

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
ESPON PROJECT 2.3.1.**

**APPLICATION AND EFFECTS OF  
THE ESDP IN MEMBER STATES  
(2004 – 2006)**

**(o) Political challenges for the ESPON projects**

The Second and Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, published in January 2001 and February 2004 respectively, presented for the first time a third territorial dimension of cohesion (beside the economic and social cohesion), which calls for a better co-ordination of territorially relevant decisions. Stressing the persistence of territorial disparities within the Union, the report stated the need for a cohesion policy not limited to the less developed areas as well as the need to promote a more balanced and more sustainable development of the European territory.

The Cohesion Reports represent in that respect a follow up of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), adopted at ministerial level in May 1999, calling for a better balance and polycentric development of the European territory. The projects launched under the ESPON programme shall follow an integrated approach and, seen together, cover a wide range of issues, such as:

- Identifying the **decisive factors relevant for a more polycentric European territory**; accessibility of a wide range of services in the context of enlargement; integration of wider transnational spaces; promotion of dynamic urban growth centres; linking peripheral and disadvantaged areas with those centres; etc.
- Developing **territorial indicators and typologies** capable of identifying and measuring development trends as well as monitoring the political aim of a better balanced and polycentric EU territory
- Developing **tools supporting diagnoses of principal structural difficulties as well as potentialities**, such as disparities within cities and regenerating deprived urban areas; structural adjustment and diversification of rural areas; strategic alliances between neighbouring cities at transnational, national and regional scale; new partnerships between rural and urban areas; potential support from infrastructure networks in the field of transport, telecommunication, energy; etc.
- Investigating **territorial impacts of sectoral and structural policies** in order to enhance synergy and well-co-ordinated decisions relevant for territorial development within policy fields such as Structural Funds, agriculture, transport, fisheries, environment, research and development as well as impacts to be taken into account in Integrated Coastal Zone Management activities; developing methods for measuring the territorial impact of sectoral and structural policies; etc.
- Developing **integrated tools in support of a balanced and polycentric territorial**

**development**; approaches to enhance the potential of cities as drivers of regional development, new tools for integrated urban-rural development and planning, etc.

The Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion included new scientific knowledge and information from a series of ESPON projects. As such the ESPON programme has met one of its objectives by delivering new scientific knowledge and information on European spatial issues as basis for future policy development at EU-level and within Member States.

With the results of all ESPON projects, the Commission and the Member States expect in particular to have at their disposal: **a diagnosis of the principal territorial trends** at EU scale as well as the difficulties and potentialities within the European territory as a whole; **a cartographic picture of the major territorial disparities** and of their respective intensity; a number of **territorial indicators and typologies assisting a setting of European priorities** for a balanced and polycentric enlarged European territory; some **integrated tools and appropriate instruments** (databases, indicators, methodologies for territorial impact analysis and systematic spatial analyses) to improve the spatial co-ordination of sector policies.

In this respect, the ESPON projects will serve as a strong scientific basis for the propositions of the Commission in view of the reform of post-2007 Structural Funds.

### **i) Relation to the ESPON 2006 Programme**

The priorities describing the work-programme of the ESPON 2006 Programme are structured in four strands:

1. **Thematic projects** on the major spatial developments on the background of typologies of regions, and the situation of cities.
2. **Policy impact projects** on the spatial impact of Community sector policies and Member States' spatial development policy on types of regions with a focus on the institutional inter-linkages between the governmental levels and instrumental dimension of policies
3. **Co-ordinating and territorial cross-thematic projects** represent a key component of the programme. These projects evaluate the results of the other projects towards integrated results such as indicator systems and data, typologies of territories, spatial development scenarios. The cross section projects help to thematically co-ordinate the whole programme and add value to the results and to fill gaps, which are unavoidable when different themes are dealt with in different projects.
4. **Scientific briefing and networking** in order to explore the synergies between the national and EU source for research and research capacities.

