

TRANS IN FORM PROJECT



Guidelines for New Narratives and Story Telling



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
Section 1: Narratives.....	6
What do we mean by “new narratives”?.....	6
<i>Exercise 1: Getting some first ideas</i>	6
Narratives in the Baltic Sea Region.....	6
“Grand Narratives” of Rural Change.....	7
<i>Exercise 2: Matching narratives</i>	11
<i>Exercise 3: Which narrative fits your situation?</i>	12
Linking narratives to scenarios.....	12
Section 2: Place Marketing and Branding	13
Identity and Image.....	13
What to look at.....	14
What is the offer from your place?.....	14
<i>Exercise 4: What is your Point of Parity and your Point of Difference?</i>	15
What are your target markets?.....	15
Who are the competitors? Who can we co-operate with?.....	16
<i>Exercise 5: How can you co-operate and with whom?</i>	17
<i>Exercise 6: From ideas to a strategy</i>	17
Branding.....	18
<i>Exercise 7: What is your existing brand?</i>	20
Section 3: Story-Telling and Writing Success Stories	21
<i>Exercise 8: What are your success stories?</i>	21
Section 4: Techniques	22
Do “before and after” comparisons.....	23
Focus Groups.....	23
Participatory Video.....	24
Photographic interviews.....	25
Transect Walk.....	25
Create TiF Trails.....	25
Annual TiF Activity Week.....	26
Design in Public.....	26
Have a TiF shop or market stall.....	26
Local Debates.....	27
Drama / Street Theatre.....	27
Summary	28
APPENDIX 1	29
APPENDIX 2	33

FOREWORD

These guidelines are made for all Trans in Form partners and co-partners and also others that find new narratives and storytelling important and interesting for development and change.

The guidelines are very practical in their approach, and practical in a way that also shows that if we want to make new narratives and storytelling we need to practice.

The guidelines should be seen together with the toolbox for scenario planning, and build on the information in the attractivity barometers. New narratives and storytelling is more than branding, although branding might be a part of it. Our approach focuses on attractiveness for new citizens and attractiveness for visitors.

The form and the content of these new narratives should be consistent, but also diverse, since the target groups are different. If we want to attract more visitors, we should focus on a more irrational approach than if we want to attract more citizens. Adventures put scenery, colour and sound in play, even poetry might be useful. Attractiveness for citizens might be something else, e.g. the coffee latte factor.

As Trans in Form is a project that want to show that the different aspects linked to work packages give a holistic approach, we should also look for possibilities to use diverse approaches in our search for new narratives. Different approaches also involve different competences and thus different discourses.

Our study visit for policy makers to Reggio Emilia in Italy will try to explore this approach. The concept of “**progettazione**” is a process or action linked to knowledge of friends, tools and spaces. The method puts differences in play, and is open for the unforeseen and the surprising, and is working to establish relations. The concept was made in the field of education, but is used for planning cities and public spaces in Reggio Emilia.

What new narratives can be made if an approach along these lines should be realized?

We should bear in mind diverse solutions when practicing new narratives and storytelling. The exercises are important, but as stated in the project form we should also seek help from professional storytellers and even migrants (friends) and use the modern tools available.

Notodden May 11, 2010

Bjørn Frode Moen
Project manager

These Guidelines were prepared within the framework of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007 – 2013 Trans in Form project of the 4th priority “Attractive & competitive cities and regions”. The Guidelines are written by professor Cliff Hague. In addition they draw on contributions made by Piotr Dzik and Bjørn Frode Moen as well as by participants at the transnational workshop in Valmiera 5-7 April 2010.

Partners

Telemark County Council NO
Telemark Research Institute, Bø NO
Østfold County Council NO
Indre Østfold Regional Council NO
Regional Planning Authority Havelland-
Flaeming DE
Municipality of Tranemo SE
Vidzeme Planning Region LV
Jelgava Local Municipality LV
Alytus County Governor's Administration LT
Municipality of Suwalki PL

Lead partner

Municipality of Notodden NO

Co-partners

Pskov, Russia
Grodno, Belarus
Kraznoznamensk, Kaliningrad
Innovation Circle Network



www.tifpro.eu

Trans in Form Project:

Guidelines for New Narratives and Story Telling

All partners will establish marketing packs for regional branding which will include new narratives and story telling. It will also include a collection of highlights that will be published in hard print and at the web as "roadmap to the rural BSR". It can also include brochures, videos, other presentations and maps. *Project Application*.

These Guidelines aim to steer the partners' work on preparing new narratives, regional branding and story telling. They are based on the discussions at the Valmiera Workshop in April 2010.

Section 1: Narratives

What do we mean by “new narratives”?

Narratives can be a collection of ideas that offer an interpretation of social and economic conditions and change. Because TiF is concerned with places, we are interested in place-based narratives. In other words how do we perceive change in a place and how do the unique characteristics of that place influence the changes?

You can thus think of a narrative as a way of describing the development path that your town or region might follow. However, for each partner that path should take some account of real conditions and trends. The SWOT analysis that you have done should be considered.

Exercise 1: Getting some first ideas

Look back at your SWOT analysis. What does it suggest are the main development options open to you? What kind of place are you? What kind of place are you turning into? What kind of place do you want to become?

Narratives in the Baltic Sea Region

The EU’s Strategy for the BSR was produced in 2009. It highlights four challenges:

- To enable a sustainable environment;
- To enhance the region’s prosperity;
- To increase accessibility and attractiveness;
- To ensure safety and security in the region.

Some words recur several times in the Strategy, and are clearly important to the narrative. In particular these include the idea that the BSR is a macro-region, and thus an example of how the common EU objective of territorial cohesion can be achieved through:

- Co-operation,
- Co-ordination, and
- Integrated actions.

Thus the argument is that environmental sustainability, prosperity, accessibility and safety need to be seen as inter-related aims.

The Trans-in-Form project is part of the priority that seeks to “increase accessibility and attractiveness”. We therefore should be thinking about attractiveness and accessibility (and their relation) when developing new narratives. However, connections could also usefully be made to ideas about sustainable environment, prosperity and even safety.

