

5. Priority 4: Capitalisation, Ownership and Participation: Capacity Building, Dialogue and Networking

The ESPON 2013 Programme will put much emphasis on capitalising the evidence and findings through awareness raising and involvement of policy makers, practitioners, scientists and the wider public, in the beginning partly based on the results achieved by the ESPON 2006 Programme.

A participatory approach – including all target groups – for preparing territorial policies is fundamental to ensure their relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The strategy of the ESPON Programme would therefore be incomplete and unable to achieve its overall objectives without specific actions raising awareness and involving stakeholders in the practical use of results coming out of projects. Bringing together views of policy makers, practitioners and scientists has been a good experience within the ESPON 2006 Programme, also as dialogue on defining and guiding actions. This also holds true for the applied research projects, for targeted analysis and for progressing further the ESPON Scientific Platform in the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The SWOT analysis included in the ESPON 2013 Operational Programme concluded that the capitalisation and awareness raising activities of the ESPON 2006 Programme and the results obtained so far were too limited, and that the uses of results should be improved by means of involvement, capacity building, dialogue and networking.

A substantial effort will be undertaken in the course of the ESPON 2013 Programme to involve the target groups in order to ensure quality partnership and the highest possible acquaintance, understanding and use of the evidence and knowledge base developed. Capitalisation, ownership and participation represent a core element in making the knowledge base of ESPON operational and used in practise, and for the preparation of effective territorial policies.

Three types of actions are foreseen to be financed within Priority 4 in support of capitalisation:

1. Media and Publications
2. European Seminars and Workshops
3. Transnational Networking Activities

The implementation of these actions is expected to increase profoundly the awareness of ESPON and the comparable European evidence available. The actions will ensure a wide coverage of the capitalisation of results by addressing mainly the following target groups:

- At the European level policy makers in European Institutions and programmes, representatives of EU Member States dealing with territorial development and relevant sector policies;
- Global, transnational, national, regional and local policy makers, practitioners, the private sector, as well as the general public involved in the development of territories. The scientific community (including students and young scientists) related to territorial research will empower the capitalisation of results and be a target by itself in awareness raising activities.

As the ESPON 2006 Programme resulted in a substantive output, an enhanced dialogue and involvement of policy makers and practitioners at all levels has become feasible from the beginning of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

The dialogue envisaged should as well result in an increase of requests for additional information and assistance from ESPON, such as in particular themes for applied research under Priority 1 and interest for participating in actions under Priority 2, which would increase the use of ESPON findings and evidence even more.

The operational objectives for the three types of actions include the following:

- Capitalisation by raising awareness of ESPON findings, in particular by involving different stakeholders in interactive and focused transnational dialogues;
- Improving and consolidating the ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge;
- Receiving feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice;
- Ensuring the transferability of results by providing compact, written and long-lasting, easily readable evidence of the territorial knowledge built within the ESPON 2013 Programme.

A targeted ESPON Capitalisation Strategy as the guiding strategy for Priority 4 will provide action lines guiding the best possible capitalisation and use of results from applied research and analysis in creating awareness, involvement and to build capacity around ESPON findings. Its implementation will be facilitated by a media bureau as external support.

In addition, an ESPON Corporate Identity, identified and developed in the framework of the ESPON Communication Plan, targeting potential beneficiaries, will be created and implemented in order to create an ESPON identity and ease the visual communication of ESPON facts and data. The Corporate Identity will in general support the branding of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The ESPON Corporate Identity shall support and be used as part of the ESPON Capitalisation Strategy and in efforts of external awareness raising and communication during the entire programme implementation, also by the ESPON Coordination Unit (CU).

The ESPON Website will play an important role in ensuring a wide dissemination and use of results, tools, programme documents, and the ESPON e-Library. The further development of the ESPON Website will be closely coordinated with the ESPON Corporate Identity and include its design elements.

An active media and press cooperation will also support the capitalisation of the Programme in line with the strategy set up. Several series of ESPON publications are planned which will target different groups of stakeholders, be it policy makers, practitioners and/or scientist. The production, printing and dissemination of these will ensure a solid transfer of results and be oriented towards an easy use of results and key messages in the policy context. Finally, the Capitalisation Strategy will include the necessary (collaterals) auxiliaries promoting the ESPON 2013 Programme.

In particular, a number of projects on transnational activities are foreseen to ensure a wide dissemination of ESPON activities in complementarity to the capitalisation provided at European level. Packages of actions at transnational level involving regional / local actors will stimulate the understanding and use of ESPON results, and should support operational decisions in the territories in question.

5.1 Media and Publications

5.1.1 Objectives

A crucial factor for creating awareness and empower the different actors in territorial development is to ensure a strategic support from media and publications stimulating information and dialogue on ESPON results which can lead to the use of the results. This cannot be achieved only by oral communication, but needs the support of specific outputs documenting the progress on the development of evidence and the knowledge base as well as the experiences made.