Project 2.3.1 belongs to the second strand of projects and holds an important position in the definition and elaboration of a common ground for investigating the degree of application and effects of the ESDP in the Member States as well as in new Member States and in neighbouring states taking part in the ESPON programme and as such on the spatial structure in Europe. A number of other projects of the ESPON programme are ongoing and a strong co-ordination will be required with these projects in order to reach consistent projects results within the ESPON programme. The necessary networking and cooperation would in particular involve the other project under strand 2 on methodological aspects of the territorial

impact analysis, e.g. projects on Governance and impact on Structural Funds. In addition, close contact with the relevant thematic projects on territorial trends under the first strand is to be foreseen. Finally, close links will be required with the coordinating and cross-thematic projects under priority three building on a scientific coherence in the ESPON programme as well as with the Co-ordination Unit.

## **ii) Thematic scope and context.**

The ESDP was adopted at the Council meeting in Potsdam in May 1999. Now, five years after the presentation of the final version of the ESDP, it is relevant to assess the effects of the ESDP at EU level and in each Member State in order to identify the potential of the ESDP and to find best examples of its application and implementation at European, transnational, national and regional/local level.

It is to be expected that ESDP also has had an impact in the new Member States as well as in the neighbouring countries, which participate in the ESPON programme. The project should therefore consider the entire "ESPON-space" as the research area. In the following the concept "ESPON-space" covers the mentioned countries and the EU-level (Commission / DGs)

The assessment to be carried out will be of the main impacts of the ESDP, namely to contribute to a European wide perception and integration of spatial policy orientations like balanced development, polycentrism, better accessibility, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage, horizontal and vertical co-ordination in policies and spatial strategies at EU, transnational, national and regional/local level. Beyond this general assessment of the delivery mechanisms of the ESDP, special attention should be paid to the question of whether and how the ESDP has had a positive influence on co-ordination of sectoral policies, and how far a horizontal integration of sectoral policies could be achieved considering territorial issues.

The ESDP is somehow a unique document with European policy orientations for territorial structures and development. Although being non-binding the implementation is supported by the European Commission and Member states. The recognition of the ESDP document have over the five years reached a certain level among politicians, administrators and professionals within the field of spatial development and planning at European, transnational, national and regional/local level.

Several European scientists have within the last decade produced scientific papers as well as reports on both the history of ESDP as well as on more specific targeted aspects of ESDP. Nevertheless, knowledge on the actual political and spatial impacts and effects at all levels mentioned above is rather diffuse. The Belgium EU presidency (Spring 2001) carried out a survey into the subject of "ESDP policy orientations in national spatial planning", as part of the Tampere Action Programme (Action 2.1.3).

At EU level, the Tampere Action Programme for implementation of ESDP, adopted at the informal minister meeting in 1999 during the Finnish EU Presidency, is a major political effort to operationalise the ESDP. The Action Programme consists of 12 actions and both the Commission and a number of Member States were assigned – and accepted to take responsibility for carrying out the actions.

The actions are:

- 2.1.1 ESDP policy orientations in SF mainstream programmes. (Portugal)
- 2.1.2 Interreg III and ESDP demonstration projects. (Denmark)
- 2.1.3 ESDP policy orientations in national spatial planning. (Belgium)
- 2.1.4 Spatial impacts of Community Policies. (Portugal)
- 2.1.5 Territorial impact assessment. (UK)
- 2.1.6 Urban policy application and co-operation. (France)
- 2.2.1 Establishing the ESPON co-operation. (Luxembourg, Sweden)
- 2.2.2 ESDP as basis for geography books for secondary schools. (France)
- 2.2.3 "Future regions of Europe" award. (Germany)
- 2.2.4 Guide on integrated strategies for coastal regions. (Spain)
- 2.3.1 Pan-European framework for spatial development. (Germany)
- 2.3.2 Spatial impacts of enlargement on EU Member States and non-Member states. (Commission)

At the transnational level, the impact of ESDP on the Interreg programme is indisputable, specifically the Interreg III B programme although impacts of ESDP also are traceable in Interreg II C projects. The impacts of ESDP in projects developed during both programmes should therefore also be assessed, specifically spatial visions and strategies, but also more targeted projects may show valuable contributions to the implementation of ESDP, specifically in a transnational context.

