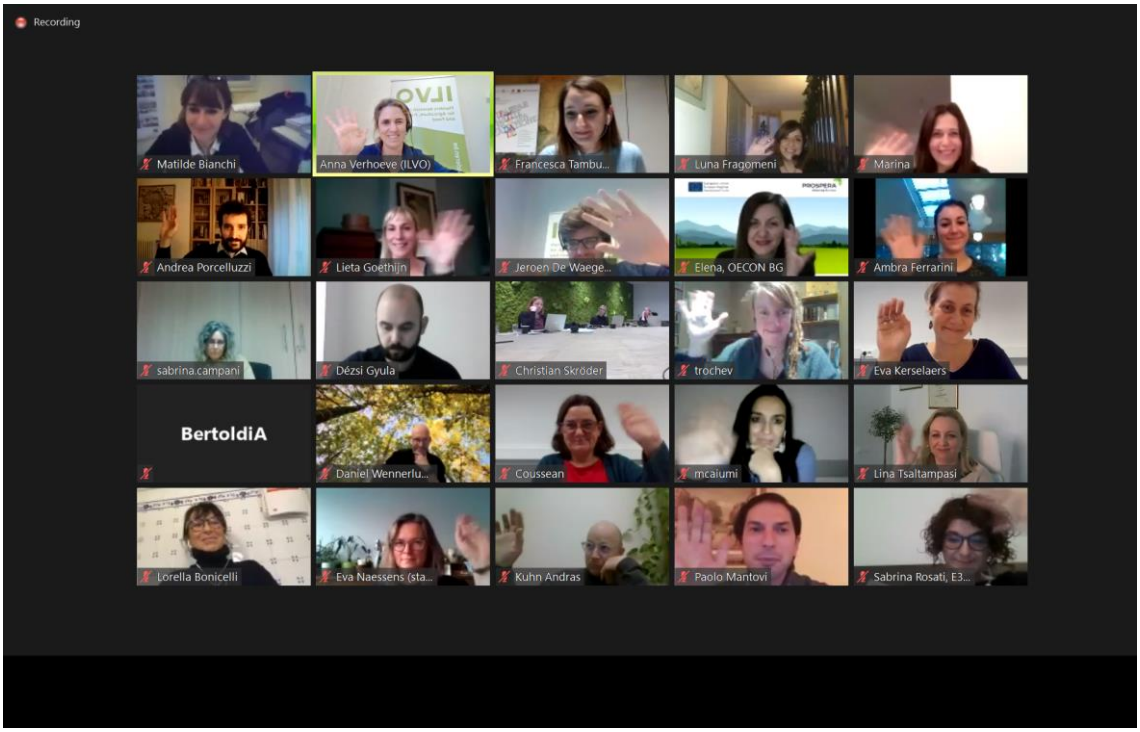

PROSPERA guideline for online field visits

Tips and tricks for interregional learning in an online setting

Summer of 2021

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This guideline was developed as part of the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA, PROmoting Sustainable development and regional attractiveness through PERi-urban Areas. The authors would like to thank all PROSPERA partners for their contributions to this report.

More information? See the project's website: www.interregeurope.eu/PROSPERA/

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1 PROSPERA field visits

The field visits are developed within the PROSPERA project, **PRO**moting **S**ustainable development and regional attractiveness through **PER**i-urban **A**reas, funded by Interreg Europe.

There is the hypothesis that sharing of experience of Good Practices should lead to their "easier and faster" adaptation and implementation in other regions. However, the challenge remains how to best leverage this existing body of evidence and utilise the good practice catalogue to make the learning embedded in the practices more readily and accessible to potential adopters[1].

Prior to the covid-pandemic expertise on interregional learning in an online setting was relatively rare. As ILVO's social science team is responsible for the methodological support of the interregional learning in various other European projects, an intra-organizational workshop was of great help. This report builds on the solid methodological work done in the projects FarmDemo, Nefertiti, Fabulous farmer and Liason[2].

This report contains practical tools, tips and trick to enhance the transferability of Good practices through the organisation of an online field visit.

1.1 Objectives of the field visits

The Interreg Europe project PROSPERA aims to improve local and regional policies on the protection and the promotion of natural heritage in peri-urban areas, the rural-urban fringe that is threatened by urban-sprawl. The ultimate goals is to prevent biodiversity loss, soil consumption and degradation of natural assets, and to improve regional attractiveness and economic sustainable development in the peri-urban areas. The PROSPERA partners identify at least 15 Good Practices from the 5 participating cities: Aristoteli, Debrecen, Ghent, Reggio Emilia, and Varberg. During a process of interregional learning that comprises field visits and other workshops, the partners exchange knowledge about these Good Practices and discuss their transferability with a focus on policy making for the peri-urban areas. The knowledge feeds into the definition of local action plans to improve a local policy instrument.

The field visits are keystones of the process of interregional learning. They have multiple objectives:

- To **inform**: During the field visits the receiving partner provides information about its' Good Practices to the visiting partners. The receiving partner explains the Good Practices, gives more

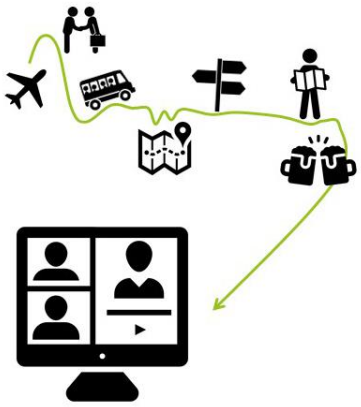
[1] Henderson, Donna et al. 2016 Scalability and transferability of Good Practices in Europe: What does it take? International Journal of Integrated Care, 16(6):A191, pp. 1-8, DOI: http://doi.org/10.5334/ijic.2739

[2] Link to manuals developed within Farmdemo : https://trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/demo-design-guide-for-virtual-demonstrations/ and https://trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-virtual-demos_Training-Kit_2007008.pdf and https://trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FAQ-virtual-demonstrations_200716.pdf ; Liason, FabFarmers https://www.fabulousfarmers.eu/en .

background about them, highlights their successes and failures, and highlights the role of policy making in the Good Practices.

- To **consult**: The field visits are also organised to consult other partners and their stakeholders on their experiences and expectations.
- To **discuss**: The field visits provoke debate about policies for the peri-urban areas. Building on the Good Practices that are presented, the various PROSPERA regions share their past and current experiences with policy making for the peri-urban areas.
- To **collaborate**: Besided the interregional discussions, the field visits foster also intraregional collaboration since both the PROSPERA partners as well as their local stakeholders are involved in the process. As such, each field visit is also an occasion to reflect on the own situation and to discuss with stakeholders possible improvements to a local policy instrument. As such, the field visits build new bridges between local stakeholders and spark new partnerships for policy making in the PROSPERA regions.

