

**ESPON**



Co-funded by  
the European Union  
Interreg

# ESPON Programme : objectives, priorities and opportunities

## Rhine-Alpine Talk 18

6 June 2025  
Nicolas Rossignol

# ESPON in a nutshell

ESPON is an EU-funded programme that supports authorities responsible for development policies with territorial evidence and data

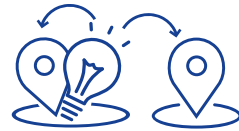


# What is ESPON?

ESPON is an EU-funded programme that bridges research with policies. We provide territorial analyses, data and maps to :



support EU development policies and, particularly the Cohesion Policy, with facts and evidence.



help public authorities to benchmark their region or city, identify new challenges and potentials, and shape successful development policies for the future.



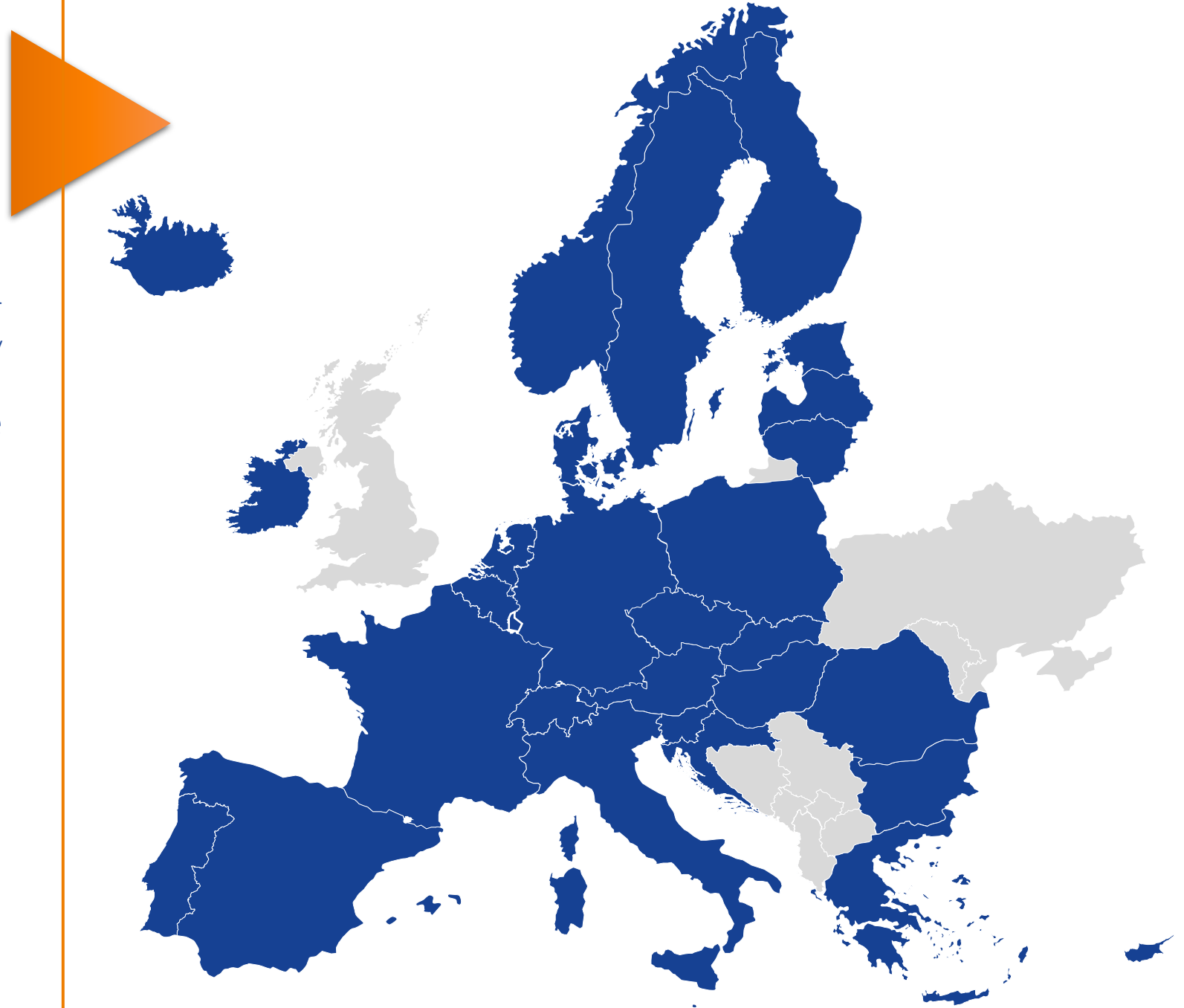
All our content is publicly available on our website to download and use it.

