional treatment*” that has been agreed for this particular situation. It is of utmost importance that the programme management and especially the technical / analytical assistance unit is endowed with sufficient financial resources in order to avoid a future capacity lack, which might prevent the ambitious approach of the ESPON 2013 Programme (i.e. highly interwoven interventions, considerable degree of programme-internal synergy potentials, pronounced overall innovative profile) to become a real success.

5.4. Summary Conclusions

If one considers the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme (1 December 2006), **the following summary conclusions** can be formulated with respect to the rationale of programme strategy, its internal coherence and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities:

- An in-depth appraisal of the ESPON 2013 programme’s objective system reveals that **the overall rationale of the strategy is characterised by a very high degree of internal consistency**. There is a logical progression from a limited number of general objective statements defining the main focus of the programme (i.e. one “overall aim” and 3 “overall objectives”) towards a wider range of more targeted objective statements making further concrete the aforementioned ones (6 “strategic objectives” and 13 “specific objectives”) and down to the 23 “operational objectives” defined across the 5 programme priorities, which specify what the programme interventions should actually achieve.
- **The intervention logic of the ESPON 2013 programme is valid**, as the 5 programme priorities are strongly corresponding to the higher-ranking programme objectives (“overall aim”, “overall objectives”, “strategic objectives”, “specific objectives”) and because the envisaged actions are generally well linked to the “operational objectives” defined across the respective priorities.
- **The relations between the 23 higher-ranking programme objectives** (i.e. “overall aim”, “overall objectives”, “strategic objectives”, “specific objectives”) **are characterised by a very high degree of interdependence** (i.e. primary relations in a downward direction) as well as **by an existence of strong additional support effects and cross-cutting effects** (i.e. secondary relations in an upward direction).
- **The relations between the 23 priority-level “operational objectives” and the higher-ranking programme objectives are generally characterised by an absence of objective-conflicts and by very strong mutual reinforcement effects**. This overall situation clearly indicates that the different “objective strings” make - individually and jointly – a considerable contribution to achieve the overall aim of the future ESPON 2013 programme.

³⁵ Technical assistance at the initiative of the Member States shall be within the limits of 6% of the total amount allocated to an operational programme under the Territorial co-operation objective.

³⁶ See also the justification developed in the “introductory section” of Priority 5 in the Final Draft Programme (pp.49-50).

- **The 16 envisaged priority-level actions are generally characterised by a very high level of overall complementarity as regards an achievement of the stated higher-ranking programme objectives.** This means, firstly, that no negative contributions of actions could be detected which might hamper an achievement of the wider programme objectives. Secondly, one can observe that each priority (and its related actions) as well as the combination of priorities (and of all actions) make a significant contribution to achieve the stated higher-ranking objectives of the ESPON 2013 programme.
- **Also the overall complementarity of the 16 envisaged priority-level actions as regards an achievement of the various “operational objectives” is at a very high level.** Across the entire programme, no situation could be detected where an action partially or wholly tends to counteract the achievement of one or more of the stated operational objectives. Within the same programme priority, one can naturally find the highest contribution-levels of actions to achieve the respective operational objectives (primary relations). But also the additional support effects of priority-specific actions to achieve operational objectives under other programme priorities (secondary relations) are generally very high, which clearly indicates that substantial synergy effects do exist within the ESPON 2013 Programme.
- Our attempt to quantify the hypotheses on potential synergy effects among the various actions at priority level has shown that already the 2nd Draft of the ESPON 2013 programme as a whole displays a very high synthetic coefficient of synergy (0.85). If one considers the recent improvements / modifications realised in the subsequent versions of the programme, **one can certainly assume that the already high level of programme-internal synergy was even slightly further increased.** This generally positive situation underpins however again our general recommendation that existing synergy potentials should be carefully exploited and developed further by those managing / realising the implementation of the future ESPON 2013 programme.
- After the improvements / modifications realised for the most recent version of the programming document, one can re-affirm that the future ESPON 2013 Programme **shows a good balance between standard-type and new / innovative actions that reflect in an appropriate way the new needs which had been identified at the end of the programme’s SWOT-like context assessment.** This means that neither the combination of programme priorities nor the actual balance achieved between standard-type and new / innovative actions allows identifying major risks, which might seriously hamper the implementation of the future programme or compromise an achievement of its objectives.
- **Our appraisal of the financial allocations to the different programme priorities clearly shows that the budgetary distribution is generally adequate,** as it tends to positively support a realisation of various aspects that are of strategic importance for the success of the future ESPON 2013 programme (i.e. achievement of all stated higher-ranking programme objectives; achievement of the stated “Operational Objectives”; potential realisation of programme-internal synergies; sufficient financial resource endowment for technical/analytical assistance in order to avoid a future capacity lack).

6. The external coherence of the strategy with respect to major Community policy objectives

6.1. “General observations” resulting from the evaluability assessment

The evaluability assessment has extensively examined those parts of the **1st Draft ESPON 2013 Programme** that aim at defining the wider EU-policy context and the most important Community policy objectives. Text references relating to the over-arching objectives of EU-policy that will play a major role during the years to come (i.e. Lisbon & Gothenburg agenda; Rotterdam agenda & follow up) and more specifically to the Community Strategic Guidelines for the EU’s Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 can mostly be found in the “Introduction” and Section I.1. In addition to this, a number of larger text blocks referring to these issues were elaborated under Section II.1 and under Section II.2.

Our first analysis has allowed formulating a number of **general observations**, which are summarised in **ANNEX 3 (box 5)** of this report. They generally aimed at fine-tuning the current descriptions in the respective parts of the programme and at further sharpening their analytical quality. These general observations were briefly discussed during a joint working meeting between the evaluators and representatives of the future programme (Managing Authority; ESPON-CU).

Subsequently, all suggestions made in the evaluability assessment were - in a very proactive manner - taken into consideration during the next step of the programme elaboration process. Due to this positive attitude, a substantially improved introductory part could be presented in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

This has enabled the evaluators to start with their in-depth assessment according to the suggested methodology.

6.2. The in-depth evaluation and related “first recommendations”

According to the overall approach adopted for this ex-ante evaluation, the evaluators are required to

- examine the “external coherence” of the strategy with regard to key Community policies and objectives, as reflected in the Community Strategic Guidelines (**sub-task 3.1**),
- appraise the potential of the programme to deliver relevant elements supporting the achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies (**sub-task 3.2**).

To address these tasks, specific text references that localise the ESPON 2013 Programme in the context of the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) for the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and the over-arching EU-policy objectives of the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategies are reviewed (Sections I.1-I.4, II.1, II.2.1-II.2.4) and the main elements of the programme strategy are assessed against this wider background (objectives and priorities).

The following sub-sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 present an in-depth analysis of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme alongside the above-mentioned ex-ante evaluation tasks, whereas

the final sub-section 6.2.3 gives a summary overview on the related recommendations that might be considered while elaborating the Draft Final ESPON 2013 Programme.

6.2.1. The “external coherence” of the programme strategy with respect to the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG)

In July 2006, the Commission has presented a proposal for a Council Decision on “Community Strategic Guidelines” (CSG) for the cohesion policy’s programming period 2007-2013.³⁷ According to this document, these Guidelines represent (...) *a single framework which Member States and regions are invited to use when developing national, regional, and local programmes, in particular with a view to assessing their contribution to the objectives of the Union in terms of cohesion, growth and jobs. The Guidelines are a necessary condition, but not the only condition for achieving the right level of concentration on key priorities for each Member State and region in accordance with the renewed Lisbon Agenda.*

The **CSG-document** draws the attention to four over-arching principles³⁸ that should be observed during the programming process and **sets out three key priorities**, on which national, regional, and local programmes co-financed through the Community’s cohesion policy should seek to target their resources:

1. Improving the **attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities** by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment.
2. Encouraging **innovation, entrepreneurship** and the growth of the **knowledge economy** by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies.
3. Creating **more and better jobs** by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

Alongside these key priorities, the CSG-document subsequently elaborates **3 “strategic guidelines”** and a larger number of **related “guidelines for action”** (see: ANNEX 13).

In addition, the **CSG-document also formulates a number of “additional guidelines” that aim at promoting territorial cohesion and at making European territorial co-operation objective a success (see: Annex 13)**. Due to the fact that cohesion policy is capable of adapting to the particular needs and characteristics of specific geographical challenges and opportunities, the territorial dimension will strongly matter in the future. An active promotion of territorial cohesion³⁹ under the next generation of programmes (2007-2013) will therefore be part of the effort to ensure that all areas of the Community territory have the opportunity to contribute to the growth and jobs agenda. The European territorial co-operation objective will complement the wider effort to promote territorial cohesion, as it has an important role to play for ensuring a balanced and sustainable development of the Community territory.⁴⁰

³⁷ COM(2006)386 final

³⁸ These are: (1) Cohesion policy should focus to a greater extent on knowledge, research and innovation, and human capital in the light of the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. (2) The objective of sustainable development shall be pursued and synergies between the economic, social and environmental dimensions shall be boosted. (3) The objective of equality between men and women shall be pursued. (4) Appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be taken.

³⁹ When developing their programmes and concentrating resources on the three key priorities, Member States and regions should pay particular attention to these specific geographical circumstances. Taking on board the territorial dimension will help them to develop sustainable communities and to prevent uneven regional development from reducing overall growth potential. This means however also that a different meaning should be given to territorial cohesion, linked to each Member State’s history, culture or institutional situation.

⁴⁰ Closer cross-border and transnational co-operation across EU regions (including maritime co-operation where appropriate) that follows shared development strategies for the different territories concerned and interregional

While taking into consideration the above-said, **one can observe that the ESPON 2013 Programme is firmly anchored in the wider context of the Community's cohesion policy during the years 2007-2013 as designed by the CSG.** This statement is confirmed when reviewing the descriptions provided in various parts of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The introductory sections in the 2nd Draft (Sections I.1-I.4) show that the programme considers itself to form part of a wider process, where the territorial dimension is increasingly recognised in the context of European policy-development and decision-making. Its future activities, focussing on an improvement of existing evidence and a generation of new knowledge with respect to territorial development as well as on a wide dissemination / awareness raising, are clearly oriented towards the three Structural Funds objectives and especially on the European territorial co-operation objective. The core sections making up the programme strategy (II.2 "Objectives" and II.3 "Priorities") put a clear focus on exploring further issues that are related to the strategic thematic priorities for Structural Funds interventions 2007-2013, thus providing a wider operational support to the related programmes. Already at this stage of the assessment, one can therefore assume that the ESPON 2013 Programme is able to develop a wide range of complementary relations with respect to the Community Strategic Guidelines.

In order to assess further these complementarities a cross-referencing exercise is realised, which aims at mapping "direct" and "indirect" support effects that might result from priorities and actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the wider set of guidelines as stated in the CSG-document. This mapping is realised separately for (1) the three "strategic guidelines" and the related "guidelines for action" as well as for (2) the "additional guidelines" that focus on a promotion of territorial cohesion and the European territorial co-operation objective. The results of these cross-referencing exercises are summarised in two matrixes that show the magnitude of potential "indirect" or "direct" support effects.

From the matrix showing **potential indirect / direct support effects of the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the "strategic guidelines" for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013** (see: ANNEX 14), the following key features can be derived:

- The priorities and actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme show **no evident conflict with one of the guidelines stated in the CSG-document.** They either develop positive relations of complementarity at different degrees, or generate no effect at all. With the exception of those actions having a specific programme-related operational purpose that somehow limits their capacity for establishing external links to the stated guidelines (P1-A3, P5-A1), all other **programme actions develop widespread and often strong support effects that are mostly of an "indirect" nature (but sometimes also of a "direct" nature).**
- **"Indirect support effects"** tend to emerge if improved knowledge / evidence on issues related to territorial development that will be generated by the future ESPON 2013 Programme helps improving the effectiveness of Community-, national- or regional-level policies, which in turn might then be able to better act alongside the stated Community guidelines. The **strongest indirect support effects** that tend to emerge from the ESPON 2013 Programme activities **concentrate on all themes covered by Guideline 1** (*Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work*) **and by Guideline 2** (*Improving knowledge and innovation for growth*). In the context of Guideline 3 (*More and better jobs*), potential indirect

networking, especially to ensure a transfer of ideas to mainstream national / regional cohesion programmes, can help speeding up economic development and the achievement of higher growth.

support effects resulting from the ESPON 2013 programme are rather limited or even not existing.

- A potential **“direct support effect”** tends to emerge in those cases where specific ESPON programme actions are used to realise planning-alike preparatory activities in relation to concrete interventions addressing a specific Guideline, which will subsequently be implemented outside the ESPON programme. On ground of this assumption, it is most likely that such effects might emerge in the context of “Experimental actions applying ESPON-results” (P2-A2) and “Joint actions with other Structural Funds Programmes” (P2-A3).⁴¹ If this should hold true, then **limited direct support effects will mostly focus on all themes covered by Guideline 1** (*Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work*) **and by Guideline 2** (*Improving knowledge and innovation for growth*).

The matrix showing **potential “indirect / direct support effects” of the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the additional guidelines focussing on the territorial dimension of cohesion policy** (see: ANNEX 15), allows identifying the following aspects:

- Also in this case, **no evident conflict of priorities and actions** under the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation to the additional guidelines stated in the CSG-document can be observed. On the contrary, the **priorities / actions develop a very strong and nearby fully generalised support effect across all of the stated guidelines**. This is somehow natural, as the focus of the ESPON programme strongly corresponds to the one addressed by this heading of the CSG-document. Moreover, the programme explicitly aims - by a number of its own objectives – at making a supportive contribution to other Structural Funds programmes and especially to those under the new objective “European Territorial Co-operation”.
- The **“indirect support effect”** is - as already mentioned above - **nearby generalised across all guidelines**. Only the actions with a strong programme-internal purpose (P1-A3, P5-A1) do not tend to produce any effect at all. But also the ECP-National Networking Activities (P5-A2) show limited indirect effects in case of the co-operative dimension, as their basic purpose is certainly not to raise awareness among EU-funded co-operation programmes.
- A particularly interesting feature is **the quite extensive range of strong “direct support effects”**, which tend to result from several ESPON actions in relation to additional guidelines promoting territorial cohesion or addressing the new objective on European territorial co-operation. With respect to a wider promotion of territorial cohesion (additional guidelines 1 & 2), actions P2-A2 and P2-A3 tend again to generate strong direct effects across all issues mentioned. And also here, they can be explained by the speculative assumption that these ESPON-actions might be used to realise planning-alike preparatory activities for interventions that will subsequently be implemented outside the programme. As concerns European territorial co-operation (additional guidelines 3-4), the range of ESPON actions generating such effects is even wider and covers again all issues addressed under this heading. With respect to guideline 5.2, the generally widespread and strong direct support effect can be explained by the fact that the ESPON 2013 programme belongs to the type of inter-regional programmes that will be implemented under this heading. It thus directly contributes with all its actions to realise the guideline. In case of actions P2-A2 and

⁴¹ The above-made assumption on “direct supportive effects” is yet highly speculative, as the exact nature and scope of projects to be adopted under P2-A2 and P2-A3 is not yet fully known. Due to the fact that all ESPON-actions will always be “immaterial” interventions, the associated direct support effects will never be of a nature that tends to actually change the physical environment.

P2-A3, the resulting direct effects can be explained by the same assumptions as made above. The assumed direct effects generated by P4-A1 can be explained by the fact that “European Seminars and Events” address all co-operation types as a target group and that the issues of the guidelines also represent potential themes for such events. The effect-intensity becomes stronger at the level of inter-regional co-operation, as the ESPON 2013 programme envisages establishing a very close co-operation with other interregional programmes (i.e. jointly organised events etc). One could imagine that “Transnational Networking Activities” (P4-A2) might also develop similar direct effects, but the differentiation between them is yet still weakly elaborated wherefore no rating has been realised.

To conclude on this first part of the external coherence-assessment, the following final comments and general recommendations can be elaborated (see also: **ANNEX 17, box 1**):

- **The ESPON 2013 Programmes shows a high degree of external coherence with respect to the “Community Strategic Guidelines”**, which can be explained by an absence of any constellation of conflict and the existence of widespread complementarity-relationships with most of the stated guidelines. These **complementarity-relations are very significant in case of the “additional guidelines” that address the territorial dimension of cohesion policy (broad coverage, strong direct & indirect support effects)**. In case of the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy in general, **a significant and widespread contribution can also be observed in case Guidelines 1 and 2**. All in all, the above-said clearly points to **an existence of significant external synergy potentials** that should be carefully exploited during the forthcoming programme implementation process.
- **An issue that certainly requires further clarification** before finally adopting the programme is the **nature of projects that will be carried out under actions P2-A2 and P2-A3**. If one agrees that the likely emergence of potential “direct support effects” is a generally welcomed positive result, then also the related question to what extent these actions should actually focus on designing, preparing or planning concrete material interventions that will subsequently be implemented outside the ESPON programme has to be further discussed in due time. Our recommendation in this direction would be to approach this issue by stressing in particular scope-related and application-focussed considerations. In concrete terms this means that such projects should be of a European-wide or at least of a transnational interest (to avoid a flood of small-scale project applications) and that the content-oriented work within such projects has to be realised on ground of already available ESPON findings or data (to avoid that specific new data have to be generated by ESPON before starting the project).

6.2.2. The potentials of the ESPON 2013 programme to deliver aspects that support an achievement of the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategies

At the **Lisbon European Council of March 2000**, the European Union has set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Around this strategic goal, the Lisbon Strategy was designed to enable the EU regaining the conditions for full employment and to strengthen cohesion by 2010.

Shortly afterwards, the **Gothenburg European Council of 2001** agreed on a “Sustainable Development Strategy” (SDS) that sets out the policy framework within which European Union action should operate in order to fulfil the long-term vision of sustainability, where economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection should go hand in hand in a mutually supporting way. In this respect, the SDS underpins the whole of the Lisbon Strategy and adds to it an environmental strand.

Following the **mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy** conducted by an independent High Level Group⁴², the Commission presented a Communication on growth and jobs (February 2005)⁴³ that argued towards a new start for the Lisbon strategy refocusing efforts on two goals: delivering a stronger, lasting growth and more and better jobs.

The **overall ambition** of these wider policy strategies is to direct EU-Member State activities towards creating high-performance societies that are based upon (...) *a knowledge intensive, high-growth and at the same time environmentally sustainable economy with employment for the great majority of the population in the working age and with financially sustainable social systems to care efficiently for the needy non-employed.*⁴⁴

In relation to this wider ambition, a **set of global objectives** is defined that forms the core of the Lisbon Strategy and which the Union seeks realising by the year 2010.⁴⁵

- a growing European economy,
- an internationally competitive European business sector,
- a knowledge-intensive European economy,
- an economy with a high level of employment for both sexes and all age groups (70% for all by 2010, 67% by 2005, 60% for women by 2010, 50% for 55-64 year olds by 2010),
- an economy with a low level of social exclusion and poverty,
- a social system which is financially sustainable in the medium and long term,
- an economy which does not degrade health or the environment and which promotes safety.

Below these global objectives, a large number of more specific objectives are formulated (often involving quantitative targets) and the various Lisbon Strategy documents also define objectives for creating a fully operational internal market, including measures for the restructuring and increasing liberalisation of product and capital markets, for adequate and sustainable pensions, and for reform of the formal education systems of the Member States.

Any attempt to assess the contribution of the Structural Funds and of the related programmes to an achievement of objectives as stated in the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies should first of all take into consideration a number of general features that have been revealed by a recent thematic evaluation realised on this topic:⁴⁶ There is a considerable congruence between the overall Lisbon-objectives and the Structural Funds objectives⁴⁷, but also the various specific objectives of the Lisbon Agenda and the Structural Funds reveal a number of complementarities and congruencies. In addition, it has become

⁴² “Facing the Challenge. The Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment”. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok. November 2004.

⁴³ “Working together for growth and jobs: A new start for the Lisbon Strategy”. Communication to the Spring European Council. COM(2005)24.

⁴⁴ European Commission: Thematic Evaluation of the Structural Funds’ Contributions to the Lisbon Strategy. Synthesis Report, February 2005.

⁴⁵ These global objectives were isolated by reviewing the various Presidency Conclusions.

⁴⁶ European Commission: Thematic Evaluation of the Structural Funds’ Contributions to the Lisbon Strategy. Synthesis Report, February 2005.

⁴⁷ Economic growth is a shared objective, as are the objectives of high employment and low unemployment. The Structural Funds and the Lisbon Agenda also share the premise that growth and development should not be achieved at the cost of environmental degradation. Economic development should be environmentally sustainable.

evident that the Structural Fund's contribution is most relevant in case of those overall/specific objectives whose realisation involves or requires the allocation of funds for investment or may be facilitated by such investment.⁴⁸ This is because the Structural Funds by definition operate through the allocation of funds.

Against this wider background, **it becomes quickly evident that interventions of the ESPON 2013 Programme will not be able to “directly” deliver aspects supporting an achievement of the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies objectives and to stimulate economic growth, social cohesion and wider sustainability.** This is – as already stated before – mainly a consequence of the specific nature of the envisaged interventions. The ESPON 2013 programme will only realise immaterial interventions that focus on improving existing / on generating new European-wide knowledge and evidence in relation to territorial development (e.g. applied research, innovative actions involving studies, international seminars & other events and networking to stimulate the policy dialogue and to raise awareness, setting-up of a scientific community etc.).

