

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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If necessary, you can also contact the CoR Data Protection Officer (data.protection@cor.europa.eu). You have the right of recourse to the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time (www.edps.europa.eu). Please note that the questionnaire with your contribution and your contact details will be published online. Your questionnaire might be transmitted to CoR Rapporteurs and other EU institutions for information. If you do not wish so, please inform us accordingly.

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?

While the staff working document has provided a methodology for the possible assessment of territorial impacts, it is necessary that any Territorial Impacts Assessments should have a territorial and spatial focus which promotes territorial integration though harmonised spatial, social and economic assessment at a European, National and Regional level. Such assessments should provide an integrated approach to harmonising regional and local typologies, while recognising the diversity of regions, and the assessments should be tailored for the specific needs of regions.

The Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA) is committed to the principles of subsidiarity and would not wish to see any processes established which would damage this principle. It is felt that there is a need to promote co-ordinated approaches and tools to promote inter-territorial and transnational cohesion. The MWRA would be reluctant to suggest any specific proposals, but would suggest that an follow up proposals to the Green Paper would ensure that all sectoral polices considered for adoption in members states should be subject to territorial impact proofing.

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?

The EU Commission's proposals are positive and could form the basis for the delivery of more effective territorial cohesion. Any territorial cohesion policy should acknowledge that there will both convergence and diversity of policy and attributes of different regions, and should ensure that the discussion and consideration of diversity of sector policies, be viewed as a positive attribute, enhancing the territorial cohesion process.

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 sectorial policies having a territorial impact? If yes, in your opinion for which sectorial policies should the assessment of territorial impacts be made mandatory?

c) The consideration of the application of territorial assessments should be undertaken initially on a voluntary or pilot project basis. The findings or outcomes of such projects used as a template or tool to undertake any future project assessments. Areas of possible application for the Territorial Cohesion assessment process should be selected in terms of the Europe 2020 objectives.

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?

d) There are a number of potential resources and organisations who are qualified for the data collation, analysis and presentation of the Territorial analysis proposed. The project assessment methodology and tools proposed in section 5.4 of the working document are acceptable insofar as they measure quantitative data. However the methodology proposed makes no provision for the assessment of qualitative data which can be of significance to the regions of member states.

e) Given the complexities and availability of suitably qualified and experienced research staff resources and the financial limitations at an European scale in giving effects to these proposals it is considered that a one stop shop entity with specialised skills would be the best entity to undertake the work, rather than at a regional scale.

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

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?

f) The MWRA is reluctant to suggest any specific proposals in this regard due to the variables between states in respect of the powers and responsibilities of different tiers of governance throughout the EU. Ireland has a much centralised Governance structure with limited powers for the Regional and Local Authorities, and like many regions within member states is subject to on-going local governance reform. e.g. UK/Ireland.

g) The COR is a potential vehicle for political representation for the delivery of “regional public services” and for the development of credible collaborative solutions at a local and regional level within the Republic of Ireland.

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?

h) Yes. The EU2020 Growth Strategy Europe 2020 promotes five ambitious objectives relating to employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy. These 5 target areas are set within spatial and economic parameters with require Member State to adopt national targets, priorities and action plans to promote and deliver in each of these areas high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The provision of a Territorial Cohesion Assessment with defined outputs would assist in

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

the assessment of the success of the implementation of such strategy at a European scale.

i) The complexity of the annual growth survey requirements as part of any territorial impact assessment would require substantial resources, and it is not certain that the current quantitative data required would be available at either a national or regional scale. The inclusion of such an assessment would most likely be best employed on a cyclical basis.

j) Territorial Impact Assessment would be best undertaken both at an EU level and at a National Level. While the assessment at a EU level would be more relevant to the assessment of cohesion of harmonised common policies between EU member states, i.e. Common Agricultural Policies etc, it would be possible at a national level , to obtain more detailed data analysis and trends for local data sources which may not be readily available at a European scale.