1.2 A PROSPERA field visit in an online setting?



As the PROSPERA partners prepared for the project's first field visit, the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting travel restrictions dramatically altered the initial plans. The PROSPERA partners have to organize the field visits in an online setting. Since the field visits are keystones of the interregional learning process, it is crucial that the online field visits are inspiring events that inform the participants, provoke discussion and foster collaboration. As such, the online field visits have the same objectives as their on-site counterparts and we highlight that the switch from on-site to online field visits can be conceived as 'cooking a new recipe with the same ingredients'. This PROSPERA guideline for the online field visits offers the 'new recipe': the methodology for setting up an inspiring online field visit.

1.3 Hybrid versus full online meetings.

There are different possibilities for organizing a PROSPERA field visit in an online setting. Firstly, the field visit can be organized fully online: all participants log into the online event from their home or work office. This means that all interactions happen online, from the plenary presentations of the city's Good Practices to the workshop about the local applicability of these Good Practices. This strategy allows to organize an online field visit at all times, even during periods of severe travel and working restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Secondly, the field visit can be organized partly online and partly offline: the participants of one region meet physically. The plenary presentations of the city's Good Practices (see paragraph 4.2 on the public conference) are broadcasted to the gathered audience but the local roundtable (see paragraph 4.3) comprises face-to-face interactions. This option can only take place if partners are allowed to meet and travel within their region.

Thirdly, there is the possibility for a hyrid version: a mixture of the first and the second strategy. The partners in the regions under lockdown organize a full online field visit, while the other partners organize the second, partly online partly offline field visit.

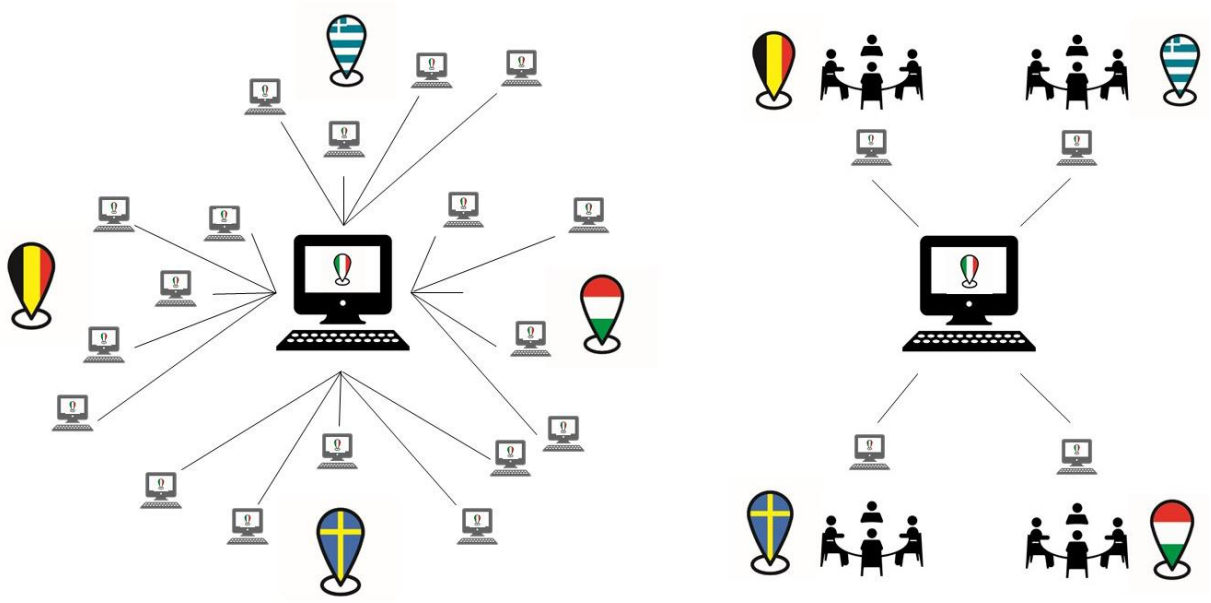


Figure 1- Full online field visit (left) and field visit with partly online and partly offline setting (right)

2 Co-production with stakeholders

From the onset of PROSPERA, stakeholder involvement was defined as the backbone of the project and the key component to the learning process. As such, the PROSPERA project is a layer cake of co-production: intraregional learning between the PROSPERA partners and their local stakeholders as well as interregional between the PROSPERA partners and the stakeholders from the participating regions.

What is more, thorough co-production during the field visits builds towards an action plan that is broadly supported, and more likely to generate impact/effects[3]. A first selection of the local Good Practices was defined by each partner during local stakeholder groups[4]. Also in futher dialogue with local stakeholders additional information was collected on how and why a specific good practice is relevant to present on a field visit.

An intense stakeholder envolvement is equally important in the preparation of a field visit (especially as a hosting partner) as it is in the public event. Their knowledge and experiences is of great value to inform, consult, discuss and collaborate on the transferability of local Good Practices.

Why exactly and how to engage stakeholders exactly in the organisation and participation of a field visit is included in each part of the online field visit program.

[3] De Vos A., Dujardin JM., Gielens T., Meyers C. (2016) Context & Transfer Issues: How Can Good Practices Be Transferred?. In: Developing Sustainable Careers Across the Lifespan. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47741-1_4

[4] Verhoeve, A. and De Waegemaeker, J., (2020) *PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA.

3 The scope of a field visit

To ensure that each field visit contributes to the PROSPERA objective, it is important to deliberately align the focus with the PROSPERA framework and previously gained insights on the common challenges[5]. Alignment with other PROSPERA partners' interests is another factor to enhance the transferability of the presented Good Practices. In the spring of 2020, we organizes a **synthesis-workshop** for each partner region with this objective in mind. Each and every workshop was designed as a moment of co-production between the hosting and the visiting partners: a moment of integration and exchange of knowledge across the regional borders. Only for the study visit in Gent, we were able to have a real life workshop during the launcing event in Debrecen February 2020. Unfortunately all the other workshops took place – due to covid – in an online setting. The original idea was to embed them each workshop in preparation of a field visit at the end of the previous field visit.

Luckily, the launching event of PROSPERA was a pre-covid real life event. Hosted by the Hungarian partners, the city of Debrecen and EDC, we enjoyed working together and sharing social events. On one of these moments we learned more about the delicate balance of a good goulash. And at that very moment, cooking a goulash, became part of the common language of the PROSPERA-project. It became the metaphor to refer to the ingredients of a good field visit, acknowledging that in such a visit smaller and bigger pieces get all there meaning in the broader story.We kept using this metaphor, based on the experience that having a shared language is among the critical factors to organize a successful social interface[6].

