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Please note that the information contained in this document is an extract of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and does not constitute the integral tendering documentation for this call for tenders.

The full tendering documentation (ToR and annexes) can be downloaded from the *Portail des marches publics* in the link available under the section for this call.

The only official tendering documentation (ToR and annexes) is the one published in the *Portail des marches publics*. The ESPON EGTC cannot be held responsible for any errors that may appear in the ToR published in its website or any other platform than the official *Portail des marches publics*.

In case of interest, you are invited to download the full tendering documentation from the *Portail des marches publics* and submit your tender via the same platform.

CORRIGENDUM:

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 14 October 2026 at 11:00:00 CET

Call for tenders**Extract of the Terms of reference****ESPON European Research Project****“Crisis Innovation for a Competitive Europe and Regional Opportunities [CICERO]”****Technical and administrative
Terms and conditions****ESPON EGTC**

03 September 2026

Implementation Framework: The Single Operation within the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme implemented by the ESPON EGTC. The ESPON 2030 Monitoring Committee approved the Single Operation on 26 September 2022. The Single Operation is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund via the ESPON 2030 Cooperation Programme.

This document details both the technical and administrative terms and conditions including its annexes and constitutes the dossier of this call for tenders. Its original is kept in the contracting authority's records and is the only version that is deemed authentic.

Key Information on the Procurement

Title	Crisis Innovation for a Competitive Europe and Regional Opportunities [CICERO]
Procedure	EU Open
Contracting authority	ESPON EGTC 11, Avenue John F. Kennedy L-1855 Luxembourg Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
Type of contract	Service contract
Duration	27 months (24 months for contract implementation + 3 months for administrative closure)
Maximum available budget	EUR 800.000,00 (excluding VAT)
Place of delivery	Luxembourg
Lots	This tender is not divided into lots
Variants	Not permitted
Market access	Participation in this tender is open to all economic operators established in the European Union, the European Economic Area and third countries signatories to international agreements in the field of public procurement by which the EU is bound
Tender submission method	Electronic submission via the Luxembourg Public Procurement Portal (www.pmp.lu)
Deadline for sending requests for information And/or reporting errors, omissions, ambiguities, or discrepancies	16 September 2026 at 10h59 CET 07 October 2026 at 10h59 CET
Deadline for submission of tenders	23 September 2026 at 11h00 CET 14 October 2026 11:00:00 CET

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1 What is to be done? (Purpose of the contract)

The ESPON EGTC is launching an open call for tenders to further build up ESPON's stock of research and provide new European territorial evidence in the framework of the [ESPON 2030 Programme](#). The call for tenders shall result in a European research project being implemented within the framework of the Thematic Action Plan "European Territories in Global Interactions".

1.1 Context

Recent work undertaken by ESPON for the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026 introduced the concept of regional cognitive cohesion, measuring the extent to which European regions converge towards the global frontier of science and engineering. The ACCORD study¹ identified two complementary channels through which regional public authorities become exposed to globally emerging scientific and technological opportunities: the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP) and Interreg. Public-sector exposure through both channels is associated with stronger regional industrial engagement in frontier scientific and technological domains. Although the effect is more pronounced in low- and middle-income regions, the findings suggest that FP and Interreg cross-regional collaborations in globally emerging frontier domains crowd in subsequent industrial engagement with frontier technologies across all European regions.

These findings question a one-sided interpretation of interregional knowledge transfer in which technologically advanced regions merely supply knowledge while less developed regions merely receive it; and raise two broader questions. First, do regions developing emerging technological solutions benefit when these technologies obtain validation in other regions? Second, which processes unfold within FP and Interreg collaborations that strengthen Europe's vigilance towards globally emerging scientific and technological opportunities?

Europe's crisis coordination agenda relating to climate impacts, security, global health resilience and humanitarian aid, as reflected in the Commission Work Programme 2026, together with the increasing frequency and interaction of societal crises across Europe, provides a particularly relevant context in which to investigate these questions. Crises create conditions in which emerging technologies are tested, demonstrated and validated, potentially increasing the legitimacy and credibility of emerging technological trajectories.

