GreenSAM
Green Silver Age Mobility

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Implementation guidance

How to design the participatory process when developing and improving green mobility and public transport solutions

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Introduction

The main aim of this guide is to describe, explain and guide the reader through the intricacies of the participatory process in developing and improving green mobility and public transport (PT) solutions: from setting a focus to supporting successful engagement to evaluating the impact (Figure 1). In short, the implementation guidance introduces the basic dimensions of participation and describes how to implement tools that help to engage target and user groups, i.e. in the case of the GreenSAM project, the participation of silver age people in developing green urban mobility offers.

Chapter 1 helps to specify the aim of engagement and describes different aspects that should be considered while planning a participatory process and before choosing the engagement tools to use. Chapter 2 gives instruction on choosing the right tools and increasing the engagement level. Chapter 3 describes different phases of using the tool(s). Chapter 4 focuses on impact of the tool(s) and chapter 5 on tips and hints to engage the silver age user group. The guidance ends with a checklist to support successful engagement.
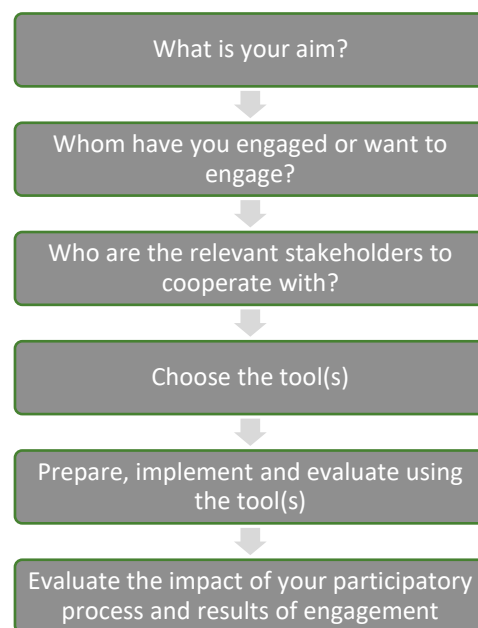

Figure 1. Participatory process

1   The participatory process

Citizen participation in decision-making and service design is not a new phenomenon – governments and municipalities globally have been increasingly using citizen input as it is one of the key ways of ensuring that new interventions meet users' needs. Additionally, **involving citizens helps gather public support and acceptance for these new initiatives** while at the same time empowering the people who have contributed (read more about why participation is important in chapter 3 of the Atlas).

In light of ageing world and populations, **paying special attention to the silver age user group** is especially important. If you have not worked with seniors before, there are several important aspects to consider. Firstly, you may want to get acquainted with why it is important to even engage the elderly: subchapter 1.1 Ageing world and Europe in the Atlas gives a short overview of this.

As evident, taking into account the needs of the elderly is very important. When designing any service, the 4 A's principles from the Atlas (subchapter 2.2 Mobility services of good quality) are of key importance – when these principles are taken into account, any intervention or service becomes much more accessible for all target groups.

It is important to remember that participation is a long process, not a one-time event, and benefits

from a structured, cohesive approach with clear goals. Additionally, **real participation is not implemented until the decision-making is involved** (read more from chapter 3.2 of the Atlas).

1.1 The phases of the participatory process

For the sake of clarity, in the GreenSAM project, participation is defined as a process with four possible stages (read more from chapter 3.2 of the Atlas):

▪ **Inform** – one-way communication with an aim to communicate something to somebody or some user group.
▪ **Consult** – entails consulting and asking for feedback from somebody without further engaging them in the process.
▪ **Collaborate** – engages people to a much higher degree through cooperation, i.e. people can directly influence the design of a new intervention or service.
▪ **Empower** – highest level of involvement during which people can make decisions themselves and plan independently.