What can however be expected from the ESPON 2013 Programme are potential “indirect support effects” that may facilitate to achieve elements of the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategies. This is the case when improved knowledge / evidence on number of issues related to territorial development that will be generated by the future ESPON 2013 Programme subsequently helps improving the effectiveness of Community-, national- or regional-level policies, which in turn might then be able to better contribute delivering selected aspects of the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies. **This more realistic option seems to be the main intention of the ESPON 2013 programme** and becomes also evident while reviewing the introductory sections of the 2nd Draft (Sections I.1-I.4, II.1, II.2.1-II.2.4). There are a number of text references that establish a clear and direct link between the ESPON 2013 Programme's specific purpose / overall aim and its potentially supportive contribution to an achievement of the wider Lisbon/Gothenburg objectives.⁴⁹

In order to **localise potential “indirect support effects” that may result from the envisaged interventions under the ESPON 2013 programme**, a simplified cross-referencing exercise is carried out. It relates the actions under the different priorities of the ESPON 2013 programme as well as the framework of potential themes / additional thematic issues for applied territorial research and targeted analytical deliveries⁵⁰ in a very general way to a list of congruent themes and objectives⁵¹ that integrates the core of the Lisbon Strategy objectives and the Structural Funds objectives.

The result of this cross-referencing exercise is resumed in **a matrix that shows the magnitude of potential “indirect support effects” (see: ANNEX 16).** From this matrix, the following **main features** can be derived:

⁴⁸ Examples for a number of issues addressed by these objectives are the following: The overall economic policy mix, IT infrastructure investment, investment in R&D, investment in human capital, lifelong learning, skills for the information society, enlarging the workforce, increasing employability through active labour market policies, investment in business development, social inclusion and sustainable environmental development.

⁴⁹ In the sections on: “Introduction” (Page 5), “Milestones in policy development for regions and larger territories” (Pages 6 & 7), introduction to the “Programme Strategy” (Page 12), “Conclusion & main orientations for an ESPON 2007-2013 Programme” (Page 20), “Objectives” (Page 21) and “Priorities”, especially related to applied research (Page 27).

⁵⁰ This framework of potential themes is specified in Annex VI.2 of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

⁵¹ This list was elaborated in the “Thematic Evaluation of the Structural Funds' Contributions to the Lisbon Strategy” on ground of a detailed analysis of the specific objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and all the Structural Funds. The starting points have been the relevant Lisbon Strategy objectives and the parenthesis indicates in which of the Structural Funds the overlapping / complementary objectives can be found. Whereas the exact formulation of the objectives may differ between the formulations of the Lisbon Strategy and those of the Funds, the fundamental content of most objectives is identical.

- **There are slight differences among the different actions of the ESPON 2013 Programme with respect to their capacity for creating “indirect support effects”:** The most widespread and strong indirect support effects tend to emerge from the knowledge-generating applied research actions (P1-A1, P2-A2) and from actions using results of applied research (P2-A1, P2-A2, P2-A3), but also from the Territorial Monitoring System (P3-A3) and from actions stimulating awareness-raising, dissemination, empowerment and involvement (P4-A1, P4-A2, P4-A3, P5-A2). For other actions, reduced indirect effects are either a consequence of their more programme-focussed nature (P1-A3, P5-A1) or due to their specific operational purpose that limits a thematic correspondence with the stated Community-level objectives (P3-A1, P3-A2)⁵².
- **“Indirect support effects” tend to concentrate on a limited number of themes / objectives jointly covered by the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategies and the Structural Funds approach:** The most extensive indirect contribution is expected to emerge in relation to “sustainable development”, but also with respect to “infrastructure investment” and “R&D-investment”. A still remarkable contribution is possible with respect to “employment” and to “investment in human capital”, especially for themes/objectives related to the information society and new technologies.

To conclude on this final step of the external coherence assessment, the following final comments and general recommendations are elaborated (see also: ANNEX 17, box 2):

- From the above said one can easily see that **the specific nature of the future ESPON 2013 programme “only” allows supporting in an indirect way a number of actions carried out elsewhere, which aim at delivering elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies.** This indirect contribution is clearly focussed on the issues of “sustainable development” and “infrastructure investment”, but also on themes / objectives that are in a wider sense related to research & development, new technologies and the Information Society.
- Considering the range of issues concerned by such indirect effects, one can state that **the ESPON 2013 Programme shows already a high degree of external consistency with respect to the entire set of wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies.** In order to actually meet these expectations, it is therefore recommended **to carefully exploit these theme-specific external synergy potentials** during the forthcoming implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

6.3. “Key findings” of the progress evaluation

Due to the considerable degree of external coherence in relation to the “Community Strategic Guidelines” and the wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies that existed already under the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme, there was no need to further develop this issue while elaborating the **Draft Final ESPON 2013 Programme (12 September 2006)**.

At the **ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting of September 2006**, only a few comments were made by the delegations present that tend to improve the external coherence of the

⁵² E.g. the Territorial Database will not be able to produce data on all themes addressed by the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategy. Tools will certainly not be developed for all themes addressed by the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategy.

future ESPON 2013 programme. It was argued in favour of establishing a closer relation to other Structural Funds programme (Austria, DG REGIO) and of emphasising stronger the impact of future ESPON research in relation to European policies (DG REGIO).

In the **Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme (1 December 2006)**, however, some text modifications were included into the document that tend to further strengthen the external coherence of the entire strategy approach. This progress concerns both aspects, i.e. the contribution of the ESPON 2013 Programme to realise objectives formulated in the “Community Strategic Guidelines” and its potentials to deliver aspects that support an achievement of the Lisbon / Gothenburg strategies. In the **text box below**, the main references in the Final Draft are presented to which this effect can be allocated to.

Text Box 2

On p.14 of the Final Draft (Section I.7 “Assessment of the environmental impact):

It should also be mentioned that the ESPON 2013 programme will contribute with European information and evidence by means of trends analysis and impact assessments, including key environmental issues such as climate change, nature and biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, which are also priority actions areas set out in the EU 6th Environmental Action Programme, Thereby, the ESPON 2013 programme can potentially support the promotion of sustainable development. The information that will be made available by means of integrated analyses in support of Territorial Cohesion policy objectives will often include an environmental dimension and hereby complement existing environmental monitoring and information contributing to decision making on more cohesive, balanced and sustainable forms of development.

On p.31 of the Final Draft (Section II.4.1, operational provisions for Priority 1):

The demand from policy development voiced by members of the ESPON Monitoring Committee will be the key selection criteria for the thematic orientations. Themes in support of territorial cohesion and cooperation will together with themes related to the Lisbon strategy and a sustainable economic development be given high priority.

On p.37 of the Final Draft (Section II.4.2, target-group specification for Priority 2):

The particular target groups that can be considered by the Monitoring Committee are:

- *Authorities at EU and Member State levels involved in processes implementing the territorial cohesion objective, including the Community Strategic Guidelines and National Strategic Reference Framework strategies as well as territorially relevant aspects of Structural Funds Programmes under the Objectives of Convergence and Competitiveness.*
- *Authorities at EU and Member State level as well as in Partner States working in territorially relevant sector policies.*
- *Authorities responsible for implementing programmes under Structural Funds 2007-2013 dealing with cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation under the objective of European Territorial Cooperation.*
- *Groups/clusters of regions and cities representing at least three countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme that has a common interest for support of ESPON analysis in gaining European experience and/or knowledge on common challenges related to their territorial and/or urban development.*

6.4. Summary Conclusions

If one considers slight improvement realised in the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme (1 December 2006), **the following summary conclusions** can be formulated with respect to the external coherence of the programme strategy:

- **The ESPON 2013 Programmes shows a high degree of external coherence with respect to the “Community Strategic Guidelines” (CSG).** There are no evident conflicts in relation to the stated CSG-objectives and the most significant complementarity-relations can be observed in case of those “additional guidelines” that address the territorial dimension of cohesion policy (broad coverage, strong direct & indirect support effects). In case of the strategic guidelines for cohesion policy in general, a significant and widespread contribution can also be observed in case of Guideline 1 (*Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work*) and Guideline 2 (*Improving knowledge and innovation for growth*).
- **The ESPON 2013 Programme shows a very high degree of external consistency with respect to the entire set of wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies.** However, due to the specific nature of the ESPON 2013 programme, one can “only” expect an indirect support to actions carried out elsewhere that aim at delivering elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies (focus on issues related to “sustainable development” and “infrastructure investment”, but also to themes / objectives that are in a wider sense related to research & development, new technologies and the Information Society).

7. The expected outputs, results and impacts

7.1. “General observations” resulting from the evaluability assessment

The evaluability assessment has examined the few text references in the 1st Draft, which defined what the future ESPON 2013 Programme is expected to achieve. The text describing the various programme priorities (sub-sections II.3.1-II.3.5) contained only provisional information about the expected outputs / results / impacts of the future programme, which in addition were only partially complete and sometimes rather dispersed throughout the text. A clear statement on the expected overall programme impact was however not yet elaborated.

Due to these shortcomings, a number of general observations had been formulated that apply to the whole of the 1st Draft Programme:

- Each sub-section relating to a specific programme priority should always contain three sub-heading that clearly relate to the “*expected outputs*”, the “*expected results*” and the “*expected impacts*”.
- Already existing statements on outputs / results / impacts that are dispersed throughout the text describing each priority should be allocated to the appropriate new sub-headings on outputs / results / impacts. In addition, a larger number of adequate statements on outputs / results / impacts still have to be elaborated.
- An adequate statement on the overall expected programme impact should be elaborated.

Also here, the general observations made by the evaluators were taken into consideration in a very pro-active manner during the subsequent step of the programme elaboration process. Due to this positive attitude, more detailed information on the expected outputs / results / impacts could be presented in the strategy section of 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme.

This allowed the evaluators to start the in-depth evaluation of existing output / result / impact statements and to assist the elaboration of appropriate output / result / impact indicators.

7.2. The in-depth evaluation and related “first recommendations”

According to the overall approach adopted for this ex-ante evaluation, the evaluators are required

- to verify that the output / result statements (and indicators) and the quantified objectives at priority level are appropriate and reflect the structure / hierarchy of priorities / objectives of the programme (**sub-task 4.1**),
- to propose reliable impact indicators (and possibly quantified targets⁵³) at priority level, for which the coherence is appraised in relation to higher-level objectives at programme and Community level (**sub-task 4.2**),

⁵³ In cases where quantification would not be possible, the evaluator(s) should at least assess and ensure the causality between outputs, results and impacts.

- to define indicators at action level, in order to ensure that the indicator system remains manageable and useable by the implementing bodies and programme authorities (**sub-task 4.3**).

Statements on the expected outputs / results / impacts were elaborated in Chapter II of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme only in case of four priorities (P1-P4). For Priority 5 relating to “Communication and Technical/Analytical Assistance”, no such statements do exist so far. In addition, the related output / result / impact indicators have also not been defined for the different programme priorities.

Due to this semi-finalised status of the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme, the following sub-sections 7.2.1-7.2.3 present an in-depth evaluation that focuses mostly on assessing the causality-relations of output/result/impact statements with respect to the envisaged actions and the different levels of programme objectives (priority-level, higher-ranking programme objectives). In addition, suggestions for potential output/result/impact indicators at priority level and suggestions for indicators at action level are elaborated. The appropriateness-assessment of the finally selected indicators will therefore be realised during the next stage of the ex-ante evaluation process (see: section 7.3).

7.2.1. Causality-relations between existing output / result statements and the stated actions / objectives at priority-level

To highlight the causality relations between all elements that need to be considered (i.e. outputs, results, actions, objectives), a **systematic cross-referencing exercise** is realised for each Priority. An assessment of logic links can however only be realised for those Priorities that show a high degree of coherence between operational objectives / envisaged actions and well-elaborated output/result statements. This situation can be assumed to be true for Priorities 1-4, whereas Priority 5 is still lacking of coherence (“mismatch” between operational objectives and actions, see chapter 5) and does not yet contain elaborated output/result statements.

The systematic cross-referencing exercise shows that **the current statements on outputs and results elaborated for Priorities 1-4 are already characterised by well-developed relations of causality with regard to the envisaged actions (outputs) and the stated priority objectives (results)**. In addition, also a **relatively high degree of coherence can be observed between output and result statements**.

The causality relations assessment at the level of each Priority reveals however a number of still existing weaknesses:

- **Priority 1:** A comparison between the current output-statement and the envisaged actions shows that a relatively solid causality-relation exists between both of them. However, no specific output has yet been defined in relation to the “Knowledge Support System” (P1-A3). If one compares the current result-statement to the stated operational objectives, it appears that the entire statement could be made slightly more precise with respect to the type of evidence / knowledge that will be generated (i.e. by referring to OPOs 1.1-1.6). In addition, a brief reference to the results generated by the “Knowledge Support System” (OPO 1.7) should be included. A comparison between the output and result statements shows that a part of the output-statement makes reference to immediate effects resulting from the actions and would therefore better fit into the result statement (...*provide new information and evidence on a wide variety of themes*). In addition, the result statement includes an issue that

could potentially be transferred to the output-statement (*Documents may reflect different territorial entities, most often being European, national and/or regional*).

- **Priority 2:** A comparison between the current output-statement and the envisaged actions does not show specific weaknesses that need to be addressed, i.e. the output-statement shows a clear causality-relation with regard to the envisaged actions P2-A1, P2-A2 and P2-A3. If one compares the current result-statement to the stated operational objectives, it appears that the important issue of an “improved usefulness” and the ways how this can be achieved (OPO 2.2) should be better reflected. A comparison between the output and result statements finally shows that an issue is mentioned at the level of results that should be transferred to the output-statement (themes that have ... *been selected by the Monitoring Committee to meet the best possible the demand expressed by potential users of ESPON results*). This would also be more consistent with the approach adopted under Priority 1.
- **Priority 3:** A comparison between the current output-statement and the envisaged actions shows that for some aspects mentioned, an attempt to better quantify the outputs could be made (i.e. expected number of data sets; expected number of new tools). In addition, also the outputs related to action P3-A3 could be better quantified (i.e. number of key indicators for which time series will be built). If one compares the current result-statement to the stated operational objectives, it appears that the entire statement could be made more precise. The statement should be more affirmative (not: *among the results will be...*) and clearly point out the desired effect (... *more widespread use of ESPON data ...*). To underpin this effect, also the driving forces behind it should be better highlighted (e.g. *increased availability, stronger reliability, wider access, more frequent updates*). In addition, the immediate effect resulting from the development of a Territorial Monitoring System should be better highlighted. A final comparison between output and result statements reveals that an issue is mentioned at the level of outputs that should be transferred and better highlighted in the context of the result-statement (*New methodologies and models for Territorial Impact Assessment are one potential innovation within the ESPON Scientific Platform*).
- **Priority 4:** A comparison between the current output-statement and the envisaged actions does not show particular weaknesses that need to be addressed, i.e. the output-statement shows a clear causality-relation with regard to the envisaged actions P4-A1, P4-A2 and P4-A3. If one compares the current result-statement to the stated operational objectives, it appears that the entire statement could be made slightly more precise by including a reference to the increased feedback on the usefulness / the scope of practical use of ESPON results (OPO 4.3). A comparison between the output and result statements shows that the current output-statement is a little too lengthy and could be shortened by transferring some of the target group references to the result-statement. In addition, the result-statement should also be more affirmative (avoid too vague expressions such as ... *this may result...* or ... *will probably be...*).

The above-mentioned weaknesses should be addressed during the next stage of the programme-elaboration process. This requires in most cases that **the current output/result statements under Priorities 1-4 are re-formulated** in order to further improve their causality relations and their overall coherence. In an annex to this report (**see: ANNEX 18, tables 1 & 2**), concrete examples for revised statements are proposed.

In case of Priority 5, the next stage of the programme-elaboration process should concentrate on eliminating the still existing “mismatch” and on elaborating coherent output- and result-statements by using the cross-referencing approach as shown above.

7.2.2. Causality-relations between existing impact statements and the stated higher-ranking programme objectives

Similar as under the previous sub-section 7.2.1, **a systematic cross-referencing exercise is realised for Priority 1-4** to highlight the causality relations between all elements that need to be considered (i.e. impacts, higher-ranking objectives). And here again, Priority 5 can not be included in this exercise due to the still existing “mismatch” between operational objectives and actions and the absence of elaborated impact statements.

In this case, however, an examination of causality-relations between priority-level impact statements and higher ranking programme objectives is slightly more complicated. One must firstly determine in relation to which of the 25 objectives (OVOs, STOs, SPOs) the cross-referencing will be realised. Further clarification in this respect can be obtained by re-considering some results of the internal consistency analysis realised in Chapter 5 of this report.

The examination of relations between priority-level operational objectives and higher-ranking programme objectives has allowed identifying a number of constellations for which a strong and very strong mutual reinforcement effect exists between priority-level objectives (OPOs) and higher ranking programme objectives. As a result of this, **the cross-referencing of priority-level impact statements will be realised only in relation to those higher-ranking programme objectives that show very strong mutual reinforcement effects with respect to the specific priority concerned (see: figure 8)**. The basic assumption underlying this approach can be explained as follows: If very strong mutual reinforcement effects exist under a given priority between OPOs and some higher-ranking objectives, then also the wider impact generated under this priority should mostly contribute to achieving these higher-ranking programme objectives.

Figure 8: Higher-ranking programme objectives to be considered in the cross-referencing exercise

Priority	Related higher-ranking programme objectives		
	OVOs	STOs	SPOs
Priority 1: Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion	1, 2	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3, 6, 14
Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demand	1, 2, 3,	1, 2, 3, 4,	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14
Priority 3: Scientific platform and tools	1, 3	3, 4	8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
Priority 4: Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement	3	5, 6	2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13

The systematic cross-referencing exercise reveals that – in general - **the current impact statements elaborated for Priorities 1-4 show rather weak relations of causality with regard to the higher-ranking objectives concerned:**

- **The current impact statement for Priority 1** only addresses in a sufficient way OVO 1 and STO 1. With respect to all other higher-ranking programme objectives (OVO 2,

STO 2 & 3, SPO 1-3, 6, 14), clearer links should be created for example by introducing short text references or by expanding the entire statement.

- **The current and relatively short impact statement for Priority 2** addresses in a more or less sufficient manner most of the higher ranking programme objectives. Nevertheless, it could be useful to stronger emphasise several aspects in the current statement that are more precisely spelled out under some of these objectives (e.g. STO 3 & 4, SPO 2-4, 6). Only with respect to OVO 2 (policy demand) and OVO 3 (user orientation), clearer links should be created for example by introducing short text references.
- **The current impact statement for Priority 3** addresses only a smaller share of the closely related, higher-ranking programme objectives (OVO 1, STO 1 & 4). The statement shows partial / more substantial weaknesses especially with respect to all SPOs, but also in relation to STO 1 & 3.
- **The current impact statement for Priority 4** is very short and does not yet addresses in a satisfying manner the higher-ranking programme objectives that are closely related to this priority. Due to this, substantial improvements are necessary in order to establish more valid causality-relations with these objectives.

Also here, these weaknesses have to be addressed during the next stage of the elaboration process which again **requires in all cases that the current impact statements under Priorities 1-4 are substantially re-formulated**. At the end of this report, an overview on suggestions for revised impact statements can be found (**see: ANNEX 18, table 3**).

In case of Priority 5, the next stage of the programme-elaboration process should concentrate on elaborating coherent impact-statements by applying the cross-referencing approach shown above.

7.2.3. Suggestions for output / result / impact indicators at priority level and for indicators at action level

To address specific prescriptions that appear under sub-tasks 4.1-4.3 in a more comprehensive way, a set of indicators at priority levels is elaborated and suggestions for corresponding action-level indicators are made.

Suggestions for priority-level output / result / impact indicators

The previous assessment of causality-relations has revealed a number of weaknesses that tend to complicate an identification of appropriate output, result and impact indicators at priority-level. A coherent set of indicators, capable of informing a future monitoring (and evaluation) of the ESPON 2013 programme priorities, should therefore take into consideration our suggestions for revised output, result and impact statements (see: 7.2.1 and 7.2.2).

As a consequence of the above-said, **a larger number of potential indicators had been elaborated for Priorities 1-4 alongside the suggested new output, result and impact statements** that can again be found in the overview tables attached to this report (**see: ANNEX 18, tables 1-3**).

Below only **a brief summary appraisal of the main features characterising the different indicator types is given**.

- **The proposed output indicators for Priorities 1-4** are all of a quantitative nature and data on them could easily be generated by the future programme management unit. A larger number of “general indicators” aim at determining the total number of actions realised or the amount of individual actions realised under a given Priority. There are also a number of more “specific indicators”, addressing particular aspects in the context of a priority that can be measured (e.g. number of stakeholder / user consultations realised; number of stakeholders / users contacted; number of indicators covered; number of seminars/events per year of operation).
- **The proposed result indicators for Priorities 1-4** are partly quantitative and partly of a qualitative nature. Also here, we consider that the necessary data / information can in principle be generated easily by the future programme management unit. The quantitative result indicators mostly aim at measuring the intensity of a use of ESPON data and results (e.g. number of users, number of document downloads from the ESPON-website, number of participants in seminars/events etc.). The qualitative result indicators - in turn - focus on generating information on improvements / progress achieved with respect to the ESPON 2006 programme and on the quality of results or the profile of ESPON-data users.
- **The proposed impact indicators for Priorities 1-4** are mostly of a qualitative nature. This is rather understandable for a programme with an overall intervention logic that focuses on generating policy-demand based knowledge (via applied research, data collection, targeted analysis) and on disseminating / creating awareness about this knowledge towards potential users. A few quantitative indicators are related to some expected impacts for which a measurement approach seems to be possible. Compared to the output/result indicators, however, some effort and imagination will be required to establish feasible arrangements that allow generating data and information on the issues addressed by the impact indicators. For issues that relate to the proper achievements of priority-level actions⁵⁴, i.e. thus being under a “direct” control of the programme management, one could envisage introducing specific provisions in the future project-reporting template in order to retrieve the necessary baseline information (see also below: elaboration of action-level indicators). Less controllable aspects related to the “external environment” such as own actions taken / opinions expressed by the wider community of users and policy-makers⁵⁵ will require other solutions: One could think of generating information by diffusing short questionnaires to participants of seminars / events or of networking activities. Other options are to create a “virtual opinion board” on the ESPON-website (accessible to all) and to precondition some information downloads from the ESPON-website with an answering of a short questionnaire. Finally, also the network of ESPON Contact Points could be entrusted with some functions in this respect, as they are an ideal interface that can gather / pool information on the specific national situations.