Building on ACCORD and in particular on the notion of the global frontier of science and engineering and the identified channels through which public authorities crowd in regional industrial engagement with frontier technologies, CICERO shifts the analytical focus from regions becoming exposed to frontier knowledge towards regions validating and demonstrating emerging technological solutions through collaboration with public authorities in response to societal crises. The central inquiry is whether and through which processes crisis-driven technological validation contributes to the subsequent global frontier relevance of emerging technologies, strengthens the scientific and industrial frontier presence of the regions developing them, and ultimately contributes to long-term regional transformation, regional competitiveness and Europe's technological leadership.

¹ ACCORD study: <https://www.espon.eu/projects/accord-analysing-competitiveness-through-lens-cognitive-regional-distance>

1.2 Objective

CICERO seeks to advance understanding of how Europe's response to societal crises may simultaneously strengthen regional competitiveness and technological leadership. In particular, the project shall explore whether Europe's capacity for collective action in response to recurring crises can contribute to lasting competitive advantage and represent a distinctive feature of the European development model.

The project shall address the following policy questions:

- What value does crisis-related cross-regional collaboration create for the competitiveness of Europe's regions?
- Under which crisis contexts and collaboration conditions can crisis-driven innovation contribute most strongly to Europe's future global competitiveness?
- How can FP10 and the next generation of Interreg strengthen the double benefit of addressing pressing societal crises while enhancing regional competitiveness and technological leadership?

The project combines quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The quantitative analysis shall investigate whether and under which crisis contexts and collaboration conditions crisis-related cross-regional collaboration contributes to the subsequent scientific and industrial frontier presence of European regions. The precise hypotheses, operationalisations and analytical approaches shall be proposed and justified by the tenderers.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the project shall investigate the relationship between crisis-driven innovation and long-term territorial transformation through historical observations and comparative contemporary territorial and technological case studies. The qualitative analysis shall deepen understanding of the historical, territorial, technological and institutional processes through which crisis-driven innovation may contribute to longer-term regional scientific, industrial and territorial transformation, strengthening regional competitiveness and the contribution of regions to Europe's overall competitiveness.

Finally, building on the quantitative and qualitative evidence, the project shall develop a strategic European policy blueprint identifying how European territorial and innovation policies can better harness crisis-driven innovation to strengthen regional competitiveness and technological leadership while enhancing Europe's capacity to respond effectively to societal crises.

1.3 Description of tasks

In pursuit of the objective and answering the policy questions described above, the tasks outlined below shall be carried out within the framework of this European Research Project. Tenderers are requested to include within their technical offer how they intend to implement these tasks – via a methodological framework and approach, and including: (i) a description of their foreseen organisation and planning; (ii) proposed deliverables; and (iii) how the necessary research resources and effort shall be distributed between the different tasks.

It should be noted that while the tasks are intended to provide an overall framework for the achievement of the objective and answering the policy questions, they can also be divided into sub-tasks or reorganised as the tenderer deems appropriate, consistent with their preferred methodological approach. Similarly, tenderers are free to add to, or elaborate upon, the policy questions outlined above. Therefore, while the description of tasks offers a suggested basis for the organisation of this European Research Project, and should generally be followed, it is not intended to be inflexible. Tenderers are

strongly encouraged to include innovative or exploratory proposals which could help distinguish their technical offer and how it provides a unique contribution to knowledge.

For successfully achieving the objectives of this study, the tasks below will be carried out in close collaboration with the ESPON EGTC and the steering committee.

1.3.1 Task 1: Quantitative analysis

The task consists of an econometric analysis based on a constructed longitudinal dataset combining variables derived from semantic analysis with regional statistical indicators.

Econometric analysis

The task shall assess whether and under which conditions regions can strengthen their scientific and industrial frontier positioning through the crisis-related validation and legitimisation of their technological capabilities in collaboration with public authorities from other regions.

The econometric analysis shall address at least the following analytical dimensions:

- Crisis-related cross-regional collaboration: the extent to which regional science and industry participate in crisis-related FP and Interreg projects with public authorities from other regions, and the effect of such participation on subsequent regional global frontier positioning. The contribution of FP and Interreg projects shall be distinguishable in the analysis
- Future-frontier tracing: the extent to which crisis-related projects involving regional science and industry anticipate technological trajectories that subsequently acquire global frontier characteristics, and the effect of stronger future-frontier tracing on subsequent regional global frontier positioning
- Crisis contexts: the role of different crisis contexts in crisis-related cross-regional collaboration, future-frontier tracing and subsequent regional global frontier positioning
- Collaboration conditions: the role of the characteristics and configurations of crisis-related projects in crisis-related cross-regional collaboration, future-frontier tracing and subsequent regional frontier positioning. The analysis may consider network characteristics of collaboration, including partnership renewal, technology readiness levels, the nature and maturity of technological validation environments, technological complexity within consortia, the diversity of participating organisations and their knowledge domains, the nature of public-sector participation or other theoretically and policy-relevant collaboration conditions.