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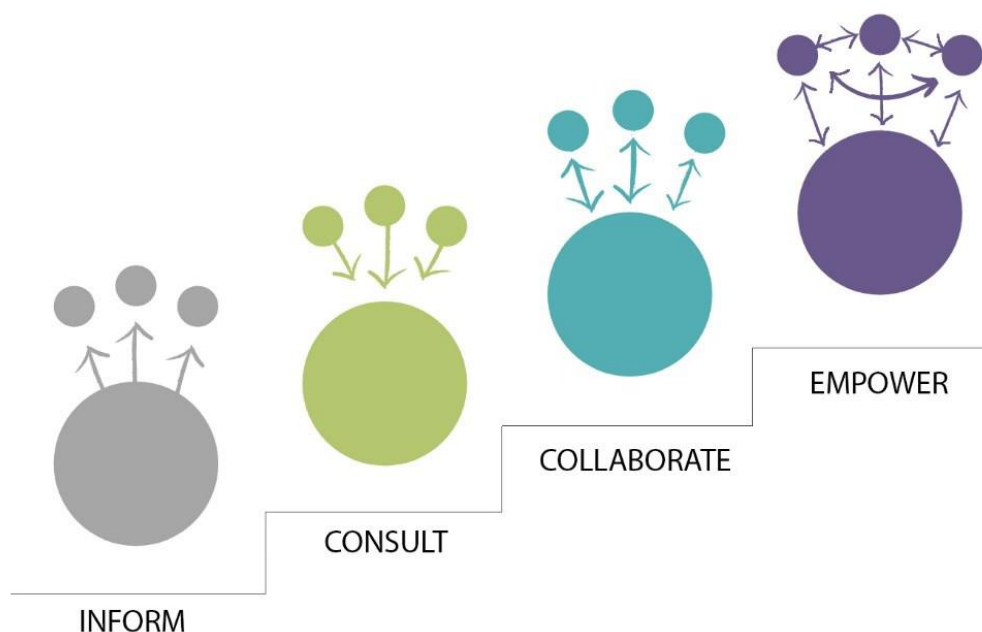
Figure 2. Different levels of participation

As evident, informing is the weakest level on engagement with empowerment on the other end of the scale. Depending on the goals of participation, i.e. which level of engagement is required, participation can take place in any stage. However, it is important to note that more meaningful participation takes place in the last two stages when the participants' ideas and suggestions are (ideally) taken into consideration and implemented. The first two stages serve more informative purposes, whereas the participants' inputs are gathered but may not be considered in the implementation phase.

1.2   Starting the process

As evident, **defining the goal of participation** is the foundation of the process. Is the goal getting feedback about a new solution? Or perhaps some remodeling is being planned and planners would like to know which changes the users would like implemented? Whatever the goal or the problem you wish to solve may be, it is important to **phrase it clearly**.

For this, it is helpful to think about the issue as **compromising of several parts**. For example, if your main goal is developing a new public transport route network, what are its secondary goals? These could be attracting more users to take public transport or connecting nearby residential areas into the city's main route network.

Once you have these secondary issues or goals in mind as well, you will have a much clearer idea of how to proceed, e.g. which target and user groups need to be consulted or collaborated with.

1.3   Mapping user groups and stakeholders

Once the problem or goal and all its parts are in place, it is important to think of **whether you need to engage just the end users of the intervention** (e.g. in case of a new solution in PT, the regular users of PT) **or if other input is needed as well** (e.g. other stakeholders in addition to end users, such as local organizations, NGOs or private companies). Involving stakeholders may also help in reaching end users and understanding these target groups better.

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If you decide to engage both end-users and other local organizations, it is important to map these actors. For this, it is advised to **make a list of all these groups** e.g. by using a mapping tool or technique (see Atlas chapter 3.1). You may even want to consider contacting representatives of your target group(s) and asking for their input on who should be involved in the process and how to contact them. It is important to remember that the importance of stakeholders may vary in different stages of the process and that mapping can, and usually is, an ongoing process. If useful and necessary, the actors on your list can also be grouped in various ways, e.g. spatially (local, regional, international), by their contribution in terms of engagement (e.g. who needs to only be informed, who consulted with, etc.), their access to key resources (e.g. these could be logistical, human, institutional or informational), or their mobility behavior (e.g. car dependent users, multi-modal users, public transport users).

In many cases, there is a need to engage other sectors in your organization or city in the planning. For example, the mobility issues of elderly people are usually relevant for the health and social sectors as well. Many cities have elderly councils or other similar boards, which have an advisory role or formally represent elderly people in decision making.

In addition, for communication reasons, sometimes it is important that local media is involved.

1.4   Engaging stakeholder and user groups

Once you have the list of who you want to engage in your participatory process, engaging them can be accomplished in many ways while always keeping in mind the characteristics of the groups you wish to engage.

Most commonly, contact with the desired groups is established on a **personal level**, e.g. through an (email) invitation or some other type of personal approach. It is very helpful to get in contact with the user groups **on site**, in their daily life (e.g. at a mobility hub or on a street that is supposed to be rebuilt). Taking part of events and/or visiting community centres is very helpful too. If stakeholders or user groups belong to a certain organization, that organization can be approached as a whole or through a specific contact person who can then, in turn, invite others from the organization. The **organization-based approach** can be useful for targeting certain groups as well, e.g. reaching the elderly through various senior organizations.

