



MEMO

The cluster cooperation and the ESPON BSR-TeMo project (Output 5.3)

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Introduction

This memo highlights one recent ESPON initiative dedicated to the making of a monitoring system for the Baltic Sea Region that would measure progress in the territorial development through a number of indicators. Specific details on the project (called BSR-TeMo) have been extracted from its draft final report that is currently under stakeholders' review.

The cluster partnership is not in charge of influencing the final shape of the report. However, it may consider how to use and further upgrade the territorial development monitoring system (see the paragraph on 'Challenges') to serve the purpose of tracing the progress in developing a network of sustainable, multimodal and green transport corridors in the Baltic Sea Region.

General information on the ESPON BSR-TeMo project

The main objective of the BSR-TeMo project is to develop an operational indicator-based monitoring system for the Baltic Sea Region promoting territorial cohesion.

The key TeMo feature is the development of the system in close collaboration with its potential users - senior officers in the BSR countries responsible for territorial development (VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development). All this was done in order to ensure applicability of the TeMo system for support of the implementation of key BSR policy documents such as the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EU BSR-Strategy) and the VASAB Long Term Perspective (VASAB LTP) in the first instance. In addition, however, the EU 2020 Strategy, the Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2020) and other documents related to the EU Cohesion Policy have also been used as reference for development of the TeMo system.

The monitoring system should try to measure various aspects of territorial cohesion, including the BSR divides as an important contextual factor conditioning the BSR policies and efforts. The system should also be flexible enough to take advantage of and serve the monitoring purposes of the EU Strategy for the BSR.

The TeMo territorial monitoring system comprise of two modules: a simple module and an advanced module. The simple module contains the compilation and analysis of the chosen indicators, while the advanced module identifies standardised cross-indicator analysis options by relating different indicators with each other, and by producing complex indicators through statistical procedures (such as GINI coefficients etc.) in order to address key policy challenges related to territorial cohesion.

The final proposal for the TeMo territorial monitoring system consists of 5 policy domains, 12 subdomains as well as 29 indicators. The time frame for data to be collected was set to start in 2005, up to latest data available. The main spatial levels for collected data have first and foremost been NUTS-3 regions in those BSR countries where such exist, e.g. the BSR EU states and Norway, and, for Russia and Belarus, on *oblast* (SNUTS-2) level. For indicators for which NUTS-3 data were not available, NUTS-2 data have been used.

The outputs from the TeMo project, to be ready in January 2014, include: a Handbook (to be published both in English and Russian), a Technical Specification, and the Presentation Tool with a User Manual. The Presentation Tool, in the form of a browser application, will provide access inter alia to the indicator maps, domain and subdomain descriptions, the conducted analyses, as well as to specific implementation recommendations for each single indicator.

The Presentation Tool (still under construction) is available at: <http://bsr.espon.eu/>



Accessibility

In order to identify the main components of the BSR territorial monitoring system, the European territorial debate was translated to the Baltic Sea Region's specificity and priorities. It helped identify the main components of the territorial development and embed them into a framework for the BSR territorial monitoring system. Among them are:

- Ensuring accessibility, connectivity and parity of access to transport and ICT infrastructure, and development of TEN-T;
- Enhancement of intermodality of transport and greening of transport, including motorways for the sea and short sea shipping.

The system contains a domain called 'Access to services, markets and jobs'. It is further split down to three subdomains: 'Potential accessibility', 'Spatial structure' and 'Internet'.

The 'Potential accessibility' subdomain comprises the following indicators: 'Accessibility potential by road', 'Accessibility potential by rail', 'Accessibility potential by air' and 'Multimodal accessibility potential'.

The 'Spatial structure' subdomain has the following indicators: 'Functional areas: access to cities (number of cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants within 60 minutes road travel time from each region)', 'Population potential within 50 km (number of population located within 50 km airline distance from any place)' and 'Border crossings (number of passing vehicles)'.

Key findings

A selection of key findings indicate that recent trends in general territorial development in the BSR point towards increasing spatial polarisation, which further aggravates the already existing unbalanced regional structures.

The three principal BSR divides were also assessed. Both the North-South gap as well as the urban-rural gap of the BSR is growing further. The East-West gap also exists, but it is changing form. From having been a primarily economic gap sharpest along the former iron curtain, it has now changed into a far more multifaceted divide, where social differences today are possibly the most pronounced ones.

In contrast, territorial disparities between adjacent regions inside countries have in the past 15 years exploded, particularly in eastern BSR, but most major metropolitan areas also in the west are being segregated from their surroundings wealth-wise. It is evident that the urban hierarchy is a decisive factor across the BSR in dictating the magnitude of on-the-ground territorial disparities.

Eastern BSR is still lagging behind in accessibility, but catch-up is rapid. Most inaccessible types of territories are sparse and border regions whereas capital regions and secondary city metropolitan areas have increased their accessibility most.

Challenges

The territorial monitoring system developed should be flexible enough to take advantage of and serve the monitoring purposes of the EU Strategy for the BSR, to respond to new policy challenges and directions, and at the same time be stable enough to allow temporal comparison and reveal long-term trends and in particular warn about changes in them.

All of this is achieved by combining relevant statistical information with relevant territorial typologies. Most statistical information can be collected more or less in routine nature for all territorial units of the BSR over the longer period of time.

The key challenge is, however, to turn it into a meaningful policy indicator system responsive to the current policy needs and appealing to the minds of policy makers. The system allows for construction of different indicators, in line with the key policy needs, based on the limited set of routinely collected statistical information (variables).

Relation with the cluster work

As stated, the cluster partnership may consider how to use and further upgrade the territorial development monitoring system (see the paragraph on 'Challenges') to serve the purpose of tracing the progress in developing a network of sustainable, multimodal and green transport corridors in the Baltic Sea Region.



The following questions may be relevant to address this issue:

- Should the monitoring system be upgraded with any new elements (domain, subdomain, indicators) to better reflect the notion of a network of sustainable, multimodal and green transport corridors in the Baltic Sea Region? If so, what kind of indicators (visible in the territorial context) may be proposed?
- What is the cluster opinion on a need to institutionalise the monitoring system (that is: to make the system continuously updated and utilised in policy making)? As the authors of the report say: *'It is necessary to regularly update the data; adjust the system as a whole to future policy needs; carry out analyses, and disseminate both the system and the results to users of the system'*.
- What is the cluster opinion on the proposed options to sustain the institutionalisation?
 - Through a new project (similar to the current TeMo project)
 - Through an institution (one institution takes responsibility for both maintaining the monitoring system and also the financing of it - whether this will be by own means or by applying for funding)
 - Through cooperation (several actors take on joint responsibility for the monitoring system in a formalised way)
 - Through a network with agreed responsibilities and personal commitments

Advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions are presented in the attached Annex 11 to the draft final report.

- Is there any specific role/responsibility the cluster partnership, in one form or another, can proposed as regards the institutionalisation of the monitoring system?

Drafted by Wiktor Szydarowski, cluster manager