It is also worth noting that at a special conference in Kiruna in December 2009 on “Cohesion Policy and Territorial Development: Make Use of the Territorial Potential” during the Swedish Presidency, it was claimed that there is a need for cohesion policy to work within a framework based on a **Local Development Methodology (LDM) model**. The essence of this is that it is strategic and multidimensional; based on local partnerships, and stresses the importance of networking and capacity building. TiF seems to fit this model – if it can be really strategic and if partners can build local (and transnational) partnerships.

“Grand Narratives” of Rural Change

The ESPON project on the Diversity of European Rural Regions has identified three “Grand Narratives”. These are ways of looking at the changes rural regions are going through. The narratives are selective. They each highlight different key drivers of rural change and also, sometimes implicitly, point to possible ways forward and development strategies. You do not have to follow them in every way, but as the table below tries to show, they can stimulate ideas about possible narratives for your region or town.

Grand Narrative	Key Idea	Implications for development	Success stories in TiF
"Agri-centric"	Rural areas are first and foremost agricultural areas: their future is tied to the future of agriculture in the area.	<p>There are two possible ways to develop this narrative. For most of the 20th century, the dominant one was about agricultural modernisation. This involves making farming more efficient particularly by the use of technology (e.g. fertiliser, pesticides, machinery) and rationalising farms (generally making them bigger and more specialist).</p> <p>More recently, there is a counter-narrative that is a celebration of traditional agricultural practices – organic produce, landscapes with animals in the fields etc. This links into things like the slow food / slow towns movement, a reaction against the excesses of modernism. However, farms need to diversify to survive – findings other sources of income, e.g. "farmhouse bed and breakfast", "farmhouse teas", or horse riding centres etc.</p>	Yellow House, Tranemo – a revival of rural living.

<p>Urban-rural relations</p>	<p>Farming is no longer a significant employer or major part of the rural economy. The jobs and services in the city/town can help keep rural regions viable. Rural areas close to cities can attract new residents and have a market for their “products”, e.g. local tourism.</p>	<p>The relations between councils within a region are often poor, with traditional urban-rural rivalries. Instead you need to look for new partnerships that can deliver gains to the towns and the rural areas. Commuters are people with jobs. By moving into rural areas they can reduce the % unemployed, make the age-structure younger, put people and money into the community.</p> <p>The countryside can benefit the city by offering access to land, housing and space, an attractive environment to escape to.</p> <p>There is a variant on this narrative. The idea of the compact city (also called “the city of short distances”) is also a strong EU narrative. This opposes “urban sprawl” on environmental, social and aesthetic grounds. It argues for higher densities especially around public transport hubs. In America this is called Transit Oriented Development, and links in with ideas such as “Smart Growth” and New Urbanism.</p>	<p>Suwalki is undertaking projects to make the city more attractive, complementing the tourism offer from its surrounding region of lakes.</p> <p>Michael Fuller-Gee has shown examples of this type of approach and advocated it at the Trakai meeting.</p>
------------------------------	---	--	--

<p>Globalisation and Networks</p>	<p>Places are connected through functional links to other places that might be many kilometres distant. People and goods move globally as the market economy has become globalised.</p>	<p>Broadly there are again two competing sub-narratives. One is critical of the impacts of globalisation. It is seen as shifting people and resources to the rich regions, leaving peripheral rural regions with a declining and aging population, while their natural resources are plundered by big business.</p> <p>The other sees opportunities in globalisation. There is scope for growing e-business from rural locations. The global market for “green” products – renewable energy, sustainable tourism etc. can provide a basis for market-led “eco-modernisation”. Even the out-migration of people can provide flows back of remittances and know-how. Even more important is the opportunity that globalisation presents to attract new in-migrants to fill key skills gaps in your town or region. As well as jobs, tolerance and inclusiveness are likely to be key factors in attracting and holding these mobile people. Globalisation does not make every place the same, rather it makes difference a valuable commodity in niche markets. Thus place identity becomes important in marketing.</p>	<p>Notodden (and Suwalki) Blues Festival takes a music form from USA, gives a local branding and sells the product to a wide audience.</p>
-----------------------------------	---	--	--

Exercise 2: Matching narratives

Here are some quotations from recent high-level EU publications or events. Can you match each to one or more of the narratives described above?

<p>“Preserving rural areas and the resources they contain from urban sprawl matters more now: rural areas are can be seen as potential suppliers of renewable energy”, Loretta Dormel, Deputy Director-General Agriculture and Rural Development DG intervention in DGRegio rural-urban linkages seminar (January 2009).</p>	
<p>“Urban centres are generally in the areas with the most fertile soils and so increasing urbanization means the loss of productive agricultural land and areas of bio-diversity”. Loretta Dormel, Deputy Director-General Agriculture and Rural Development DG intervention in DGRegio rural urban linkages seminar (January 2009).</p>	
<p>“The arrival of increasing numbers of people from towns and cities can alter the rural character of areas. While it might push up income and tax receipts and so help to maintain public services and expand the local market, it can lead to widening social disparities and new tensions by increasing house prices to levels that locals cannot afford, or by access to services.” Urban and development sprawl, draft technical report prepared by the Belgian Delegation, 2009.</p>	
<p><i>“The future of rural areas is becoming increasingly tied with the development of the rural economy as a whole, and this requires a real change in the economic and social base, in physical infrastructure, access to ICT and other new technologies, the growth of new sources of employment (such as in SMEs or rural tourism) and the maintenance of public services.”</i> 3rd Cohesion Report (EC 2004)</p>	
<p><i>“Diversification can come from increasing renewable energy exploitation, production of biomass and biofuels, through tourism”,</i> 4th Cohesion Report (EC 2007).</p>	

Exercise 3: Which narrative fits your situation?

Look back to your answers to Exercise 1. Compare your answers to the narratives in the Table above. Which narrative fits most closely with the situation of your town or region? Can you think of success stories to show how that narrative works in practice in your area?

You might compare your answers with those from other partners in TiF. Which partners feel most comfortable with which narrative? Can you find partners with which you might co-operate by developing local variations on similar narratives?