In case of Priority 5, the next stage of the programme-elaboration process should focus on identifying an appropriate set of output/result/impact indicators once the related statements are elaborated.

⁵⁴ E.g. ESPON-internal sources used elaborating strategic ESPON-publications; ESPON-internal judgements on the quality, comparability, transferability and usefulness of ESPON-deliveries (i.e. expressed by the task forces / sounding boards or by ECP national networking); ESPON project-internal appraisal of specific issues such as awareness, involvement, innovation etc.

⁵⁵ E.g. increased awareness of external users; practical usefulness of ESPON-deliveries for stakeholders / practitioners; external take-up and/or transfer of ESPON-evidence etc.

Suggestions for action-level indicators

In order to ensure that the above-proposed system of output, result and impact indicators at priority level remains manageable and useable by the implementing bodies and programme authorities, the evaluators were also asked to elaborate suggestions for indicators at action level.

A pragmatic solution was adopted to address this task of the ex-ante evaluation: Through a cross-referencing exercise, the already elaborated suggestions for priority-level output / result / impact indicators (see above) were linked to the envisaged actions under each priority in order to derive a number of logically related indicators for each action that are capable of providing information and evidence for a future monitoring of the programme priorities. A complete set of action-specific indicators could again only be elaborated for Priorities 1-4, due to the known weaknesses that still characterise Priority 5. The suggested action-specific indicators can again be found in an overview table that is annexed to this report (**see: ANNEX 18, table 4**).

However, one has to bear in mind that these action-specific indicators will only be able to retrieve information that is more or less under the direct control of those implementing the action. In practical terms one could think of including questions directly relating to these indicators in a future reporting template, which will have to be filled in by approved ESPON projects.

In the following, **only the most important features characterising the complete set of action-level indicators for Priorities 1-4 are described:**

- **The majority of action-level indicators are directly related to the output/result/impact indicators defined for the corresponding priority of the ESPON 2013 programme.** These action-specific indicators mostly aim at providing direct information that can feed into the overall monitoring of results and impacts at the level of the respective priority. Only in case of Priorities 3 and 4, some action-specific indicators will also retrieve information that supports the output-monitoring under the respective priority of the programme.
- **There is also a number of indicators at priority-level or action-level that are characterised by cross-priority relations.** This means in practice that information on some priority-level indicators is generated by one or more actions, which are realised under another programme priority. There are no cross-priority relations in case of Priority 3 actions and only relatively weak relations in case of some actions under Priority 1 (P1-A1, P1-A2) and Priority 2 (P2-A1, P2-A2, P2-A3). More substantial cross-priority relations do exist in case of all actions under Priority 4 and for one action under Priority 5, where action-level indicators will also retrieve information serving the priority-level impact monitoring under other priorities. The focus is either on establishing a multi-source based monitoring of the quality / validity of applied research outcomes (e.g. P4-A3 and P5-A2) or on retrieving information on the external utility and take-up of ESPON evidence by the wider community of users and policy-makers (e.g. P4-A1 and P4-A2).

In case of **Priority 5**, some preliminary suggestions for P5-A2 could also be developed by the above-described cross-referencing exercise. Yet, this still provisional set of action-specific indicators needs however to be further completed. For this purpose, the above-applied cross-referencing exercise can be applied once all of the priority-level output/result/impact indicators are elaborated. This might also require a definition of additional action-specific indicators under Priorities 1-4, as in case of Priority 5 action-specific indicators also some cross-priority relations might exist.

7.3. “Key findings” of the progress evaluation

7.3.1. An appraisal of the modifications realised in the subsequent programme versions

In the **Draft Final ESPON 2013 programme (12 September 2006)**, only a few modifications were realised in various sub-sections specifying the different programme priorities (Chapter II: section II.3 on “Priorities”). They focus mostly on Priorities 1-4 and have partly fine-tuned further some of the existing output / result / impact statements or adapted the related target values for their quantification (mostly at output-level). For Priority 5, the previously missing output / result / impact statements have not yet been elaborated. **The progress realised by the modifications in the context of Priorities 1-4 and the concrete effects regarding a quality-improvement of the programming document** can be summarised as follows:

- **The expected outputs under the various programme activities have become more realistic:** This is mostly a consequence of the adapted quantitative target values, which had been realised for the first time alongside more concrete figures for the future programme budget (total budget, indicative split according to the programme priorities).
- **The weak causality-relations between existing output / result / impact statements and the various programme objectives / actions continue to persist:** This is mostly due to the fact that the current statements have not been systematically cross-checked against the stated programme objectives and – in case of evident shortcomings – not amended accordingly. Due to this overall situation, the related needs for further changes in the programming document have still to be considered valid.
- **A coherent system of output / result / impact indicators at priority level (and a system of indicators at action level) has not yet been established and included into the programming document:** The final choice for a coherent indicator system could not be realised at this stage of the programming process, as the various programme objectives still needed to be reviewed and because further discussions with DG REGIO on the actual range of indicators to be taken into consideration by the future programme had not yet taken place.

The comments made by the delegations present at the **ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting of September 2006** did neither focus on improving further the causality-relations between existing output / result / impact statements and the various programme objectives / actions, nor on making an actual choice for determining a coherent system of output / result / impact indicators at priority level. Only the representatives of DG REGIO were asking to stronger emphasise the impact of future ESPON research in relation to European policies.

For the **Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme (1 December 2006)**, a larger number of modifications were realised in the context of the different programme priorities (Chapter II: section II.3 on “Priorities”). They have further fine-tuned further some of the existing output / result / impact statements, adapted the related target values for their quantification (mostly at output-level) and eliminated still existing gaps in the programming document (i.e. elaboration of output / result / impact statements for Priority 5). **The progress realised and the related effects can be summarised as follows:**

- **Under Priority 1, the current statements on outputs / results / impacts remain generally unchanged compared to the previous situation:** Whereas the output-

statement can be considered appropriate, one can still observe some weaknesses at the level of result- / impact-statements regarding their coherence with the stated programme objectives (i.e. higher-ranking objectives, operational objectives). Issues that could have been better highlighted in both cases are for example the required high quality of results (linking up to the role of task-forces/sounding boards) as well as their contribution to raise the effectiveness of regional policy and to further enhance territorial co-operation in Europe.

- **Also in the context of Priority 2, the current statements on outputs / results / impacts remain unchanged compared to the previous situation:** The output- and result-statements can be considered appropriate, but some weaknesses regarding the coherence of the impact-statement with respect to the related programme objectives (i.e. higher-ranking objectives) do persist. Issues that could have been better highlighted are for example their support to territorial strategy building and to an initialisation of territorial co-operation as well as their contribution to improve the understanding of territorial dynamics and of related cause-and effect relations.
- **Under Priority 3, only a few modifications were realised for the previous statements on outputs / results / impacts:** The content-related description and the quantitative targets of the output-statement have been further elaborated, which has led to a more detailed and realistic presentation that can be considered appropriate and in line with other changes realised in the context of this priority (i.e. new actions). Compared to this, the result- and impact statements remain unchanged compared to the previous situation. And also here, weaknesses regarding their coherence with the stated programme objectives (i.e. higher-ranking objectives, operational objectives) do persist in both cases. Issues that could have been better highlighted are for example an improved territorial knowledge base needed for informed policy formulation, an increased practitioner support and a better understanding of territorial dynamics.
- **In the context of Priority 4, the quantitative targets of the output-statement and the content-related descriptions of output / result / impact statements have been further elaborated:** The most significant progress has been achieved at the level of the output-statement, which is now much more concrete and in line with other changes realised in the context of this priority (i.e. new actions). Some weaknesses regarding the coherence of result- and impact-statements in relation to existing programme objectives (i.e. higher-ranking objectives, operational objectives) do however persist. Issues that could have been better highlighted are for example an increased awareness / ownership / feed back on applied research activities as well as the initiation of a more intense policy dialogue on aspects related to territorial development.
- **The most significant changes can be observed within Priority 5, as the previously missing output / result / impact statements have now been extensively elaborated:** The new sub-sections extensively describe the expected outputs and provide for appropriate result- and impact statements that are coherent with the stated programme objectives (i.e. higher-ranking objectives, operational objectives).

At this stage, **the Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme did not yet include a precise list of indicators that will have to be applied in forthcoming evaluation.** It was however announced to the ex-ante evaluators that a specific “programme annex” will be elaborated in the very short term that aims at specifying the set of output, result and impact indicators for each programme priority.

7.3.2. The appropriateness of output, result and impact indicators mentioned in the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme

On the 6th of December 2006, a document specifying the “quantitative indicators for the evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme” (Annex V.4 to the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme) was provided to the ex-ante evaluators. It lists – alongside the corresponding statements on outputs / results / impacts – the respective indicators that will be applied at the level of the different programme priorities. In addition, each sub-section (V.4.1-V.4.3) also briefly describes the nature of the indicators and the process for retrieving the relevant data/information.

If one compares the various statements on outputs, results and impacts mentioned in this Annex-document, **it appears that an inconsistency exists with respect to the statements elaborated in the body text under the various programme priorities (i.e. sections II.4.1-II.4.5)**. This shortcoming should be corrected before the final submission of the programme document that is expected to take place at the very beginning of 2007.

In order to realise the envisaged **appropriateness-assessment of the output / result / impact indicators**, it was orally agreed among the ex-ante evaluators and the parties involved in the elaboration of the ESPON 2013 Programme to take into consideration only the **statements elaborated under the various programme priorities and to compare them to the list of indicators mentioned on the left side of the tables in the annex-document**. To facilitate this exercise, three comparative overview tables have been drawn up that bring together both of the aforementioned elements (**see: ANNEX 19**).

Although there is no standard method for verifying the appropriateness of the proposed priority-level output / result / impact indicators and their quantification, we will apply a **quality assessment approach** that is proposed in the on-line evaluation guide of the European Commission. This quality assessment of programme indicators takes into consideration a larger number of criteria that can be divided into two main groups: (1) Quality criteria applicable to each indicator type and (2) quality criteria applicable to the entire indicator system.

Quality assessment for each indicator type

The usefulness and quality of the different indicator types (i.e. output-, result- and impact-indicators) depends upon the availability of data, the sensitivity of indicators to the intervention, their reliability & credibility, their comparability, their normativity and their meaning & validity.

- **Availability of data:** The current set of output and result indicators across the five programme priorities are all of a quantitative nature. Their definition clearly prescribes what should be quantified and the type of information to be produced indicates that it can quite easily be quantified at regular intervals. The stated impact-indicators across all priorities are mostly of a qualitative nature, wherefore in those cases a direct quantification will be rather difficult. Through the envisaged production of various levels of qualitative information (high, medium, low), it seems however to be possible elaborating at regular intervals an indirect second-level quantification for the expected impacts (i.e. proportion of high, medium or low ratings expressed in % of the total).
- **Sensitivity:** The capacity of the different programme interventions to impact on the stated output and result indicators under all programme priorities can be considered very high. All output / result indicators chosen are conceived in a way that the programme interventions are capable of bringing about a change in the respective

indicator values during the respective phases of the programme implementation process. This sensitivity tends however to be stronger for all output indicators (i.e. due to the numerous baseline targets mentioned in the output statements) than in case of the result indicators (i.e. there are no clearly quantified baseline targets mentioned in the result statements). Such a clear cause-and-effect relationship does not exist in the context of the predominantly qualitative impact indicators. Although it is highly probable that the various ratings levels for qualitative information to be produced (high, medium, low) will change over time, the sensitivity of impact indicators will much more be conditioned by the soundness of the evaluation method applied and the quality of the evaluation team in charge.

- **Reliability & Credibility:** The information produced by applying the stated output- and result indicators tends to be highly reliable and credible. This means that the same measurement, taken by two different evaluators under identical conditions, will produce the same value for the respective indicators. As concerns the predominantly qualitative impact indicators, however, a high degree of reliability and credibility will in most cases not occur this mechanically. It will strongly be conditioned by the quality of the questions put forward to potential interviewees as well as by their own (subjective) appreciation of the evaluation issue at stake (response given). Thus, the overall outcome tends therefore to depend upon the soundness of the method applied and the independence / reputation of the evaluation team in place.
- **Comparability:** The entire system of indicators was elaborated from a priority-specific point of view, wherefore an assessment of the extent to which indicators are allowing for a programme-internal comparison between different priorities (or even inter-programme comparisons) is not considered relevant in this particular context.
- **Normativity:** The stated output-, result-, and impact indicators are all related to a specific normative concept that - in each case - is the corresponding output-, result-, and impact-statement elaborated under the different programme priorities. The degree of normativity is highest in case of all output-indicators, as they are clearly related to a large range of quantitative baseline targets mentioned in the corresponding output statements. In case of several result- and impact indicators, however, the degree of normativity is not yet at a fully satisfactory level. This is mostly due to the fact that not all of result/impact statements are yet fully consistent with the stated higher-ranking programme objectives and/or the priority-level operational objectives (see: 7.3.1.).
- **Meaning & Validity:** The meaning of the stated output-, result-, and impact indicators is generally high, as they can quite easily be understood by everyone who has to use them. This level of understanding is likely to be highest in case of the output/result indicators due to their quantitative nature, whereas the qualitative concepts behind the priority-level impact indicators might require some further explications to be provided at a later stage. In most cases the set of output-, result-, and impact indicators is valid, as they accurately reflect the overall corresponding normative concept (i.e. output-, result-, and impact statements) to be measured by them. Only for a few constellations, a cross-referencing of information contained in the different overview tables (see: ANNEX 19) shows that some improvements are still possible. Our recommendations for potential changes in the respective indicator-sets concerned are summarised below (see: Figure 9).

Figure 9: Recommended changes in the indicator system (suggestions for new or modified indicators)

Priority	Output Indicators	Result Indicators	Impact indicators
P1	-	New indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of territorial entities covered (European, national, regional, different territorial entities). 	-
P2	-	New indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics addressed by the actions realised. Number of new project ideas emerging as due to the actions realised. 	-
P3	-	-	-
P4	-	New indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new proposals for action implemented. 	New indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of policy documents making reference to ESPON evidence / data or reproducing ESPON maps.
P5	Modification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meetings organised (MC, CA, CC, AA/GoA). Number of networking activities organised, including ECP meetings. New indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of guidelines, project descriptions, assessment reports realised. Total number of on-the-spot checks realised. 	New indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of in-time delivered reports and number of delayed reports. Number of projects implemented in-time and number of projects with delay. 	-

Quality assessment for the entire programme indicator system

The entire programme indicator systems should ideally provide for coverage, balance, selectivity and relevance.

- **Coverage:** The indicators selected cover all of the 5 programme priorities, i.e. the level of coverage concerns 100% of the planned programme expenditure.
- **Balance:** The current indicator system of the ESPON 2013 Programme displays a good balance between the different indicator types, as it consists of 19 output indicators and 24 result / impact indicators. This positive situation would even be

further improved if all of the above-suggested new indicators (2 output indicators; 7 result/impact indicators) are integrated into the existing system.

- **Selectivity:** The system of indicators is sufficiently simple, i.e. the system respects the future programme managers' capacity to absorb the related information.
- **Relevance:** The indicator system as a whole is highly relevant, as indicators were developed for all priorities that have significant implications in terms of decision-making (covering the entire programme budget; all innovative measures; all themes considered to be strategic).

7.4. Summary Conclusions

If one considers the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme (1 December 2006), **the following summary conclusions** can be formulated with respect to the statements on expected outputs / results / impacts and the related programme indicator system:

- **Under all 5 programme priorities, the output-statements have to be considered appropriate.** They are fully in line with the corresponding priority-level objectives and the planned priority-level actions.
- **Some weaknesses regarding the coherence of various result- and impact-statements in relation to existing higher-ranking programme objectives and/or operational objectives continue to persist under most of the existing programme priorities** (Priority 1: result- & impact-statements; Priority 2: impact-statement; Priority 3: result- & impact-statements, Priority 4: result- & impact-statements).
- **The individual indicator types (i.e. output-, result- and impact-indicators) mentioned in the Annex V.4 to the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme are all very useful and show a high level of quality.** This overall judgement can be confirmed for the large majority of quality assessment criteria applied, which examined for example the possible quantification of indicators at regular intervals (availability of data), the sensitivity of indicators, their reliability and credibility as well as the meaning of indicators. **Some improvements** should however be made to further strengthen the “normativity” and “validity” of some indicator types (i.e. sufficiently sound relation of indicators to a programme-specific normative concept; adequate reflection of this normative concept by indicators).
- **Seen as a whole, however, the entire programme indicator system displays very high level of quality.** It is characterised by an extensive coverage (i.e. the system includes the 5 programme priorities and 100% of the planned expenditure), a good balance between the different indicator types, a well-developed selectivity (i.e. the system respects the future programme managers' capacity to absorb the related information) and a high level of relevance.

8. The implementation system and its compliance with the Structural Funds Regulations for the period 2007-2013

8.1. “General observations” resulting from the evaluability assessment

The evaluability assessment has only realised a rapid summary appraisal of those parts in the **1st Draft Operational ESPON Programme** that refer to the implementation system, i.e. Chapter IV on “implementation provisions” and Chapter V on “final provisions”.

- **Chapter IV** already contained a number of provisions that further detail the future functions, tasks and responsibilities of the different programme authorities (Section IV.1) as well as of the monitoring & evaluation system (Section IV.2). Compared to this, the provisions relating to the management & control system (Section IV.3), to audit (Section IV.4) and to the communication plan (Section IV.5) were only partially / not at all elaborated. With respect to all the existing provisions in the 1st Draft, one can assume that they had been elaborated on ground of the available draft versions for the new Structural Funds regulations 2007-2013.
- Under **Chapter V**, the text for the partner agreement (Section V.2) was not yet elaborated. Accordingly, no “consistency check” comparing its contents with the already elaborated implementation provisions of the future programme (Chapter IV) could be realised.

Due to the above-mentioned situation, no general observations were elaborated on these Chapters of the 1st Draft ESPON 2016 Programme.

8.2. The in-depth evaluation and related “first recommendations”

In the **2nd Draft Operational ESPON Programme (25th of July 2006)**, no significant progress with respect to a further concretisation of the “implementation provisions” under Chapter IV of the document could be achieved. This was mainly due to the fact that the actual publication of the new EU-Structural Funds Regulations 2006-2013 in the Official Journal (L210 of 31.07.2006) has only taken place after the completion of the 2nd Draft Programme.

As a consequence of this, it was agreed among the parties involved in the ex-ante evaluation to start the in-depth assessment only at a later stage when a more substantial revision of these provisions has taken place that is in line with the definitive version of the new Structural Funds regulations for 2007-2013.

8.3. “Key findings” of the progress evaluation

8.3.1. An appraisal of the modifications realised in the subsequent programme versions

In the **Draft Final ESPON 2013 programme (12 September 2006)**, the detailed description of the “implementation provisions” (Chapter IV of the document) was modified and streamlined in the light of the final version of the Council Regulation laying down general provisions on the ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund (EC-Regulation No 1083/2006) and of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund (EC-Regulation No 1080/2006). However, the text for the “agreement between Programme partners” (Section V.2) was still not yet included in this version of the programming document.

Only a few comments made by the delegations present at the **ESPON Monitoring Committee meeting of September 2006** did focus on improving further the detailed description of the “implementation provisions”. The representatives of DG REGIO were asking to further rationalise the wording relating to the “concertation committee”, which is foreseen under section IV.1.2 (“Other programme bodies and networks”) of the document. In addition, a representative of the Luxembourg delegation highlighted that problems might occur in the national legal / administrative context if the intended full switch from the current system of “subsidy contracts” to the envisaged future approach of “service contracts” is realised.

For the **Final Draft ESPON 2013 programme (1 December 2006)**, a larger number of modifications were again realised in the context of Chapter IV, which have further fine-tuned the already existing provisions in the light of the outcomes of previously held discussions. Only at a few places, some precise references to EC-Regulations are still missing. In addition, the “agreement between Programme partners” has been eliminated from Chapter V on Annexes and will therefore not be any further considered by this ex-ante evaluation. These more substantial improvements allowed starting the in-depth assessment of this part of the programming document, for which the main results are presented in the next section of the ex-ante evaluation report (see: 8.3.2).

8.3.2. An assessment of the implementing provisions in the Final Draft ESPON 2013 Programme and an appraisal of the risks associated to these provisions

According to the overall approach adopted for this ex-ante evaluation, the evaluators are required

- to assess the implementing provisions of the ESPON 2013 programme, including an examination of previous experience (**sub-task 5.1**),
- to appraise the risks associated to the implementing provisions of the ESPON 2013 programme, i.e. possible bottlenecks which might impede implementation of the programme and formulate recommendations for preventive actions (**sub-task 5.2**).

