

**transformative
social innovation
theory**

Methodological guidelines for case studies Batch I

Deliverable n. 4.1

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Focus of deliverable:

These methodological guidelines are directed at the researchers who conduct in-depth case studies within the TRANSIT project. They describe how the TRANSIT researchers should conduct the in-depth case study work through different types of research activities to allow for rich exploration, description and analyses.

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1 Introduction

As part of the TRANSIT project, an embedded case study approach is used to ground and test the emerging middle-range theory on transformative social innovation. This approach combines both qualitative, in-depth case-study analysis, as well as quali-quantitative comparative meta-analysis. In WP4, the focus is on grounding the theory through in-depth case study work. The aim of the in-depth embedded case studies is to contribute to developing knowledge about the dynamics of social innovation as described in the overall TRANSIT research question (see D3.1):

How does social innovation interact with other forms of (transformative) change, and how are actors (dis)empowered therein?

TRANSIT researches a sample of approx. 20 transnational networks in total. The embedded case study approach allows capturing interactions between transnational networks (i.e. networking at international level) and their national, regional and local origins and manifestations over time. Rather than assuming such networking takes place, this is one of the empirical questions. Thus, our objects of analysis are:

- **(Local) Initiative** = a (local) place, activity, community, project or programme. In the context of TRANSIT, we refer to 'local initiatives' as local 'manifestations' of a transnational network that we study as empirical cases. What a 'local initiative' means can differ for each case-study. For example in the case of the Impact Hub it can refer to a specific workplace (e.g. the Impact Hub Amsterdam), in the case of the Global Ecovillage Network it can refer to an ecovillage community (e.g. ecovillage Tamera in Portugal), in the case of Transition Towns, it can refer to a group of people that have adopted the idea of Transition Towns for their own city/ town/ neighbourhood (e.g. The Hague in Transition).
- **(Transnational) network** = a (transnational) collection of initiatives and actors that are connected to each other and share an equal concept and identity, either formally or informally. 'Transnational' implies that the network(ing) crosses national borders. The network can be more or less formalised. The level/degree of formalisation is itself a part of the empirical research.

We distinguish between two batches of transnational networks, a first batch of 12 networks that has already been selected and a second batch of approx. 8 networks or thematic clusters that still have to be selected. These guidelines are meant to give guidance for the first batch of in-depth case studies to be conducted during June 2014 – March 2015 (for a detailed timeline and deadlines see section 2). For the selection criteria, see Annex 1, for an overview of the networks see table 1 in section 2.

These guidelines are directed at the researchers who conduct in-depth case studies within TRANSIT. Therein we distinguish between (1) those responsible for a case study and the analysis of the international networking ('case study coordinators'; formerly 'network leads'), and (2) the researchers who analyse one of the local manifestations ('case researchers') as part of a case. All case study coordinators are also case researchers for at least one local manifestation. The guidelines describe how the TRANSIT researchers should

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conduct the in-depth case study work through different types of research activities to allow for rich exploration, description and analyses:

- Interviews and other types of dialogues with stakeholders involved with and relating to this type of social innovation at various levels
- Document review (primary and secondary sources)
- Participant observations at meetings, events, etc.

The guidelines also describe how these research activities should be reported upon. One of the main aims of the empirical research is to produce “rich empirical descriptions” for each case-study, using the common empirical research questions developed in 3.1. as a cognitive map (see figure 1, section 3.1). While WP3 focuses on *what* we want to know, these guidelines specify how we get to know it, by operationalizing the research questions developed in WP3. The cognitive map is meant to outline the information needed to undertake a meaningful comparison of the case studies, which demands a certain level of homogeneity in data collection, documentation, analyses and report writing. At the same time we consider it important to safeguard flexibility and attention to the specific characteristics of each individual case, like: ‘field’ of the social innovation (entrepreneurship, energy, service exchange, etc.), theory of change (what societal changes are imagined and how from this type of social innovation), or level of formalization of the local social innovation initiatives and the structures and networking at different levels.

