

ESPON - INTERSTRAT ESPON in Integrated Territorial Strategies

Transnational Networking Activities 2013/X/X

Final Report Version 31 May 2012



This report presents the final results of Transnational Networking Activities conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU27, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

Information on the ESPON Programme and projects can be found on www.espon.eu

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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List of authors

Professor Cliff Hague,	Freelance Consultant, ESPON Contact Point, UK
Julius Ursu,	The Royal Town Planning Institute, ESPON Contact Point, UK
Jenny Crawford,	Formerly at The Royal Town Planning Institute, ESPON Contact Point, UK
Eleanor Rowe,	The Royal Town Planning Institute, ESPON Contact Point, UK
Katarzyna Wojnar,	Centre for European Regional and Local Studies – EUROREG, Warsaw University, Poland
Valerie Biot,	Universite Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Marc Nielsen,	Universite Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Tim Cassiers,	Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Marius Mladenov,	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria
Dr Stella Kyvelou,	Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences of Athens, Greece
Dr Cormac Walsh,	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Dr Cian O’Callaghan,	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Dr Gavin Daly,	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Professor Maria Prezioso,	University of Rome ‘Tor Vergata’, Italy
Dr Angela D’Orazio,	University of Rome ‘Tor Vergata’, Italy
Professor Octavian Groza,	‘Al.I.Cuza’ University, Iasi, Romania
Dr Oana Stoleriu,	‘Al.I.Cuza’ University, Iasi, Romania
Blanka Bartol,	Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, Republic of Slovenia

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A. Executive summary

The INTERSTRAT project's overall aim is “to encourage and facilitate the use of ESPON 2013 Programme findings in the creation and monitoring of Integrated Territorial Development Strategies (ITDS) and to support transnational learning about the actual and potential contribution of ESPON to integrated policy-making.” We defined integrated territorial development as ‘the process of shaping economic, social and environmental change through spatially sensitive policies and programmes’.

INTERSTRAT is a Priority 4 project within ESPON 2013 Programme, so is concerned with dissemination of ESPON findings rather than with research. There are nine partners: the ECPs from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia (Project Partners) and the UK (Lead Partner).

The project partners adopted a way of working in which they came together in a series of transnational project workshops to agree the broad parameters within which each stage of the work would be planned and executed, but then the individual partners each customised the general approach to their unique national needs. In this way there was strong transnational learning at the heart of the project, which was enriched by the diversity of the ECPs and their different territorial situations.

A project website (www.espon-interstrat.eu) and shared portal was developed to an agreed format. It contains links to the main ESPON website and to most of the partners' national websites, along with information about the INTERSTRAT project. It includes a set of Country Reports – one for each partner country – which explain the current situation of integrated territorial development strategies in that country. It also has a Library of ITDS documents from the partner countries and some key EU documents on territorial development and cohesion. There are also details of the events that INTERSTRAT has run, with programmes, presentations of speakers and reports.

The partners worked together to develop a common approach to identifying key national stakeholders. Each partner then applied that approach to the specific situation in its own country. Databases of contacts were built up accordingly by each ECP. These were then used to target ESPON messages and events at the stakeholders. While the specifics varied from country to country, in general national spatial planning ministries and those involved in ITDS at regional scale were identified as ESPON's key practitioner stakeholders.

The project has run sixteen transnational events targeted at practitioners involved in ITDS work, plus two further similar national events in Slovenia.

These sixteen events were held between March 2011 and March 2012. They included at least one in each of the nine countries. They ranged from intensively interactive small group events to larger and more conventional meetings with presentations, roundtables, and parallel workshops. Findings from more than thirty ESPON projects were presented at these events. Scientists from ESPON research teams took part, though some researchers were reluctant to do so.

The partners also agreed on and implemented a common approach to the preparation of “demonstration materials”. These printed and electronic documents are intended to highlight the relevance of ESPON to ITDS practitioners. One set of materials was produced for each country, allowing for communication in the national language, a necessary step to reach some practitioners.

In October 2011, telephone interviews were undertaken with partners by an independent expert to survey how successful the project had been in meeting its objectives. The conclusion of the expert was that the project has achieved its objectives. Specifically:

Objective 1: To develop and apply a transnational approach to active knowledge transfer between ESPON scientists and policy makers and practitioners from the participating countries within ESPON. This was achieved through the transnational events, and also the use of demonstration materials.

Objective 2: To raise awareness and promote the use of ESPON findings at all levels of territorial policy. The independent expert concluded that “Interest in both ESPON and ITDS was generally increased” as a result of INTERSTRAT. However, within the confines of a Priority 4 project it is not possible to assess if success in promoting use of ESPON was then translated into actual use of ESPON in making ITDS, and any use of ESPON may be time-lagged.

Objective 3: To explore the usefulness of ESPON findings in the development of ITDS. The partners found that receptiveness to ESPON was shaped by the degree of orientation to, and political support for, ITDS within a country.

Objective 4: To give feedback on the outputs from Priority 1 research and to identify further themes for future work. There was generally little feedback on Priority 1 themes from the events. Discussion of ESPON was often in more general terms rather than focusing on a single Priority 1 project in some depth. However, there was a view that the results of Priority 1 projects could be better presented. They need clearer and briefer conclusions. A recurrent message was that practitioners say they do not have time to read all of a report, let alone all the reports.

Objective 5: To stimulate interest from practitioners and stakeholders for targeted analytical deliveries under Priority 2 of the ESPON 2013 programme. All ECPs felt that the national events stimulated interest. However, the main period of INTERSTRAT engagement with practitioners began in April 2011, which was really too late for them to put in expressions of interest for Priority 2 projects (the cut-off date was 22 March 2011).

Objective 6: - To feedback to the ESPON Programme on the priorities and questions identified by the users of ESPON findings. The priorities of the stakeholders with whom INTERSTRAT engaged across the nine countries were overwhelmingly at national, regional and local scale rather than at the pan-European scale. They also wanted ESPON to be less academic, and to work more closely with URBACT and INTERREG.

Objective 7: To support transnational interest in the preparation of ITDS, that can contribute to competitiveness and cohesion through development of Europe's regions. The project's website includes in its library not only examples of ITDS from different countries within the project, but also some scientific articles and guidance about territorial development approaches. However, the collection is not comprehensive and there is no commentary arising from it.

Objective 8: To facilitate transnational exchange of experience, concepts and data about the development, implementation and monitoring of integrated territorial strategies in the context of the ESPON programme. Overall, the project has achieved a lot in transnational exchange of experience on the development and implementation of ITDS, though perhaps not so much on the monitoring aspects. There has been some discussion of concepts in the workshops and demonstration materials. Several partners would have liked to have seen more exchange of data particularly on the challenges and approaches to ITDS used in other countries.

Objective 9: To develop approaches to dissemination and transnational learning that are transparent, innovative and transferable. A guide to "Techniques for Listening to Stakeholders" was prepared and discussed. The guide included advice on how to run a focus group, stage a debate, use scenarios, organise and run an "ESPON Quiz", do silent brainstorming and challenge and sort assumptions. The aim was to stimulate ideas for using interactive teaching and learning in the planned events. Each partner themselves then decided what to use, taking account of their resources and national learning cultures.

Objective 10: To develop the ECPs and their networking by sharing knowledge and skills for delivery of the ECP role. Arguably, this was the project's greatest success. In the survey, all interviewees agreed that it had

been well achieved by all partners. However, they also felt that there is a need for capacity building and networking to continue beyond the life of the INTERSTRAT project, given the crucial role the ECPs play in the dissemination of ESPON.

The key findings from the project are:

- 1: The ITDS approach is uneven between the countries and underdeveloped or fragile in several partner countries.**
- 2: There is value in preparing a National Engagement Strategy.**
- 3: Focused and intensive interventions such as the INTERSTRAT events can have impact and generate innovation.**
- 4: ESPON needs to better address the needs of national and sub-national stakeholders to deliver its full benefits.**
- 5: An enhanced role for ECPs with better resourcing for their work offers the best route for capitalisation of ESPON in the post-2013 programme.**

The project demonstrates the benefits that can be gained by transnational networking and learning amongst ECPs.

B. Report

1. ESPON-INTERSTRAT's Aim, Objectives and Strategy

The overall aim of the project was set out in the application as:

To encourage and facilitate the use of ESPON findings in the creation and monitoring of integrated territorial development strategies and to support transnational learning about the actual and potential contribution of ESPON to integrated policy-making'.

The strategic objectives of the project were:

- To develop and apply a transnational approach to active knowledge transfer between ESPON scientists and policy makers and practitioners from the participating countries within ESPON;
- To raise awareness and promote the use of ESPON findings at all levels of territorial policy;
- To explore the usefulness of ESPON findings in the development of Integrated Territorial Development Strategies (ITDS);
- To give feedback on the outputs from Priority 1 research and to identify further themes for future work;
- To stimulate interest from practitioners and stakeholders for targeted analytical deliveries under Priority 2 of the ESPON 2013 Programme;
- To feedback to the ESPON Programme on the priorities and questions identified by users of ESPON findings;
- To support transnational interest in the preparation of integrated territorial development strategies, that can contribute to

competitiveness and cohesion through development of Europe's regions;

- To facilitate transnational exchange of experience, concepts and data about the development, implementation and monitoring of integrated territorial strategies in the context of the ESPON Programme;
- To develop approaches to dissemination and transnational learning that are transparent, innovative and transferable;
- To develop the ECPs and their networking by sharing knowledge and skills for delivery of the ECP role.

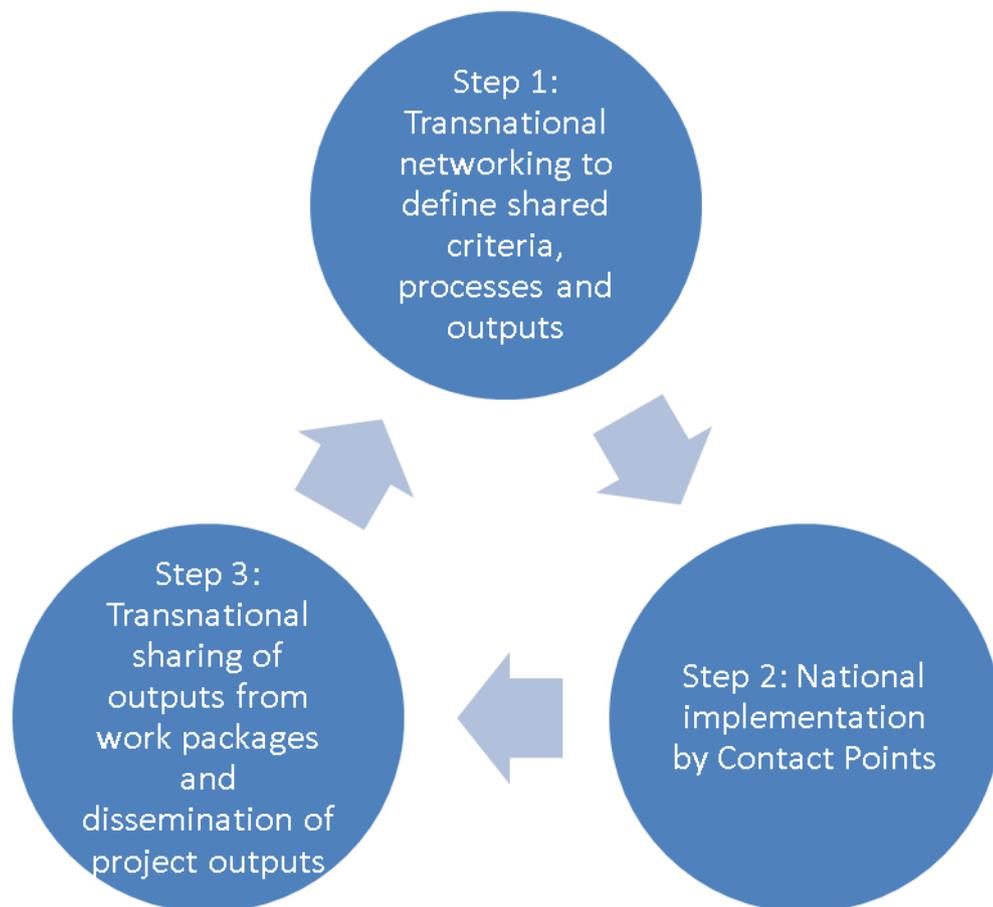
The application stated that “The project will achieve its objectives by building on synergies, between current experience of integrated territorial strategies and ESPON outputs and research, to maximise transnational learning. This will be achieved by exploring, comparing, recording and sharing experience on how ESPON data, analysis, indicators and findings can assist the preparation, implementation and monitoring of territorial development policies and sharing the approaches and outcomes generated through transnational networking.”

The idea of Integrated Territorial Development Strategies (ITDS) was central to the project. The application explained: “The ESPON-INTERSTRAT proposal is based on the project partners’ shared recognition that **integrated territorial development strategies (ITDS)**, whether at transnational, cross-border, national, regional or sub-regional levels, are the most obvious ‘users’ of ESPON data and that practitioners and other stakeholders responsible for the development and agreement of these strategies should be targeted by the ECP Network to promote both use of, and feedback to, the ESPON research programme.”

