

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS
– DIRECTORATE E –
Horizontal Policies and Networks



QUESTIONNAIRE

ASSESSMENT ON TERRITORIAL IMPACTS

Submitted by Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)

Michael Schneider is the rapporteur for the CoR own initiative opinion on *Assessment on territorial impacts*. This opinion will discuss the European Commission's Staff Working Document on **Assessing territorial impacts: operational guidance on how to assess regional and local impacts within the Commission Impact Assessment system, SWD (2013) 3 final**. This questionnaire identifies important issues for the Committee of the Regions and is designed to assist in the drafting of the own initiative opinion on the assessment of territorial impacts.

Please complete and submit by **20 March 2013**. If you are member of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network you can upload the completed questionnaire directly onto the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network website (<http://subsidiarity.cor.europa.eu> – remember to log in). Alternatively and in case you are not member of the Network, you can send it by email to subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu.

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QUESTIONS

1. The Staff Working Document states that: *"the guidance provided here also responds to a request from the Member States, expressed in the debate following the 2008 Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and under the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 as part of the Territorial Agenda process"*.

a) Do you consider that the document published by the European Commission meets the expectations and the ideas expressed in the political debate raised after the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion in 2008? Do you believe there is a need for greater follow-up to this debate on territorial cohesion and if yes, could you give some concrete examples?

Largely, I consider the document as a step in the right direction, which allows to move from general statements about the need of better territorial awareness to concrete proposals on how to go about. Maybe it should be highlighted that at this stage territorial impact assessments work rather as eye-openers about possible territorial differentiations of impacts. It is not meant to be a thorough and in-depth analysis at this stage.

Probably it would make sense to do a follow-up or review once the first 10 or 15 impact assessments have been carried out. This would allow to see whether they work in practice, where there are potential misunderstandings or difficulties and what the actual added value is.

2. In order to better coordinate the territorial impact of sectoral EU policies, there needs to be a better understanding and measurement of those impacts. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion already focused on this point, stating that "improving territorial cohesion implies better coordination between sectoral and territorial policies and improved coherence between territorial interventions".

b) Do you believe that the European Commission's proposal can be an effective instrument able to improve coordination between EU sectoral policies having territorial impacts? In your view what else should/could be done?

Yes, it can be an effective instrument for having first ideas about differentiated territorial impacts of different policies. This will allow for a first check against the objectives of EU regional policies or other policies with explicit territorial objectives (e.g. the Territorial Agenda).

To improve the coordination between EU sector policies and their territorial impacts, it would probably be necessary to regularly compile all territorial impact assessments carried out and provide a review on the degree the territorial impacts point towards (a) synergies between different policies in particular types of regions, or (b) hamper each other in specific types of regions.

3. The Staff Working Document provides operational and methodological guidance on how to answer a range of questions regarding the potential territorial impact of a given proposal. Nevertheless, it underlines that assessing territorial impacts is not mandatory, and states that it is just a tool that can be helpful to enhance the policy coherence of some policy proposals.

c) Do you consider that territorial impact assessments should be made compulsory for those sectoral policies having a territorial impact? If yes, in your opinion for which sectoral policies should the assessment of territorial impacts be made mandatory?

Territorial impact assessment might also be of particular interest for policies which are spatially blind at first sight. There are various views and assessments on which policy sectors should address their territorial impacts. The 5th Cohesion Report lists a series of relevant sector policies for this. Other examples are shown in the table:

EU policy fields of territorial relevance	Deutscher Verband für Wohnungswesen, Städtebau und Raumordnung e.V. (2009)	Battis & Kersten (2009)	Ravesteyn & Evers (2004)
Regional policy	X	X	X
Transport	X	X	X
Energy	X	X	
ICT	X	X	X
Agriculture	X	X	X
Environment	X	X	X
Maritime	X		
Common market & competitiveness	(X)		X
Research	(X)	X	
Employment & Social	(X)		