The media activities will involve a continuous and pro-active media dialogue, based on a flow of Territorial Observations (Briefings) and Media Activities / Blogs being based on key results. The different target groups of different media will be aimed at and the ESPON Website as a well-established brokering information platform will be developed further.

The elaboration of compact and easily readable ESPON Synthesis Reports, Scientific Reports, and other publications will provide written and long-lasting evidence of the territorial knowledge in an easily understandable language. It is therefore a very important and necessary element for the achievement of the specific objectives of this programme priority and for the entire ESPON 2013 Programme.

Issues to be considered are territorial trends which are of interest for policy makers, the private sector and the wider interested public (e.g. climate change, energy, demography, migration, economic perspectives for regions and cities, and good governance).

5.1.2 Deliveries and Outputs Expected

Capitalisation and media activities will imply a large amount of smaller and larger targeted efforts and deliveries creating visibility of ESPON facts and data among different groups of stakeholders:

- **ESPON Capitalisation Strategy** (Targeting all relevant groups and audiences)
The ESPON Capitalisation Strategy leads to a plan for activities addressing different target groups of stakeholders such as mentioned before. It will materialise in an Annual Action Plan to be handed over to and approved by the MC.
- **ESPON Corporate Identity and Lay-Out** (Relevant for all ESPON “products” targeting all relevant groups and audiences)
Based on the Corporate Graphic Design Guidelines¹ and taking the ESPON Communication Plan as cross-reference, the development and implementation of the ESPON Corporate Identity includes primarily promotional material (e.g. map books, posters, business cards, CD ROM, etc).
- **ESPON Media Activities** (Targeting media and journalists)
Media activities will – as continuous media dialogue – include approx. 100 media reveals in the lifetime of the ESPON 2013 Programme period (equivalent to approx. 17 per year

¹ These Guidelines govern the application of the identity and confirm approved colour palettes, typefaces, page layouts and others such as methods of maintaining visual continuity and brand recognition across all physical manifestation of the brand. Both, the development of these Guidelines and the production of promotional material based on these Guidelines, are financed under Programme Priority 4. On the contrary, promotional material of general value (e.g. application package, stationary) is financed within the activities of the Communication Plan under Programme Priority 5. The concrete application of the Guidelines belongs to each specific product. The Corporate Identity will be visible in the way it has been visually designed, but not in its structure, content, etc. The Corporate Graphic Design Guidelines will be available at www.espon.eu in due time.

as output) implemented as direct mailings, press releases, articles, newsletters [**green series**] using own ISSN numbering, the presence at editors' lunches, and blogs/weblogs/videoclips. Relevant media may be European journals (e.g. cafébabel, EurActiv, EUobserver, European Agenda), the Global Press (e.g. The Economist), Net-Broadcasting (e.g. arte ["Le Dessous des cartes" / "Mit offenen Karten" by Jean-Christophe Victor], BBC [taking Climate Watch as reference], EuroNews, WDR ["Die Sendung mit der Maus" / "La souris souriante]), Institutions and Networks (e.g. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC, World Economic Forum, World Social Forum), and national journals / newspapers with an explicit European Focus (e.g. DIE ZEIT, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Le Monde).

- **ESPON Synthesis Reports** (Targeting policy makers, practitioners, and the private sector in European settings)

The ESPON Synthesis Reports will result in approx. 3 Synthesis Reports in the course of the ESPON 2013 Programme period (equivalent to approx. 1 per two years as output), using an own ISBN numbering [**white series**].

- **ESPON Territorial Observations (Briefings)** (Targeting policy makers, practitioners, and the private sector in European settings)

The ESPON Territorial Observations (Briefings) will result in approx. 12 Territorial Observations in the lifetime of the ESPON 2013 Programme period (equivalent to approx. 2 per year as output), using an own ISBN numbering [**red series**].

- **ESPON Scientific Reports** (Targeting the European scientific community)

The Scientific Reports will result in approx. 3 Scientific Reports as output in the course of the ESPON 2013 Programme period (equivalent to approx. 1 per two years as output), using an own ISBN numbering [**blue series**].

- **ESPON Website (www.espon.eu)** (Targeting the general interested public)

The ESPON Website will continue its role as key information source having the home page conceived with information on the programme, the ESPON e-Library (downloads), a story and map of the month (changing approx. every month during the ESPON 2013 Programme period), and selected web links (e.g. European Commission's DG Regio's website Inforegio, OECD, Networks related to territorial development). Updating the ESPON Website will be managed in-house at the CU.

In addition to the deliveries mentioned before, additional outputs (e.g. reports) may be necessary, but will be detailed in the respective Terms of Reference depending on the specific task to be fulfilled.