2. How the project worked

A transnational approach was centrally embedded throughout all aspects of ESPON-INTERSTRAT. While different partners took the lead on different Work Packages (and sub-WPs) every action was shaped by transnational discussion and sharing. The overall approach was shown in a diagram in the application and this is the approach the project partners followed; please see Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: The overall project strategy



The application anticipated four main areas of activity, each of which was a sub-WP of WP2. These were:

- 2a) A shared web portal system for the TNA;
- 2b) Stakeholder mapping and design of engagement strategies;

- 2c) Detailed design and delivery of demonstration materials;
- 2d) Co-ordination and delivery of interactive events;

In addition, WP 1 was about the co-ordination and management of the project. This has been a successful feature of the project. The use of regular project bulletins to keep all partners informed on progress has been a key part of this WP. In addition, partners have completed **blunder-checking** of six draft final reports (ARTS, CLIMATE, DEMIFER, EDORA, FOCI and RERISK). The Lead Partner coordinated two rounds of telephone interviews with all partners: in the first round, partners were asked their views on how to reach out more effectively to stakeholders and improve the sharing of transnational learning; in the second round, partners were invited to highlight their experiences and the learning outcomes from participating in the project and how these outcomes may be taken forward into the next ESPON programme. Two reports were produced and circulated to partners. Achievements in WP1 are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1: Achievements in WP1

- So far, three project progress reports submitted on time for which payment has been received. The fourth and fifth (final) project progress reports are due by 30 June 2012 and 31 October 2012 respectively;
- All partners have attended the Financial Managers' training;
- Six project meetings were held which were well attended;
- Lead Partner produced and circulated 28 project bulletins to partners.

Photo 1: Transnational project workshop in Brussels, February 2011: partners working together on design of demonstration materials



Photo 2: Transnational workshop in Brussels, February 2011



3. The shared web portal

The Polish ECP led the development of the shared web portal. However, ideas for the portal were presented to all the partners at the second and third transnational workshops. Thus all partners were able to input their ideas in relation to the structure, content, and design of the website, using the approach set out in Diagram 1. The site is www.espon-interstrat.eu.

The partners decided that the title “ESPON-INTERSTRAT” by itself would not communicate very clear messages about the focus of the project to “outsiders” visiting the website. Therefore a brainstorming session was undertaken in the first transnational workshop (June 2010, Alcala de Henares) to create a short but clear set of words that could be prominent on the site and give an instant message of what all the partners felt was the essence of what the project was about. Table A in the Annex provides the full list of ideas generated by the brainstorming exercise that was done transnationally in the workshop. The final choice was “sharing experience – listening to practice – informing policy”.

Another decision reached through transnational discussion was to have a map on the home page of the website. The map shows the member states of the project partners. In this way we sought not only to communicate the facts about where the partners are from, but also to project two other ideas. These were that ESPON-INTERSTRAT is a European project about places, and that the partners come from many different parts of Europe.

Equally important was the decision of the partnership to have an “ESPON EU Latest News” column on our home page, with hot-links to the www.espon.eu site. This sought to demonstrate that INTERSTRAT is part of ESPON. It also gave those visiting the INTERSTRAT website quick and easy access to the main ESPON site.

The project's website also includes a page describing the project, and provides a list of contact details of all the partners. Video clips have been included on the site to help explain the project.

An important part of the website deals with **Integrated Strategies**. This provides a short explanation of what the project means by "Integrated Strategies". It says that ITDS "bring together spatially sensitive policies and programme plans to support economic, social and environmental change. They focus on 'place' or 'territory', cross-sectoral development policies, integration of policy between scales and across borders, and processes of strategic assessment." It goes on to note that such strategies can be developed "at national, cross-border, regional, city and local levels". The page poses and answers important questions:

- What is a good ITDS? (The answer draws on and acknowledges the GRIDS INTERREG 3c project).
- How to develop a good ITDS? (This time the answer references ideas from the Polish Ministry of Regional Development).
- How to include a territorial dimension? (The answer is from the Handbook on Territorial Cohesion).
- What can sector policies do? (Many such sectors are listed and guidance provided from the Handbook for the National Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU).
- Is the territorial dimension already present in ITDS in EU member states? (The answer comes from DG Regio's Working Paper on The Territorial and Urban Dimension in National Strategic Reference Frameworks and Operational Programmes 2007-13).

Thus the web site seeks to provide practical, well informed and reputable guidance for those involved in work on ITDS or for policy makers in non-territorial sectors. The website also includes an electronic **Library of copies of ITDS** and related documents. Table 1 shows the number, origin and type of document held in this electronic library, and reveals that there are 101 documents, including publications from the EU and from the nine partner

countries. Although the coverage is by no means comprehensive, the Library was the most visited page on the INTERSTRAT web portal (with approximately 900 page views in the last year), and shows the potential to collect and make available a diverse range of ITDS and related scientific work. If ESPON post-2013 wants to build stronger links with practitioners it might consider embedding a similar portal in its main website.

Table 1: ITDS documents in INTERSTRAT electronic library

Origin	Practical handbook	Scientific article	Research report	Policy paper
EU	11	5	5	4
Belgium			1	4
Bulgaria				2
Greece	1		1	8
Ireland				6
Italy		6	7	4
Poland	3	1	4	9
Romania		1		4
Slovenia				2
UK	2		1	4
Other	3		1	

In addition the website, under the “Publications” section has nine short **Country Report** papers produced for the project. Each one of these describes the “Current context of integrated territorial development strategies planning in...” one of the nine INTERSTRAT member states. Here again the partners worked transnationally to agree an approach while respecting the need for each output to be specific to the particular national situation.

Now that the project is closed, these documents will become out of date, and of course they only cover nine of the thirty one ESPON members. However, the work in ESPON-INTERSTRAT has demonstrated that the ECP network

has the potential to develop and deliver reliable and comparative background information on this important topic. Such work could be scaled up in a post-2013 ESPON, and sustained in the meantime, perhaps through another Priority 4 project.

A further section of the project website contains information on **ESPON-INTERSTRAT events**. From this it is possible to see the programme of various workshops held within the project and in some cases to download presentations. There is also a calendar which highlights dates of ESPON-INTERSTRAT events: a click on the highlighted date takes you to a page giving details of the event.

Finally the website has a “**Links**” page on which hotlinks take users directly to details of ESPON projects, the other ESPON ECP TNAs, the current and three most recent presidency sites and Cliff Hague’s blog sites (which sometimes include blogs about ESPON and territorial cohesion).

Statistical data on the number of visits to the INTERSTRAT webportal was collected using Google Analytics from July 2011 to March 2012. The analysis showed that there were approximately 1,800 visits to the site, and around 5,800 page views. The most popular page on the webportal was the Library, which attracted approximately 900 page views over the period. The data shows that there were around 17,500 hits on the national webpages of ECP partners. While it is difficult to benchmark these figures, it seems clear that through its website the project achieved outreach and provided a means of disseminating ESPON results and supporting the work of the ECPs involved.

The graph below shows further data about web-site use. The peak of the hits in late September 2011 coincided with the peak of activity on INTERSTRAT workshops. It also shows that roughly 1 in 3 of the visits to the site were return visits, suggesting that interest in INTERSTRAT had been raised.

Diagram 2: Number of visits to the ESPON-INTERSTRAT website (1 July 2011-28 March 2012)

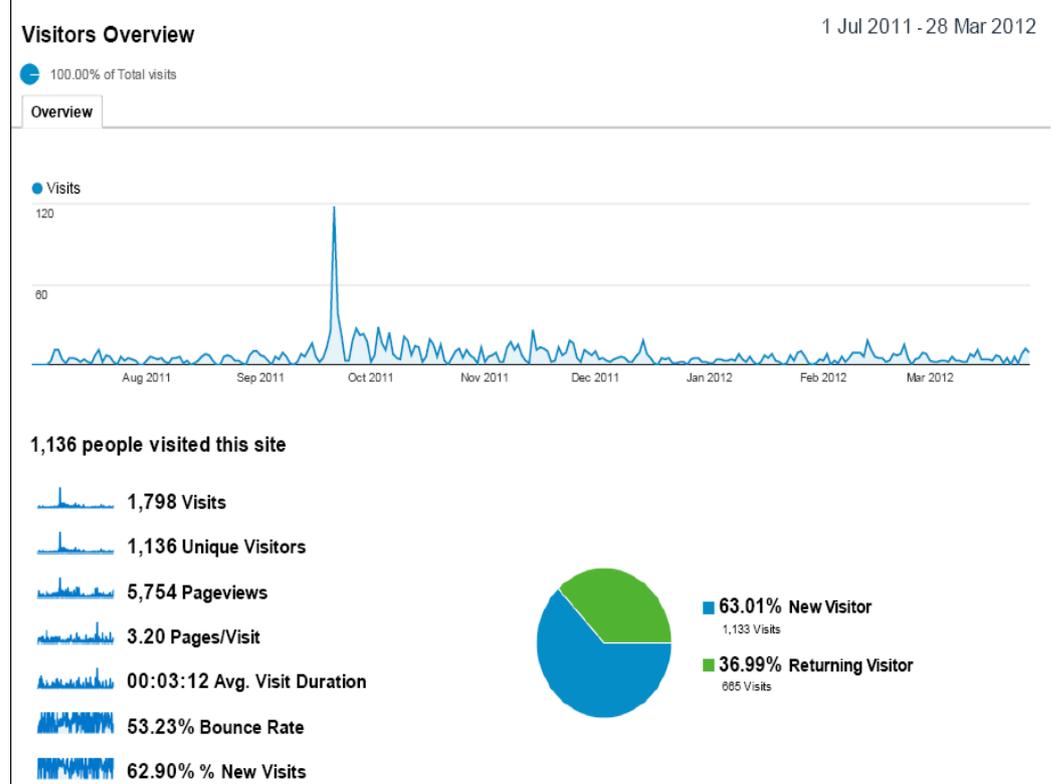
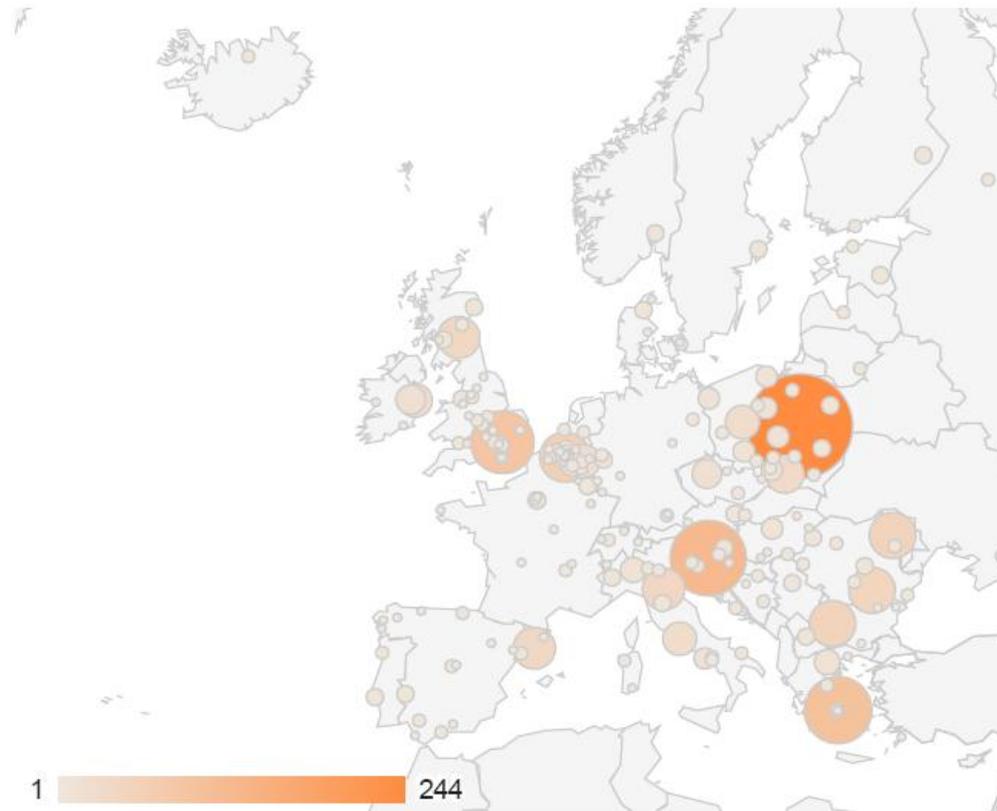


Diagram 3: Country of origin of visitors to the ESPON-INTERSTRAT



Box 2: Summary of achievements in WP2a

- Web portal was regularly updated with partners' national events, presentations.
- Links were established between the INTERSTRAT website and the ESPON website and ECPs' own websites.
- Short summary "country reports" were prepared explaining the systems and form for ITDS in each of the nine countries.
- An electronic Library of over 100 key territorial development documents from the EU and the 9 partner countries has been built.

4. Strategies for engagement with stakeholders in each country

WP 2b was concerned with **stakeholder mapping and design of engagement strategies**. The UK ECP led on this work, but again the transnational working model in Diagram 1 was fundamental to the action. At the project workshop in Alcalá, the UK ECP presented suggestions to other partners for a common methodology to identify stakeholders. This methodology is fully explained in Annex I to this DFR. There was substantial discussion in the workshop about how to use the methodology in the context of the very different national situations of the various partners. As a result of the discussions, some changes were made to the original template that the UK ECP had presented. All partners then agreed to use this common methodology. Diagram 4 shows the basic template agreed to guide the identification of key stakeholders. This was successfully used by each partner in developing their national Engagement Strategy.

Equally important was that at the first project workshop the partners spent time openly and honestly discussing what “engagement” meant. The discussions recognised different institutional situations and governance cultures amongst the nine countries. The different ECPs brought different experience and capacity to the project. Thus the project enabled a sharing of experience, and the passing on of expertise, while still respecting the differences amongst the partners.

This first intensive working session of the project, spread over an evening and a morning in Alcalá, was an important threshold in team building and creating mutual confidence. This was only achieved because of the open and inclusive approach to the workshop.

Diagram 4: Template developed and used to identify key stakeholders within each partner member state (stakeholders are indicative, and not necessarily those identified in any one state.)