4. The Staff Working Document states that a territorial impact assessment should be carried out when the proposal explicitly focuses on specific territories or when the proposal risks of having a large asymmetric territorial impact (outlier impact). It also highlights different methods that can be used to assess territorial impacts. In particular, it mentions qualitative and quantitative analysis. These tools and methodologies should be used by the different Directorates-General at the European Commission when preparing territorial impact assessments for proposals they are responsible for.

d) Do you consider the data, methodology and tools proposed for supporting territorial impact assessments (such as ESPON ARTS¹ or QUICKScan) are sufficient to measure the potential territorial impacts a given proposal could have in your region? Would you propose any other type of tools/methodology?

e) Do you believe the complexity of territorial impact assessments require them to be carried out by a single specialised entity (one-stop shop) or do you prefer the idea of a decentralised system as proposed in the Staff Working Document?

For a territorial impact assessment serving mainly as eye-openers the methodology and tools proposed are sufficient. As for the data, there might be some challenges depending on the policy field in question.

Focusing on eye-openers and the proposed methodologies, things should be kept rather straightforward and suitable for a decentralised system. In case of more in-depth assessments (which might be useful in particular cases) maybe a single body with a particular insights and experience in the field of territorial impact assessments might be suitable.

5. Multilevel Governance and partnerships are key factors in the implementation of territorial cohesion, focussing on strengthening a place-based approach. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for the assessment of specific territorial impacts and recalls the potential role² of the CoR in assisting the European Commission in the process of Impact Assessment as well as to be associated to some of the EC's initiatives towards improvements in the capacity building of regional and local authorities³.

f) What should the specific measures providing for the involvement of local and regional authorities be in these exercises?

g) What role do you see for the Committee of the Regions in this context?

The results of territorial impact assessments should be made available to local and regional authorities when they formulate their position to a policy. This way they can either provide additional insights or work as corrective to an impact assessment, which might be misleading.

The Committee of the Region could facilitate the collection if impact assessments and review them with regard to types of regions which (a) are particular affected by a number of policies, (b) might

1 http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/arts.html.

2 See section 5.5 of the EC's Staff Working Document: "Under the Protocol on Cooperation between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions (2012) the Commission services may ask for support from the Committee in preparing its assessment.

3 CdR 353/2010, CoR Opinion on Smart Regulation.

have better chances to benefit from synergies between different policies, or (c) even might face challenging with contradicting impacts of policies.

In the case of single impact assessments it could also help to ensure that regions differently affected from a policy are responding to a policy proposal. In other words, avoid a bias in the responses as only regions facing on type of impact participate in a stakeholder dialogue.

6. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for territorial cohesion to be strengthened in relation to the EU2020 Strategy. One possibility for this could be not to confine the assessment of territorial impacts to legislative proposals and to extend them to other documents, such as key planning documents, such as the Annual Growth Survey.

h) Do you think there should be a territorial dimension of the EU2020 policy cycle?

i) Do you consider the Annual Growth Survey (as a key planning document for the launch of the annual EU2020 policy cycle) should contain a territorial impact assessment?

j) In your opinion, should Territorial Impact Assessments also be carried out at Member State level?

Yes, for a successful implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy, it is necessary to consider the territorial dimension. (See also Zillmer, S., K. Böhme, C. Lür, K. Pflanz & A. Radvánski (2012) Umsetzung und Wirkungen der Strategie "Europa 2020" in deutschen Regionen. BMVBS-Online-Publikation, Nr. 24/2012.)

Yes, the Annual Growth Survey should contain a territorial reflection and that could be in form of a territorial impact assessment.

Some Member States do already have tools similar to territorial impact assessments to be applied in certain cases. Overall, I would probably rather advocate to inform the Member States about the procedures and encourage them to use them, but not make it generally obligatory. (Possibly, it could be come obligatory for EU programmes in the Member States.)