

3. Priority 2: Targeted analysis upon demand

Priority 2 offers a framework for a new type of projects within the ESPON Programme, supporting the use of existing results in partnership with different groups of stakeholders.

Introducing a new approach to the generation of project ideas as well as to the implementation of projects, it provides an opportunity to stakeholders for (1) enhancing their understanding of the larger territorial context, (2) making comparisons to other territories, regions and cities, and (3) hereby providing a European perspective to considerations on the development of their territories.

3.1 Basics of the targeted analyses and their implementation

What can stakeholders gain?

Stakeholders engaging in targeted analyses delivered by ESPON will obtain customised and up-to-date information that they can make use of for policy development, the set up of strategies, and/or implementation measures related to their territorial reality.

The targeted analytical input should be of particular interest to stakeholders wanting to add a European dimension to the information and knowledge about their territorial context and opportunities for development.

Who are the stakeholders?

The particular stakeholders that can be considered by the Monitoring Committee (MC) are:

- Public authorities at European level and on all administrative levels of EU Member States and ESPON Partner States involved in processes implementing EU Cohesion Policy, i.e. the Territorial Cohesion objective, including the Community Strategic Guidelines and National Strategic Reference Framework strategies as well as territorially relevant aspects of Structural Funds Programmes under the objectives of Convergence and Competitiveness.
- Authorities responsible for implementing Structural Funds Programmes 2007-2013 under Objective 1, 2, and 3, including programmes dealing with cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation as well as INTERACT and URBACT.
- Groups of public authorities at regional/local level representing regions and/or cities from at least three countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme and having a common interest in support from ESPON analyses for the purpose of gaining European perspective/context experience and/or knowledge on common challenges related to their territorial and/or urban development.

Only public authorities located in the EU territory or situated in a country participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland) are eligible stakeholders. Following the decision of the ESPON 2013 Monitoring Committee

a public authority is a body which has got a public mission, which can implement public policy and execute public tasks.

In the framework of the third type of actions, and in the case of cross-border cooperation programmes along external EU borders in Programmes under Structural Funds (SF), the eligible stakeholder will be the Managing Authority of the cross-border programme (located in the EU territory). However, public authorities representing the regional/local/national authorities involved in the cross-border programme, can also be involved in the steering of the Targeted Analysis and participate in meetings and events organised by the project stakeholder(s).

Organisations representing (types of) regions and cities as well as international networks related to EU regional policy or other policy areas cannot be considered as potential stakeholders. Representatives from such bodies can, in their capacity to facilitate cooperation between different stakeholders, be involved in the implementation of targeted analyses as members of Steering Committees or in a similar way.

Partnership and input of stakeholders

Partnership in the project implementation is vital in order to achieve useful results. This applies to both, the partnership between the ESPON Programme and stakeholders, as well as between the team of experts and the stakeholder representatives.

Stakeholder involvement is essential throughout the project's life-cycle. This will encompass elements such as:

- Definition and development of the targeted analysis.
- Selection of the most appropriate team of experts to conduct the analysis.
- Steering and guidance of the targeted analysis and the group of experts.
- Provision of information to the analysis (e.g. detailed data; qualitative inputs).
- Applying the analytical output in practise and dissemination of project results.

The success of projects on targeted analysis highly depends on stakeholders' commitment to work together with researchers and to engage them in making use of the targeted analytical outputs provided within their daily work on matters and policies related to regions, cities and larger territories.

The team of experts being engaged for carrying through a targeted analysis will be carefully selected ensuring their preparedness and willingness to work in partnership with stakeholders. This may imply a different approach towards their usual research and analytical work, as stakeholders' needs and specific interests have to be taken into account.

In this respect, Priority 2 projects will contribute to the use of ESPON results in practise and to the involvement of policy makers, practitioners and scientists in a joint synergetic process.

Operational results

The project implementation shall ensure operational results in relation to the specific type of action (see chapters 3.3.1 to 3.3.3). This may imply an involvement of stakeholders, e.g. as members of a steering group. The commitment of key stakeholders needs to be ensured in order to reach this objective.

The analysis shall make use of existing ESPON results both, of the previous and the current programme period, and be enriched by more detailed information and practical know-how provided by stakeholders.

The ESPON projects shall have a European-wide relevance, i.e. be of interest beyond the actual stakeholders involved. A mechanism for dissemination of results will therefore be an integral part of the project implementation. Existing European networks provide wider audiences that should be included in the transfer of the results and use of the targeted analysis.

A two-step procedure towards targeted analyses

The stakeholders considered eligible for this type of projects include public authorities either (1) at European level and in EU Member States and ESPON Partner States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) dealing with territorial matters, or (2) involved in Structural Funds Programmes or (3) representing groups of regions and cities (see chapter 3.1 for a definition of groups of regions and cities).

Setting up the actions under this priority follows a two-step process:

(1) In a first step, stakeholders are invited to voice their interest for information/knowledge in relation to one of the three types of action under Priority 2 (see below) by submitting expressions of interest including project ideas. Expressions of interest selected by the ESPON MC will be the basis for project specifications for the targeted analyses that will be delivered by ESPON. These specifications will be set up with the active involvement of the stakeholders who submitted the respective expressions of interest.

(2) As the second step, these project specifications will be published in the framework of a call for proposal/tender for targeted analysis which will result in the selection of the best proposal/tender submitted and through this the TPG/team¹ of experts that entail the analytical capacity necessary. The TPG/team of experts will implement the targeted analysis in a partnership process with the stakeholders behind the selected projects.

