

SHARE project brief no. 10 – Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to give direction on the process of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the SHARE project on local and/or regional policies as a result of the implementation of Local Action Plans (LAPs). As a result of this approach, the focus of this Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit brief is a combination of:

1. Evidence of how SHARE is having process-related (smaller) impacts in the journey towards actual policy changes (bigger impacts) whilst in Phase 2 of the project (January 2019 to December 2020). This evidence will be primarily in the form of comparing the old policy document to the newer policy document and pin-pointing the actual changes and relating them to the LAP of the relevant SHARE project partner.
2. Evidence of actual impact of SHARE on existing policies (big impacts) in terms of actual changes achieved in Phase 2 of the project. This evidence may be in the form of endorsements of different aspects of SHARE partner LAPs by local politicians, key local stakeholders and similar groups able to influence policy making at local and regional levels. Evidence could also include local press articles (provided they mention SHARE), local TV news/programmes (again, provided SHARE is mentioned). Evidence could also include agreed minutes of meetings by policy makers and/or key local stakeholder groups, particularly if those minutes mention SHARE and if they are available in the public domain.

2. Establishing the content and boundaries of what is to be monitored and evaluated

Before any monitoring or evaluation takes place of the impact of LAPs on existing policies, SHARE partners will need to re-visit their LAPs and answer in detail the following questions for each of their LAP's objectives:

1. Specifically what change is intended to be achieved in existing policies for each LAP objective? This change needs to be defined clearly and in as much detail as possible. The LAP may contain some of this information, but try to go beyond that and specify it further. The more specific the changes intended, the easier it will be to identify what their exact impact on existing policies should be.
2. How would you describe the intended impact on policy for each objective of the LAP? Having established earlier what the changes are to be, this section is about actual impacts on existing policies. Again, these need to be SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.
3. How will you assess the impact of each LAP objective on existing policies? Each SHARE partner will need to decide on their own strategy for this. Some impacts may be readily measurable using numbers or statistics (e.g. increase in visitor numbers over a given period; surveys of residents/tourists/businesses to test behaviour change). In other cases, more qualitative measures such as public statements from local politicians or key stakeholder groups endorsing a specific part of the LAP will be more appropriate for a number of reasons, such as the length of time that the

impact will take to materialise on the ground due to investment decisions that need to be approved through a majority vote by the local/county council, etc. The importance of specific LAP objectives cannot be overemphasized here. For instance, if a LAP objective is set as “integrating existing decision-making mechanisms for the local economic development of the area”, the lack of specificity of this LAP objective would make it very difficult (if not impossible) to monitor and evaluate in terms of its actual impact on existing policies.

4. What was the situation before the policy impact took place? This particular element is addressed very well by all LAPs, so it should not require much extra work. However, it is important that this is spelled out clearly for each LAP objective so that it is possible to evaluate the final impact. It would be impossible to establish change to existing policies (i.e. the AFTER stage in evaluation) without a very good understanding of the situation before the intervention took place (i.e. the BEFORE stage in evaluation).

5. How did the situation change after the impact was achieved (or partly achieved) in Phase 2 of the project? This may be a policy-related issue. For instance, discussions have taken place (and a record of these discussions exists in meeting minutes) by local/regional policy makers to change existing policies and those discussions can be linked to the SHARE project as an instigator of those debates. The latter is very important. Unless a clear direct link can be established between discussions among policy makers about changes to policy and the SHARE project itself, it will be very difficult to prove that any impacts on existing policies are due to the SHARE project.

6. On the basis of the above steps, what kind of evidence will each partner be seeking to gather to demonstrate impact by the SHARE project for each LAP objective?

Overall, the impact of the SHARE project on existing policies is likely to be limited within the two-year period of Phase 2 of the project. This is understandable given the context of policy making. However, it is essential that SHARE partners have a clear idea of what will be classed as "success" for each impact. Similarly, SHARE partners also need to be realistic about what is simply not viable within the 2-year time frame of Phase 2 of this project. Any policy impact achievements beyond that period, however impressive, will not count as regards the evaluation of the project.