5.1.3. Implementation provision

Activities under this action will be implemented as MA led projects. This implies that the MA will propose to the MC an MA-led project which will include the different activities that should be implemented in the course of the relevant project implementation period (the duration can be of one or more years depending on the types of activities foreseen). The activities included and described in the MA-led project will be implemented by the MA as provision of services according to EU and Luxembourg public procurement legislation. The MA will follow a tendering procedure including all necessary elements of publication, submission of tenders, selection, award and contracting following the rules set out in the

Luxembourg public procurement law and related implementation provision as well as EU legislation.²

5.2 European Seminars and Workshops

5.2.1 Objectives

The objective of European seminars and workshops, mainly targeting policy makers and practitioners and being open to interested scientists and a wider interested public from EU Member States and Partner States, their regions and cities, is to widen and consolidate the ownership of ESPON evidence and knowledge produced in Applied Research under Priority 1, also through the exchange of the experiences acquired with the participation in the Targeted Analyses financed under Priority 2 and progress made on the Scientific Platform under Priority 3.

The transfer of results will primarily target the group mentioned before. However, some seminars are aiming as well at discussing the global perspective, in cooperation with neighbouring countries, some continents and groupings of countries (e.g. Mediterranean Area, Eastern Europe, the Black Sea Cooperation and the Northern Periphery).

The establishment of a competent and long-lasting intellectual capacity in Europe in the field of territorial development and cohesion shall also imply scientific events targeting territorial research and analysis. Events, scientific conferences and workshops on specific issues shall involve the network of scientists in the field of territorial research and related fields established under the ESPON 2006 Programme as well as operating spatial observatories of EU Member States and Partner States.

These open seminars and workshops³ would provide valuable inputs for the MC on the specific needs of different target groups in terms of information, tools and guidance that should be given priority when deciding on actions to be financed under the other programme priorities. In addition, they will provide feedback on the usefulness and use of ESPON results in practice allowing for an ongoing improvement of the overall usefulness of the ESPON Programme deliveries towards actors of high relevance for territorial development and cohesion. Workshops on scientific issues can be part of the activities ensuring the usefulness of future results.

The open seminars and workshops will, in order to support at its best the capitalisation for policy development, be organised in close cooperation with the bodies mentioned. In particular, a broad approach shall be taken in relation to different sector policy areas and in relation to European associations representing urban and rural areas, maritime regions etc. as well as organisations promoting specific sectoral interests. Institutions related to the collection and use of territorially related data and facts (e.g. EEA, OECD, etc.) will be considered as well. In addition, European professional and scientific organisations (e.g. AESOP, ECTP, ERSA, EUGEO, FIG, IFHP, ISoCaRP, RSA, etc.) will be taken into account.

Common events with other Structural Funds Programmes shall take into consideration the first experience of cooperation between the ESPON 2006 Programme and the INTERACT Programme within the previous programming period. A yearly coordination will be

² Luxembourgish law of 30 June 2003, Règlement Grand Ducal (RGD) of 7 July 2003

³ Apart from these open European Seminars and Workshops, internal ESPON Seminars will be staged in the lifetime of the ESPON 2013 Programme. The internal ESPON Seminars are organised to ensure dialogue between MC Members, the ECP Network and Lead / Project Partners on the progress of projects results. They are financed by the Technical Assistance Budget of the ESPON 2013 Programme (Priority 5).

undertaken between the ESPON 2013 Programme, INTERREG IV B, INTERREG IV C, INTERACT II, and URBACT II to ensure complementarities, which may include common events.

Issues to be considered in preparing these events are territorial structures, trends, perspective and policy impacts which are of interest for policy makers, practitioners and interested scientists (please refer to 5.1.1), taking particularly into account the issues of data collection, database maintenance and use, and monitoring.

5.2.2 Deliveries and Outputs Expected

The organisation of European seminars and workshops targeting specific EU Community actors, actors at European / global level and within relevant Structural Funds financed programmes as well as the scientific community and national spatial observatories will as deliveries result in:

- **ESPON Seminars and Workshops**

14-20 seminars and workshops will be staged during the ESPON 2013 Programme period (equivalent to 2-3 per year). Each year, one event will target in particular policy makers and practitioners at European level, working in European Institutions and international cooperation structures.

- **Events in cooperation with stakeholders**

It is as well foreseen to stage events in cooperation with other relevant bodies, either based on (1) a cost sharing model, (2) by including ESPON 2013 work sessions/workshops financed by ESPON, back-to-back with the event, or (3) by providing and paying for speakers presenting ESPON results at external events.

In relation to the deliveries mentioned above, additional outputs (e.g. seminar material, printed reports, brochures, etc.) may be necessary, which may be tendered and detailed in respective Terms of Reference depending on the specific tasks to be fulfilled.

5.2.3. Implementation provision

Activities under this action will be implemented as MA led projects. This implies that the MA will propose to the MC an MA-led project which will include the different activities that should be implemented in the course of the relevant project implementation period (usually one year). The activities included and described in the MA-led project will be implemented by the MA as provision of services according to EU and Luxembourg public procurement legislation. The MA will follow a tendering procedure including all necessary elements of publication, submission of tenders, selection, award and contracting following the rules set out in the Luxembourg public procurement law and related implementation provision as well as EU legislation.⁴

5.3 Transnational Networking Activities

5.3.1 Objectives

The ESPON 2013 Programme states that the ECP Network shall play the important role of undertaking these Transnational Networking Activities related to capitalisation of results.