No direct financial contributions or co-financing will be requested from stakeholders in implementing selected actions. However, stakeholders will be expected to cover personnel and travel costs for their own active involvement in the implementation and use of the targeted analysis provided.

What is the difference to ESPON applied research?

The distinction between Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects can be seen from the following overview:

¹ Depending on the budget of the project – please refer to chapter 8.3.1.

	Priority 1	Priority 2
Project idea	ESPON MC	Policy makers & practitioners
Process	One-step process (Call for proposal)	Two-step process (Call for expression of interest; Call for proposal)
Project approach	Applied research providing new European wide results	Use of existing ESPON results, integrating them with practical know-how of and detailed information from stakeholders
Actors	TPG (researchers only)	TPG/Team of experts & stakeholders in partnership
Relationship	Results may feed Priority 2 actions	Results should feed operational use and may reveal needs for applied research under Priority 1

3.2 Objective of the targeted analysis

The aim is to carry through targeted analyses in partnership with policy makers and/or practitioners showing an interest in gaining awareness of European evidence, information, experience and/or knowledge on common challenges related to their territorial and/or urban development.

The individual targeted analysis shall support better informed policy decisions by:

- Integrating ESPON findings with more detailed information and practical know-how, either from a territorial part of Europe or from a sector authority.
- Contributing to a sound knowledge of territorial development perspectives/trends through new understanding of future development potentials and challenges for the respective territorial and/or urban development.

On the basis of the interest and ideas expressed by stakeholders in calls for expression of interest, the MC will be responsible for selecting actions of targeted analyses to be carried through by TPGs or teams of scientists/experts.

The target groups for the results of the user driven targeted analytical deliveries based on ESPON results are:

- (1) Policy makers and practitioners involved in carrying through programme and project activities outside and within Structural Funds' funded programmes;
- (2) Research institutes and universities carrying through the analysis.

The main difference between targeted analyses under Priority 2 and the rest of the ESPON 2013 Programme is the purpose of user involvement and the use of existing ESPON results.

3.3 Types of actions

Projects under Priority 2 can have different foci and accordingly vary in their content. In order to have a clear distinction between the various possible project orientations, each project needs to be clearly allocated to one of the following types of action:

- 1) Integrated studies and thematic analysis;
- 2) Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions;
- 3) Joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes.

Independent of the type of action, each project should have a European perspective (i.e. supporting the understanding of the wider European context), a clear transferable character and a concrete implementation part, focusing on specific territories.

The analytical approach can provide integrated, cross-thematic analyses, study individual themes or sectors, or focus on a specific type of territories. At any rate, ESPON findings shall be integrated and supplemented with more detailed information and practical know-how, either from a territorial part of Europe or from a sector authority. Analyses can include/be based on case studies. The geographical coverage will normally have a more limited territorial coverage than the entire European territory.

3.3.1 Integrated studies and thematic analysis

This type of action is foreseen to follow a “traditional” analytical approach using existing results of ESPON applied research and other studies. The analysis can integrate several themes relevant for certain types of territories, regions and/or cities or they can be less comprehensive in the approach by focusing on one or a few themes.

Objectives

The main objectives are:

- 1) To provide added value for territorial development of specific types of territories² by offering new comparative insight and understanding on territorial potentials and challenges from a European perspective;
- 2) To ensure that other (similar) types of territories/regions can benefit from the output of the analysis.

It is expected that groups of regions and/or cities across Europe as well as national authorities that are facing common challenges will be interested in territory specific and yet transferable analyses giving insight in their position in a European territorial context, e.g. how territories, types of regions and cities with similar challenges best develop their policies and strategies.

Studies or analyses could, for instance, look into a specific theme or potentials of certain types of regions, and assess their position in the European context. Contributing to the

² Types of territories codified for the territorial dimension, include urban, rural-mountains, rural-islands, rural-area (sparsely and very sparsely populated), rural-other, former external border, area dependant on fisheries, outermost regions, transnational cooperation areas, cross-border cooperation areas and interregional cooperation areas (as listed in the ESPON 2013 Programme, p. 9).

assessment of the position of a region in a larger territorial context, cross-thematic studies can be of particular importance. Furthermore, this type of action offers the opportunity to break down existing ESPON results to a lower level, and to enrich them with specific regional/local knowledge/evidence. ESPON results can thereby be made more easily accessible and comprehensible for stakeholders below the national level. They can also provide an additional dimension to the development of strategies and policy making for the stakeholders involved.

Outputs expected

The outputs expected are integrated analyses providing insights in the state of development, the challenges and potentials of particular territories/types of regions/cities by including a number of sectors and addressing potential synergies. Results can also concentrate on a particular theme. In both cases, the outcome of the interaction between the European perspective/dimension and the national/regional/local one is expected to deliver added value to the stakeholders involved. Results shall lend themselves to practical application/use by the stakeholders involved in the project.

3.3.2 Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions

This type of action clearly allows for the implementation of projects that differ from the mainstream of the ESPON 2013 Programme by being more experimental and/or innovative in character. It is in a way a laboratory for developing ways of meeting main territorial challenges that Europe is confronted with.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- 1) To support experimental and innovative actions carried through in partnership with stakeholders with European knowledge on territorial structures, trends, perspectives and policy impact;
- 2) To provide methodological support to experiments and innovative efforts.