Another useful technique is asking already established contacts for additional contacts – those recommendations can be added to your list of target groups and stakeholders. This can be also done after an event, either via a feedback form, or even digitally. However, it is important to always mention to the people who were suggested where you received their contact information from.

Traditional media can also be a useful vehicle for contact, especially when reaching the older target group. **Social media** can be helpul in reaching certain demographics and using various forms of media (e.g. videos) to attract participants. As evident, the **type of approach** needs to be taken into consideration as well: while many people nowadays feel comfortable using various digital solutions, this should not be taken for granted. In case of the silver age target group, alternatives to email or other electronic approaches should be considered (e.g. informational posters at senior centers, invitations by phone or snail mail, in which case it may be useful to add a pre-paid envelope for responses, etc.).

1.5   Managing stakeholder and user group relations after the process

Once your stakeholders and user groups have been successfully engaged, it is important to not forget that engagement is not a one-time event. Ensure that all the engaged actors receive some type of follow-up information (unless specific conclusions are not made at the end of the event/process) – how was their input used, what are future plans – and that communication channels remain open for engaging them in the future as well, whether into starting new planning processes or continuing on-going ones, or evaluating previous processes. Ideally, this means some form of keeping contact with the engaged actors even when they are not being actively engaged. This increases the probability that people will participate again in the future. However, be mindful of excessive spam and be respectful of people's time and attention.

If additional feedback is needed for the implemented solutions, another event or meeting might be necessary.

1.6   Tips and hints for the silver age target group

- **Explore different engagement methods** – there are excellent resources for engaging the silver age group[1].
- **Avoid stereotypes** – e.g. do not assume that all silver aged people are inactive or retired, and that they experience mobility in the same way due to age similarities. Be aware that the group of silver agers is a heterogenous group, and try to reach people of different age, gender, origin, social backgrounds etc.
- **Be aware of barriers** – if participants need to travel somewhere, it is important the locations are accessible and easily found. The same applies to other possible impairments that need to be considered, e.g. visual or hearing related. It is also important to remember that many barriers cab be addressed by simply asking participants about them and then accommodating their needs.
- **Consider digital literacy** – in case of an online event, consider the digital skills and past experiences of your senior group, e.g. which online platforms or online tools are familiar to them. Be prepared to offer assistance if necessary.
- **Prepare for low participation** – one study revealed that despite extensive effort and various age-friendly approaches, out of all eligible persons, only 22.9% participated. Be prepared for additional effort. The same applies to schedules and timelines – the elderly may experience changes in their life and schedules which may interfere with organizational plans.
- **The participants need to feel like their contribution matters** – the user group needs to feel heard and personally invited to give feedback. Ensure that it is understood why their participation is important and what they get from attending.
- **Meet the elderly at places they frequent** – this can be sports clubs, activity centers or even the Sunday market. These places are good for establishing contact or even use some tools, e.g. conduct flash interviews, have a street talk with passers-by or observe people.
- **Public authorities can help** – the public sector can offer useful advice on places and means of contact, e.g. the social services department is most likely in tight contact with various seniors and senior groups and they may be willing to offer advice.
- **Motivating participants** – if needed and possible, a prize fund may motivate participation, e.g. offering newspaper subscriptions, gift cards, free public transport tickets, free coffee and snacks during the event. Make sure that this is known to the participants beforehand.

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[1] Learn how to engage people over 50: http://tiny.cc/m4eylz
How to reach 'hard-to-reach' older people for research: https://surveyinsights.org/?p=11822
https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/

2   Choosing the right tools

As evident, each target group and participatory process has different requirements. Once you know the aim of your participation, the stakeholders and target groups you want to include, it is time to think about concrete ways of engagement.

2.1   Toolbox and filters

The toolbox and the filtering system are one of the tools developed in the GreenSAM project. The toolbox includes more than 20 different practical tools that were chosen based on their potential usability in engaging the silver age target group within the GreenSAM project (with the goal of developing age-friendly and green public transport systems and urban spaces). While most of the tools have been tested by the GreenSAM project partners, others remain untested but have the potential to be equally valuable in engaging people into developing green mobility solutions.

