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**ESPON ITALIAN EVIDENCE  
IN CHANGING EUROPE**

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The book reflects the positions and opinions expressed by the Italian partners in the execution of projects. More information on the ESPON Programme and the projects can be found on the website [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu).

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As experimental people we do not act as the theoretical ones: the originality of an idea is not intended to be printed on a sheet of paper but to prove it through an original experiment  
(Blackett '62)



# Index

<i>Presentation of Mr Maurizio Lupi, Minister of Infrastructures and Transports</i>	15
<i>Foreword</i> (M.M. Migliaccio)	17
<i>Introduction</i> (B. Acreman)	19
<i>ESPON 2020. Toward a new European Territorial Observatory</i> (Z. Piazza)	21
<b>ITALY TROUGH ESPON EVIDENCE 2013</b> (M. Prezioso)	31
<b>PART 1</b>	
<b>ITALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO APPLIED RESEARCH (PRIORITY 1)</b>	51
<b>1. Demographic and Migratory Flows Affecting European regions and Cities- DEMIFER</b> (P. Rees , N. van der Gaag , J. de Beer , F. Heins)	53
<b>2. Transport Accessibility at Regional/Local Scale and Patterns in Europe – TRACC</b> (D. Fiorello)	61
2.1 The Project	61
2.2 The position of Italy	62
2.3 Regional case studies	62
2.4 Policy addresses	63
<b>3. Knowledge, Innovation, Territory - KIT</b> (R. Capello, R. Camagni, A. Caragliu, C. Lenzi)	65
3.1 Scope of the project	65
3.2 Position of the country in Innovation patterns	65
3.3 Efficiency in innovation and regional growth	68
3.4 Summary of regulatory implications	68
<b>4. Territorial Impact of Globalisation for Europe and Its Regions- TIGER</b> (A. Montanari, B. Staniscia)	71
4.1 Summary of the project	71
4.2 Territorial evidences	71
4.3 Policies and intervention guidelines	72
<b>5. Spatial Indicators for a Europe 2020 Strategy Territorial Analysis – SIESTA</b> (F. Bonsinetto, A. Cannizzaro, E. Falco, B. Lino, G. Modica)	75
5.1 Summary of the project	75
5.2 Italian Situation	75
5.3 Significant trends at the regional level	76
5.4 Policy for the country and the Regions	77
<b>6. Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe - ET2050</b> (R. Camagni, R. Capello, A. Caragliu, U. Fratesi)	79

6.1	Scope of the project	79
6.2	The country's position in the trend scenario	79
6.3	The country's position in the territorial scenarios	81
6.3.1	Scenario "Megacities"	81
6.3.2	Scenario "Cities"	82
6.3.3	Scenario "Rural"	82
6.4	Summary of regulatory implications	84
<b>7.</b>	<b>Territorial Approach for New Governance – TANGO</b>	<b>85</b>
	(N. Caruso, G. Cotella, U. Janin Rivolin)	
7.1	Summary of the project	85
7.2	Italy in ESPON TANGO research	86
7.3	Significant regional and sub-regional cases	87
7.4	Indications and addresses for national and local policies	87
	<b>ITALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO TARGET ANALYSIS (PRIORITY 2)</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Success for Convergence Region's Economies – SURE Project " Structured Empirical Analysis for Convergence regions: identifying success factors for consolidated growth – SEARCH</b>	<b>91</b>
	(G. Trupiano, F. Izzo)	
8.1	Introduction	91
8.2	The position of Italy	91
8.3	Significant regional and sub-regional case studies	92
8.4	Summary of related policies and guidelines for the country and the Regions	92
<b>9.</b>	<b>Spatial Scenarios: New Tools for Local-Regional Territories – SPAN-3</b>	<b>95</b>
	(R. Camagni, R. Capello, U. Fratesi)	
9.1	The project objectives	95
9.2	Alternative routes for post-crisis scenarios	96
9.2.1	The reference scenario	96
9.2.2	The proactive scenario ("green economy")	96
9.2.3	The "defensive" scenario	97
9.3	Results of scenarios	97
9.4	Policy implications	98
<b>10.</b>	<b>Metropolisation and Polycentric Development in Central Europe: Evidence Based Strategic Options – POLYCE</b>	<b>101</b>
	(R. Camagni, R. Capello, A. Caragliu)	
10.1	The project objectives	101
10.2	The Italian situation and individual case studies	102
10.3	Summary of regulatory implications	105
<b>11.</b>	<b>Institutional Capacity for Territorial Development – SMART-IST</b>	<b>107</b>
	(C. Pacchi)	
11.1	The Project	107
11.2	The Methodological Approach and Results	108
<b>12.</b>	<b>Transport Infrastructure for Peripheral Regions' Economic Development – TIP RED Project "ADES - Airports as Drivers of Economic Success in Peripheral Regions"</b>	<b>111</b>
	(F. Alcozer, S. Favargiotti, M. Ricci)	
12.1	Summary of the project	111
12.2	The position of Italy	112

