

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.

Name of Authority:	
Contact person:	
Contact details (phone, email):	
Member of	SMN Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform Other

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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?

The working document and methodology set out in **Assessing territorial impacts: operational guidance on how to assess regional and local impacts within the Commission Impact Assessment system** (TIA) is a positive contribution and an improvement to the integration of the territorial dimension of the EU's sectoral policies, which was one of the demands of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. Furthermore, TIA incorporates and synthesises recent studies (databases, typologies, methodologies, instruments, etc. developed by ESPON and EEA amongst others) carried out to integrate territory as a crosscutting aspect of impact assessments on sectoral policies.

The debate on territorial cohesion will continue, as will the debate on economic and social cohesion. Nevertheless, it is more useful to start work on the TIA of sectoral policies and, in so doing, to improve awareness and recognition of the territorial impacts of the policies and use the findings to inform and enrich the debate.

It is important to mention that despite the progress signified by the TIA proposal, there are difficulties involved in integrating the local perspective and level, which is where a good number of the territorial impacts of sectoral policies occur. Although the methodology includes the recent studies of regional typologies (urban and metropolitan, rural and outlying regions, intermediate cities, etc.) the local level is the least represented in the TIA proposal because it is difficult to obtain harmonised data at the EU level. Further work is required to broaden databases, especially at the intermediate (NUTS 3) level and below.

Proposal: Involve the local and regional levels in the work to broaden the harmonisation of local databases in order to better measure the territorial impact of policies. Local as well as intermediate governments can play a significant role.

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 TIA document and proposals improve coordination between EU sectoral policies and the territorial impact since until now territorial impact assessments have been sporadic. The TIA proposal is the first tool (based on other impact assessment tools) that specifically assesses the territorial impact of sectoral policies: it will provide awareness and recognition of these impacts.

Legislating and applying sectoral policies by using the same criteria in different situations (and the basic characteristic of a territory is difference) results in different impacts. It can accentuate differences or have unforeseen, sometimes negative, outcomes. Understanding of the territorial impacts of sectoral policies is being developed: it will advance and deliver results that will help to improve coordination and, at the same time, raise new issues.

A number of key aspects are currently absent from the proposal:

- coordination between the sectoral policies and the territorial strategies of the States and regions, and of local strategies in particular. (noting that the Commission has yet to gather this information in a structured form)
- the participation of the local authorities and intermediate or meso level authorities, when these play a part in local implementation. The local – and intermediate - levels are vital to the territorial impact assessment of policies (impacts occur at the local level).

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?

Although it makes sense to begin the TIA of sectoral policies that have an obvious territorial impact (transport and agricultural policies, environmental directives or urban policies, etc.), it would eventually be interesting to gradually extend TIA to all sectoral policies, since they all have a

territorial impact even though some are better understood or more widely recognised than others.

All sectoral policies (e.g. policies relating to industry, communications, patents, security, immigration, or education, etc.) have varying territorial impacts which need to be understood and assessed. Understanding the territorial impact of sectoral policies will help to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, this knowledge needs to be accumulated in order to incorporate it and create a record of the territorial impacts of sectoral policies within structures and administrations.

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) The methodologies and tools proposed are a clear step forward. Its relative simplicity, straightforwardness and communicability, and the significant incorporation of knowledge gained in recent years, are very positive. Nevertheless, it is necessary to stress the difficulties involved in connecting instruments such as ARTS or QUIKScan with the local and intermediate level, whereas the territorial impacts of sectoral policies occur at the local level (see section f).

Proposal: formally include the local and regional perspective in TIA by involving local and regional authorities in the process after first identifying the affected territories (typologies, etc.).

e) TIA will require a significant time-investment from the DGs, which they will find difficulty. Furthermore, assessing territorial impacts is a relatively new and inherently complex process. This is why it would be prudent to opt for some form of specialised entity in order to create a core of accumulated knowledge to generate a record of the territorial impacts of sectoral policies within political and administrative structures. Experts, associations and local and regional authorities also

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

need to be involved (see section f).

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) In order to generate and accumulate information on the territorial impacts of sectoral policies, the local and regional authorities have to be involved in the TIA process. At a time of crisis and global change, the Commission's sectoral policies have different local impacts, and at the same time, local responses are structured around specific and individual strategies based on their resources and approaches.

Proposal: include a structured dialogue in TIA, involving significant local and regional authorities in each case to compare and enrich the outcomes. Intermediate local governments can contribute to the development of these dialogues. It is also necessary to involve experts on each sectoral policy and the associations involved because they have prior knowledge of the territorial impacts of each policy.

g) The Committee of the Regions, as a consultative body representing the local and regional authorities, has an essential role to play in defending the capacity and need for local and regional participation in TIA. Although the current TIA proposal represents considerable progress for territorial cohesion, the local and regional authorities need to be involved and sectoral policies have to be coordinated with the assessment of territorial impacts and the impacts on local and regional strategies.

The capacity of local and regional authorities to develop and promote their own territorial development strategies is already under pressure, due to austerity measures. Furthermore, ongoing national legislative reforms (Spain, Italy and France) could present them with fresh difficulties for the development of their own territorial strategies.

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.

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) From the perspective of local governments, the Europe 2020 strategy is a vast unknown, possibly because it has a weak territorial dimension and it is difficult to read from a territorial perspective and apply its data and objectives to the local level. It would be more helpful to translate Europe 2020 data, indicators and objectives into intermediate and local terms. It is important to stress the need to disseminate a territorial reading of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Work carried out through ESPON, especially the SIESTA project (Spatial indicators for a Europe 2020 Strategy Territorial Analysis http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/siesta.html) reveals the importance of a territorial reading of the strategy's indicators and objectives. They also show that a significant part of southern and eastern Europe is far from these proposals and objectives.

i) Yes, a territorial reading of the **Annual Growth Survey** would make it easier to understand the Commission's proposals and to achieve them in practice in the various territories. It is important for these documents to include a more detailed territorial reading, with a focus on the meso level, incorporating territorial typologies (urban regions, medium-sized and small cities, rural areas and outlying areas).

j) If TIA helps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of sectoral policies and results in better policy implementation, it will gradually be adopted by the other levels of government. The TIA of sectoral policies should be emphasised as a process for developing and producing results and information that contribute to the application of sectoral policies (and will undoubtedly raise new issues at the same time).