[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

# How is ESPON governed?

All 27 EU member states and 4 partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) participate in ESPON programme and co-finance it, with the key support of the European Commission

The main programme activities are implemented by the ESPON EGTC (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation), which is a structure created and chaired by the state of Luxembourg



# What ESPON does?

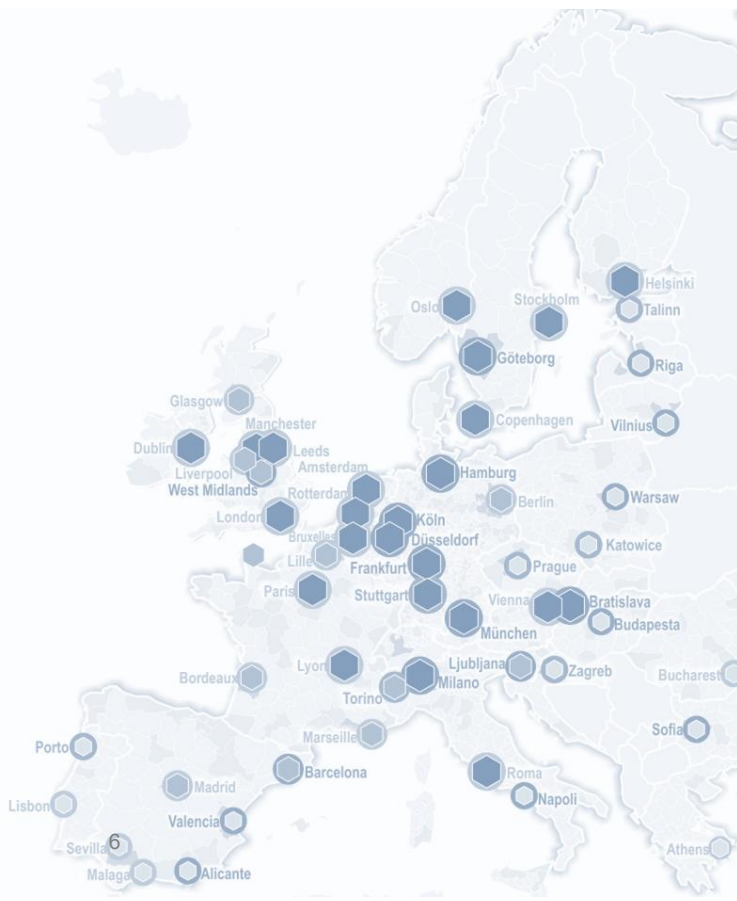


ESPON creates evidence and knowledge. We develop studies based on the needs of European public authorities at all levels. Any local, regional or national authority as well as an EU institution can inform us about policy support needs and become an ESPON stakeholder.

Our studies have a territorial focus, which means that our analyses are adjusted to the specificity and needs of the people and the places we are looking at.

For the ESPON 2030 Programme, our studies and events are clustered within the so-called Thematic Action Plans (TAPs).  
[\(more on the TAPs\)](#)

# Who benefits from ESPON?



**Local, regional and national authorities** are the main beneficiaries of our results. They can request our services and acquire tailormade studies that include benchmarking, case analyses and policy guidance on the topics of their interest.



ESPON is a unique resource of information for **scientists, researchers and students**. Since 2006, ESPON has been cited more than 20.000 times in academic publications. At the same time, many European universities and research centres are contracted by ESPON to conduct studies.



As our content is free for anyone to access and download, **the private sector** is also benefiting from our work. Consultancies, SMEs, even industries can use our publications to better position themselves in certain markets and/or adjust their products and services.



ESPON is also a goldmine for **journalists**. It provides them with evidence and data to support their stories and connects them to a vast pool of experts and stakeholders.



