

## Concept paper: Study / Site visit

A study or site visit is an on-site participatory method. It is a visit by a group of people (target or user group) to a place away from their local environment, e.g. the country, other city, etc. to learn something, share experiences, and get motivation and ideas for developments in their own environment.

**Study visit** is usually more focused on learning and may include e.g. presentations and local (site) visits to specific locations. Discussions, exchanges and development of topics of common interest together (e.g. between the visitors and the hosts, who may be local planners and decision makers) can also be included. Often, the aim of study visits is to benchmark good practices.

**Site visit** can be done in the framework of a study visit. It tends to be a shorter visit/trip to some specific location, where topical actions/features are introduced. The aim of a site visit is to give participants an opportunity to observe the target on-site and in person.

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
Conference, living labs, living streets; VR tools, videos.	Learn about the local situation and get acquainted with new/interesting solutions. Exchange of information, experiences and ideas. Benchmarking good practices.
<b>How can the tool be used in each phase of the process</b> (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?	
Study visits enable <b>collecting ideas</b> and getting familiar with others' experiences. This offers very valuable input to plan different developments or to tackle weak points that have appeared in the planning or development stage. The tool can be used in the <b>evaluation and feedback stages</b> if e.g. representatives of the user group or specialists participate in the study visits and offer their feedback about developments and current situation.	
<b>What is the aim of engagement with this tool?</b>	
Study visits inform participants of different situations and experiences. They also allow exchanging ideas and gathering input to solve certain problems, which makes it a good tool for <b>consultation</b> and <b>collaboration</b> . Study visits may also <b>empower</b> people as they understand that their experiences and opinions are important and based on these something may be changed.	
For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
It is time-efficient to have <b>more than 3</b> participants in one study visit. This will also enable interaction between participants, which increases the value of the tool. However, it is not recommended to have more than 20 people as it makes moving in a group and also sharing ideas more difficult.	<b>Little to no effort required</b> - participants have to go to the agreed place at the agreed time and be active during the study visit. In some cases, transport may be organized by the organizers as well.

<b>Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>	<b>Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>
Some preparation required: planning the route/objectives, what and how to show, what kind of feedback to ask from participants, etc. In case there is a need for organizing the transport, find a guide, make agreements with representatives of objects, organize coffee breaks, etc., you need more time to prepare using the tool.	May require <b>considerable set-up</b> as a study visit can last from 1 hour to a whole day, depending on aim of the visit and what is planned to show to the participants (incl. where these objects are situated).
<b>Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?</b>	<b>Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price</b>
Time needed to summarize using the tool <b>depends on the length and content of the study visit</b> : if there are more objects to see and more discussions, there are more aspects to cover when summarizing the results of the study visit. In case of several study visits, a summary template may be needed.	The price is influence by the cost of organizing the visit (staff costs, moderator/guide costs, transport costs if needed, catering and coffee breaks in case of longer study visit, technical equipment in case of wishing to have some kind of formal presentation during the study visit (paper, stationery, rent of projector/computer, etc.).  These costs can be significantly reduced by having a short study visit and meeting the participants at the visit site.
<b>SWOT on using the tool</b>	
<b>STRENGTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives hands-on and personal experience regarding different solutions, interventions and sites.</li> <li>• A very flexible tool in terms of organization and implementation.</li> <li>• Promotes group discussion and strengthens the relationships and cooperation within a group.</li> <li>• Can be used with almost any target group and helps complement various other tools.</li> </ul>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single examples may not give the full picture of a situation/action.</li> <li>• Not particularly empowering/engaging (rather informing/consulting level)</li> <li>• Requires quite a lot of planning and knowledge of the observed site to answer the questions of participants.</li> <li>• Might be expensive or time-consuming to arrange.</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing new places and actions together helps to notice details and make discoveries that may not have happened elsewhere.</li> <li>• The participants can reflect upon lessons learned (already during the visit) in order to derive new ideas using their experiences, impressions and feelings.</li> <li>• Increases practical and operational</li> </ul>	<b>THREATS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependence on outside actors: sudden changes and cancellations possible.</li> <li>• May take longer than planned (e.g. moving between objects with a large group, too lengthy discussions).</li> <li>• The relevance to the user group may be difficult to ensure.</li> <li>• Accessibility challenges may occur (applies</li> </ul>