Figure 2 - Cooking the local 'goulash'

The **toolkit** to support partners in the organization of this workshop was integrated in a pre-defined **digital canvas**, using the MURAL application[7].

[5] Verhoeve, A. and De Waegemaeker, J., (2020) *PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA.
[6] Rogge, E., Dessein, J. & A. Verhoeve (2013). The organisation of complexity: A set of five components to organise the social interface of rural policymaking. Land Use Policy 35, 329– 340.
[7] www.mural.co

As presented in figure 2,3 and 4 the workshop included the following steps:

(1) In a first step each partner gave a brief **presentation of the Good Practices**; Hosting partners gave an introduction of each good practice previously selected together with their local stakeholder group. Furthermore, the PROSPERA-target was used to indicate how a specific good practice is related the local challenges and policy priorities[8].
(2) A second step consisted of a **voting session** in which all participants could indicate their preference and interest *'We would like to visit…'*
(3) An **in-depth discussion** was held for further clarification and identification of partners' interest. At this point all participants came to a joined definition of the ingredients of the field visit. So, in drafting the agenda, we cooked together a new goulash.
(4) An **evaluation** was held at the end of each workshop. Beside an evaluation the workshop, this moment was also used to make links with other field visits.

The following paragraphs describe the different steps of the local synthesis-workshop. These steps are the ingredients for sharpening the focus of an (online) field visit.

3.1 The presentation of local good Practices

3.1.1 The PROSPERA target-tool as background to present local Good Practices

The PROSPERA framework provides clear guidance for the organisation of the fieldvisits. Namely, that the field visits should fit in the flow to meet the project's overall objective, which is **to improve regional policies on protection and promotion of natural heritage in peri-urban areas** threatened by urban sprawl. In particular, PROSPERA wants to prevent biodiversity loss, soil consumption and further degradation of natural assets, by in parallel leveraging on those challenges as a way to favor regional attractiveness and economic sustainable development. Embedded in this overall objective, the PROSPERA project focuses on **strategies** to include peri-urban areas in strategic planning as key leverage for sustainable growth and attractiveness of the region. Partners are invited to reflect upon strategies which (1) **Change the mindset of peri-urban actors toward natural heritage as an opportunity for business development and (2) Raise awareness about urban-rural linkages as a key factor for protecting natural heritage and contributing to sustainable development.** It is important to keep this overall objective and strategies in mind when organizing a field visit.

A good understanding of the project ambitions and of the local context is crucial background information necessary to organize a field visit. To support the partners in this ambition ILVO developed **a target-tool**[9].

[8] Verhoeve, A. and De Waegemaeker, J., (2020) *PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA.
[9] Verhoeve, A. and De Waegemaeker, J., (2020) *PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA.

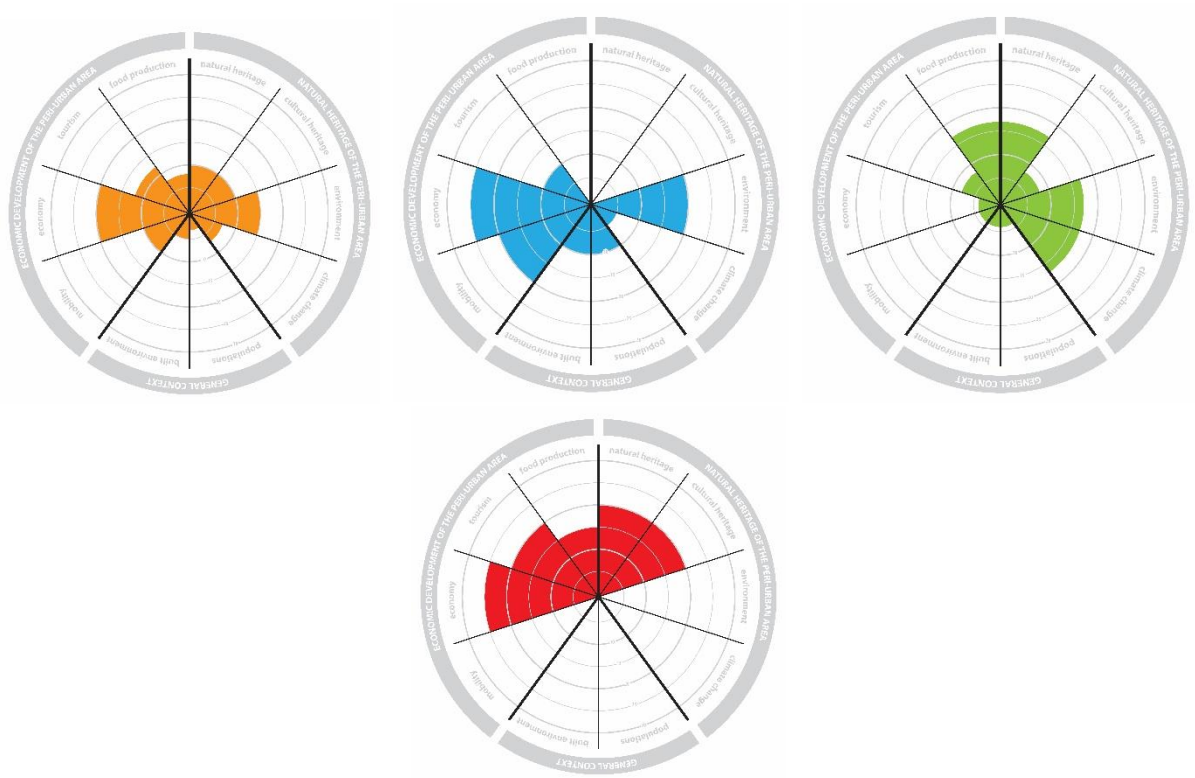
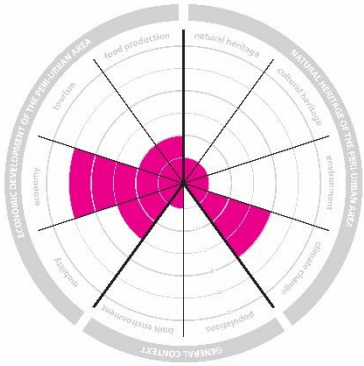


Figure 3 - Target by the different partners for the ambitions of the local policy instrument. Top left –Aristoteli, Top middle: Debrecen, Top right: Ghent, bottom left: Reggio Emilia, bottom right: Varberg



As a result, all partners gained a better understanding of the local relevance the PROSPERA themes and challenges that each individual partner wanted to address within the PROSPERA project. During an intra-organisational meeting the same tool was used to get a better understanding of regional differences.