Project activities should go beyond a traditional format of analyses and case studies and proactively explore new avenues of creating territorial development, meeting main challenges and proposing innovative actions. They could inspire strategy building and planning processes and/or, particularly through their innovative approach, stimulate creativity on new ideas for applied research projects under Priority 1 of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Innovative actions can in principle include actions improving the economic, social and environmental situation and performance of the territory in question. They can, for instance, relate to more comprehensive territorial visions and strategies including the larger territorial context. The actions can as well relate to governance issues related to implementing territorial cooperation in practice and to training efforts related to the use of ESPON results e.g. how to work with visions and scenarios, how to read regional relevance out of ESPON maps, how to use methodologies and techniques applied in ESPON, or how to relate in practice to a European perspective in regional/local efforts to shape development. Finally, an action could also be considered to be innovative and/or of

experimental character, if stakeholders of different regions work together for the first time.

Outputs expected

Outputs expected include analytical/methodological inputs to visions, scenarios and strategies for the development of certain territories/types of territories as well as proposals for actions to be carried out by stakeholders which support innovative measures for the territory in question. Outputs can as well include new avenues to deal with major territorial challenges facing Europe, its regions, cities and larger territories. Even though more experimental and innovative in character, results shall lend themselves to practical application/use by the stakeholders involved in the project.

In the approach to major territorial challenges priority would be given to experimental and innovative project ideas meeting territorial challenges addressed by European policy orientations, such as:

- Demography:
Fertility, ageing and migration processes.
- Economy:
Globalisation, increasing global pressure to restructure and modernise, new emerging markets & technological development.
- Climate change:
New hazard patterns, changing potentials.
- Energy supply and efficiency:
Increasing energy prices.
- Transport and accessibility/mobility:
Saturation of euro-corridors, urban transport.
- Geography:
Territorial concentration of activities, mainly economic, in the core area of Europe, the process of metropolisation and further EU enlargements.

These challenges may impact on different types of regions, cities and larger territories in different ways and require diverse policy responses.

3.3.3 Joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes

The joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes take a geographical starting point in the area covered by these programmes, be it transnational, cross-border, interregional, regional or urban territories. The content of these actions can be integrated and thematic analyses and they can be experimental and innovative of nature (as described above in chapters 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). A main prerequisite is that they are justified by supporting Structural Funds Programme implementation.

Objectives

The objectives are:

1) To provide information and analyses on the European position of these areas, their comparability with other similar areas, and their potentials and challenges, useful for Structural Funds Programmes (regional, cross-border, transnational, interregional and urban);

2) To provide methodological support for strategic processes, including visions and scenarios for spatial development and planning.

It is expected that project results will support decisions on concrete actions such as documents on strategic development or Structural Funds actions involving several stakeholders from regions and cities as well as national level. Projects should have a particular collaborative approach between actors from different countries.

Outputs expected

Outputs expected include support to programme implementation and ideas for definition of projects providing added value to the development of the territory covered by the Structural Funds Programme in question.

The following table gives a brief overview on the three types of action under Priority 2:

	Type of action 1	Type of action 2	Type of action 3
Eligible stakeholders	Groups of at least 3 regions and/or cities (i.e. a minimum of 3 public authorities ³ at regional/local level representing 3 different countries participating in ESPON 2013 Programme); Public authorities at EU and national administrative levels (i.e. when public authorities at national level are behind an EoI no minimum representation of different countries participating in ESPON is required)	Groups of at least 3 regions and/or cities (i.e. a minimum of 3 public authorities ⁴ at regional/local level representing 3 different countries participating in ESPON 2013 Programme); Public authorities at EU and national administrative levels (i.e. when public authorities at national level are behind an EoI no minimum representation of different countries participating in ESPON is required)	Authorities responsible for implementing Structural Funds Programmes 2007 - 2013 Objective 1, 2 and 3 (i.e. when an authority responsible for implementing Structural Funds is behind an EoI no minimum number of partners is required for submitting the EoI)
Is is not consistent with the OPKey aspects to consider	More reactive, “traditional” approach, based on existing ESPON results, though not necessarily limited	More proactive, experimental and/or innovative approach	Either of the two approaches <u>but</u> focused on existing Structural Funds Programme

³ Please refer to the definition of public authority available at page 28)

⁴ Please refer to the definition of public authority available at page 28)

	to these		
Outputs	Analyses of specific territorial potentials from a European perspective	Analytical input to territorial visions/ strategies/scenarios/ tools or to dealing with major territorial challenges	Either of the two outputs <u>but</u> focused on Structural Funds Programme area

3.4 Mapping the demand of stakeholders

In the course of programme implementation, ESPON will invite potential users through calls for expression of interest to propose project ideas. After the screening of the proposals received, a selected number of project ideas will be chosen by the MC and developed into project specifications/terms of references in close partnership with the respective stakeholders. The project specifications/terms of reference will be the basis for calls for proposals/tenders from TPGs or transnational teams of researchers/experts for carrying through the analysis requested.

Screenings of demand for targeted analyses by stakeholders shall be carried through at least 2-3 times during the implementation of the programme.

3.4.1 General principles

In principle, the generation of project ideas for Priority 2 actions is conceived as a bottom-up approach, i.e. policy makers and practitioners shall voice their information and knowledge needs by expressions of interest that shall then be met by respective actions. The results of these actions shall, in turn, be put into use by afore mentioned stakeholders.

The MC will decide the timing of subsequent calls for expressions of interest.

Project ideas of stakeholders may be appropriate for a project under Priority 2 if an analysis of the proposed issue can contribute to policy development of the territories in question. The most prevailing territorial challenges at this point in time are known, however new themes will obviously appear on the policy agenda. Themes vary according to the territorial diversity in Europe. Therefore, it has not been considered appropriate to concentrate a call for interest on certain thematic issues, as there must be enough flexibility, also to cater for new needs occurring until the end of the current programme period.