knowledge .	<p>especially to target groups with special needs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather conditions may be challenging (if outdoors).</li> </ul>
<b>How to use the tool?</b>	
<p><b>How to prepare using the tool?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careful planning (e.g. ensure the location/topic is interesting or suitable for the user group by mapping the needs and interests of potential participants beforehand)</li> <li>• Timing and good communication between organizers and user groups</li> <li>• Practical planning (e.g. permissions, schedule, transport)</li> </ul> <p><b>How to implement the tool?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being present, active and curious, sharing own experiences and views with others, promoting discussion and idea exchange</li> <li>• Taking notes</li> <li>• Practical support on-site, i.e. ensuring the smooth running of the visit</li> </ul> <p><b>How to follow-up using the tool?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation: e.g. main results, lessons learned, other important information</li> <li>• Sharing lessons learned and good practices with colleagues, visit participants and/or other people interested in the topic after the visit</li> <li>• Mapping potential ways to develop/apply the viewed good practices locally</li> </ul>	
<b>Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Think of your goals and be mindful of the size of your group</b> – while it is recommended to have at least 3 people in a study visit, always consider your aims with the study visit, the object of your visit and your target group when putting together the participant list. For example, if you are visiting only one large site with individual exploration, a larger group may be fine. But if you have planned on-site presentations or visiting many objects, manouvering with a group of more than 20 people can be very challenging.</li> <li>• <b>Accessibility has many aspects</b> – be mindful of all of them, which includes the physical (e.g. rough terrain or walking long distances may be difficult), sensory (e.g. general noisiness may make it difficult to enjoy the visit or hear the hosts) and mental impairments (e.g. very high places may cause vertigo or technical jargon may confuse).</li> <li>• <b>Have regular breaks and snacks and drinks on hand</b> – in case of long visits with many objects and stops, consider supplying refreshments and be mindful of having enough rest stops.</li> <li>• <b>Plan extra time and be flexible</b> – delays are likely in case of large groups and many objects, so always plan extra time to account for this.</li> <li>• <b>Check the weather forecast</b> – if your planned site visit is outdoors, be mindful of weather conditions. If the weather is less than ideal, instruct your user group to dress appropriately or in case of very bad and unmanageable weather, consult with them if they are still interested in coming or if the visit should be postponed.</li> </ul>	
<b>More experiences from GreenSAM partners</b>	
Read about study visits during the partner meetings in Hamburg and Tartu from <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a> .	



GreenSAM  
Green Silver Age Mobility

## Study Visit, Estonia, Tartu

Study visit title: Study visit of the main innovation center of Tartu and to the company who developed the new bus route network

Location, date, times  
SPARK Demo Center & Positium offices  
Tartu, Estonia  
7 June 2019

Contact information:  
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Aim of the visit:  
The aim of the visit was to introduce the ways Tartu has employed innovation and participatory methods in boosting the development in Tartu, which also includes developing and launching the new bus route network.

Number of participants: 4

### Study visit description:

The study visit began with a visit to SPARK Demo Center (<http://sparkdemo.ee/>), which is an information and demo centre for South Estonian businesses. SPARK introduces the business environment of South Estonia and exhibits its key innovations and unique inventions. The tour was given by Mr Karl Einaru, a coordinator at SPARK Demo. After SPARK, the group headed to Positium OÜ (<http://www.positium.com/>), which is a mobile data analysis company that used mobile data analysis and participatory methods to develop the new Tartu bus route network that is age-inclusive, modern and efficient.

### Study visit was related to:

- ☒ mobility
- ☒ silver age
- ☒ participation

### How was the study visit connected to project aims:

SPARK Demo Centre introduced its interactive demo space that features many innovative solutions, technologies and initiatives connected with mobility. The centre demonstrated how it acts as a major

community hub for all ages and target groups by bringing citizens together for workshops and other events.

Positium OÜ introduced the participatory methods that were used in developing the new bus route network and how the needs of all target groups, incl. the silver age target group, were taken into account in the development process.

### Lessons learned:

The visitors learned more about Tartu and its development. At SPARK Demo, the local business ecosystem was introduced, including the large role the public sector plays in fostering innovation in Tartu. The other features of SPARK were also introduced such as the Maker Lab that provides all youth a place to tinker with technology and get together in a casual yet educational environment. All visitors felt that this kind of places are necessary in their cities as well and that their public sector should follow the example of Tartu in ensuring that the city is always supportive of its entrepreneurs.

Positium OÜ shared their experience in using mobile data for mobility analysis and how they have been using it in their work and most importantly, in developing the new Tartu bus route network. The several participatory practices (developing an innovative map solution to compare the old and new networks, the means to leave feedback, public gatherings in every city district) that ensured that the new network is inclusive, efficient and meets the needs of citizens were also introduced.

### Attachments:



Interreg  
Baltic Sea Region

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