⁴ Luxembourgish law of 25 June 2009, Règlement Grand Ducal (RGD) of 3 August 2009

The activities shall aim at supporting a targeted transnational capitalisation, awareness raising, exchange of experiences, participation, empowerment and dissemination of ESPON results and evidence. They shall activate transnational interest in ESPON by involving policy makers, practitioners and scientists, young academics and students in particular those who would otherwise not be informed about ESPON.

A specific objective is to ensure a complete coverage of all relevant actors at transnational level within the European territory involving the target groups mentioned before and to promote the European perspective of territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion.

Moreover, the transnational activities should contribute to the quality of the applied research actions by providing factual feedback based on national information, via the CU, to the TPG on draft final project reports.

A particular challenge for the Transnational Networking Activities is to ensure an operational approach that can lead to proposals for new initiatives that can be decided and implemented by relevant stakeholders. The Transnational Networking Activities shall consider and / or seek to define potential new actions within the transnational territory, which can contribute to the development of its regions and cities. In this context, the transnational networking could also lead to raising the interest from practitioners and stakeholders for targeted analytical deliveries under Priority 2 of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

5.3.2 Compulsory Actions and Additional Activity Ideas

Within the ESPON 2013 Programme a range of approximately 14 Transnational Networking Activities shall be carried through during 2007-2013. The Transnational Networking Activities shall be implemented as transnational projects under Priority 4 of the Operational Programme. The total budget for the 27 Member States ECPs for the entire programming period is €3.000.000 and an additional €18.000 is available for the participation of the 4 Partner States ECPs.

A Transnational Networking Activity will normally last 2-3 years. Depending on the logic of each Transnational Networking Activity and the strategy chosen, its duration might be shorter or longer. ECP institutions wanting to participate in the last call for Transnational Networking Activities opening on 24 August 2011 shall assure that their formal nomination as national ESPON Contact Point is valid for the entire project implementation period in the proposal and does not expire before the proposed project implementation has ended. The MC will in the course of the eligibility check be asked to confirm the duration of the nomination of their national ECP institution

The Transnational Networking Activities are part of the capitalisation efforts within the ESPON 2013 Programme opting for ownership, participation, capacity building, dialogue and networking. Some analytical effort in communicating a transnational perspective shall be envisaged based on existing ESPON results. However, research and conceptual work exclusively aimed at new scientific results is not foreseen as part of the Transnational Networking Activities.

Project proposals for Transnational Networking Activities by the ECP Network shall as foreseen in the ESPON 2013 Programme comply with the following requirements and explicitly include all 4 compulsory activities listed below (specific outputs and results shall be as well indicated):

1. An overall strategy for the Transnational Networking Activity as such justifying each (separate) action proposed within the project characterised by (1) a clear transnational orientation, including purely national actions only where they can be justified as an

integrated part of the Transnational Networking Activity, (2) clearly defined target groups, including groups which otherwise could not have been informed and, become interested.

2. A package of several actions to be implemented as part of the Transnational Networking Activity, among which, (1) actions carrying through events that can support capitalisation of ESPON results in the transnational context, and (2) actions with an operational approach which could lead to recommendations for new initiatives within the respective transnational area.
3. Actions that provide feedback on blunders, misinterpretations and mishaps in Draft Final Reports of ESPON Projects under Priority 1, which will be forwarded by the ESPON CU to the MC and relevant TPG and Sounding Board members⁵.
4. Actions ensuring the ESPON Monitoring Committee feedback on national activities (twice a year) on the status and development of national networks related to ESPON and on potential demands and expectations.

The last call for proposals opening on 24 August 2011 should benefit from positive capitalisation experiences made in other ongoing Transnational Networking Activity projects and explicitly include cross-fertilisation of activities integrating thematic issues and approaches already undertaken in other transnational capitalization projects under Priority 4 and making use of best experiences in a communication targeting users of ESPON results.

Project elements, which the ESPON Monitoring Committee does not envisage to be included and implemented by the ECP Network, are:

- Collection of data for other ESPON projects;
- Purely national actions, unless they are integrated and fully justified as part of a Transnational Networking Activity.

The following ideas for actions are the result of discussions within the ESPON Monitoring Committee and with the ECP Network. They express proposals that can be further considered by the ECP Network and eventually included in project proposals for Transnational Networking Activities. The list shall not to be considered exhaustive, and serves only the purpose of stimulating the process in the ECP Network leading to project proposals for Transnational Networking Activities:

(1) Promotion of a territorial development approach at events involving key stakeholders, practitioners and scientists in developing strategic development objectives and finding underused development potentials, which could be turned into operational actions by the stakeholders. Information on the scenarios and their consequences for the transnational territory in question could be included.