So, in the organisation of an (online) field visit, and more specifically in defining the scope of the field visit, this target-tool was re-used and served as a background to present the local Good Practices.

3.1.1 Common challenges as background to present local Good Practices

To serve as a source of inspiration for other peri-urban regions, the Good Practices should be transferable. Of course two contexts are never the same, so at first sight these pratices often do not seem to be transferable. Yet, we argue that an indepth understanding of common challenges creates a solid basis to select meaningful Good Practices. A cross-case analysis was used to identify common challenges. The results of this analytical work is critalized "*PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA." [10]. Also, the *PROSPER-O-MATIC*, a spreadsheet which provide an instant overview of the local challenges, their overlap in the different regions and their connection with the selected Good Practices, is a tool of great help[11].

This knowledge on common challenges also helps hosting partners to present the Good Practices during the field visits in such a way that the other partners are eager to discuss further the local relevance, the possibility of a solution in their local context.

Both products are tools to identify and present the local Good Practices. And we recommend to present the Good Practices in such a way that they are explicitely connected to the earlier identified common challenges. By doing so, the hosting partner immediately makes clear why a certain practice could be of relevance in other partners' context.

3.2 Cooking the local goulash

3.2.1 Voting session - Guidance by partners' interest

Beside the thematical guidance derived from the PROSPERA framework and the identified common challenge, an understanding of partners' interest is essential information to define a successful (online) field visit.

After the presentation of the Good Pracitces and a moment for clarifying Q&A, visiting partners were requested were invited to make clear their preference during a voting session. The Mural application allows to include a voting session. By giving each partner 3 votes a first impression was gained on which Good Practices got less or more interest.

3.2.2 In-dept reflection – defining a tastefull recipe

The result of the voting session, was used to further define the agenda of the field visit. A moment was reserved to get a better understanding of the reasoning behind the visiting partners' preference.

At this stage, attention was also given to the relations (both geographical as contentwise) between different Good Practices.

The discussions was then moderated to define in a co-productive way the most interesting agenda for the upcoming (online) field visit. The graphical summary which was made during this discussion, served as an instant tool to conclude the workshop to define the scope of a field visit.

[10] Verhoeve, A. and De Waegemaeker, J., (2020) *PROSPERA synthesis report. Revealing common challenges in five European peri-urban areas*, a report by ILVO for the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA.
[11] Porcelluzzi, a. (2020) https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cUoafKX68vuk4icyEJd3uFU-ghKoEJtAhrvexKWI0Eo/edit#gid=0

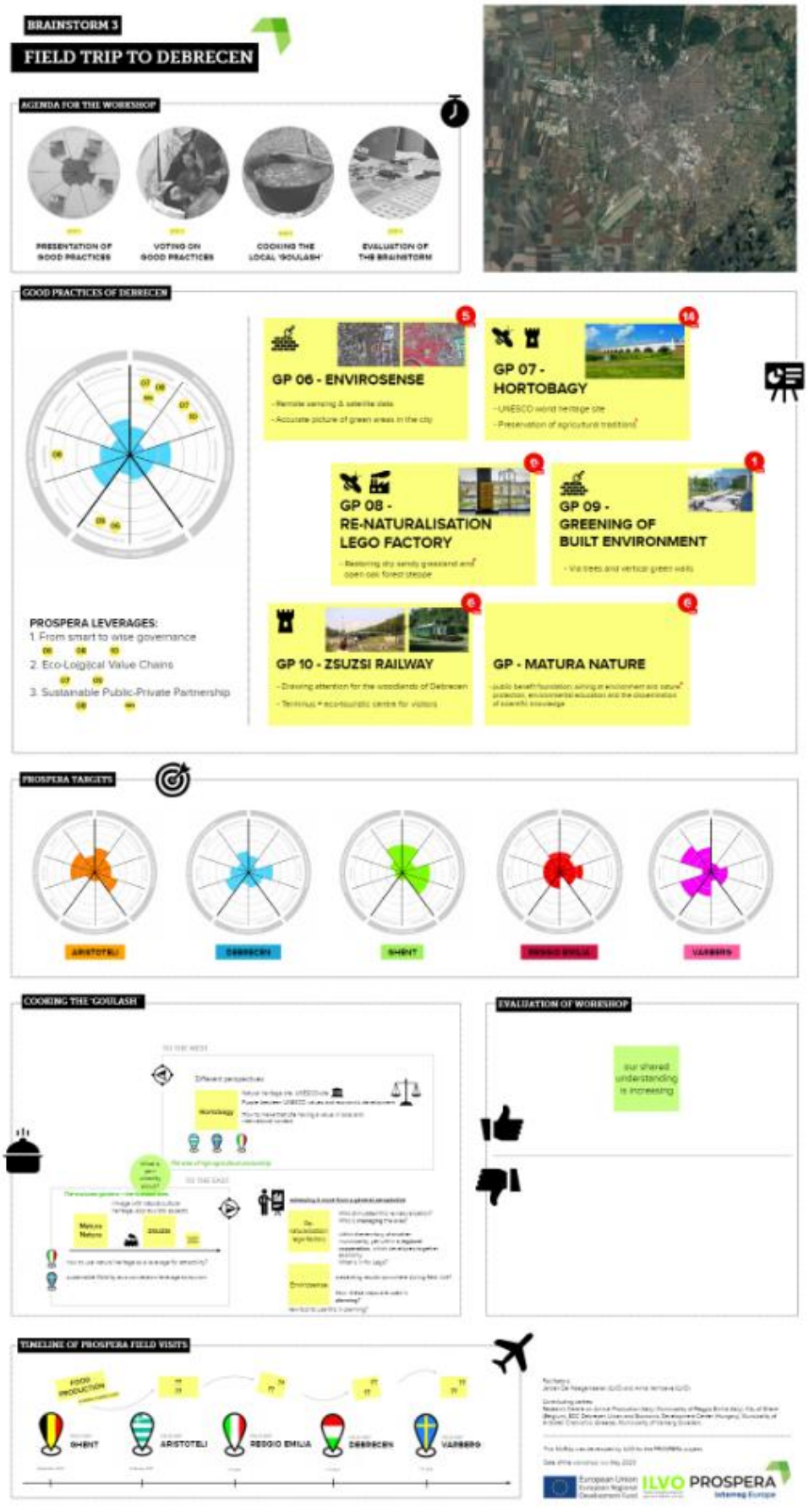


Figure 4- Canvas to discuss the agenda of upoming field visit – workshop 1

3.3 Balancing the field visits – cooking the interregional goulash

Once workshops to define the scope of all individual (online) field visits were held, a specifc workshop was dedicated to organize a thematical balance between the different field visits (September 2020). This was a moment to summarize the thematical scope of all Good Practices and field visits.