The **most important experiences made with the implementation of the previous ESPON 2006 Programme** have already been extensively taken into consideration under Section II.2.3 of the programming document, which forms part of the wider analysis of the present situation. The way how key findings resulting from the mid-term evaluation / its subsequent

up-date were integrated into the programme and how they were pro-actively converted into concrete “needs” to ensure a smooth operation of the future ESPON 2013 Programme (under section II.2.4 of the document) is appropriate and allows stating that a clear learning process has taken place within the programme. This impression is further supported by the fact that explicit additional references to this prior experience are again made in the “introductory sub-section” to Priority 5 (II.4.5). As a consequence of this, the ex-ante evaluators do not consider necessary to further deepen the examination of previous experiences gained under the ESPON 2006 Programme.

As already mentioned above, the **“implementation provisions” for the ESPON 2013 Programme** are laid down in Chapter IV of the document. It distinguishes between two main sub-sections that are currently entitled “Management” (IV.1) and “Information and publicity” (IV.2). **The main findings of our in-depth assessment (and the related recommendations) can be summarised as follows:**

- **Section IV.1 “Management”, sub-section designating the programme authorities (IV.1.1):** The provisions relating to the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority, the Coordination Unit and the Audit Authority/Group of Auditors are generally in line with those to be found in the related Structural Funds Regulations (i.e. General-Regulation, ERDF-Regulation). Some of the provisions are slightly shortened compared to the original formulations in the Regulations and in some cases a number of new / additional provisions have been added that take up issues which are of a specific relevance for the future ESPON 2013 Programme (i.e. tasks of the Monitoring Committee, whole paragraph on the ESPON–CU). Only in the context of two sub-sections, we recommend to make **slight text-improvements** to avoid duplication or misunderstandings: The first improvement concerns section b), which relates to the future Programme Monitoring Committee. The last bullet point specifying the composition of the MC (representatives of the Commission) contains duplication in relation to the next following paragraph, where the same issue (“advisory capacity”) is mentioned again. It could be worthwhile re-considering and eliminating this minor shortcoming. The second improvement should be made under section d), which relates to the future “ESPON Co-ordination Unit”. In the context of Art. 14(1) of the ERDF-Regulation, no mentioning of a “Co-ordination Unit” can be found in the text. Only a reference to a “Joint Technical Secretariat” is included here. Acknowledging that both structures are certainly meant to be identical in this particular case, it would however be more appropriate to start the relevant paragraph as follows: *According to Article 14(1) of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006, a Joint Technical Secretariat adopting the form of a Coordination Unit will be set up in order to (...).*
- **Section IV.1 “Management”, sub-section designating facilitating bodies and networks (IV.1.2):** These are provisions not derived from prescriptions in the Structural Funds Regulations that partly aim at creating specific structures to support / facilitate the overall implementation of the future ESPON 2013 programme (i.e. Concertation Committee, ESPON Contact Point Network) and partly aim at defining the context for an involvement of specific non-EU-Member States invited to participate in the programme (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein). These provisions can in general be considered appropriate for fulfilling the assigned purpose. Especially the networking provisions in the ESPON 2013 programme have further simplified / clarified the role and function of the ECP-network, if compared to the previous programming period. They are now allow setting up a decentralised support structure that is capable of stimulating a wider involvement in ESPON and of ensuring a wider dissemination of / awareness-raising on future project results towards policy makers and practitioners.

- **Section IV.1 “Management”, sub-section laying down provisions for setting up the management and control systems (IV.1.3):** In more detail, these provisions are related to procedures for the selection and approval of operations, the control system, the eligibility of expenditure, the mobilisation & circulation of financial flows, the computerised exchange of data, evaluation and the delivery of additional information. By reviewing the various regulatory references mentioned and by taking into consideration the specific context of the ESPON 2013 programme, one can state that the provisions are generally appropriate and in line with the prescriptions in the General-Regulation and the ERDF-Regulation. Only in the context of notion of “indirect beneficiaries” (p.67), **it might be worthwhile re-considering** the rather narrow view that only the public authorities at administrative level will receive the knowledge, results, data, tolls etc. from the programme and no direct subsidies. Can it not be possible that also non-public organisations / actors will receive these outcomes and no direct subsidies? If this is the case, than a slight modification to the current text should be made.
- **Section IV.2 “Information & Publicity”:** The provisions under this section of the programming document are generally more than sufficient to comply with the basic requirements as laid down in the Structural Funds Regulations. They also provide first specifications for the envisaged implementation of a specific “Communication Plan” (to be developed after the adoption of the programme), which will be realised via a specific programme action foreseen under Priority 5 (see: Section II.4.5 of the programme). Together with the additional text-references under Priority 5, the programme provisions are likely to help increasing the awareness on future ESPON work and to disseminate research results / findings to a broader audience.

Seen as a whole, **the ex-ante evaluators can not identify an evident risk associated to these implementing provisions (i.e. possible bottlenecks) that might – at a later stage - impede a smooth implementation of the ESPON 2013 programme.**

8.4. Summary Conclusions

If one considers the most recent version of the ESPON 2013 Programme (1 December 2006), **the following summary conclusions** can be formulated with respect to the appropriateness of the implementing provisions:

- **The provisions elaborated for the designated programme authorities are generally in line with the prescriptions of the new EU Structural Funds Regulations.** They clearly describe the specific roles / tasks / responsibilities of the Managing Authority, the Monitoring Committee, the Certifying Authority, the ESPON-CU and the Audit Authority / Group of Auditors. The provisions also specify the co-operation mechanisms / working procedures between these individual components of the wider management system and the related reporting procedures.
- Beyond these formally required programme authorities, the ESPON 2013 programme also defines **transparent provisions for setting up specific facilitating bodies / networks** (i.e. Concertation Committee, ESPON Contact Point Network) **and for clarifying the relationship between involved Partner States** (non-EU Member States) **and ESPON.**
- In addition, **the provisions clearly describe a number of other programme-related implementation / management / control procedures** (i.e. selection & approval of operations, control system, eligibility of expenditure, mobilisation &

circulation of financial flows, computerised exchange of data, delivery of additional information) **and define the context for a future evaluation of the ESPON 2013 Programme.**

- Finally, the ESPON 2013 Programme also contains detailed **provisions on “Information & Publicity” that are fully in line with the basic requirements as laid down in the Structural Funds Regulations and enable to increase the awareness on future ESPON work as well as to disseminate research results / findings to a broader audience.**
- Considering the above-said, **one can say that the overall management and implementation system is convincing and appropriate for realising a smooth delivery of the future ESPON 2013 programme.** This means also that the entire set of provision elaborated is actually able to support a concrete realisation of the “strategic objective” mentioned in the programme that explicitly refers to this particular issue of crucial importance.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Presentation of main evaluation tasks / sub-tasks and related evaluation questions

Main Evaluation Task 1:	
Appraisal of the socio-economic situation of the eligible area, analysis of the needs, and the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified	
Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 1.1: The evaluator(s) will have to examine the preliminary analysis of the socio-economic (and territorial) situation of the European territory (SWOT-like) and the key sectors of intervention presented in the draft programming document for an ESPON II.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there important quantitative baseline data or research-based findings (e.g. from ESPON I) that should have been better taken into consideration in the assessment of the programme context? • On ground of the experience made under the ESPON I programme, are the fields / areas where important data-deficiencies at a European-wide level continue to exist well considered in the new ESPON II programme strategy? • Have the long-term perspectives and challenges of territorial development in Europe been sufficiently taken into account? • Have the territorial challenges / specific needs of national / regional actors and other Structural Funds programmes (“convergence” and “competitiveness and employment” programmes; INTERREG follow up programmes) sufficiently been taken into consideration? • Have the territorial challenges / specific needs related to the recent enlargement of the European Union and of a future EU-enlargement sufficiently been taken into consideration? • Have the territorial challenges / specific needs of EFTA countries and other neighbouring Third Countries of the European Union sufficiently been taken into consideration? • By considering the above-mentioned aspects, how can the current situation of the European territory be described in terms of strengths and weaknesses (i.e. potentials, existing disparities & gaps) and which are the opportunities and threats (i.e. immediate needs and future challenges) in this respect?
<p>Sub-task 1.2: On the basis of Task 1.1, the evaluator(s) will have to appraise and assess the relevance of the approach underlying the programme strategy, i.e. relevance of the programme priorities and objectives proposed, in relation to the needs identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the ESPON II programme represent a suitable strategy to meet the previously identified needs / challenges that are to be confronted in the future? • Does the approach of the programme takes account of the new driving forces shaping or likely to shape in the future the European territory? • Does the approach take account of the new information needs which may result from new EU policy orientations (for instance higher priority for urban issues)? • Are the ESPON II programme strategy's objectives and its priorities relevant to achieve the previously identified needs / challenges? • Which are the aspects that should be included into / improved in the ESPON II programme strategy in order to further increase its relevance?

Main Evaluation Task 2: Evaluation of the rationale of the strategy, its overall consistency and the degree of risk involved in the choice of priorities	
Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 2.1: The evaluator(s) will have to examine the rationale of the strategy, i.e. to realise an in depth analysis of priorities and objectives. The analysis must also briefly consider the role of public intervention as such (via the programme and envisaged priorities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the programme strategy contain well-defined and clear objectives at various levels (strategy-level: general objectives / policy goals; priority-level objectives)? • What is the overall rationale of the programme strategy (i.e. of the objectives and priorities) and is the rationale underlying the intervention logic valid? • To what extent do the programme interventions promote economic growth, social cohesion and sustainability (i.e. Lisbon objectives)? • To what extent does the programme strategy provide for “openness” with respect to other EU-programmes addressing similar / related aspects (INTERACT, URBACT)?
<p>Sub-task 2.2: The evaluator(s) will have to assess the internal coherence and consistency of the strategy, requiring an in-depth cross-analysis of the relationships and complementarities between the different priorities, including the contribution of each priority to the programme objectives, and how the combination of priorities will contribute to achieving these objectives.*) The adequacy (proportionality) of the financial allocation to each priority should also be assessed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the individual “objective strings” at priority-level (specific objectives & operational objectives) contribute to the overall policy goals formulated for the programme strategy? • What are the relationships in terms of complementarities / synergies between the different “objective strings” at priority level? Are there any conflicts between priorities? • Is there an alternative combination of priorities (“intervention mix”) that might be more appropriate to achieve the programme’s overall objectives? • Have sufficiently robust provisions (with respect to activities and financial resources) been included into the new ESPON II programme that allow realising more focussed follow-up actions to ensure the sustainability of present and future ESPON results? • Are the envisaged overall financial resources available to the new programme sufficient to meet the ambitions of the programme’s overall objectives and priorities? • What kind of interventions / types of activities can realistically be realised within the allocated overall financial resources?
<p>Sub-task 2.3: The evaluator(s) will have to assess the degree of policy risk involved in the choice of priorities examine the potential risks of the programme. **)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an adequate balance between more standard measures and innovative approaches (i.e. compared to the ESPON I programme and the new needs identified)? • Does the new ESPON II programme contain specific provisions for the participation of candidate countries, which will possibly join the EU during the period 2007-2013? • To what extent are risks implicit in the proposed objectives at various levels that might seriously hamper the implementation of the future programme and the achievement of its objectives? • If such risks do exist, how can they be minimised?

Main Evaluation Task 3: Appraisal of the external coherence of the strategy with Community Strategic Guidelines	
Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 3.1: The evaluator(s) will have to examine the “external coherency” of the strategy with regard to key Community policies and objectives, as reflected in the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the intervention logic and the priorities of the ESPON II programme consistent with the CSG? • What kind of interaction / synergy does exist between the ESPON II programme priorities and its logic of intervention and the CSG?
<p>Sub-task 3.2: Based upon task 3.1, the evaluator(s) will also have to appraise the potential of the programme to deliver relevant elements supporting the achievement of, in particular, the Lisbon Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the ESPON II programme strategy contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies? • What are the synergies / potentials of the ESPON II programme to deliver relevant elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies?
Main Evaluation Task 4: Evaluation of expected results and impacts	
<p>Sub-task 4.1: The evaluator(s) will have to verify that the proposed output and result indicators and quantified objectives at priority level are appropriate and reflect the structure and hierarchy of priorities and objectives of the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to the experience under ESPON I, have more appropriate and sophisticated performance indicators been defined for the ESPON II programme that are practical and allow realising a reasonable quantification of progress against both priority level objectives and overall objectives? • Is the quantification of objectives at priority level appropriate and in line with the proposed output and result indicators? • Does the quantification of objectives at priority level reflect the structure and hierarchy of priorities and objectives of the ESPON II programme? • What are relevant findings from the mid-term evaluation / the update of the mid-term evaluation of the ESPON I Programme that should be taken into consideration in this context? • What are relevant aspects in the EC draft working paper on “Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation” that should be taken into consideration in this context?

Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 4.2: The evaluator(s) will have to propose reliable impact indicators and possibly quantified targets, at priority level. In cases where quantification would not be possible, the evaluator(s) should at least assess and ensure the causality between outputs, results and impacts. Also, the coherence of the impact indicators defined at priority level with the higher level objectives at Community level should be appraised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are relevant aspects from the EC draft working paper on “Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation” that should be better taken into consideration in a further development of impact indicators? • What are reliable impact indicators (quantitative and qualitative) at priority level that allow determining the expected overall consequences of the future ESPON II programme beyond the immediate effects? • Have impact indicators been included into the new ESPON II programme for determining the level of medium- and long-term take up of future ESPON results at Community-level and lower levels of spatial policy action (transnational, cross-border, national / regional levels)? • To what extent will it be possible to measure in quantified terms the overall impact of the future ESPON II programme? • Do qualitative impact indicators display a clear causality in relation to the expected outputs and results at priority level? • Does the set of quantitative and qualitative impact indicators at priority level establish a coherent link with higher level objectives at Community level (i.e. as reflected in the Community Strategic Guidelines and the Lisbon/Gothenburg strategies)? • Based upon the suggested set of impact indicators, what will be the potential overall impact of the ESPON II programme in quantitative terms?
<p>Sub-task 4.3: It might be necessary that the evaluator(s) will have to define indicators also at action level, in order to ensure that the indicator system remains manageable and useable by the implementing bodies and programme authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are potential action-related output and result indicators for the future ESPON II programme that can easily be incorporated into the wider programme-level indicator system? • To what extent are these action-related output and result indicators effectively usable / applicable in the context of the future programme monitoring system?

Main Evaluation Task 5: Appraisal of the proposed implementation systems, compliance with Council Regulation laying down general provision on the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund.	
Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 5.1: The evaluator(s) should assess the implementing provisions of the ESPON II programme (i.e. the designation of bodies and procedures for implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems, partnerships arrangements, publicity procedures etc.), including an examination of previous experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed implementation system of the future ESPON II programme generally in line with the prescriptions of the new EU Structural Funds Regulations and does it clearly describe the specific roles / responsibilities of the individual management structures (i.e. Managing Authority, Certifying Authority ESPON-CU, Audit Authority, competent bodies in the Member States, body responsible for making payments to the beneficiaries)? • Are the proposed co-operation mechanisms / procedures between the individual management structures of the future ESPON II programme convincing and appropriate to realise a smooth delivery of the defined programme objectives? • Are the reporting procedures clearly described in the programme? • Does the future ESPON II programme contain clear prescriptions for evaluation at programme level? • Has an effective financial control system and efficient payment process been established that helps avoiding future under-spending (a de-commitment) of funds available? • Does the future ESPON II programme contain provisions for an efficient technical assistance and does it allocate sufficient resources to the respective tasks (human & financial resources)? • Does the future ESPON II programme contain appropriate provisions for a decentralised support structure (contact points) to maintain proximity relations / contacts with the project promoters? • Compared to previous ESPON I experience (e.g. ECP-network, seminars etc.), are the networking provisions in the ESPON II programme appropriate to further open up future project results to the wider practitioner community and lower administrative levels? • Has the role and function of networking under a future ESPON II programme been simplified and clarified? • Have appropriate provisions been included into the new ESPON II programme ensuring a review and scientific validation of future project outputs/results as well as a better cross-fertilisation of ESPON II projects? • Has an appropriate communication strategy been developed that is likely to help increasing the awareness of future ESPON work and to disseminate research results / findings to a broader audience?
<p>Sub-task 5.2: The evaluator(s) should appraise the risks associated to the implementing provisions of the ESPON II programme, i.e. possible bottlenecks which might impede implementation of the programme and formulate recommendations for preventive actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are potential risks / possible bottlenecks of the implementing provisions (co-operation mechanisms / procedures) that might impede an overall management / monitoring of the ESPON II programme or its project-based implementation process? • Does the envisaged allocation of financial and human resources to the implementation system represent an eventual risk for effectively accomplishing the workload attributed to the specific management structures? • What are feasible recommendations for actions to prevent potential risks / possible bottlenecks (i.e. with respect to the key responsibilities of the various bodies involved in the programme; monitoring and reporting arrangements; effective financial control mechanisms acceptable to all participating countries; effective project development mechanisms; project selection methodology and core criteria; specific arrangements for innovative operations)?

Main Evaluation Task 6: Application of the SEA Directive (EC 2001/42) to the ESPON II programme	
Sub-tasks	Related evaluation questions
<p>Sub-task 6.1: The evaluator(s) are only requested to carry out the implementation of an “examination of the likely significant environmental effects of the ESPON II programme”, based on the criteria defined by the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, Art. 3 (5) and Annex II.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree does the programme set a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to their location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources? • To what degree does the programme influence other plans and programmes? • How relevant is the programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development? • Are there any environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme? • Is the programme relevant for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)? • What is the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the environmental effects? • What is the potential cumulative nature of the effects? • Are the potential effects of a transboundary nature? • What are the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)? • What is the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)? • What is the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected? • What are the likely effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status?

ANNEX 2: Initial timetable for the ex-ante evaluation, as prescribed by the Terms of Reference

Ex-ante Evaluation process	Operational Programme
Early June 2006 Kick-off meeting with evaluator(s) MA, CU	Early June 2006 First Draft Operational Programme
June 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, exchange of information on the basis of the First Draft Operational Programme between programme authorities and evaluator(s). • First analysis based on first draft programme. 	26-27 June 2006 MC meeting: discussion and comments on First Draft Operational Programme
End June- 31 July 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further analysis based the second draft programme. Elaboration of first recommendations and draft structure of Ex-ante Evaluation Report by 31 July 2006. • Eventually: delivery of the "Screening environmental effects report". • Coordination meeting early August 2006. 	Early July 2006 Improvement of the First Draft, based on MC comments. Elaboration of a "Second Draft" Operational Programme
Early August 2006 – 1 September 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of Draft Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report. • Delivery of the Draft Final Report by 1 September 2006. 	Early August 2006 – 8 September 2006 Elaboration of Draft Final Programme, also integrating (1 st week of September) results of the Draft Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report.
20-21 September 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion at MC meeting of the draft Final ex-ante evaluation report at the MC meeting (together with the Draft Final Programme). 	20-21 September 2006 Discussion at MC meeting of the Draft Final ESPON 2013 Operational Programme.
End September – 13 October 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of the Ex-ante Evaluation Final Report, integrating MC comments, also integrating last modifications implemented on the draft final programme. • Delivery of the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report by 13 October 2006. 	End September – Mid-October Finalisation of the ESPON 2013 Operational Programme.
Submission of the consolidated ESPON II Operational Programme to the Commission by Mid-October 2006, including Ex-ante Evaluation Final Report	

ANNEX 3: Evaluability Assessment: Overview on “general observations” made on the 1st Draft ESPON 2006 programme

Box 1:

Summary of general observations relating to the introduction and Sections I.1 & I.2

- In the introduction, some clarifications regarding the sources used for the description should be provided. In addition, the list of new territorial challenges should be improved.
- In section 1.2, the description of the new territorial challenges should better take into account the outcomes of the ESPON 2006 Programme.

Box 2:

Summary of general observations relating to Section II.1

- The entire section II.1 should be deeply re-structured. For this purpose, a new presentation focussing on three different parts should be adopted: (1) A truly SWOT-like analysis of the European territory and its evolution that is mainly based upon the outputs of the ESPON 2006 Programme, (2) a truly SWOT-like analysis of the ESPON 2006 Programme and (3) a concluding part that summarises the overall need for a new ESPON Programme and its main orientations.
- The above-mentioned SWOT-assessments should observe the generally known minimum-standards that are defined for this method.

Box 3:

Summary of general observations relating to the section on “Objectives”

- A larger number of descriptive text blocks in the section that tend to dilute the visibility / coherence of the entire objective-system should be eliminated or transferred elsewhere.
- The current denomination for the different objective-types should be changed in order to indicate more clearly their respective place in the wider hierarchy of programme objectives (“*strategic objective*” could be re-named into “overall objective” or “overall goal”; “*overall objectives*” could be re-named into “strategic objectives”; “*specific objectives*” can remain as they are).
- The current statements elaborated for the specific objective-types at all levels should be further improved with respect to their clarity and consistency (e.g. sharpen the statement on the “*strategic objective*”; reduce the number of “*overall objectives*” and sharpen their statements; improve the statements for “*specific objectives*”).
- Eliminate still existing weaknesses in the objective system to obtain a clearer presentation of the overall rationale of the programme strategy.