The tools can be used for various purposes, and **the filtering system helps to select which tool or combination of tools is most appropriate** for each participation case. By entering four parameters (which phase of the process or participation stage you want to use the tool, what is your aim with citizen engagement, how many people you want to engage with the tool at once and how much time you have to implement the tool), the user receives a list of tools that fit the entered criteria.

Some of the tools are very simple and quick to use as part of regular tasks (e.g. interviews, conversations, street talk) while others require more time and effort to prepare and implement (e.g. workshops, deliberative mapping). It is good to combine several tools as target groups may prefer different approach to express their thoughts and more valuable input may be gathered when using combinations of tools. Most of tools are **usable in all phases of the process** of developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions. This means they can be used to, for example, collect ideas to solve an issue or evaluate the impact of an already implemented intervention.

Most of the tools can also be **used with most aims of engagement**: in case of good planning, you can, to some extent, use most tools to inform people about something, consult or collaborate with them or empower them. When using the toolbox, only a number of tools are suggested in each phase, but by reading the concept papers of tools, you will get many more ideas on how to use the tool in other phases as well. This also applies to other filters: e.g. the implementation time and number of people engaged suggest optimal values but naturally, all tools can be modified to fit whichever purposes.

To learn more about each tool and how to use it, along with practical tips and hints, have a look at each tool's concept paper. The concept papers also have a **SWOT** section which helps to understand the benefits and risks associated with each tool. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – the first two are internal or inherent factors and the latter two external factors. By studying the SWOT analyses, you will get a better idea if a tool is the right fit for you considering your goals, and how to mitigate possible risks and use the tool to its fullest potential.

If you would like to learn more about how each project partner has used the tools they selected in their pilot projects and the process and outcomes of their pilots, read more on the pilots.

2.2   Increase the level of engagement with tools

It is important to remember that by combining different methods (read chapter 4 of Atlas), tools and techniques, it is possible to increase the level of engagement. In plain terms, this means that instead of simply using one tool, e.g. citizen's forum, it may be good to add different tools and techniques to engage the participants even more, e.g. using hand-raising or polling techniques during the forum, the mind mapping technique during focus groups, or observation during walking groups or mentoring. This can elevate a simple meeting to something much more engaging.

Read more about the difference between techniques, tools and methods – as understood by Green-SAM projects partners – in the blogpost "Are all approaches equal: Is it important to know the difference between technique, tool and method?".

2.3   Tips and hints

- **If you are using one tool many times, prepare a summary template** – a summary template is useful if the tool is used many times and by different researchers (e.g. several interviewers conducting interviews) in order to ensure that all summaries follow the same outline and are easily comparable.
- **Think of barriers and overcome them** – while many people in silver age do experience physical and mental barriers to participation in case of some tools, these can often be overcome with careful planning and help of technology. E.g. if people struggle with hearing, ensure speakers use a microphone or if necessary, that a sign language interpreter is available. All these aspects should be mentioned while inviting people as it makes their participation more likely.
- **Choose appropriate tools for your target group** – in case some barriers cannot be overcome, e.g. a long walking tour may not be feasible for silver age people even with adequate rest stops, adapt the tool to the local context. It is important that participants feel safe and comfortable in their environment and if this means modifying a tool, be open to that option.
- **Weight the added benefits of some tools** – some tools have inherent benefits that not only make them suitable in a certain phase of the process but offer additional benefits. For example, a workshop or focus group can also entail a learning experience for the user group, e.g. if the focus is on using a certain service, the participants learn about it and as a result, may change their attitude and behavior.
- **Consider combining tools** – since no target group is homogenous, consider if using several tools will yield a better result. E.g. while some people may be eager to participate physically, others might struggle or be unwilling – in this case, combining two tools to facilitate these two different preferences may be useful in order to recruit a much higher number of participants. The same applies to quantitative and qualitative tools – in some cases, collecting both kinds of information may be very useful, especially in case of big changes or developments.

3   Using tools

Once you know your aim of engagement, target groups and stakeholders and have chosen the right tool(s) to use, it is time to proceed with implementation. Below are the most universal steps that apply to virtually all participation processes. For more details on each step of using a specific tool, see the concept papers. It is recommended to **read the entire concept paper** as all sections complement each other and include useful tips and hints for using the tool successfully.