(2) Stakeholder-oriented activities on national, regional and local level in order to raise and / or deepen awareness and stimulate the use of results of ESPON projects and thus to stimulate interest – in the sense of bottom-up approaches – in targeted analysis proposals under Programme Priority 2. In doing so, it is a particular challenge to bridge the gap between the scales of NUTS (being the basis for ESPON results) and the sometimes very detailed concerns of stakeholders on the local/regional level. Developing activities to illustrate the relevance of ESPON results on the national, local and regional level could start in “small states” as their stakeholders are particularly aware of matters of scale.

⁵ Blunder checks refer to factual mistakes, misinterpretations and mishaps. The more in-depth scientific check of project deliveries is undertaken by the Sounding Boards experts in the framework of the KSS. In this sense, each individual ECP is requested to provide feedback on blunders related to its respective country.

(3) Awareness raising in the transnational territories focusing on the main territorial challenges for Europe defined in the ESPON 2006 Scenario project (3.2) and the necessity to include a larger territorial context in finding a sustainable development path, eventually including the involvement of stakeholders from the private sector. Particular focus should be given to raise awareness about possible opportunities for development.

(4) Activities for young researchers, scholars and students in order to activate the particular interest of the next academic generation of administrators and scientists. Transnational networking activities should address these by staging tailor-made events. Such events should follow-up on experiences gained from the YoungStars Seminars under the ESPON 2006 Programme. These events could be coordinated between several projects and culminate in a bigger event in the course of the ESPON 2013 Programme organised by the ESPON CU in close cooperation with the ECP Network.

(5) Training and teaching activities could be provided for practitioners, policy makers and teachers in order to enable them to use territorial information and ESPON findings. These activities could also include other European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes as well as other activities / networks than ESPON. An example for existing training / teaching material might be the “Flipping-Through-Atlas” produced by the Italian Ministry of Transport and Public Works.

(6) Learning efforts towards secondary schools and higher education institutions teaching the European perspective for the generation that will live in Europe of tomorrow. Eventually elaborating teaching material and conveying open competitions among school classes on “their European territory of tomorrow” can be considered.

(7) Dissemination of results, information and publications related to ESPON projects to relevant regional, sectoral and academic stakeholders, e.g. at seminars, conferences, etc. The dissemination to national networks involved in the transnational project could be done by regular mailings, organisation of national “info-days” or workshops, websites linked to the ESPON Programme Website, etc.

(8) Efforts to increase networks around the ESPON 2013 Programme and by doing so, the potential partners in ESPON actions under Priority 1, 2 and 3. This could include targeted seminars for scientist representing potential beneficiaries that could become partners in a TPG.

(9) Networking with other networks relevant for territorial development and cohesion could be considered, as well as common actions with other Structural Funds Programme that should be given high priority in such considerations.

(10) Networking action could also include neighbouring countries / continents (on their own expense). Different regional activities could be included considering different planning cultures and integrating basic territorial approaches and ideas. Preference should here be given to EU Candidate Countries. In addition, the ESPON Monitoring Committee has expressed particular interest in integrating the Balkan countries in ESPON activities, including in Transnational Networking Activities.

(11) Cooperation across projects on Transnational Networking Activities could be an option on a variety of issues, including promotion activities, events, teaching, etc. In addition, an action such as a “road show (ESPON on the Road)” could be developed and staged in order to go public with ESPON 2006 and 2013 findings.

(12) National websites could be set up providing information on the ESPON 2013 Programme. However, ECP websites shall be clearly complementary to the ESPON Website

at programme level and not duplicate information already accessible at programme level. The use of links to the ESPON Website should prevail. The presence of native languages should be present in ECP Websites, particular the homepages, in order to reach a wider audience.

(13) Translation of short key texts (such as brochures related to Transnational Networking Activities and/or text for websites) into other languages than English, depending on the logic of the activity envisaged and keeping its added transnational value in mind.

5.3.3 Deliveries and Outputs expected

The contracted ECP Lead Partner has, according to the usual reporting requirement related to Progress Reports, every six months to inform on the Transnational Network Activities carried through.. These activity reports will include information on the project implementation and the output, results and impacts achieved in the transnational context.

In addition to these regular activity reports, each contracted Transnational Networking Activity will have to deliver:

- Delivery of **feedbacks from the blunder checks** implemented by the TPG members within 3 weeks time after receiving an information email from the ESPON CU on the availability of the Priority 1 project(s) Draft Final Reports. A template table for each ECP noting blunders, misinterpretation and mishaps will be made available. The Lead Partner will ensure that the individual inputs provided by each of the ECP partners in the project are compiled in one document and submitted to the ESPON CU.
- A **Draft Final Report**, consisting of max. 50 pages (plus an executive summary of max. 10 pages), shall consist of a presentation of the strategy implementation achieved as well as the main results in terms of capitalisation of ESPON results that the Transnational Networking activity has accomplished. The Draft Final report shall in particular address the level of impact on concrete decisions aimed at developing the transnational territorial context.
- A **Final Report** as a consolidated and improved version of the Draft Final Report on the basis of comments received from the ESPON MC and the CU. The Final Report is considered as the main documentation of the Transnational Networking Activity.

