

Q&A Session - New ESPON Calls

Almost 15 m Euro for up to 31 New Projects



The 5 Calls covering up to 31 projects represent a major European effort increasing the knowledge and facts about the European territory, types of regions and ongoing dynamics and potentials.

Researchers, experts and stakeholders in the public and private sector from 31 European countries are invited to apply for up to 31 new projects on new analyses under the ESPON 2013 Programme. Public authorities are in particular invited to express their interest and ideas on future targeted analyses based on ESPON results tailored to meet their needs. The deadline for submission of the proposals is **11 November 2009**.

In this report, representatives at the ESPON Coordination Unit have answered key questions in an interview style on the content related to the main themes of the Calls and the projects involved.

Call for Proposals for Applied Research

Interview with Michaela Gensheimer, Cluster Coordinator/Project Expert at the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Question: The Call for Proposals includes eleven new themes of Applied Research. Can you explain the main objectives behind those themes and the expectations by the ESPON Monitoring Committee?

Michaela: The overarching goal of ESPON Applied Research Projects is the continued building of knowledge and new evidence about European regions which should serve to support policy development. That is why the themes of these projects are defined by the demand of policy makers.

Our Applied Research Projects address major territorial challenges and analyse the resulting consequences for Europe's regions and cities. One of the central objectives is the provision of comparable regionalised information and the proposal of policy options that give policy makers the possibility to enhance positive effects of trends and to react upon negative ones. In addition, some of the projects support the assessment of territorial impacts of EU policies and can thereby also help to identify potential synergies and/or conflicts between different policies.

Knowledge on the 11 themes included in the currently open call is vital for identifying, mapping and interpreting trends and their impacts on the development of Europe.

These projects hold key positions in developing a common understanding of the following:

- Relation between attractiveness and competitiveness of European regions and cities.
- Land use patterns from a European perspective, their changes and their relation to economic, social and environmental performance of European regions.
- Opportunities for territorial cooperation in transnational areas, between regions and across internal and external borders.
- Transport accessibility and accessibility patterns at both, regional/local scale and European level and their relation to regional economic development.
- Opportunities and perspectives for the development of secondary growth poles.
- Diversity of specific types of territories throughout Europe, their specific needs and development opportunities.

- Territorial dimension of the innovation and knowledge economy, the territorial potential and distinction of regional variation.
- Competitiveness and integration of European regions in global economy, their position in global flows, structures and networks.
- Patterns of the use of European seas and their relation with development on land.
- Role and contribution of services of general interest in territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion.
- Territorial impacts of EU Directives and the sensitivity of types of territories to such impacts.

Question: Who can participate in the Call?

Michaela: Potential beneficiaries of this call are public and private bodies that dispose of the necessary analytical capacities to successfully implement research projects. Private applicants need to prove their solvency as part of the application. In this context, Member and Partner States have provided a list of documents that will have to be supplied by private applicants at the moment of application. The list is included in the Application Pack - Priority 1.

Question: How do researchers find partners to apply to this call?

Michaela: The ESPON Partner Café offers a good opportunity of finding potential partners to set up a Transnational Project Group. In the Partner Café section on the ESPON Website, potential beneficiaries that are interested in becoming involved in ESPON projects are listed. The compilation of potential partners includes information on the thematic fields the respective institutions work in, the disciplines they represent as well as the geographical coverage they can offer.

The café should certainly only be a starting point, as there is the interest to create good and comprehensive partnerships all over Europe.

Call for Expression of Interest for Targeted Analyses

Interview with René van der Lecq, Project Expert - Project Development and Coordination, at the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Question: Why the Call for ESPON Expression of Interest for Targeted Analyses is considered so important for public authorities in Europe?

René: Targeted Analyses offer public authorities the opportunity to carry out an analytical process to detect territorial development opportunities by combining European territorial evidence and more local and regional information. The public authorities are asked to define their precise demands on the basis of challenges they experience themselves.

ESPON offers the framework to look at these challenges from a new European perspective. This helps stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the larger territorial context, to make comparisons to other territories, regions and cities, and to provide a European perspective to considerations on the development of their territories.

Question: Can you say more about the potential benefits of this call?

René: Public authorities have a unique opportunity to obtain almost for free customised results they can use for policy development. ESPON possesses of an innovative knowledge base and wide network of researchers and policymakers that will for sure be enriching.

Question: Who is considered as a stakeholder that could apply to this call?

René: All national public authorities of the 31 countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme, EU authorities, the authorities responsible for implementing Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013 under Objective 1, 2, and 3, including programmes dealing with

crossborder, transnational and interregional cooperation, as well as groups of public authorities at regional/local level representing regions and/or cities from at least three countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Question: What are the experiences from stakeholders in running Targeted Analyses?

René: I receive much positive feedback from stakeholders. The Metroborder project for instance receives lots of attention from the media and politicians and is so capable to put territorial development in the spotlights. Other stakeholders told me that taking part in ESPON helps them to obtain new knowledge and thus brings support that reaches much further than the project as such.

Call for Proposals for Targeted Analyses

Interview with Michaela Gensheimer, Cluster Coordinator/Project Expert at the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Question: What are the themes for the Call for Proposals for Targeted Analyses?