3.4.2 Application Procedure

A call for expression of interest will normally be launched including a public event where comprehensive information will be given on the application procedure. Stakeholders will also be informed about the call for expression of interest via the ESPON newsletter, the ESPON website as well as 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 about the call so that the information can be nationally disseminated to stakeholders.

The publication of the call for expression of interest will include information on the type(s) of action for which proposals are requested and the general objectives of this type of projects. In order to offer guidance for the formulation of the expression of interest an application form will be provided on the website of the ESPON 2013 Programme.

Expressions of interest should be submitted by stakeholders as defined in chapter 3.1 (see above). In the case of type of action 1 and type of action 2, these can be either a group of regions and/or cities, i.e. a partnership of at least three public authorities at regional/local level representing three different countries participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme, or a public authority at EU and national administrative level (i.e. no minimum representation of different countries participating in ESPON). In the case of type of action 3, stakeholders should be Managing Authorities for Structural Funds Programmes 2007 – 2013.

Only public authorities located in the EU territory or situated in a country participating in the ESPON 2013 Programme (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland) are eligible stakeholders.

In the framework of the third type of actions, and in the case of cross-border cooperation programmes along external EU borders in Programmes under Structural Funds (SF), the eligible stakeholder will be the Managing Authority of the cross border-programme (located in the EU territory). However, public authorities representing the regional/local/national authorities involved in the cross-border programme, can also be involved in the steering of the Targeted Analysis and participate in the meetings and events organised by the project stakeholder(s).

In case of thematic or territorial intersections/overlaps among two or more expressions of interest submitted, it may be proposed that the respective stakeholders cooperate and form a larger grouping of stakeholders.

Calls for expression of interest will usually be kept open for two months (40-45 working days). Interested stakeholders will be asked to forward their expression of interest in both, hardcopies (one original and one copy) and digital format to the attention of the CU, making use of the standard application form for that particular purpose provided via the ESPON website.

A lead partner principle shall be applied in situations when several stakeholders are behind an expression of interest.

3.4.3 Selection Procedure

The selection procedure starts immediately after the deadline set for submitting project ideas. It consists of two distinct assessment parts, an eligibility check and an evaluation, and will be concluded with a short-list of project ideas that is forwarded to the MC which takes the final decision on approval of ideas for targeted analyses to be carried through in partnership.

Eligibility criteria

At first, expressions of interest 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” and “no”, depending on whether the respective evidence has been provided or not. Each project idea to be evaluated has to fulfil the following criteria:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
1. Expression of interest has been submitted in due time in original and electronic version ⁵ .
2. Expression of interest is complete and includes the requested administrative forms and supporting documents (the list of supporting documents required will be provided in the specific call), all properly filled in according to the detailed instructions provided in the Application Form.
3. The content of the expression of interest relates to the type of action set out in the call.
4. All stakeholders involved are public authorities at local/regional/national level or Managing Authority of programmes under Structural Funds (please, refer to the definition of public authorities provided at page 28).
5. All involved partners fulfil the eligibility criteria specified in the call for interest (e.g. minimum number of public authorities at regional/local level in the case of the first two types of actions)

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 Stakeholder will be informed in written by fax and offered a maximum of **seven 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 (letter(s) of commitment).
- Missing signature and/or missing stamp on a document.
- Correction of discrepancies in the electronic version of the application submitted compared to the paper version sent to the MA by post, which is considered the valid application in legal terms.

⁵ 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.

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 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 EoI considered 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).

If the content of an expression of interest should not relate to the type of action set out in the call, it can be further considered in the selection procedure for the type of action it fits to, given that (1) this particular type of action was also covered by a call for expression of interest at the same time; and (2) subject to approval of the stakeholder(s) having submitted the expression of interest. In the event that the type of action, the application should actually be allocated to, was not subject of a call for expression of interest at that specific point in time, the application will be considered ineligible and the respective applicant will be notified accordingly.

The outcome of the eligibility checks has to be confirmed by the MC. Only those expressions of interest that will have fulfilled the eligibility criteria will be subject to the subsequent qualitative evaluation. Stakeholders that submitted ineligible applications will receive a notification letter specifying the non-fulfilled eligibility criteria.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation is based on a scoring system and results in a list of expressions of interest that is forwarded to the MC for decision.

This second step in the selection procedure serves to assess the relevance of the expressions of interest regarding the existing knowledge available, primarily within the ESPON Programme, and of the specific call to which they respond. It also looks into the impact of each proposed project idea, i.e. its importance and operational use for stakeholders involved in territorial development on EU, national and regional level.

The general evaluation criteria that need to be met by all expressions of interest, independent of the type of action they address, are the following:

GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA
1. Presence of a European perspective/dimension in the targeted analysis.
2. Degree of transferability and added value of expected results (e.g. geographical coverage of stakeholders involved should be typical for a certain typology of

cities/regions).
3. Operational use and implication of the analytical results envisaged by the stakeholders involved (e.g. how are the results related to stakeholder processes?).
4. Degree of competent involvement of stakeholders in the targeted analysis (e.g. how do they intend to provide appropriate know-how and give access to all necessary data and documents for analysis to the team of experts?).
5. Measures for the dissemination of the experience made with project results (e.g. are they conceived in such a way that a wide target group can be reached?).
6. Contribution to the expected results and impacts of the ESPON 2013 Programme (e.g. has the theme/topic already been covered by another action under Priority 2?).