ESPON can be equally useful to any **active citizen** interested in understanding how their city/region performs, keen to have an overview of main territorial trends in Europe, or simply to browse our interactive maps and visuals.

# Thematic Action Plans



**Climate  
neutral  
territories**



**Governance  
of new  
geographies**



**Places  
resilient  
to crises**



**Perspective  
for all people  
and places**



**Living, working  
and travelling  
across borders**



**Smart  
connectivity**



**European  
territories in  
global  
interactions**



**Adapting to  
the impacts  
of climate  
change**

# Governance of new geographies



Produce the evidence and knowledge base about the understanding of **new emerging geographies** in terms of their delineations, functional and cooperation arrangements and involved actors and stakeholders.

Assess the existing governance **mechanisms** and offer possible **pathways** on how to find new appropriate ones with strong stakeholder involvement

Strengthen the **capacities** and **skills** of policy makers on all levels of governance and across policy sectors to harness the full potential of **functional territories**.

Facilitate **networking** and **participation** of civil societies, youth initiatives and other stakeholders who play an important role in the elaboration of appropriate and innovative governance solutions

# Smart connectivity

Smart  
connectivity



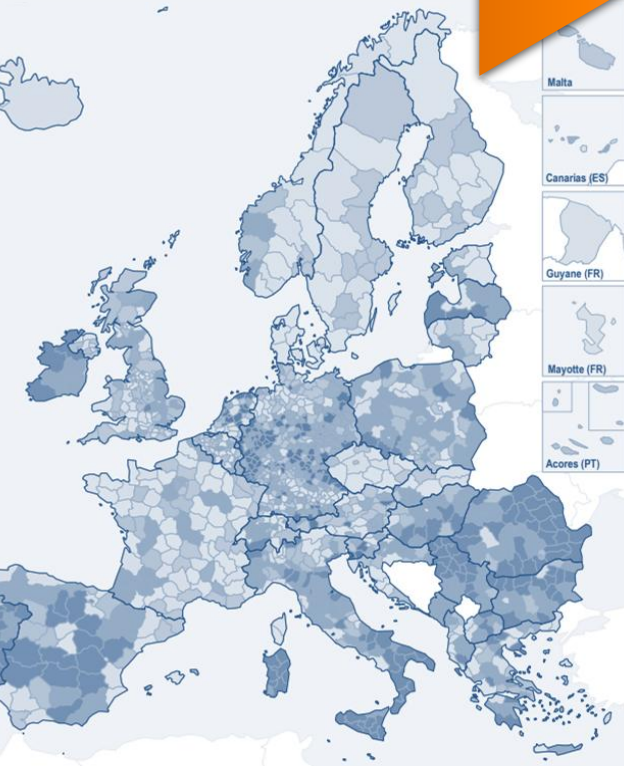
- How can smart **transport infrastructure** help mitigate **territorial vulnerabilities** to natural or human-made crises?
- Which regions in Europe face the greatest risk of losing **accessibility** due to **infrastructure disruptions**?
- How can **resilience** indicators be integrated into **accessibility models** at various territorial levels (urban, rural, cross-border)?
- What policy measures and **investments** are most effective in reducing the **vulnerability** gap between territories?

# European territories in global interactions



- Territorial analysis of the erosion of **strategic industries** in Europe.
- Territorial analysis of **technological sovereignty** for strategic technologies (e.g. Important Projects of Common European Interest).
- Territorial evidence on factors that increase the **attraction of private capital** to strategic industries and technologies
- Circular rather than linear value chains of **critical raw materials**
- **Impact of global economic shocks** on employment and GDP for European regions

# How ESPON support is delivered?



Depending on the intended use, we deliver research results in different formats



## Study reports

comprehensive presentation of research results

## Publications

research conclusions via e.g. policy papers, atlases etc.



## Interactive maps and dashboards

to illustrate the main findings of our research

## Open Datasets

ready and available for all to download and use



## Storymaps

long, but easy to read articles enhanced with interactive maps, dashboards and visuals from the ESPON portal

## Blog posts

short, easy to read articles on a specific topic



## Podcasts and videos



## TerritoriALL magazine

magazine articles – where we present opinions of influential policymakers and researchers

# Resources

## ESPON Portal: web maps and data stories; applications and dashboards

<https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/sites/#/espon-hub>

### Cross-border cooperation programme areas

This dashboard enables to visualise and navigate the territorial scope of cross-border cooperation programme areas across 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 programming periods.