12.3 Significant regional and sub-regional case studies	112
12.4 Summary of related policies and guidelines for the country and the Regions	113
<b>ITALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENTIFIC TOOLS (PRIORITY 3)</b>	115
<b>13. Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes – TerrEvi</b> (A. Gramillano, A. Valenza)	117
13.1 Summary and project objectives	117
13.1.1 The methodological approach	117
13.1.2 The development of the project	118
13.2 TerrEvi presents the territorial evidences useful for Italy	118
13.3 Regional case studies	119
13.4 Lessons learned	119
<b>14. Update of Indicators and Maps (2011-2014) Harmonised Datasets on Local Units (LAU 2) - The Relevance of Municipality Data for a Comprehensive Understanding of Small-Scale Territorial Dynamics</b> (Elisa Ravazzoli, Thomas Streifeneder)	121
14.1 Scope of the Project	121
14.2 Methodological Approach	122
14.3 Implications for territorial analysis or policies	122
14.4 Expected Results	124
<b>ITALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKING ACTIVITIES (PRIORITY 4)</b>	125
<b>15. The European contribution of the “Integrated Territorial Development Strategies” to territorial cohesion - ESPON INTERSTRAT</b> (A. D’Orazio)	127
15.1 Introduction	127
15.2 Integrated Territorial Development Strategies (ITDSs)	129
15.3 ITDS characteristics	130
15.4 Scenarios in comparison	131
15.5 Transformation dynamics in administrative systems	133
15.6 The situation in partner countries	135
15.7 Some policy addresses	137
<b>16. Capitalisation and Dissemination of ESPON Concepts – ESPON CaDEC. The Italian experience</b> (M. Coronato)	139
16.1 The role of “concepts” in transnational cooperation experience	139
<b>17. Establishment of a transnational ESPON Training Programme to stimulate interest to ESPON2013 Knowledge – ESPONTrain. The Italian experience</b> (M. Coronato)	143
<b>PART 2</b>	
<b>THE ITALIAN REGIONS AND THE TERRITORIAL COOPERATION</b>	147
<b>18. Piedmont Region: The position of Italian Regions towards ESPON and the use made</b> (G. Baschenis, S. Occelli)	149



