



BRANDTour

Building Regional Actions for New Developments in Tourism

Methodology for the Exchange of Policy Experience

V.2



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I. Introduction

Interreg Europe (IE) is a European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that aims to support mutual policy learning among different regions across Europe. The Programme is mainly aimed at regional and national Managing Authorities that are in charge of Operational Programmes for the period 2014-2020, but also addresses lower level public administrations - such as cities and provinces - as well as other public bodies that play a role in regional and national development strategies. The declared objective of the IE programme is to improve the performance of regional/national development policies and programmes. IE enables regional and local public authorities, as well as other players of regional relevance (research institutions, R&D facilities, service providers, university departments etc) to exchange practices and ideas on the way public policies work and can find new solutions to deliver development strategies in their territories.

The mutual policy learning process and the resulting improvement of policy capacity of partners and regions participating in the IE programme is generally referred to as “*capitalisation*”. In the context of IE, capitalisation is the process of collecting, analysing, disseminating and transferring good practices and policy experience in a field of regional interest (economic, technological, social, environmental, etc), in order to transfer and implement good¹ practices developed by other regions in one’s own area. In other words, capitalisation is the process of transferring “good practice” A from region “X” to region “Y”, and implementing “good practice” A in region “Y” through Y’s own Structural Funds or mainstream programmes². The transfer from X to Y entails that the policy capacity of region “Y” benefits from policy capacity of region “X”, provided that the latter avails of a successful solution to a specific regional development issue. As capitalisation is meant as a reciprocal process, while region “Y” is benefited by region “X” through good practice A, region “X” is benefited by region “Y” (or another region “Z”) through good practice B and so on.

In line with the above capitalisation objective, the BRANDTOUR³ project aims to generate a policy change⁴ in the implementation of the partners’ regional Structural Funds policies and programmes related to the

“improvement of the partners’ capacity to support tourism through the promotion, innovation and diversification of the offer. The project aims to provide better policy instruments to develop new customised tourism products that can satisfy emerging target groups, and favour inbound flows towards the EU.”

¹ In the context of the IE programme a “good practice” refers to any project, policy, regional initiative, support scheme, etc that has proved “successful” to support a specific development issue. The concept of “good practice” does not refer to practices that are still underway or require experimentation, but rather to already assessed ones.

² The ‘Investment for Growth and Jobs’ programmes.

³ BRANDTOUR = Building Regional Actions for New Developments in Tourism

⁴ Policy change = improvement of the policy capacity of the participating partners and partners’ regions, which is able to bring about more effective and efficient policy actions.



This objective will be achieved through a series of activities (such as surveys, studies, workshops, study visits, etc) that are designed to implement the policy learning process and improve the capacity of the partners, in the areas of a more innovative, attractive, and diversified tourism offer. As a result of the policy experience exchange the partners will discover and adopt new good practices and projects⁵ that can support excellence and uniqueness, and develop new products and services that better integrate private and public stakeholders to increase the value and promotion of EU's unique attractions.

II. The six policy themes

In the context of INTERREG a Good Practice (GP) is defined as “an initiative (e.g. methodologies, projects, processes and techniques) undertaken in one of the programme's thematic priorities^{6,7} which has already proved successful and which has the potential to be transferred to a different geographic area”.

To be considered a good practice, an initiative must fulfil at least the following two conditions:

- the GP has already proved successful, that is to say it has already provided tangible and measurable results in achieving a specific objective;
- the GP has the potential to be transferred to a different region or geographic area, that is to say it can realistically be transferred and implemented (with or without adaptations) in other regions or socio-economic contexts.

The objective of the BRANDTOUR project is to exchange policy experiences and GPs that can improve the partners' capacity to support tourism through the promotion, innovation and diversification of the offer and accordingly improve the partners' policy instruments in order to develop new customised tourism products that can satisfy emerging target groups, and favour inbound flows towards the EU⁸. In particular, the project mainly focuses on Good Practices (GPs) that contribute to the following six policy themes⁹:

⁵ The uptake of new good practices equates with the implementation of new projects in the regions, projects that markedly benefit from the know-how provided by the good practices

⁶ In the case of the Interreg Europe programme, the thematic focus is on four policy topics, each related to regional development :

1. Research, technological development and innovation
2. Competitiveness of SMEs
3. Low-carbon economy
4. Environment and resource efficiency

⁷ For the full list of thematic objectives see: REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013

⁸ In the framework of the Interreg Europe programme, BRANDTOUR specifically focuses on: Priority axis 2: 'Competitiveness of SMEs' - Specific objective 2.1: Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, European Territorial Cooperation programmes, supporting SMEs in all stages of their life cycle to develop, achieve growth and engage in innovation.

