



EUROPEAN COMMISSION ADOPTION OF EUROPEAN OBSERVATION NETWORK ON TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COHESION

The European Commission (November 7, 2007) approved the new Programme for ESPON, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. It will provide comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions and larger territories. In doing so, ESPON will be facilitating the mobilisation of territorial capital and potential, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to widen and deepen European territorial cooperation, and to enable sustainable and balanced development.

The results achieved by the previous ESPON 2006 Programme have given policy-makers new comparable information and better understanding of European territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impacts. Data, indicators and European maps from ESPON projects and synthesis reports have been used in several policy documents, particular at European level. The data and tools provided have been applied increasingly in national and regional development strategies. They have also proved useful for transnational cooperation activities and project selection, in cross-border discussions on the larger territorial context and by scientists, students and individual European citizens.

Cohesion policy and regional policy, with their objectives for cohesion and competitiveness and for European territorial cooperation, have to rely on solid and comparable regionalised information. Policymakers dealing with development of regions and larger territories need evidence and comparable information, with long term trends and perspectives providing valuable insights into how a region or territory is likely to change in relation to others. This information exposes areas for potential development, and latent strengths, allowing different options to be explored.



The ESPON 2013 Programme will make this data and analytical support tools directly available to policymakers and stakeholders. Policy requirements will define the subjects of the applied research and focus the themes and EU policies that need to be addressed. The progress made by the ESPON 2006 programme will be deepened and extended in the light of priorities identified by policymakers. Exploratory investigations and perspective studies will support policy relevant themes of the future. The applied research will pave the way for integrated analytical activity in specific territorial contexts.

Stakeholder events, with representatives from all administrative levels and relevant sectors, will be a major channel through which the programme will be implemented. This user-oriented approach will extend the current ESPON knowledge base to offer operational support to strategic processes in smaller or larger territorial settings and about the themes studied. Through awareness raising and partnerships, the new programme will offer and carry through targeted analytical deliveries upon demand, responding to needs and making use of the ESPON results so far.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will operate within five priorities at programme level. These are:

1. Applied research on territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion: evidence on territorial trends, perspectives and policy impacts;
2. Targeted analyses based on user demand: a European perspective on the development of different types of territories;
3. Scientific platform and tools: comparable regional data, analytical tools and scientific support;
4. Awareness raising, empowerment and involvement: capacity building, dialogue and networking;
5. Communication and technical/analytical assistance.

The actions will be delivered by transnational consortia contracted through open competitive processes calling for proposals or tenders. The implementation principles will ensure continued close cooperation with other Community programmes and related activities in Member States.

The budget for the ESPON 2013 Programme is EUR 47 million, and the programme will be managed by the Ministry of Interior and Spatial Development in Luxembourg on behalf of the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, all participating in the programme.

For more information please contact the ESPON Coordination Unit on info@espon.eu.