“New narratives will, once born, become the drivers of change. TiF will focus on the triple helix and involve also academic institutions, business and government into the creation of the narratives. Specialists on history, geography, ethnography or anthropologists can give valuable inputs. Businesses within the field of tourism, fashion, hand craft or trade can both contribute to creation and promotion of the new narratives. If the narratives should be real drivers of change they must be rooted in reality and governmental investments and priorities. Therefore it is utterly important to involve the decision makers during the project so they understand the background for the efforts and endorse the initiatives.” *TiF Project Application*

Look at the quote above from the project application. Which academics and businesses are you going to involve in developing the narrative for your town or region? How are you going to involve the politicians and other sections within your own municipality or region? (You can get some tips on how to do this when you reach Section 3 of these Guidelines!)

Linking narratives to scenarios

Once you have an understanding of the local assets and drivers of change – the basis for the narrative - you can project them into future scenarios. In other words, the narratives are also ways of describing – or even prescribing - possible development paths for towns and regions in the project. The scenarios then project these forwards in ways that highlight some key choices. Separate guidance on scenarios will be provided through WP3.

Section 2: Place Marketing and Branding

Identity and Image

It is useful to distinguish between identity and image. Basically, identity is how you see yourself: image is how others see you.

The identity of a place is partly inherited and hard to change. This is likely to involve things like the local climate, nature, history and cultural heritage. However, there are other aspects that can be shaped by municipal/regional action. These include things like provision and maintenance of open space or cultural facilities, the schools, regeneration of run-down areas, the quality of a town centre etc. There may be key institutions such as a sports club whose reputation helps shape the identity of your place.

Different groups in your area (old, young, traditional residents, new migrants, businesses etc.) are likely to have different understandings of the identity. The challenge for the council is to build shared aspects of identity. Again this means engaging with citizens and businesses and local institutions. Consensus building does not mean offering everything to everybody. Nor can an identity be created that has no basis in local reality. The message is that you need **concentrate on what you have, the essence of your place, while also recognising the drivers of change** within that situation.

The ESPON project called TIPTAP argues that territorial identity is a vital component of territorial cohesion. Territorial identity is taken to mean “social capital” (i.e. the assets based in the people and their skills and experience and commitment to the place), the capability of developing shared visions of the future, local know-how and specificities, and the competitive advantage of each territory.

Territorial identities are expressed in local culture, know-how and landscape. They hold local people together. Identities are often formed out of shared work experiences or shared education. Collective learning about and development of identities can mobilise efforts for local development or conservation.

Place marketing is about projecting the identity of a place to residents and outsiders. What do you want the recipients of your messages to think about your town/region?

If your place has no image at all, then you need to create one, to “position” the place, e.g. as a place to live or as a place for tourism.

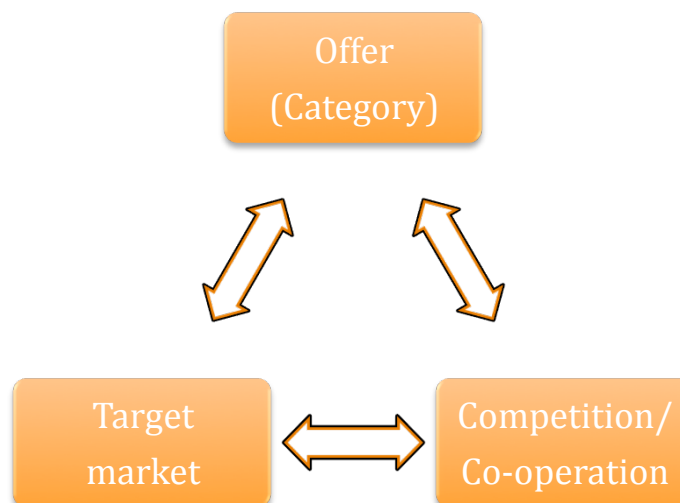
If you have good facilities with an un-deserved poor image or a weak image – then, again, promotion and marketing is required.

If you have a favourable image and good facilities – then sustain the high quality facilities and only market to the level required to maintain this favourable image.

If you have poor facilities but a favourable image, then your priority should be to improve the product, rather than promote it.

What to look at

There are three things you have to look at when doing place marketing: the “offer”, the target market and the competition. As the diagram shows, each affects the other.



What is the offer from your place?

This is linked back to identity. **What kind of place are you?** What category do you fit into – e.g. are you a spa town, cultural centre, a place based on farming, a place that above all is accessible to main highways or is known because of its university? One of the advantages that big cities have is that they can typically offer a range of these “products” – they can be a place of research and learning, but also a centre for culture and have an airport. Smaller communities are unlikely to be able to offer all these things.

Being in a category helps. It is easier to sell the category than to sell the particular place. However, you also need to get beyond the basic categories and **differentiate yourself**. What is special about your tourist area that makes it better than other

tourist areas? You have to be different if you are going to sell yourself. “Differentiate or perish” is the mantra. You need to **develop your own story / stories within the category.**

Exercise 4: What is your Point of Parity and your Point of Difference?

The “Point of Parity” defines the general category (or categories) that define the “offer” made by your place. What kind of a place are you? The “Point of Difference” is your offer within that category – what makes you special compared with others in the category? What TiF partner might share the same Point of Parity? How might you cooperate with them to build your marketing and special stories?

What are your target markets?

Marketing involves identifying the various markets and sub-markets for what you have to offer. They may be:

- Local residents (whose support is important to any public action);
- Local businesses (vital to the economy and local livelihoods);
- Visitors (and if so from where, which age groups and what interests?)
- Inward investors (again from where and what type of investors do you want to attract?)

This list is not exclusive. None of the groups listed above are homogenous.

Some tourist sub-markets:

- Winter tourism
- Agri-tourism (e.g. staying on farms, picking fruit, riding horses)
- Food tourism (unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences)
- Eco-tourism (by ecologically aware people to environmentally important sites)
- Extreme tourism (travel to dangerous places or participation in dangerous activities)
- Heritage tourism
- Gay and Lesbian tourism or “gaycation”, offering tolerance and gay culture
- Health tourism (to access health care)
- Sailing and boating
- Pop-culture tourism (linked to film and TV locations, associations with celebrities etc)
- Religious tourism
- Staycations (people staying at or close to home and taking vacations there)
- War / military history tourism
- Wildlife tourism

A strategic decision needs to be made at an early stage. Do you opt for:

- One positioning strategy aimed at one key group (e.g. tourists); or
- Multiple positioning strategies for one group (e.g. trying to attract tourists from abroad, as well as those with particular interests in culture and history, and also targeting younger tourists through, e.g. more active leisure opportunities? Or one strategy to attract families to move into / stay in your area, and another one for to draw young professionals); or
- One positioning strategy for the whole market (this is a good place to live or set up business because it is also a great place for recreation).