Box 4:***Summary of general observations relating to the section on “Priorities”***

- Despite already existing structuring elements in the sub-sections referring to the individual priorities, the formal presentation of the programme priorities should be made more homogenous and also be further differentiated (headings on: Introduction, operational objectives at priority level, main types of action, operational provisions, target groups & beneficiaries, expected outputs/results/impacts).
- Existing objective-statements under the individual priorities should be shorter / more straightforward/ more affirmative and under Priority 5 clear objective statements still have to be elaborated.
- The profile of the currently envisaged actions under Priority 2 and Priority 4 should be further differentiated / sharpened in order to achieve a more adequate user-orientation (P2) and to avoid potential duplication effects (P4), while under Priority 3 the tools-related target group orientation should be further clarified.

Box 5:***Summary of general observations relating to the “Introduction” and Sections I.1, II.1 and II.2.***

- Isolated text blocks that can be found in section II.1 as well as in section II.2 should be transferred to Chapter I, as this seems to be the most appropriate place for “setting the scene” in a more general way.
- Beyond the merely descriptive approach adopted in the 1st Draft, the “context setting” elements of the future ESPON II programme should be more analytical.

ANNEX 4: In-depth Evaluation: Overview on recommendations relating to the socio-economic / territorial situation analysis

Box 1:	
<p>Section I.1 “Framework conditions related to the development of the European territory”,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group together the 1st and last sentences of the section relating to the contribution of the ESPON 2006 Programme for identifying territorial challenges and make it introductory statement to this section. • Group together the 1st and last bullets (addressing the global economic conditions of European territorial development). Add the issue of a “fragmentation of the European economy”. • Create a new bullet point showing the growing interactions between the EU territory and its environment (neighbourhood, Europe in the world) in terms of demography (migration pressure, demographic decline), economy (access to EU markets, economic inter-penetration at intercontinental scale), environment (Mediterranean, Black Sea) and energy supply (fossil resources, pipelines). • Re-formulate the bullet point “energy prices are increasing ...” as follows: <i>“Growing energy prices and the emergence of a new energy paradigm have strong territorial impacts, some regions being more affected and others showing substantial potential for the production of renewable energy”.</i>
<p>Section I.2, “Milestones in policy development relevant for regions and larger territories”</p>	<p>Establish a clearer link with Section I.1 (“Framework conditions...”) by the following improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three bullet points relating to the strategic objectives of key importance of (p.7) should be placed immediately after the bullet point recalling the main EU policy documents such as the Structural Policies and the Lisbon Agenda (p.6). The three bullet points should be followed by the sentence “the EU Commissioner and Ministers...”. • After that, place the section “for regions and larger territories ...”, however with a number of additional bullet points providing policy answers to the challenges and issues identified in Section I.1. • The last paragraph of Section I.2 could in fact become the first paragraph of Section I.3.
<p>Section I.3 “Expectations to the ESPON 2013 Programme”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer last paragraph (“The final beneficiaries”) at the beginning. • Add a new paragraph indicating that policy makers need, for the design of their policies, substantial information on long-term evolutions and perspectives (which cannot all be derived from trends) and which draw the attention on changing framework conditions.
<p>Section I.4 “Structural Funds 2007-2013 ...”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the title of this section to: <i>“ESPON 2013 in relation to Structural Funds”.</i>
<p>Section II.2.1 “Main European territorial structures and characteristics”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarise in a few paragraphs the basic characteristics and dynamics of the European territory. • Highlight better the following aspect: Present and future changes in the global context (especially the accelerating globalisation and climate change) and in Europe’s neighbourhood (for instance growing in-migration pressure) and the related impacts on changes of the European territory generate new regional challenges such as the needs for stronger competitiveness, for prevention measures related to climate change and for better socio-cultural integration policies.

Box 2: SWOT-analysis for the European territory and its evolution, Section II.2.2	
Strengths	Add the following aspect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The catching up process of the weakest regions of the EU has been significant in recent years.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify the 1st bullet point by considering that overall disparities have been falling across the EU since 1995. • Transfer the second bullet point to “threats”. • Highlight further the following aspects: weak productivity and employment growth after 2000; widening of Europe’s innovation gap, compared with USA and Japan.
Opportunities	Add a new bullet point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increasing production of renewable energy will provide substantial development opportunities for a number of rural regions throughout the EU.</i>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take better into consideration the following: Disparities in GDP per head between Member States remain marked and continued high growth will be needed for more than a generation in many new member states if this gap is to be substantially reduced. • Add a new sentence to the 1st bullet point: <i>In the context of accelerating globalisation, external competition is also growing, bringing with it numerous asymmetric shocks and adding to the process of geographical concentration of activities and population.</i> • Add a new sentence to the bullet point on “Ageing of population”: <i>Immigration from outside Europe, which may partly compensate for declining European population, is also likely to increase the issues of socio-cultural integration, especially in large cities.</i>

Box 3: SWOT-analysis of experiences gained with the ESPON 2006 Programme, Section II.2.3	
Strengths	Add the following aspect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness rising of decision-makers about future development perspectives and issues.
Weaknesses	Add the following aspect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong academic orientation of numerous projects, making the access of results difficult to decision-makers and planners.
Opportunities	Change the policy-objective like formulation of opportunity statements (a few examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing demand for support to policy documents in particular the implementation of Structural Funds... • Existing potential for further improving systematic evidence... • Existing potential for strengthening a European dimension in territorial development policy ... etc.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in how far some of the threats relating more to the 2000-2006 period are also risks for the future and if, on the contrary, improvements are expected. • Include the following reference in relation to the lack of data: The new territorial challenges identified will require new territorial data that have to be collected and elaborated (energy issues, impacts of globalization and of climate change, socio-cultural integration etc.).

Recommendations, Box 4:	
<p>Section II.2.4 "Conclusions and main orientations for an ESPON 2007-2013 Programme"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the section title to: <i>"Conclusions on main needs shaping the demand for an ESPON 2007-2013 Programme"</i>. • Highlight better in the context of the "general needs": The considerable impact of present and future changes in the global context and in Europe's neighbourhood will result in new territorial challenges that have to be anticipated and studied. This creates new needs in terms of data collection and substantial needs with respect to prospective and exploratory research, also involving forecasts based upon long-term oriented scenarios.

Recommendations, Box 5:	
<p>Section II.2 Objectives</p>	<p>Overall aim and overall objectives: The second bullet at the end of p.21 is formulated in a too restrictive way. On the one hand, applied research actions and the choice of themes have to be defined by policy demand. On the other hand, it is an important function of research activities to explore the perspectives and to identify the themes which will be considered as policy relevant in future. Demand of policy makers alone closes the door to exploratory research and to the awareness rising process which may result from it (Project 3.2. is a good example of such a situation). It should be indicated that research has also to be carried out to investigate future challenges and to generate awareness rising about them</p> <p>Strategic objectives: In order to take into account the above-mentioned observation, the first Strategic Objectives should read as follows: <i>"Support to greater effectiveness of regional policy by actions involving studies, data collection, observation and analysis of territorial development trends as well as exploration and anticipation of territorial development issues in the Community (...)."</i></p>
<p>Section II.3 Priorities</p>	<p>In order to make possible the realization of investigations which go beyond trends and have a more exploratory character, the title of the first Programme Priority should be re-formulated as follows (p.25): <i>"1. Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: evidence on territorial trends, <u>perspectives</u> and policy impacts."</i></p>
<p>Section II.3.1 Applied research</p>	<p>Also here, the priority title should be modified: <i>"Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: evidence on territorial trends, <u>perspectives</u> and policy impacts"</i>.</p> <p>Introduction: In order not to limit strictly research priorities to policy demand and to make possible investigations exploring the emergence of future challenges, the second sentence should be formulated as follows: <i>"The themes explored by the ESPON 2006 Programme need further deepening and widening dependent of policy demand <u>and of emerging evolutions and challenges</u>"</i>.</p> <p>Operational objectives: Data collected and used in the context of the ESPON 2006 Programme concern mainly individual regions (of various levels), but hardly concern flows. There is a clear need for improving the knowledge basis on territorial flows in Europe. The first operational objective should therefore be amended as follows: <i>"Continue building new evidence based on comparable information about European regions <u>and about territorial flows, including transnational ones</u>"</i>.</p> <p>Main types of actions: The last paragraph on "Cross-thematic and thematic analysis could be formulated as follows: <i>"New information on trends and territorial perspectives could contribute .etc"</i>.</p>

	<p>Expected results / expected impacts: There seems to be some confusion between results and impacts: “The expected results will include an improvement of evidence-based policy development ...etc” (expected results) and “Impacts will be better policy development due to...etc.” To our understanding, the improvement of policy developments is an impact and not a result. Results could be for instance the awareness rising generated by ESPON activities, which may lead to policy improvements (impacts)</p>
Section II.3.2 Targeted analysis based on user demand	<p>Operational objectives: The first operational objective could also, in addition to the position of concrete regions and/or larger territories, indicate the provision of evidence on territorial flows, including those of cross-border and transnational character (see “Thematic Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios” ESPON-Interact Study)</p>
Section II.3.3 Scientific platform and tools	<p>Main types of actions: The section refers only to regional data and does not take into account information on territorial flows. This could be introduced into the paragraph “the availability of comparable regional data...”</p> <p>Operational provisions: Before contracting an action for the ESPON Territorial Database and the work on data improvements, it seems wise to launch an investigation of no more than one year about “Possibilities and limits of comparable territorial data in Europe” which would take into account also the other territorial information sources developed by other EU or international institutions and the new themes of interest for the ESPON 2013 Programme. The objective of such an investigation should be to dissipate unrealistic expectations, to avoid double work and to define a sound work programme for the ESPON Database.</p>

ANNEX 5: The “objective system” as spelled out in the 2nd Draft ESPON 2013 Programme

“Overall Aim” and related “Overall Objectives” (OVO):		
<p>Overall Aim: Support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory by providing comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions and larger territories that can support the use of territorial capital and potentials and contribute to an improved European competitiveness, to European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.</p>		
<p>OVO 1: The ESPON 2013 Programme shall enhance European evidence and knowledge in relation to territorial cohesion and development. In that respect it shall build on what has been/will be achieved by the ESPON 2006 programme.</p>	<p>OVO 2: Policy demand shall define the applied research actions and focus the themes and EU policies that need to be addressed. The progress made by the ESPON 2006 programme shall be further deepened and widened depending on demand expressed by policy makers involved and policies paving the way for integrated analytical activity in concrete territorial contexts.</p>	<p>OVO 3: A user oriented approach shall be adopted for the ESPON 2007-2013 Programme. The current ESPON knowledge base is already able to offer operational support to strategic processes in smaller or larger territorial settings and within the themes studied so far. The ESPON 2007-2013 Programme shall through a strong involvement and awareness raising offer targeted analytical deliveries upon demand, responding to needs.</p>



“Strategic Objectives” (STO)
<p>STO 1: Support to greater effectiveness of regional policy by actions involving studies, data collection, observation and analysis of territorial development trends in the Community, that position regions in the European context, and which can (1) support a better targeting of interventions aiming at improving regional competitiveness and territorial cohesion by evidence on territorial structures and types of regions at European level, and (2) improve synergies and added value from applying an integrated approach to territorial development, coordinating across sector policies based on evidence on their territorial impact.</p>
<p>STO 2: Evidence on themes of policy demand related to the European strategic guidance on territorial development and cohesion and to themes and types of territories eligible for ERDF intervention as well as phenomena related to European territorial policy orientations expressed by Member States in policy documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the “Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union”.</p>
<p>STO 3: Analytical support to the initialisation of territorial cooperation, in clusters and networks, involving regions, urban and rural territories as well as territories with specific characteristics by providing evidence on regional comparative advantages in a European perspective and joint strategies in favour of territorial development.</p>
<p>STO 4: Targeted use of ESPON results in specific territories coupled with practical know-how, in order to ensure a correct interpretation and applicable results, that could have a demonstrative effect for other areas.</p>
<p>STO 5: A geographical coverage within the actions including new EU Member States and EU Candidate countries and their regions while neighbouring countries not participating as partners shall be covered in a limited number of outputs. For some action Europe in the world should be the coverage creating a greater awareness of this context.</p>
<p>STO 6: Synergy and complementarity to other Community activities, in particular other Structural Funds 2007-2013 and with relevant sector policies, research and studies outside ESPON.</p>



“Specific Objectives” (SPO)
<p>SPO 1: Thematic orientations of applied research shall be based on strategic considerations and will be inspired by policy priorities of the Commission and EU Member States that will meet policy demand visible in Structural Funds Regulations and other European documents.</p>
<p>SPO 2: Screening of user demand from policy makers and practitioners shall be ensured through targeted awareness raising, involvement and creation of sensibility to European dimension of regional policy and territorial development among stakeholders across the Community at European, national and regional levels.</p>
<p>SPO 3: Targeted analytical deliveries shall follow a transparent invitation of stakeholders at European and national level working within European programmes related to Structural Funds 2007-2013. In particular, other Interregional cooperation actions will be relevant as their content is clearly defined by demand for European wide evidence and/or a European territorial dimension in policy development for certain territories, allowing for integrated analysis of certain territorial contexts, cross-cutting studies based of regional case studies, experiments and technical/methodological support to territorial planning/spatial programming, including support to Fast Track activities, if needed.</p>

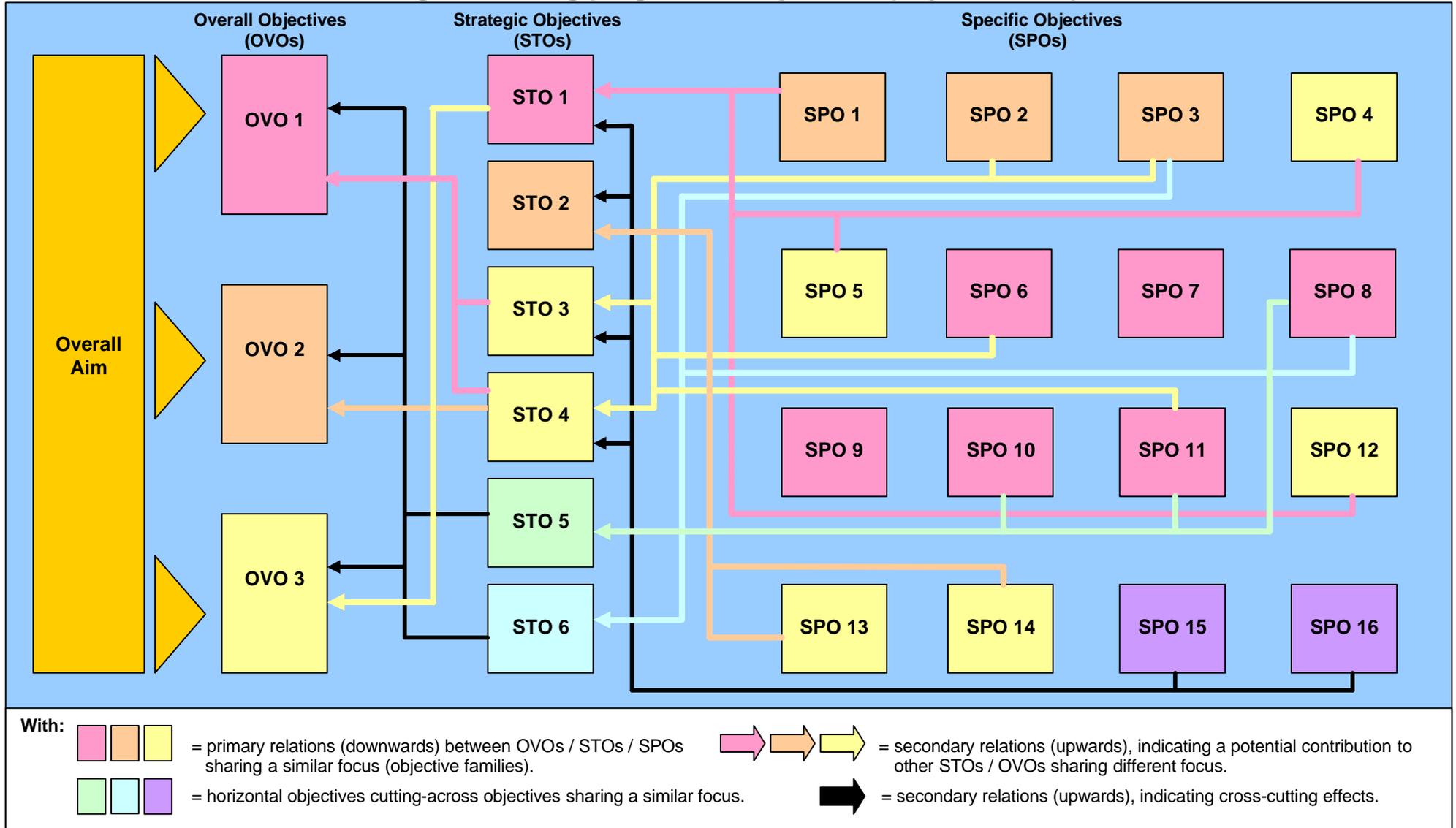
SPO 4: A geographical detail in the actions that can ensure the interest and dialogue previewed, in particular through targeted analysis including more detailed information on regional/local areas, in particular through a more intensive use of case studies.
SPO 5: An ESPON Contact Point network, operative in all EU Member States, shall support awareness raising and involvement of national and regional policy makers and practitioners around Europe and ensure European wide correctness of information in applied research actions by means of blunder checks.
SPO 6: Knowledge and competence support in relation to territorial development and cohesion shall be ensured and used for validation of results from applied research by task forces/"sounding boards" in an interactive process with consortia. For targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results the validation and usability check is part of the process and involvement of practitioners.
SPO 7: Scientific and intellectual support in the short and long term for conducting applied research in the field of territorial development and cohesion shall be stimulated through cooperation with scientific organisations relevant for a multidisciplinary European community in the field of territorial research.
SPO 8: Regionalised European dataset (including time series) shall in general be improved by using available sources at European and national level and by ensuring a thorough validation of the quality and comparability of data.
SPO 9: Quality control and validation of results and data shall be strengthened through knowledge support within the programme.
SPO 10: The ESPON scientific platform shall be maintained and improved, including the ESPON database, necessary analytical tools and methodologies.
SPO 11: Monitoring system for European territorial trends and policy impacts shall be established to ensure relevant information to the target groups on the territorial in relation to policy orientations for a harmonious and balanced EU territory and a territorial cohesion. A networking with national spatial observatories shall support this action.
SPO 12: Consolidation of public access to ESPON results, in particular to EU wide, comparable and regionalised information and analysis on regional competitiveness and territorial potentials, including under-used potentials of regions and larger territories as well as factors of improved attractiveness, focusing on opportunities for developing new assets, and on sustainable development, qualities of life and the environment.
SPO 13: Communication activities that can support awareness raising, involvement and dialogue, in particular the policy dialogue will play an important role from the outset.
SPO 14: Publishing of synthesis documents, reports and material presenting evidence and policy options that can support the overall understanding of European territorial dynamics, including cause-effect relations and future developments.
SPO 15: Conditions for consortia and procedures for applying for ESPON actions shall stimulate many offers and attractive budgetary provisions that can ensure involvement of high qualified consortia.
SPO 16: An efficient and competent coordination and a simple management structure and mechanisms for financial management as well as a sufficient analytical capacity available for providing synthesis of results for policy development.



"Operational Objectives" (OPO) at priority level	
Priority 1: Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on territorial trends and policy impacts	OPO 1.1: Continue building new evidence based on comparable information about European regions
	OPO 1.2: Provide information and possible policy options for enhancing positive effects of trends and anticipate and counter balance negative ones
	OPO 1.3: Provide information supporting ex-ante assessments and monitoring of policy achievements and allow a better understanding of cause-effects relationships intervening also at national, regional, cross-border, transnational levels.
	OPO 1.4: Contribute to the identification of spatial structures within the EU territory and of options for synergy through territorial cooperation arrangements.
	OPO 1.5: Improve a future oriented time dimension
	OPO 1.6: Improve the existing EU wide information, refining the existing concepts, indicators, typologies, methodologies and defining new ones
	OPO 1.7: Contribute to a strengthening of the necessary knowledge capabilities needed for ensuring scientifically validated results of the applied territorial research.
Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories	OPO 2.1: Provide evidence and knowledge based on ESPON results on the position of concrete regions and/or larger territories in relation to other European regions and in a global context, showing the strong points and challenges for the area.
	OPO 2.2: Improve the usefulness of ESPON results by testing new, experimental and innovative options such as (1) analysis of themes of interest for groups of regions, partly based on case studies, (2) methodological frameworks for translating territorial development goals and policy aims into concrete actions and (3) technical, methodological and analytical support to territorial planning processes and spatial programming.
	OPO 2.3: Provide analytical support and evidence based on ESPON results on thematic priorities in cooperation with other Structural Funds programmes.

