

ECTP NTCCP reaction

Dear Phaeton,

First I like to thank you for the way the NTCCP meeting was prepared and conducted, as well as the great hospitality we experienced.

During the meeting you invited us to elaborate in a written reaction on messages communicated during the meeting.

Hereby I will do so, on behalf of ECTP-CEU, hoping to support and clarify my contributions.

My main comment is, that when aiming at our spatial development objectives. our NTCCP (also UDG) focus tends to be (too much) oriented on the **provision** of policies and tools to be applied by others

Our objective of balancing the multitude of societal interests by integrative approaches, requires the constructive collaboration of others: other government sectors, levels, private parties and ngo's.

Constructive collaboration or at least openness for co-ordination can only be expected if those "others" see their (probable) profits and interests well supported.

In actual society people do not automatically accept policies regarding their interests and opinions, because authorities or officials promote such policies. As a result only policies and options which seriously reflect the interests and opinions of those who are expected to apply the proposed policy options, can become effective.

This means that we must focus not (only) on the provide-side of policy making but have to **develop the demand** side, serving society's multitude of interests in the best (long term progress, sustainability, territorially coherent) way.

More specifically, we have to address the question how we can develop and provide information and knowledge which makes society demand for integrative approaches.

If we are convinced of the advantages of integrative approaches, we must clearly show those advantages and benefits for the different stakeholders in society.

For an EU or national policy becoming effective, we depend on those who must implement it on the ground: for instance the regional or local spatial planners (also working in consultancies). These planners must not only be aware of the aims and content of a policy, but also **like to apply** the related tools in practice, because they are convinced that a proposed policy supports the locally and regionally perceived interests.

This answer on the "**bigger question**" applies not only for TIA, but for most of our work: TIA, Communication Strategy, ESPON, place based approaches.

If **TIA** has to become an accepted and well applied tool, it can become effective if the unavoidable extra workload, (because of newly required spatial impact criteria) is compensated by clear benefits recognised by those (sectors) involved in the decision-making process.

But those benefits must be demonstrated first in order to open-up their minds for constructive collaboration, thereby avoiding the normal reaction of institutional struggles and fights about competencies.

(The plea for TIA of the ECTP in the nineties was based on the early experiences with EIA, which created an excessive burden of required environmental studies in relation to the poor environmental profits, and a lot of meaningless box-ticking. Quantitatively overregulated environmental aspects did not allow for integrated balancing of relevant aspects in a territory.

Therefore ECTP in the early nineties pleaded for a simplification into the direction of more qualitatively integrative considering of all relevant aspects (economic, social and environmental) within a territory.

(Although controversially formulated: TIA coming instead of an overregulated EIA would be preferred)

This notion is also relevant for the **communication strategy** for Territorial Agenda 2020.

Communication conveying knowledge about advantages and benefits of the integrated territorial approaches for the various sector interests, including the possibilities of synergy, offers best chances for becoming effective: it will allow for conveying more specific, targetted messages.

Our messages, if expressed in general brochures and leaflets, which mainly reflect the senders point of view (interest) will not be received by those who we aim to address.

For **ESPON**, aiming to support the territorial cohesion policy, my plea for priority to addressing the bigger question is also relevant. ESPON studies can develop and provide knowledge about benefits of integrated approaches for different sector interests and other stakeholders.

Studies investigating benefits, profits and synergies for specific interests like infrastructure, logistics, production of goods, service providers, tourism, agri-industry, inclusiveness, biodiversity, watermanagement, access to social services, cultural heritage, landscape quality etc etc would provide useful information and add to the relevance of the ESPON program.

Such information can nourish the communication strategy.

Place based approaches include local and regional decision-making.

Those involved in local and regional decision-making on future developments, are not applying top-down policies because the higher authority says to do so. Local and regional decision-makers have to be convinced themselves about what is best for their region. That includes that a balance should be developed between the contribution of a specific territory to the quality of the higher scale and the way the regional decision-makers perceive their interests.

The normal reaction on good practice examples: "that works there, but not here, because we are different," requires room for interpretation to those involved.

That may comply with the spatial planning and territorial cohesion objective of diversity.

Nourishing local and regional decision-making processes with knowledge and information about potential sectoral advantages, benefits, profits and synergies will help local/regional decision-makers to develop their vision for the best way forward.

So, my plea is for giving priority to the “bigger question” developing information, and knowledge about the benefits of other policies, other sectors and other stakeholders provided by integrative approaches of development. When their benefits and advantages are clear to them, those other sectors and stakeholders may even demand for integrative development.

This seems a prerequisite for Territorial Cohesion.

If we understand territorial cohesion as a tool supportive to economic, social and physical development, this seems to me even as a prerequisite for success of the European project.

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representative to NTCCP and UDG
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