3.1   Preparation

Preparation is the most important step of using a tool as it is key to successful implementation. In this stage, several important aspects need to be considered:

- **Deciding on the way of using the tool** – will it be a physical or online meeting, how much budget and staff do you have available for organization, etc.
- **Organizational details** – if necessary, book a venue or room(s), order catering.
- **Time schedule** – compile the timeschedule for the event (e.g. workshop) or facilitator (e.g. observation), consider the needs and restrictions of facilitator and participants (different type of activities, rotation of performers, etc.).
- **Materials** – if any materials are needed, e.g. paper and pens, printed maps, drawing supplies, make sure to provide them.
- **Topics –** explain beforehand what is open to debate and what is not (e.g. finances or other aspects). Be sure to provide all necessary information about the issue (e.g. maps, good practice examples, possible restrictions etc.) to the participants.
- **Facilitator** – if your tool requires a professional facilitator or moderator, consider whether you have a qualified person available or need to hire one. Sometimes it may also be good to have a person from outside your organization who can provide a more neutral view on the topic. In case of several moderators, ensure there is a thorough briefing beforehand.
- **Template** – if the tool benefits from having a template either for implementation (what to ask or notice, key points, etc.) or summaries (to ensure summaries are uniform and comparable), compile it to support the implementation procesess.
- **Invitations** – prepare invitations and disseminate them through the appropriate channels (see above 2.4). Be sure to think of and include any requirements or information related to GDPR regulations.
- **Evaluation** – according to your objectives, decide on how to evaluate using the tool afterwards and what kind of information should you collect for that (e.g. compiling feedback forms; see evaluation framework for more details and ideas).

3.2   Implementation

If you are implementing a tool that requires organizing a physical event, ensure that all organizational matters are addressed – participants can access the venue and all the materials and tools are in place. Approach online tools as you would physical ones and treat the online 'meeting room' as a physical

one – welcome participants and thank them for participating.

Explain the aim of the participatory process clearly at the start and leave room for questions. Once started, ensure that the discussion/process goes smoothly, and everyone is comfortable. If a moderator is used, support them whenever necessary and assist with any other task that requires it. Keep an eye on the time schedule as well and help adhering to it, e.g. by reminding the moderator of the time or helping wrap up the discussion when necessary.

At the end, summarize the discussion and if possible (unless more summarizing is needed), outline the main ideas that were presented and that would be used for input and/or presented to decision-makers. It is also important to notify everyone of the next steps, e.g. if there are other meetings/events planned.

It is possible to ask feedback on the event/process during the event or immediately after the event, e.g. using a digital polling tool or via anonymous written feedback forms.

If you take pictures or collect contact information during the event, remember to infrom about this and use consent forms. In general, take care of the GDPR requirements. If planned, hand out small thank-you gifts before the participants leave.

3.3   Follow-up

The extent of the follow-up depends on which tool(s) were used and what were the goals of engagement. In any case, it is polite to send participants a thank you notice and if possible or available, more information on how they can contribute in the future or what has happened since they last met.

It is helpful to **consider follow-up as an important part of the process** – fostering good relations with key target groups and keeping open communication is an important asset regardless of the outcome. Even if something did not work out as planned during implementation then poor follow-up may alienate participants even further and make them resistant to being engaged in the future.

3.4   Tips and hints

- **Use concept papers to support your planning and implementation process –** before you start using a tool, download, read and, if necessary, add your modifications to the concept paper of your chosen tool based on your situation. This will increase the quality of the implementation process and supports the later evaluation of activities. Be sure to consult the concept paper also during the implementation process – is there a need to modify something and why? This helps gather the needed input.
- **If there is a need to use additional tools, do it** – if it becomes apparent that there are barriers to realizing the original plan, e.g. turnout is too low, be flexible and use additional tools such as phone interviews to gather more feedback.
- **Avoid negative experiences** – word of mouth is a powerful thing, especially in a tight-knit community or user group. As such, it is important to always plan well and be prepared. Even

if something does not go as planned, remain positive and overcome obstacles as best as you can.

▪ **Be prepared for low turnout** – it is common for up to a third of registered participants to not participate. Take this into account in your planning, e.g. be prepared to divide groups differently or have extra chairs or tables on hand.

▪ **Boost your confidence by learning about others' experiences** – talk to your colleagues who have used the tool you plan to use before, look for information online, read the pilots of the GreenSAM project or contact the partners directly for their experiences (partners' experiences with tools are listed in Appendixes), etc.

4   Measuring impact

To measure the impact of using a tool or a combination of tools, it is important to collect data about the situation throughout the processes: before, during and after implementing the intervention. This means that in order to truly know if your participatory process made a difference, consider ways of measuring its impact even before the process even starts. This can mean defining a list of success indicators or compiling feedback forms. Collecting this information helps to evaluate whether you fulfilled the main and secondary goals of your intervention (read more from the evaluation framework).

