

Summary report Interregional Knowledge Exchange Session SWARE

Hosting partner's number, name: Tipperary County Council, Ireland (PP2)

Date of visit: 22-24 May

Places of visit/location: Thurles, Nenagh, Ballina (Lough Derg), Clonmel, Cashel

Number of participants: 24 (excl. PP2 partners and participants)

List of participants:

Please see the attached registration documents

1. Summary of the aims and achievements of the transfer visit held:

Day 1 (22nd of May):

Summary of the interactive presentations held:

(Nenagh) (1) Opening presentation on the profile of County Tipperary and Tipperary County Council by Ger Walsh, Senior Executive. **(2)** Followed by a presentation by Charles Stanley Smith on the Tipperary Public Participation Network: A formal structure/arrangement for bottom-up/community stakeholder involvement in local decision-making. TPPN is a new way for voluntary groups to interact with the County Council and to give the public a strong mechanism to participate in the 'well-being' of their local area and the county and all its people. TPPN is not only responsible for representation & participation, but also for capacity building and serves as an information hub. **(3)** Margaret O'Sullivan then gave a short presentation on the Lough Derg Marketing Group: A model of multi-level stakeholder participation. Lough Derg wants to be a key destination for superb water based activities combined with very high and international visitors. They want to achieve this by improving lakeside amenity areas, orientation and lakeside experiences. For the implementation a €2.000.000 stimulus fund is available for which priority projects are selected by the LDMG. **(4)** The County Development Plan: A tool for statutory effective spatial governance, was presented by Nuala O'Connell. The CDP is a statutory planning framework for the County. It is prepared over a period of 2 years, with a lifespan of 6. The CDP considers input from the public and is adopted by the elected members of the county. The CDP is supported by private sector developers and has a strong and organised stakeholder network.

Summary of the study visits organised:

(Ballina) (1) Time for informal discussion was organised around Ballina on the shores of Lough Derg.

Day 2 (23rd of May):

Summary of the interactive presentations held:

(Thurles) (1) Visit at Cabragh Wetlands Interpretive Centre. Here a presentation was held by Michael Long on a successful example of biodiversity management. An important part of which is developing a sense of awareness. Although biodiversity is not valued monetarily, wetlands are now more valued than 25 years ago (partly because of the work by the Cabragh Wetlands Interpretive Centre). A big part in that is involving the community. Not only on site, but also through a column in a weekly

newspaper to remind people of the important issues. Cabragh Wetlands Interpretive Centre also works with schools and are part of the curriculum of the schoolchildren. During this course the knowledge on the importance of biodiversity is transferred. A shared sense of awareness is thus created. **(2)** Roisin O’Grady presented the River Suir heritage audits: Local involvement in data-collection. An important aspect of the heritage audits is that it is research done for the community by the community. The key is local participation. Heritage audits are done on built and natural heritage through public consultation. Local stakeholders are invited (also involving TPPN). The gathered information is used to inform future policy and development proposals, improve understanding of the river corridor and to enhance the heritage tourism experience of visitors and residents alike. **(3)** Further a presentation on the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO) by Fran Igoe: a new approach to engaging local communities and promoting public participation in the management of our Water environment was given by Fran Igoe. LAWCO operates to coordinate the water quality work of Local through agreed regional structures, thereby providing a collaborative approach to river catchment management. LAWCO also engages local communities and promotes public participation in the management of the water environment. Again, creating awareness is an important goal.

Summary of the study visits organised:

(Clonmel) (1) A study visit was organised in Clonmel along the River Suir Blueway. Here all partners were introduced to the newly developed Canoe Slalom Course and to flood protection measurements on the shores and the user involvement to eliminate the contamination with an exotic bacteria. This issue was guided by Valerie Connolly.

(Cashel) (2) A visit to the historic town of Cashel was organised. Partners were free to walk around the ancient town and castle.

Day 3 (24th of May):

Summary on interactive workshops:

(Thurles) (1) Workshop 1: Data collection and monitoring: stakeholder participation (Róisín O’Grady, PP2).

Participating partners/stakeholders: Manita Koop, Stephan van Dijk (PP1), Carlo Ferrè, Edo Bricchetti (PP3), Zsófia Dolník-Domany, Miléna Molnár (PP4), Lelde Ābele, Linda Krūmina (PP5), Bas Leurs (PP6).

Presentation 1: Ecomuseum Martesana: a managing system of socio-economic assets in the Navigli area (Edo Bricchetti);

Presentation 2: Discovering Naviglio Grande (Carlo Ferrè);

Presentation 3: Értéktár, a method for data collection (Miléna Molnár).

Outcome statements:

- It is necessary to develop a format in which to give structure to all data, in a way presentable, and easy to understand for civil servants and;
- Simplification works better in reaching the goals.

(2) Workshop 2: Fostering stakeholder involvement in public/policy-making structures (Michael Moroney, PP2).

Participating partners/stakeholders: Jan Kragt, Marcel de Ruijter (PP1&PP6), Mila Campanini (PP3), Béla Keszegh, Zoltán Bara (PP4), Jolanta Sausina, Janis Rubulis (PP5).

Presentation 1: Zoetermeer (Jan Kragt); presented on the growth of the city and of the foresight and proactive planning in connecting the city centre to outside water bodies to allow for greater connectivity/functionality.

Presentation 2: Dutch Water Authorities (Marcel de Ruijter); outlined the nature and role of the Water Authorities and spoke about the “interest-pay-say” principle.

Presentation 3: River contracts as governance instruments (Mila Campanini); presented on the use of multi-scale River Contracts in the Lombardy Region to involve public and private actors.