18.1	Summary of our ESPON experience	149
18.2	An overview to our region.	151
18.3	Significant aspects	151
18.4	Summary of related policies and guidelines for the regions	152
<b>19.</b>	<b>The Lombardia Region</b>	<b>155</b>
	(A. May, L. Pedrazzini)	
<b>20.</b>	<b>The Emilia Romagna Region</b>	<b>159</b>
	(P. Matussi, G. Guaragno)	
20.1	Synthesis of ESPON experience	159
20.2	The overlook of the Region	160
20.3	Significant aspects	160
20.4	Summary of related policies and guidelines for the regions	161
20.4.1	The territorial capital	161
20.4.2	The actual cities	161
20.4.3	The integrated system for wide area network	162
<b>21.</b>	<b>The Convention for the protection of the Alps, beyond the Alps</b>	<b>163</b>
	(P. Angelini)	
21.1.	The Alpine Convention: an innovative approach to the mountain	163
21.2	Synergies between the Alpine Convention and the ESPON Programme	164
21.3	Final remarks	165
<b>22.</b>	<b>Collaboration between ESPON and METREX</b>	<b>167</b>
	(A. Tolomelli, S. Grassi)	
22.1	The growing role of metropolitan regions in the European landscape	167
22.2	The project ET 2050 Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe	167
22.3	The response of the Emilia-Romagna region in the consultation on “Territorial Vision 2050”	168
<b>23.</b>	<b>Territorial cohesion, regional competitiveness and sustainability: a comparison between the results of ESPON projects and addresses of European policy for the transnational cooperation</b>	<b>171</b>
	(M. Coronato)	
23.1	Integrated guidelines for Cohesion, competitiveness, sustainability	174
<b>24.</b>	<b>Cohesion policy in perspective 2014-2020. The framework for the relaunch of European territorial cooperation and the role of macro-regions</b>	<b>177</b>
	(A. D’Orazio)	
24.1	Introduction	177
24.2	In search of a new paradigm for European regional policy	178
24.3	The territorial dimension in the new Cohesion Policy 2014-2020	180
24.4	The new challenges of territorial cooperation: the role of macro-regional strategies	182
24.5	Conclusions	184
<b>25.</b>	<b>Italy in transnational cooperation: ESPON Contact Points</b>	<b>187</b>
25.1	Portugal (E. Marques da Costa)	187
25.2	France (B. Elissalde, F. Santamaria)	188
25.3	Belgium (V. Biot)	189
25.4	Spain (J. Farinós Dasi)	190
25.5	The Netherlands (D. Evers)	191
25.5	Lithuania (M. Burinskiené, D. Lazauskaité)	193

<b>26. A new Territorial Agenda for Italy. The identification of the territorial capital in support of the Country guidelines in the 2020 Perspective.</b> (M. Prezioso)	195
<i>Afterword</i> <b>The future for ESPON Programme</b> (P. Mehlbye)	201
<b>REFERENCES</b>	205
<b>CREDITS</b>	217

## Maps

Map 1	Employment rate, 20-64, in 2010. Distance to National 2020 Target, SIESTA	44
Map 2	Total expenditure on R%D, 2008, Distance to National 2020 target, SIESTA	45
Map 3	Population aged 30-34 with a tertiary education – Average 2007/10. Distance to National 2020 target, SIESTA	46
Map 4	Population growth in urban and peripheral regions, DATABASE, 2010	48
Map 5	Net Migration by main components 2000-07	55
Map 6	Impact of migration on Population in 2050, DEMIFER	57
Map 7	Examples of accessibility maps produced in the TRACC project	61
Map 8	Territorial patterns of innovation in Europe	67
Map 9	Index of Europe 2020 Strategy	76
Map 10	Annual average GDP growth rate in the baseline scenario, KIT	80
Map 11	Annual average GDP growth rate: difference between the MEGAs scenario and the baseline, ET2050	81
Map 12	Annual average GDP growth rate: difference between the Cities scenario and the baseline, ET2050	82
Map 13	Annual average GDP growth rate: difference between the Rural scenario and the baseline, ET2050	83
Map 14	Annual average GDP growth rates 2005-2025 in the Reference scenario, SPAN-3	98
Map 15	Demifer scenarios of change in labour force in 2005-2050 in Molise region and in Italy	118
Map 16	Population aged 30-34 with a tertiary education. Average 2007/10, SIESTA	197
Map 17	Population aged 30-34 with tertiary education. Average 2007/2010 - Distance to National 2020 Target, SIESTA	197

## Figures

Figure 1	Future trends of regional disparities (Theil Index), ET 2050	80
Figure 2	The Theil index in the four scenarios	83
Figure 3	Predicted urban 'equilibrium' size (in % on actual size).	103
Figure 4	Predicted equilibrium population for different levels of high-level urban functions, POLYCE	104
Figure 5	Predicted equilibrium population for different levels of city networking, POLYCE	104
Figure 6	Institutional Thickness's Paradigm, SMART-IST	108

