

## **Assessment of territorial impacts**

*Helena Gidlöf, Section of local and regional development, Swedish association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)*

### **Background**

The Commission has prepared a working document with proposed guidelines for evaluation and assessment of territorial impacts. The development of these guidelines is based on an order from the member countries, as expressed in the debate that followed the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion from 2008 and during the Polish presidency in 2011 as part of the Territorial Agenda.

Regions shall prepare the opinion on the Commission's working document, with a first reading of COTER on the 26 February.

The definition of territorial impact assessment can be summarized as "a tool to analyze the effects of physical development in relation to the objectives of the planning or the plans for the area."

### **Impact Assessments generally**

- Impact assessment is a key tool for the assurance that all the initiatives taken by the EU Commission and EU legislation is carefully prepared based on transparency, comprehensive and balanced evidence.
- Impact assessment is a support in the process making political decisions and not a substitute for political decision-making
- While many players may be involved, but the overall quality of the impact assessment is the responsibility of a management team

### **Guidelines for territorial impact assessment**

The guidelines summarize the territorial impact assessments can be conducted. The aim of territorial impact assessment is to make a preliminary assessment or estimates in the design of various EU policies and what outcome they can get by territorial approaches and differences.

The aim of territorial impact assessment is thus to make an impact from a territorial perspective. These types of assessments have become more realistic to perform when there has been a considerable increase in the regional, local and spatial data available.

### **The need to make territorial impact assessments**

There is a need for territorial impact assessments on the adoption of various legislative proposals, such as state aid rules, bill that aims to reduce emissions or the consequences of increased global trade integration has different territories and what measures should then be designed. For example, there are various opportunities for regional aid depending on the territorial conditions, such as conditions and needs in the sparsely populated areas of northern Europe.

### **When making territorial impact assessments and adaptation of policies**

The guidelines aim to provide opportunities to include territorial impact of policies:

- Explicitly targeting certain regions or areas.
- Have a high level of risk that affect one type of region or area more than other regions and areas, ie. which has a very asymmetric territorial impact.

Policies specifically targeted to certain regions and areas should base their impact on these regions or areas (if they have already been identified). If regions or areas have not yet been identified, the impact assessment relies on:

- a) an ad hoc / temporary definition of regions or areas that may act as a substitute until a "definitive" definition has been developed and is widely widespread, for example, while preparing definition city uses the definition municipality, a clear definition as an administrative unit, perceived close enough to town to definition
- b) a harmonized definition of a particular type of area is widespread, eg coastal region or island

To assess the territorial impact of an intervention (policy, legislative, action plan, and budget) can improve the effectiveness of policies. If the territorial implications are very asymmetric, the policy can be adapted to reduce this imbalance. The guidelines specify five different types of adaptation and mitigation of possible asymmetric territorial:

- Customize policy throughout the Union or any of its parts
- Allow more time to implement a policy in some parts of the Union
- Exclude certain parts of the Union from politics
- Use existing policies, including cohesion policy, to deal with asymmetric territorial impacts
- create a new instrument to deal with asymmetric territorial effects if or when they arise

### **Units / definition of different territories**

Territorial means mainly that you have a spatial approach in the analysis of impacts. The spatial refers:

- Administrative and political levels (macro-regional, national, regional or local level)
- Types of regions such as: border regions, rural, coastal areas
- Functional areas such as: the area around a river, labor

The guidelines includes a number of maps showing up how these territorial units relate to each other, and definitions as the basis for these devices ex. cities, urbanization, areas characterized as peripheral, sparsely populated, islands, mountains.

#### **Methods / tools**

Assessment of the territorial effects can be made using both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop territorial impact assessments.

The qualitative approach relates to describe the following:

- The main problem
- Capacity to meet the problems / implement policy
- Actors involved in the policy measures
- Potential impact, which is a combination of the above mentioned issues

The guidelines presented two methods to implement quantitative territorial impact assessments: one based on statistics (GIS) and QuickScan (quantitative) and ESPON ARTS (quantitative) as evaluates policies based on three elements: exposure, sensitivity, impact).

#### **Related / links**

Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/panorama/pdf/mag28/mag28\\_sv.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panorama/pdf/mag28/mag28_sv.pdf)

Impact assessment guidelines 2009:

[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/commission\\_guidelines/docs/iag\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/commission_guidelines/docs/iag_2009_en.pdf)

Assessing territorial impacts: Assessing territorial impacts: Operational guidance on how to ASSESS regional and local impacts Within the Commission Impact Assessment System, SWD (2013) 3 final

#### **Related comments**

See also SALAR's overall position on the European Commission's Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion - turning territorial diversity into strength (2009-02-20)

Territorial Cohesion: [Territoriell sammanhållning](#)

**The comments generally - SALAR officers**

Making territorial impact assessments can be compared with, for example sustainability impact assessments that include more than just the environment or environmental impact assessments.