Priority 3: Scientific platform and tools: Comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support	OPO 3.1: Contribute to the consolidation of the territorial knowledge base needed for informed policy formulation and application
	OPO 3.2: Ensure information, data and tools that policy makers and practitioners at all administrative levels are able to use on their own
	OPO 3.3: Respond to needs for public access to the ESPON data and tools
	OPO 3.4: Ensure availability of comparable regional data at as detailed geographical scale as possible as well as statistical quality control and data validation
	OPO 3.5: Support a concrete application and use of data for policy, strategy and planning processes, including tools for forecasting and models
	OPO 3.6: Continuously assess territorial development trends in relation to territorial policy objectives at European level
Priority 4: Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement: Capacity building, dialogue and networking	OPO 4.1: Raising awareness on ESPON findings, in particular by involving regional policy makers and practitioners in transnational dialogues
	OPO 4.2: Improving and consolidating the ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge
	OPO 4.3: Receiving feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice
	OPO 4.4: Providing written and long lasting, easy accessible evidence of the territorial knowledge built within the ESPON exercise
Priority 5: Communication and technical/analytical assistance	OPO 5.1: Support a wide awareness and information on the ESPON 2013 Programme and the results of actions through measures of communication
	OPO 5.2: Ensure a smooth implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme
	OPO 5.3: Ensure internal coherence of actions through internal coordination and events.
	OPO 5.4: Provide for simple management procedures related to procurement, contracting and payment
	OPO 5.5: Increase the number of offers from consortia for the individual actions
	OPO 5.6: Ensure the research administrative tasks related to actions of applied research
	OPO 5.7: Ensure the analytical capacity necessary for high quality synthesis of results transposing scientific results for use by policy makers.

ANNEX 6: Relations between higher-ranking programme objectives (objective tree)



ANNEX 7: Mutual reinforcement effects between priority-level and higher-ranking objectives

Priority-level operational objectives		Higher-ranking programme objectives																							
		Overall Objectives			Strategic Objectives						Specific Objectives														
		OVO 1	OVO 2	OVO 3	STO 1	STO 2	STO 3	STO 4	STO 5	STO 6	SPO 1	SPO 2	SPO 3	SPO 4	SPO 5	SPO 6	SPO 7	SPO 8	SPO 9	SPO 10	SPO 11	SPO 12	SPO 13	SPO 14	SPO 15
P 1	OPO 1.1	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+	+++	+++	+++	++	0	+++	++	++	++	+	++	0	+++	++	++
	OPO 1.2	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+++	++	++	++	+	++	++	+++	++	++
	OPO 1.3	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+++	++	++	++	+	++	++	+++	++	++
	OPO 1.4	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	0	+++	++	++	++	+	++	0	+++	++	++
	OPO 1.5	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+	+++	+	+	0	0	+++	++	++	++	++	++	0	+++	++	++
	OPO 1.6	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	++	+++	++	+	0	++	+++	++	++	++	+++	+++	++	+	+++	++
OPO 1.7	+++	+	+	+++	+	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	++	+++	++	++	++	+	++	0	+++	++	++	++
P 2	OPO 2.1	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	0	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	++	++	+	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++
	OPO 2.2	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	0	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+	+	+	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++
	OPO 2.3	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	0	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+	+	+	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++
P 3	OPO 3.1	+++	++	++	+++	++	++	+++	+	++	++	++	+	0	0	+++	+++	++	+++	++	+++	+	++	++	++
	OPO 3.2	+++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+	++	++	++	++	+	0	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	++
	OPO 3.3	+++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	0	++	0	+	0	0	+++	+++	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	++
	OPO 3.4	+++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	0	0	+	+++	0	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	++
	OPO 3.5	+++	+	+++	+++	+	+++	+++	++	+	+	+	+++	++	+	0	++	+	++	+++	++	+++	+++	+	++
	OPO 3.6	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	+	0	++	++	++	++	+++	+++	+	0	+++	++	++
P 4	OPO 4.1	++	++	+++	++	++	++	+++	+++	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+	+++	+	+	+	+++	++	+++	++	0	++
	OPO 4.2	++	++	+++	++	++	++	++	+++	+	+++	++	+++	+++	+	+++	+	+	+	+++	++	+++	++	0	++
	OPO 4.3	++	++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	0	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	0	++
	OPO 4.4	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	++	0	0	++	0	+	++	+	++	++	++	+	+++	+++	+++	++	++
P 5	OPO 5.1	++	++	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	0	++	++	++	+++	+	++	+	0	++	0	+++	+++	+++	0	+++
	OPO 5.2	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	+++
	OPO 5.3	+++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	+	++	0	++	0	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	+	+	+	++	+	+++
	OPO 5.4	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+++	+++
	OPO 5.5	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	+++	+++
	OPO 5.6	++	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	++	++	+	+	0	+	++	+++
	OPO 5.7	+++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	++	+	+	0	+	0	++	++	++	++	+++	++	0	+++	+	+++	+	+++

With:
 +++ = very strong mutual reinforcement ++ = strong mutual reinforcement + = low mutual reinforcement 0 = neutral - = contradiction between objectives

= Objectives with similar focus & reinforcement effects between objectives at (++)
 = Cross-cutting objectives & reinforcement effects between objectives at (++)
 = Reinforcement effects between objectives at (+++)

ANNEX 8: Complementarity of priority-level actions as regards an achievement of higher-ranking programme objectives

Contribution of ... to achieve ...		Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
		P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
Overall Objectives (OVO):	OVO 1	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	+	++	++	++
	OVO 2	+++	+++	+	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	+	++	+
	OVO 3	++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
Strategic Objectives (STO):	STO 1	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	++	++
	STO 2	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	++	++	+++	++	++
	STO 3	++	++	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	++	+++
	STO 4	++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	++	++	++
	STO 5	+++	+++	0	++	+	+	+++	++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++
	STO 6	++	++	0	++	++	+++	+++	+	++	+++	++	0	+	+
Specific Objectives (SPO):	SPO 1	+++	+++	+	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
	SPO 2	++	++	+	+++	+++	+++	+	++	+	+++	+++	++	+++	++
	SPO 3	+++	+++	+	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	+	++	+
	SPO 4	++	++	+	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	+++	++	0	++
	SPO 5	0	0	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+++	++	++	+++
	SPO 6	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+	+++	++	0	0	++
	SPO 7	++	++	+++	+	0	0	+++	+	+++	++	+	0	+	+
	SPO 8	+	0	++	+	0	0	+++	+++	+++	+	+	+	+	+
	SPO 9	+	+	++	+	+	0	++	+	++	0	+	+	0	+++
	SPO 10	+++	+	++	++	+	+	+++	+++	++	0	+	+	++	0
	SPO 11	++	+++	++	++	+	+	++	+++	+++	++	++	+	++	+
	SPO 12	+++	+++	0	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	++	++	+++	++	+
	SPO 13	0	0	0	+	++	++	+	+	+	+++	+++	++	+++	++
	SPO 14	+++	+++	++	+++	++	++	+	+++	+++	++	+	+++	+++	++
	SPO 15	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0
	SPO 16	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	++

With:
 +++ = very strong contribution (main focus) ++ = strong supportive contribution + = some contribution 0 = no contribution / neutral - = negative contribution

= Objectives with similar focus & related actions with a contribution (++)
 = Cross-cutting objectives & related actions with a contribution (++)
 = Related actions with a contribution (+++)
 = Related actions with a contribution (+++)

ANNEX 9: Complementarity of priority-level actions as regards an achievement of priority-level objectives

Contribution of ... to achieve ...		Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
		P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
Priority 1	OPO 1.1	+++	+++	+++	++	+	+	+++	++	+++	+	+	++	0	++
	OPO 1.2	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	+	+	++	+	++
	OPO 1.3	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	+	+	++	0	++
	OPO 1.4	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	++	++	++	+	+	++	0	++
	OPO 1.5	+++	+	+++	++	+	+	++	++	+++	+	+	++	0	++
	OPO 1.6	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	++	+	++
	OPO 1.7	0	0	+++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
Priority 2	OPO 2.1	++	++	+	+++	++	++	+++	+++	++	++	+	++	+	++
	OPO 2.2	++	++	++	++	+++	++	++	+++	++	++	++	++	+	+
	OPO 2.3	++	++	+	++	++	+++	++	+++	++	++	+	++	+	+
Priority 3	OPO 3.1	+	+	0	+	0	0	+++	++	++	+	0	0	0	++
	OPO 3.2	++	++	+	++	++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	++	++	+	+
	OPO 3.3	0	0	0	0	++	++	+++	+++	+++	++	+	++	+	++
	OPO 3.4	+	+	++	+	+	+	+++	++	+++	++	0	+	0	0
	OPO 3.5	0	0	+	++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++	++	++	+	+
	OPO 3.6	++	++	0	+	+	+	++	+++	+++	+	0	++	0	+
Priority 4	OPO 4.1	+	+	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++
	OPO 4.2	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	+++	++	++	++	++
	OPO 4.3	0	0	++	++	++	++	0	0	+	+++	++	0	+	++
	OPO 4.4	+++	+++	0	+++	++	++	+	++	++	+	+	+++	++	0
Priority 5	OPO 5.1	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	++	+	++	++	++	+++	++
	OPO 5.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	OPO 5.3	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+++
	OPO 5.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
	OPO 5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	
	OPO 5.6	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	OPO 5.7	0	0	++	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+

With:
 +++ = very strong contribution ++ = strong supportive contribution + = some contribution 0 = no contribution / neutral - = negative contribution

ANNEX 10: Quantified hypotheses on potential synergy among the actions at priority level

Interaction between ... and ...		Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions		Total				Coefficient	
		P1- A1	P1- A2	P1- A3	P2- A1	P2- A2	P2- A3	P3- A1	P3- A2	P3- A3	P4- A1	P4- A2	P4- A3	P5- A1	P5- A2	S+	S -	N+	N -	CS+	CS-
Priority 1 Actions	P1-A1		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	26	0	13	0	1	0	
	P1-A2	2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	26	0	13	0	1	0	
	P1-A3	2	2		0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	11	0	7	0	0.79	0	
Priority 2 Actions	P2-A1	2	2	0		1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22	0	12	0	0.92	0	
	P2-A2	2	2	0	1		1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22	0	12	0	0.92	0	
	P2-A3	2	2	0	1	1		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22	0	12	0	0.92	0	
Priority 3 Actions	P3-A1	2	2	1	2	2	2		1	2	1	0	1	2	20	0	12	0	0.83	0	
	P3-A2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2		2	1	1	1	2	18	0	13	0	0.69	0	
	P3-A3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2		2	2	0	2	18	0	12	0	0.75	0	
Priority 4 Actions	P4-A1	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	1	2		0	2	2	18	0	10	0	0.9	0	
	P4-A2	2	2	0	2	2	2	0	1	2	0		2	2	19	0	10	0	0.95	0	
	P4-A3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1		2	19	0	11	0	0.86	0	
Priority 5 Actions	P5-A1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2		15	0	11	0	0.68	0	
	P5-A2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	9	0	6	0	0.75	0	
Sum of average																265	0	154	0	0.86	0

With the numeric values expressing the following statements:¹

- 2 = particularly high level of synergy
- 1 = obvious synergy of little relevance
- 0 = absence of synergy
- 1 = negative synergy of little relevance
- 2 = negative synergy, which is a cause of concern

1	= indicates the value for symmetrical synergies (reciprocal effects)
2	= indicates the value for asymmetrical synergies (non-reciprocal effects)
1	= indicates the value for symmetrical / asymmetrical synergies among actions
0	of the same priority (primary relations)
2	= indicates areas with very strong symmetrical / asymmetrical synergies
2	outside the primary relations

¹ During the interactive elaboration of the "matrix of cross-impacts" together with representatives of the Managing Authority / the ESPON-CU, provisional rating values had been allocated to the different cells of the matrix. Due to the fact that these ratings sometimes also covered intermediate numeric values (e.g. 1.5 or 0.5), an adaptation had to be made in order to allow for a calculation of synergy coefficients in this final matrix of cross-impacts. The intermediate values were generally rounded up to the next higher full numeric value (0.5→1; 1.5→2).

ANNEX 11: Comparison of priorities, measures and actions of the ESPON 2006 Programme and of the ESPON 2013 Programme

ESPON 2006 Programme		ESPON 2013 Programme (2 nd Draft)	
Priorities	Measures & Actions	Priorities	Actions
<i>Priority 1: Thematic projects on important spatial developments</i>	Measure 1.1.: Cities, polycentric development and urban-rural relations 1.1.1.: The role, specific situation and potentials of urban areas as nodes of a polycentric development 1.1.2.: Urban-rural relations 1.1.3.: Particular effects of enlargement and beyond for the polycentric spatial tissue 1.1.4.: The spatial effects of demographic trends and migration)	<i>Priority 1: Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: Evidence on territorial trends and policy impacts</i>	Cross-thematic and thematic analysis (defining territorial potentials and challenges), including studies of territorial trends and prospective studies
	Measure 1.2.: Parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge 1.2.1.: Basic supply of infrastructure for territorial cohesion 1.2.2.: Spatial effects of networks, transport and (tele-) communication services 1.2.3.: Identification of spatially relevant aspects of the information society		Territorial impact studies on EU policies
	Measure 1.3.: Natural and cultural heritage 1.3.1.: The spatial effects and management of natural and technological hazards in general and in relation to climate change 1.3.2.: Management of the natural heritage 1.3.3.: The role and spatial effects of cultural heritage and identity		Knowledge Support System
	Measure 1.4.: Deepening thematic projects and new thematic projects		
<i>Priority 2: Policy impact projects</i>	Measure 2.1.: The territorial effects of sector policies 2.1.1.: Spatial diversification by the infrastructure policy of TENs 2.1.2.: Spatial effects of the EU R&D policy 2.1.3.: Spatial effects of the EU Agricultural Policy with particular reference to the environmental dimension and policy)	<i>Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demand: European perspective to development of different types of territories</i>	Integrated studies and thematic analysis
	Measure 2.2.: New territorial aspects of the Structural Funds and related Funds 2.2.1.: The territorial effects of the Structural Funds, pre-accession aid and Phare/Tacis/ISPA) 2.2.2.: The effects of Structural Funds in urban areas		Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions
	Measure 2.3.: Institutions and instruments of spatial policies 2.3.1.: The application and effects of the ESDP in the Member States 2.3.2.: The co-ordination of territorial and urban oriented policy from the EU to the local level		Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes
	Measure 2.4.: Deepening policy impact projects and new policy impact projects		

ESPON 2006 Programme		ESPON 2013 Programme (2 nd Draft)	
Priorities	Measures & Actions	Priorities	Actions
<i>Priority 3: Co-ordinating cross- thematic projects</i>	Measure 3.1.: Integrated tools for the European spatial development	<i>Priority 3: Scientific platform and tools: Comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support</i>	ESPON Territorial Database, including data validation and improvement
	Measure 3.2.: Spatial scenarios and orientations towards the ESDP and the Cohesion Policy		Tools development and maintenance
	Measure 3.3.: Territorial dimension of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Process		Territorial Monitoring System and Reports
	Measure 3.4.: Deepening cross-thematic projects and new cross-thematic projects 3.4.1.: Europe in the World 3.4.2.: Deepening cross-thematic projects 3.4.3.: New cross-thematic projects		
<i>Priority 4: ESPON Research briefing and scientific networking</i>	Measure 4.1.: Data navigator: preparatory surveys on data access	<i>Priority 4: Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement: Capacity building, dialogue and networking</i>	European seminars and events
	Measure 4.2.: ESPON briefing and scientific co-ordination of ESPON Contact Points		Transnational networking activities
	Measure 4.3.: ESPON briefing and scientific co-ordination of Transnational Project Groups		Synthesis reports and publications
<i>Priority 5: Technical assistance</i>	Measure 5.1.: Management, implementation, monitoring and control	<i>Priority 5: Communication and technical/analytical assistance</i>	Implementation of Communication Strategy
	Measure 5.2.: Information, publication and evaluation		ECP national networking and dissemination carried through by the ECP network

ANNEX 12: In-depth Evaluation: Overview on recommendations relating to the rationale of programme strategy and its internal coherence

Box 1:

Recommended text modification for the “Overall Aim”: *The ESPON 2013 Programme shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory by enhancing European evidence and knowledge in relation to territorial cohesion and development. In that respect, the ESPON 2013 Programme shall build upon what has been/will be achieved by the ESPON 2006 programme and shall also further deepen / widen these achievements.*

Recommended text modification for “OVO 1”: *The ESPON 2013 Programme shall provide comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions and larger territories that can support the use of territorial capital and potentials and contribute to an improved European competitiveness, to European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.*

Recommended text modification for OVO 2: *Applied research actions and the analytical focus on themes and EU policies that need to be addressed under the ESPON 2013 Programme shall be defined on ground of policy demand, which is expressed by key decision-makers and other actors involved at various administrative levels in policies paving the way for an integrated development in concrete territorial contexts.*

Recommended text modification for OVO 3: *The ESPON 2013 Programme shall adopt a user-oriented approach that - through stronger stakeholder involvement and awareness raising – produces targeted analytical deliveries on themes studied so far and on new topics, which are able to provide operational support for strategic development processes in smaller or larger territorial settings.*

Recommended text modification for STO 2: *Improved evidence on themes of policy demand related to the “Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion” and to themes and types of territories eligible for ERDF intervention as well as phenomena related to European territorial policy orientations expressed by Member States in policy documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the “Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union”.*

Recommended text modification for STO 3: *Stronger analytical support to the initialisation of territorial cooperation, in clusters and networks, involving regions, urban and rural territories as well as territories with specific characteristics by providing evidence on regional comparative advantages in a European perspective and joint strategies in favour of territorial development.*

Recommended text modification for STO 4: *Stimulate a targeted use of ESPON results in specific territories coupled with practical know-how, in order to ensure a correct interpretation and applicable results that could have a demonstrative effect for other areas.*

Recommended text modification for STO 5: *Adopt a wide geographical coverage within the actions including new EU Member States and EU Candidate countries and their regions while neighbouring countries not participating as partners shall be covered in a limited number of outputs. For some action Europe in the world should be the coverage creating a greater awareness of this context.*

Recommended text modification for STO 6: *Ensure synergy and complementarity with respect to other Community activities, in particular those related to other Structural Funds programmes for 2007-2013 and to relevant Community sector policies, or with respect to research and studies outside ESPON.*

Box 2:**Recommended changes under Priority 1:**

- In the title of P1-A1 (description) the current reference to “territorial impacts” should be eliminated and be replaced by “studies of territorial trends and prospective studies.
- In the description of P1-A1, the last paragraph should be linked to the second one in order to provide a more comprehensive description for future trends analyses/ prospective studies.

Recommended changes under Priority 2:

- The first larger paragraph after the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions should go to the sub-section on operational provisions.
- The description of the target group / beneficiaries should include a reference on “European associations representing local/regional authorities” (see operational provisions of P2).

Recommended changes under Priority 3:

- The first two paragraphs of the description of P3-A1 should form one single paragraph that adopts the same title as outlined in the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions.

Recommended changes under Priority 4:

- Highlight better the basic difference between “European Seminars” (P4-A1) and “Transnational Networking Activities” (P4-A2), e.g. by including appropriate text modifications in the description of each action (basic purpose, geographical scope, themes addressed) and in the sub-sections on “operational provisions” and on “target group / beneficiaries”.
- Improve the current listing of main stakeholder groups to be addressed by P4-A1 (i.e. OECD and the Council of Europe’s CEMAT are “international organisations”; MOT should go to national support structures mentioned under the last bullet point).

Recommended changes under Priority 5:

- Under “main types of action”, eliminate a major inconsistency existing between the bullet-pointed enumeration of actions and the following in-depth description (Only three bullet points should exist, i.e. by merging bullet points 2 & 3 into one; by merging bullet points 4-7 into one).
- Provide a comprehensive description for all activities related to administrative & financial programme management, technical assistance, analytical activities should be provided.
- Review / change the sub-section on “operational provisions” and further elaborate the “target groups & beneficiaries” sub-section in relation to the communication strategy and ECP-networking.

Box 3:

Recommended changes for STOs 3 & 4 and further concretisation OVO 3 at the level of strategic objectives:

- **Transfer of the current STOs 3 & 4:** Convert both STOs into “specific objectives”, by maintaining their link to the user-oriented approach and by using the existing objective statements.
- **Close the gap at the level of strategic objectives that has been created by the transfer of STOs 3 & 4:** Elaborate a new and wider STO-statement by merging the current statements of SPO 13 & 14. The new STO-statement could read as follows: Initiate a policy dialogue from the outset to raise awareness and involvement, which is supported by a publishing of synthesis documents, reports and material presenting evidence and policy options that can improve the overall understanding of European territorial dynamics, including cause-effect relations and future developments.

Recommended changes for the statements of SPOs 1-3: Only use the term mentioned under OVO 2 (“policy-demand”) in the current statements to avoid confusion. Highlight better the focus of each statement. The revised SPO-statements could read as follows:

- **Text modification for SPO 1:** *Thematic orientations of applied research shall be based on strategic considerations and will be inspired by policy priorities of the Commission and EU Member States, in order to meet the policy demand that is visible in Structural Funds Regulations and other European documents.*
- **Text modification for SPO 2:** The policy-demand approach shall be further stimulated and supported through targeted awareness raising, involvement and creation of sensibility to European dimension of regional policy and territorial development among stakeholders across the Community at European, national and regional levels.
- **Text modification for SPO 3:** Policy-demand for applied territorial research and targeted analytical deliveries shall also be revealed by transparent consultations / screenings of interests that are addressed to key stakeholders, who work at various administrative levels on issues related to territorial development and in the context of European programmes related to the Structural Funds 2007-2013 (but in particular other Interregional co-operation programmes).
- **Alternative use of left-over text elements under SPO 3:** The following text element in the current statement does not express an objective and is far too operational: *Their content is clearly defined by demand for European wide evidence and/or a European territorial dimension in policy development for certain territories, allowing for integrated analysis of certain territorial contexts, cross-cutting studies based of regional case studies, experiments and technical/methodological support to territorial planning/spatial programming, including support to Fast Track activities, if needed.* Transfer this text in an appropriate manner to both the operational provisions of Priority 1 (pp. 27/28 of the 2nd Draft) and the operational provisions of Priority 2 (p. 31 of the 2nd Draft).