There is no general “right answer” to this question. It depends on your situation.

Who are the competitors? Who can we co-operate with?

Marketing generally focuses on competition. Certainly it is important to understand who else is offering a similar product to you, and to explore where your advantage lies. This is part of the process of differentiating your offer. You can look, for example at the marketing materials produced by your competitors and compare them with your own. What stories are your competitors using? How can you adapt and improve on those?

However, TiF is about territorial co-operation. There can be benefits from co-operation as well as from competition. For example, in the “urban-rural relations” narrative described in Section 1 of these Guidelines, the idea is that regional co-operation can create benefits for towns and rural areas around the towns. Even more importantly there are potential partners for you within TiF. Part of your uniqueness is that you are a TiF partner and have an opportunity to co-operate with partners from other countries within the project. How can that be turned into a

competitive advantage? What can it offer to your local businesses or residents? How can co-operation and sharing ideas lead to better promotion of your places within a shared category?

Exercise 5: How can you co-operate and with whom?

Putting it together

By now you should have some ideas about what is the basis for your place marketing strategy. Now you need to start putting the different pieces together. Try to do Exercise 6.

Exercise 6: From ideas to a strategy

Try to fill in for your town or region:

- 1. What is the target market / markets?*
- 2. Within that market/markets, who are the main target groups?*
- 3. Our town / region is... (write down you concept, claim or key idea)*
- 4. Write 3-5 points on why that key concept should be believed*
- 5. Who are our main competitors and what do we have that they do not?*
- 6. What will be the benefits from this marketing?*

*Now compare this with your existing image and marketing. What needs to change?
What should be retained?*

Branding

Branding is part of the way of bridging the gap between the identity of your place and its image. However, it is again important to stress that the branding has to be built on authentic qualities of your place. It should not be something invented so as to fit only an aspiration: there must be some basis in reality.

Thus when considering place branding we come back to some of the fundamental attributes of the place – its location, the natural environment, the history and culture, the climate, the people and their values etc. In other words you need to look at the identity of the place and how it relates to the offer that the place is making to its target markets.

Thus branding is about content (and for commercial products it appears that some notion of values is an important part of a brand). But it is also about communication.

The **name** is of basic importance. This may sound obvious but when local government units are reorganised there is likely to be a problem in agreeing a name that is acceptable and also has some meaning to the wider public. Administrators often decide these things and do the job without imagination. Names can last a long time and be easy to remember. Of course the name is likely to be fixed already, and that may or may not be an asset. It will be known locally, but may, for example be difficult for foreigners to pronounce (in which case write it out phonetically for them, e.g. on your website or promotional materials).

Logos or other symbols may be used to build the brand. These should be consistent with the rest of the brand and its central messages. Look for example at the TiF logo and consider what it tells you about our project. Look at any logo used by your town / region and try to decode the messages it conveys, and consider how they relate to, e.g. your narratives.

One problem with logos is that they can be ambiguous and may mean different things to different people. They may also become dated and need changing, which implies writing off the value built up by association with the logo.



Baltic Sea Region

Programme 2007-2013

Here is the logo of the BSR. What does it tell you about the brand? It includes the name, which crucially contains the words “Baltic Sea” as the basis for the identity of the region. The graphic also suggests the sea (dark blue and light blue colours plus wave-like shape). This strengthens the message that the Baltic Sea is the crucial element defining the region. However it is quite an abstract and modern graphic. It is not a picture of waves, for example, still less something like a painting of a Baltic port from the 18th century. Also, the size of the dots varies. What does this suggest? How different would it have looked if all the dots were the same size? What subtle difference might that have made to the message? The font is clear and modern and projects confidence.

Slogans or **Straplines** can be used to convey a simple and attractive message. However, some argue that slogans are easily forgotten. Again language and culture may be barriers to a successful slogan. The meaning of some slogans may be hard to translate into other languages. For example, Glasgow was very successful within the UK in the 1980s with its slogan “Glasgow’s Miles Better” which was accompanied by a graphic of a happy smiling sunny-yellow face, since the slogan could be pronounced in English as “Glasgow Smiles Better”. This kind of play on words is lost in translation: even “Glasgow’s Kilometres Better” would make no sense.

The “Glasgow’s Miles Better” campaign was an attempt to market the city based on an **idea** – that the city is a happy, friendly place that has been regenerated. The smiling face had a universal appeal and was easy to understand, and caught attention at a time when the image of the city was rather negative. However, abstract ideas can be hard to communicate and it is difficult to prevent others from copying your original ideas.

Style also matters. This is the area of graphic designers. Style includes things like the choice of colours, fonts, graphics, photos etc. You need to have some consistency within the brand – the style needs to express and fit your key message. It is an important part of the brand. Thus if you are selling your town as a cool place for young people with lots of contemporary culture you need to use visual images that match your written message.

Style attributes and choices.

- Complexity – Minimalist (cool/modern/ basic/simple) or Ornamentalist (traditional/luxurious/complex/decadent);
- Presentation – Realist ('this is what you get' / photos/ value for money) or Abstract ('this will be an experience'/logos/ambiguity);
- Kinetics – Dynamic ('this place is changing'/up-to-date) or Static ('this place has enduring values and qualities'/ we value tradition);
- Power – Strong ('we can give you what you want') or Subtle/Refined ('you can make your own future here')

In all of this remember that you are trying to grab and hold the attention of your “customers”. Make it interesting and distinctive and easy to follow.

Exercise 7: What is your existing brand?

Look at your existing website.

- Who is it targeted at? Are there separate pages for local residents and for tourists, for example?
- What image does it portray through its graphics?
- What image does it portray through its text?
- Is it easy to read? What non-national languages can it be read in?

Today the Internet is a crucial channel for communication of your regional brand. This starts with your own **website**. Who is it speaking to? How user-friendly is it? What does it tell people about your council, town and region? Appendix 2 of this report gives you a check-list that you can use to evaluate a website and gain ideas about how a website design might be improved. Remember people will flick from one website to another very quickly. They will only take a few seconds to scan what is on your site before moving on, so you have to grab and hold their attention by what they see as soon as the site opens.