Consideration is given to the territory in policymaking. We take a positive approach in a methodical way to make territorial impact assessments. The methods seem to appear to be good approaches. It is good to methods and statistics, which defines and sees differences in the territory, to be developed and constantly evolve.

Issues to discuss the Commission's document on territorial impact assessments

**Questions developed for the first discussion on COTER Commission meeting on March 26.**

*A: reflects the document / guidelines expectations in light of the political debate following the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion from 2008?*

We take a broadly positive about the EU Commission's work, approach and ambition. Not sure if it can help any negative consequences, in general or in individual cases.

*B: the proposal could be an effective instrument to improve coordination between EU sectoral policies which have implications for the local and regional level? Is there anything more that can / should be done?*

Understanding of territories and regions specific conditions (needs, challenges and opportunities) can be visualized over time, which can contribute to better coordination between sectoral policies.

*C. about the territorial impact assessments are required for sectoral policies which have an impact on regional and local level (and isf for which sectoral approaches)?*

Budgetary resources that will contribute to greater cohesion and distributed to EU regions should be based on territorial impact assessments. For example, the state aid rules in its drafting consider territorial impact assessments so competitive and so level playing field within the EU can be achieved.

*D: data, methods and tools proposed are sufficient (depending on your region)?*

Both models, methods and tools are designed so that new information and facts can be processed into. Continuous efforts to develop new viable statistics and new definitions of units based on the territorial conditions. Then enter these in the models / methods based on both qualitative as well quantitative analysis and obtain results = territorial impact and outcome of different actions / policies.

*E: is the territorial impact assessments so complex that they should be carried out by a specialized unit or a decentralized system guidelines suggest?*

In terms of which system is to prefer; centralized (one-shop-stop) or decentralized (where those responsible for the work to design their own policy measures implementing the analysis) can be arguments both speak for or against the two systems.

A decentralized approach might be able to help and encourage more creativity. Arguments against a specialized unit (centralized) performing such assessments may be the risk of a stop, which only provides feedback to the policy drafting unit without any meddlesome kick in alternative policy measures.

Compare the environmental impact and its positive contribution in the formulation of policies and measures and increased bureaucracy and possible delays in the work.

*F: what steps should be taken to ensure that local and regional authorities can participate in these procedures?*

Open consultations with the local and regional level can make shots.

*G: what role should the Committee have in this context?*

Regions can usefully rådgöras current selected units of analysis and the territorial impact assessments in the preparation of policies and legislation.

*H: Europe 2020 - it should have a territorial dimension?*

As Europe 2020 means control with goals and strategies and legislation territorial impact assessments help in efforts to better data analysis and preparation of objectives and indicators. Although it can contribute positively, it is unclear that it will be mandatory in its entirety or if it is different in Europe in 2020 when it involves many policy areas where some areas have a higher risk of creating asymmetry in its outcome.

At the MS level, the regional level expressed needs to be part of the system with the Europe 2020 process and objectives set at EU level and at national level. Commitment and knowledge, institutional capacity building of goals tailored to the region / territory and follow-up work that captures regional differences (opportunities and challenges) can be improved. The Territorial Dimension imprint on MS level might be to implement territorial impact assessments in the work of national objectives related to Europe 2020.

*I: the Annual Growth Survey (Europe 2020 planning document), it should have a territorial impact assessment?*

Europe 2020 strategy can be said to be a top-down approach, performed at the EU level and then expected to be implemented in member countries. If territorial impact assessments are added, one can possibly be better capture the local and regional disparities within the EU, which can help to improve one designed and implemented strategy.

*J: be territorial impact assessments carried out at national level?*

Member States should also develop territorial impact assessments, in order to coordinate all actions at all levels of governance.

Territorial cohesion is secured treaties and includes Member States. Implementing territorial impact assessments can contribute to an approach which also how to find potential.

The issue of SKL's role at the national level can be analogous to the question of the CoR's role at the EU level. The question is whether you can answer the questions of principle the same approach or if you can say that the territorial impact of MS level so should not SKL go in and review the national policy.

#### **EU policies with different territorial implications**

EU policies can be divided into categories based on how well they take the territorial dimension into consideration:

- Cohesion policy, agricultural policy and rural development policy, the EU's environmental policy and transport policy has a clear territorial dimension
- Energy policy, fisheries, maritime affairs, internal market issues and competition policies, with a more implicit connection to the territorial dimension
- Research and development, economic and monetary policies, EU policies on exports, food safety, EU policies on nutrition and industry