



EUROPEAN SPATIAL PLANNING
OBSERVATION NETWORK



Terms of Reference for ESPON-INTERACT Thematic Study

Spatial Visions and Scenarios

Spatial vision and scenario activities currently carried out under the framework of INTERREG III Programmes are one of the meeting points between INTERACT, facilitating mutual learning between different INTERREG areas, and ESPON, analyzing spatial development trends at European scale. The present document outlines the study to be carried out, analyzing and comparing the various ongoing spatial vision and scenario activities in order to draw up proposals for future action, identify gaps and stimulate synergies. The study shall run from May 2005 and March 2006, with an important milestone being a INTERACT event centered on this study, probably in January 2006. The size of the study is 50,000 Euro (incl. VAT if applicable).

In the following the INTERACT Programme and the ESPON Programme are presented, before outlining the general objectives of this study, the primary research issues envisaged, the timetable and key deliveries and the budget.

1. The INTERACT Programme and the IP Qualification & Transfer

Cooperation between countries and regions promoted by the Community Initiatives INTERREG II and III has become a fundamental element of EU cohesion policy. The positive impacts of INTERREG II and III programmes and projects on social, economic cohesion and territorial development are acknowledged. However, their implementation is not always easy, insofar as it requires specific transnational knowledge and know-how which might not be sufficiently available at national or regional level. This holds especially true for the transnational and interregional cooperation programmes under strands B and C of INTERREG III.

The major problems concerning the INTERREG programmes and the adjacent project implementation obviously stem from difficulties to “manage the difference”: differences of legal, administrative rules, traditions between countries etc. In order to overcome these obstacles, but also to explore major opportunities and gain more benefits from the results

of the programmes and projects, more exchange and provision of information and good practices and examples among the INTERREG community is required.

INTERACT as part of the Community Initiative INTERREG is designed to address these weaknesses, and also to take advantage of the previous and ongoing experiences, with a view to increasing the impact of INTERREG III on economic, social cohesion and cooperation throughout the EU and with neighbouring countries. By capitalising the broad expertise in the fields of regional development, cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation developed through INTERREG in all Member States of the EU the purpose is to provide support to the implementation of programmes and projects for all 3 strands of INTERREG.

More precisely, INTERACT aims at promoting the exchange of experience, making best practices accessible to interested stakeholders in the European Union through an active programme of dissemination, developing and offering decentralised training interventions and workshops for implementing bodies and project leaders.

In that perspective, major expected outcomes of the INTERACT programme are:

- To enable and encourage transfer of experiences and good practice between institutions and players in different geographical areas, programmes and INTERREG strands
- To provide a joint platform for INTERREG and establish common standards and procedures for the implementation of INTERREG programmes (especially for inter-regional and transnational cooperation and for cooperation with neighbouring countries)
- To enhance know-how, technical and organisational capacity of institutions, organisations and persons directly involved in the realisation of INTERREG programmes and projects and improve the link between regional and national instruments and INTERREG
- To enlarge the group of project applicants for all strands of INTERREG through broad information activities and support for project development and implementation
- To act as a platform for the transfer of data and information between related initiatives like ESPON, URBACT and the INTERREG programmes in both directions.

INTERACT serves as a major service provider for the INTERREG Community, as well as for the national and regional actors directly involved, by providing technical and scientific assistance; by increasing the quantity, and improving the quality of information necessary to the implementation of INTERREG programmes and projects; by facilitating the access to this information.

The services of the programme are developed by the Programme Secretariat and the five INTERACT Points:

- Information and Animation,
- Qualification and Transfer,
- IIC coordination,

- Tool Box
- Managing Transition and External cooperation

In this framework, the Interact Point Qualification and Transfer has two related specific objectives:

- to provide opportunities and forums for INTERREG operators to exchange knowledge and experiences.
- to provide opportunities for them to learn or update skills that are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities of the INTERREG world.

These two objectives will be approached through a process involving all INTERREG operators in the discussion and identification of good practice, training on this good practice, evaluation of results and subsequent improvement of the training offered.

2. Relation to the ESPON Programme

In this context, the participation of ESPON in the Interact Point Qualification and Transfer aims at ensuring interaction on thematic issues. The purpose of this activity is to build on the use and exchange of knowledge accumulated in ESPON projects and to combine the knowledge with the good practice experiences in Interact projects in order to support the project development and the generation of project ideas to the benefit of many of the INTERREG programmes.

Furthermore, by interlinking and exchanging experiences from INTERREG III A, B and C and ESPON, mutual learning and benefits can be obtained, which in turn can support the development of new project ideas within INTERREG A, B and C programmes as well as new research within the ESPON programme.