Section 3: Story-Telling and Writing Success Stories

“Schools, SME's and NGO's can play an important role by taking part in the story telling. Project groups can be formed and school children as well as adults can write essays, make videos and present the regional highlights with researching history and facts. These highlights can be outstanding pieces of architecture, unique natural landscape, cultural events, industrial success stories, universities or institutions, art galleries, museums, unique individuals or NGO's who has contributed to the regional identity etc.” *TiF Project Application.*

So what do we mean by story-telling and how does this fit into the narratives and the branding? **Story-telling may be just that.** If your place has a tradition of story-telling then that may be part of the place-branding process. For example, Cesis produced the book about *Spooks, Ghosts and Haunted Houses*. Of course there can be many different types and styles of story-telling, not all of them traditional. Examples include science-fiction, love stories, crime stories, thrillers, travel-writing etc. etc.

The idea of being a “literary town” has been used in place-marketing by some towns, and especially as a way of building a niche tourism product. This often draws substance and interest from associations with well-known novelists who were born, lived or died there or wrote about the town or region. Other towns have developed strategies to present themselves as “book towns”, with for example a lot of second-hand book shops and an annual book festival where living authors give talks and market the latest works.

However, within the TiF project **story-telling can also mean highlighting success stories that demonstrate the essential ideas in the narratives and branding.** We have already seen an example of this with the Yellow House from Tranemo. Here is an example of a new commitment to and confidence in rural living that is made possible by vision and common endeavour amongst a group of friends. Similarly, Suwalki has shown through a number of projects how it can develop as a cultural hub in the region that is connected internationally.

Exercise 8: What are your success stories?

What projects can you identify that show how your town/region is developing or can develop? What is the story they tell?

Section 4: Techniques

Whether you are consulting on scenarios, or building narratives, or getting people involved in story-telling, you need to engage with stakeholders. By this we mean that you need to contact and listen to the main groups in your region or town. This requires that you do some **stakeholder analysis**. There is no dominant technique for doing this. However, it does mean that you have to think about the diversity of your community and the different groups and interests who might be affected or able to contribute to the process of building ideas and stories.

Some categories of groups that you might think about consulting:

- Young people
- Elderly people
- Women
- Men
- Newcomers to the community
- Businesses
- Business development agencies
- Tourist agencies
- Civic societies

In project management, stakeholders are often analysed in terms of power and their ability to influence, and/or by whether they stand to gain or lose from the project. In TiF this type of analysis might not be appropriate, and there are difficult ethical questions about who to involve closely in the consultation and engagement processes, given that resources are constrained and it is not realistic to imagine that every group can be involved in an in-depth manner.

In an ideal world you would conduct sample surveys to collect statistical information that would be representative of the population as a whole. However, this is an expensive exercise and needs a person with expertise in surveys and sample design to oversee the process. Also just being part of a questionnaire survey does not give respondents much sense of being involved. In addition the concerns of the TiF project are more qualitative – narratives and story telling and scenarios and design – than quantitative. The work in WP3 on the Attractiveness Barometer will look at the statistical aspects of the situation of the partners. Thus the techniques discussed in these Guidelines for involving people are qualitative.

Do “before and after” comparisons

One problem TiF faces is that it is trying to build the foundations for long term development in each of the partners. However the project itself lasts only 36 months. How then do we know whether what we are doing in the project is having the desired effects?

We need to have some baseline information at the start of the project. Then we do the co-operation and actions in the WPs. Then we compare with our baseline information.

For example, each partner was asked to do a SWOT analysis at the start of the project. You will be asked to repeat that exercise at the end and we will compare the two.

The same kind of “before and after” comparison can be done using the techniques described in this Section. Do your first surveys in the summer of 2010 and then repeat them in 2012 and we will be able to see what has changed as a result of TiF endeavours.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups are now used widely to collect “soft” information about how strongly people feel about issues and how they see things. You invite some people along to a small group discussion about a topic. For example, in TiF the topic might be “How can we make our town more attractive?” You can either try to set up a group that is roughly representative of the town as a whole (e.g. mix of men and women, old and young) or you can set up different groups for the main stakeholder groups you have identified. One single group takes less resources, but a set of stakeholder groups will probably give you greater insights and mobilise more people.

The **timing** of the meeting needs to be thought about. It should be at a time that is convenient for the members of the group. For example, a group of business people might prefer a breakfast meeting to one during the working day. Early evening is a difficult time for parents with young children. The meeting should not be planned – or allowed – to run too long. About 90 minutes is probably about right: more than 2 hours is almost certainly too long. Try to make it attractive for people to attend – e.g. hold it in a convenient venue and provide nice coffee and snacks, and have comfortable chairs. People should feel relaxed and able to chat.

Arrange the seating so that people are **sitting in a circle**. This is NOT a committee meeting or a platform for the council to address the people. The point about a circle is that nobody has the dominant seat, and that is also how the discussion should go: forceful individuals should not be allowed to dominate the discussion while others say nothing. It is probably a good idea to start by just going round the circle and getting everyone to introduce themselves. Maybe give them name badges that are large enough for people to read within the circle so discussion can be on familiar terms. You should have a record of the basic profile of the participants – gender, approximate age, background (e.g. “commuter” or “council employee” or “student” etc.)

To ensure it works like this you need somebody who will be the **facilitator**. This role

demands some skills. If you have not done it before try a practice focus group with some of your colleagues from work – and get them to give you advice on how you could do it better. Basically you have to be firm but polite and also manage the flow of the discussion. You do not need to reach agreement within the group, though if agreement can be reached then you should note that.

You need to **prepare questions** before the meeting. You need to think ahead about what you want to find out from your focus group. The questions should be **open questions**. The members of the group will not be a statistically reliable sample, so there is no value in getting figures from them (e.g. cars per household) as the figures would not mean much. However, it might be useful, for example, to explore whether car-using members of your group have different arguments from non-car-users when you ask about whether reducing car parking areas in the town centre would be a good idea. So open questions are questions that seek opinions and do not steer respondents to a preconceived answer. Open questions should prompt discussion – and that is the essence of the focus group. People discuss and you listen in to get a sense of their attitudes and ways of looking at things.