Box 4:

Recommended changes for SPOs 6 & 9 and OPO 1.7: Review all objective statements referring to quality control & validation and elaborate a more solid STO-statement by stressing the different perspectives (i.e. programme-external; programme-internal) and by creating an additional link to usability feedback. Transfer the more specific details of SPO 6 (setting up task forces/"sounding boards") to OPO 1.7. The resulting new objective statements could read as follows:

- **New SPO:** Quality control and validation of research results or data as well as a check of their usability shall be an essential part of the ESPON 2013 process and will be achieved through (1) programme-external knowledge and competence support for applied research actions on territorial development, (2) a continuous feedback process on their actual usefulness in the context of targeted analysis, seminars and networking activities involving practitioners and (3) a reinforced programme-internal knowledge support.
- **New OPO 1.7:** Contribute to a strengthening of the necessary knowledge and competence capabilities needed for ensuring scientifically validated results of the applied territorial research through setting up task forces/"sounding boards".

Recommended changes and modifications for SPOs 15 & 16: Elaborate a new and wider objective statement, e.g. by including "communication activities" (from SPO 13) and by using the current statements of OPO 5.2 & SPO 16. Move the new horizontal objective further up in the hierarchy of programme objectives (i.e. as STO 6). Transfer SPO 15 to the level of operational objectives under Priority 5, i.e. by merging it with OPO 5.5. The resulting new objective statements could read as follows:

- **New STO 6:** A smooth implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme, by establishing a simple management structure and mechanisms for financial management as well as by ensuring a competent technical assistance for efficient co-ordination and a sufficient programme-internal analytical capacity that is able to provide a synthesis of research results for policy development, which is accompanied by targeted communication activities to support awareness raising.
- **New OPO 5.5:** Conditions and procedures for applying to ESPON actions and attractive budgetary provisions that can increase the number of offers coming from consortia for individual actions and ensure an involvement of highly qualified consortia.

Box 5:

Ensure that existing synergy potentials are fully exploited and further developed in the future (i.e. in case of priority combinations that are characterised by a strong symmetrical or asymmetrical complementarity).

In case of Priority 5, a new and appropriate action P5-A3 should be created. This new action must cover all issues related to programme management and technical assistance that are mentioned in the yet weakly addressed operational objectives. In addition, it should also contain clear operational prescriptions with respect to a programme-internal co-ordination / follow-up of actions, which allows exploiting as much as possible the already visible synergy potentials within the programme.

ANNEX 13: Overview on the various objective statements formulated in the “Community Strategic Guidelines”

GUIDELINES FOR COHESION POLICY, 2007-2013	
Guideline	Guidelines for action
GUIDELINE 1: Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work	
1.1. Expand and improve transport infrastructures	30 projects of European interest; complementary investment in secondary connections; support for rail infrastructure; promotion of environmentally sustainable transport networks particularly in urban areas; improving the connectivity of landlocked territories to the TEN-T; development of the “motorways of the sea” and to short-sea shipping
1.2. Strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth	investment in infrastructure in the convergence regions and in the new Member States; attractive conditions for businesses and their highly-skilled staff; investments that contribute to the EU Kyoto commitments; risk prevention measures through improved management of natural resources; more targeted research and better use of ICTs; more innovative public management policies
1.3. Address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources	improve energy efficiency; development and use of renewable and alternative technologies; development of networks for traditional energy sources where there is evidence of market failure mostly in convergence regions
GUIDELINE 2: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth	
2.1. Increase and better target investment in RTD	creation of regional and trans-regional clusters of excellence; supporting RTD activities in SMEs and technological transfer; support for regional cross-border and transnational initiatives aimed at strengthening research collaboration and capacity building in priority areas of EU research policy; strengthen R&D capacity building, including ICT; research infrastructure and human capital in areas with significant growth potential
2.2. Facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship	establishing poles of excellence; providing business support services to enable enterprises and in particular SMEs to increase competitiveness and to internationalise; full exploitation of European strengths in the area of eco-innovations; promoting entrepreneurship facilitating the creation and the development of new firms
2.3. Promote the information society for all	balanced support for the supply and demand of ICT products and both public and private services including increased investment in human capital; ensuring availability of ICT infrastructure and related services where the market fails to provide it at an affordable cost
2.4. Improve access to finance	support to non-grant instruments; developing an integrated approach that simultaneously supports innovation, its transfer into new commercial activity and the availability of risk capital; outreaching to young or female entrepreneurs or disadvantaged groups
GUIDELINE 3: More and better jobs	
3.1. Attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems	implement employment policies aimed at achieving full employment, at improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion; promote a life-cycle approach to work; ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for jobseekers including disadvantaged people and the inactive; improve matching of labour market needs
3.2. Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour market	promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners; ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms
3.3. Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills	expand and improve investment in human capital; adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements
3.4. Administrative Capacity	support good policy and programme design; enhance capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes
3.5. Help maintain a healthy labour force	preventing health risks to help raise productivity levels; filling the gaps in health infrastructure and promoting efficient provision of services where the economic development of less prosperous Member States and regions is being affected

THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF COHESION POLICY	
Issue	“Additional Guidelines”
Promoting territorial cohesion	
1. The contribution of cities to growth and jobs	<p>1.1. Promote entrepreneurship, innovation and the development of services, including producer services.</p> <p>1.2. Promote internal cohesion inside the urban areas that seek to improve the situation of crisis districts (including a rehabilitation of the physical environment and a re-development of brownfield sites).</p> <p>1.3. More balanced, polycentric development by developing the urban network at national and Community level including links between the economically strongest cities and other urban areas including small and medium-sized cities.</p> <p>1.4. Preparation of medium- to long-term development plans for sustainable urban development.</p>
2. Support the economic diversification of rural areas, fisheries areas and areas with natural handicaps	<p>2.1. Investing in development poles in rural areas (for example in small and medium-sized towns).</p> <p>2.2. Developing economic clusters based on local assets combined with the use of new information technologies.</p> <p>2.3. Integrated tourism development approaches dedicated to quality, focusing on consumer satisfaction and based on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.</p>
European territorial co-operation objective (complementary support to a promotion of territorial cohesion)	
3. Cross-border co-operation	<p>3.1. Strengthening the competitiveness of the border regions.</p> <p>3.2. Contribute to economic and social integration, especially where there are wide economic disparities on either side of a border.</p> <p>3.3. Where basic conditions for cross-border co-operation already exist, cohesion policy should focus assistance on actions that bring added value to cross-border activities (e.g. increasing cross-border competitiveness through innovation and research and development; connecting intangible networks / services or physical networks - also transport - to strengthen cross-border identity as a feature of European citizenship; the promotion of cross-border labour market integration; cross-border water management and flood control).</p> <p>3.4. Particular attention needs to be paid to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing external borders of the Union following enlargement.</p>
4. Transnational co-operation	<p>4.1. Improvement of the physical interconnection of territories (e.g. investments in sustainable transport, creation of European transport corridors and particularly cross-border sections).</p> <p>4.2. Improvement of intangible connections (R&D/innovation networks, exchanges between regions and between the parties involved, integrated maritime co-operation).</p> <p>4.3. The prevention of natural hazards and water management at river basin level.</p>
5. Interregional co-operation	<p>5.1. Focus on the Growth and Jobs Agenda (i.e. strengthening innovation, SMEs and entrepreneurship, the environment and risk prevention).</p> <p>5.2. Encouragement of exchanges of experiences and best practices regarding urban development, modernisation of public sector services (such as health and government using ICT) and the implementation of co-operation programmes as well as studies and data.</p> <p>5.3. Encouragement of exchanges of experiences and best practices regarding urban development, social inclusion, relationship between cities and rural areas, and the implementation of co-operation programmes.</p>

ANNEX 14: Potential “indirect / direct support effects” in relation to the “Strategic Guidelines” for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
GUIDELINE 1: Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work														
1.1. Expand and improve transport infrastructures	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
1.2. Strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
1.3. Address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
GUIDELINE 2: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth														
2.1. Increase and better target investment in RTD	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2.2. Facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship	IE++	IE+	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2.3. Promote the information society for all	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2.4. Improve access to finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GUIDELINE 3: More and better jobs														
3.1. Attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems	IE+	IE+	0	IE+	0	0	IE+	0	IE+	IE+	IE+	IE+	0	IE+
3.2. Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour market	IE+	IE+	0	IE+	0	0	IE+	0	IE+	IE+	IE+	IE+	0	IE+
3.3. Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills	IE+	IE+	0	IE+	0	0	0	0	IE+	IE+	IE+	IE+	0	IE+
3.4. Administrative Capacity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IE	0	IE+
3.5. Help maintain a healthy labour force	IE+	IE+	0	IE+	0	0	IE+	0	IE+	IE+	IE+	IE+	0	IE+
With: IE = Indirect effect DE = Direct effect ++ = potentially strong effect + = potentially limited effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

ANNEX 15: Potential “indirect / direct support effects” in relation to the “additional guidelines” focussing on the territorial dimension of cohesion policy

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
1. The contribution of cities to growth and jobs (Promoting territorial cohesion)														
1.1. Promote entrepreneurship, innovation and the development of services, including producer services.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
1.2. Promote internal cohesion inside the urban areas that seek to improve the situation of crisis districts (including a rehabilitation of the physical environment and a re-development of brownfield sites).	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
1.3. More balanced, polycentric development by developing the urban network at national and Community level.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
1.4. Preparation of medium- to long-term development plans for sustainable urban development.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2. Support the economic diversification of rural areas, fisheries areas and areas with natural handicaps (Promoting territorial cohesion)														
2.1. Investing in development poles in rural areas (for example in small and medium-sized towns).	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2.2. Developing economic clusters based on local assets combined with the use of new information technologies.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE+	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
2.3. Integrated tourism development approaches.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE++
With: IE = Indirect effect DE = Direct effect ++ = potentially strong effect + = potentially limited effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
3. Cross-border co-operation														
3.1. Strengthening the competitiveness of border regions.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
3.2. Contribute to economic and social integration, especially where there are wide economic disparities on either side of a border.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
3.3. Existing basic conditions: assistance should focus on actions that bring added value to cross-border activities	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
3.4. Particular attention to be paid to the changing external borders of the Union following enlargement.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
4. Transnational co-operation														
4.1. Improvement of the physical interconnection of territories	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
4.2. Improvement of intangible connections.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
4.3. The prevention of natural hazards and water management at river basin level.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ D+	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
5. Interregional co-operation														
5.1. Focus on the Growth and Jobs Agenda.	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE+	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
5.2. Exchanges of experiences and best practices (urban development, modernisation of public sector services, implementation of co-operation programmes) and studies and data.	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE0 DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	0 DE++	IE+ DE++
5.3. Exchanges of experiences and best practices (urban development, social inclusion, relationship between cities and rural areas, implementation of co-operation programmes).	IE++	IE++	0	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	IE++	IE++ DE++	IE++	IE++	0	IE+
With: IE = Indirect effect DE = Direct effect ++ = potentially strong effect + = potentially limited effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

ANNEX 16: Potential “indirect support effects” that can support a third-party delivery of strategic policy objectives jointly pursued under the Lisbon /Gothenburg Strategies and the Structural Funds

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
Employment (ERDF, EAGGF-Guidance, FIG, ESF, EQUAL)														
Increasing overall employment levels	++	++	0	++	++	++	+	+	++	++	++	+	0	+
Increasing levels of employment for women	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	++	+	+	+	0	+
Increasing levels of employment for the 55-64 year olds	+	+	0	+	+	+	++	0	++	+	+	0	0	+
Infrastructure Investment (ERDF)														
Widening access to communications infrastructure (broadband, etc.) for businesses, public administrations and citizens	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Investment in Research and Development (ERDF)														
Increasing spending on research and technological development and innovation	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Strengthened co-ordination and transfer of technology between public and private-funded research	+	+	0	+	+	++	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	+
Promote development and application of new environmental technologies	++	++	0	++	++	++	0	++	+	++	++	++	0	++
Investment in Human Capital/HRD (ESF, EQUAL, EAGGF)														
Increase investment in human capital	+	++	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	+
Reduction of the share of 18 to 24 years olds with only secondary level education	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0
With: ++ = potentially strong indirect support effect + = potentially limited indirect support effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
Investment in Human Capital/HRD (ESF, EQUAL, EAGGF)														
Promotion of training, education and counselling to improve / maintain lifelong learning	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+
Integration into the labour market, employability and job mobility	+	+	0	+	0	++	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+
Innovation and adaptability in work organization	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+
Skills for the information society	++	++	0	++	0	++	+	0	+	++	++	++	0	++
Adaptation of education and training systems to the demands of the knowledge society	++	++	0	++	++	++	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	++
Schools and training centres developed to multi-purpose local learning centres facilitating learning partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promote entrepreneurship	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+
Enhance competitiveness of enterprises	+	+	0	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	++
Support activities of SMEs via training, consultancy, investment aid technology dissemination	0	++	0	+	++	++	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	++
Furthering the capacity of SMEs to adapt technologies	+	++	0	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	++
Social inclusion (ERDF, ESF, EQUAL)														
Promoting equal opportunities for being active in the labour market	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+
Reducing gender gaps in employment	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reducing occupational segregation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+
Address regional employment disparities	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
With: ++ = potentially strong indirect support effect + = potentially limited indirect support effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

Contribution of ... To achieve ...	Priority 1 Actions			Priority 2 Actions			Priority 3 Actions			Priority 4 Actions			Priority 5 Actions	
	P1-A1	P1-A2	P1-A3	P2-A1	P2-A2	P2-A3	P3-A1	P3-A2	P3-A3	P4-A1	P4-A2	P4-A3	P5-A1	P5-A2
Sustainable development (ERDF, ESF, FIG, EAGGF, INTERREG, COHESION FUND)														
Environmental degradation and resource consumption should be decoupled from economic growth and social requirements.	++	++	0	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Protecting human health	++	++	0	++	+	++	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	+
Furthering investments in new environmentally-friendly technologies	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Managing natural resources	++	++	0	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources	++	++	0	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Protection and restoration of habitats and natural systems	++	++	0	++	++	++	0	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Sustainable fisheries to reverse the decline in stocks and to ensure healthy marine ecosystems	++	++	0	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
Reducing road transport while furthering rail, water and public passenger transport	++	++	0	++	++	++	+	++	++	++	++	++	0	++
With: ++ = potentially strong indirect support effect + = potentially limited indirect support effect 0 = no effect / neutral														

ANNEX 17: In-depth Evaluation: Overview on recommendations relating to the external coherence of the programme

Box 1:

Exploit carefully the significant external synergy potentials that tend to exist in relation to the Community Strategic Guidelines during the forthcoming programme implementation process.

In order to determine the extent to which potential “direct support effects” should be generated by the ESPON 2013 Programme in relation Community Strategic Guidelines, clarify further the nature of projects that will be carried out under actions P2-A2 and P2-A3 (e.g. by defining scope-related and application-focussed criteria).

Box 2:

Exploit carefully the theme-specific external synergy potentials that tend to exist in relation to the wider Community policy objectives as stated in the Lisbon / Gothenburg Strategies during the forthcoming implementation of the ESPON 2013 Programme

ANNEX 18: In-depth Evaluation: Overview on recommendations relating to the expected outputs, results and impacts

Table 1: Expected Outputs

Priority	Suggested new output-statement	Suggested output indicators
P1	The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through around 20-25 actions during 2007-2013, which will be selected by the ESPON Monitoring Committee in line with the existing policy demand. All applied research actions will provide targeted information and evidence that is elaborated alongside a continuous guidance / feed-back process, to be realised in the context of specific task forces / sounding boards. The actions may vary in size depending on the actual demand expressed. Each action will be documented in a report, including numerous illustrations and maps. Documents may reflect different territorial entities, most often being European, national and/or regional.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of actions realised & number of small / medium / large actions. • Number of stakeholder / user consultations realised and number of stakeholders / users contacted. • Total number of cross-thematic / thematic analyses and trends / prospective studies realised. • Total number of territorial impact studies realised. • Number of scientists involved in task forces / sounding boards.
P2	The ESPON II programme expects to carry through 15-25 targeted analyses during 2007-2013, which will be selected by the ESPON Monitoring Committee to meet in the best possible way the demand expressed by potential users of ESPON results. The projects will represent both smaller and larger actions in terms of size and duration. Each action will be documented in a report including numerous illustrations and maps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of actions realised & number of small / medium / large actions. • Number of stakeholder / user consultations realised and number of stakeholders / users contacted. • Total number of integrated /thematic studies realised. • Total number of experimental actions realised. • Total number of joint actions realised.
P3	The ESPON Territorial Database will create at least (<i>insert a number: ...</i>) additional European-wide, comparable data sets, which are duly validated and give information for all regions of Europe. The Database with time series of data and the data behind the key indicators will be regularly updated. Approximately (<i>insert a number: ...</i>) new tools, models and methodologies will be generated by the actions within the ESPON 2013 Programme, whereas a number of already existing tools such as mapping facilities and models will be maintained and updated. The Territorial Monitoring System will build time series on at least (<i>insert a number: ...</i>) key indicators and publish 2-3 reports during the ESPON 2013 Programme period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of actions realised. • Number of up-dates / improvements realised for the ESPON-Database. • Number of new tools, models, methodologies developed. • Number of already existing tools maintained/up-dated. • Number of indicators covered by the Territorial Monitoring System. • Number of periodic territorial monitoring reports published.
P4	The action "European Seminars & Events" will result in 35-50 seminars/events that are organised during 2007-2013, which corresponds to 5-8 seminars/events per year of operation. It is foreseen that at least 2-3 events per year will be targeting specific European-wide and Community-level actors, actors involved in Structural Funds programmes as well as actors from the wider scientific community and from national spatial observatories. Under the action "Transnational Networking Activities" it is foreseen that within the programme period at least 14 transnational activities will be financed. Each action will be documented in a report. The action "Synthesis Reports & Publications" will support of this priority and lead to an issuing of 5-6 larger ESPON reports/publications and of 8 smaller ESPON reports/publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of actions realised. • Total number of European Seminars/Events realised. • Number of seminars/events per year of operation. • Total number of Transnational Networking Activities realised. • Number of networking activities per year of operation. • Total number of synthesis reports / publications issued. • Number of larger and smaller reports / publications issued.
P5	In case of Priority 5, it is recommended to elaborate a coherent output-statement once the still existing "mismatch" between operational objectives and actions has been eliminated. For this purpose, the above-applied cross-referencing approach should be used. Once the output-statement is elaborated, a number of related output indicators should be defined.	

Table 2: Expected Results

Priority	Suggested new result-statement	Suggested result indicators
P1	Applied research actions will - one the one hand - deepen the existing knowledge base on the European territorial dimension, which has to a large extent been generated by the ESPON 2006 programme. On the other hand, applied research will provide new information, evidence and policy options on a wide variety of themes and policies related to European territorial development, including an assessment of territorial development trends and a prospective exploration of long-term challenges. The results of applied research have to be of a high quality, reflecting the current knowledge concerning science, and will be presented in a way to stimulate their practical use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements realised with respect to existing knowledge (baseline: ESPON 2006 results). • Number of new themes and policies covered by applied research (baseline: ESPON 2006 results). • Extent of geographical coverage achieved by applied research actions (baseline: countries taking part in ESPON 2013). • Number of feed-back & guidance notes issued by task forces / sounding boards.
P2	The actions will cover a wide variety of themes, mostly in an integrated way, and include European perspectives on territorial development that can reveal territorial potentials for the specific territories in question. A testing of new, experimental and innovative options that inspire strategy building and planning processes or stimulate creativity on new project ideas will improve the overall usefulness of ESPON results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of themes covered by actions realised. • Type of specific territories covered by actions realised. • Topics addressed by the actions realised. • Extent to which actions have used Priority 1 results.
P3	The actions will lead to a more widespread use of ESPON data in practical policy making at different levels, which is stimulated by an increased availability, a stronger reliability and more frequent updates of data as well as by a wider access to these data. A more extensive use of ESPON data will also be enhanced by an elaboration of new support tools and the improvement of existing ones. In this context, new methodologies and models for Territorial Impact Assessment will be one potential innovation within the ESPON Scientific Platform. Regular stock taking of the development of individual territories and of the European continent in the context of the Territorial Monitoring System will allow creating a user-friendly tool that supports practitioners and policy makers in their practical work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of persons using the Territorial Database and geographical spread of users. • Total number of persons using the Territorial Monitoring System and geographical spread of users. • Total number of downloads for support tools (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users. • Total number of downloads for territorial monitoring reports (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users.
P4	European Seminars/Events and Transnational Networking Activities will ensure a wide participation of policy makers and practitioners from International Organisations, European Institutions, European co-operation structures (i.e. European associations of regional/local authorities, European networks, EU-programmes) as well as from national and regional administrations. Also the number of scientist (and among them also young researchers) interested in European territorial applied research is expected to rise through these actions. European events and transnational networking activities will increase significantly the awareness of these actors about comparable evidence on the European territorial dimension generated by ESPON and stimulate further their ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge. In addition, these actions will increase a feedback on the usefulness and practical use of ESPON results and stimulate requests for information / assistance from ESPON or additional offers on actions under Priority 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of participants in all European Seminars / Events and average number of participants per seminar/event. • Total number of participants in all Transnational Networking Activities and average number of participants per action. • Profile of persons / organisations attending European Seminars / Events and Transnational Networking Activities. • Frequency and nature of the usefulness feedbacks received. • Number of indications for a practical use of ESPON results received. • Number of requests for information / assistance and additional P2 offers addressed to ESPON.
P5	In case of Priority 5, it is recommended to elaborate a coherent result-statement once the still existing "mismatch" between operational objectives and actions has been eliminated. For this purpose, the above-applied cross-referencing approach should be used. Once the result-statement is elaborated, a number of related result indicators should be defined.	