ESPON has been contracted to provide content for events (seminars) on thematic issues and will as an input to these seminars, guide studies crossing assessment of project activities within INTERREG programmes with state-of-the-art research, analyses, and concrete project ideas for implementation in different strands of INTERREG.

The seminars should address several of the main INTERREG interests, by providing:

- an opportunity for project promoters and project managers from different programmes to meet, exchange knowledge and know-how
- an opportunity for actors coming from outside the INTERREG community to be informed on the development of INTERREG projects related to their field of activity.

As an essential input to thematic slots at INTERACT seminars, thematic studies need to be carried out, which are the subject of the present Terms of Reference. In order to address the mentioned interests, the thematic studies should concentrate on:

- scientific inputs on trends in a selected field, to “feed the content” of projects, better define the orientation that has to be given to the future projects in relation to ESDP objectives, and provide programme managers and project promoters with new project ideas. Indicators, tools and methods should also be partly envisaged in order to

improve analytical skills, and subsequently, implementation and evaluation of the projects

- case studies based on best practices examples taken among a wide range of INTERREG projects within the thematic focus, representing, as far as possible, all strands and main geographic areas.

Five themes of mutual interest have to be covered by ESPON based on INTERREG priorities, as well as on Commission priorities and ESPON's major areas of expertise:

- Transport, communication and accessibility
- Environmental hazards and risk management
- Polycentric development and urban-rural relations
- Cross-border cooperation
- Spatial visions and scenarios

3. General Objectives of the Study on Spatial Visions and Scenarios

Under INTERREG IIC, spatial development visions and scenarios or territorial strategies at transnational and European level have been elaborated in a number of programming areas. The names of these documents are as varied as they character. To varying degree these have been used as background information when drafting the INTERREG IIIB programmes and defining and selecting strategic projects to be funded under INTERREG IIIB.

Following the work carried out during the previous programming period, many of the IIIB programmes are currently developing spatial visions or building on visions developed under IIC. These new visions are envisaged as key input in the development of the new transnational programmes. Among the IIIB programmes currently working with the development of spatial visions or comparable activities are the Alpine Space, Atlantic Area, Baltic Sea, CADSES, North Sea and North West Europe. The thematic foci and procedures differ widely between the various programmes. Additional efforts are also needed to identify need to be undertaken to identify other INTERREG projects on territorial strategies and spatial development policies in particular in programming areas which have no explicit spatial vision and scenario activities ongoing. Also activities under the previous programming period need to be taken into consideration, in particular with regard to their application and influence on project selection. To a certain degree similar there are also comparable activities under INTERREG strand A and C which need to be taken into account.

At the same time, ESPON is analysing spatial development trends and policy impacts at European level covering a wide range of topics that also are addressed in the various IIIB studies. In addition, one ESPON project (3.2) is explicitly working with the development of territorial development scenarios for Europe and also other ESPON projects are partly employing scenario techniques in the course of their work.

Thus, there is a wide range of spatial vision and scenario activities currently ongoing with various geographical and thematic foci, as well as different processes and intentions.

Bringing together all this material, processes and people involved should provide a good opportunity for mutual learning and inspiration and an added value for the future development of INTERREG cooperation activities and further transnational activities within a future objective within Structural Funds dealing with territorial cooperation. It should enable project development officers and programme managers to better understand the distinct spatial characteristics and development trends within their programme area, to consider them in a wider context and to make use of them in programme development and project selection.

For this purpose the present call for tender has been developed. The aim of this study is to provide a systematic and comparative overview on the spatial visions and scenario work currently going on in various INTERREG projects and to draw up an analysis of their differences in thematic priorities and methodologies and in particular on how ESPON results can support the further development of spatial visions in INTERREG programmes and beyond.

In doing so the focus is certainly on ESPON and INTERREG IIIB activities. However, brief screening of IIIA and IIIC activities regarding possible work related to spatial visions and scenarios will be necessary. With regard to INTERREG IIIB the main focus will be on the vision and scenario studies mentioned above. A special emphasis needs to be placed on identifying additional projects which could be of interest particularly in Southern Europe and other areas where there are no explicit spatial vision or scenario activities. This involves also an assessment of the reasons why these areas are not engaging with territorial strategic think at transnational level in terms of spatial visions or scenarios.

With regard to INTERREG IIIA and IIIC a survey should be made trying to identify interesting activities under IIIA and IIIC. This should involve an assessment on projects/activities illustrating whether and how also these strands may benefit from more territorial strategic thinking. This implies also the development of concrete project ideas.

The focus of this study has to be set in close relation with the needs and expectations of the INTERREG programmes and projects, in order to provide appropriate answers to their needs, and stimulate synergies between them. A main event in relation to the study will be subject to an INTERACT seminar at which various actors of the INTERACT and INTERREG community will come together to discuss issues related to this study.