In addition, one specific criterion will be taken into account for each of the three types of action:

SPECIFIC EVALUATION CRITERIA Depending on Type of Action	
1. Integrated studies and thematic analysis	Degree to which the action provides new comparative insight and understanding of the state, trends, perspectives and/or policy impacts from a European perspective for the territories, regions and cities involved.
2. Knowledge support to experimental and innovative actions	Degree of innovative and/or experimental character of the action and ability to approach major territorial challenges (e.g. has the approach/methodology been applied before in this particular type of territory?).
3. Joint actions related to other Structural Funds Programmes	Depending on whether the action is supposed to be of more “traditional” character or more innovative character, one of the two above mentioned criteria will apply.

Stakeholders should, when expressing an interest, give a brief presentation of the territory for which the analysis should be conducted (incl. key data on size, population, economic strength, challenges).

Stakeholders submitting an expression of interest should nominate one representative that will function as Lead Partner.

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 expressions of interest will be marked and assessed exactly as they are described and presented. No assumptions or interpretations about the project idea will be made in addition to what is in the application. Concise but explicit justification will be given for each score. Evaluation forms with no concluding comments will be declared inadmissible. Equally, evaluation forms carrying handwritten corrections of scoring are declared inadmissible if they are not accompanied by handwritten initials. Any recommendations for improvements to be proposed to the stakeholders will be included as well.

The assessment will be prepared for the MC by the CU. Once the individual assessments are completed, the evaluation proceeds to a consensus discussion, integrating the views of those having taken part in the assessment. A consensus report will be produced, also including any proposals for improvements. Consensus reports with hand-written corrections will be deemed inadmissible.

The content of the assessment will not be published or forwarded to persons or institutions which are not directly engaged in the evaluation or decision making. The project idea itself included in the expression of interest, as well as the description,

concept and structure of the idea for a targeted analysis remains the property of the stakeholder(s) behind the idea.

Decision making

Decisions on project ideas for targeted analysis will finally be made by the MC of the ESPON 2013 Programme, based on the results of the eligibility check and of the evaluation of the EoI. All EoI will be evaluated and the result of the evaluation will generate a ranking of the EoI received for the call in question. After having decided on the eligibility of EoI, the MC will confirm the best applications resulting from the ranking of EoI.

The number of EoI that will be approved will be decided by the MC prior to the launch of a call for EoI. This will be done either as a specific number of EoI or as a total budget allocation for the implementation of the related Targeted Analyses. The decision of the MC will opt at a selection of EoI that ideally includes actions from the three different types of actions.

The result of this exercise will be made transparent by providing the MC with a list including all expressions of interest received and the information below:

- The scoring resulting from the evaluation and the result of the eligibility check.
- A compilation of suggestions for improvements from the assessment of the expressions of interest that could include proposals for merging expressions of interest and/or improve the content of the targeted analysis envisaged.

For the approval of the best EoI, provided that the above conditions are met (i.e. eligibility and evaluation criteria), the following factors might as well be taken into account by the MC in case of equality in scoring:

- Relevance of the proposed project idea with respect to the type of action(s) covered by the call and with respect to the programme.
- A reasonable involvement of partners from Member States having entered the EU after 1st of January 2004.

Following the decisions of the MC, all stakeholders, having submitted an expression of interest, will be informed in written about the outcome of the selection procedure. All stakeholders whose expression of interest could not be approved will receive a notification letter with brief information on the assessment results. Similarly, all stakeholders behind approved expressions of interest will receive a letter from the MA (CU) stating the decision of the MC as well as a maximum budget foreseen for the targeted analysis. The decision may include certain recommendations for improvements deriving from the results of the evaluation assessment, which will be discussed with the stakeholder when setting up the project specification.

Selected project ideas will at a next stage be developed into project specifications/terms of reference for a call for proposal/tender.

All the Lead Applicants of the ineligible or non-approved EoI will receive a notification letter with brief information on the assessment results. In case Lead Applicants of ineligible or non-approved EoI are not satisfied with the decision of the MC, they may

put forward an appeal (for more detail on the appeal procedure, please refer to chapter 8.12 of the Programme Manual).

3.5 Setting up the analysis

3.5.1 Role of the stakeholders in the setting up phase

Stakeholders whose project ideas have been accepted by the MC will be considered partners in the further specification and setting up of the targeted analysis. This involvement will include the elaboration of detailed project specifications/terms of reference as well as the assessment of proposals/tenders from potential TPG/team of experts supporting the decision of the MC on the most suitable project and TPG/group of researchers/expert.

Stakeholders will be fully involved in carrying through targeted analysis, not only by taking part in the development of the action but also by providing information to the analysis, such as detailed data and qualitative inputs. The involvement of stakeholders will provide for knowledge support and can be organised in the form of a Steering Committee following the implementation of the action. Stakeholder organisations at European level, e.g. organisations representing (types of) regions and cities as well as international networks related to EU regional policy or other policy areas, can eventually be invited on their own expenses to participate in the steering of the project should the stakeholder(s) wish so.

3.5.2 Elaboration of Project Specifications/Terms of reference

On basis of the financial volume for the call allocated by the MC, project specifications or terms of references will be elaborated. The stakeholders behind the selected project ideas will be involved in specifying the analytical delivery to be provided by the project. This will ensure the highest possible usefulness of results and the commitment by the involved stakeholders.

The project specifications/terms of reference will be elaborated by the CU in collaboration with the stakeholders. Involvement of the ESPON Concertation Committee in specifying the Targeted Analyses is not foreseen. However, the CC can be asked for advice by the CU in the process of elaboration.