<p>High power/influence and high immediate benefit from ESPON INTERSTRAT Spatial planning ministries</p> <p>Regional government departments and government agencies at regional scale which produce ITDS.</p> <p>Regional economic development agencies.</p>	<p>High power/influence but less immediate benefit from ESPON INTERSTRAT</p> <p>Sector ministries (e.g. transport, environment).</p> <p>Providers of Services of General Interest (e.g. public transport companies, health boards, retailers).</p> <p>Private sector developers and infrastructure providers.</p> <p>Local / municipal level governments.</p> <p>National and regional media.</p>
<p>Low/diffuse power/influence but high immediate benefit</p> <p>Consultants.</p> <p>Spatial planning research institutes.</p> <p>Professional institutes representing spatial planners.</p> <p>INTERREG projects.</p> <p>Individuals working on ITDS.</p>	<p>Low/diffuse power/influence and less immediate benefit</p> <p>Environmental NGOs</p> <p>Students on territorial development-related courses.</p> <p>Other individuals.</p>

Having established a common approach, each partner then produced and implemented its own “National Engagement Strategy”. Thus, all nine partners produced a National Engagement Strategy to a common format. Each of the nine strategies covered:

- Aims and objectives;
- The national context for preparation of ITDS
- A self-assessment of the capacity of the ECP
- Identification and targeting of stakeholders
- Database of contacts
- Approach to communications

- Listening to stakeholders
- Priority messages and mechanisms for engagement
- Framework for evaluation.

The nine Engagement Strategies are included in Annex II to this DFR.

At the first workshop, partners were also invited to discuss means of communicating with stakeholders. Table 2 summarises methods that were reviewed at the workshop and comments on them. While not all of these were used later in the dissemination of ESPON during the INTERSTRAT project, several were and the exercise itself helped partners to be clear about what type of approach would fit what needs.

Table 2: Possible communications methods

Method	Comments
Phone calls or face-to-face meetings.	Resource intensive but probably essential for engagement with High Influence / High Benefit stakeholders.
Flyers	Leaflets – one or two sides of paper – explaining what ESPON is and how it can be used in ITDS. Layout and graphic design matter. Should we have a common flyer or each do our own? Flyers may be different for different stakeholders. Use flyers for Low influence / High benefit groups in particular?
Newsletter	A short, news electronic publication – once a month or every two months – to keep those on your database informed and interested.
ESPON INTERSTRAT PowerPoint	A common PowerPoint with notes to explain the project and give national contact details. Could be in English or in separate languages. Could be used to target High Influence / High Benefit group, but also others (e.g. in conference presentations, or put on web sites).
Press packs	Press releases plus supporting notes, documents, contact details to brief journalists (technical media + regional media) about the project or events within ESPON- INTERSTRAT.
Success stories and highlights	We could produce summary reports on good examples of ITDS. These could be shared with everyone via the website, but particularly directed at the High Influence / High Benefit group (e.g. through a summary report or workshop).
Events such as seminars or	Events offer the opportunity to develop dialogue, relationships and networks which may or may not be

workshops	attractive to target audiences. They are both time and resource intensive. However they are also information-rich and flexible.
Presentations in other events	Chance to present ESPON-INTERSTRAT at national or regional conferences, usually through partnership or “network hub” contacts. Is the audience likely to be one that will have interest in and benefit from ESPON-INTERSTRAT?
Country Report	Summary of key ESPON findings and data for your country. Significant resource requirement to prepare and produce, but scope to achieve visibility through media and to reach all four categories of stakeholders.

The partners felt that the preparation of National Engagement Strategies in this way was useful. e.g. one ECP commented on how the exercise had helped build links to practitioners: “The engagement strategies template has proved very useful – particularly in terms of developing a network and database of key stakeholders. Our focus in the past has been on promoting ESPON among researchers.” Another said “Our National Engagement Strategy has helped to identify where ESPON is most relevant – at what level and for whom.” Box 3 zooms in to show in more detail how one partner was able to use a range of communication methods to deliver its National Engagement Strategy.

Box 3: Communication and engagement in Greece

<p>ESPON-INTERSTRAT has been mentioned in various publications in Greece, including press releases and in TV interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Commissioners and members of Regional Councils (e.g. Spyros Spyridon, Member of the Regional Council of Attica) have published many press releases on the first ESPON-INTERSTRAT Workshop (concerning the content and the reason of their participation in both INTERSTRAT meetings). • The Greek ECP produced a video-spot from the 2nd INTERSTRAT meeting and sent to INTERSTRAT stakeholders and posted on Facebook, Twitter etc. • Stella Kyvelou has mentioned ESPON INTERSTRAT during a TV discussion organised at the Parliament TV Channel with deputies from all Greek parties and the mayor of Athens about strategic spatial planning concerning the Athens historical centre. • ESPON-INTERSTRAT and its usefulness for regional stakeholders has been mentioned during a TV interview/presentation during the 2nd INTERSTRAT meeting (persons interviewed: Petros Tatoulis, Regional Commissioner of Peloponnisos, Spyros Spyridon, Region of Attica,

George Dimaras, Region of Attica, Stella Kyvelou, INTERSTRAT Coordinator in Greece. The subject was mainly ITDS in Greek regions and regional stakeholders.

Similarly, the UK ECP published seven articles highlighting ESPON results and one article informing about the latest ESPON call for proposals. It is impossible to tell how many people were reached by the combined dissemination efforts of the INTERSTRAT partners, but it is clearly a considerable number.

One important impact of the engagement strategies was that they stimulated the development of databases containing details of key stakeholders. Statistical data received from all nine partners shows that by the time of the Final Report, these partners' stakeholder databases reached approximately 4,400 contacts combined. Many of these are persons who would not have known of ESPON but for the project, and who are not listed on any database held by the CU. This demonstrates the crucial intermediary role that ECPs can play in outreach and delivery of ESPON direct to stakeholders in their own country.

Diagrams 5 and 6 show the breakdown of the database contacts, using the categories developed by the INTERSTRAT partners that are set out in Diagram 4 above. Importantly it shows that overall 20% of the contacts are those seen to have significant influence and potential direct benefit from ESPON – that is the key practice agencies involved in territorial development. Furthermore, 40% of contacts, while not having direct policy-making power, are categorized as able to directly benefit from ESPON findings. Identification, analysis and monitoring of stakeholders in this way seems to us to be fundamentally important to the work of ECPs, and a vital stepping stone towards effective delivery and capitalisation of ESPON results. The increased numbers of contacts on the database, and the attention to practitioners in general and the categories of stakeholders, are important added value achieved by this TNA that would not have happened without the project.

Diagram 5: Profile of stakeholders according to partners' databases

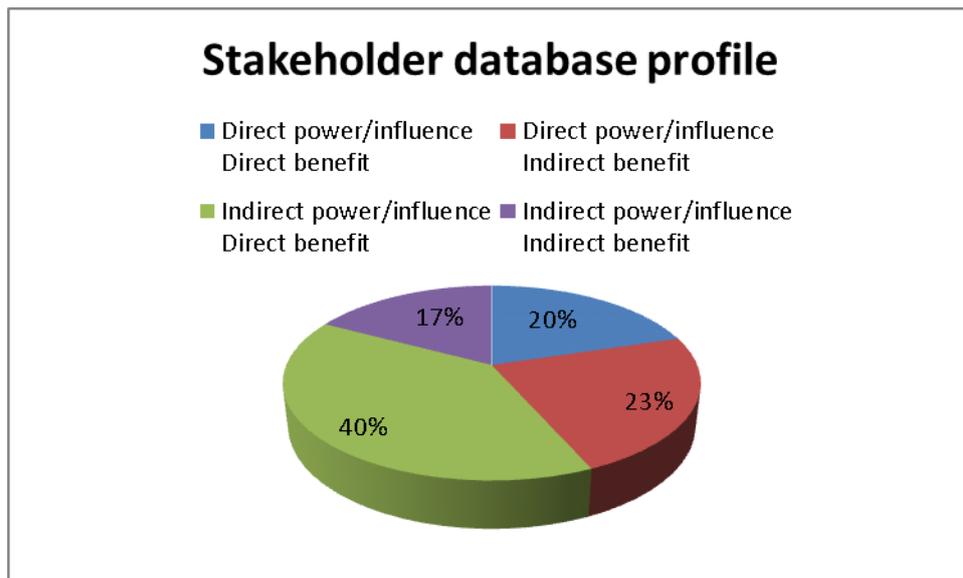
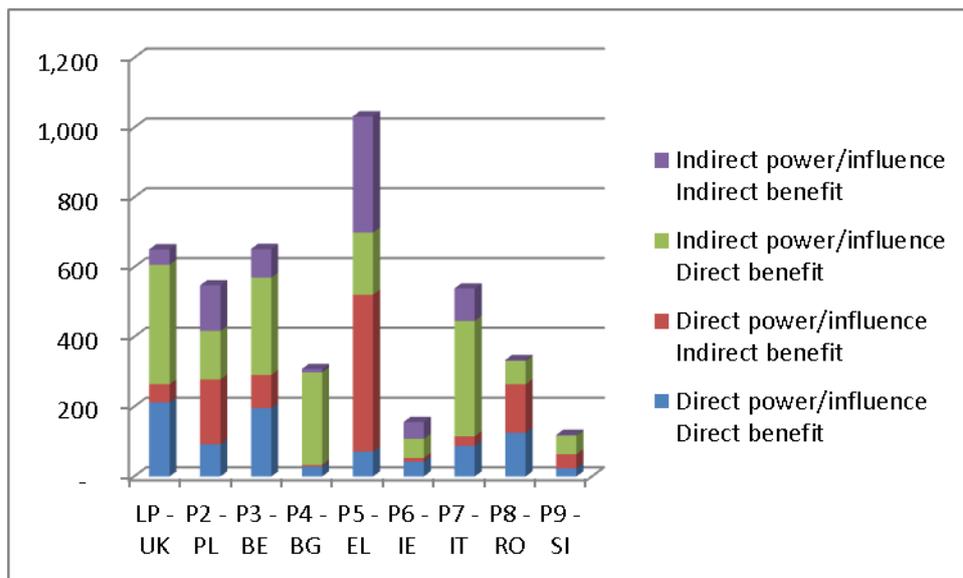


Diagram 6: Profile of stakeholders according to partners' databases broken down per partner country



Box 4: Summary of achievements in WP2b

- All partners completed their engagement strategies by February 2011. However, partners continued to update their engagement strategies to reflect changes in the national planning policy context and in the event schedule.
- Partners continued to build their contact databases thus enabling them to target specific stakeholders.
- The work of the project demonstrated the value of formal identification of stakeholders using categories based on influence and potential practical use of ESPON results.
- Between them partners used, and gained experience of, a range of communication methods.

5. Demonstration Materials

WP 2c was the **design and delivery of demonstration materials**. The work was led by the Irish ECP with support from the UK ECP and the transnational approach of INTERSTRAT was followed once again. A common template was developed and agreed through very interactive workshops in Brussels in November 2010 and February 2011. This meant that we had a common design consistent with the graphic style of our website. Within that we had a broadly common lay-out for the materials. However, the detailed content was specific for each of the partners and in national languages so as to make the text more accessible to practitioners and policy makers.

At the November 2010 workshop in Brussels partners were able to draw on lessons learned from national implementation of their engagement strategies and to bring these insights into discussion about how to prepare the demonstration materials. For example, one point made was: “It is important to use the language of practitioners and policy makers – e.g. they may not understand ‘ITDS’, but do talk of ‘spatial strategies’” (UK ECP).

The main **purpose of the demonstration materials** was to inform stakeholders of the wealth of research on territorial development challenges and opportunities available from ESPON, and how these challenges and opportunities can be tackled and capitalised on by policy makers. The materials were designed in such a way that allows them to be adapted to specific national contexts and be translated into the national language of the partner involved.

Having agreed upon a general template for the Demonstration Materials, several points of **design** were discussed by project partners over the following months. These included the creation of a common colour scheme, how to identify the Demonstration Materials with both INTERSTRAT and ESPON more broadly, and how best to position the Demonstration Materials for individual partner countries while retaining broad unity of design. Thus,

project partners opted for a simple design incorporating ESPON-INTERSTRAT logos for the front and back pages, while leaving the middle pages open for partners to use and interpret in different ways.

Figure 1: ESPON-INTERSTRAT Demonstration Materials Template



In order to appeal to ESPON stakeholders on the national and regional level, the demonstration materials needed to form a bridge between the ESPON European level and the work of practitioners on the ground. Finding the balance between these levels of analysis was viewed by INTERSTRAT partners as one of the key challenges. However, while there was a considerable amount of work involved in this process of ‘translation’, most partners found the results to be highly beneficial in stimulating the interest of stakeholders.

Partners used a range of formats and examples for these purposes (see Table 3). In general, however, most partners chose to follow a format that: a) presented a short introduction to the ESPON programme and b) applied ESPON evidence and methodologies to national and regional contexts, in

order to demonstrate how drawing upon this evidence base can both situate and anticipate their individual member state's position within current and emerging territorial trends.