All the above mentioned reports will have to be delivered both, in a printed version via mail directed to the postal address of the CU as well as digitally by email (or the most adequate media) directed to the ESPON CU (in case the size of the files does not allow for sending by e-mail the reports can be delivered by upload on the dedicated programme intranet). Aiming at full transparency the CU will upload reports received on the ESPON Website. Deadlines for the submission of the above mentioned reports will be indicated in the specifications and in the Subsidy Contract and will coincide with the deadlines for the submission of progress reports whose approval will allow for the release of the reimbursement of the incurred costs.

5.4 Application and Selection Procedures for calls for proposals

All projects financed under this priority under the action Transnational Networking Activities, will be subject to calls for proposals and subsequent subsidy contracts.

5.4.1 Application Procedure

All Transnational Networking Activities financed under this priority will be subject to calls for proposals.

As soon as a launch of a call for proposals has been decided upon by the MC, a pre-announcement of the call will be issued, providing information on the call. The pre-announcement will be widely published by adding it to the ESPON Website (www.espon.eu), to the ESPON Newsletter as well as to the Official Journal of the European Commission, C Series. At the same time, the Member and Partner States participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme will be informed directly about the planned call. The pre-announcement will normally be issued eight weeks prior to the publication of the Call for Proposals.

The pre-announcement procedure is supposed to facilitate the submission of a proposal at a later stage, by giving interested beneficiaries the chance to prepare on beforehand. The pre-announcement offers an opportunity to incorporate ideas of all partners equally, thus ensuring a high level of commitment to the Transnational Networking Activity. As an additional advantage, partners can test how the cooperation works during this preparatory phase before starting to implement actual Transnational Networking Activities. It is possible to for an ECP institution to participate in more than one proposal.

The publication of the Call for Proposals will become public via the same channels as the pre-announcement.

Calls for Proposals will usually be open for two months (40-45 working days). Proposals should be submitted according to the application requirements provided and specified in the application packages. Standardised application forms will be provided by the ESPON 2013 Programme. Automatic registration of proposals will be ensured.

5.4.2 Selection Procedure

The selection procedure starts immediately after the deadline set for submitting proposals for Transnational Networking Activities. The two parts will time-wise run in parallel. The MC will first decide on the eligibility of proposals received before addressing the results of the content related evaluation resulting in a ranking of the best proposals. The MC will select the best eligible proposal(s) according to the ranking resulting from the content related evaluation. The MC takes the final decision on the approval of projects on Transnational Networking Activities.

Eligibility Criteria

Transnational Networking Activities will be checked against the eligibility criteria in order to ensure that they fulfil the technical requirements of the Programme. The eligibility assessment will be performed by the CU.

The check of the eligibility criteria will be documented by ticking boxes of “yes” or “no”, depending on whether the respective evidence has been provided or not. Each proposal for a Transnational Networking Activity to be assessed has to fulfil the following criteria:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
1. The application has been submitted in due time in original and electronic version ⁶ .

⁶ You are advised to keep a proof of the submission of the postal version within the set deadline in case no date stamp is placed on the envelope by the postal services. Following the electronic submission you will receive an automatic confirmation that your email has successfully reached the programme mailbox. Should you not get the automatic confirmation mail, please check that the application was sent to the correct address and/or that no other error has occurred in order to avoid any problem with the eligibility of your proposal.

2. The application is complete and includes the requested administrative forms properly filled in according to the detailed instructions provided in the Part A and Part B of the Application Form, supporting documents as well as the proposal for a Transnational Networking Activity (the list of supporting documents required will be provided in the specific call).
3. The content of the proposal specifically includes all the 4 compulsory activities required (see list in page 78).
4. The proposal comply with the requirement set by the ESPON 2013 Programme (as detailed in Chapter 5.3.2 of the Programme Manual)
5. The partnership involves at least the minimum number of participants given in the specific call.
6. The nomination of all ECP institutions involved in the project proposal has been confirmed by the Monitoring Committee by the time of the opening of the call, and a valid nomination exists for all partners involved until the end of the project by the deadline for the submission of the proposal.

In case the CU should detect, during the eligibility check phase, one or more of the following omissions in applications received within the deadline given, which would lead to the application being deemed ineligible, the respective Lead ECP Partner will be informed in written by fax and offered a maximum of five working days (counting from the day following the day of receipt of the fax as documented by the transmission report) to correct the omission(s).

The correctable omissions are the following:

- Missing supporting documents **in paper version** as requested in the call: the two annexes of Application Form Part A (3.5b - management chart and 3.6b - financial flow chart) as well as solvency documents (if relevant).
- Missing signature and / or missing stamp on a document.
- Missing supporting documents **in electronic version** as requested in the call: the two annexes of Application Form Part A (3.5b - management chart and 3.6b - financial flow chart).
- Correction of discrepancies in the electronic version of the proposal submitted compared to the paper version sent to the MA (CU) by post, which is considered the valid application in legal terms.

