Case studies

Title of case study: **The ESPACE project**

Keywords: Transnational learning, political leadership, planning timescales, innovation, funding.

Audience: Local, regional, national spatial planners and policy-makers

Messages in the ESPACE strategy to which the case study applies:							
	1.	2.X	3.	4.	5.X	6.X	7.
	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.X	14.

Sentences linking the case study to relevant strategy messages:

2. From the presentations and discussions during transnational workshops and conferences held by the ESPACE project, it is evident that current planning and political timescales are not long enough to effectively address adaptation to climate change.

5. Through research commissioned by the ESPACE Project it is evident that the majority of existing spatial plans and policies across partner countries need to be reviewed and amended to effectively deliver climate adaptation.

6. European funding for the innovative ESPACE project allowed research into climate change risks to inform adaptation through the spatial planning system.

13. From the presentations and discussions during transnational workshops and conferences held by the ESPACE project, it is evident that longer term perspectives and leadership by politicians is required to deliver successful adaptation to climate change.

Elements of 'Guidance' to which the case study applies:	'Tool' to which the case study applies:
Photo/diagram/map:	Overview: Through the ESPACE Project, key transnational lessons have emerged on political timescales, leadership, planning timescales and the value of funding innovative projects on the practical application of climate risks to inform spatial planning. Lessons have also emerged on the how to improve spatial plans and policies to ensure effective adaptation.

Description:
Over the four years of the ESPACE Project, four transnational Conferences and five transnational Technical Workshops have been held involving the 10 partner organisations and a very wide range of other organisations from across Europe (many of whom are part of the Extended Partnership which now has over 200 members). An important component of these events was the extensive discussions and debates which have contributed greatly to

the collective transnational learning of the ESPACE project.
In particular, two key themes have emerged from these debates, which has also been supported by findings from partner actions, as being common threads across Europe: timescales and the role of politicians.

Planning Timescales:
The majority of public policy is designed according to shorter timescales than those required to enable successful adaptation. The short-term horizons of many agencies (and the politicians who govern them) can retard and impair the development and execution of adaptation measures, leading to mal-adaptation. If initiatives are designed to sub-optimal timeframes, their objectives may not accurately reflect the long-term requirements and implications of climate change for spatial planning. This can produce a set of objectives designed according to political criteria that are misaligned with actual hydrological or climatic events.

Political Leadership:
Politicians also need to provide better leadership and look beyond their political mandates to ensure that adaptation to climate change is given the appropriate weight in policy making. Short-termism, especially among politicians, can reduce the 'stock' of agency by giving the impression that nothing meaningful can be achieved in short timeframes. Overcoming the (false) mindset that adaptation requires impossibly long-term commitments is key to developing agency for adaptation.

The ESPACE Project commissioned research to gain knowledge and understanding of existing spatial planning networks, how they work and how to influence them, in all four partner countries. Through this work it emerged that spatial plans and policies need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that climate adaptation is effectively addressed. It is also necessary to encourage spatial planning at the relevant level to give sufficient weight to climate change adaptation, compared to other policy objectives, in order to minimise future risk. Another key finding is that information needs to be rich enough in detail yet targeted to the spatial and time scale of the adaptive planning measure in question. If not, information is not only used inefficiently, it can also constitute a barrier in itself.

The ESPACE Project is funded by the INTERREG IIIB North West Europe Programme which recognised the need for innovative, forward-thinking projects on the practical application of adaptation through the spatial planning system. It is necessary that such funding continues to be made available for similar projects to ensure that adaptation to climate change is made a core objective of spatial planning.

Author:	Further information:
The ESPACE Project	2nd ESPACE Workshop Report 3rd ESPACE Workshop Report 4th ESPACE Workshop Report 1st Conference Agenda 1st Conference Report 2nd Conference Agenda & Report 3rd Conference Agenda 3rd Conference Report 3rd Conference Case Studies Summary 4th Conference Agenda Draft Scoping Report ESPACE Extension