You must **keep a record** of what is said. You can tape record the meeting. This ensures you have an accurate record (provided the recording is clear – test it out first and keep the microphone away from sources of background noise such as heating systems!). However, transcribing a recording can take a long time. The other option is to have somebody taking notes at the meeting itself – in which case it is important that they accurately record what each person has to say. After the meeting you should produce a report of it that is given to the participants.

You then need to **analyse** the record and identify the key attitudes and findings. You can use the focus group at the start and end of the project to give you a way of identifying if they feel that TiF has made a difference. You can also use them during the project to get feedback on how things are developing – e.g. how do they respond to the scenarios?

Remember you can work transnationally by sharing with your TiF partners your ideas and experiences and results from running a focus group.

Participatory Video

With this technique, individuals or groups make videos as a way of learning together and sharing ideas about a place. You need the video **equipment** (camera and maybe lights if there are interviews indoors) and access to **editing** facilities. The whole process also requires planning. The **showing** and sharing of the videos is an important part of the process – though also one that can gain the attention of local news media.

Given that the focus of TiF is on making places attractive and developing new narratives, you should set some guidelines about the subject matter of the video. Beyond that the approach is rather free-wheeling, with the video makers having to plan their production, make contacts and undertake interviews, collect shots of places in the town / region etc, do some graphics and then edit it into a short film (epic length productions by amateurs get boring well before the end).

Again at the end you need to **analyse** the messages that are in the videos, and use

those findings to drive forward ideas in the TiF project. Similarly, the technique can be used to do “before and after” studies – perhaps in the language of Hollywood a “sequel” or “Jelgava Participatory Video II”! Again transnational working could take various forms – simply swapping videos or having teams doing videos of their town / region and that of a TiF partner. Because video is a visual medium it is well suited to work on visual aspects of town attractiveness. However, video also involves research and analysis and can be used to present evidence, e.g. about how young people feel about their town/region. Through liaison with the local news media the videos can be used to spark wider awareness and discussion of TiF themes. The technique is also good for building motivation and commitment of the participants to the project.

Photographic interviews

This technique involves asking questions that people answer by taking photos. An obvious example is you ask “What do you like most / least about the town?” People then take photos to give you their answer. They can either use their own cameras, or for a target group such as children, for example, you give them a cheap disposable camera to use.

To use the technique properly, you should get the photographers to talk to you about their photos. By asking open questions (e.g. “So what is it that makes you like this place?”) you can build a more in-depth understanding of what the participants feel. This process is called “**de-coding**” and may be done in a group, where as in the focus group, you should keep a record of what is said by whom. Again you then need to **analyse** and evaluate the findings, and feed them into the process of developing narratives, stories and responding to scenarios.

As with other techniques, this can be used to do “before and after” studies and to gain local media attention. The process of showing the photos in a public exhibition can take the messages out further and involve others in discussion of the TiF themes (again this bit needs planning). You can also use the photos to bridge into another group – e.g. show photos taken by children to a group of older people and use it to engage them in discussion. It is also a technique that can be used as a basis for transnational co-operation involving one or more partners. A **TiF photo album** could be produced of the path to a new rural BSR.

Transect Walk

This technique was introduced and practised at the TiF workshop in Valmiera in April 2010. The sheet explaining the technique that was produced for that workshop is Appendix 1 of these Guidelines.

Create TiF Trails

This builds on the idea of a town trail. A town trail involves a written or audio guide – or maybe a workbook – that people can use to follow a trail round the town. The highlights along the trail are picked out for them and some interpretation is provided, typically for example a short history of a building or explanation of a view over the landscape. So your trail needs to connect key sites and say something about them.

You can adapt this technique to make it a way of consulting people about TiF. For example, you can ask people to make their own trails linked to TIF themes – e.g.

improving attractiveness, success stories, new narratives of rural development etc. Alternatively you can create a TiF trail (which could be for walking or at regional level for cycling / driving / or linked to a bus route), and as well as interpretation of the points on the trail you can ask people questions – e.g. “This is a piece of land currently used for car parking. Can you think of better uses for the site?”

If you use workbooks you can offer people a chance to be in a lottery to win a prize if they submit their workbook. In this way you can hope to get more workbooks submitted than if you simply ask for people to send them in. You can also organise “drop in” points where people can submit the workbooks, e.g. local library or a box on-site.

Annual TiF Activity Week

One way to raise awareness of TiF and to get people involved in it is to hold a TiF week. This could be done on the same week in each TiF partner – or the “TiF Torch” could be passed on from partner to partner from one week to the next. Either way there are media opportunities in this, provided the whole thing is properly planned.

There could be a different theme each year, reflecting the development of the project. In 2010 the focus could be on where we are now in terms of attractiveness and what needs to be done. In 2011 the focus could be on the scenarios and in 2012 on the success stories. Equally each partner could use the week to develop the theme that works best for them. However, there should always be some publicity to the transnational aspects of TiF.

You would need to **organise activities and publicity**. It could be a way to showcase things like the findings from the photographic interviews or the participatory video, or to have a week of story-telling etc.

An activity week can involve two-way communication if you plan it carefully. In other words, use it to collect views from people about how to make the place more attractive, or about their responses to different scenarios etc. For example if you have an exhibition you can give people post-it notes to add their own ideas and post them on a “TiF Wall”. Again when information is collected it needs to be analysed and fed into the process of making decisions.

Design in Public

Take an area or a site that you plan to make more attractive (e.g. the sites in the WP5 investments). Install teams of design students in a visible location on the site or in the area – e.g. a tent in a park or a large empty shop or in the car park of a supermarket. Give them a design brief for the site and a short period to produce some solutions – e.g. 2-3 days. Encourage the public to stroll round and talk to them while they are doing their designs, so the public learns about TiF and design and the students learn about what people want in the area. Then hold an exhibition – perhaps with a design jury – to look at what has been produced. Again this is a good way to get local news coverage.

Have a TiF shop or market stall

As a focus for publicity and a way to meet the public and interest them in TiF you can set up a TiF shop – e.g. in an empty shop in the town centre. Alternatively you might think of renting a stall in a market. But what does TiF have to sell? We want to sell

the ideas that are at the heart of the project – making places attractive and competitive through transnational co-operation. We seek to make people more aware of urban design, encourage thinking about new narratives, showcase stories and good examples. We have TiF videos and a web site. We have photos and should be able to make some display panels to create a bright, attractive display of what TiF is about. We could have webcam links to other partners. The shop can give away TiF pens, leaflets etc.