In the first two cases, the listed missing and / or corrected documents, duly signed and stamped, shall be dispatched in original to the CU by registered express delivery within **seven working days** (counting from the day following the day of receipt of the fax as documented by the transmission report)..

In case of missing electronic versions of supporting documents as well as discrepancies between the electronic and the paper version of the submitted application, the electronic version corresponding to the paper version submitted shall be sent by email to the CU (to the email address indicated in the communication) within **seven working days** (counting from the day following the day of receipt of the fax as documented by the transmission report).

Any document delivered after the deadline given will not be considered and the proposal will be deemed not eligible. It is advised to all applicants to keep a proof of the sending of the requested documents within the deadline (e.g. receipt of the post office clearly indicating the sending date).

The Lead ECP Applicants of ineligible applications will following the MC decision on eligibility receive a notification letter specifying the non-fulfilled eligibility criteria.

Evaluation Criteria

In parallel with the eligibility check, the evaluation of all project proposals will take place. The Evaluation Committee will be made up of CU staff members.

The check of compliance with the evaluation criteria is based on a scoring system and results in a ranking list of all proposals received.

This step in the selection procedure serves to assess the relevance of the proposals regarding the priorities and objectives of the ESPON 2013 Programme and of the specific call to which they respond. It also looks into the impact of each proposed Transnational Networking Activity, i.e. its importance for the capitalisation at transnational level and for stakeholders involved in territorial development on EU, national and regional level.

The evaluation will be based on three types of selection criteria:

- Content related criteria,
- Management related criteria, and
- Partnership related criteria.

Content Related Criteria
1. Soundness of the proposed strategy, adequacy of the objectives set and the actions proposed (e.g. Are the strategy, objectives and actions consistent? Can the strategy and its objectives be realistically achieved through the proposed approach? Will the Transnational Networking Activity support territorial development processes and operational initiatives in the transnational context? Could the project lead to demands for further analytical work/activities within ESPON?)?
2. Potential contribution to a transnational capitalisation of ESPON 2013 results (e.g. Is the proposed strategy adding value and strengthening the capitalisation activities at Programme level? Does the proposed strategy consider adequately a complementarity to the objectives, results and impacts of the Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme?)
3. Balance between the 4 compulsory activities and the other activities proposed by the partnership (e.g. Are activities linked together in a logic and reinforcing manner?)
4. Cross-fertilisation through integration of thematic issues and approaches already undertaken in other transnational capitalization projects under Priority 4 and thus making use of best experiences in a communication targeting users of ESPON results.
5. Appropriateness of actions and disseminations activities proposed in relation to the objectives and target groups identified by the proposals (e.g. Have adequate target groups been identified? Are they conceived in such a way that target

groups can be easily reached? Does the dissemination activities proposed include innovative new ways of capitalising on ESPON results?)

Management Related Criteria

1. Appropriateness and clarity of the management structure and the plan for the implementation of the Transnational Networking Activity (e.g. is the Lead ECP Partner experienced in project management; are procedures for decision-making and monitoring transparent; is the timing for individual work packages and the overall work plan convincing?)
2. Transparency of procedures related to ERDF requirements (e.g. are the required audit procedures, that need to be established, in place and are all partners aware of them?)
3. Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources (budget and staff) among the different work packages and partners (e.g. is the breakdown of budget to partners adequate?)

Partnership Related Criteria

1. Sufficiency of the combination of competences/expertise presented in the applying ECP Group as a whole for the strategy and activities proposed (e.g. are the team of partners involved covering the required knowledge and experience related to the proposal?)
2. Relevant experience of the individual partners (e.g. does the professional and academic experience of the individual team members correspond sufficiently to deal with the variety of challenges related to the Transnational Networking Activity?)

For the final call for proposals opening on 24 August 2011 the Monitoring Committee has adopted the following call specific criteria in order to ensure the ambition of the Operational Programme of having all national ECP institutions involved in Transnational Networking Activities:

Call Specific Criteria

1. Involvement in the partnership of one of the ECPs not yet involved in any running TNA projects (Portugal or Denmark) = 10 points.
2. Involvement in the partnership both ECPs not yet involved in any running TNA projects (Portugal and Denmark) = 30 points.

Each criterion will be awarded a score between 0 – 10. Half marks can be given, too. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

0. No evaluation possible: The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

1. Unacceptable: The proposal almost fails to address the criterion making it very difficult to judge due to missing or incomplete information.
2. Extremely poor. The criterion is addressed very superficial and highly unsatisfactory manner.
3. Very poor. The criterion is addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner.
4. Poor. Serious inherent weaknesses exist in relation to the criterion.
5. Un-sufficient. Inherent weaknesses exist in relation to the criterion in question, which are too serious for correction.
6. Sufficient. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion; however there are significant points that would need correction.
7. Fair. The criterion is addressed sufficiently; however some points would need correction.
8. Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although some improvements are still needed.
9. Very good. The criterion is addressed in a convincing way and only minor improvements are needed.
10. Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question without any shortcomings.