Figure 7	Traffic lights with Smart Growth indicators for Umbria region compared to Italy and EU27+4 area, TerrEvi	119
Figure 8	Flowchart of activities within the project	123
Figure 9	Population growth rate 2001-2011	124
Figure 10	Diagram of CaDEC project, CaDEC	142
Figure 11	ESPONTrain Project, ESPONTrain	145
Figure 12	Regional Territorial Plan – Piemonte Region	150
Figure 13	Territorial regional Plan – The regional policentric system	150
Figura 14	Regional Territorial Planning of Lombardia Region: the position of Lombardia region in Europe, opportunity of growth	156
Figure 15	PTR of Lombardy – the three macro-objectives of the plan: “Reinforcing competitiveness”, “Protect and enhance resources”, “Rebalancing the territory”.	157
Figure 16	System of urban polarities of the Padano-Alpine-Maritime area	159
Figure 17	Urban development scenarios of the European space	161
Figure 18	Integrated system for wide area	162

## Tables

Table 1	Overview of the five dimensions and twelve indicators of territorial governance	85
Table 2	Europe’s socio-political macroregions and Worldwide Governance Indicators	86
Table 3	Evaluation features for Planning systems	132
Table 4	Typologies of government structures related to their centralisation degree	134
Table 5	ITDSs in INTERSTRAT countries: a summary, INTERSTRAT	135
Table 6	Example of a matrix for the assessment of the effects expected from the 2020 Strategy in support of policy choices	199

## 7. TERRITORIAL APPROACHES FOR NEW GOVERNANCE - ESPON TANGO<sup>1</sup>

*Nadia Caruso<sup>2</sup>, Giancarlo Cotella<sup>3</sup>, Umberto Janin Rivolin<sup>4</sup>*

### 7.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The ESPON project TANGO (Territorial Approaches for New Governance)<sup>5</sup> was tendered on December 2010, and performed during the period June 2011 / May 2014 by a Transnational Project Group led by Nordregio, Stockholm. Politecnico di Torino<sup>6</sup> was partner of the TPG with the OTB Research Centre of the Delft University of Technology, the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Science, and the Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering of the University of Ljubljana.

The TANGO project builds on the assumption that territorial governance matters in order to achieve territorial cohesion and the 'Europe 2020' Strategy's objectives. Its main aims are thus to assess the status of territorial governance throughout Europe and to propose recommendations for improvement. This has been done through a series of conceptual surveys and in-depth qualitative analyses of 12 case studies of territorial governance throughout Europe.

In brief, the TPG developed an operational definition of territorial governance as "the formulation and implementation of public policies, Programmes and projects for development (i.e. an improvement in efficiency, equality and environmental quality of a place/territory)" by five "dimensions", which were further detailed into twelve qualitative "indicators" for analysing the performance of territorial governance (Table 1). Besides, a typology of territorial governance across Europe was developed (see section 7.2).

**Table 1: Overview of the five dimensions and twelve indicators of territorial governance**

<b>Dimensions of territorial governance</b>	<b>Indicators for analysing the performance of territorial governance</b>
1. Co-ordinating actions of actors and institutions	Governing Capacity Leadership
2. Integrating policy sectors	Subsidiarity Public Policy Packaging Cross-Sector Synergy
3. Mobilising stakeholder participation	Democratic Legitimacy Public Accountability Transparency
4. Being adaptive to changing contexts	Reflexivity Adaptability
5. Realising place-based/territorial specificities and impacts	Territorial relationality Territorial knowledgeability and impacts

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/tango.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/tango.html)

<sup>6</sup> Project team: Nadia Caruso, Giancarlo Cotella, Alberta De Luca, Francesca Governa, Umberto Janin Rivolin (coordinator) and Marco Santangelo.

The above definition, dimensions and indicators have served to provide guidelines for the case study analysis and constituted the underlying framework for the overall research. Particularly, a framework for the identification and transferability of good territorial governance “features” was developed in order to draft the handbook entitled ‘Towards Better Territorial Governance in Europe: A Guide for practitioners, policy and decision makers’, a forthcoming publication by ESPON (see section 7.4).

## 7.2 ITALY WITHIN ESPON TANGO

Single countries did not receive relevant attention in the TANGO project, since territorial governance was approached in more general terms and surveys were rather focused on policies and practices retrieved from specific case studies (often cross-border or transnational). However, national perspectives were analysed in order to develop a typology of territorial governance in Europe. Italy was therefore compared to other ESPON (not only EU) countries, in order to identify some general clusters according to their main common features.