The econometric strategy shall propose an appropriate approach for constructing the global frontier of science and engineering and deriving from it a regional measure capturing the subsequent scientific and industrial frontier presence of European regions. The proposed operationalisation shall constitute the dependent variable of the econometric analysis. Project-level information shall be used to construct appropriate regional measures.

Tenderers shall propose and justify:

- the hypotheses and analytical framework reflecting the analytical dimensions specified above and, where proposed, additional analytical dimensions;
- the operationalisation of the analytical dimensions and the proposed analytical strategy;

- the temporal treatment of multi-annual FP and Interreg projects;
- the regional level of analysis. Territorial granularity is considered as an asset;
- the scientific and technological data sources required in addition to the minimum sources of CORDIS, KEEP and Eurostat, including data suitable for constructing the global frontier of science and engineering and deriving regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence;
- the temporal coverage, which shall be sufficient to capture crisis-related project collaboration and allow subsequent changes in regional frontier positioning to be observed. Longer observation periods spanning earlier FP and Interreg programming periods and extending to the most recent observations available will be considered an advantage.

The minimum geographical coverage shall comprise the ESPON space (EU and EFTA countries). The inclusion of additional European countries, such as the United Kingdom and EU candidate countries, will be considered an advantage.

Semantic analysis

The prospective service provider shall develop a semantic analytical framework supporting the identification, classification and characterisation of crisis-related collaborative projects and their technological orientation. The framework shall provide the basis for operationalising the analytical dimensions of the quantitative analysis.

The prospective service provider is expected to:

- identify collaborative FP and Interreg projects consistent with the study objectives and involving crisis-related technological validation environments. Tenderers may propose a taxonomy distinguishing different forms of technological validation, ranging, for example, from initial peer testing through simulation-based and operational experimentation to pilot and demonstration projects. The development and application of such a taxonomy will be considered an advantage;
- classify projects according to a common crisis taxonomy and, where proposed, distinguish between reactive and preventive crisis response logics;
- construct annual global frontier technological trajectories using, for example, scientific publications, patents and other relevant scientific and technological evidence;
- identify semantic relationships between crisis-related collaborative projects and technological trajectories suitable for operationalising indicators of future-frontier tracing;
- Tenderers may also propose complementary semantic analyses of relevant strategic or policy documents where these contribute to the objectives of the study and support the development of additional regional indicators.

Longitudinal database and indicator construction

The task shall construct a harmonised longitudinal region-year database integrating regional indicators derived from FP and Interreg collaborative projects, semantic analysis, regional statistical data and, where proposed, collaboration network indicators and other relevant scientific, technological, policy or public investment data sources.

The database shall support the operationalisation of the analytical dimensions specified under the econometric analysis and the construction of regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence constituting the dependent variable.

Tenderers shall propose and justify the regional indicators derived from project-level information, the construction of the global frontier of science and engineering, the derivation of regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence, and the operationalisation of the dependent variable, while ensuring consistency with the study objectives.

1.3.2 Task 2: Case studies

The task shall combine historical observations of crisis-driven innovation with contemporary European territorial case studies to interpret the quantitative findings and investigate the historical and contemporary processes through which crisis-driven innovation contributes to long-term territorial transformation, regional competitiveness and, ultimately, Europe's competitiveness and technological leadership. Historical observations shall identify recurring patterns of crisis-driven innovation, while comparative territorial case studies shall examine how crisis-driven innovation unfolds across different regional and technological contexts and identify processes that cannot readily be captured through quantitative analysis.