Table 3: INTERSTRAT Partners approach to demonstration materials

Partner	Format of demonstration materials	Examples Used	Number of pages
Belgium	<p>1-Give general information about the ESPON programme.</p> <p>2-Give examples of how ESPON can bring interesting information from EU to national level.</p>	<p>We used three storylines that were formulated as questions.</p> <p><i>1-Are there territories potentially vulnerable? (Using the ReRisk typology)</i></p> <p><i>2-Which demographic futures for territories? (Using the DEMIFER typology)</i></p> <p><i>3-Which futures for the cities? (Using the FOCI mat on GDP)</i></p>	6
Bulgaria	<p>Gives an overview of the planning systems in Bulgaria.</p> <p>Informs about how the planning systems operate at national and regional level.</p>	<p>Although no specific examples of ESPON projects are used, it highlights the key messages and the main mechanisms of engaging with stakeholders to promote ESPON research.</p>	4
Greece	<p>Gives general information about the ESPON programme</p> <p>Gives examples on how ESPON findings can be useful for regional integrated territorial development strategies</p> <p>Focuses on the ESPON Climate and the elaboration of Regional adaptation strategies taking as case study the Region of</p>	<p>Three main story lines :</p> <p>How can the FOCI findings be integrated in the current implementation of the Athens master plan?</p> <p>How can EDORA findings be incorporated in territorial development of a rural region? (using the Peloponnesus case study)</p> <p>How can ESPON</p>	8

	Peloponnesus which is mostly integrated in ESPON-INTERSTRAT	Climate findings be used in ITDS formulation by the Region of Peloponnesus, and especially in regional adaptation strategies ? (RAS)	
Ireland	Demography, cross-border cooperation and spatial monitoring	Demographic status typology, Metroborder case studies, indicators under 4.3.1 and INTERCO	14
Italy	The document is divided into two parts. The first sets a general framework (<i>ESPON contribution to knowledge: resources</i>). The second is then <i>Widening of knowledge on demographic studies for regional development</i> . Its objective is to show the potentialities offered by ESPON in terms of its contribution to positioning different regions with respect to different issues.	Maps and typologies are used, with special reference to the DEMIFER Project, to show how ESPON can be useful for several practical issues that Italian regions currently face in the actual transition phase and given the global crisis. The importance of the knowledge collected by ESPON in integrating the European perspectives in territorial policies at regional level was used as a storyline	8
Poland	Part one explains the main conceptual and methodology tools developed by ESPON projects that are useful in examining the territorial dimension of public interventions and policies as well as analyzing main territorial trends. The second part of demonstration materials is devoted to cities and metropolisation. It underlines the importance of cities for growth, competitiveness and	The content of demonstration materials is to large extent based on the synthetic approach to ESPON findings presented in the First Synthesis Report from Autumn 2010. Furthermore, the content was selected after reviewing final and draft final reports of all finished or almost finished ESPON Applied Research and Targeted Analysis projects. Much focus was put to thematic areas preferred by the target group, that	20

	territorial development by referring to the main EU policy documents and policies.	is content from: ARTS, CLIMATE, FOCI, RERISK, TIP-TAP, EDORA and DEMIFER projects. The content was analysed from the point of view of Poland, its regions and territory, so that all main conclusions could be highlighted in a way that underlines place-based approach and the territorial dimension.	
Romania	The Romanian DM is based on two main materials: 1. the Strategic Concept of Territorial Development <i>Romania 2030 (SCTDR)</i> - a strategic document establishing the priorities for Romania's sustainable and integrated territorial development. 2. results of ESPON projects: maps, messages, information.	The DM focuses on several subjects of interest approached in the ESPON research and also included as priority axes, in the SCTDR, such as: territorial integration (exiting peripherality), polycentric development, rural development, urban-rural relations, territorial diversity. For each main theme (priority) of SCTDR, the DM underlines relevant ESPON messages, that could be used by national practitioners in the elaboration of integrated development strategies at different geographic levels (national, regional and local).	12
Slovenia	ESPON maps were combined with national maps in order to explain how broader (ESPON) trends can be seen in Slovenia. Namely, the stakeholders welcome broader EU pictures but they appreciated also	The major focus was to demonstrate the main themes of future development and how can they influence the national (spatial) development policy.	28

	<p>when the trends were demonstrated at lower level (i.e. municipal). In this way they can more easily imagine possible driving forces behind. ESPON methodologies were used also to demonstrate possible approaches in various territorial contexts (cross-border) and to feed-in the debate on territorial models for Slovenia and their potentials in relation to different ESPON and national scenarios. The produced material was disseminated to different stakeholders at national, regional and local levels.</p>		
UK	<p>The demonstration material that the UK ECP has produced highlights eight ESPON projects, six of which involve UK partners. It was aimed at informing policy makers, practitioners and researchers about past and current ESPON research in a highly accessible fashion. The demonstration material adapts messages from ESPON and translates them into key messages that can be used to develop effective place-based policies in the UK. For example, the demonstration material informs that planning is a mechanism to support growth and that local assets and local</p>	<p>We used examples from 8 ESPON projects, six of which had a UK partner. Examples from the following projects have been used: ARTS, CAEE, EATIA, KITCASP, PURR, ReRISK, RISE and SGPTD. The story line was 'key messages from ESPON that support good planning which can then lead to growth', and 'what key messages come out of ESPON that can be used as policy options by policy makers?'</p>	8

	<p>strengths have to be considered as policy options by policy makers. Moreover, business networks in rural regions can support business clusters.</p> <p>It also informs of the tools, techniques, key indicators, benchmarking and scenarios that ESPON makes available to policy makers. Furthermore, it looks at what best practices are available to the Local Enterprise Partnerships in England. It identifies the 'Green High Tech' scenario from ReRisk as a possible policy option for Scotland.</p>		
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As Table 3 shows, there were variations between countries in the content of the demonstration materials. For example some used more maps than others, some focused more on Priority 2 projects etc. Some were considerably longer than others. In some cases the definition of the ESPON maps that were reproduced needed to be of a higher quality. However, overall the exercise should be seen as an experiment, even a brave experiment, in national dissemination of ESPON findings. In each case, the ECPs were able to use the materials to reach stakeholders, often in association with a national event.

Various ESPON projects (including ReRisk, ARTS, DEMIFER, and CAEE) were used to discuss key territorial issues on a regional and national level. However, the projects were not described in isolation. Rather the **ESPON results used in demonstration materials** were tied into the priorities of the national engagement strategies and, in particular, were linked to the thematic focus of the national events (which are described in the next Chapter). The Belgian partner asked stakeholders to select specific topics they would like to cover in the national event, then subsequently developed the demonstration

materials around these topics, while others (e.g. Ireland) organised national events around key emerging territorial policy concerns and developed the demonstration materials as a way to complement the themes covered in these events.

Some common themes used by partners were Demography (four partners), Cities and Future growth (three partners), and Energy (three partners). Most partners focussed on the application of ESPON results at the national and regional level, although the specific focus differed.

Testing the Demonstration Materials

Partners had, in general, a very positive experience producing the demonstration materials. Partners all felt that demonstration materials were valuable as a tool for capitalisation in ESPON. Partners felt that demonstration materials were useful in showing national stakeholders the benefit of ESPON information in a more applied manner.

However, some partners found that the production of demonstration materials was, for various reasons, not a straightforward task. The practice of translating ESPON material into national languages and for national and regional contexts was very time consuming. However, as one ECP commented, “Using the national language is paramount if we want to reach the stakeholders. The demonstration material is one of the few documents that are in national language”. Additionally, the lack of available ESPON data (given that the demonstration materials had to be prepared before many Final Reports from projects were available to ECPs) was a further frustration. A number of partners also suggested that demonstration materials needed to be flexible in nature and should be used in conjunction with other forms of dissemination in order to maximise their effectiveness.

The INTERSTRAT partners recommend that the Demonstration Materials continue to be used as a mode of ESPON capitalisation. However, we must include a caveat here. Given the work involved in their production, national contact points would need to be allocated additional resources to produce the demonstration materials. While the demonstration materials are an added

value from INTERSTRAT as a Priority 4 project, similar quality materials could not be produced by ECPs using only existing national funding.

Importantly, the **response from stakeholders** was also very positive. Through a process of consultation enabled both through the national events and the national engagement strategies more broadly, the INTERSTRAT partners asked stakeholders what they thought were the major barriers preventing them from engaging with ESPON and what measures ESPON could take to remedy these problems. A common concern amongst stakeholders was that they could not easily access what was relevant to them in ESPON reports. Most stakeholders suggested they had severe time limitations that prevented them from reading extensive research reports in detail, and consequently wanted to find quicker ways of accessing data on relevant trends, statistics, and methodologies. While different suggestions were made by stakeholders about how to present ESPON data in more targeted ways (including short videos, interactive web content, factsheets etc.), there was a general consensus that **clearer messages for policy-makers are needed.**

From the feedback received, **the demonstration materials were definitely seen by stakeholders as a positive step** in this regard. Additionally, many of the examples used in the demonstration materials were also presented orally in the national events. The interest shown by the target group is evidence that the materials are useful and user-friendly. Most policy-makers felt that it enhanced their knowledge of ESPON, and convinced them of the relevance of ESPON research to their day-to-day activities. There was also the perception that demonstration materials should be used in combination with other forms of dissemination, such as intensive workshops, interactive seminars, and summary reports of pertinent ESPON projects. As such, demonstration materials would form one component of a pathway for practitioners into more sustainable engagement with the ESPON programme.

Box 5: Some stakeholder responses to the demonstration materials

“They (the demonstration materials) are used for informing national beneficiaries about the relevance of ESPON studies in their practice and building of ITDS. The DM is a brief and informative material that could go deeper, or be followed by further explanations/presentations/materials: Romanian beneficiaries need precise examples, clearly explaining how to link or include ESPON results in national development strategies.” *Feedback from a representative of a Regional Development Agency, Romania*

“National stakeholders need more information regarding precise ESPON indicators in order to use them in the monitoring and evaluation of national development strategies. That could be the subject of a DM.” *Feedback from a representative of a Ministry, Romania*

“ESPON findings could be of increasing relevance given the absence of analysis and monitoring at the regional scale in England, or given that England is now the only country in Europe where there is no strategic planning at either national or regional level.”

Feedback from a practitioner in the private sector, UK

“I think this is one of best examples I've seen in translating ESPON into something planners can actually use. It's miles above the jargon-laden synthesis reports produced by the CU, and I think they should take a good look at what INTERSTRAT has done for their future publications.”

Feedback from a member of the ECP Network

“I like (the demonstration material) very much and think it is a model and style for the CU to apply in the capitalisation ahead.”

Feedback from a representative of the CU

Box 6: Summary of achievements in WP2c

- Lead Partner coordinated the delivery of the final draft of the demonstration material template (June 2011).
- All nine partners have produced their own version (translated into national language) of the demonstration material.
- Partner 6 (IE) has produced a report on partners' experience of using the DMs in their own country.
- Three project partners (P6, P7 and P8) organised four events focussed on testing practitioners' views on the making of an ITDS.

6. Interactive events in nine countries

Co-ordination and delivery of interactive events was WP 2d. Again the approach set out in Diagram 1 was followed. Ideas of approaches to interactive events had been explored in the first workshop in Alcalá in June 2010. In the spring of 2011 a schedule was drawn up for events in each partner country. The events then took place through the spring, summer and autumn of 2011, with a final event in March 2012. As a general rule, each event was attended by at least two other INTERSTRAT partners and where this was not possible, partners sent presentations. This had two advantages. It made the events genuinely transnational, ensuring that these workshops and conferences were enriched by perspectives from other European countries. In addition, it allowed ECPs to observe (in a participatory way) how their peers went about delivering an event. Through taking part in these events, the ECPs were “learning by doing”.

Photo 3: Greek and Italian ECPs share a platform at the INTERSTRAT event in Athens, 10 March 2011



The schedule of these events is listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Schedule of events and ESPON projects featured in them.

No.	Date	Location	Title	ECPs participating	Main ESPON projects featured
1	10 March 2011	Panteion University, Greece.	<i>Towards a Greek Observatory for territorial Development and Cohesion.</i>	Bulgaria, Greece, Italy.	FOCI, Euroislands, INTERCO, ReRisk.
2	1 April 2011	Edinburgh, UK.	<i>Using ESPON research for the Scottish National Planning Framework.</i>	Belgium, Ireland, Romania, UK.	CAEE, EDORA, FOCI, ReRisk.
3	7 April 2011	Dundalk, Ireland.	<i>Work, Rest and Play: Planning for Functional Territories.</i>	Ireland, Romania, UK.	METROBORDER
4	12 April 2011	Warsaw, Poland.	<i>How to include a territorial dimension in creating evidence based national integrated strategies</i>	Poland, Slovenia.	ARTS, DEMIFER, EDORA, FOCI, ReRisk.
5	15 April, 2011	Ljubljana, Slovenia.	<i>ESPON INTERSTRAT workshop.</i>	Slovenia.	DEMIFER.
6	17 May 2011	Sofia, Bulgaria.	<i>ESPON INTERSTRAT workshop.</i>	Bulgaria, Greece	ESPON-INTERSTRAT
7	26-27 May 2011	Rome, Italy.	<i>Geography and Geographies in Italy and in Europe.</i>	Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, UK	ESPON Database, ESPON HyperAtlas, Metroborder
8	9 June	Iasi,	<i>Refresh your</i>	Romania, UK	ESPON Database.

	2011	Romania.	<i>practice! The ESPON contribution to the formulation of territorial development strategies in Romania.</i>		
9	28 September, 2011	Dublin, Ireland.	<i>Indicator development and monitoring for the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines</i>	Ireland, Netherlands.	ARTS, INTERCO, KITCASP, TYPOLOGIES.
10	30 September, 2011	London, UK.	<i>Planning for Growth: What can we learn from Europe?</i>	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, UK	ARTS, ATTREG, CAEE, EATIA, FOCI, KIT, KITCASP, PURR, ReRisk, RISE, SeGI, SGP.
11	4 October, 2011	Ljubljana, Slovenia.	<i>Is there space for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?</i>	Poland, Slovenia, UK.	ATTREG, EDORA, ESPON TIA, POLYCE
12	5 October, 2011	Brussels, Belgium.	<i>How can ESPON contribute to Belgian regions spatial-planning?</i>	Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy	DEMIFER, ESPON Database and HyperAtlas, FOCI, METROBORDER, TPM, ReRisk.
13	12 October, 2011.	Warsaw, Poland.	<i>Territorial perspective in strategic planning. What</i>	Greece, Ireland, Poland, Slovenia.	BESTMETROPOLISES, FOCI, KIT, TERCO, TIGER, TIPTAP, TRACC.

			<i>do ESPON results say about Poland</i>		
14	28 October, 2011	Sinaia, Romania.	<i>Management and monitoring systems for integrated territorial development.</i>	Romania.	ESPON Database 2013, SGPTD, EDORA, FOCI, TEDI, 1 st ESPON Scientific Report
15	8 November, 2011	Panteion University, Greece	<i>ESPON findings in service of a new paradigm of regional development in Greece.</i>	Estonia.	EDORA, ESPONTrain, EUROISLANDS, FOCI, INTERCO, TeDi, TERCO, ReRisk, ULYSSES.
16	30 March 2012	Edinburgh, UK	<i>Positioning urban Scotland in its European context – what can we learn about benchmarking?</i>	Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania	RISE, EATIA, ESPON Database, Hyper Atlas,

It is important to stress that all the workshops succeeded in reaching out to involve practitioners, and many also benefited from high level speakers from within ministries and/or ESPON CU and MC members. ESPON posters were displayed at the events. As one ECP commented, “ESPON should keep on giving materials to enrich the seminars such as posters and publications. Presence of a member from the CU or DG Regio is also fruitful for the debate and makes the seminar more attractive for participants.”