Remember that the desired impact depends also on the success of the participatory processes and the tools used, e.g.:

▪ Was the right tool chosen when considering the main problem and objectives?

▪ Were the right user groups and stakeholders engaged? Was any group missing?

▪ Were there enough members of the right target groups to represent the group as a a whole?

▪ Was the process carefully planned and executed in the expected manner?

▪ Were there any shortcomings or unexpected surprises?

▪ Was there something that did not work as expected, or sudden changes in plans?

▪ What was the feedback of the participants – were they satisfied or unsatisfied?

All the above-mentioned aspects are indicators that help measure the impact of the participatory process – as evident, while you may have received the input you needed, this is not the only indicator of success but aspects such as user satisfaction and the process as a whole are also important.

More information on why and how to evaluate, also tips and hints for that, can be found from the evaluation framework.

Conclusions

Engaging user groups and stakeholders is very valuable in terms of getting useful input into developing green mobility solutions. However, to achieve the expected results, engagement needs to be thoroughly planned and implemented. It is important not to underestimate the effort needed – building relations and cooperation may take a long time. If you as an engager are looking for simple one-time events or processes, be prepared to receive results that may be shallow or not representative of the user group.

Table 1 **summarizes the most important aspects of engagement and provides a sort of checklist** that helps the engager to understand if they are fully prepared to start their participation process in order to support developing green mobility solutions that meet the needs of silver age people and are accepted and used by them.

Table 1. Checklist of most important aspects of engagement

AM I FULLY PREPARED TO START MY PARTICIPATION PROCESS?	YES	SOME-WHAT	NO
I know what I want to achieve with engaging people and have phrased my goals clearly			
I know what my sub-goal(s) are with engaging people and have phrased them clearly			
I know that I have to use the input I get from engagement in decision-making			
I have used all available and appropriate knowledge and resources to map my user groups			
I have used all available and appropriate knowledge and resources to map the relevant stakeholder groups			
I know what kind of input I need from my user and stakeholder groups and why I want to engage them			
I have defined the means of engaging the relevant user groups			
I have defined the means of engaging my stakeholder groups			
I have made additional effort by contacting my user and stakeholder groups and asking for their suggestions on who else should be engaged and how			
I know how to remain in contact with my user and stakeholder groups even after engaging them			
I know what kind of value and input each group can bring in in the process			
I have considered the tools available and chosen the one(s) that fit my goals the best (e.g. by using the filtering system)			

I have learned about the chosen tool(s) and read the concept paper(s)			
I have thought if I need to modify the tool or combine it with other methods/tools/techniques			
I have discussed using the tool(s) with people who have used it before/searched for information online/etc.			
I have a clear idea of how I want to use the tool(s) and what I want to achieve by using it			
I have a clear idea of how to summarize using the tool(s)			
I have a clear idea of how to evaluate using the tool(s) and how to collect the information for evaluation, e.g. by creating success indicators, preparing feedback forms, etc.			
I have planned follow-up activities with my user and stakeholder groups, e.g. sharing the results of using the tool, organizing follow-up activities, etc.			

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Appendix. Partners' experience with tools

Tools/ Partners who have used this tool	Aquarium/ Fishbowl	Case studies	Citizens' forums / citizens' assembly / citizen	Coaching/ mentoring	Community mapping	Competitions	Conceptual mapping	Conversation	Deliberative mapping	Digital participation platform	Focus groups	ICT tools for polling, voting, feedback	Interviews	Mobility (living) lab	Negotiation	Observation	Online event tools	Panel discussion	Personal narratives	Photovoice	Questionnaires	Street talk	Study visit/ site visit/ field trip	Walking groups	Workshop	World café/ Learning cafe
PP1			X		X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X
PP2		X			X			X					X		X	X		X	X		X				X	
PP3			X	X	X			X								X					X		X		X	
PP4				X												X	X							X		
PP5			X		X			X					X	X	X		X				X		X	X	X	X
PP6				X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X			X				X	X
PP7		X			X			X			X				X	X		X			X		X		X	X
PP8	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	

PP1   Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
PP2   City of Aarhus
PP3   Municipality of Gdansk
PP4   Tartu City Government
PP5   City of Riga (Riga Municipal Agency "Riga Energy Agency")
PP6   Valonia / Regional Council of Southwest Finland
PP7   Institute of Baltic Studies
PP8   TUAS