At the national and regional level, the ESDP has been operationalised on a volunteer basis in different territorial context, and probably in different ways. In order to obtain more knowledge on the acceptance and usefulness of the themes and delivery mechanisms of the ESDP a series of case studies should be explored. A tentative list of relevant and interesting cases for further investigation includes the following cases:

- The 6 Environmental Framework Programme
- The Øresund Region (Denmark-Sweden)
- The Second Benelux Structure Outline
- Interreg project; European Route of Brick Gothic (Germany)
- The National Spatial Strategy 2002 (Ireland)
- The National Spatial Strategy (Netherlands)
- The National Spatial Planning Report 2000 (Denmark)
- The General Spatial Plan of Greece (2000)
- The Structure Plan Review, (Malta)
- "Programme Directeur de l'Aménagement du Territoire" (Luxembourg)
- Sectoral policies; "Schémas de Services Collectifs" (France)
- MIIAT, "Agglomerations" et "pays", Urban/rural (France)
- The Plans for Coastal and Mountainous Areas in Greece (2003-2004)
- Committee of Experts for European Spatial Development (Germany)
- The Structure Plan of Wallonia, (Belgium)
- The Structure Plan of Flanders, (Belgium)
- "Estrategia Territorial Navarra", (Spain)
- Stockholm and the region "lake Mälaren" (Sweden)
- "Botnia Arch", (coast region north of Umeå, Sweden to Oulu, Finland)
- "The Botnian Line" (Sweden)
- The island of Gozo (Malta)
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands Region (2004), (Ireland)

- The Regional plans for Crete and South Aegean Sea Regions (2003)
- The “Triangle” Region (Denmark)
- The Emilia Romagna region (Italy)
- The city of Catania (Sicily)

On basis of both the ESDP and the Hanover document (CEMAT) it is to be expected that ESDP has also been implemented in various degree in the new EU member states as well as in the neighbouring states, which participate in the ESPON programme. The project should therefore also identify such case stories in these countries, preferably at transnational, national and regional/local level and conduct a similar assessment.

The outcome of this project should be oriented towards a practical use of policy orientation as included in the ESDP. It should be assessed whether the themes and concepts presented are sufficient and covering the demand for spatial policy orientations at all levels and in all parts of the European territory. It should consider the delivery mechanisms presented in the ESDP and assess whether the mechanisms for implementation are sufficient and delivering the expected results, and if not, how this could be improved in future European spatial development policies.

The project should cover not only strategy documents on spatial development and spatial planning documents, but as well investigate the impact on cooperation activities (vertical and horizontal integration) as proposed in the ESDP. It is important that the approach is more than a simple registration whether the ESDP is mention in a document or not. For each document, guidelines, strategy, legislation, regulation, etc. the assessment must judge the content of the individual documents, and determine whether ESDP objectives, concepts and policy directions are not only directly referred to but also indirectly present.

Close coordination should in particular be established with the upcoming project 2.3.2 dealing with “Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies from EU to local level” in order to avoid overlaps with this project and explore synergies. Furthermore, both the cross-thematic project 3.2 “Spatial Scenarios and orientations in relation to the ESDP and EU Cohesion Policy” and project 3.3 “Territorial dimension of the Lisbon/Gothenburg process” will be of special importance in order to avoid overlaps and ensure coherent results. A close cooperation is therefore obligatory to coordinate in depth and to achieve consistency, preferably through a joint meeting at an early stage in the project implementation. Finally, a close coordination should in addition be envisaged with other actions under ESPON measures 2.1. and 2.2., which also investigate the territorial aspects of sector policies.

### ***iii) General objectives***

The general objective of the project is to assess to which extent the policy orientations and options set out in the ESDP document, as well as the recommendations described in the chapter “The Application of ESDP” have worked in practice, whether it has been taken onboard by the “ESPON-space” at EU, transnational, national and regional/local level, and whether and how an improvement of transmission and delivery mechanisms could be envisaged for future policy documents for the development of the enlarged European territory.