Outcome statements:

- It is critically important to involve stakeholders/actors of all types in public/policy-making structures in order to produce effective solutions for complex situations.
- “Co-creation” of solutions/policies between public and private stakeholders.
- There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to ensure the involvement of stakeholders/actors.
- The situations are, broadly, similar in all regions; the differentiating factor between regions is scale; this means, therefore, that we can learn from each other.

(3) Workshop 3: Investing in green/blue infrastructure to promote sustainable socio-economic activity at local level. (Valerie Connolly, PP2).

Participating partners/stakeholders: Ronald Waterman (PP1&PP6), Laura Burzillieri, Dario Parravicini (PP3), Pál Banai Tóth, Orsolya Békési (PP4), Māris Lietuvietis (PP5), Hans Heupink (PP6).

Presentation 1: Aquapuncture: optimal use and adaptation and management of inland waterways and their waterfronts (Ronald Waterman);

Presentation 2: Area integrated project for the development of the Navigli Canals System (Laura Burzillieri);

Presentation 3: Green blue investment in the region of municipality of Moča (Pál Banai Tóth).

Outcome statements:

- Identify the different and common interests of the diverse user groups
- Involve the development of the adjacent areas of inland waterways
- Communicate this both issues to stimulate and support the endurance of the policy makers.

2. Title of good practice(s) involved in the transfer visit and introduced to the participating partners:

- Tipperary Public Participation Network: A formal structure/arrangement for bottom-up/community stakeholder involvement in local decision-making;
- Lough Derg Marketing Group: A model of multi-level stakeholder participation;
- The County Development Plan: A tool for effective spatial governance;

- Cabragh Wetlands Interpretive Centre: A successful example of biodiversity management;
- River Suir Heritage Audits: Local involvement in data collection;
- From the Green & Blue Futures project to River Suir Blueway: Collaboration with local communities;
- The Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO): A new approach to engaging local communities and promoting public participation in the management of our water environment;
- Canoe Slalom Course river Suir.

3. Title of good practice(s) transferred or potentially transferable to any participating partners:

- See list above (IRL).
- See description of day 3 (VAR).

4. Lessons learnt during the KES

Although the territorial contexts of the partners are different from each other, the social ones are quite similar. Therefore, good practices presented have aspects that can be useful to all partners.

One of the main lessons learnt during the KES in Tipperary is the importance of a good structure for local involvement in decision making and data collection. It is important to have a network with which stakeholders are familiar with and through which stakeholders can have real representation in policy changes. TPPN is one of the main examples of direct stakeholder involvement: bottom-up, far-reaching, wide variety of topics and a wide variety of stakeholders. It is also learned that there is not one specific way in how to involve stakeholders/locals. They can differ widely – from public forums and questionnaires to individual talks. For the partners it might be different to which structure works best (one or more might structures might work).

It is also learnt that the answer for better stakeholder involvement is not further institutionalising, but bringing together passion, energy, knowledge and all the different stakeholders.

And: it is necessary that the authorities facilitate the network by financing it (and other needs), but they don't interfere with the process and outcomes.

There is also a need for efficient cooperation between municipalities and civil organizations regarding project planning considering various aspects of green/blue investments. LDMG shows that water crosses regional borders. This is the same for all partners involved. Within the LDMG it is shown that good cooperation can lead to results.

Also one of the lessons learned is that there is still a lot to learn in the different regions (e.g. the problems with the realization and financing of certain projects).

5. Proposed actions

There are multiple actions proposed by the partners. Most of them of course considering actions within the different regions, but also proposed actions on a project-wide (EU) level.

Agreeable is that stakeholder meetings should be held in all five regions to inform the regional stakeholders of the outcome of the first KES. Following the application plan there are 2 planned SIG meetings per region in semester 3. Per partner region it could be decided if more stakeholder meetings are necessary. Also, policy makers should be made more adherent to reality and not only to general assertions.

It is also proposed to look at the options to formalize a participation network in close cooperation and consideration with/of existing networks. Within this, partners should also take into consideration the small stakeholders operating on the ground, as they are the main points of the everyday life and are the ones that exist independently from the political contexts. Further, partners have indicated the wish to start a common database. For these actions, funding is one of the main issues to tackle. Motivating locals to volunteer and making use of personal skills and thematic expertise could help in this regard.

Further, on a project-wide level, it is proposed to try and co-operate in constructing a unique guideline on how to influence the policy makers in planning concrete actions and invitations to exploit the formidable resources of tourism/heritage and green economy.

6. Interregional Knowledge Exchange Session Statement of outcomes

Considering the discussions during the three-day visit (e.g. during study visits, presentations and workshops) and the provided conclusion reports by all partners, the statements below summarize the most important outcomes of the first Interregional KES visit for the SWARE project. The statements are numbered in no specific order of importance. Of course regarding the different regional culture, habits and structures.

1. There is a need to further focus on the aspects of governance and try to cooperate in constructing a unique guideline on how to influence the policy makers in planning concrete actions and invitations to exploit the formidable resources of tourism/heritage and green economy;
2. It's absolutely necessary and urgent to have a common strategy in formulating a unique and very simple questionnaire on cultural and social needs related to the territory and heritage. If we don't know and if, above all, we don't know what people and stakeholders think of their own grounds where they live and operate, any tentative in planning action plans will be inadequate;
3. A common database on natural and cultural heritage (including the actors) is very important for the development of action plans. Stakeholders should be involved in the collection of data. It is necessary to take into account the propositions of local stakeholders and if possible implement them;

4. There is a necessity of involving children of very early age (5+ years) in green/blue area activities (e.g. water sports and/or educational purposes);
5. Public-private sectors engagement for the promotion and management of tourism in its region is essential.
6. ...

Annexes:

- Signed attendance sheet of the transfer visit
- Agenda of the transfer visit