Taking the existing comparative studies about government, governance and planning systems into account, the TPG developed indeed the seed of a possible typology of territorial governance in Europe. With the aid of hierarchical cluster analysis, seven socio-political macroregions have been identified in which the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)<sup>7</sup> are most similar (Table 2). The main key trends in territorial governance across these clusters of countries, as well as different approaches to tackling territorial policies, were then traced through an online survey.

**Table 2: Europe’s socio-political macroregions and Worldwide Governance Indicators**

	Voice and accountability	Political stability & absence of violence	Government effectiveness	Regulatory quality	Rule of law	Control of corruption
Nordic states FI, DK, IS, NO, SE	Very strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong
Rhinelandic states AT, BE, CH, DE, FR, LU, NL	Strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong	Very strong
British Isles IE, UK	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Very strong	Very strong
Southern states CY, EL, ES, IT, MT, PT, SI	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Baltic states EE, LT, LV	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Visegrád states CZ, HU, PL, SK	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Balkan states AL, BA, BG, HR, KV, ME, MK, RO, RS	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

<sup>7</sup> The Worldwide Governance Indicators are publicly available at [www.govindicators.org](http://www.govindicators.org).

### 7.3 RELEVANT REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

For its nature, territorial governance is difficult to measure empirically. Taking the gap between national trends and multi-level processes into account, 12 case studies were developed in order to provide an understanding of how actors and institutions at different levels formulate and implement policies, Programmes and projects. One case study focussed on the Target-based Tripartite Agreement developed in Lombardy. Italian governance practices were also considered, although marginally, in another case study: the Trilateral Nature Park Goricko-Raab-Örség (on the border of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia).

In 2002, the EU Commission launched the idea of experimenting “target-based tripartite contracts and agreements” to be subscribed by sub-national authorities, Member States and the Commission itself. The aim was to implement EU legislation with wider efficiency and flexibility. Among the 4 pilot projects developed, the Tripartite Agreement among the European Commission, Italian Government and Lombardy Region was the only one actually signed, while the others failed after lengthy negotiation processes. However, it was not carried out afterwards. The most interesting feature of this experience is the importance of political support, manifesting as vertical coordination in the form of assiduous relationships between the regional President and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Even if appreciable, this feature proved to be insufficient on its own to guarantee the success of the process.

The case study of Trilateral Nature Park Goricko-Raab-Örség investigated rather the evolution of activities finalised to a coordinated protection and management of natural areas in a transnational context. The analysis of the Italian position throughout the whole cooperation processes showed how Friuli-Venezia Giulia started its involvement already in the 1960s, Veneto joined in the 1970s and the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, formally founded in 1978, included also other north Italian regions over time. This case suggests that the capacity to carry out cross-border coordination, consolidated as a legacy of informal contacts and decades of experience of actors involved, connections and trust, is of crucial importance for the effective governance of natural areas.

### 7.4 POLICY OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Europe is still in recovery from a deep financial crisis and struggling with unemployment and social exclusion. At the same time it must switch to a low-carbon economy and adapt to the climate changes that are already underway. Responding to these daunting tasks requires effective and urgent policy initiatives and actions at European, national, regional and local levels as well as across different policy sectors. This is well indicated by the EU growth strategy for the coming decade, known as ‘Europe 2020’, and aimed at making the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The so-called “place-based approach” as delineated in the Barca Report and the existence of good governance with a strong adaptive capacity are recognised as critical factors in addressing the agenda set by the Europe 2020 strategy. Better territorial governance is thus needed for a place-based cohesion policy that can contribute to a better Europe.

Along these lines, the most relevant outcome of the ESPON TANGO project is constituted by the handbook ‘Towards Better Territorial Governance in Europe: A Guide for practitioners, policy and decision makers’, where research findings are distilled for practical purpose. One message conveyed by this handbook (currently in draft) is that, since territorial governance contexts differ quite dramatically across Europe, ‘one-size-fits-all’ recommendations would be misleading. Anyone concerned with better territorial governance in Europe should rather facilitate local engagement in common aims, thus contributing to turn the territorial diversity of Europe into strength.