⁹ A policy theme is a specific area of interest/concern for the partners' regional development strategies



1. the promotion of tourism products to enhance the visibility, image and market uptake of destinations
2. the valorisation of attractions through marketing, territorial branding and quality schemes
3. the innovation of the tourism offer through the clustering of SMEs and tourism products
4. the innovation of the tourism offer through synergies between private and public stakeholders
5. the diversification of tourism products and services to provide more customised packages
6. the development of experiential tourism in relation to local value chains and excellence

Each policy theme is dealt with separately through dedicated events (workshops, focus groups, study visits, etc) under the coordination of the hosting partner and the support of the Lead Partner.

III. The six policy instruments of the BRANDTOUR partners and the related indicators

To ensure that the GPs (projects, tools, initiatives etc) selected are the most effective to support innovation, the partners are invited to use sound and relevant metrics (indicators) that can - while evaluating the GPs - best gauge and describe the policy action's outputs and impacts on the regional contexts. Here, outputs and results refer to the achievements that directly relate to the implementation of a specific project or GP funded by a regional programme. The description of outputs and results should cover both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project's impact and results.

As required by the IE programme, the BRANDTOUR proposal provides a set of "self-defined" indicators that must be used to measure the effectiveness of the policy learning process. These indicators measure the effects of the exchange of Good Practices among the partners, once the GPs have been transferred and implemented in regions that are different from their original territory¹⁰.

The following table displays the indicators listed in section C.6.2. of the BRANDTOUR application form that will be used to evaluate the project's results in the long term (Phase 2):

¹⁰ The effects of the transfer of the GP are mainly expected after Phase 1 of the project is completed (December 2019). Nevertheless, the early adoption of innovative practices by one region during Phase 1 of the project may result in tangible improvements even before Phase 2 starts (January 2020).



Policy Instrument	Partners' Policy Instruments	Self-defined result (or performance) indicator	Target value
1	Tuscany Region: ROP 2014 2020 - Axis 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	Number of SME clusters promoted through new projects (e.g. Art Cities&Towns, Country&Flavours, Relax Wellness, Sun&Sea, Active&Outdoor, Luxury, Wedding, MICE)	5
2	Crete Region: ROP 2014-2020 AXIS 1: Strengthening competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship in Crete	Number of SMEs supported through new projects in less touristic areas that valorise less known attractions	10
3	Latvia Country: OP "Growth and Employment" - Investment priority 3.2: supporting SMEs to engage in regional, national and international markets, and innovation processes	Number of SMEs delivering new tourism products in the areas of e.g. MICE and health/wellness tourism	12
4	East-Flanders Province: Strategic Policy Plan for Tourism in East-Flanders 2014-2019	Number of tourism enterprises clustering with other sectors (e.g. food, cycling, culture) through new projects	8
5	Limburg Province: ROP South Netherlands - Specific objective 1B1 – Strengthening innovation through national and international SMEs clusters	number of SMEs participating in innovative marketing and communication campaigns (e.g. online, social, storytelling) through the new projects	8
6	Balearic Islands Region: ROP 2014-2020 - Thematic Objective 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	Number of enterprises introducing new products in the tourism market (e.g. gastronomy, heritage, thematic products, local excellence, etc.) through new projects	10

The following paragraph provides the features that should be taken into account to improve the analysis and evaluation of the GPs while exchanging the policy experience during Phase 1 of the project.

IV. The Good Practice evaluation criteria

To ensure consistency in the way the Good Practices are evaluated, the BRANDTOUR partners have agreed to use a common evaluation framework that provides the key features or criteria to take into account while assessing the relevance of the GPs to be exchanged among the partners during Phase 1 of the project (2017-2019). The framework takes into



account four areas of evaluation: the strategic relevance, the evidences of success, the added value, and the transferability of the Good Practices. These are explained hereafter¹¹:

i) Strategic Relevance (policy impact)

1. **Relevance:** the long-term **impact** of the practice on the policy theme

ii) Evidence of Success (tangibility, durability and visibility)