In all, sixteen events have been run in the nine countries, and ECPs from sixteen ESPON countries have taken part. Some events were very small and targeted (with less than 20 people) so that they could be very “hands on”, literally training practitioners to use ESPON by looking over their shoulders. Others have been large – for example the first one in Italy sat within a major

geography conference and was able to expose ESPON to over 250 attendees. The overall attendance at these events was 1,350 participants ranging from ECPs, researchers and students to politicians, policy makers and practitioners.

Table 5: Profile of participants at partners' events

Project partner	ECPs	Policy maker/ politician	Practitioner	Academic	Student	Private sector	Other	Total
LP – UK	36	29	30	24	3	18	3	143
P2 – PL	8	42	23	22	5	5	3	108
P3 – BE	4	2	24	13		3	3	49
P4 – BG	4		27	4		3		38
P5 – EL	7	76	27	34	313	17	19	493
P6 – IE	5	6	31	31				73
P7 – IT	12	3	19	200	17	5		256
P8 – RO	3	12	10	19	2	6	3	56
P9 – SI	3	86	36	9				134
Total	67	256	212	347	338	32	31	1,350

Diagram 7 below shows the data for the profile of stakeholders which has been collected from all nine partners. The figures show that 62% of participants were researchers (including ECPs) and a further combined 30% were from central, regional and local government. Diagram 8 illustrates variations in the profile of participants amongst countries. This highlights the large scale events in Greece and Italy, both of which mainly reached those stakeholders categorised as “Indirect power / Direct benefit”, thus conflating the proportion in that category in Diagram 7.

Diagram 7: Profile of stakeholders participating at events by ITDS typology

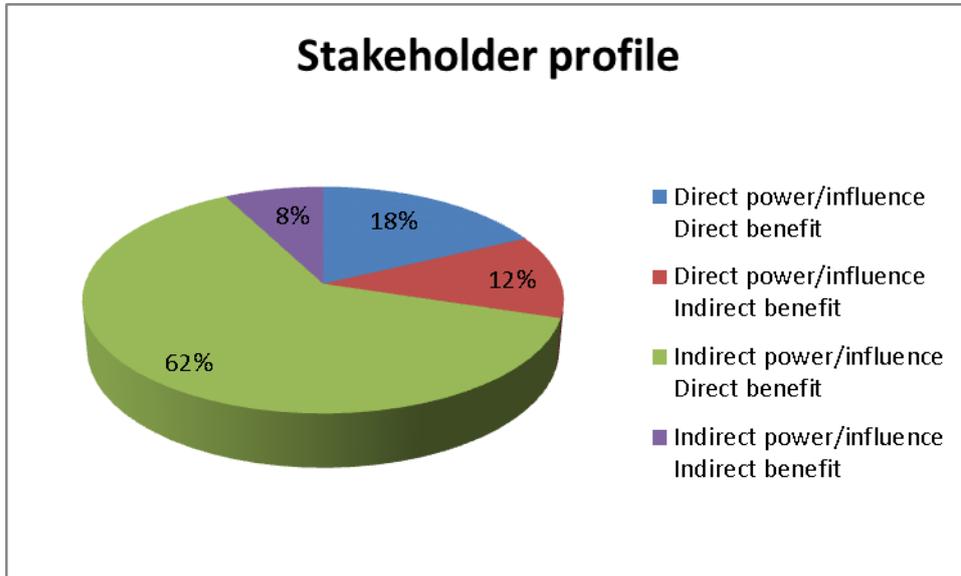


Diagram 8: Profile of stakeholders participating at events by partner

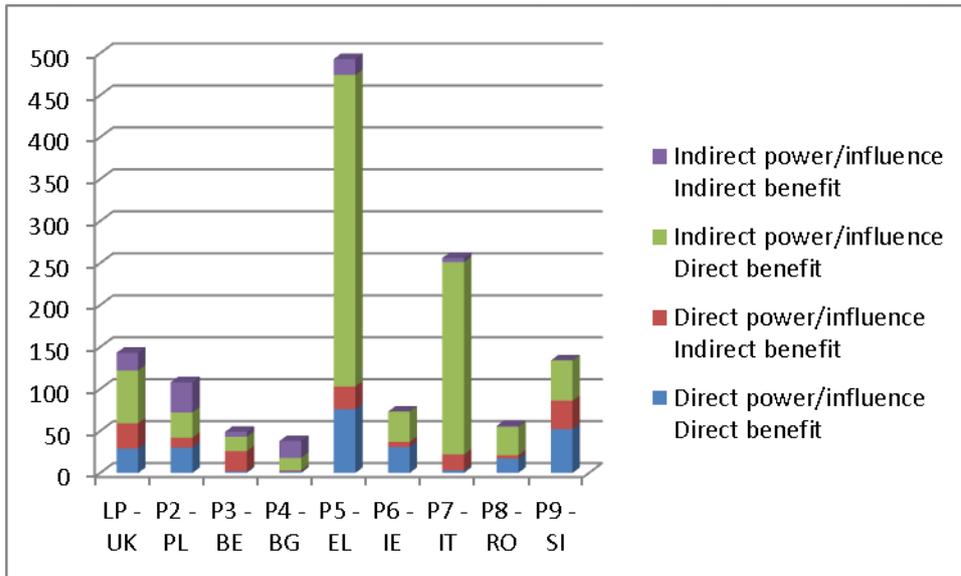


Table 6 shows the techniques used in the different events.

Table 6: Techniques used in INTERSTRAT events

Event	Techniques used
Greece March 2011	Keynote speakers plus four roundtable discussions
UK April 2011	Small groups on SWOT analysis; scenarios work; brainstorming.
Ireland April 2011	Presentations and discussions.
Poland April 2011	Brainstorming, quiz, world café, silent brainstorming.
Slovenia April 2011	Presentations and discussions
Bulgaria May 2011	Presentations and discussions.
Italy May 2011	Presentations, discussions, parallel workshops, roundtable.
Romania June 2011	Presentations and discussions; SWOT analysis in small groups
Ireland September 2011	Presentations and discussions.
UK September 2011	Presentations and discussions; parallel workshops.
Belgium, October 2011	Presentations and parallel workshops. Interactive presentation of ESPON Database.
Slovenia, October 2011	Presentations, discussion and roundtable.
Poland, October 2011	Presentations, discussion, themed parallel workshops and roundtable.
Romania, October 2011	Presentations, discussion and parallel workshops
Greece, November 2011	Presentations, roundtable, interactive questionnaire.
UK, March 2012	Presentations, roundtable discussion, parallel workshops

In addition, at the March 2012 workshop Twitter was used to publish real-time accounts of what was being said on #esponscot.

These national events achieved some notable results. The Greek partner reports that the representatives of the organisations participating in events

committed themselves to consider the use of the findings of the ESPON 2013 studies and projects. As she notes “This commitment is indeed the first and main objective of the activity of the transnational ESPON-INTERSTRAT network.” The INTERSTRAT activity there has prompted suggestions for the creation of a Greek Observatory for “Territorial Development and Cohesion”.

Also in Greece, the intervention of INTERSTRAT has contributed to a wider debate about the need for a new development structure of the state. This is based on the new “Kallikrates” administrative reform – with the need for the creation of “Integrated Territorial Development Strategies” under the jurisdiction of the new Regions.

In Italy, the main interest was in specific regional experiences in using ESPON knowledge to frame development regional plans. However, some criticisms of ESPON findings in relation to Italy were also reported, though overall there was general appreciation of the programme.

The event in Romania also generated some important messages for the dissemination of ESPON. These are:

1. *Adapt* your objectives to the national context: focus on national themes of interest, related to the ESPON research; invite diverse potential beneficiaries of ESPON research and then refine the messages and target groups; put them together and stimulate dialogue.
2. *Keep in mind a transnational agenda framework*, in order to obtain comparable results and ensure the transfer of knowledge
3. Use (progressively introduce new) interactive methods for engaging dialogue between different categories of participants – even sometimes surprising your participants in order to *avoid monotony*
4. Use *accessible language* for presentations, brochures, leaflets
5. Focus on good practice examples: they are easy to understand, discuss (involve participants) and remember!
6. Ask for *precise feedback* (according to the event objectives) in order to have an objective evaluation.

Somewhat similar messages came from the UK events, where practitioners stressed their interest in ESPON but also the need for it to be more accessible to them, less academic in orientation and to provide better comparisons of policy, practice and know-how across Europe.

Box 7: Case study of interactive event methods in Poland

Engaging practitioners

An interactive workshop organised in Warsaw on 12 April 2011 provides a good example of successful use of interactive workshop techniques to disseminate ESPON results amongst national level stakeholders. The workshop positively influenced participants' knowledge, understanding, awareness, readiness to try new resources and methodologies, confidence in referring to spatial and territorial data, openness for using maps and cartographic material in ITDS, and orientation in available data, analytical tools, results and recommendations.



Target group

30 representatives of working groups of 9 national ITDS i.e. ministerial level policy-makers.

Reaching the target group

The event was organised with close cooperation with the Polish MC member, who contacted participants and encouraged them to take part in the workshop. This formal way of inviting participants assured their motivation and presence. The aim of the workshop was to identify how ESPON results and the European Territorial Development Perspective might be useful for policy-makers in creating ITDS at national level:

Opening an interactive workshop – try brainstorming!

The organisers decided to break the ice with brainstorming:

- What makes a good ITDS?
- How can we understand the territorial dimension?

Participants were divided into four thematic groups:

- Good governance and security
- Human capital, social capital, innovation
- Regional, urban and rural development
- Transport, energy, environment

Each group received a sheet of paper and brainstormed to generate the most important ideas concerning two main questions. At the end, speakers from each group presented the results of the discussion. They were then discussed further. This integrated participants, showing that despite representing different sectors, they were facing very similar dilemmas and challenges, and that they needed interdisciplinary dialogue under the umbrella of very general European concepts. Moreover, this first section empowered practitioners to creatively interpret vague terms according to the specific national context and challenge the “usual, unquestioned way of preparing ministerial documents”.

Engaging and learning – try quizzes and make it fun!

After the brainstorming session, there was a quiz on European Territorial Development: Poland in European context. Participants were randomly divided into two competing teams and answered questions about Poland based on ESPON results and typologies. The aim was to create dynamic learning through competition, group collaboration, using cartographic materials and creative questions. Some answers involved analysing ESPON maps. Through fun and competitive analysis of cartographic material, participants learned how to read maps, how to understand cross-tab typologies, how to compare and contrast particular regions and finally how territory matters in various aspects of social and economic life. This technique ensures maximum engagement and prevents discouragement caused by complicated maps and typologies. Here is an example of a quiz question:

Question 2. You have been invited to four equally interesting conferences. You can only go to one of them, only by plane and must return to Warsaw on the same day. Which conference will you be able to attend? Lublin, Vilnius, Milan or Kiev.

Commentary: The ESPON FOCI project mapped daily return flights between cities where it is possible to make a return trip in one day. It is clear that in Warsaw enjoys the best accessibility in this respect, while in most of the old member states of the network of connections is much more dense and polycentric. Also sometimes international connectivity between metropolises is better than with their surrounding cities, for example it is surprising that Milan is “closer” to Warsaw than Vilnius. Polish cities apart from Warsaw lack of connections with European cities.

World Café – a way to implement and generate practical solutions!

In order to capitalise on newly acquired knowledge and competences, the organisers invited participants to work in random groups in the form of the

World Café. Participants were divided into 4 groups by 4 different tables.

- Good governance and security
- Human capital, social capital, innovation
- Regional, urban and rural development
- Transport, energy, environment

Their task was to create mind maps answering questions such as: What type of knowledge is necessary to include a territorial dimension in ITDS? What indicators might be useful in this process? What do ESPON scenarios say about Polish territory?

All 4 thematic tables had a set of ESPON maps and included an expert-rapporteur – a scientist from an ESPON project. Each group had 15-20 minutes to generate as many ideas as possible and they were written down on large sheets of paper by each table. Rapporteurs moderated discussion and noted the ideas. After each session participants changed, so that everyone had a chance to sit at each thematic table. Participants were asked to cooperate in various constellations. At the end, rapporteurs presented the results from each table. The outcomes proved that a territorial perspective is indeed necessary in strategic planning. Moreover, despite sectoral divisions, practitioners understood how their competences might overlap in terms of practical challenges and how space is important in delegating particular competences (centralisation vs. decentralisation). World Café results for each table have shown how the territorial dimension, multi-level governance and smart growth might have different meanings, but that they are all interrelated. Finally, participants agreed that mapping complex phenomena provides very important input for decision making processes.

Consolidating knowledge – reflection through silent brainstorming and learning diary!

Participants had 10-15 minutes to note down the answers in their learning diaries: How to include a territorial dimension in ITDS? In which thematic areas and in which governance levels ESPON results might be useful? How to make ESPON more useful for practitioners and stakeholders? They later presented them in a round of conclusions. In the second round of conclusions they were asked to share their experience and feelings about the workshop. Learning diaries were photocopied and archived by the organiser.

Box 8: Summary of achievements in WP2d

- During the reporting period all partners delivered at least one interactive event which was attended by at least one other ECP. When an ECP was not able to attend, the ECP sent presentation instead.
- Project partners prepared and delivered sixteen transnational events which were attended by 1,350 policy makers (e.g. at national, regional and local levels), practitioners, researchers and students.