The analysis shall investigate:

- Historical perspective: how historical episodes of crisis-driven innovation compare with contemporary European crises, identifying recurring patterns and major differences in the ways crises stimulate scientific, technological and industrial transformation.
- Comparative territorial perspective: whether similar forms of crisis innovation are associated with different regional scientific, industrial and territorial development trajectories and, if so, which territorial, institutional, governance and policy factors explain these differences.
- Comparative technological perspective: how competing technological solutions evolve during crisis innovation, why some technologies acquire legitimacy, validation and wider diffusion while alternative technological trajectories do not, and which processes and actors contribute to technological legitimisation.
- Collective action perspective: what happens behind technological validation processes, including how crisis situations shape collaboration, resource mobilisation, decision-making and technological experimentation, how collective action challenges emerge and are addressed, and how public authorities, scientific organisations and firms contribute to these processes.
- Longitudinal process perspective: how technological experimentation, validation, legitimisation and diffusion unfold over time, and how longer-term processes of crisis-driven innovation contribute to regional scientific, industrial and territorial transformation, regional

competitiveness and, ultimately, Europe's competitiveness beyond what can readily be captured through quantitative analysis.

Tenderers shall propose and justify the case study selection strategy, including an indicative number of case studies. The proposed selection shall ensure an appropriate balance between analytical depth and breadth of coverage across different geographical areas, historical and contemporary crisis contexts, scientific and technological domains, collaboration conditions and territorial development contexts. Subject to maintaining sufficient analytical depth, broader geographical coverage across the overall portfolio of case studies is encouraged.

1.3.3 Task 3: CICERO blueprint for crisis-driven regional competitiveness

The task shall develop a strategic blueprint enabling crisis-driven innovation to become a long-term mechanism for delivering cutting-edge crisis response solutions while strengthening regional scientific, industrial and territorial transformation, regional competitiveness and, ultimately, Europe's competitiveness and technological leadership under conditions of repeated and interacting crises.

Building on the quantitative and qualitative evidence, the blueprint shall synthesise the project's findings into an integrated set of policy recommendations identifying how European territorial and innovation policies can harness crisis-driven innovation to strengthen not only crisis responsiveness but also regional competitiveness, technological leadership and territorial cohesion.

The blueprint shall identify strategic policy recommendations concerning:

- Policy strategy: the strategic use of crisis environments as opportunities for accelerating the experimentation, validation and diffusion of emerging technologies with the potential to strengthen regional resilience, regional competitiveness as well as Europe's technological leadership and global competitiveness;
- Policy coordination: policy measures supporting responsive and continuous coordination between European innovation and regional policies throughout the crisis innovation cycle, enabling temporary crisis-driven experimentation to translate into cutting-edge crisis response solutions and durable regional scientific, industrial and innovation capabilities;
- Policy mix: the complementary roles of regional innovation policies, Framework Programmes and Cohesion Policy, with particular attention to Interreg, throughout the crisis innovation cycle;
- Capacity for collective action: capacity-building measures enabling public authorities to identify, mobilise, validate and accelerate technological trajectories responding to societal crises;
- Governance of collective action: governance approaches enabling public authorities, scientific organisations and firms to organise, coordinate and scale crisis-driven technological validation across territories;
- Regional transformation: policy approaches supporting the reconfiguration of existing scientific, industrial and institutional capabilities towards greater crisis resilience, stronger engagement with emerging technological frontier opportunities and enhanced regional competitiveness contributing to Europe's overall competitiveness.

1.4 Expected outputs and deliverables

The outcome of the various analysis resulting from section 1.3 (the various methodologies, analyses, etc.) shall be reported via 1) **static formats** - in a textual way as well as maps, graphs, infographics, figures (e.g. for different reports, briefs, presentations, infographics, articles, leaflets, etc.) and 2) **interactive formats in the ESPON Data and Knowledge Portal**² - visualisations like web maps, data stories, dashboards, apps, videos (as agreed with the ESPON EGTC). The tenderer shall provide details on the nature and format of these deliveries already in its technical offer.

The following outputs and deliverables shall be provided covering the tasks of the requested service as specified above in section 1.3.

1.4.1 Expected outputs

The main outputs of the service shall be:

- Semantic classification of FP and Interreg collaborative projects, including a crisis taxonomy, semantic measures supporting the operationalisation of future-frontier tracing and, where proposed, a technological validation taxonomy, crisis response logics and additional semantic indicators.
- Annual global frontier of science and engineering, constructed from scientific publications, patents and/or other relevant scientific and technological evidence, together with regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence derived from it.
- Methodological documentation describing the semantic methodology, frontier construction and indicator definitions.
- Harmonised longitudinal region-year database integrating project-level semantic information, regional statistical indicators and the variables required for the quantitative analysis.
- Econometric assessment of the proposed hypotheses and analytical dimensions, including descriptive statistics, diagnostic and robustness analyses, and the corresponding empirical findings.
- Regional typologies derived from the empirical analysis, illustrating different territorial patterns of crisis-related cross-regional collaboration, technological validation and scientific and industrial frontier positioning.
- Historical observations together with comparative territorial and technological case studies.
- Scientific report presenting the quantitative methodology, database construction and econometric findings.
- Scientific report presenting the historical and comparative qualitative analysis.
- Strategic European policy blueprint (CICERO Blueprint) containing integrated policy recommendations.
- Maps, figures, web maps, dashboards, infographics and other proposed static and interactive visualisations supporting the communication of the study results.