The pre-announcement of the project will be launched in parallel to the starting of the drafting of the project specification, at the latest.

The MC will be presented for formal approval and commenting draft project specifications including indicative project budget (during an MC meeting or in written procedure).

The MC has mandated the finalisation of the project specification including budget allocation to the MA/CU. The MA/CU will in agreement with the stakeholders finalise the project specification and process them in relation to the call for proposal.

The MA/CU has been given the mandate to take a final decision on project budgets within a threshold of +/- 50.000 EUR difference from the initial budget proposal indicated in the draft project specifications submitted for approval.

3.5.3 Cooperation agreement with stakeholders

Once the project specifications/terms of reference are finalised by the MA/CU in cooperation with the stakeholders, including the budget allocation, a Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement on the targeted analysis shall be concluded between stakeholder(s), represented by a Lead Stakeholder, and the ESPON MA. This agreement will be signed by both sides before the launch of a call for proposal and should provide for the following aspects:

- The intention of use of the results from the targeted analysis.
- The commitment of representative(s) of the stakeholders in setting up the project specification/terms of reference.
- Their involvement in the assessment of the best proposal/tender.
- Their active participation in the steering of the project including meetings with the selected team of experts (i.e. kick-off meeting, intermediate meetings, final meeting).
- The obligation of stakeholders to submit a report at the latest 12 months after the final delivery of the targeted analysis, evaluating and giving evidence of its usefulness and application as well as any shortcomings, etc.
- The commitment of stakeholders to disseminate widely the experience from the targeted analysis, including key messages translated in the language(s) of the stakeholder(s).
- The provision of human resources and funds necessary for the stakeholder involvement in the partnership.

The Stakeholder Cooperation Agreement is necessary as a commitment of stakeholders to the project and as basis for the MC's decision to allocate funds to the targeted analysis.

3.5.4 Partnership between stakeholders and TPGs/teams of researchers

As outlined above, a close partnership between stakeholders and researchers is important for achieving successful results of the targeted analysis. In the setting up of the analysis it will be sought to meet the following requirements:

- Persons with solid competences, both from the stakeholder and the researcher side. The cooperation must be based on mutual trust and respect and be oriented towards the requested outputs. Communication is a key word. Individual solutions for each project are therefore necessary, depending on the partners and the character of work.
- The stakeholders will be responsible for providing their practical knowledge and input on their needs. They should also make efforts to facilitate data not readily available. Stakeholders should respect the requirement for the results to be of European relevance. They are obliged to participate in the dissemination of results

and must commit to the necessary involvement throughout and particularly after finalisation of the analyses.

- The TPG/team of experts must accept that targeted analyses are “more applied” than applied research in the sense that they take their starting point from user demand. Therefore they may be comparatively far away from traditional research. A combination of a good understanding of the subject matter, willingness to listen to users and ability to address users’ needs in a practical language is necessary. The language issue concerns both, the ability to communicate in an easily understandable manner as well as the use of the languages most appropriate for the end-users.
- Cooperation between the TPG/team of experts and stakeholders is a key factor for the use of the results of Priority 2 projects. The results must be scientifically solid and the stakeholders must feel confidence in the accuracy of project results. Conclusions must be expressed in a non-technical language, and delivered in time to be fed into policy development processes.

3.5.5 Deliveries and outputs expected

The targeted analyses financed under Priority 2 will have to approach the issues raised in the project specification/terms of reference developed for each project, by providing solid and targeted analysis of relevant territorial structures, trends, perspectives and impacts in relation to the socio-economic reality.

The concrete deliveries and outputs of each project will be specified in the respective project specifications/terms of reference. The deliveries will concentrate on (1) the output from the targeted analysis to be provided by the TPG/team of experts and (2) supporting events (e.g. workshops) during project implementation that can contribute to the usefulness of the analysis for the stakeholders.

The analytical delivery shall reflect current scientific knowledge and methodological standards and should be presented in such a way as to ensure the practical use. The TPG/team of experts will be requested to strictly follow the given timetable for the implementation of the project defined together with the stakeholders involved in order to coordinate towards and fit into the latter’s relevant agenda.

The project specifications/terms of reference for each project elaborated together with stakeholders will define the detailed project implementation, inputs from stakeholders to the project, the exact outputs and deliveries and their optimal timing. The size and length of the individual project will influence the outputs and deliveries.

However, as a general indication, the following outputs will normally be the minimum requirements for team of experts conducting a targeted analysis:

- An **Inception report**, consisting of max. 20 pages (plus annexes if relevant), based on the approach outlined in the project proposal/tender, and to be submitted normally twelve weeks after the Kick-off Meeting will have taken place. The inception report consists of two parts. In its content part it should provide a more detailed overview of the analytical approach to be applied, the methodology and hypothesis for further investigation, as well as the main literature, data sources, etc. The inception report should throughout the lifetime of the project serve as a basis for assessment of project development. Furthermore, in its financial part - with the completion of the template

provided by the Programme - the Inception report should as well detail the break down of the project's budget on the individual partners per budget line.

- **Interim report(s)** depending on the project duration, consisting of max. 50 pages (plus annexes if relevant), and containing an executive summary, outline of methodology, presentation of main results achieved so far, and description of further proceeding.
- **Draft final report**, consisting of max. 50 pages (plus an executive summary of max. 10 pages) of the main results, covering the analytical delivery, its (prospects of) operational use and the elaboration process conducted together with stakeholders.
- **Final report**, as a revised and improved version of the draft final report on the basis of comments received from the stakeholders involved, the MC and the CU. The Final report is considered the main analytical output of the project. However, stakeholders' use in practice of the knowledge provided is a main objective for the targeted analysis as well.

