

INTERREG /ESPON

Spatial visions and scenarios

Methods and approaches used in
spatial visioning

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Elaboration steps of spatial visions

- Territorial analysis (present situation and trends) for the entire cooperation area and, possibly for sub-areas (thematic analyses, quantitative and qualitative approaches);
- Analyses of policy impacts (not frequent in practice);
- Search and elaboration of information about the future (projections, scenarios, identification of driving forces and of their evolution, evolution of public policies);
- Identification of most significant territorial challenges for the cooperation area (present and future);
- Elaboration of an indicative strategy and future image of the territory of the cooperation area

Main information constraints faced in the elaboration of spatial visions

- Heterogeneity of national statistical and territorial information systems;
- Difficulties in setting up a transnational data base for the cooperation area;
- Non-availability of quantitative projections and scenarios for the cooperation area;
- Insufficient knowledge about driving forces and their future evolution and about their possible territorial impacts;
- Insufficient knowledge about the impacts of policies;

The knowledge base underlying most spatial visions (with a few exceptions) is rather weak

Elaboration process of spatial visions (interplay of stakeholders)

Original model

- A technical team (consultants, transnational technical working group) carries out the preparatory analyses and the draft spatial vision;
- A consultation process is organised at administrative/political level;
- Some form of administrative/political validation (with indicative character) takes place

Elaboration process of spatial visions (interplay of stakeholders)

More recent approaches to the elaboration and updating processes of spatial visions

- The administrative/political stakeholders are involved from the very beginning and during the whole elaboration/updating process;
- Wide consultations are organised during the elaboration process (workshops with public, private semi-public stakeholders; bottom-up approaches)

Elaboration process of spatial visions (interplay of stakeholders)

- The output is less a territorial image for the long-term future and more the identification of strategic key issues (and projects) for future transnational cooperation;
- Evolution of spatial visioning towards an on-going process

Examples of innovative approaches in the preparation of spatial visions

- Economic analyses (Atlantic Area): calculation of a “relative development index” (RDI) for each NUTS3 unit, useful for deepening the knowledge on the regional environment of urban systems, as well as their present and future positioning in the wider Atlantic Area;
- Prospective Study for the Alpine Space: elaboration of a series of 6 complementary scenarios highlighting specific elements of territorial development in the Alpine area

Examples of innovative approaches in the preparation of spatial visions

Elaboration of a spatial planning observatory in South-East Europe (ESTIA-SPOSE project):

- Territorial Indicator System;
- Pilot Applications of Indicators in selected sectors and areas;
- Spatial Planning Observatory Platform as permanent network of spatial planning agencies

Potential contributions of ESPON to the spatial visioning process

- Provision of an integrated transnational spatial data base (NUTS2 and NUTS3);
- Maps data base;
- Identification of most important driving forces and of their possible evolution, together with possible territorial impacts;
- Analyses of policy impacts
- Provision of thematic analyses on the constraints and performance of European regions (territorial potentials);
- Awareness raising information about changing contexts (through scenarios and speculative research on non-linear processes)

Conditions for higher usefulness of ESPON outputs in spatial visioning processes

- Wider availability of the ESPON data base and maps base
- More future-oriented research
- Better streamlined studies with more coherence between them;
- Less academic expression of outputs;
- Transnational cooperation areas should be considered in the presentation of outputs