The first map showcases the number of programmes under a specific programme type that cover a given NUTS3 region.

The second map showcases the number of programmes across all programme types that cover a given NUTS3 region.

Explore using the filters that are important to your search, below.

- Select programming period  
2021-2027
- Select CBC programme type  
No category selected
- Select programme area  
No category selected

The territories correspond to 2021-2027 programming period and are displayed using the NUTS 2021 version.

The data originates from the KEEPER EU database.

### Overview of the 2014-2020 programming period

Cross Border Cooperation programmes funded under ERDF, IPA and ENI

With a budget of xx billion EUR, 89 CBC programmes are implemented within the EU and at the EU's external borders.

55 Interreg VI-A programmes in the EU, making sure to turn border obstacles into opportunities between EU Member States.

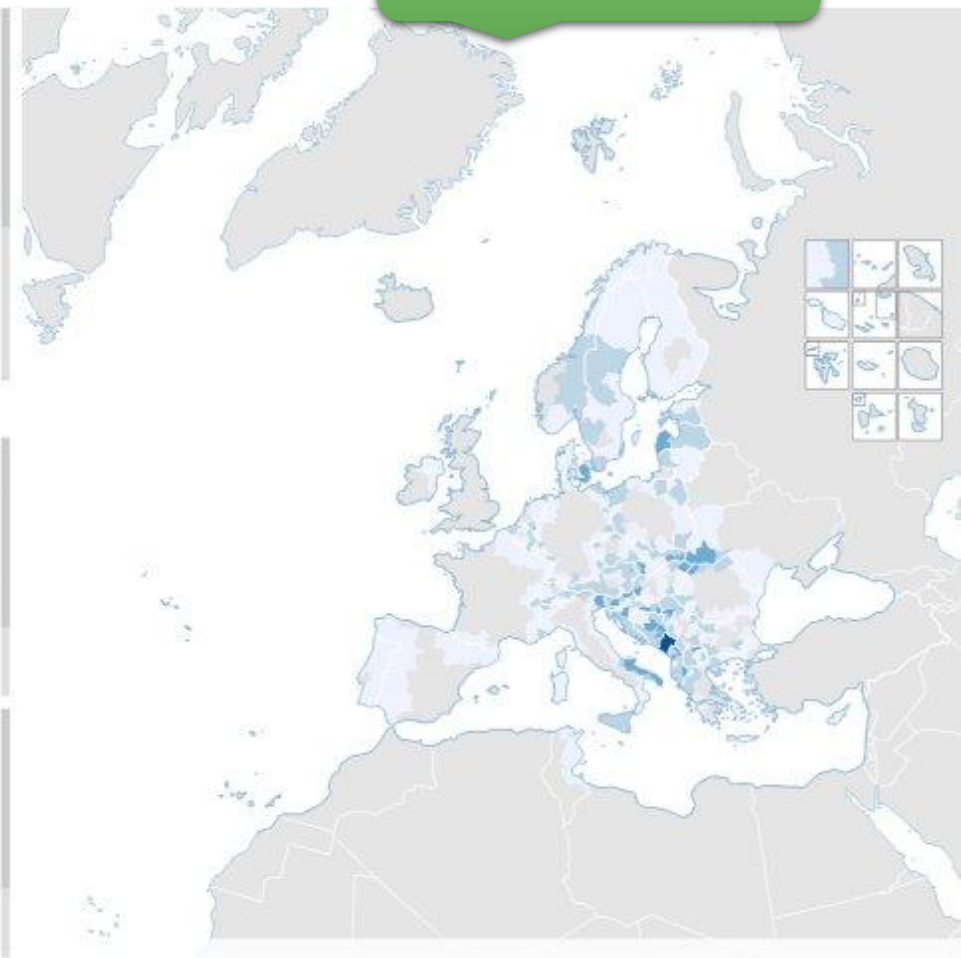
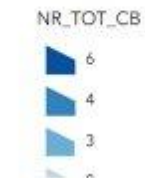
10 Interreg VI-A IPA programmes, which are operating at the EU's border with IPA countries. They mainly contribute