Data and interactive maps and graphs resulting from the research and provided in the format compatible with the environment of the ESPON Data and Knowledge Portal.

² <https://gis-portal.espon.eu/arcgis/apps/sites/#/espon-hub>

1.4.2 Deliverables

The technical offer shall include a description of the format and the content of all deliverables according to the methodological concept the tenderer proposes to implement. The technical offer shall also indicate to which task(s) each deliverable is referring to.

1.4.2.1 Predefined deliverables

The selected service provider is requested to submit at least 4 predefined deliverables, linked to foreseen payments in the contract (3 interim and 1 final payment):

- One inception deliverable
- Two progress reports
- One final deliverable

The table presented in section 1.5.3 below indicates the time schedule for the predefined deliverables.

N.B. All reports and related deliverables (e.g. PPT, maps, posters, data delivery etc.) must use ESPON corporate identity and templates provided; specific instructions will be provided to the service provider during the kick-off meeting.

1. An inception deliverable containing at least:

- Report (approximately 30 pages, excluding annexes) including:
 - refined conceptual and analytical framework for the study;
 - detailed methodological approach for the quantitative, semantic and qualitative analyses;
 - refined approach to the global frontier of science and engineering, regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence, and the proposed indicator framework supporting the quantitative analysis, including, where proposed, collaboration network indicators;
 - refined semantic methodology, including the proposed crisis taxonomy, future-frontier tracing methodology and, where proposed, technological validation taxonomy;
 - overview and assessment of the proposed scientific, technological and regional data sources, including data availability, quality, limitations and strategies for addressing potential data gaps;
 - proposed methodology for constructing the longitudinal region-year database;
 - refined approach to selecting historical observations and comparative territorial and technological case studies, including, selection criteria and preliminary shortlist;
 - refined conceptual approach for developing the CICERO Blueprint;
 - conclusions arising from the kick-off meeting.
- Work plan presenting the next steps foreseen in the project's implementation, including meetings with selected target groups
- Description of the format and content of the next intermediary deliverables.
- The project description, including visualisations (infographics, maps, etc.).

2. A final deliverable containing at least:

Static formats:

- Final main report (40 to 80 pages) including:
 - executive summary;
 - quantitative analysis findings;
 - historical observations and comparative territorial and technological case studies;
 - integrated discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings and CICERO Blueprint;
- Scientific annexes, detailing the methodology and the research results including:
 - documentation of the semantic methodology;
 - documentation of the case study methodology;
 - documentation of the construction of the global frontier of science and engineering and the derivation of regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence;
 - documentation of the longitudinal database and indicator construction;
 - econometric methodology, diagnostics and robustness analyses;
 - limitations and future research avenues.
- Presentations (PPT, or similar - editable) of the research results: one technical presentation of the methodology, and one broader/policy-oriented presentation of the results, conclusions and recommendations adapted for the general audience.
- **All figures** (graphs, schematics, illustrations, and images) included in the final deliverables. These shall be submitted together with their source files, particularly when underlying data are involved (e.g. editable spreadsheet files such as XLSX, and editable vector formats such as PDF, EPS or AI). All images must also be delivered separately in high-resolution PNG format. Any externally sourced images must be properly credited and licensed.
- **All maps** included in the final deliverables. These shall be submitted together with their source files, including the map project files (e.g. from QGIS or ArcGIS). These project files must contain correctly linked spatial and attribute data (e.g. SHP, GPKG, CSV, XLSX, or geodatabases). All map layout exports must be provided both in editable vector formats (such as PDF, EPS, or AI) and in PNG format.