Figure 5 presents the conclusion of this balancing workshop, in which the chosen focus of a specific field visit are defnied based on the common challenges.

Field Visit	Common challenges that will be addressed during the field visit	Good Practices that will be visited
Ghent	CC.12 – Mediating conflicts between farmers and other users of the open space CC.13 - Improving the city-agriculture relationship CC.20 - Constructing green infrastructure in the peri-urban area	GP Gent en Garde, GP De Goedinge, GP Gentbrugse Meersen, GP Groenklimaatassen
Aristoteli	CC.08 – Negociating with (new) big (branch) plants CC.16 - Developing gastro-tourism CC.17 – Balancing tourism and leisure with other economic activities	GP Aristotelis Grove/Route, GP Kouzina program, GP Women association, GP Parallel restoration
Reggio Emilia	CC.14 - Differentiating policies for the agricultural area CC.18 - Connecting peri-urban areas to the city CC.21 - Afforestating the peri-urban area	GP Edible park, GP Green ways, GP Urban forestation
Debrecen	CC.24 - Enhancing biodiversity * CC.25 – Balancing conservation and development at heritage sites CC.27 – Reconciling modern-day farming and traditional agricultural landscapes	GP Hortobagy, GP Zsuzsi and Matura Natura, GP Re-naturalisation lego-factory
Varberg	CC.06 – Affordability and sufficient supply of housing CC.22 - Mapping, valuating and communicating about ecosystem services CC.32 – Working towards circularity	GP Grasslands, GP EMC and Arena, GP Rural development strategy

Figure 5 - Overview of the thematical focus of the different field visits – September 2020.

4 The components of the PROSPERA online field visit.

The actual (online) field visit is defined as the sum of all moments were the hosting partner takes the lead in a public interregional setting. Public, in the sense that these moments are open to other participants, to stakeholders from the other partners.

Onfield study visits have automatically a large gradient from formal to informal, from local to interregional, from small to big number of participants[12]. For example, sitting in a bus together with a close colleague, discussions in the bar with local stakeholders and the participation in moderated interregional workshops all create very different settings. And all of these moments have their value. All of these moments play a specific role in the transfer and integration of knowledge. However, creating this diversity in learning moments in an online setting is a huge challenge.

With the value of the different settings in mind, we defined a sequence of meetings with different levels of formality and regionality; and came up with a deliberate sequence were partnermeetings alternate with local stakeholders meetings and interregional workshops.

The upcoming paragraphs provide a description of each steps.

4.1 Partnermeeting - Setting the scene

A good start is half the battle. Taking time and making time to share and discuss with all partners the agenda of the field visit is of major importance. Done in an interactive setting it allows to the visiting partners to renew their knowledge on a specific context and at the same time increase their interest.

As a hosting partner this is the moment were the (draft)agenda of the upcoming field visit is shared with all partners. Hosting partners provide additional information to increase the understanding of the local context, for example by sharng video's and folders.

As a visiting partner, this meeting is the moment to collect the necessary information to be capable to decide afterwards **which stakeholders to invite** for the upcoming public events. The absence of travel costs is definitely a benefit to increase the participation in public project events. However, the increased online fatigue does require a carefull selection of stakeholders. To prevent further online fatigue, but also to garantuee fruitfull interactions.

To further support the transferability discussions (see paragraph 4.3), all visiting partners are also requested to get a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between the local and the visiting context. A comparison of their own 'Regional analysis Report'[13]and the one of the hosting region, forms the main source of information. Again a MURAL-canvas was provided to collect the synthesis of these comparative reflections[14].

[12] https://trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/demo-design-guide-for-virtual-demonstrations/
[13] All the Regional analysis reports are available at https://www.interregeurope.eu/prospera/library/
[14] MURAL – tranferabilty.

4.2 Public conference – informing the audience

A second, and main part, of the online field visit is the "Public conference". This is the moment where the hosting partner present the local good practices to inform the large audience of visiting partners and their stakeholders. During this half-day conference the good practices are presented one by one by speakers directly related to the practice. During this public conference, the interaction with the audience is limited to short Q&A sessions. These Q&A sessions are supported by a Mentimeter-tool. To keep the flow in the conference only urgent clarifying questions are adressed. All other questions are grouped and brought into the discussions at a later stage of the study visit (see also paragraph on interregional learning 4.4)

4.2.1 Tips and tricks for the organizing comitee

Organizing an online public conference is a challenging job. To support hosting partners in this job the following list of tips and tricks was collected.

Make use of the flexibility of an online setting.

Contrary to its' real-life counterpart, there are no time limits to a an online field. There is no need to push the entire process of a field visit into a overly crowded agenda since there are no hotel nor travel costs. Each and every step of the field visit merits its own day and there must be sufficient -*yet not too much*- time between the different steps.
For example: The interregional discussion on a Good Practice is best organized 4 to 5 days after it has been presented.

Provide context for the Good Practices.

Contrary to traditional on-site field visits, participants in online field visits don't experience the city and, as a consequence, they have no or little background about the Good Practices. Be sure to introduce the participants to the local context before you expand on the Good Practices.

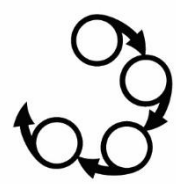
Make use of the PROSPERA regional report and the PROSPERA synthesis report to effectively communicate the local context.
For example: Use those figures and maps that are in the regional report, thus you can refer to that report if participants want more information.

Focus on the scope of the field visit.

Each city faces multiple challenges and wants to present a wide array of Good Practices, yet the time is limited. Focus on the predefined scope of the field visit throughout the entire program and in all presentations.
For example: Only provide figures that are relevant to the scope of the day. Don't try to be exhaustive in the information you share.

To safeguard the focus of the online field visit a local organizer must advise all speakers and edit their presentations.

Structure the storyline and coordinate the presentations.



Be sure to structure the storyline and to assure a logical sequence of the PROSPERA field visit.
For example: First clarify the local context and challenges, than outline the overall policy framework(s), and finally provide detailed information on specific interventions and actions.

Coach the speakers and coordinate their presentations in order to avoid too many repetitions or information that is outside of the scope of the field visit.

Select people that speak from the heart.

Select those speakers with a passion for the Good Practice and raise their eagerness to share their story by highlighting the added value of the field visit for them.
For example: Clarify to each speaker why you selected him/her. Explain what is in it for them? E.g. an occasion to share your story or to ask for suggestions from abroad.