2020 2027

### Number of programmes

Programme type	2014-2020	2021-2027
cross-border (internal)	49	55
cross-border (pre-accession)	10	10
cross-border (neighbouring)	5	15
cross-border (non-interreg pre-	0	0

### Number of programmes covering a region

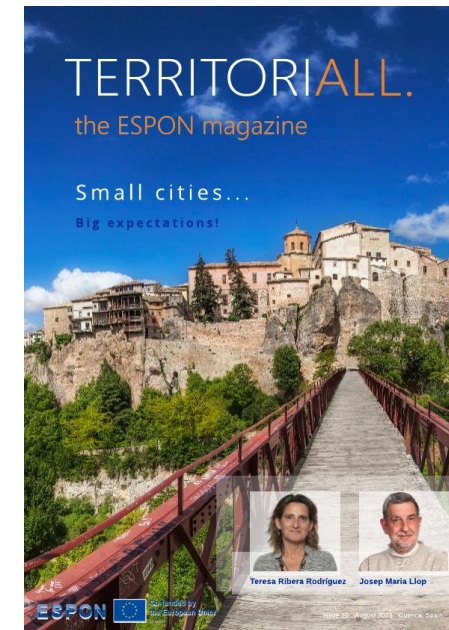


# Resources

<https://territorial.espon.eu/>

## ESPON TerritoriALL

- **Online/interactive magazine via the ESPON portal**
- Authors: politicians, policymakers, researchers, ESPON staff
- **3 issues per year**
  - 2 topical - focusing on the EU presidencies
  - 1 dedicated to the EU RegionsWeek
- offers step to our stakeholders beyond the framework of a project
- helps us connect with policymakers and increase our visibility to them
- opens ESPON to new, less knowledgeable audiences



David Kuttik, János Koltár

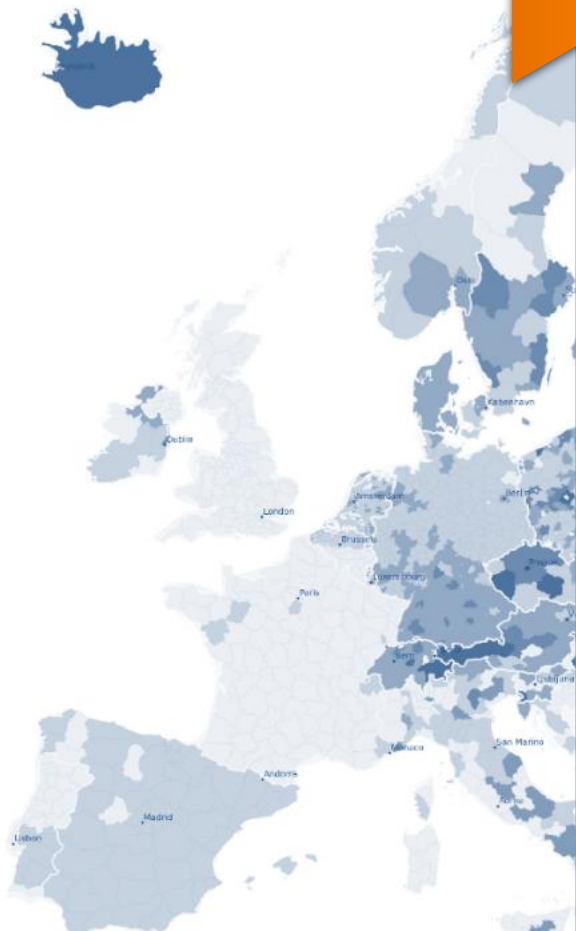
In an era of unprecedented global challenges – economic crises, geopolitical tensions, climate change and pandemics – the concept of resilience has become a cornerstone of regional development. Yet, resilience is no longer just about bouncing back; it is about bouncing forward. This is particularly true for the EU's eastern border regions, which have demonstrated a remarkable capacity for territorial exaptive resilience – a concept that refers to the ability of regions to repurpose existing resources and capabilities to create new opportunities in the face of adversity.