2. **Tangibility:** the concrete results of the practice (e.g. as measured through indicators)
3. **Durability:** the potential of the practice to become a **durable model** for similar or complementary initiatives for the policy theme/reference sector;
4. **Visibility:** the **communication** and **dissemination** activities adopted by the practice;

iii) Added Value (effectiveness, innovativeness, efficiency, etc)

5. **Effectiveness:** the **tangible achievements and results** of the practice and the resulting **benefits** for the different stakeholders;
6. **Innovation:** degree of **innovativeness** of the proposed solution;
7. **Efficiency:** the **amount of resources** (human, economic, social, technical etc and other critical success factors) required for the implementation, and the **effective and efficient use** thereof;
8. **Externality:** the observed **external and additional effects** of the practice, e.g. to inspire concrete actions like exchange of experience, methodologies, tools, know-how, information, etc.;
9. **Intra-regional co-ordination:** the degree of **regional co-ordination and resource efficiency** displayed by the practice
10. **Extra-regional impact:** the potential of **trans-national collaboration of the practice** with other initiatives outside the region at national or European level;
11. **Quality:** The **quality assurance measures** adopted by the practice;

¹¹ These four areas of evaluation should be taken into account while filling in the Good Practice Template (Annex 1 to the present document), so as to cover the entire range of features listed above, as well as the additional features that are needed to describe and assess the Good Practices. The template should be filled in in correct and plain english, avoiding too long and/or obscure sentences and acronyms. The description should be self-contained i.e. not depending on external documentation.



iv) Transferability (capitalisation potential)

12. **Transferability:** the potential of the practice to be adapted to and adopted in different contexts;

V. Analysis of the Good Practices

In order to better describe the Good Practices, the partners should try to provide the following information which is meant to deepen the analysis and stimulate the discussion.

i) Outputs and results

The first aspect to describe is the quantity and quality of the GP's results. A Good Practice¹² that meets or exceeds expectations, naturally candidates as a GP. The description of the results should refer to the six policy themes (or objectives) of the BRANDTour project. In other words, the Good Practice Template should explain how (and how much – by using quantitative indicators) has the Good Practice contributed to the following objectives:

1. enhance the visibility and market uptake of known and less known destinations;
2. valorise attractions through better marketing, branding and communication;
3. innovate the offer by clustering tourism SMEs and products;
4. increase synergies between tourism private and public stakeholders;
5. deliver more customised packages by diversifying the offer;
6. leverage local value chains and excellence to develop thematic and experience-oriented tourism.

Typical questions to answer could be:

- How many destinations have become more visible? How can you prove they are more visible?
- How many secondary attractions have been valorised?
- How many innovative tourism products have been developed by clustering SMEs and/or products?
- How many cooperation agreements among private and public stakeholders have been implemented?
- How many diversified and customised packages have been developed by the GP?
- How many local value chains and excellences have been leveraged to deliver thematic and experience-oriented tourism products?

ii) Innovativeness

The description of the GP should explain the different innovative aspects of the GP. Has the GP developed new tools, approaches, partnerships, contents, products etc?

¹² The term "Good Practice" indicates any project, initiative, scheme, tool etc funded by the partners' policy instruments or, if relevant, by other funding schemes.



Typical questions to be answered include:

- Do you think the GP is innovative? If yes, why?
- What are the most innovative features of the GP?
- Do you think the GP is the first of its kind or do you know of similar initiatives in the EU or elsewhere?
- Does the GP involve new stakeholders, tools or target groups?
- Does the GP involve new clusters of stakeholders?

iii) Additional effects

External and additional effects indicate any additional (not directly related) positive impact, result, effect or change that has been caused by the GP. These effects are more likely to occur at later stages, when the GP is either ending or completed. Additional effects include (sometimes unexpected) impacts on non-core target groups. External and additional effects can indicate the GP's ability to achieve sustainable changes in the long term.

Possible questions about additional effects can be:

- The type and number of spin-off initiatives
- The number of new tools and methods adopted by the participating stakeholders
- The development of new networks
- Open and organisational innovations,
- Increased awareness, etc

iv) Transferability

The transferability or replicability of the GP indicates its potential to be implemented in other regions or contexts with or without adaptations. Replicability considerations can help avoid mistakes in transferring the GP, reduce implementation costs, and shorten lead times for a quicker achievement of results.