More specific objectives are the following:

- To show the influence of ESDP on spatial policies and development at relevant scales through an empirical assessment of the application of the ESDP at EU level, transnationally and within the "ESPON-space", including in strategies made by regions, metropolitan areas and in cross-border regions.
- To show the influence of ESDP on the sectoral co-ordination and the vertical coordination with other levels, - at EU level and within the "ESPON-space"
- To assess the application of the ESDP in relevant policy documents at EU level and in the "ESPON-space", including the outcome of the Tampere Action Programme in relation to the expectations.
- To learn from case studies assessing the application of ESDP policy options in practise, at different administrative levels (such as the Interreg III programmes) and in different territorial contexts.
- To determine strengths and weaknesses of the ESDP approach and the themes selected (SWOT) and provide recommendations for improvements in relation to policy orientations and options of the ESDP covering the enlarged European territory and in relation to a territorial dimension in EU strategies like the Lisbon/Gothenburg and the aim of territorial cohesion proposed in the Third Cohesion Report.
- To recommend thematic orientations and delivery mechanisms for further policy developments in support of territorial cohesion and a polycentric and better balanced EU territory.
- To propose appropriate instruments and institutional settings for improving the co-ordination at European and national level of sector policies with spatial policy orientations

In the efforts to meet these objectives the project shall make best use of existing research and relevant studies, including other ESPON research results.

#### *iv) Primary research issues envisaged*

- Development of a methodology for the assessment of the ESDP's impact at EU level and in the "ESPON-space" considering the key messages of the ESDP calling for territorial balance and polycentrism, vertical and horizontal co-ordination as well as spatial integration. The assessment should cover the EU, transnational, national and regional/local level.
- To define useful concepts and categories and to find appropriate indicators and typologies suitable for the assessment. These should cover e.g. the "soft laws" such as strategy documents and guidelines, and the "hard laws" such as legislation and regulations.
- To define indicators for mapping the degree of ESDP application, preferably at minimum at NUTS 3 level. However in determining the indicators it should be considered at which level the relevant political decision-making processes are organised, (e.g. Flanders = NUTS 1)
- To assess what spatial integration means in theory and in practice with regard to the envisaged application of the ESDP.
- To assess the experiences in the "ESPON-space" with application of ESDP principles and policy options on the national, regional and local level (traces in policies and practical implementation), as well as the direct and indirect effects on the uptake of the ESDP by metropolitan urban regions

- To assess through comparative studies the different methods used by the "ESPON-space" in relation to application of ESDP policy options as well as vertical/horizontal integrations procedures
- To assess the concrete impacts of ESDP in selected case studies at European, transnational, national and regional/local level, in the "ESPON-space"
- To develop useful tools for future application of European policy orientation for territorial development covering the new enlarged EU.
- To develop a database consisting of developed indicators and typologies as well as a commented biography of scientific articles, papers and reports about the ESDP.

### ***v) Expected results and timetable***

The research undertaken is supposed mainly to work on the data and information available from the EU, transnational, national and regional level and normally be based on existing administrative units.

One of the main objectives of the ESPON 2006 Programme is to focus on research with policy relevance and to contribute to the development of relevant policies. Therefore, deliverables of the project should be highly operational and as far as possible fit into the relevant political agenda. The following timetable and specification of output is reflecting this objective:

#### **December 2004: First interim report**

- a) Development of the theoretical base and methodological framework for the project, including consensus on concepts and categories to be used for analysis, indicators for level of implementation, after a precise analysis of the availability and comparability at Community, transnational, national and regional/local level. (For these analyses, the results of the study programme and the results of the ESPON projects in course should be taken into account. Further, a first tentative reference list to relevant scientific literature and Interreg II C and III B projects should be made. This task should also define the appropriate geographical level and technology required for data collection, taking into account the availability of the relevant data at EU, transnational, national and regional/local level.),
- b) Development and presentation of indicators to be applied for analysing the ESDP application,
- c) Presentation of considerations concerning the selection of 20 to 30 case studies covering different administrative levels and territorial contexts in the "ESPON-space",
- d) Presentation of a first detailed and comprehensive list of data and information for the analyses, requested from the administrative units of the Commission and from transnational, national and regional/local level,