Appoint a host(ess) who welcomes all participants to your city. Since the host(ess) kickstarts the field visit and sets the' tone, he or she needs to have high energy levels.

Think carefully about the speakers' language skilss. If English is a barrier for most speakers, please hire a professional interpreteur.

To avoid delays select only one speaker per presentation.

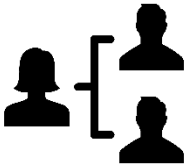
Tips for timing.

An audience's attention span is limited, especially within an online setting. The plenary part of the online field excursion should not exceed 3 hours, break(s) included.

In Europe there are huge cultural differences regarding lunch time and punctuality. What some may find fashionable late, others find annoying and disrespectful. For this reason, keep to the timing as much as possible. The key to time keeping is the inclusion of buffer time in the program. For example: Make sure to have suffient time for Q&A so that you can cut this time if your are behind schedule. Be aware that there are different timezones in Europe. Keep in mind that your participants might be ahead/behind in time. For example: Breaking for lunch at noon in Ireland is too late for Finnish participants where it is 2pm.

Technical issues (e.g. speakers struggling to share a presentation or video) can mound up to huge delays. Organize a test session (1h) just before the public plenary event thus speakers get to test their presentations.

A good start is half the job done. Launch the webinar 15 minutes prior to the event so that participants can log in and start the presentations on time.



Tips for organisation.

A clear division of roles is essential to setting up a successful field visit. There are the following roles:

- The host welcomes the participants to the field visit. He or she also thanks all speakers and participants at the end of the field visit. The host also sends out the invitation for and all material about the field visit prior to the event.
- The moderator is responsible for time keeping. He or she has an eye on the speakers'time and ensures that all speakers have the time that was defined in the program. The moderator also moderate the Q&A in the field visit.
- The organizer sets-up the platform. He or she is responsible for all technical issues during the online event, including the set-up of translation rooms in the online platform.

When the team is operating from different offices/countries it is advisable to set-up an additional communication channel. If the online platform of the online field visit fails, there is needs for a quick and ready channel to communicate. This additional communication channel is equally useful to communicate short messages out of sight of the field visit participants.

4.2.2 Tips and tricks for the presentors

Also as a presentor, the conference is a challenging moment. This list of tips ans trick provide at least some support.

Use the shared language of the PROSPERA project!

Clarify your local challenges by referring to the common challenges that were earlier identified in the PROSPERA project.

Make use of the PROSPER-O-MATIC to identify which cities face similar challenges. Don't hesitate to call out these links out in your presentation.
For example: *"we face the challenge X just as our colleagues from Y and Z".*

Avoid the use of specific, local terminology or the names of local partners.
For example: Don't say "*we collaborated with Y*" but say "*we collaborated with a local NGO for nature development, named Y*".

Evoke the Good Practices through multimedia

An online field visit can never replace the multisensoral experience of a visit on site. Nevertheless different media (e.g. movies) will help the audience to get the look and feel of the good practice. The media doesn't have to be professional but most be short (max 1min) and on-topic.
Tip: On facebook or twitter you might find some short amateur videos that can help to bring the story across.

Integrate multiple perspectives on the good practice

Even though there is only one presentor, try to integrate what other stakeholders have said about the good practice.

These voices can be integrated in the presentation by using a small interview, a quote, a newspaper's headline or even a facebook comment.
For example, if the good practice is oriented towards food production it is particularly interesting to know what the farming community thinks about it.

Be transparent about your struggles in local policy making.

Since the field visit aims to inspire policy making in other cities, presentors must focus on the role of local policy making in the good practice.

To facilitate the process of interregional learning it is important that presentors address their successes as well as their failures. Avoid to host a 'good news show' because your struggles are equally inspiring as your wins.

Don't hesitate to communicate the questions you have at the end of the presentation. Maybe you will get helpful feedback from the audience.

Keep to your timing!

The presentation is part of a bigger plenary part. Small delays in each presention mount up to a massive delay in total. It is for this reason that the moderators of the field visit are strict time keepers.

While you present, make sure that you see the timekeepers who give (subtle) hints about your remaining time. For this reason it is advisable to have two screens: one for your presentation and one for the webcams.

Try out your presentation in advance. It often takes more time to explain signs that you first imagined. Also be sure to have some buffer time (2 min).

Don'ts!

Don't dwell on what other speakers will present but focus on the good practice that you are presenting.

Don't name all local partners and collaborations but integrate their names and logo's at the end or the start of the presentation. If you vocally list all partners you loose your audience's attention.

Don't have more than one presentor per presentation.

4.3 Local round table - Transferability assessment

Transferring a good practice/or policy is like taking a plant from one pot to another one, which is a quite delicate activity: the grounds may be different, one needs to add some water or fertilizer and the result is far from being guaranteed. The process is the same and as delicate with the transfer of a practice from one context ("de-contextualisation") to another one ("re-contextualisation")[15].

Whether or not a particular practice can be applied in another region is the subject of a transferability assessment. Therefore, each visiting partner is asked to organize a meeting with the local (key) stakeholders to discuss the transferability of the presented good practices. Preferably, this local round table is organiszed in the afternoon following the public conference.

To support visiting partners in the transferability assessment of the good practices, a step-by-step approach is/was provided. The central tool to support this approach is a MURAL-canvas, with pre-defined boxes.

In contrast to the previous meetings visiting partners are in the moderation seat are during these local round tables. The language barrier is the main reason to do so. Otherwise, too much information would be lost in translation. And that would be a real pitty.

To guide the local moderators in their job two MURAL canvas were developed: an (1) Introduction canvas and (2) a Transferability Canvas.

[15] De Vos A., Dujardin JM., Gielens T., Meyers C. (2016) Context & Transfer Issues: How Can Good Practices Be Transferred?. In: Developing Sustainable Careers Across the Lifespan. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47741-1_4

4.3.1 Introduction-Canvas

A well-structured introduction is necessary to bridge the international setting of the public conference with the setting of the local round table and to encourage participants to involve actively. An Introduction-Canvas with the following pre-defined boxes provide support (for an example see figure 6):

- **Mirror-box**. Partners were requested to make some homework to prepare the field visit (see paragraph 4.1). They had to make an overview of the similarities and differences between the local and the visiting context. This overview acts as a perfect tool to introduce the visiting context tot the the marticipants of the local round table.
- **Who is in the room ?** It is always good to know who is in the room and to have a (visual) report of this. To use this visual in an intreregional context, it is important that local names get some more general description.
- **Which Good practice to discuss?** Not all the good practices presented during the public conference need to be discussed at the local round table. Only those found most interesting (from the transferability perspective). The 'Measuring the temperature' visual is an easy tool to get a first idea on particpants' interest.