7. How successful was the project in achieving its objectives?

To help us evaluate and reflect upon the extent to which the ESPON-INTERSTRAT project achieved its objectives, we drew on the services of an experienced practitioner in the field. Christabel Myers was a UK member of the ESPON Monitoring Committee for some years before she left her post in the UK ministry responsible for spatial planning. In October 2011, as most (but not all) of the activities of the ESPON-INTERSTRAT project had been completed, she undertook telephone interviews with all partners. These interviews systematically went through all the objectives listed above, and sought views from the nine ECPs who are partners in the project. The full report is contained in the Scientific Report.

Thus ESPON-INTERSTRAT has taken a transnational and inclusive approach to self-evaluation. While it could be argued that the partners cannot be objective about what they have achieved (or failed to achieve), the nature of the project means that they are the persons best placed to make judgements on these issues.

In addition, feedback was obtained from other stakeholders who participated in the interactive events that ESPON-INTERSTRAT delivered in each partner member state. That feedback and the experiences of those events have been used to write this report.

The overall conclusion drawn for Myers' survey was that "ESPON-INTERSTRAT has met its objectives and given benefit to the nine countries and the ESPON programme."

She further found that "The project has clearly raised the awareness of national stakeholders to ESPON findings and supported transnational learning." Importantly, she noted the success of the project in creating "a transferable approach and interactive tools which can be used to further promote engagement of stakeholders and learning across the ESPON member countries." Furthermore, the project increased "the capacity of ECPs to assist this further work."

More specific findings for each objective are now reviewed. Inevitably, there was more success with some than with others. The ESPON-INTERSTRAT project was rather experimental in nature, and the results can be used to inform future projects and the role of ECPs in ESPON post-2013.

Objective 1: To develop and apply a transnational approach to active knowledge transfer between ESPON scientists and policy makers and practitioners from the participating countries within ESPON;

This objective was achieved. The idea of “active knowledge transfer” was taken forward through the events listed in Table 4, and exemplified by the case study of the workshop in Warsaw.. The idea was to avoid a situation where the audience sat passively: instead they were involved in a variety of ways. To give a further example: The Romanian workshop on 9 June 2011 divided participants into three groups (regional and local authorities; consultants and practitioners and researchers) and got them to do a SWOT on ITDS in Romania). The workshop then explored how ESPON could be useful.

The transnational element was present in every workshop in two ways: there was active participation by ECPs from other countries (including some from outside the INTERSTRAT partners); and the approach to engagement and running interactive workshops had been discussed and experiences shared by the partners before the event.

Each workshop brought together scientists and policy makers and practitioners. Again to give just two examples:

- In the workshop held in Greece on 8 November 2011, there were presentations by researchers from a number of ESPON research projects (FOCI, TeDi, ULYSSES, ReRisk, EDORA, INTERCO etc) who shared the platform with a Member of Parliament, a regional Commissioner, Regional Counsellors and civil servants from different ministries. The central focus was on the scope to use ITDS in the context of the administrative reforms in Greece, with new regions and municipalities.
- The seminar in Dublin on 28 September 2011 directly addressed the issue of monitoring in Ireland’s National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. Speakers included researchers from the ESPON ARTS project but also from regional authorities within Ireland.

However, some partners reported that they had found it difficult to get researchers from ESPON projects to participate in their event. Similarly, some found it easier to attract practitioners from central government than from local government. These are points we return to later in this report, but overall it is clear that the objective was met.

Box 9: A transnational approach to active knowledge transfer between scientists and practitioners

The workshop in Edinburgh on 1 April 2011 was targeted at a small group of planners involved in work on the National Planning Framework (NPF) for Scotland or on one of the four city region plans that are being prepared. It was an “invitation-only” event, so that a small, specialised group of practitioners could work intensively with INTERSTRAT ECP partners from Ireland, Romania and Belgium, as well as the UK.

All participants worked in small groups to undertake a SWOT analysis of Scotland in a European territorial development context, thus directly bringing to bear a transnational approach. There was also comment on the NPF by the non-UK ECPs.

Later in the day, after presentations of key ESPON ideas and of the ReRisk project, participants worked in small groups to interpret the four ReRisk scenarios in terms of policy implications for Scotland. Finally, presentations of progress on the city region plans were followed by brain-storming of how ESPON might be used in them.

Photo 4: Practitioners present ideas on using ESPON watched by ECPs from Belgium and Ireland at the Edinburgh workshop, 1 April 2011



Objective 2: To raise awareness and promote the use of ESPON findings at all levels of territorial policy

There can be no doubt that the project promoted the use of ESPON findings at all levels of territorial policy. This was done through the workshops held in each partner country and through the demonstration materials and the project’s website. From her interviews, Myers came to the view that “Interest in both ESPON and ITDS was generally increased.”

A quotation from Myers' interviews captures the situation:

“We managed to raise awareness of and interest in ESPON, target the most interested actors, get good feedback, make certain changes/influence processes. People call the ECP. There is interest in the presentation materials used at the workshop.” *ECP Poland*.

Similarly, the ECP Belgium observed that INTERSTRAT has been a key element in supporting dissemination of ESPON.

The more fundamental question is whether the success in promoting use of ESPON was then translated into actual use of ESPON in making ITDS. It is not possible within the confines of this project to research this question, and of course any use of ESPON may be time-lagged rather than instantaneous after a workshop of a read of demonstration materials. Myers found that several partners mentioned the difficulty encountered in engaging particular groups of practitioners e.g. where ITDS practice was weak. However, partners also felt that there are difficulties in promoting the use of ESPON material in its current form.

“We’ve explored this but I’m not sure we’ve convinced/informed stakeholders in a way which is useful for their work.” *ECP Greece*

“At practitioner level we have achieved success. After our national workshop the number and quality of applications to ESPON has increased. Many more practitioners are now interested in the programme. For policy making I’m not sure we’ve achieved great success in influencing policies though there is now more cross-Ministry working.” *ECP Bulgaria*

Box 10: Promoting the use of ESPON findings: Blog on 10 key messages

Cliff Hague’s “World View” blog published on 3 October 2011 on www.CliffHague.wordpress.com reported on the INTERSTRAT conference on 30 September 2011 and set out ten messages for “Planning for growth” from ESPON. These were:

1. Play to local assets, strengths and potentials;
2. Build resilience as well as competitiveness;
3. Understand and exploit agglomeration economies;
4. Have an innovation dimension to your development strategy;
5. Think about clusters;
6. Improve access to networks and accessibility;
7. Avoid urban sprawl;
8. Plan for functional regions and build mutually supportive urban-rural relations;

9. Analyse the territorial impacts of policies and proposals;
10. Public services matter.

The page had received over 400 hits as at December 2011.

Objective 3: To explore the usefulness of ESPON findings in the development of ITDS;

The idea of listening to practitioners was fundamental to the project. INTERSTRAT was not about one-way communication of ESPON to practitioners. The project set out to discover how useful those in practice found ESPON. The partners sought to get views about ESPON from participants in the events and from responses to the demonstration materials.

Thus there were calls from the workshop held in Romania in June 2011 for use of ESPON findings in local strategies and for the creation of a central database that integrates ESPON research with new indicators for regional and local planning. In the UK, practitioners said that ESPON reports need to be written in “Plain English” and that the idea of using ESPON for benchmarking with other parts of Europe is attractive (thus the closing INTERSTRAT workshop in Edinburgh looked at benchmarking).

From her interviews Myers found general agreement that ESPON data and reports must be up to date, factual and locally relevant, and easier to access. There was a clear view from many practitioners that ESPON would be more useful if it provided data at LAU 1 and 2 levels.

Box 11: Examples of approaches to exploring the usefulness of ESPON findings

Bulgaria: We took an urban focus to our dissemination to meet the interests of a lot of practitioners – e.g. Pernik, a middle sized Bulgarian town. A colleague was invited to Ruse to present INTERSTRAT and ESPON programme opportunities to apply for funding especially Priority 2. There was strong demand for knowledge and skills to use ESPON findings. We also had several meetings and a national workshop, then continued to keep in contact with a core of experts and practitioners who helped to spread the word.

Slovenia: Stakeholders appreciated our dissemination activities: they were very interested and eager to learn more. They wanted to improve things. However, it was not so easy for them to come down from the broader picture. They could not use ESPON material directly, even with help in interpretation. The ESPON results needed to be supported by national data. We elaborated the most important aspects and combined the two. National questions were “What spatial policies do we want? How can

public policies influence this?" We focused the workshop on these questions.

It also became clear that receptiveness to ESPON was shaped by the degree of orientation to, and political support for, ITDS within a country. Within Italy, for example, Myers was told "Italy is very sceptical. It doesn't have a European vision. Spatial planning within the country is not able to use ESPON data on the geographic scales on which it is based. The challenge was explaining to policy makers the practical use of ESPON on the geographic scale it uses." Within the UK the regional tier of plan making in England was effectively abolished while the INTERSTRAT project was in operation. This made it necessary to try to create new links with new agencies who might be users of ESPON data."

The Polish ECP "consulted stakeholders who knew what would be going on for the next few years. As a result we shifted the focus of our work from the regional to the national. Stakeholders were involved in ESPON, INTERREG and INTERACT."

Objective 4: To give feedback on the outputs from Priority 1 research and to identify further themes for future work;

The project has been less successful in achieving this objective. There was generally little feedback on Priority 1 themes from the national workshops. There are a number of explanations for this, not least the extent to which the events were structured to focus on issues and policy instruments directly familiar to the practitioners. Discussion of ESPON was often in more general terms rather than focusing on a single Priority 1 project in some depth. Researchers from Priority 1 projects were not always present, or in some cases the project they were involved in was still in its early stages, which made it difficult to provide much feedback.

However, some feedback was obtained. For example, there was a view that the results of Priority 1 projects are not presented well. They need clearer and briefer conclusions. The Territorial Observations, whilst valuable, also need to be shorter. A recurrent message was that practitioners say they don't have time to read all of a report, let alone all the reports.

Feedback from one country identified priorities in the following order:

- Infrastructure, energy, environment, transport, TIA;
- Land use, urban and rural development.

There is also interest in topics of current media interest but no interest in EU directives such as services of general interest or globalization/global issues.

There was also a view that there should be a greater focus on the processes needed to achieve territorial development and the place based approach, rather than on territorial development trends. A much greater understanding is needed of territorial governance.

Objective 5: To stimulate interest from practitioners and stakeholders for targeted analytical deliveries under Priority 2 of the ESPON 2013 programme;

The orientation of the project towards practitioners probably made it easier to achieve this objective than the one in relation to Priority 1 projects. INTERSTRAT has definitely achieved this objective. All ECPs felt that the national events stimulated interest. However, there are still hurdles to be overcome. Thus when interviewed by Myers, the Polish ECP observed that:

“There is potentially high interest but there is just so little money and so many different projects proposed with very few succeeding in getting funding. Also, the timing of the project didn't encourage people to apply to the ESPON (there were no immediate opportunities to apply for funds) so we focused on scientists and the ESPON results.”

One problem was that the main period of INTERSTRAT engagement with practitioners began in April 2011, which was really too late for them to put in expressions of interest for Priority 2 projects (the cut-off date was 22 March 2011).

Objective 6: - To feedback to the ESPON Programme on the priorities and questions identified by the users of ESPON findings.

The main message from the project was not surprisingly that the priorities of the stakeholders with whom INTERSTRAT engaged across the nine countries were overwhelmingly at national, regional and local scale rather than at the pan-European scale. Even the ECPs themselves would like to see a stronger orientation within ESPON to national stakeholders. Examples of what this might mean are country supplements which explain the relevance of ESPON data, use of stakeholder language, and simpler maps.

Similarly, there is a view that ESPON needs to be less academic. One view expressed to Myers, but which reflects a broad consensus was “There should be less focus on narrow academic research, which is already addressed by FP7, and more on producing results which meet the needs of practitioners, including the private sector. What we really lack is case studies.” Of course

ESPON has many case studies, but they are usually to be found in the annexes of Scientific Reports, where few practitioners will search. Maybe an on-line compendium of these case studies could be produced?

In mitigation there was general recognition of the value of Priority 2 projects as meeting some of these concerns. For example, a comment from Bulgaria was “Priority 2 projects are especially important. ESPON reports contain many errors about Bulgaria because much information on the country is not up to date. Bulgarian participation in Priority 2 projects such as *Growth Poles in SE Europe* will help overcome this problem by collecting more up to date data.”

One suggestion to emerge was that there could be value in finding ways (“Priority 5”?) of linking Priority 2 Projects with Priority 4 projects, so that the expertise and contacts of the ECPs could be directly used in (and enhanced by) dissemination of Priority 2 results nationally.

A further message to ESPON was that it should work more closely with URBACT and with INTERREG. Practitioners know these programmes and see how ESPON results could be used in preparation of applications to them. Unfortunately, outputs from the TransMEC project, which relates ESPON to INTERREG, came too late for INTERSTRAT to use them.

Box 12: Feedback to ESPON from users

The President of the Royal Town Planning Institute who had chaired the INTERSTRAT event in London in September 2011 summed up as follows:

“Future (ESPON) research could focus more on identifying the levers of planning policy and delivery and assessing how they could be used to better effect by policy makers, rather than purely analysis. The conference revealed that, although European areas vary widely in terms of their socio-economic realities, there are “common issues and opportunities where they could learn from experience in other areas to develop effective solutions. ESPON could help more on this by allowing for flexible and adaptable solutions through project work to a rapidly changing economic, social and political environment.”

There are also some strong messages about communication: indeed more user-friendly communication (from a practitioner’s perspective) is seen as probably the main priority. ESPON maps were described as “not the sort of tool to find information about your region”. ESPON methodologies were described as “too complicated”. There was a call for “simple step-by-step tools to aid learning through workshops”. Those who had tried to engage with the ESPON database were not enthused. Data seemed hard to access and was

too often out of date in relation to practitioner needs: often more detailed and up-to-date data for their region was available to them elsewhere. However, there were some positive responses to the demonstration of the Hyper-Atlas at the Belgian workshop.