Questions about the transferability of a Good Practice can include:

- Transfers or adaptations that have already taken place
- The amount of resources needed for the implementation
- Specialization and qualification needed for the implementation
- The relevance of the transfer for the target region (how relevant it is?)
- The availability of guidelines to implement the Good Practice
- Can the GP be effective and efficient in another regional or economic context?
- Is there any local factor that can jeopardize the transfer (e.g. cultural, social, technical, environmental)?
- Can legal issues be a barrier to the transfer?
- Can the GP be transferred and implemented fully or partially?
- Is the knowledge and experience to implement the GP codified, e.g. through proper evaluation?



v) Quality Assurance

Quality assurance indicates all measures taken to ensure the best quality of the support actions delivered through the Good Practice. This includes an evaluation of the management activities as well as the implementation of more specific actions such as peer reviews, application of quality standards or schemes, in-process evaluations, etc.

Possible questions to answer in this case include:

- Does the GP comply with any certification or quality standard?
- Does the GP make any evaluation of the tools or services it provides? What kind of service evaluation is applied?
- How does the GP ensure compliance with certification or quality standards, if any?
- In case of service certification, does it correspond to the users or stakeholders' needs? If yes, how?
- What is the actual take up of the tool or service (market / stakeholders uptake)?

vi) Recognition

The recognition or status of a Good Practice indicates its potential to serve as a reference or standard for future and similar activities.

This requires performing a benchmarking analysis or comparative assessment of the GP. The goal of the comparative assessment should be to see whether the GP has created new standards for the sector or a new model of policy delivery and can be used as a benchmarking basis.

As an example, the creation of a brand can lead to the creation of “a new service” that better responds to a market demand or innovation needs of the stakeholders. A brand can be very important in terms of marketing and promotional activities, and can provide insights into how a need has turned into the creation of a new service.

Possible questions to consider are:

- Are there any new tools or standards created by the GP?
- What kind of benchmarking indicators / models have been used?
- What brands or service packages have been created?
- Is there any feedback of users that have taken up the new model or standard delivered by the GP?
- Can the GP be effective and efficient in a wider European context?
- How can you measure the effectiveness of the tool or the usefulness of the new standard delivered by the GP?
- Is it easy to benchmark the GP?
- Can costs be a barrier for adaptation and transfer of the GP?
- What type of training is required to implement the tool or service delivered by the GP?



vii) Communication and promotion

The communication and promotion actions implemented by the GP can be easily measured and include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Measures of communication and promotion will include the type of tools used, e.g. newsletters, webnews, events, press releases/briefings, videos, brochures, awards, etc. which can be quantified in terms of numbers, frequency, size etc. Careful consideration should be given to the impact of communication of the Good Practice, as reflected e.g. by press impact, people attending events, participation of target audiences (policy makers, SMEs, R&D institutions) etc.

Possible questions to consider are:

- Are there any actions implemented for the communication and promotion of the GP? If yes, what are they?
- How many resources are needed to deliver the communication actions?
- What are the target audiences of the communication and promotion actions?
- How easy was to communicate/promote the GP? What is the level of specialization and qualification needed to communicate/promote the GP?
- Can the GP be appraised (perceived) as effective and efficient in a wider European context?
- Are there ways to measure the effectiveness of the communication and promotion actions of the GPs (e.g. press coverage, attendance at events, etc)
- Can the originality and uniqueness of the GP be adapted with success to other contexts, how important are the communication and promotion actions to transfer the GP?
- Are there any specific context factors that can facilitate communicating the GP to particular targets/audiences?
- Are costs a barrier for communicating and promoting the GP?

viii) Trans-regional or trans-national collaboration

Although BRANDTOUR's policy instruments are provincial, regional or national programmes, there could be trans-regional or trans-national dimensions to them¹³. In the framework of the BRANDTOUR project, there is a real added-value if the selected Good Practices have or can easily have a trans-national dimension either in their activities or impact.

Possible questions to consider here are:

- Has the Good Practice delivered any joint trans-national events?
- Has the Good Practice developed any trans-national strategies or actions?
- Has the Good Practice delivered any trans-national call for projects, services, etc
- Has the Good Practice developed any trans-national joint models, tools, etc.?

¹³ See e.g. existing inter-regional cluster initiatives such as the NECSTOUR Network, or the working groups on Tourism implemented by the ERRIN and the CPMR Networks.



- Has the Good Practice deployed any formal agreements on transnational cooperation's between stakeholders?
- Did the actors involved in the GP participate in any trans-national exchange?
- I yes, what was the scope of the trans-national collaboration, of the trans-national joint actions or projects, etc?
- Does the GP show particularly interesting features in terms of trans-national collaboration?