All maps must follow the layout design of the ESPON map templates (MapKits), and all associated data files must be saved within the designated folder structure of the template. Additional editing and finalisation in vector editing software is permitted and encouraged. The service provider must also be able to adapt the templates when necessary, for example to adjust the spatial extent of the map (e.g. zooming in on case study areas).
- **Structured data and metadata from** all maps and figures. These must be provided using the ESPON data and metadata templates. The service provider shall organise descriptive and statistical data in Excel spreadsheets, structured as one or multiple datasets depending on the project outputs. Relevant spatial data must be delivered as .shp, .gpkg, or geodatabases. The data delivery should constitute a standalone product and include the following:
 - **Well-defined metadata:** All data must be accompanied by metadata explaining and describing the dataset. Metadata should provide context and include details such as title,

code, abstract, source, type, years covered, and geographic coverage. Detailed requirements for metadata are provided in the [ESPON Database documentation](https://database.espon.eu/doc/)³.

- **Replicability, modularity and reuse:** Data must be delivered in a way that allows analyses to be reproduced and facilitates reuse beyond the project. This includes providing sufficiently granular temporal data, ensuring a multilevel perspective (local/regional, national, EU27), and delivering background data together with any derived or aggregated datasets.
- **Good spatio-temporal coverage, high granularity and special attention to data gaps:** Data must cover all countries participating in the ESPON Programme (EU27 + EFTA) for the longest time-series and spatial granularity feasible if not stated or agreed otherwise. Particular attention should be given to identifying and addressing data gaps. Where gaps exist, complementary data sources, interpolation, or other appropriate methods should be used where feasible. In addition to the ESPON Programme area, data for candidate and potential candidate countries, microstates, and the United Kingdom should also be included, whenever feasible (and if at marginal costs) and subject to prior agreement of the contracting Authority.

Interactive formats:

In addition to the static content, service providers must also develop interactive content for the ESPON Data and Knowledge Portal; this a platform that allows to develop and publish interactive webpages, atlases, handbooks interactive reports, web-based maps, data stories, dashboards and various content driven applications. The platform is based on ArcGIS Enterprise technology and all the proposed/requested interactive visualisations or solutions must be compatible with the system. The platform provides configurable widgets and templates to allow easy development of the abovementioned content even with no or basic programming skills. Access to the platform with a dedicated workspace will be provided to the service provider by the ESPON EGTC. The exact format and structure of the interactive content shall be agreed with the ESPON EGTC.

3. Two progress reports

In addition to the above, the service provider will be requested to submit two progress reports, corresponding to foreseen interim payment in the contract.

Those brief reports (max. 10 pages) shall provide:

- an overview on the progress of the implementation of the project, highlighting the status of the different tasks and the challenges and risks associated for the good achievement of the research
- the list of the meetings held
- the list of the intermediary deliverables submitted since the previous pre-defined deliverable.

The service provider will receive written feedback from the ESPON EGTC on each mandatory delivery (inception, final and progress report) including approval or request for revision and/or addressing identified challenges (indicatively within two weeks after receiving them and one month for the final delivery).

³ <https://database.espon.eu/doc/>

1.4.2.2 Intermediary deliverables

In addition to the predefined deliverables, service provider is expected to provide intermediary deliverables. These can take different forms, depending on the profile and content of the requested tasks. Their exact quantity, format and content shall be proposed in the technical offer, then agreed between the ESPON EGTC and the service provider at the kick off meeting. They shall be submitted on a scheduled basis corresponding to the progress of the implementation of the different tasks described above (see sections 1.3).

While leaving freedom to the tenderers to define the intermediary deliverables in their technical offer, the following shall be considered:

- 1) intermediary deliverables shall be planned throughout the project's life cycle and are expected in between each of the pre-defined deliverables.
- 2) compulsory element of the intermediary deliverables are: the data resource that shall be steadily acquired processed and submitted to the ESPON EGTC, a detailed overview of the data collection process and data structure, and adjustments related to the data strategy when necessary (see dedicated section about data deliverable process below).

The service provider will receive feedback from the ESPON EGTC on each deliverable.

The technical offer shall indicate the time schedule for all intermediary deliverables proposed by the tenderer.

1.4.3 Common requirements for all deliverables

All deliverables should be delivered in electronic (editable) format and the text – whatever the format of the deliverable, as relevant, should have gone through a thorough language check, preferably by an English native speaker. ESPON EGTC will provide the generic templates for the reports and maps, however, the service provider shall adjust the templates if necessary, depending on the geographic extent or the relevant peculiarities.