The ESPON website was also a focus for comment. It was felt to be complicated and not easy to access information. There was also some frustration with how long it takes to get reports from projects onto the website, as nothing is placed there until it has been approved by the MC, which is usually weeks after the report has been submitted. Why can't reports go on the site as drafts with a disclaimer that the MC has yet to comment upon them?

These suggestions, arising from the work done in INTERSTRAT, raise some basic questions about the purpose and resourcing in ESPON post 2013. These are returned to later in this report.

Objective 7: To support transnational interest in the preparation of ITDS, that can contribute to competitiveness and cohesion through development of Europe's regions;

There were mixed views about the success in achieving this objective. For some ECPs, e.g. Italy, Romania, and Poland, looking at the contribution of ITDS to European regional development was a key dimension which stimulated stakeholder interest. For others it was a step too far to progress beyond considering how ESPON could help ITDS within their own national context.

The project's website includes in its library not only examples of ITDS from different countries within the project, but also some scientific articles and guidance about territorial development approaches. However, the collection is not comprehensive and there is no commentary arising from it. Producing such a commentary is a significant task and beyond the resources of the project. However, ESPON might now consider how to capitalise on the work done in INTERSTRAT in compiling these documents in one place. The INTERSTRAT web portal will die when the project is finished. It would be a pity to lose it all, since the material is a valuable source to support transnational interest in ITDS.

Objective 8: To facilitate transnational exchange of experience, concepts and data about the development, implementation and monitoring of integrated territorial strategies in the context of the ESPON programme.

Overall, the project has achieved a lot in transnational exchange of experience on the development and implementation of ITDS, though perhaps not so much on the monitoring aspects. There has been some discussion of concepts in the workshops and demonstration materials. Several partners would have liked to have seen more exchange of data particularly on the challenges and approaches to ITDS used in other countries.

This objective is closely linked to objective 7. Thus the points made above about the web portal are valid here too. The focus in Priority 4 projects like INTERSTRAT on dissemination rather than on research means that while the project did indeed “facilitate transnational exchange” it stopped short of doing real analysis of the content, concepts, methods, monitoring and territorial governance systems in the ITDS it collected. Such added value would come at a cost, but also be very cost-effective since so much of the preparatory work has now been done within the project. The discussions on engagement strategies and other discussions in the partner workshops; the national workshops; and the INTERSTRAT website library, including descriptions of country approaches to ITDS, have provided opportunities for exchange. Again this poses a question for a future ESPON of how to organise Priority 4 so as to be able to take advantage of such opportunities for analytical work that builds upon the basis of the dissemination activities.

Similarly, there has not been an opportunity to create transnational networking amongst practitioners attending the INTERSTRAT events, with the exception of the workshop in Dundalk (April 2011) which involved practitioners from Ireland and the UK. In part the far-flung nature of the nine partners made it difficult to involve practitioners in attending events in another country. However, there might be scope in future to explore how the existing set of practitioner contacts might be mobilised to become a “knowledge community”, e.g. through webinars or similar events.

Objective 9: To develop approaches to dissemination and transnational learning that are transparent, innovative and transferable;

A number of steps were taken to achieve this objective. At the first meeting of the project group in Alcalá in June 2010, the Lead Partner presented a short document that described a number of “Techniques for Listening to Stakeholders”. These included guidance on how to run a focus group, stage a debate, use scenarios, organise and run an “ESPON Quiz”, do silent brainstorming and challenge and sort assumptions. The aim was to stimulate ideas for using interactive teaching and learning in the planned events. Thus, in keeping with the overall INTERSTRAT strategy, all partners shared the ideas transnationally, but each partner themselves decided what to use, taking account of their resources, national learning cultures etc. As the Greek

partner observed, “We learnt how to organise an engagement strategy and help interactive events.”

Then in the meeting in Alcalá and again in the Brussels meeting in November 2010, a range of interactive techniques were used. For example, in Alcalá there was silent brainstorming to think of how we would describe the project. In Brussels, a range of methods were used and participants were introduced to the use they might be put to.

In addition, by attending INTERSTRAT events run by other partners (see Table 4, Photos 3 and 4 and Box 7, for example) ECPs were able to learn from each other and to experience innovative teaching and learning for themselves. Thus learning by doing was embedded throughout the work of INTERSTRAT. All the evidence is that this form of learning is more effective than the passive learning that is the norm in ESPON seminars, for example.

In these ways INTERSTRAT achieved this objective: there was transnational learning and transfer of innovative approaches. This did not mean though that every event was highly interactive. Some countries (Slovenia, Romania, Italy) were constrained in taking full part in the transnational learning opportunities provided by the project for lack of time. The Belgian ECP commented while the approach to dissemination was not innovative, it was effective, transparent and transferable. Resourcing constraints and local traditions constrained adoption of innovative approaches to running the workshops. However, all countries introduced some change to their usual way of running such workshops. The Polish ECP summed it up well:

“Our workshop was very dynamic and fun. Almost all (Government) Ministries now want such a workshop. There was a good mix of brainstorming; development of solutions; and understanding of maps and results. Each country has implemented the recommended project approach in its own way to reflect different country circumstances. It definitely brought added value. The first Polish event brought together all people drafting strategies face to face for the first time. They saw synergies between the strategies they were working on. Through INTERSTRAT, we have identified new groups of stakeholders who now contact us to consult us on ESPON.”

Objective 10: To develop the ECPs and their networking by sharing knowledge and skills for delivery of the ECP role

Arguably, this was the project’s greatest success. In Myers’ survey, all interviewees agreed that it had been well achieved by all partners. However, they also felt that there is a need for capacity building and networking to

continue beyond the life of the INTERSTRAT project, given the crucial role the ECPs play in the dissemination of ESPON.

Transnational networking was central to the whole project and its main component parts – the website, the events and even the demonstration materials. As the Romanian partner commented, “The project has given a better image of different national contexts, territorial strategies and promotion methodologies – through partner meetings, the web site, informal discussions etc.”

The transnational approach worked because the basic approach adopted by INTERSTRAT is robust – partners come together in a project group workshop to share ideas and learn from each other and agree the parameters of a common way forward. But then, there is acceptance of diversity. Each partner’s situation is unique, and the partner must decide how they interpret and apply the common ideas. This diversity in turn enriched the learning experience within the project.

The Italian ECP commented “The Italian ECP participated in a lot of seminars – e.g. UK, Belgium – and saw different approaches/relationships people have with the ESPON programme. It gave a better focus on ESPON topics and more information on the programme.”

The Bulgarians in turn learnt from the Italians: “We learnt a lot in particular from our neighbours, the Italian and Greek ECPs, both based in academic institutions. We exchanged with representatives of these ECPs at their/our workshops. From the approach of these countries – where there was a spread of participants and not just students, we decided to have our workshop in the premises of the Union of Bulgarian Architects, who also chaired/spoke at the event, and not the Ministry. This enhanced the practitioner approach.” *ECP Bulgaria*

Thus each partner was able to learn from the other partners in ways that fitted their own needs. Thus the Slovenian ECP observed, “We’ve learnt through partners how they overcame common challenges especially where the political level was not supportive of integrated strategies/unstable situations. The UK and Poland were especially helpful for the Slovenian situation: Poland had energy, UK had a long tradition of how to do things such as steering preparation of guidelines. We also learnt through reports and committee meetings.”

The five short videos on the project website, which were filmed at the November 2011 event in Warsaw and feature the ECPs from Ireland, Greece and Poland, also convey this sense of transnational learning.

Box 13: Sharing knowledge: slide used by ECP Ireland in presentation to Polish INTERSTRAT workshop, November 2011



NIRSA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

How can these challenges be addressed by learning from ESPON?

- Learning from applied ESPON research in Ireland – such as CAEE project on Agglomeration economies in Dublin region.
- Using indicators and monitoring broad trends – Using indicators to see how Ireland fits into what’s happening in Europe. Learning from methodologies for best practice in developing indicators.
- Learn from experience of planning for cross-border regions.
- Using ESPON results reflexively to allow people working in region to get from them the key lesson and key story of THEIR region.

EUROPEAN UNION

Partners felt that their skills in working with others on international projects had increased. Some partners developed practical management skills such as public procurement and the Lead Partner developed better communication and coordination approaches:

“It has improved ECP capacity to manage transnational projects and partnerships. INTERSTRAT has helped to polish our management skills: the project demanded a lot of public procurement/outsourcing which required tendering: each task became smoother and more efficient; and interactive techniques. Working with partners we learnt how to work together and in a network. This was very positive. There was understanding and contacts increased: that was the added value of the project. There was a lot of scope for involvement in networks with complementary skills and different organisations: it was a good experience.” *Lead Partner*

8. Key findings and messages

The partners have been interviewed and then worked together in their project meeting in Krakow (November 2011) and the final project meeting in Edinburgh (March 2012) to agree the main findings from the project and the messages that it holds for ESPON. These are now set out:

Finding 1: The ITDS approach is uneven between the countries and underdeveloped or fragile in several partner countries.

The project began with the idea that policy makers and practitioners involved in ITDS are the most obvious potential stakeholders for national contact points to interest in ESPON results. However, from the start, the project also recognised that there was no unambiguous and agreed definition of ITDS, and that the reality is that practice varies between different countries and also through time.

The project took the GRIDS (INTERREG 3C) definition of a good ITDS and put it on the website. This says that an ITDS should be:

- is embedded in its organisational, economic and social context;
- establishes a widely shared vision for the future development of the region;
- engages stakeholders in an open and productive manner during the preparation of the strategy;
- communicates its key messages clearly to a variety of audiences;
- identifies clear mechanisms for delivery;
- phases and sequences key investments and actions;
- establishes a simple but effective framework for monitoring.

The compilation of examples of ITDS on the INTERSTRAT website provides a potentially valuable resource for further analysis of the nature and practice of making ITDS. In addition there is a short overview of the position with NSRFs across the EU on the INTERSTRAT website. However, as explained earlier, that research is beyond the remit of INTERSTRAT as a Priority 4 project tasked with dissemination.

Box 14: More research is needed: what are the lessons from the ITDS?

“I did find out quite a lot about the differences between planning systems in each country but would like to know more: what kind of strategies are being prepared in each country, how the strategy was drafted, the main actors, practitioners/experts/scientists; how they interact in this procedure; the background papers – who writes them; the model use for discussions of the strategy after it has been proposed; what do they look like in each country.” ECP Poland.

“We would like to promote country experiences of ITDS further under INTERSTRAT, e.g. on the website, once the country events and reports are completed. We could make a brochure if there is still money left in the budget with examples from all the countries.”

Nevertheless, some pointers can be drawn from the experiences of the INTERSTRAT partners, who each did a Country Report explaining the system in their own country. These are on the project website and are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: ITDS in the INTERSTRAT countries

Country	State of ITDS
Belgium	Three Regions (Brussels capital, Wallonie and Vlaanderen) the latter two each with five provinces. Then there are 589 Municipalities. Brussels has a “regional development plan/strategy” (1995, 2002) that is currently being updated. A “strategy for international development” was produced in 2009 and an “agency for territorial development” has been created focused on major developments. There is an integrated strategy for the Harbour and some sector-based co-operation amongst municipalities. In the Walloon Region the main ITDS is the SDER (Schéma de Développement de l’Espace Régional), produced in 1999, influenced by ESDP and now being updated. There are some inter-municipal strategies. In the Flemish Region, the main spatial instrument for territorial development is the Spatial Structure plan Flanders (RSV - “Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen”). A small update was done in 2010. Yet, a major revision is being conducted at the moment. The new Spatial Policy plan Flanders (BRV – Beleidsplan Ruimte Vlaanderen) has to tackle new issues at stake, using the time horizons of 2020 and 2050. There is also a regional land use plan. Belgium also has strong cross-border traditions that influence territorial strategies.
Bulgaria	There is a National Development Plan, a NSRF, a National Regional Development Strategy and six Regional Development Plans. Spatial planning and regional development are treated in separate pieces of legislation, with little integration between

	them.
Greece	A shift towards a more strategic spatial planning approach occurred in the late 1990s. The national government produces the General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development. A national ministry also produces Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Development. There are also masterplans and general urban plans, as well as more local regulatory plans. There is on-going administrative reform seeking to rationalise the many small municipalities and enhance functionality of regions that become 2 nd tier local government. This is emphasising the role of regions, as decentralised units in planning and development. There are three types of ITDS – for urban areas, rural areas and coastal zone management.
Italy	Administratively, Italy has 20 regions, eleven metropolitan cities, 110 provinces and over 8,000 municipalities. Regions produce specific normative rules on planning and formal tools therefore differ between different regions. The regional key development document is the ‘Piano Territoriale Regionale’. The metropolitan cities produce metropolitan plans whilst Provinces produce Provincila Territorial Plans. There is no national spatial plan, only sector plans. Each Region must now prepare an “Integrated Planning Document” linked to the NSRF.
Ireland	There is a National Spatial Strategy (NSS) which was updated in 2010 and Regional Planning Guidelines were produced for eight regions by the national government in 2004. Recent years have seen increasing emphasis on an evidence-informed approach. Lower tier City/County Development Plans are expected to have a “Core Strategy”. There is on-going work on cross-border links with Northern Ireland, including linking the NSS with the NI Regional Development Strategy.
Poland	Policies set out at national level define the basic urban networks and have a particular focus on metropolitan areas. The National Spatial Agreement Concept (2011) sets out a vision to 2030 for spatial and territorial cohesion. The National Strategy for Regional Development 2010-20 provides integrated strategies for urban and rural regions and integrates public sector policies territorially. Poland has 16 self-governing regions (voivodships). These have full responsibility for strategic and spatial planning. Each has a regional development strategy. The lowest tier, the communes, also have substantial land use planning responsibilities, though few have full and up to date plans. Integrated planning in metropolitan areas remains problematic.
Romania	The Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism produces the National Spatial Planning Plan (PATN) as well as the General urban planning rule, and ensures preparation of the Regional Spatial and the Urban Planning Regulations. It also has responsibility for ensuring sectoral and inter-local authority