3. Example of evidence collection process for evaluation of a LAP objective's impact on an existing policy

This section includes a step-by-step template that SHARE partners can follow to scope out the intended impacts of LAP objectives on existing policies, the collection of evidence for those impacts and the evaluation of the final (actual) impact of the project on existing policies using an evidence-based approach.

This is outlined below in 4 clear steps.

Step 1 – Specifying the intended policy change to be achieved for a specific LAP objective

Table 1. Description of expected change to existing policy (Step 1)

Local Action Plan (LAP)	<i>[State title of LAP and SHARE partner name here]</i>
Policy to be changed	<i>[State existing policy to be changed here and include web link to policy document]</i>
LAP objective	<i>[State here LAP objective drawn from Local Action Plan]</i>

<p>Description of expected change to policy</p>	<p><i>[Describe here in as much detail as possible the actual change expected in the policy outlined above. This change in the existing policy should be up to December 2020 and not beyond that date. Ensure that the description of the intended change on an existing policy follows the SMART principle, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable (up to December 2020), Realistic and Time-bound (only up to December 2020)]</i></p>
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Step 2 – Assessing the impact of a LAP objective on an existing policy

This is about deciding how to measure the impact. This may be a quantitative measurement (e.g. number of sentences/paragraphs changed in an existing policy or added to it directly as a result of the SHARE project before December 2020) or qualitative (e.g. a letter of support from a local politician or key stakeholder group endorsing this specific objective of the LAP; a statement by a local policy maker recorded in the minutes of a meeting and supporting this specific objective of the LAP).

Table 2. Description of evidence if impact to be collected (Step 2)

<p>Local Action Plan (LAP)</p>	<p><i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i></p>
<p>Policy to be changed</p>	<p><i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i></p>
<p>LAP objective</p>	<p><i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i></p>
<p>Description of the type of evidence to be collected to prove impact on the above policy</p>	<p><i>[Describe here in as much detail as possible the different types and sources of evidence to be collected to prove impact on the above policy. Evidence of change beyond December 2020 will not count for the purposes of the evaluation of the SHARE project's impact]</i></p>

Step 3 – Explanation of the situation BEFORE the intervention (intended policy change)

In order to establish the nature and magnitude of the change to existing policies (i.e. the AFTER stage in the impact evaluation process), it is important that there is a good understanding of the situation before the intervention took place (i.e. the BEFORE stage in evaluation).

Important: Evidence feeding into this assessment of the BEFORE stage must include information gathered in Phase 1 of the project. This can include minutes of meetings with stakeholders, minutes of focus groups, written case studies for each location, SHARE survey results, SHARE benchmarking exercise results, outcomes from the peer review process, feedback from stakeholder groups on drafts of the Local Action Plan, etc.

Table 3. Description of the situation BEFORE the intervention (Step 3)

Local Action Plan (LAP)	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
Policy to be changed	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
LAP objective	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
Description of the situation BEFORE the intervention of the SHARE project	<i>[Using the relevant section of the LAP document but focusing specifically on the LAP objective above and the policy to be targeted, explain the situation BEFORE the intended policy impact (Table 1) should take place]</i>

Step 4 – Explanation of the situation AFTER the intervention (intended policy change)

The focus here needs to be on how the situation changed AFTER the intervention (policy change) was achieved in Phase 2 of the project. The nature of this change may be tangible and direct (e.g. a new accessibility plan for a whole section of the town centre which can be attributed directly to the SHARE project) or more indirect and intangible (e.g. minuted discussions with local policy makers about intended changes to existing policies, provided those discussions can be attributed directly to the SHARE project). This direct link to the SHARE project in each case is extremely important. Unless a clear direct link can be

established between the SHARE project and the evidence gathered for evaluation, the impacts on existing policies and the situation after those changes have been implemented, it will be very difficult to prove that any impacts on existing policies are due exclusively to the SHARE project.

Table 4. Description of the situation AFTER the intervention (Step 4)

Local Action Plan (LAP)	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
Policy to be changed	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
LAP objective	<i>[This should be the same entry as in Table 1]</i>
Description of the situation AFTER the intervention of the SHARE project	<i>[Using the information from earlier tables but specifically from Table 3, explain the situation AFTER the policy change took place]</i>