#### **March 2005: Second interim report**

- e) Presentation of the core hypothesis of the analysis, including results of a literature study, the envisaged typologies and a first database on indicators, and a biography on ESDP application,
- f) Presentation of selected case studies, including selection criteria covering as wide a field of ESDP as possible (EU, transnational, national and regional/local level.) and as many countries as possible, in all minimum 20 to 30 case studies)
- g) Presentation of the methodological framework for the assessment of case studies,
- h) Presentation of intention on the mapping of results from the project

### **December 2005: Third interim report**

- i) Presentation of a comprehensive working report on tentative results of the research, applying the methodology, analysis of the accumulated data/information previously collected, including the following elements;
  - Draft final analysis/diagnosis of the accumulated data/information of the application of ESDP at EU, transnational, national (for each country from the ESPON area), and regional/local level
  - Tentative assessment of the spatial and territorial impact at EU, transnational, national, and regional/local level and in different territorial contexts
  - Presentation of findings in the case studies including preliminary conclusions based on a cross analysis of the case studies
  - Preliminary recommendations on the thematic relevance and delivery mechanisms of the ESDP and how to improve application of spatial objectives, concepts and policy orientations. This should as well include recommendations for the practical application of the ESDP guidelines in the different operational programmes of Structural funds, at European, transnational, national and regional/local level
  - Draft recommendations for improvements of policy orientations and options of the ESDP covering the enlarged European territory and in relation to a territorial dimension in EU strategies like the Lisbon/Gothenburg and the aim of territorial cohesion proposed in the Third Cohesion Report (outdated / still valid ESDP policy options and suggestions for new policy options in relation to an enlarged EU territory),
- j) First input based on indicators and typologies developed to the ESPON database and map collection, including a final draft database on ESDP biography.

### **Final report: May 2006**

- k) Final report with clear policy recommendations in relation to the application of the ESDP, including clear recommendations on thematic adjustments and delivery mechanisms, in particular regarding the integration of a territorial dimension in Structural and sector policies and the possible diversification of policy priorities targeted to different territorial contexts
- l) An executive summary, useful for dissemination of the main findings of the project, including an article suitable for use towards the political level as well the public in general;
- m) Methodological paper on the scientific framework developed and used in the project,
- n) Presentation of final categories and indicators having been used for measuring the extent of ESDP application at all levels and maps for the ESPON database and map collection, as well as a final ESDP biography database;
- o) Formulation of the further research necessary in the field of territorial impacts of European Spatial Development.

### ***vi) Rationale and structure***

The following text has the role of shaping the mind of thinking in developing a proposal for undertaking the ESPON action 2. The text is not meant to be exhaustive, but to serve the purpose of guiding the tender:

#### **1. Elaboration of an appropriate methodology.**

The methodology should take account of the spatial concepts developed under priority 1, 2



and 3. The methodology should also allow indicating different policy levels (European, transnational/national, regional/local) and policy fields (especially regional/structural and environmental policy) in order to identifying the relevant actors and procedures for a better territorially coordinated policy. It should indicate the access points on how to measure the territorial effects of the policy investigated.

At present the ESPON project under priority 2 make use of several assessment methods and models. Besides developing operational assessment tool, this project should also draw upon these existing assessment methods. Further the project should keep in mind the specific needs of the end users (policy – and decisions makers).

## **2. Presentation of the level of ESDP application in Europe with reference to the territorial dimensions and the governmental level responsible for policy implementation**

The chapter in the ESDP document, “The Application of the ESDP” should be considered as a guide to relevant questions to be answered. The chapter includes a reference to a number of policy options, which are key to achieving a balanced and sustainable development (English version, section 164), which should be considered carefully as to which degree these have been implemented.

Further more this chapter includes a series of proposals for actions of different kind at Commission level, transnational and at national level. The project should consider these proposals carefully and give answers as to what extent an implementation has taken place. A starting point could be the analysis on the general relevance of the ESDP topics on different levels (national and regional/local).

The structured presentation of the ESDP application should allow identifying the relevant parameters for the territorial impact assessment for all three dimensions, the policy (contents and strategies), polity (institutions, organisations) and politics (processes) regarding in particular spatial disparities and imbalance of the European territory.