The EU's eastern border regions are often characterised by their peripheral locations, lower levels of economic development and reliance on traditional sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. These regions face significant structural challenges, including demographic decline, limited institutional capacity and vulnerability to external shocks.



Regional Development Profiles: Latest Classes (2006-2021)

# How ESPON support is delivered?



Regularly, ESPON organises events to transfer the accumulated knowledge and facilitate interaction and networking.



ESPON seminars - in cooperation with the running presidency of the EU Council and focusing on its thematic priorities



ESPON networking and policy events – to facilitate exchange of experience, knowledge sharing and discussions on the findings of our studies



ESPON training and learning events, e.g., to promote the use of ESPON web applications, mapping solutions, policy analysis tools or specific methodologies



I am a  
policymaker.

How can I  
benefit from  
ESPON?

**Request the ESPON service.** If you have a specific policy support need that typically fits into one of our TAPs, then feel free to enquire us. We offer different types of stakeholder engagement:

- Calls for targeted analyses
- Have your say in our research projects and make the results yours
- On-demand services

# Key **ESPON** support for policymakers



**ESPON funds studies based on the needs** of European public authorities at all levels. Any local, regional or national authority as well as an EU institution can inform us about policy support needs and become an ESPON stakeholder.

Since 2007, **ESPON Targeted Analyses** have been supporting territorial development processes at local, regional and national levels in Europe by **bringing together policymakers who share similar challenges** and who are looking for new territorial evidence and a European perspective.

**From 2007 to 2022: 51 projects involving more than 300 stakeholders** (local authorities, national administrations, EU programmes...)

**Since 2022** (new ESPON 2030 Programme): **already 18 projects and more than 100 stakeholders involved!**



# Targeted Analyses

## What it is and how does it work ?

### WHAT

- A **territorial study financed by ESPON** emanating from a proposal submitted by a group of stakeholders ...
- ... that reflects stakeholder **specific territorial context** (countries, regions, cities, FUAs, cross-border areas, territories with geographic specificities, cooperation areas of EU-funded programmes, etc. ) and **policy needs**...
- ... that relates to one of the eight **ESPON thematic priorities** (Thematic Action Plans)
- ... that offers a wider **European perspective** (notion of replicability and/or common interest for other EU territories)

# Targeted Analyses

## What it is and how does it work ?

### WHEN

- Stakeholder proposals **can be submitted at any time** (principle of an open invitation with cut-off-dates/ next one for instance : 24 November 2025)
- ESPON EGTC evaluates **twice per year** all stakeholder proposals received by the cut-off dates

### HOW MANY

- Next cut-off-date: up to 6 **new proposals** can be selected

**VALUE** : targeted analyses budget amounts on the average around **250 KE**

# Stakeholders

## Who can apply?

- **EU-level, macroregional, cross-border, national, regional and local authorities** - having legal mandate or specific tasks in developing, evaluating and/or implementing public policies with a territorial dimension. They may also involve stakeholder networks at a broader scale (i.e. networks of local authorities, intergovernmental associations, advocacy organisations, chambers of commerce, associations of trade unions, citizen groups, etc.).
- **Managing Authorities and joint secretariats, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and other territorial cooperation bodies** responsible for implementing EU-funded programmes for transnational, cross-border or macro-regional areas.
- **Single or several stakeholders acting jointly** (to encourage a wide geographical coverage and ensure that numerous countries, regions and cities can benefit of territorial evidence).
- **ESPON space**: stakeholders in the EU member states and the ESPON partner states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).

# Partnerships, can ESPON help?



LinkedIn group

"ESPON stakeholders" <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12067347/>



ESPON Contact Point (ECP)

[https://www.espon.eu/countries\\_overview](https://www.espon.eu/countries_overview)



ESPON Directory: [Stakeholder directory | ESPON](#)



## ESPON Seminar: Exaptive resilience in border regions

### Seminars

Organised together with the Polish EU Presidency

Add to calendar

Get directions 

Date

June 25, 2025 · 9:00am CET

Location

European Solidarity Center

Type

In-person Event

<https://www.espon.eu/events/gdansk>

**ESPON**



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Interreg

**// Thank you**

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**[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)**