A shop or stall needs somebody to staff it and be able to talk to people who come to look. It can be a way of getting structured information from the visitors – e.g. by having flip charts and post-its that they can write down their ideas and leave them with you. It could be where you hold exhibitions of the photos from a photographic survey – or have drawing materials available and get children to make posters about their town and display them. There are lots of possibilities. Maybe you can create a TiF quiz that the shop can give out (correct answers on your website), or even a TiF board game using dice, that takes you round all the partners to collect stories.

This is also a way to reach and build up a list of people who you want to keep contact with through the project. For example if you collect their email addresses you can keep updating them about what TiF is doing or ask their views about the scenarios for example.

Local Debates

Debates are more interesting than simple presentations. Debates can be organised at many different levels. For example, you might want to use local experts or politicians or you might encourage local schools to have a debating competition linked to TiF themes. In particular there is scope to debate the kind of futures that your town/region might follow, or what should be done with a key site, or the proposition that “There’s nothing special about this place”.

Drama / Street Theatre

Another way to focus ideas and get people talking (and local media interested) is to work with actors to put on a TiF play. This could take many different forms but should relate in some ways to TiF themes. One obvious possibility is to set it in the BSR of the future. Another possibility is to focus it on conflicting ideas about how to develop the town, with characters presenting and defending different alternatives, perhaps focused, for example, on somebody thinking of moving away from the area and being persuaded to stay – or a traveller returning from visiting other TiF partners and telling her/his stories.

Summary

There are lots of ways in which you can engage with your public in a creative way. By sharing experiences with your partners within TiF, perhaps creating joint materials, you can get the benefits of transnational co-operation.

Remember to record and analyse the results.

Try to do “before and after” studies to focus on how TiF is changing perceptions of your area, and to show how new narratives and story telling are developing and being recognised.

Look for media opportunities.

Keep the WP2 team informed about your activities.

Want to find out more? Here are some things you might look at.

For more about the internet the best place is:

<http://www.useit.com/homepageusability/>

Some books are available in <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/books.html>,

<http://www.useit.com/books/uibooks.html>

For techniques of involvement visit www.communityplanning.net

For the EDORA “Grand Narratives” see the Interim Report on

www.espon.eu/main/Menu_projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/edora.html

For interesting cases and planning procedure outlines: Teemu Moilanen and Seppo Rainisto, How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, ISBN-13: 978-0-230-22092-8

APPENDIX 1



Transect Walks as a Participatory Way of Creating New Stories or Information for Designers

Cliff Hague

A Transect Walk is one of a number of participatory techniques that can be used to develop new narratives. This note explains the idea and how to use it.

A Transect Walk is a simple way of gathering information. It can be done by a person alone, or in small groups. It's a walk, but a walk that is pre-planned and undertaken with a purpose. The purpose needs to be agreed at the start – things look different, depending on what you are looking for.

First you need **to select a route to walk**. Decide where it will start and where it will end. It helps to have local knowledge to do this. If you decide to use the method in your own town or in the countryside in your region then choose a route that you expect to be productive in relation to your purpose. The route does not necessarily have to follow a straight line – it can meander or lead back to where it began. You can even deviate from the route if something looks interesting.

Then you take a **walk along the line or route**. Keep your eyes open and note down (and maybe sketch or photograph) what you see. If you choose to interview people along the way, again keep notes of what they say.

At the end, **sit down and discuss in your group what you have found out and plan how to develop and present the information**. We have 35 minutes at the start of Friday morning for group presentations and feedback.

Using a Transect Walk to Create a Story

Novels or movies sometimes use journeys or sections of a town as a key part of their story. Road movies are an obvious example. The novelist James Joyce used early 20th century Dublin as a fundamental part of some of his writings – for example *Ulysses* is set on one day 16 June 1904 as Bloom, the fictional character at the heart of the book, moves from his house and around the bars, library, hospital, brothels etc of the city. Bloomsday is celebrated in Dublin every year, with visitors retracing these footsteps.

We may not produce a literary classic to rival *Ulysses*, but we'd like some of you to create a short story inspired by your transect walk.

Your note taking from your walk might look a bit like this:

Location	Buildings and street	People on the street / in the shops etc	Ideas for story
Rigas Iela, Sv.Radonezas Sergijas Bajica	Church on corner site. Little traffic. White Skoda passes with 3 men inside.	A few pedestrians on the street; man wearing sun glasses with a large dog.	<p>Historical story – why was this church built here when it was? What kind of people might have been in it the day it opened?</p> <p>Crime / thriller - What are the men in the Skoda up to? Why is the man wearing sun glasses? Has he seen the car go by?</p> <p>Satire – the dog has just been appointed City Architect and is doing a survey to redesign Valmiera as a “dog-friendly town”</p>
Rigas Iela junction with Georga Apina Iela	Traffic lights. Signs to town centre. Shop selling fruit and vegetables.	Talk with shop keeper – he gets some local produce from a farmer friend.	<p>Story about food in Valmiera? Where has the food travelled from to get here, What stories could it tell?</p> <p>Historic story – did people walk past here to the church? What might it have looked like then? Who might have met on this corner all those years ago?</p> <p>Crime story – traffic lights break down, delaying a get-away.</p> <p>Dog story – dog stops here to pick up some cans of dog meat: decides traffic lights need a “dogs crossing” sign.</p>
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

To save time you might decide before you set out what type of story it is that you will write. One important thing is to look out for and record the detail – the colour of a car or a woman's coat, the sounds you hear etc. This detail will give your story an edge – and if you are writing a detective story, it may provide the vital clue!

Using a Transect Walk to analyse townscape and get views about possible urban design interventions

You can use the same basic method in a quite different way – to do a reconnaissance of the built environment, how it functions and how design interventions might improve it. It is possible to then use this approach with different groups of the population - e.g. children or women or old people – to find out more about how they experience the same environment, and how their priorities overlap or differ.