Michaela: The themes for Targeted Analyses are defined by stakeholders who subsequently also participate in the project implementation and will later on apply the results generated by the project in their practical work. It is a new type of projects in the ESPON framework, supporting the use of existing ESPON results in partnership with different groups of stakeholders and enriching them with more detailed information and know-how from specific target regions.

The projects included in the current Call shall address the following themes: Potential of Rural Regions/PURR and Transnational Support Method for European Cooperation/TranSMEC.

Question: Can you explain the aim of the 2 projects?

Michaela: The aim of the PURR study is to create and test new ways to explore the territorial potentials of some rural areas and small and medium-sized towns in peripheral parts of Europe around the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea.

TranSMEC belongs to the joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes. By using, inter alia, existing ESPON results, the project aims at developing transferable analytical and methodological tools that will help INTERREG Programmes in both, the development of and capitalisation on projects.

Question: What are the ambitions for TranSMEC?

Michaela: The basic question that this targeted analysis should address is: How can available territorial evidence be applied for territorial cooperation programmes in order to support the capitalisation and dissemination of project results, and strategic project and programme development?

Call for Proposals for the Scientific Platform

Interview with Marjan van Herwijnen, Project Expert - Statistics, Data and Maps at the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Question: Can you tell more about the main objectives of this Call?

Marjan: The projects within the Scientific Platform represent a core element in the knowledge base that is being created by ESPON. They contribute to the building of European datasets, indicators and tools and with that they form a basic source for the scientific community in the field of European territorial science.

At the moment an ESPON database is being build and with a call for proposals for the project "Territorial Indicators and Indices" the focus is now put on the indicators. The main objective of this project is to define and develop a set of territorial indicators and indices that can be used to support policy making in the field of territorial cohesion and European territorial development. This also means that the project has to look into how the indicators and indices can be presented and communicated to different groups of stakeholders, such as experts, administrators, policy makers and the wider public.

Question: What are the key research questions to whom the researchers need to contribute?

Marjan: The field of European territorial development and cohesion covers a large number of issues and aspects ranging from the policy orientations and challenges mentioned in the Cohesion Reports, the Territorial Agenda and the Green Paper to other important issues such as migration, economic development, environmental issues, urban sprawl, cultural assets, climate change, innovative creativity, etc. This led us to an important question: "Which indicators could capture and measure territorial cohesion and development within Europe?" Capturing and measuring issues however, is not enough. These indicators also have to be communicated to policy makers and therefore another important question is: "Which indicators are able to communicate, in a simple way, complex issues?" And of course: "How can this best be done?" All in all, quite challenging questions I would say.

Question: Yes indeed! And how could one address all these questions in the project?

Marjan: Well, the project is structured in 3 parts. The first part focuses on searching and reviewing existing territorial indicators. The most promising indicators of the first part are being explored and tested in the second part. And finally in the third part, the selected territorial indicators are made operational. Of course, during the project policy makers should be directly involved in the whole process. Only then we can try to ensure that the final indicator set is manageable and based on most important and excepted ones.

Call for Proposals for Transnational Networking Activities by the ESPON Contact Point network

Interview with André Mueller, Cluster Coordinator / Project Expert - Capitalisation, Analysis and Publications at the ESPON Coordination Unit.

Question: The ESPON Operational Programme includes a Priority on Capitalisation in which the Transnational Networking Activities are part of the actions to be financed in support of the capitalisation. In this context what is the role of the ESPON Contact Point Network?

André: The role of the ESPON Contact Point Network is to undertake the Transnational Networking Activities and thus to support the capitalisation of projects results and activities of the ESPON 2013 Programme. In doing so, the ESPON Contact Points form groupings of members of the ECP Network.

Question: What are the key ideas behind this Call?

André: The key ideas behind this Call are to stimulate the ECP Network to hand in proposals for Transnational Networking Activities. These proposals will follow a given set of ideas which have been approved by the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

Question: What the ECPs are expected to deliver?

André: The ECPs are expected to carry through activities and events which address for instance stakeholders at national, regional and local level to raise their awareness for targeted analysis proposals they might submit. Or, they might tailor activities for the next generation of scientists and administrators, i.e. young researchers, scholars and students to

activate their interest in research on territorial development and cohesion and what the ESPON 2013 Programme is offering as platform to do so. Training and teaching activities are also possible fields of activities. We are very much looking forward to the Transnational Networking Activities!

ESPON Partner Café

Research institutes that are **looking for partners** to prepare a proposal for one of the projects under the current Calls are remembered to have a look at the overview of potential partners that is available on the ESPON Website. The fields of expertise that are indicated in the overview provide you with a good impression of which institutes might be interested in the same research theme as you and might wish to join you in a Transnational Project Group. **90 institutions from 23 European countries** have already taken the opportunity to be included in the overview compiled by ESPON. [Link](#).

Contacts

For questions concerning the content of the 5 Calls please send an email to content@espon.eu; for questions related to administrative issues and application procedures please send an email to procedures@espon.eu.

Please visit the [Frequently Asked Questions page](#). This page is updated with the answers to the most frequent questions that were submitted to the ESPON Coordination Unit.

The documentation related to the Calls, including the procedure for applying, the eligibility rules, the evaluation criteria and the submission material is available [here](#).

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More information

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department for Spatial Planning and Development of Luxembourg. More information: www.espon.eu