1.5 Project management

1.5.1 Mandatory meetings foreseen during the contract implementation

The service provider shall ensure participation (of at least with one team representative) in all mandatory meetings mentioned below. Costs related to these meetings must be included in the Annex B financial offer of this call for tenders. No other expenses will be paid by the contracting authority to the service provider.

Most of these meetings are held online. In case of a physical meeting (up to 4 physical meetings shall be organised during the lifetime of the project), it will normally take place at the ESPON EGTC's premises in Luxembourg. However, physical meetings may also take place at other suitable locations, upon agreement between the service provider, the involved stakeholders if relevant and the ESPON EGTC.

Kick-off meeting

It will consist of a general presentation and dialogue regarding the objectives and tasks of the service contract. The kick off meeting will also address more precisely the organisation of the project and the plans for the intermediary deliverables. The service provider will receive guidelines and all relevant information concerning the proper application of the ESPON Corporate Identity; this includes guidance

on the ESPON Data and Knowledge Portal interface for data delivery and digital deliverables, on how to design the maps in line with the main elements of the ESPON layout, as well as on communicating results during the project implementation.

Steering Committee meetings

Partnership and cooperation are central to the implementation of ESPON European research projects and are prerequisites for ensuring useful results and effective policy uptake. The successful accomplishment of the objectives of this project will be achieved by proactive participation between selected stakeholders, the ESPON EGTC and the service provider at every stage of the implementation.

To allow for a framework that facilitates successful cooperation, a Steering Committee shall be established for the lifetime of this European research project. The main purpose of the Steering Committee is to ensure the involvement and active participation of stakeholders in the implementation and steering of the project and to safeguard the policy relevance of project outputs for the stakeholders.

The goals of the Steering Committee meetings are, as follows:

- To closely follow and advise the implementation of the research, making sure that it meets both research objectives and policy demands,
- To discuss and give feedback to deliverables from the service provider and provide guidance for the subsequent steps of the research and service contract implementation;
- To discuss and agree upon how to deliver - at each stage of the implementation - the results of the research to selected target groups.

The composition of the Steering Committee is defined by the ESPON EGTC and communicated to the service provider. It comprises at least stakeholders of the territories for which case studies are expected and the ESPON EGTC. Other external stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the [ESPON Monitoring Committee](#)) and/or relevant organisations may also take part in the Steering Committee.

Indicatively, four steering committee meetings shall be foreseen.

- The first one shall take place ca. 1 month after the kick-off meeting, preferably as a physical meeting.

The timing and location of the other Steering Committee meetings will be discussed and agreed during the kick-off meeting and may be amended during the project implementation.

1.5.2 Ad-hoc coordination meetings

Project coordination meetings are organised to discuss the service contract implementation: these **meetings** may be organised to discuss deliverables submitted and to provide related feedback, or other related issues to the organisation of the work and content, including also:

- **meetings** involving the data specialist of the ESPON EGTC, which may be organised to discuss the data strategy and collection, visualisations and a map-validation workshop.
- **meetings** involving the brand manager of the ESPON EGTC, which may be organised to discuss the communication strategy during implementation: presentation of intermediary results, informing the audience on the progress made during the project lifetime, etc.

Defined case by case, these take place on a regular basis when deemed necessary. The meetings are organised by ESPON EGTC, and the conclusions may be documented.

1.5.3 Indicative time schedule

The table below presents the indicative time schedule for the predefined deliverables and kick-off and steering committee meetings.

The exact deadlines for the predefined deliverables as well as the indicative time schedule for all other intermediary deliverables and for coordination and steering committee meetings will be agreed during the kick-off meeting.

The minutes of the kick-off meeting, containing a record of the agreed dates, will be signed by the representatives of both, the service provider and the ESPON EGTC, and will be subject to article of the service contract - "Performance of the contract and subcontracting".

Meetings	Predefined deliverables	Indicative deadline ⁴
Kick-off		As soon as possible (and normally within 2 weeks) after the award of the contract
	Inception Deliverable	T +1 months
1st Steering Committee		T + 2 months
	Progress report 1	T + 6 months
2nd Steering Committee		T + 9 months
	Progress report 2	T + 12 months
3rd Steering Committee		T + 15 months
	Final Deliverable	T + 22 months
Final Steering Committee		T + 24 months

1.6 Technical and professional capacity requirements

The service provider must have proven, European/transnational scale research expertise and multidisciplinary experience relevant to the contract subject matter in order to ensure the successful implementation of the service. The competences and experience of the service provider within the fields outlined below shall be clearly demonstrated and documented, as requested in Sections **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**, as part of the verification of selection criteria.