4.3.2 Transferability-Canvas

A Transferability- Canvas is used to assess the transferability of a specific good practice. For each Good Practices discussed at a local round table a new canvas should be used. The following pre-defined boxes guide the transferability assessment (for an example see figure 7):

- **Why is this Good Practices interesting?** Local interest is key to transfer successfully a good practice. Participants should be encourage to identify specific aspects of interest , local opportunities and obstacles.
- **Where to implement?** A map of the visiting partner municipality/region is also included in the Transferability-canvas. Guiding the discussion to a specific context can often be a good tool to make the discussion embedded in local reality.
- **Who can (help) implement?** Part of the transferability assessment is also to identify all actors that could play a role in the roll-out of a particular practice. The visual of a power-interest invites to reflect on the different characteristics of edentified actor.
- **Feedback to hosting partner**. The field visits are designed to be of mutual interest, both for the hosting as for the visiting participants. For this reason a specific box is dedicated to collect during the transferability discussions feedback for the hosting partner. This feedback is valuable information which is embedded in the following interregional round table.

The result of such local round table is a better understanding of the local interest in specifc Good Practices. The critical reflection on transferability also reveal opportunities and obstacle to enroll a given Good Practice.

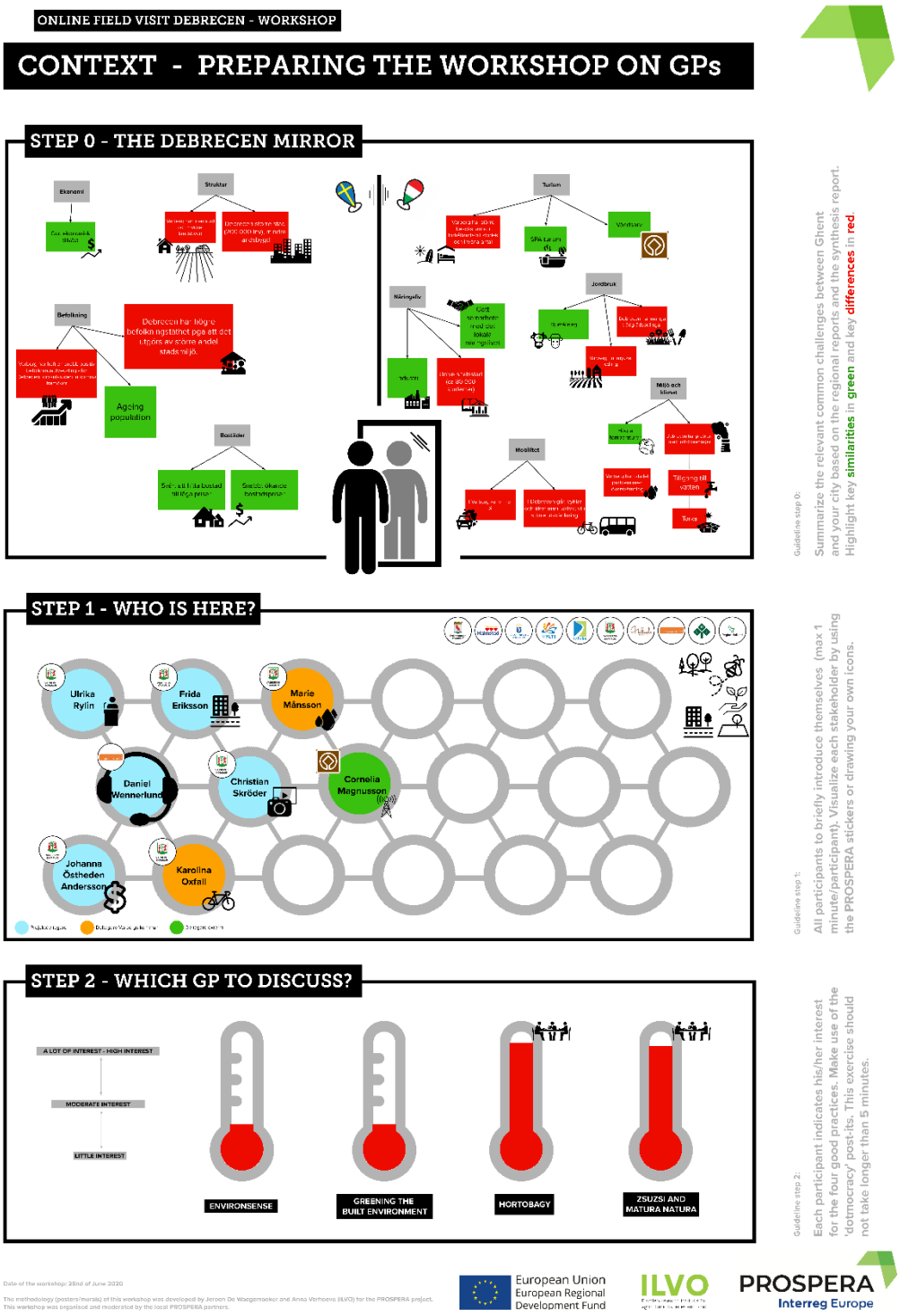


Figure 6 - Introduction Canvas

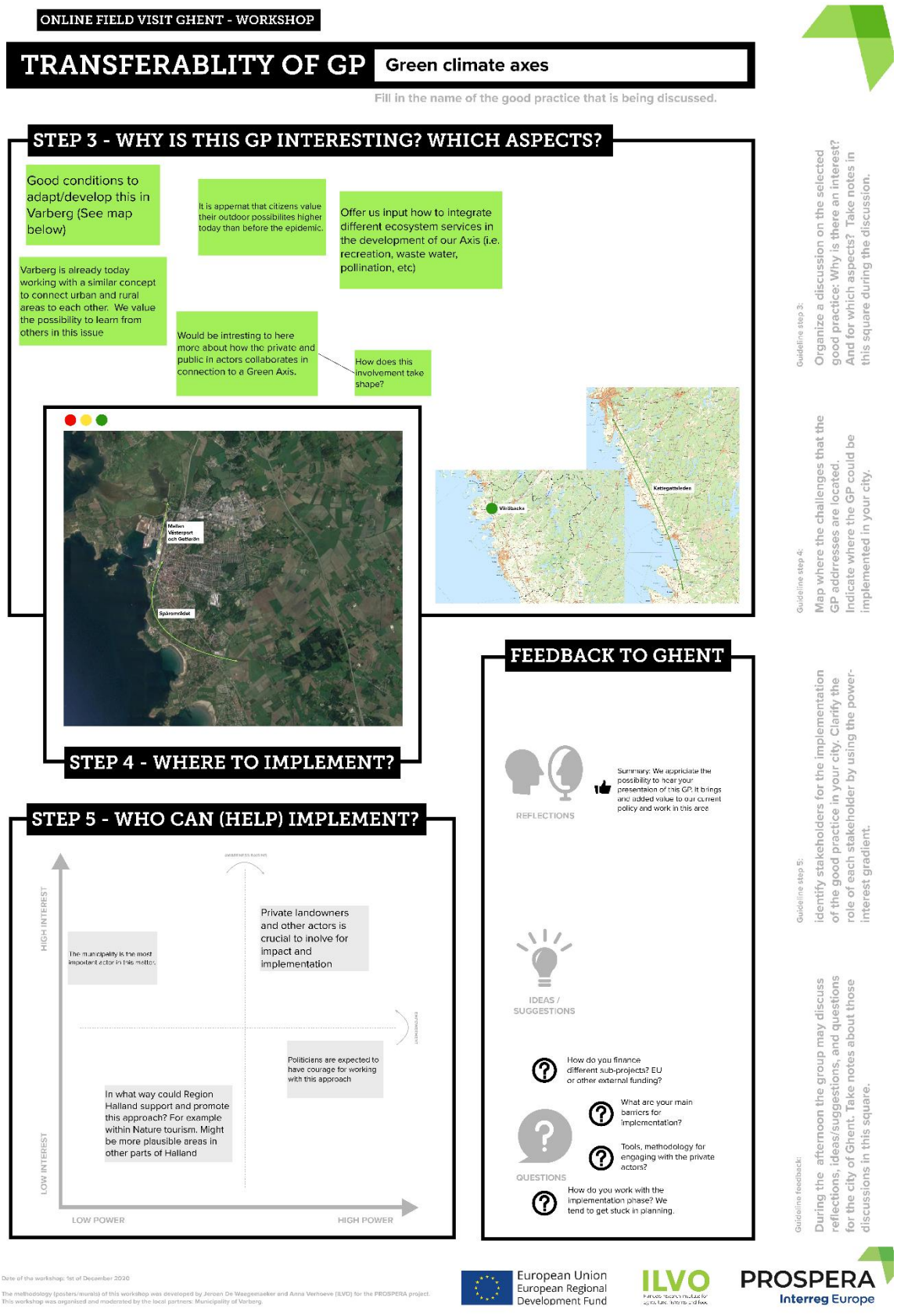


Figure 7 – Example of a Transferability Canvas used to discuss the transferability of a good practice

4.4 Interregional round table - peer-review on transferability

During the local round tables, partners gain a better understanding of the transferability of some Good Practices. Often at these moments some additional questions. For example, '*How Good Practice owners have overcome certain obstacles?'* or '*What exactly was the role of the city in a particular GP?*' or '*How the Good practice is related to policy ambitions?*'.

An interregional round table was organised to answers these kind of questions and to assess further the effective potential of a Good Practice in another context. Together with the Good Practices Owners each Good Practice was further discussed. It was a deliberate choice to organise this indepth assessment in an interregional setting, and not just bilaterial setting. Since partners do learn also from the indepth questions raisen by other partners.

These interregional round tables are held a week after the public conference. This gives visiting partners the time to structure the questions and reflections from their local round table. ILVO moderates in English[16]. On the GP owners' requests, partners organise a translation.

At these interregional round tables, also a feedback loop to the hosting partners and Good Practice owners is organised. Visiting partners are encouraged to share reflections and information tought to be relevant for the organizing partner. As such, these local round tables are real learning environments for all participants.

5 Keep the broader (policy) picture in mind – towards an action plan

The series of field visits serves as a source of inspiration for drawing up an action plan to improve a specific local policy instrument. It is therefore crucial that each individual partner keeps in mind the policy instrument and the objectives when participating in the study visits.