	<p>coordination. The Strategic Concept of Territorial Development – Romania 2030, launched to public debate in 2008, aims at an integrated and multi-scalar approach to territorial development. The document prepares the future Territorial Development Strategy for Romania. At regional level there are 41 county councils and the municipality of Bucharest; they coordinate the spatial and urban planning activity at county level and ensure the elaboration of the County Spatial Plans and of regional spatial plans which are of county interest. There are also eight Regional Development Agencies responsible for the elaboration and implementation of regional development strategies and regional development projects (managing and monitoring the use of Regional Development Funds). The Regional Operational Programme 2008-13 is a very important tool for implementing EU funds, the national strategy and regional development policies.</p>
Slovenia	<p>There are no administrative regions between the national government and the 62 communes (and then 211 municipalities). There is a National Development Strategy (2005), though in practice it has had little influence on sectoral policies. A new Development Strategy 2013-30 is under preparation. This is expected to give more emphasis to the territorial dimension. There are also regional development programmes covering twelve regions, rural development policy documents and municipal level land use plans.</p>
UK	<p>The UK has four different parts, each with rather different arrangements. In England there is no national spatial strategy. The UK government has published its National Planning Policy Framework which guides planning in England at more local levels (March 2012). The Sustainable Communities Plan (2003) is the nearest England has to a spatial framework, but it only focuses on housing and regeneration. Before 2010 England had ten Regional Spatial Strategies, but with the exception of London, these and the organisations producing them have been abolished. The Localism Act (November 2011) seeks to fill the gap left by the abolition of the regional development strategies by setting out the Duty to Cooperate. The Duty calls for collaboration between local authorities and other public bodies. To encourage collaboration between public and private bodies, business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (39 as of May 2012) have been set up. These partnerships can produce strategies on a sub-regional scale. Lower levels of government produce plans for the use and development of land. In Scotland there is a national spatial strategy, the National Planning Framework (2009), and strategic plans are being produced through co-operation amongst local authorities for the city regions. In Wales there is a National Wales Spatial Plan (2008) and as in Scotland local government produce local plans to manage land use. In Northern Ireland there is a Regional Development Strategy (2008) (with some cross-border links to</p>

	Ireland – see above), and local level control has also operated centrally for a long period, though there are proposals to transfer powers to local level.
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The sheer variety that exists, as shown in Table 7, means that ESPON will never be able to neatly fit the needs of all practitioners involved in ITDS. However, national scale strategies, where they exist, are obvious instruments for ESPON to target, though often these have lacked an effective territorial dimension in the past.

Similarly, most, but not all countries in INTERSTRAT have some kind of regional strategies, though again they may fall short in terms of their capacity to integrate sector policies territorially. Again, these are potential beneficiaries of ESPON work, with projects like RISE and some other Priority 2 projects particularly relevant.

Local authorities at lower levels are generally involved in more regulatory and detailed planning and are unlikely to show much engagement with ESPON.

Finding 2: There is value in preparing an Engagement Strategy

The preparation of national Engagement Strategies focused thinking and effort. From implementing the national engagement strategies partners have a much better knowledge of the national stakeholders, how they perceive the ESPON and some of the difficulties they encounter in understanding, accessing and using ESPON results. Partners also have much better practical skills to communicate with and engage stakeholders in an interactive way.

As the Belgian ECP commented: “There was much better knowledge of different stakeholders, the ESPON programme and people using ESPON results. The needs of stakeholders could be very different – e.g. geographic location (cities, trans-border), degree of power and responsibility (e.g. a national park, a regional authority) - and corresponding needs for data and concepts. We learnt to inform the stakeholders how they could collaborate within Belgium and with other euro regions with the same problem.”

The Ireland ECP reflected on the experience: “We learnt from the national engagement strategies: how to articulate the proper role of the ESPON; more practical actions – the delivery of the seminars; and the interpretation of ESPON and how it was perceived by the stakeholders. We realised we needed to find out what aspects of ESPON were really useful to them and then move towards that.”

Finding 3: Focused and intensive interventions such as the INTERSTRAT events can have impact and generate innovation

Of course, the work of INTERSTRAT is no panacea for strengthening ITDS. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from the partners' experiences that such interventions can have an impact. Thus the Bulgarians commented: "We learnt about the integrated approach through seeing different country systems for spatial planning and regional development. Bulgaria has two different laws for the two. They have some linkages but are not as integrated as some. Through the project it has been possible to get in the same conference room the top practitioners from both sides: The outcomes are taking us in the right direction - making connections between and harmonising the two systems."

For Slovenia, the hope is that the national workshop results which supported a spatial development model will stimulate the development of territorial development policies rather than sectoral policies. The Italian ECP is proposing to the Italian Ministry that a new territorial cohesion report is prepared. The first was done in 2006. In Greece, INTERSTRAT is felt to have promoted the idea of spatial strategic planning. The Greek ECP opines that "This is necessary in Greece. The southern countries of the EU have an urbanist tradition. We learnt a lot on the setting of goals and strategies in the integrated approach. This is good for the regions which need to do regional strategies."

Meanwhile the Polish ECP is operating with other Ministries and has managed to get ESPON used in four national level strategies (out of the nine being prepared). The ECP added, "We've also requested to be involved in another: we've been asked by the Ministry of Environment and Energy to make their strategy more transnational. We are to develop a territorial supplement to the environment and energy security strategy for Poland. It is a serious assignment and will engage new experts. Three strategies are being drafted by experts also involved in several ESPON projects. One of these, for regional development, is based on the ESPON concept (but not influenced by INTERSTRAT). It has led to a changed concept of territorial cohesion in the country."

Finding 4: ESPON needs to better address the needs of national and sub-national stakeholders to deliver its full benefits.

From their experience of implementing the engagement strategies and the feedback it gave them from stakeholders, partners want to see the ESPON

programme better meet the needs of practitioners. This requires more understanding of country stakeholders at different levels and with different interests, through better communication activities; adjustment of programme activities to better meet national stakeholder interests (whilst continuing European level support); and the presentation of ESPON results in ways which are more understandable to the different groups and which are easier to access and use; for example, through country supplements which explain the relevance of ESPON data, use of stakeholder language, and simpler maps.

Factsheets and demonstration materials produced by partners are useful in this respect, succinctly conveying the key messages relevant to each project, stakeholder or country. These dissemination tools were seen to be effective with various stakeholder groups, including students who might require the basic facts, and policy-makers who have little time to digest lengthy documents.

Simplification of language is another way of making ESPON findings more accessible. In the UK, EU terminology has been adapted for the audience, for example by referring to ITDS as spatial strategies which is a more familiar term to UK planners. A glossary of EU terms was produced by the UK ECP to try to better communicate the implications of ESPON findings. This included 'translating' terms such as secondary growth poles (secondary cities) and territorial development (spatial development). There is also a feeling that the ESPON website could be improved. The view of the partners is that the INTERSTRAT website is clearer and easier to navigate.

Some structural problems were identified in some workshops that ESPON could usefully address. Often practitioners have access to more up to date and local data than they can get through ESPON. In part this reflects the ambition of ESPON to collect data in a consistent manner from across the whole ESPON space. However, ESPON then lacks value and even credibility to some practitioners who already use better data for their own areas. Priority 2 projects may overcome this problem to some extent, but could Priority 1 projects be encouraged to make use of better data even if it is not available for the whole ESPON space?

Similarly, the research agenda in Priority 1 is skewed towards the priorities of DG Regio. There are good reasons for this, but it does mean that important concerns amongst many practitioners get little attention in Priority 1. Perhaps the most obvious examples are housing and land and commercial property markets, and a better understanding of spatial planning and ITDS in the different ESPON countries. One lesson from

INTERSTRAT is that practitioners are interested in ESPON only if it is dealing with things that they are working upon.

One thing that practitioners are interested in is benchmarking with other EU regions. However, at present they find it difficult to use the ESPON Database for this purpose. Small, interactive workshops could be used to showcase the ESPON Database and HyperAtlas, provided ECPs were proficient in both accessing and using these. Similarly, the Urban Benchmarking Tool is likely to be of interest but may not be available before the work of ECPs in ESPON 2013 begins to be run down.

Finding 5: An enhanced role for ECPs with better resourcing for their work offers the best route for capitalisation of ESPON in the post-2014 programme.

INTERSTRAT has shown that the ECPs, not the CU, MC or project partners, are the prime interface and the potential users of ESPON at national and sub-national level. The ECPs have developed valuable skills and knowledge. INTERSTRAT showed how such know-how can be acquired or boosted.

With better resourcing, whether nationally or through a larger Priority 4 programme, ECPs could play a key role in continuing the work started by INTERSTRAT to deepen engagement with national stakeholders and assist dissemination of ESPON results; better contribute to debates on programme themes and activities; and capitalise the results of Priority 4 projects.

However, they lack the resources to carry out this enhanced role if funding of ECP activities continues to be tied to project funding. Appointing ECPs to carry out defined responsibilities for the whole of the programme period with proper funding and support from the CU would enable them to operate as a strong and capable network providing added value to the programme.

Some INTERSTRAT partners feel the ECP role could usefully grow in other ways. One told Myers, “ECPs should have a defined role and the opportunity to participate in the organisation of ESPON and a vision for it. We should have regular seminars allowing time and space for ECPs to contribute to the shaping of the programme. They should be at least once a year or every half year organised under each EU presidency, similar to the one being organised for the first time by the Polish presidency in Krakow. This is inviting experts to the seminar. It should take the form of the INTERSTRAT national workshops for stakeholders facilitated by the

ECPs – i.e. making it lively and interactive. ECPs should be consulted on the agenda for such meetings.

There is also a feeling that the experience has shown the potential for better co-ordination between the different Priority 4 projects, allowing cross-fertilisation, for example between work in CADEC or ESPON Train and the dissemination work in INTERSTRAT. This would require a more flexible approach to funding and managing Priority 4 projects.

There is also a need for Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects to make provision in their budgets for joint dissemination actions shared with ECPs. At present, the focus, particularly in Priority 1, is still too much towards dissemination of findings through publishing results at scientific conferences or in academic journals that few, if any, practitioners read.

INTERSTRAT has also showed that Priority 4 projects can generate materials of potential interest for research on territorial development. In future, provision should be made for the possibility of combining dissemination and research in Priority 4 projects.

Overall the view from the project is that INTERSTRAT has provided good value for money, and that it would make sense to put more resources into Priority 4 to enable ECPs to do more activities like INTERSTRAT. As well as building good capacity across the network, the ECPs can capitalise ESPON results far more effectively than external consultants whose background is not in territorial development and who only work centrally rather than within the member states.

As things stand, INTERSTRAT partners fear that they will not be able to sustain the kind of activities and outreach that they have been doing beyond the end of the project, due to lack of resources.

9. Conclusions

The project has demonstrated the need to better connect ESPON to the practitioners and policy makers who, in different ways in different countries and regions, are involved in preparation and implementation of ITDS.

INTERSTRAT has shown that ECPs are the key channel to use. However, currently resourcing of the ECPs does not permit the sustained application of the approaches developed in this project.

A National Engagement Strategy was found to be a useful technique to identify stakeholders and target limited resources, while also thinking about appropriate channels for engagement. This is potentially a transferable approach for all ECPs in a future ESPON.

Interactive events have potential to mobilise stakeholders' interest in ESPON and to impact on ideas and practices linked to ITDS.

Demonstration materials in national languages and targeted to national stakeholders can be an effective means of reaching them.

The INTERSTRAT website has compiled a valuable collection of ITDS from the partner countries, as well as materials from the events, country reports, demonstration materials etc. This resource should not be lost when the project ends. The ESPON main website could benefit from the clarity and information on the INTERSTRAT site.

The project has been effectively managed and valuable experience has been gained in project management.

The partners have demonstrated the great strengths that can come from transnational working and learning from the diversity within the partnership.

Above all, ESPON post-2013 needs to fully recognise the vital role that ECPs play in the dissemination process, and ensure that their role is adequately resourced. This will be a cost-effective measure, as ECPs can do what no central body can do – ECPs can reach national stakeholders and understand their needs. ECPs should have a clear and valued role within ESPON, training for that role (there are things that INTERSTRAT could contribute to this) and the resources to do the job, without being dependent upon the uncertainties of tendering and participation in Priority 4 projects.

C. Annexes

Annex I

Table A: Engagement Statements for ESPON-INTERSTRAT

Statements Put Forward by Workshop Participants	“Votes”
A forum for development practitioners	
A new platform to exchange planning ideas in Europe	**
A new refreshing approach to planning Europe	****
Approaching planning systems by means of ITDS ideas and practices	*
A two-way road to better plan-making	**
Bring Europe into your practice! Bring a European perspective into your plans!	
Brings practical tools from ESPON to all actors involved in developing territorial development strategies.	
Building common understanding of perspectives for development	**
Connecting territorial planners across Europe	***
Connecting town planners in Europe	**
Don't think to poverty, make plans!	
Getting our strategies together!	
Form the (<i>nationality e.g. Greek</i>) Euro-planner!	*
Informing practice, sharing experience	****
Integrate <i>genius loci</i> with local and regional development	
INTERSTRAT helps you to know best European practice in spatial planning ¹	
INTERSTRAT is a European network creating a dialogue between spatial planning research and practice	***
INTERSTRAT: refreshing planning practice across Europe	**
Knowledge for spatial planning	
Knowledge for futures	
Knowledge for development and quality of life.	
Learning from each other	
Link ESPON evidence to planning practice	
Listen, learn, plan places	
Moving from urban planning traditions to strategic planning through ESPON	
Mutual support for the future	
New European connections for territorial planners.	
New ways of doing plans	
Open to Practice and Practitioners	*
Put more Europe in your plans! ²	
Refresh your plans, Refresh your practise, connecting to Europe.	****
Sharing experience in strategic planning	*****
Smart ideas for smart plans	****
Working together; refreshing our approaches, understanding each other; new perspectives.	

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