- At least three proposed team members shall have at least five years of professional experience and an academic background at the intersection of innovation and regional studies, preferably with European and/or transnational experience.

⁴ The letter "T" in this table stands for the date of the kick-off meeting. Timeframes are indicative.

- At least one proposed team member shall have at least ten years of internationally recognised scientific expertise in regional and/or innovation studies, combined with demonstrated experience in translating research into European policy advice.
- At least one proposed team member shall demonstrate experience in qualitative research methods, including comparative case study research, historical analysis and/or process tracing.
- At least two proposed team members shall demonstrate advanced expertise in data science.
- At least one proposed team member shall demonstrate experience in semantic analysis, text mining or natural language processing, including the use of appropriate computational methods and software.
- Advanced expertise in econometric analysis and command of statistical software (e.g. Stata, R or equivalent).
- Advanced GIS and web-based GIS, and data visualisation skills (QGIS, ArcGIS or equivalent) to carry out the necessary analytical work, configure ESPON mapping templates where necessary and present research results in both static and interactive digital formats.
- Proven experience in network analysis, including scientific, technological and/or inter-regional collaboration networks.
- Proven experience in visualising and presenting research findings in an easy-to-grasp way.
- Team members shall demonstrate a very good linguistic ability to draft and communicate research findings in high-quality English.

*click to access the
"selection criteria"*



1.7 Content of the technical offer

The technical offer must cover all aspects and tasks required in section 1 and provide all the information needed to facilitate the subsequent evaluation of tenders against the qualitative award criteria (as described in **section** Error! Reference source not found.). The contracting authority will reject tenders where no technical offer is included.

Please consult **section** Error! Reference source not found. for the complete composition of the tender.

*click to access the
"award criteria"*



The technical offer *MUST NOT* include information related to:

- **competences, skills or experience of the economic operators or team members**
- **presentation of the economic operators, abstract of CVs or biographies**
- **price of the tender**

N°	Composition of the technical offer /chapters	
1	In reference to Sections 1.1 to 1.5 // A description of the concept for addressing the research and the policy needs and description of how objectives will be achieved,	approx. 5 pages
2	In reference to Section 1.1 to 1.5 // A description of the specific approaches and methods to be applied, the rationale behind, the sources and data to be used and the deliveries. Tenderers shall include: - the overall methodological concept and study design for the quantitative, semantic and qualitative analyses; - the proposed project organisation, work plan, allocation of responsibilities, risk management and quality assurance procedures; - the proposed communication and dissemination approach. The above-mentioned main points must already address some of the proposed research content, covering: - the proposed approach to constructing the global frontier of science and engineering, deriving regional measures of scientific and industrial frontier presence constituting the dependent variable, and constructing the regional indicator framework supporting the operationalisation of the analytical dimensions; - the proposed analytical framework, hypotheses, operationalisation of the analytical dimensions and analytical strategy, including any additional analytical dimensions or methodological extensions that the tenderer considers relevant for strengthening the study; - the proposed semantic taxonomies (crises and, where proposed, technological validation maturity); - the proposed scientific, technological and statistical data sources; - the proposed approach to selecting historical observations and comparative territorial and technological case studies, including the indicative number of historical observations and case studies, selection criteria and illustrative examples demonstrating their suitability for addressing the study objectives and ensuring an appropriate balance between analytical depth and breadth of coverage; - the proposed conceptual approach for developing the CICERO Blueprint.	approx. 20 pages (excluding visuals and ref.)
3	In reference to Section 1.1 to 1.5 and Annex D // Description outlining the intended organisation, milestones and management of the work including: - Detailed work plan and timetable with descriptions of the content of the deliveries proposed. - Allocation of human resources by task and by partner (details should be provided as part of the technical offer and not only in Annex D). Approach to ensure effective project management, quality review and risk assessment.	approx. 5 pages
4	Annex D - Allocation of Human resources - filled in for all team members, including Joint Tenderers and/or Subcontractors (if applicable)	template

(...)

End of extract

Consult www.pmp.lu for downloading the full tendering documentation from the Portail des marches publics and submit your tender via the same platform.

EXTRACT