Deadlines for the submission of the above mentioned reports will be specified in the project specifications/terms of reference and in the subsidy/service contract and will coincide with the deadlines for the submission of progress reports/invoices whose approval will allow for the release of the reimbursement of the incurred costs.

Related to the targeted analytical delivery the TPG/team of experts will have (as far as relevant) to comply with the following series of compulsory deliveries:

- Delivery of **data and maps** produced within the framework of the targeted analysis for their inclusion in the ESPON scientific platform (for maps this should be in a vector format stored in .eps, .pdf or .ai files, whereas for databases this can be in any MS Access compatible format). Maps should be created in two separate layers so that they lend themselves better to further use. The first layer should consist of the map itself i.e. geographical limits, colours, symbols used in the map, etc. The second layer refers to the legend and captions of a map that could be translated by Member States to their respective language to ensure a better dissemination to regional and/or local stakeholders. The maps have to be delivered both in a resolution format which is suitable for presentations, web services, etc., and in a high-resolution format (minimum 300 dpi) which can be easily used for printing. Considering the development of new data and maps and/or the use of existing data, all experts working on projects under Priority 2 should ensure a close cooperation with the experts being in charge of the development of the ESPON 2013 Database.
- Delivery of **models developed** within the framework of the targeted analysis to be included in the ESPON tool box and be made accessible to others.
- **Dissemination of the analytical project results** in the framework of international conferences and seminars, e.g. transnational activities of the ECP Network, events organised by the CU. Dissemination activities must be foreseen in the project proposal and be included in a specific work package number 3 "Dissemination". However, project teams should consider that their core activity is implementing a targeted analysis. The allocation of resources across all work packages shall consequently reflect this aspect. In addition, to ensure the consistency of a project's dissemination activities with respective activities organised at Programme level, the

project team should take into consideration the objectives and actions of Priority 4 of the ESPON 2013 Programme “Capitalisation, ownership and participation: Capacity building, dialogue and networking”, make use of these facilities and opt for complementarity.

- **Presentations** of the status-quo of their project **at ESPON seminars** which will be organised twice per year⁶.

Reports have to be delivered both as a printed version via mail directed to the postal address of the ESPON CU as well as digitally by e-mail (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 report will be specified in the project 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.

3.5.6 Application procedure

All projects of targeted analysis financed under this priority will be subject to calls for proposal, with the exception of projects which budget is estimated not to exceed €75.000. The latter will be commissioned as service contracts according to EU and Luxembourgish public procurement legislation. The information provided below and in the following chapters 3.5.7 - 3.5.9 is relevant only for calls for proposals. General information on the tendering procedure process will be provided in chapter 3.5.10.

As soon as the launch of a particular call for proposal will have been decided by the MC, a pre-announcement of the call will be issued, providing information on the themes that will be included in the call. The pre-announcement will be widely published on the ESPON website, in the ESPON newsletter as well as in 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 about the planned call for the information to be nationally disseminated to potential Lead and Project Partners. The pre-announcement will normally be issued eight weeks prior to the publication of the call for proposal.

The pre-announcement procedure is supposed to facilitate the submission of a proposal at a later stage, by giving interested beneficiaries a chance to prepare on beforehand. Normally, TPGs/teams of experts, composed by competent eligible beneficiaries of the programme/ researchers/experts, are foreseen to provide the targeted analysis. The pre-announcement of the targeted analysis gives an opportunity to incorporate ideas of all partners equally, thus ensuring a high level of commitment to the project. As an

⁶ If this seems reasonable, depending on the period of time the project will have been underway by the time of the first ESPON seminar within the project's period of implementation (at least 5-6 months). Depending on the nature of the ESPON seminar – internal seminar or one open to all those interested in the programme and its achievements – the presentations will have to address different aspects of the project. (Whereas in an internal seminar individual steps of project development and advancement will be interesting for the audience, in the framework of an external seminar the eventual findings should be in the focus of the presentation.)

additional advantage partners can test during this preparatory phase how the cooperation works before eventually starting implementing actual project activities.

Upon the publication of the call for proposal – via the same channels as the pre-announcement - the respective project specifications/terms of reference will be made available on the website of the ESPON CU (www.espon.eu), outlining the thematic scope of the project, its general objectives, and primary research issues envisaged as well as expected results and a timetable for deliveries.

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

3.5.7 Selection procedure

The selection procedure starts immediately after the deadline set for submitting project proposals. It consists of two distinct assessment parts, an eligibility check and an evaluation. 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 according to the ranking resulting from the content related evaluation. The MC takes the final decision on project approval.

Eligibility criteria

Project proposals 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 project proposal to be evaluated has to fulfil the following criteria:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
1. Application has been submitted in due time in original and electronic version ⁷ .
2. Application is complete and includes the requested administrative forms and supporting documents requested as well as the anonymous proposal (the list of supporting documents required will be provided in the specific call) properly filled in according to the detailed instructions provided in Part A and Part B of the Application Form.

⁷ 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.

3. The content of the proposal relates to the topic(s) set out in the call.
4. The partnership involves at least the minimum number of participants given in the specific call.
5. All partners are eligible (including that solvency of private partners involved is confirmed by the respective Member/Partner States)
6. The budget limits have been respected.

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 Partner will be informed in written by fax and offered a maximum of **seven 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** 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).

