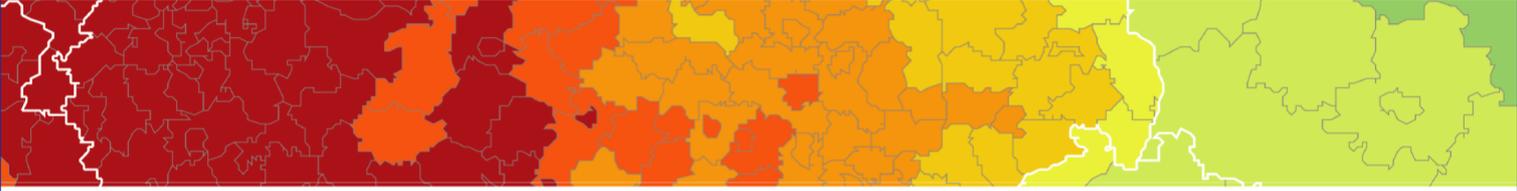


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



Cross-border Public Services (CPS)

Targeted Analysis

**Draft Final Report
Executive Summary**

Version 31/08/2018

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Cross-border Public Services (CPS)

Draft Final Report
Executive Summary

Introduction

The ESPON Cross-border Public Services (ESPON CPS) project is implemented under the 'Targeted Analyses' priority. The key objective of the project is to support a better delivery cross-border public services and to improve awareness about the added value of cross-border public services.

Methodology

Different data sources were used to compile this inventory of CPS examples, including literature, document and online reviews, stakeholders and practitioners from the case studies, interviews to experts, and a comprehensive online survey. The compiled inventory in form of a database is the first of its kind and includes a total of 559 CPS in Europe, of which for 92 CPS detailed survey answers are available allowing for insights into CPS development and governance processes. In addition, **ten case studies** have been conducted in cross-border regions in different parts of Europe. Altogether 170 CPS have been identified in these ten case study areas. Moreover, **good practice examples** have been identified in the framework of the analysis. Good practices can be a valuable contribution for awareness raising and knowledge transfer.

Key findings

The highest share of CPS in Europe has been identified along the borders **between the six founding EU Member States (i.e. the Benelux countries, France and Germany) and Nordic countries**. A high density of CPS can also be observed along the German-Czech and (partially) German-Austrian borders, and along the German-Danish border. The relatively high share of CPS along the southern part of the Finnish-Russian border can be explained by more flexible interpretation of the working criteria in one of the case study regions. Other borders show only very few CPS (for instance, Slovak borders or the border between Portugal and Spain). For some borders no or only one or two CPS have been identified (for example, Latvia-Lithuania, Hungary-Romania, Bulgaria-Romania and Bulgaria-Greece). It appears that CPS are mainly present along borders that either

- (i) have a long tradition of cross-border cooperation in areas with high population densities (Western Europe), i.e. high demand for services of any kind, or in contrary in areas
- (ii) with extremely low population densities and long distances between towns and villages, i.e. in areas with difficulties and high pressures for maintaining public services (Scandinavia).

64% of all identified CPS are located along borders between old EU Member States, almost 12% of all CPS along borders between old and new EU Member States, nearly 8% between new EU Member States and 16% between EU and non-EU countries.

Most identified CPS are implemented **between partners from two neighbouring countries, and only rarely involve partners from three or more countries**. Most of the identified CPS

covering three or more countries are found in the Nordic countries where multilateral governmental agreements exist.

Most CPS deal with environment protection, civil protection and disaster management and transport. About 60% of all identified CPS fall under these three policy fields. It can be concluded that the themes addressed in the various CPS either reflect regional topographic and natural assets and specificities; high demand for services or urgent political issues - or a combination of the three factors.

Target groups are very diverse and vary from CPS to CPS. About one third of CPS have a broad or unspecific defined target group. These address either public authorities (about 20%) or the general public (about 13%). Depending on the policy field targeted public authorities include, for example, planning authorities, schools or hospitals, fire brigades or rescue units or police and custom authorities. Other specific target groups are tourists, pupils, students, apprentices, job seekers and cross-border workers, economic actors and enterprises, as well as people requiring medical or permanent care.

The grounds on which the services were introduced differ largely, but some **needs and motivations** appear frequently. Differentiating the reasons provided by the motivations of CPSP in the survey reveals that nearly half of the CPS primarily aim at **quality-improvements**, each a quarter of survey answers could be attributed mainly to **improving effectiveness** and **improving the efficiency of service provision** respectively.

Beyond the main benefits, CPS have often **other positive effects** and impact more widely in the cross-border area. The following presents some of the more frequently mentioned benefits of CPS covered by the survey:

- CPS contribute to *reducing negative border effects*, for example by enhanced cultural integration.
- CPS contribute to *better connections*, not only between people but also by increasing the accessibility to services, provision of missing resources, or by offering a one-stop-shop and thus a simplification in dealing with a variety of border challenges.
- CPS may contribute to *raising awareness of cross-border possibilities* in terms of work, health care, recreation, education etc. This promotion may have a positive effect on the image of the cross-border region and can support regional economic development.