To have effective discussions on transferability during the local and interregional round tables, this information on the policy context of the Good Practices should be shared knowledge of all participants. Therefore, project partners should regularly update their stakeholders on the policy context of a Good Practice. Only with this knowledge, a qualitative assessment of transferability is possible. Project partners can use the information on the policy instrument and broader governmental context already included in each regional analysis report[17]. These reports also include reflections on the role and power of partner cities, and specific challenges, and current strategies and mechanisms to address these challenges. Of course, changes to the policy instrument and/or objectives may occur during the course of the project. In that case, it is even more important to inform stakeholders of the changed policy context.

As mentioned before, the field visits with the presentations of the local Good Practices and local and interregional discussions on transferability are just the tools to develop an inspired action plan. Therefore, at the end of the series of field visits, each region should have identified which Good Practices could be interesting to develop their action plan.

[16] A MURAL-canvas was developed to support this moderation.
[17] For more information see section 4.2 of each Regional Analysis report.

6 Window of opportunity created by the PROSPERA Interreg setting

The PROSPERA Interreg project is definitely a huge opportunity for knowledge exchange amongst all participating cities/partners. With the funding from Interreg Europe the project creates an arena to promote sustainable development and regional attractives through peri-urban areas.

Real opportunities arise at the interface between PROSPERA's thematic focus and the focus of the selected policy instrument. In the regional analysis reports this interface was defined as '*the PROSPERA window of opportunity*'[18]. Those themes and topics which are addressed by PROSPERA as well as the policy instrument define the window of opportunity for the local action plan. In other words, the lessons learned in the PROSPERA project are of great use for the partner cities that are in the process of reviewing and refining a local policy instrument. Besides this window of opportunity, the field visits may inspire other local policies, which are refined outside of the PROSPERA project, or inspire new frontiers for local policy making.

Insight in both the joined action field as well as in the missing links between the **selected policy instrument** and **the PROSPERA ambitions** are of great value to identify usefull and transferable good practices, to develop a local action plan to improve a selected policy instrument.

- An understanding of **joined action field (FIT)** of the **selected policy instrument** and **the PROSPERA ambitions** is crucial to understand where your policy instrument and context is already successful within the PROSPERA framework/ambitions. Sharing already existing links is highly interesting for other partners, so please pay attention to the identification and description of these links.
- An understanding of **misfit, or missing links,** between the PROSPERA ambition and your selected Ppolicy instrument is crucial to understand where improvements can be made.

The interregional learning environment not only provides inspiration to improve a local policy instrument. An active participation in the PROSPERA project is also a real opportunity to increase the cooperation with colleagues and stakeholders and to establish links with other partner cities that go far beyond the project's timeframe.

[18] See Regional Analysis Report, paragraph 4.5