For example, if you were using the method to analyse and understand the townscape in general, your sheet might look like this:

Location	Buildings	Hard and soft landscape	Views	Comments
Rigas Iela, Sv.Radonezas Sergijas Bajica	Landmark building with interesting spires and windows.	Mature trees in church grounds, but some may be near the end of their life. Fencing round church is not obtrusive and allows views through. Pavement adequate but dull.	Spires visible from more than 100 metres away. Views from here along main road but no special vistas.	Find out more about church. Could it be included as part of an architectural walking tour of the town? Might it be lit up in winter?
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

If you were using the technique to explore pedestrian experiences, for example, you would have columns covering things like quality of pavement, ease of crossing the road, how easy the route is for people with visual or mobility difficulties (e.g. look for people using prams or walking sticks), observations of how people cross the road (do they have to hurry, what are the risks?), comments from interviews etc.

Share comments and reactions within the group – we learn from each other.

You can usefully display results on a map. If you don't have a map before you set out, it may be useful to sketch one as you go along and then re-work it to present your conclusions.

You'll need to take a notepad with you and maybe some larger sheets of paper (especially if you are doing it as a map).

A camera could be useful if you are able to print out your photos.

You may want to divide responsibilities within the team – in particular make sure at least one person is taking notes!

Presentations on Friday should take not more than 5 minutes each – and may be read, acted, drawn or pinned up or take any other form you think is best (e.g. a staged interview).

Summary

This technique is:

- **Simple to use**
- **Flexible**
- **Participatory**

It develops skills in information collection and prompts creative thinking

It does need preparation – more than we have had when trying it out here! Local knowledge can help in the way you choose suitable routes, for example. Ideally try it out yourself before using it with others.

You can make a news-worthy event around the use of this technique – e.g. a story-writing competition or a photography competition along a transect.

APPENDIX 2

WWW site (page) analysis

1. Address (present):
2. Possible alternatives¹:
3. Google position² (key words)³:

Detailed criteria	Comments
1. SIGNAGE	(VISUAL AND VERBAL) COMMUNICATION
1.1. Proper and simple address	
1.2. Summary sentence	Like: Official site of....
1.3. Visible: name and coat of arms	Left upper corner, logo instead of the coat of arms is acceptable
1.4. Consistency of the page	Fonts, colours, structure
1.5. Differentiation (in graphics) between main (entrance) page and subpages	Important, search engines very often drive to a sub-page
2. COMPREHENSIVNESS	
2.1. Basic documents	Legal documents, personel. Etc.
2.2. Strategies and plans	Especially for investment
2.3. Archives	Very important to have a record of previous documents, projects etc. That can be accessed on the site.
2.4. Partners	Other towns, organisations, etc (links) – MAKE SURE TRANSINFORM IS THERE!
2.5. PDF copies of the printed material	Reports, brochures, leaflets, etc/
2.6. „To download”	Logos, signs, etc., in popular formats (eps, ai, cdr)
2.7. Reports and protocols	
2.8. Other: 2.8. Contact (address and phones) 2.9. E-mail to us 2.10 multimedia (tv reports, streaming)	Basic statistics, accommodation, road map – if possible – interactive, presentations for tourists and investors, local services (transportation, police, healthcare, etc)
2.9. Social media	Forum, chats, residents’ profiles, etc.
3. TOPICALITY	Current news
3.1. Current calendar	
3.2. Current accommodation/address	Obligatory – with date
3.3. “Current news” on main page	
3.4. Current news (organisation)	Titles, leads, short texts, possibility to

¹ For example: present: um.suwalki.pl, alternatives: suwalki.pl, suwalki.gov.pl, suwalki.eu, gminasuwalki.pl, gmina_suwalki.pl (gmina – commune), etc. Try as many as possible

² Google – because it is absolutety numer 1 (more than 80% queries)

³ Use as many as possible (name of your town, commune, name of region, famous people, comapnies in your town, etc)

	download full version (if necessary)
3.5. Current news archived	All news – obligatory – with the publication date (datum)
3.6. Archive	News older than a week or (in some cases) a month
3.7. Tourist information	All the information for tourists with dates
4. CONTACT	
4.1. Full data (addresses, personel with names and positions, phones, e-mails)	Current! You need to keep it up to date.
4.2. Question form	Possibility to send questions through Web page –e.g. Questions to the Mayor.
4.3. RSS channel	Exist or not
4.4. Forum / chats – if exist: - when? - subject? - partners? - archivisation - reports and recommendations (if any)	Exist or not
4.5. Newsletter,: 4.5.a. Exist or not 4.5.b. Frequency (once a week, twice a month?) 4.5.c. Benefis for users 4.5.d. Visible privacy policy	
5. NAVIGATION	
5.1. “About us”. Addresses, jobs offered,	
5.2. Separate subpage “For press/media”	With textes, mp3, multimedia material, contact to the press officer
5.3. Clear organisation: 5.3.a. Structure and place of the navigation elements (left or top) 5.3.b. Fast (shallow) page 5.3.c. Standards in use 5.3.d. Web page map (plan) accesible form the main page 5.3.e. Simple return to the main page (as a standard – through activated logo or coat of arms) 5.3.f. Internal search engine 5.3.g. All the documents with: “print” and “send to a friend” buttons	As a rule – finding any information – no more than 3 clicks Standard links (blue, underlined, change of colour after use), standard fonts, etc.
5.4. Simplicity of design	
5.5. Language	Proper language – in the Internet grammar and ortography is applicable too!
5.6. Buttons (esp. Graphic) with descriptions	
5.8. Simple text instead of complicated logos	Its better to write “tourism” than place an invented logo like backpacker or so

5.9. In standard resolution (1024x728) all important information above “sink line” (the point where the screen cuts off the web page and you have to scroll down to see the rest.)	Without vertical scrolling!
5.10. If there is an introduction – you should have a button “switch off the introduction”	
5.10. Any advantages for disabled	Bigger font, photos with signatures readable for voice programmes, etc.
6. LINKS	
6.1. Does any links exists?	Partner towns, region, EU programmes
6.2. If you have links – how many, connectedness between them, subject structure	
6.3. Formal structure (visibility, accessibility, standard)	
6.4. Do links have some information about action started after clicks?	Especially important when link starts film or other big (in MB) multimedia presentation – if the connection is weak or expensive (like through cell phone)
7. FINAL REMARKS	
Something else seen (noticed) by expert	
8. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS	

"This document has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of Trans in Form project and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union."



<http://eu.baltic.net>

www.tifpro.eu