In order to assure client oriented and applicable results, the following access points are to be considered:

- *Cooperation with the INTERACT Points*

For the implementation of the thematic study, cooperation with other Interact Points (IPs) will be necessary, notably with IP Information and Animation for identification for the analysis of financed INTERREG projects and identification of good practices

(a project bank is currently being developed by this IP). Also activities undertaken by IP Tool Box and Managing Transition should provide some useful inputs to the thematic study.

- *Cooperation with INTERREG programme secretariats and projects*
Information on INTERREG projects and programmes is to varying degrees available from the Internet. In order to have a comprehensive view of programmes and projects, the contractor will have to get the information directly from the INTERREG secretariats and projects. The contractor will have the support of the ESPON CU and INTERACT Points regarding this particular task.
- *Cooperation with ESPON Coordination Unit and projects*
Most of the knowledge on trends and policy impacts within the European territory as well as background and methodological information will have to be found in and collected from the ESPON results dealing spatial development, visions and scenarios. This is in particular the ESPON project 3.2, but also other projects such as 2.4.2, 3.3, 1.1.3 or 2.1.1 might be of relevance with regard to their scenario work.

4. Primary Research Issues Envisaged

Taking into consideration the EU Cohesion Policy, as well as the objectives of INTERREG and ESPON related to the ESDP, the thematic study needs to compile and compare INTERREG and ESPON projects/activities dealing with spatial development visions and scenarios at transnational and European level. The main purpose of this exercise is to provide new insights and ideas for the discussion on future programmes and key projects. The strategic element of the spatial vision activities in giving impetus to project ideas and providing guidance for project selection are key aspects.

The key deliveries of the thematic study should address:

1. Compilation and comparison of the issues dealt with in various INTERREG and ESPON spatial visions and scenario activities

Based on a screening of issues and topics selected in relation to spatial scenario and vision activities ongoing under INTERREG III B and ESPON spatial, the study will compare INTERREG IIIB vision work and ESPON studies regarding congruencies and contradictions in following fields:

1.1. Spatial development trends & geographical scope

Urban and rural development, accessibility, environment, innovation etc. are topics for which trends are discussed for various areas and at various geographical levels. Which are the main spatial development trends (and possible trend breaks) considered and to what degree do they differ between the various projects?

1.2. Impacts of policies on trends

Which EU or national policies are considered important factors influencing territorial development, and what are their main territorial impacts considered in the various projects?

1.3. Policy aims against which trends are judged

Spatial development visions and scenarios are related to development aims – mostly expressed in policies. The visions and scenario work will be developed in relation to these aims, but also on programming areas which are not working with specific territorial guidance the programming documents and foci are developed in the light of policy aims. Which are the main aims forming the backbone of the various activities?

1.4. Areas specific focus

The importance of general territorial development trends and policy may differ between various regions/programming areas. To what degree do the projects develop thematic foci corresponding to the characteristics of the programming areas and to what degree do the projects go beyond the programming areas for specific issues? For the programming areas which are not working with some form territorial strategic documents, the reasons for that need to be further assessed. This regards in particular IIIB areas but to a certain degree also IIIA and IIIC.

2. Compilation and comparison of the approaches and processes employed in various INTERREG and ESPON spatial visions and scenario activities

As under the point above, the study will compare the various projects regarding the processes and approaches chosen for the development of the spatial visions/scenarios:

2.1. Qualitative and quantitative approaches

There are different qualitative and quantitative approaches which can be employed for developing spatial scenarios and visions. The study will provide a brief overview on the approaches chosen in the various projects and the differences between them. In case quantitative approaches are chosen, also the issue of how trends and policy aims are quantified needs to be covered.

2.2. Linear and more complex/cyclic approaches

Different approaches for “forecasting” territorial development imply different views on the processes shaping territorial development. The study will investigate the views of the various projects.

2.3. Participatory dimension

The approaches chosen can also differ regarding the participatory dimension. Scenarios and development visions can either be elaborated as expert inputs or involve the process with various stakeholders. Which stakeholders are involved in which way?

3. Compilation and comparison of the results envisaged and achieved by the various INTERREG and ESPON spatial visions and scenario activities

As under the point above, the study will compare the results, i.e. visions/scenarios and policy recommendations/options which are drawn on their base:

3.1. Thematic results

Drawing on the points elaborated above, the main difference between the various projects as regards the focus of the work, the geographical and thematic areas priorities and the overall aims are to be compared. Here in particular the relation

between Interreg programming areas and the overall findings of ESPON projects for these areas are of importance.