After completion of the eligibility check and following the decision of the MC on the final eligibility outcome, the evaluation takes place. The Evaluation Committee will be

made up of two MC members or experts nominated by the MC, a representative of the European Commission and a representative of the Stakeholder Consortium. MC members should be prepared to participate in an Evaluation Committee on a rotating basis.

The Lead Applicants of these ineligible applications will receive a notification letter specifying the non-fulfilled eligibility criteria. Only those proposals that will have fulfilled the eligibility criteria will be subject to the subsequent quantitative evaluation.

Evaluation criteria

In parallel with the check based on the eligibility criteria, the evaluation of all project proposals will take place. The Evaluation Committee will be made up of MC members or experts nominated by the MC and representative(s) of the European Commission as well as a representative of the respective stakeholder consortium, normally the Lead Stakeholder. MC members should be prepared to participate in an Evaluation Committee on a rotating basis.

The check of compliance with the evaluation criteria is based on a scoring system and result in a ranking list of all project 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 project, i.e. its importance 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, referring to the anonymous scientific part of the proposal;
- Management related criteria, and
- Partnership related criteria.

<u>Content Related Criteria</u>
1. Sound concept and quality of the objectives and deliveries (e.g. can the objectives be realistically achieved through the proposed approach and methodology?).
2. Position/innovation in relation to the state-of-the-art in scientific excellence (e.g. does the approach and the results aimed at bring a clear added value compared to other current or past initiatives?).
3. Contribution to advancement of knowledge (e.g. is the project of complementary character to existing research and will not duplicate existing work?).
4. Quality and effectiveness of scientific methodology and associated work packages (e.g. are components of the analysis logically interlinked?).
5. Contribution to the expected results and impacts of the programme (e.g. how many themes, topics and experiments will be covered by the actions realised? How many types of specific territories are covered by the actions realised? To which degree will the outcomes of the actions be cited in publications at European, national and

regional level?).
6. Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination of project results (e.g. are they conceived in such a way that the adequate target group can be reached and transfer of results achieved?).

<u>Management Related Criteria</u>
1. Appropriateness and clarity of the management structure and the plan for project implementation (e.g. is the Lead Partner experienced in project management? Are procedures for decision-making and monitoring transparent? Is the timing of work packages 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 project partners aware of them?).
3. Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources (budget and staff) among the different work packages and project partners (e.g. is the break down of budget to partners adequate?).

<u>Partnership Related Criteria</u>
1. Quality and relevance of the competences/expertise present and of the transnational project group as a whole (e.g. are the relevant partners involved, contributing the required knowledge and experience and are their specific fields of expertise taken account of?).
2. Quality and experience of the individual partners (e.g. does the accumulated academic and professional background of the team enable to deal with the thematic and methodological challenges of the targeted analysis? Do the partners provide sufficient experience for ensuring smooth partnership with stakeholders?).

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 Committee will convene after the closure of the call. The committee will include an uneven number of evaluators, normally 5 and at least 3. In case of force majeure, like illness and/or transport delays/cancellation, a different number of evaluators can be accepted.

Evaluators will assess and mark the proposal exactly as it is described and presented. The evaluation will follow two steps of assessment and scoring: (1) the anonymous content related part and (2) the management and partnership related part. Evaluators will not make assumptions or interpretations about the project 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 ineligible. Equally, evaluation forms carrying handwritten corrections of scoring are declared inadmissible if they are not accompanied by handwritten initials. 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 into a consensus discussion, supposed to represent common views and comments of the evaluators. The consensus discussion, which also includes a ranking of proposals, is moderated by the CU who also establishes a consensus report containing as well the recommendation for improvements suggested by the Evaluation Committee. Consensus reports with hand-written corrections of scoring will be declared ineligible.

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 TPG/team of experts' managerial capabilities for the correct project and programme 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 from 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 proposal on the targeted analysis itself, as well as the description and concept of the project and the structure of the application, remain the property of the project 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 (only one proposal will be approved for each of the themes).

This decision will be notified to all Lead Applicants soon after the MC decision. All the Lead Applicants of the approved projects will receive a letter from the MA (CU) 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. In this case, the process of contracting, managed by the CU, will include a necessary revising/amending of the proposal for the targeted analysis. The result of this procedure will be the basis for concluding a Subsidy Contract.

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

3.5.8 Contract and duration

The proposals that are selected for funding and that fulfil the conditions set by the MC will receive a Subsidy Contract, concluded between the MA and the respective Lead Partner of the project. The Subsidy Contract shall determine the rights and responsibilities of the Lead Partner and the MA, the scope of activities to be carried out, terms of funding, requirements for reporting and financial controls, etc. A model of the Subsidy Contract is available on the Programme website (www.espon.eu).

The size and duration of projects can vary depending on the user demand for targeted analysis and the timing of the use of results envisaged.

3.5.9 Budgetary details

TPG/team of experts conducting a targeted analysis under Priority 2 will be granted a subsidy covering 100% of the real eligible costs incurred for carrying out the project 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 project specifications included in the call.

The ESPON 2013 Programme will be able to financially support the analytical part of the collaboration, but not the coordination of the actors themselves.

3.5.10 Procedures related to projects up to €75.000

Projects with a budget up to €75.000 can be contracted directly by the ESPON MA as a MA led project. In practice this means the MA will launch of a call for tender based on a decision of the MC on the content of the service to be provided. 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.⁸

⁸ Luxembourgish law of 30 June 2003, Règlement Grand Ducal (RGD) of 7 July 2003