The good practice examples illustrate a wide **variety of available alternatives for managing, financing and delivering CPS**. Interreg **funding** often plays an important role in supporting CPS development. Even running CPS rather frequently make use of Interreg funding to either develop additional service features or upgrade the existing CPS or to acquire additional resources (e.g. new infrastructure). Other typical funding sources for everyday business of CPS are public resources assigned typically to a comparative domestic service and/or income from tariffs and fees by CPS users. Many CPS have been developed making use of existing infrastructure, which in some cases required to add new infrastructure elements, e.g. tube

connections. Taking the importance of territorial characteristics into account, **CPS delivery demands continuous monitoring and adaptations.** CPS establishment takes time and needs regular monitoring whether the needs are still addressed adequately and the supportive administrative and governance frameworks are still applicable.

Obstacles and unfavourable framework conditions

Unfavourable legal and administrative framework conditions are the main obstacles during the establishment of a CPS. Survey responses and case studies confirmed that legal and administrative hurdles, such as asymmetric or unclear competences of policy actors and incompatible domestic legislation are the most relevant hurdles. In many cases more than one obstacle has been mentioned. Other obstacles are language barriers (cultural divides), one-sided scarce budgetary resources (economic discontinuity), and mental barriers (socio-cultural divides). To overcome the obstacles, **multiple modifications of cross-border legal frameworks are necessary.** Most frequently mentioned is the conclusion of a specific local or regional cooperation agreement between the competent entities organising the public service, followed by the elaboration of a new convention between local and regional authorities. Independently from the delivery mode, most CPS required **a new cross-border structure or body.** Structures without a new legal personality seem to dominate CPS delivery and often already existing structures are used and adapted, no matter whether existing services on both sides of the border are better coordinated, a domestic service is extended or a completely new CPS is developed.

Future development of CPS

The analysis of survey responses indicates a shift in the thematic foci of future CPS as compared to the CPS developed until now. Further CPS in the field of transport are planned at various borders where little or no transport CPS have been identified so far. But also borders with existing transport CPS seem to intend to further integrate cross-border transport by offering more links or developing generally more integrated public transport systems (e.g. for common ticketing). **CPS may emerge most likely in the near future in the fields of spatial planning, economic development, tourism and culture.** In the field of environmental protection most future CPS may be expected in the intervention fields that already now dominate environment related CPS in Europe. This includes CPS in support of joint nature management, whether of water bodies or nature parks etc. Positive experience made in various regions across Europe seems to initiate further joint approaches, either in other cross-border areas or aiming to further integrate already existing joint management efforts to more aspects of environmental protection. Similarly, cross-border waste and waste water treatment and fresh water provision can be expected to be dealt with in a cross-border way even more in the future. Interestingly, the energy related CPS development is not among the often mentioned intervention fields for the future. Potentials for CPS development derive from different needs and motivations. The actual potential for implementing a certain CPS, nevertheless, depends on the challenges that

need to be overcome. As for existing CPS, most obstacles and challenges perceived for future CPS are linked to different legal and administrative systems in the involved countries.

Policy recommendations

The following recommendations can be drawn from the ESPON CPS Study.

Policy Pointers for cross-border institutions, border regions and CPS providers

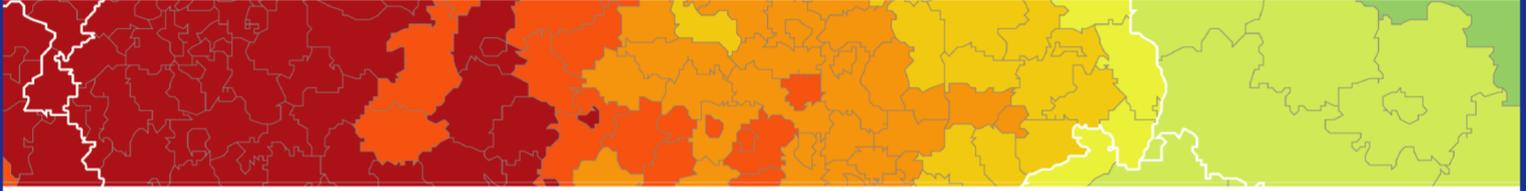
- Not every need is addressed best by a CPS.
- Ensure sufficient commitment and capacity for CPS endeavours.
- Use Interreg deliberately for CPS.
- Be pro-active and patient!
- Communicate cross-border needs to higher levels.

Policy Pointers for national and regional authorities

- Do not shy from asymmetry of responsibilities:
- National and regional authorities have various possibilities to support border regions:
 - initiating activities on local level through pilot programmes and projects;
 - supporting cross-border analysis and planning e.g. by asking for cross-border consultations or providing funding for developing cross-border spatial plans, scenarios or visions;
 - supporting cross-border initiatives through offering advice and knowledge, e.g. through a regional or national cross-border cooperation contact point;
 - contributing to exchange e.g. through conferences, info days, websites.
- Listen to border regions' concerns and requests.

Policy Pointers for EU institutions and European stakeholders

- EU institutions should:
 - pave the way for CPS development in ETC for the 2021-2027 programming period in line with the objective to reduce cross-border barriers through an adequate budget for ETC and a favourable regulation, in particular, give the ETC programmes the flexibility to support CPS through cross-border cooperation programmes;
 - collecting information on cross-border interaction for a better and more informed decision-making processes,
 - supporting and financing specific European-wide studies, analysis and territorial research on CPS;
 - propose measures to analyse and overcome any possible obstacles to the effective application of the EGTC instrument as one of the most adequate legal instruments to support CPS.
- Consider thematically focused support.
- Market CPS achievements.
- Provide open access to data and experience.



ESPON 2020 – More information

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