Table 3: Expected Impacts		
Priority	Suggested new impact-statement	Suggested impact indicators
P1	Applied research, which is defined on ground of a screening of policy demand existing at various levels and subsequently validated / checked with respect to its usability, will present evidence that supports a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and help defining territorial development potentials. Research-related policy options as well as an enhanced use of applied research results and regionalised information on European maps in policy processes and documents dealing with the development of territories can raise the effectiveness of regional policy at various levels - thus strengthening territorial cohesion – and enhance further territorial co-operation among regions, urban and rural territories as well as among territories with specific characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for national-level / regional-level policy processes (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for transnational and cross-border co-operation (with levels: high, medium, low). • Extent to which ESPON applied research results have increased the understanding of European territorial dynamics (with levels: strong, medium, low). • Extent to which ESPON applied research results have supported an identification / definition of new territorial development potentials (with levels: strong, medium, low).
P2	Targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results, which are defined by policy demand and subsequently checked with respect to their usability and transferability, will support strategic processes in smaller or larger territorial settings and thus put into practice the user-oriented approach of the ESPON 2013 programme. By stimulating a better use of ESPON results in the context of policy development and strategy building or territorial planning at lower geographical scales, the actions will generate a stronger sensibility to the European dimension of regional policy and territorial development, enhance involvement and stimulate innovation. The actions will also provide analytical support to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges and help – through their demonstrative effect for other areas - revealing options for improving further different types of territorial co-operation across Europe. Finally, targeted analytical deliveries might also be an inspiring source for strategic ESPON-publications that present evidence and policy options able to support a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and related cause-effect relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of increased sensibility / awareness achieved among participants in actions producing targeted analytical deliveries (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of increased involvement in integrated territorial development achieved by actions producing targeted analytical deliveries (with levels: high, medium, low). • Number of new and innovative options / approaches realised by actions producing targeted analytical deliveries. • Degree of analytical support provided by targeted actions to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges (with levels: strong, medium, low). • Extent to which a result-transfer has taken place towards other areas not directly involved in actions producing targeted analytical deliveries (with levels: high, medium, low). • Extent to which the outcomes of actions producing targeted analytical deliveries are considered in strategic ESPON-publications (with levels: high, medium, low).
P3	Through maintaining and improving the ESPON Scientific Platform, which also covers an elaboration of new support tools and a widening of public access to all these elements, it will be possible to base applied research and maps as well as targeted analytical deliveries on the most recent data and further refined methods. Easy access to elements of the ESPON Scientific Platform, further stimulated by focussed communication activities, will allow regions or larger territories to use more intensively thoroughly validated and comparable data in policy development processes and to be better informed about specific policy impacts and emerging European territorial trends. Finally, the ESPON Scientific Platform will also be an important source for elaborating strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of usefulness (expressed for the different Scientific Platform components) in the context of ESPON applied research actions (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of usefulness (expressed for the different Scientific Platform components) in the context of policy development processes (with levels: high, medium, low). • Specific aspects of the policy development process for which the different Scientific Platform components are used. • Number of ESPON-external policy documents making reference to ESPON

	ESPON-publications that support a wider understanding of European territorial dynamics and can act as a reference base that stimulates scientific interest in applied territorial research on a European-wide scale.	<p>results or reproducing ESPON maps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the different Scientific Platform components are used for elaborating strategic ESPON-publications (with levels: high, medium, low). • Number of applied territorial research actions on a European-wide scale (external to ESPON) using different Scientific Platform components.
P4	A realisation of these different actions at a wider or more reduced geographical scale is fundamental for putting into practice the user-oriented approach of the ESPON 2007-2013 Programme. They will raise awareness about the European dimension of regional policy and territorial development and stimulate - from the outset - a policy dialogue among Community-, national- and regional level decision-makers and practitioners around Europe. They will also help strengthening a multidisciplinary European community in the field of territorial research, also leading to a more widespread take-up of ESPON results by scientific activities outside of ESPON.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of increased awareness achieved among the participants of European Seminars / Events (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of increased awareness achieved among the participants of Transnational Networking Activities (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of usefulness of the European-wide policy dialogue (with levels: high, medium, low). • Increased number of scientists directly or indirectly participating in various types of ESPON activities (compared to ESPON 2006). • Number of scientific publications making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps.
P5	In case of Priority 5, it is recommended to elaborate a coherent impact-statement once the still existing "mismatch" between operational objectives and actions has been eliminated. For this purpose, the above-applied cross-referencing approach should be used. Once the impact-statement is elaborated, a number of related result indicators should be defined.	

Table 4: Action-level Indicators

Priority	Action	Suggested action-specific indicators (cross-priority relations in italics)
P1	P1-A1, Cross-thematic and thematic analysis, including studies of territorial trends and prospective studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements realised by the applied research project with respect to existing knowledge (baseline: ESPON 2006 results). • Extent of geographical coverage achieved by the applied research project (baseline: countries taking part in ESPON 2013). • Number of feed-back & guidance notes issued by the project-related task force / sounding board. • <i>Usefulness of the different Scientific Platform components in the context of the applied research project.</i>
	P1-A2, Territorial impact studies on EU policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements realised by the applied research project with respect to existing knowledge (baseline: ESPON 2006 results). • Extent of geographical coverage achieved by the applied research project (baseline: countries taking part in ESPON 2013). • Number of feed-back & guidance notes issued by the project-related task force / sounding board. • <i>Usefulness of the different Scientific Platform components in the context of the applied research project.</i>
	P1-A3, Knowledge Support System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of usefulness of the applied research project for national-level / regional-level policy processes. • Degree of usefulness of the applied research project for transnational and cross-border co-operation. • Extent to which the applied research project has increased the understanding of European territorial dynamics. • Extent to which the applied research project has supported and identification / definition of new territorial development potentials.

P2	P2-A1 , Integrated studies and thematic analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of themes covered by the targeted action realised. • Type of specific territories covered by the targeted realised. • Range of topics addressed by the targeted realised. • Type of Priority 1 results used by the targeted realised. • Increased awareness achieved among participants of the targeted action. • Increased involvement in integrated territorial development activities achieved by the targeted action. • Number of new and innovative approaches realised by the targeted action. • Type of analytical support provided by the targeted action to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges. • <i>Initial motivation to present an offer to P2 (Have European Seminars/Events or Transnational Networking Activities stimulated the initiative?).</i>
	P2-A2 , Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of themes covered by the targeted action realised. • Type of specific territories covered by the targeted realised. • Range of topics addressed by the targeted realised. • Type of Priority 1 results used by the targeted realised. • Increased awareness achieved among participants of the targeted action. • Increased involvement in integrated territorial development activities achieved by the targeted action. • Number of new and innovative approaches realised by the targeted action. • Type of analytical support provided by the targeted action to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges. • <i>Initial motivation to present an offer to P2 (Have European Seminars/Events or Transnational Networking Activities stimulated the initiative?).</i>
	P2-A3 , Joint actions related to other Structural Fund Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of themes covered by the targeted action realised. • Type of specific territories covered by the targeted realised. • Range of topics addressed by the targeted realised. • Type of Priority 1 results used by the targeted realised. • Increased awareness achieved among participants of the targeted action. • Increased involvement in integrated territorial development activities achieved by the targeted action. • Number of new and innovative approaches realised by the targeted action. • Type of analytical support provided by the targeted action to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges. • <i>Initial motivation to present an offer to P2 (Have European Seminars/Events or Transnational Networking Activities stimulated the initiative?).</i>
P3	P3-A1 , ESPON Territorial Database, including data validation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of up-dates / improvements realised for the ESPON-Database. • Number of persons using the Territorial Database and geographical spread of users. • Usefulness of the Territorial Database in the context of policy development processes. • Specific aspects of the policy development process for which the data in the Territorial Database are used.
	P3-A2 , Tools development and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new tools, models, methodologies developed. • Number of already existing tools maintained/up-dated. • Total number of downloads for support tools (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users. • Usefulness of the Tools in the context of policy development processes. • Specific aspects of the policy development process for which the Tools are used.
	P3-A3 , Territorial Monitoring System and Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of indicators covered by the Territorial Monitoring System. • Number of periodic territorial monitoring reports published. • Number of persons using the Territorial Monitoring System and geographical spread of users.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of downloads for territorial monitoring reports (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users. Usefulness of the Territorial Monitoring System in the context of policy development processes. Specific aspects of the policy development process for which data in the Territorial Monitoring System are used.
P4	P4-A1 , European seminars and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants in a European Seminar / Event. Profile of persons / organisations attending a European Seminar / Event. Frequency and nature of the usefulness feedbacks received. Number of indications for a practical use of ESPON results received. Increased awareness achieved among the participants of a European Seminar / Event. Usefulness of the European-wide policy dialogue. Number of scientific publications making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps. <i>Number of ESPON-external policy documents making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps.</i> <i>Number of applied territorial research actions on a European-wide scale (external to ESPON) using different Scientific Platform components.</i>
	P4-A2 , Transnational networking activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants in a Transnational Networking Activity. Profile of persons / organisations attending a Transnational Networking Activity. Frequency and nature of the usefulness feedbacks received. Number of indications for a practical use of ESPON results received. Increased awareness achieved among the participants of a Transnational Networking Activity. Number of scientific publications making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps. <i>Number of ESPON-external policy documents making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps.</i> <i>Extent to which a result-transfer has taken place towards other areas not directly involved in actions producing targeted analytical deliveries.</i> <i>Number of applied territorial research actions on a European-wide scale (external to ESPON) using different Scientific Platform components.</i>
	P4-A3 , Synthesis reports and publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Extent to which ESPON applied research results have increased the understanding of European territorial dynamics.</i> <i>Extent to which ESPON applied research results have supported an identification / definition of new territorial development potentials.</i> <i>Extent to which the different Scientific Platform components are used for elaborating strategic ESPON-publications.</i> <i>Extent to which the outcomes of actions producing targeted analytical deliveries are considered in strategic ESPON-publications.</i>
P5	P5-A1 , Implementation of Communication Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet elaborated
	P5-A2 , ECP national networking and dissemination carried through by the ECP network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Extent to which a result-transfer has taken place towards other areas not directly involved in actions producing targeted analytical deliveries.</i> <i>Extent to which the outcomes of actions producing targeted analytical deliveries are considered in strategic ESPON-publications.</i> <i>Number of ESPON-external policy documents making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps.</i> <i>Number of applied territorial research actions on a European-wide scale (external to ESPON) using different Scientific Platform components.</i> <i>Number of scientific publications making reference to ESPON results or reproducing ESPON maps.</i> <p>To be further completed.</p>

ANNEX 19: Progress Evaluation: Overview on priority-level output / result / impact statements and the related indicators as defined in the Programme Annex document V.4

ESPON 2013 Programme: Output indicators at Priority level		
Priority	Output statements	Output indicators
P1	The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through around 30-40 actions during 2007-2013 and provide new information and evidence on a wide variety of themes which through the selection process conducted by the ESPON Monitoring Committee has been targeted to the policy demand for information and evidence. The actions may vary in size depending on demand. An equal number of task forces/sounding boards will be also established and the sufficient number of experts contracted by the Managing Authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions realised & number of small / medium / large actions. • Number of cross-thematic / thematic analyses and trends / prospective studies realised. • Number of territorial impact studies realised. • Number of experts involved in task forces / sounding boards.
P2	The ESPON 2013 Programme expects to carry through 20-40 targeted analysis during 2007-2013 based on user demand. The projects will represent both smaller and larger actions in terms of size and duration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of actions realised & number of small / medium / large actions. • Number of stakeholder / user consultations realised and number of stakeholders / users contacted.
P3	A major output will be one ESPON Database (version II) including 20-30 European wide, comparable data sets, duly validated and updated, giving information for all regions of Europe, provided that the data availability makes it feasible. The data set will include the data provided by projects under Priority 1 and 2. The time series of data and the data behind the key indicators will be regularly updated during the programme implementation. Important European maps from the ESPON 2006 Programme (10-20 maps) will be updated based on new data as well as maps from the ESPON 2013 Programme (5-10) in case more recent data becomes available during the programme implementation. An index related to territorial cohesion will be developed based on territorial indicators using synthetic/combined indicators. New tools for territorial analysis, including models and methodologies, that can support further an integrated analytical approach are envisaged within the ESPON 2013 Programme. New methodologies and models for Territorial Impact Assessment represent one potential innovation within the ESPON Scientific Platform. In total, 5-10 actions leading to new tools are envisaged. In addition, some existing tools, such as mapping facilities and models, will be maintained and updated. The territorial monitoring will result in 2-3 reports during the ESPON 2013 Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions realised. • Number of new, updated and improved tools, models, methodologies developed. • Number of territorial indicators defined • Number of periodic territorial monitoring reports published.

<p>P4</p>	<p>(a) Capitalisation and media activities will imply a large amount of smaller and bigger targeted efforts creating visibility of ESPON results among different groups of stakeholders. Media activities will include 10-15 eye openers per year implemented as direct mailing, articles in magazines, e-mailed newsletter, press releases etc. The ESPON website will continue its role as key information source having the home page conceived with a story and map of the month, changing 10-12 times per year. The website of the Commission will as well foreseen to play an important role as media for ESPON. The ESPON synthesis reports and publications in support of this priority will result in 5-6 larger reports and 5-6 smaller publications during the ESPON 2013 Programme. (b) The organisation of European seminars and workshops targeting specific Community actors, actors at European level and within relevant Structural Funds financed programmes as well as the scientific community and national spatial observatories will result in 14-20 smaller and bigger events during 2007-2013, equivalent to 2-3 per year of operation. It is planned to arrange 1 bigger seminar per year targeting in particular policy makers and practitioners at European level, in European Institutions and International Cooperation Structures. It is as well foreseen to carry through some events and workshops in cooperation with other relevant bodies, sharing the costs. (c) Concerning transnational activities it is foreseen that within the period of programme implementation around 14 transnational actions should be financed so to ensure a capitalisation, transnational exchange of experiences, participation, awareness rising and empowerment. Each action will be documented in a report, including proposals for operational actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions realised. • Number of European Seminars/workshops realised. • Number of Transnational Networking Activities realised. • Number of press releases and larger and smaller reports / publications issued.
<p>P5</p>	<p>(a) In relation to Technical Assistance the following output is previewed and subject to further detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration and implementation of a complete set of guidelines for the administrative and financial implementation of actions. • Development, implementation and operation of in internal monitoring system for the follow-up of programme's implementation. • Elaboration, implementation and follow up of a set of standardised procedures and forms for application and reporting. • Elaboration of risk analysis and implementation of on-the-spot checks covering at least 1 of each type of action per year. • Organisation of one meeting of the Group of Auditors per year. • Organisation and preparation of at least 2 Monitoring Committee meetings per year. <p>(b) For the Analytical Support the following output will be implemented and subject to further detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of detailed project descriptions (Terms of Reference) for each of the actions foreseen within Priorities 1-3. • Elaboration and follow up of content oriented assessment for each interim and final output of each action. • Direct involvement in the implementation of priority 4 actions including analytical activities related to communication activities and production of synthesis reports and documents. • Animation at capitalisation, awareness raising and networking actions foreseen within Priority 4. • Organisation of 2 internal seminars per year (MC-ECP-Project Groups on actions under Priority 1, 2 and 3). • Organisation and animation of 2 internal ECP meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Monitoring Committee meetings • Number of CC meetings organised • Number of Internal ESPON seminars • Number of ECP meetings • Number of events for potential and selected beneficiaries

	<p>per year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of Lead Partner seminars when adequate. <p>(c) The output envisaged as result of the Communication Plan is the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One major event launching the programme towards the potential beneficiaries • One major event per year presenting the implementation progress of the ESPON Programme to be combined with events targeting potential beneficiaries in connection to the launching of the selection procedures. • At least one Lead Partner seminar, including a workshop with financial officers and appointed controllers per round of selection procedure. • Elaboration of a set of guidelines on the ESPON 2013 Programmes procedures for participation and implementation. • At least two seminars during 2007-2013 involving financial controllers at national level. 	
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ESPON 2013 Programme: Results indicators at Priority level		
Priority	Result statements	Result indicators
P1	The results will widen and deepen the existing knowledge base on European territorial development, provided mainly by the ESPON 2006 programme. The new and improved knowledge base will improve the information and awareness of territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts. The applied research may reflect different territorial entities, most often being European, national and/or regional and different territorial types. The results will reflect the current knowledge concerning science and provide for a practical use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of themes and policies that have been deepened and widened compared to ESPON 2006 results. • Number of partners, institutes and scientists involved in applied research actions.
P2	The results will cover a wide variety of themes, mostly in an integrated way, which has been selected by the Monitoring Committee to meet the best possible demand expressed by potential users of ESPON results. The results will include European perspectives on territorial development that can reveal territorial potentials for the territory in question, inspire strategy building and planning processes and stimulate creativity on new ideas for projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stakeholders directly involved in the implementations of the actions • Number of themes, topics and experiments covered by actions realised. • Number of types of specific territories covered by actions realised
P3	Among the results will be the use of ESPON data and tools in policy making at different levels due to access, reliability and regular updates. In particular, the monitoring of territorial development will support regular stock taking of the development of individual territories and of the European continent as such.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of downloads for support of data and tools (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users. • Number of downloads for territorial monitoring reports (from the ESPON website) and geographical spread of users.
P4	The number of policy makers and practitioners contacted and that has become aware of ESPON and the comparable European evidence available is expected to rise profoundly. This may result in an increase of requests for additional information and assistance from ESPON, such as interest for actions under Priority 2. The number of scientist interested in European territorial applied research is expected to increase as well, also among young researchers. The number potential Lead Partners interested in ESPON applied research projects and targeted analysis under Priority 1 and 2 is likely to increase as a result. A number of proposals for action resulting from the transnational networking activities are expected to be implemented by the relevant authorities and institutions involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in all European Seminars / Workshops and average number of participants per seminar/event. • Number of participants in all Transnational Networking Activities and average number of participants per action. • Number of stakeholders reached by mailing lists and by visiting the ESPON website
P5	The implementation of the foreseen three strands of priority 5 will ensure a correct and efficient implementation of the ESPON 2013 programme, strengthen its internal cohesion, and enlarge the active participation of potential beneficiaries from all Member Countries including the new Member States. In addition, the implementation of the Communication plan will contribute to the visibility of the European Union towards the beneficiaries, target groups and the general public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of on-the-spot-checks showing no significant results • Number of participants in Internal ESPON seminars • Number of participants in information events for potential and selected beneficiaries and the volume of mailing list

ESPON 2013 Programme: Impact indicators at Priority level		
Priority	Impact statements	Impact indicators
P1	Impacts will be better policy development due to an enhanced use of the applied research results and regionalised information on European maps in policy processes and documents dealing with the development of territories, territorial cooperation and cohesion, which will raise the efficiency of regional policy and help defining territorial potentials for development. Impacts will as well benefit the European capacity in the field of territorial applied research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for European, national-level / regional-level policy processes (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of usefulness of ESPON applied research results for transnational and cross-border co-operation (with levels: high, medium, low).
P2	The expected impact will include a greater European sensitivity in policy documents, strategy building and planning related to their territorial reality, including options for improving territorial cooperation and cohesion. In addition, a better use of ESPON results at lower geographical scales is expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of analytical support provided by targeted actions to a co-operative tackling of territorial development challenges (with levels: strong, medium, low). • Extent to which the outcomes of actions producing targeted analytical deliveries are cited in strategic publications at European, national and regional level (with levels: high, medium, low).
P3	The impacts envisaged include a more intensive use of a European dimension in policy development for regions and larger territories as well as stimuli of the scientific interest in applied territorial research in a European context. Dialogue might as well improve on territorial issues due to access to data for the general public. In relation to the analytical deliveries from the ESPON 2013 Programme it will be possible to base analysis and maps on the most recent data and updated tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of usefulness (expressed for the different Scientific Platform components) in the context of ESPON applied research actions and policy development processes (with levels: high, medium, low). • Number of ESPON-external documents making reference to ESPON data, tools or reproducing ESPON maps.
P4	The impact of ESPON in support of evidence based policy development will be visible in many policy documents, through references and reproduction of ESPON maps in the corporate design. In the scientific community a similar greater visibility will appear in scientific journals etc. The European perspective on territorial development and cohesion will be more visible in policy development of regions and larger territories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of capitalisation and increased awareness achieved among the participants of European Seminars/Workshops (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of capitalisation and increased awareness achieved among the participants of Transnational Networking Activities (with levels: high, medium, low).
P5	The correct implementation of priority 5 strands and action will ensure the achievement of specific priorities and programme impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of importance of audit findings as reported in annual auditing reports (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of satisfaction with information, services and support provided to the MC, ECP and partners (with levels: high, medium, low). • Degree of satisfaction of potential partners with the information given on ESPON (with levels: high, medium, low).