3.2. Methodological results

Drawing on the points elaborated above, the main difference between the various projects as regards the methodologies, indicators and participation are to be compared.

3.3. Application strategy, use and stakeholder relations/ ownership

The translation of spatial visions or scenarios into concrete projects/action supporting the spatial development aims is a crucial point for success. The study will provide an overview on the various application strategies and envisaged use (e.g. regarding the use for preparing future projects and providing guidance for project selection). With regard to the embeddedness of the spatial vision activities in the programs, the question of stakeholder involvement and “mental” ownership of the projects needs to be investigated.

4. **Provision on inputs for the definition of future cooperation themes and frameworks:**

The thematic study is to be developed bearing in mind that the study and the interaction at the seminar will target mainly project officers and programme managers within the secretariats of INTERREG programmes.

Project ideas that will be proposed should be on concrete realization of ESDP objectives and priorities for the Structural Funds 2007-13, proving through action the continued relevance of European spatial development objectives and the Lisbon/Gothenburg agenda. Furthermore, project ideas will have to take into consideration budgetary aspects, in relation to the size of the programmes, size and type of projects, but also orientations and perspectives for the next programming period. Taking this into account a proposal for future cooperation themes has to be elaborated:

4.1. Identifying gaps

Are there specific themes that are not sufficiently addressed in the current INTERREG programmes and to what extent are existing spatial disparities, challenges and potentials as identified by ESPON, targeted in INTERREG?

4.2. Distinct developments in programming areas

To what degree are the territorial development aspects target in the various programmes distinct for the specific areas or of more general nature?

4.3. Lisbon relevance

Contribution to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas and other strategically important spatial themes?’

4.4. Usefulness of territorial strategies

How can territorial strategies improve cross-border and transnational territorial cooperation by providing impetus to project ideas and guidance for project selection?

5. **Timetable and Key Deliverables**

The implementation of the study should start early in May 2005, and be developed in accordance with the following timetable and deadlines for delivery:

- **19 December 2005: Draft Final Report**

- Draft Final Report presenting all the above mentioned elements in a draft version, that will be finalised and complemented by the conclusions of the thematic seminar.
- Report presenting in a summarised version of approx. 20 pages the main outcomes of the thematic study, including the following elements:
 - Introduction
 - Findings on the European level, background information on current spatial scenario and vision and territorial strategy activities and their implications
 - Findings on topics, processes and results (cf. research issues envisaged)
 - Identification of potential cooperation themes by type of regions in meeting respective programme objectives
 - Good practice in INTERREG projects with reference to specific types of regions
 - Concrete ideas for new projects and future perspectives, both as regards possibilities for improvement and maintaining momentum in programming areas that have developed territorial strategies, and as regards beneficial approaches for programming areas that have not engaged with this kind of work (considering all three INTERREG strands)
- Prior to the elaboration of the drafting of the Final Report a list of 10 key points is to be provided for coordination of the report with ongoing Interact and ESPON processes.
- This thematic document will be disseminated at least two weeks before the seminar, in order to prepare the participants for the discussion.

- **Beginning of January to end of February 2006: Consultation process**

The contractor, with the help of the Coordination Unit and the INTERACT Point Qualification & Transfer, will have to carry through a consultation process involving the INTERREG programmes secretariats, for the validation of the results presented in the draft report. The recommendations given by the secretariats will have to be integrated in the report for its finalisation.

- **January 2005: INTERACT seminar**

- The contractor will have to prepare and organise in collaboration with the INTERACT Point Qualification & Transfer team the thematic slot related to the study within the INTERACT seminar. The contractor should be prepared to make a presentation of the results of the study, to organise and lead the debate with the participants, and to contribute to the conclusions of the seminar. Slides used in relation to the seminar will be made available to public in the internet.
- In time with the announcement of the event (that means before the submission of the above mentioned “thematic document”), the contractor will have to produce

and communicate to the INTERACT Point Qualification & Transfer a list of the main elements presented in the thematic study draft final report, that will also be presented during the seminar.

- **End of March 2006: Final Report**

- Presenting the finalised version of the thematic study, including conclusions from the INTERACT seminar.

The report is to be written in easily accessible English language which is appealing also to readers which are not familiar with spatial development visions or territorial strategies.

In addition to the reporting a close cooperation with the ESPON CU will be necessary involving at least two meetings, one in the start of the programme and one in relation to the finalisation of the draft final report. The contracting authority can request brief written inputs (discussions papers) for the preparation of these meetings.

6. Budget

The budget allocated for the implementation of the thematic study is 50.000 € This includes VAT if applicable and travel expenses for two coordination meetings in Luxembourg. Costs related to the participation to the seminar are not included.