## **3. Indicators, data and spatial concepts.**

When assessing the actual implementation of ESDP (in perspectives, legislations, regulations, directives, planning documents, co-operations and concrete implemented strategies) at different levels it should be taken into consideration that a distinction between direct and indirect effect of the ESDP can be difficult to make.

As basis for the delivery to the ESPON database the project should develop a set of indicators related to different aspect of the implementation of ESDP at the different levels. It could be e.g. “soft law” covering not judicial or political officially adopted papers, participations in programmes, “hard law” covering political adopted documents, perspectives and plans as well as legislation, regulations and directives. Other aspects could be the position of the spatial planning sector and the general European integration in the national context (e.g. harmonisation of directives and administrative systems) and – as thinking the other way round – the degree of contribution to the ESDP and influencing the European spatial development agenda. Further also indicators should be developed for concrete examples on implementation, like creations of polycentrism, accessibility, special actions related to nature and cultural heritage firmly rooted in ESDP, urban networks, the setting up of informal and formal committees or even physical structures.

The ESDP contains a series of spatial concepts. The project should concentrate on a reasonable number of spatial concepts which covers the basic policy agenda of the ESDP and

in developing indicators for the measurement the project should analyse and assess the extent of the effect of these spatial concepts and give recommendations to further development and implementation of the spatial concepts.

### **3.1. Typologies.**

On basis of the collection of data and the analysis the project should assess to what extent a set of typologies can be described for the European territory concerning the different aspects of the ESDP application. In doing this the project should explore typologies already developed by other ESPON projects.

With reference to the developed indicators the typologies should be able to give an impression of various aspects of ESDP implementation EU- and Europe-wide at NUTS III level.

### **3.2. Indicators and data collection**

The project should quantify/qualify the territorial and regional effect of ESDP implementation. The collection of data for the basic indicators should take place on the NUTS III level.

Using the indicators presented below as an indicative list, statistical and geographic data should be collected and analysed. Data should be collected at the lowest possible geographic level (ideally NUTS 3).

Indicators to be considered (not exclusive) should reflect:

- “soft law” (not judicial or political officially adopted papers)
- “hard law” (political adopted documents, perspectives, plans, legislation, regulations directives, etc.)
- territorial and regional effect of ESDP implementation
- concrete examples and output of implementation, (e.g. urban networks, informal and formal committees, round tables, local action groups, communication platforms)
- concrete physical structures.

### **4. Case studies.**

The project should carry through a series of case stories in order to assess concrete examples on the application of the ESDP. The list presented in **chapter ii** is a first tentative list, which in no way should be considered as final. The cases should be organised according to the policy level as well as the territorial contexts. The case studies should in principle cover all countries participating in the ESPON programme. Therefore, the project should carry through at least 20 to 30 case studies and present policy recommendations on basis of a cross analysis of these case studies.

### **5. Interaction with other territorially relevant policies**

The project should in the selection of a representative number of case studies cover cases on the effects of sector policies in “ESPON-space” and at community level. The interaction of ESDP with other territorially relevant policies should be included and give evidence of the character and effect of the interaction. The concrete application of ESDP in other sectoral policies or integrated approaches made together with sector policies should be highlighted (such as transport/spatial, environment/spatial, etc.).

### **6. Orientations for policy recommendations**

A particular attention should be paid to issues arising from the ESDP policy options.

In the light of the results of the above analysis, improvement of a territorial dimension of relevant policies at community, transnational and national/regional level should be proposed

in support of polycentrism, balance regional development and European territorial balance. All relevant ESDP policy options should be addressed and evaluated in this context.

Proposals should be made for improving the policy themes of European spatial policy orientation, taking into account demands stemming from the enlargement of the EU. In addition, it should be considered how policy recommendations, policy coordination could be ensured through relevant delivery mechanisms and how a system for better implementation could look like.

***vii) Existing access points***

The access points listed below can serve the purpose of providing the tenders useful information for preparing a proposal. It is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but only as information that can be helpful in tracing additional useful background information.

**Access points:**

- The ESDP document, Potsdam 1999
- The Tampere Action Programme 1999
- The ESPON programme
- The ESPON Website; [www.espon.lu](http://www.espon.lu)
- The Commission impact study on EU sector policies
- Various scientific reports