Each group of selection criteria has a total number of points. No weighting will be applied. However each criterion should be scored with a value of at least 6. Proposals that fail to achieve this minimum score for a criterion will not be further considered in the selection procedure.

The evaluation will be implemented for the MC by the CU. Evaluators will assess and mark the proposal exactly as it is described and presented. The evaluation will follow a two step approach: assessment and scoring of (1) the content related part and (2) the management and partnership related part. Evaluators will not make assumptions or interpretations about the Transnational Networking Activity in addition to what is in the proposal. Concise and explicit concluding justification will be given for each proposal as well as comments to scores, where relevant for the evaluator. Evaluation forms with no concluding comments will be deemed inadmissible. Recommendations for improvements to be discussed as part of a possible contracting will be given, if needed.

Once all the members of the Evaluation Committee have completed their individual assessments, the evaluation proceeds to a consensus discussion, supposed to represent the common views of the evaluators. The consensus discussion, which also includes a ranking of proposals, includes as well recommendations for improvements of proposals suggested by the Evaluation Committee. Consensus reports with hand-written corrections of scoring will be declared inadmissible.

Provided that several proposals receive an equal aggregate score, other factors might as well be taken into account by the Evaluation Committee:

- A reasonable geographical distribution of project partners.
- A reasonable involvement of partners from Member States having entered the EU after 1 January 2004.

The CU is responsible for a final editing of the evaluation report for each project specification included in the call. The main objectives of this process are:

- To ensure a sufficient compilation of arguments voiced pro and con the individual proposals evaluated.
- To review cases where a majority/minority view was recorded in the consensus report.
- To clearly reflect the ranking of the majority of evaluators in the consensus report and in the case of equal scoring of several proposals explain the considerations made regarding the additional factors mentioned above, that led to the final ranking.

Taking into account the importance of the managerial set-up for the correct Transnational Networking Activity implementation, the MA will, through the CU, separately assess the “Management Related Criteria” of the submitted proposals. Should the result of this separate and independent assessment be different or add to the one obtained by the Evaluation Committee, the recommendations of the CU to the MC will take this opinion of the MA into account.

By signing confidentiality agreements (using no-conflict-of-interest forms) members of the Evaluation Committee guarantee their independence and impartiality during the assessment as well as that the privacy and confidentiality of all proposals will be kept. Declarations of no-conflict-of-interest with negligence mistakes are declared inadmissible. The content of the proposals should not be published or forwarded to persons or institutions which are not directly engaged in the evaluation or decision making. The Transnational Networking Activity idea itself, as well as the description and concept of the project and the structure of the application, remain the property of the Transnational Networking Activity applicant.

Decision Making

As indicated in the previous section, the decisions on approved projects will be made by the MC of the ESPON 2013 Programme, based on the results of the eligibility and evaluation processes. The MC will approve the best eligible proposal(s) confirming the ranking of the content related evaluation.

This decision will be notified to all Lead ECP Applicants soon after the decision of the MC. All Lead ECP Partners of approved activities will receive a letter from the CU (MA) stating the decision of the MC as well as the total ERDF, EU Member States’ and eventually Partner States’ national funds approved. The MC decision may include certain conditions, recommendations and / or suggestions for improvements. The MC may as well opt for a completion of a group of ECP institutions behind a proposal by including additional ECP institutions should the sufficient participation of ECP’s not be given. In these cases, the process of contracting, managed by the CU, will include a necessary revision / amendment of the Transnational Networking Activity proposal. The result of this procedure will be the basis for concluding a Subsidy Contract.

All Lead ECP Applicants of the ineligible or non-approved proposals will receive a notification letter with a brief summary of the assessment results. In case Lead ECP Partners of ineligible or non-approved proposals are not satisfied with the decision of the MC, they may put forward an appeal (for more details on the appeal procedure, please refer to chapter 8.12 of the Programme Manual).

5.4.3 Contract and Duration

The Transnational Networking Activities proposals which are selected for funding and which fulfil the conditions set by the MC will receive a Subsidy Contract, closed between the MA

and the respective Lead ECP Partner of the Transnational Networking Activity. The Subsidy Contract shall determine the rights and responsibilities of the Lead ECP Partner and the MA, the scope of activities to be carried out, terms of funding, requirements for reporting and financial controls, etc. This does not go for all other activities under Priority 4, which instead will result in Service Contracts.

A Model of the Subsidy Contract is available on the ESPON Website.

5.4.4 Budget

The partners in the ECP Group conducting a Transnational Networking Activity will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real eligible costs incurred for carrying out the activity approved. Funding will be made available by the ERDF; the national co-financing will be ensured by EU Member States at programme level and, eventually, by Partner States. Each call will indicate the maximum budget available related to individual specifications included in the call.