The guidelines outline:

- Practical issues with regard to responsibilities, communication during the research period and a timeline for the period (section 2)
- TRANSIT case study approach including the focus of our research, research methods, research principles and the depth of our research (section 3)
- Research questions for data collection (section 4)
- Template and structure for case study reports (section 5)

The three Annexes provide more in-depth information on:

- Aims and frames of TRANSIT in-depth case studies (Annex 1 – summary of part of the TRANSIT Memo for case study coordinators and researchers, March 2014)
- Preparation of a TRANSIT in-depth case study (Annex 2 – summary of part of the TRANSIT Memo for case study coordinators and researchers, March 2014)
- Excel template for keeping overview of data-collection in all parts of a case study(Annex 3)

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2 Responsibilities, communication, and timeline

The deliverable from the first batch of case studies will be: D4.2 Report on first set of in-depth case studies (**Final deadline is 15th of March 2015**).

2.1 Responsibilities

- The **WP-lead**, AAU (supported by ULB) is responsible for coordination and cross analysis of the 12 case-studies. This includes responsibility for organising and coordinating materials filed in the Box folder for WP4, organising and planning Skype calls, preparing WP4 sessions during project meetings, and for aligning content and progress with WP-leads, case study coordinators, case researchers, as well as the task-leads of the cross-cutting themes.
- Each '**case researcher**' is responsible for delivering a report (in the required template) of the local initiative on time. Each '**case study coordinator**' is responsible for compiling the reports of the two local initiatives and the analysis of the transnational network(ing) and a comparison of the two local initiatives into a case study report. The case study reports will become Annexes to D4.2.
- Besides the case study report, each **case study coordinator** is together with their fellow **case researchers** responsible for
 - saving and storing the case study documentation on a safe place (sound files from interviews, transcripts or extensive summaries of interviews in the native language of the interviewee, and other important documents),
 - developing an internal joint research protocol which the case coordinator and fellow case researchers update regularly for each case during the research process describing choice of local initiatives, interview persons, omissions and additions of research questions, etc.
 - creating and updating an overview of data-collection activities (see template in appendix 3), specifying who was interviewed, which events were attended and which primary and secondary sources were consulted and upload updated versions of this overview on Box.
 - informing AAU about who (name of the researcher) is working on which local case study (name of the local manifestation). This information will be gathered in a document that AAU puts on BOX and which will be regularly updated - thus please send any changes asap,
 - making time for internal communication in WP4 and organize communication within their case-study team.

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Table 1: Overview of first batch of transnational networks, case study coordinator and case researchers

| | Transnational Networks under study in TRANSIT project | Case study coordinator | Local Case 1 | Local Case 2 |
|----|---|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | The Impact Hub: Global network of social entrepreneurs | DRIFT | NL Drift | BRA UFRJ |
| 2 | Ashoka: Network for financial support to social entrepreneurs | ESSRG | Hungary ESSRG | Germany UM |
| 3 | Time Banks: Networks facilitating reciprocal service exchange | UM | UK UM | Spain UDC |
| 4 | Credit Unions: Different types of credit cooperatives | UDC | UK UEA | Spain UDC |
| 5 | RIPESS: Network for the promotion of social solidarity economy | ULB | Romania UDC | Belgium ULB |
| 6 | FABLABS: Digital fabrication workshops open to local communities | SPRU | UK SPRU | ARG UNQ |
| 7 | Hackerspace: User driven digital fabrication workshops | SPRU | UK SPRU | ARG UNQ |
| 8 | Living Knowledge Network: Network of science shops and other community-based research entities | AAU | Denmark AAU | Romania AAU |
| 9 | DESIS-network: Network for design for social innovation and sustainability | UFRJ | Italy UFRJ | BRA UFRJ |
| 10 | Global Ecovillage Network: Network of eco-villages and other intentional communities | BOKU | Portugal Drift | Germany BOKU |
| 11 | Transition Towns: Grassroot communities working on 'local resilience' | UEA | UK UEA | Hungary ESSRG |
| 12 | INFORSE: International network of sustainable energy NGOs | AAU | Denmark AAU | Belgium ULB |

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2.2 WP4 internal cooperation and communication

The internal cooperation and communication in WP4 is based on the following:

- Dialogue within each case study research group (a group for each of the 12 cases in the first batch of case studies comprising the case study coordinators and case researchers). The cooperation, coordination and mutual overview of the case study work within a specific case can be supported through joint living document(s), which contain
 - An overview of the data collection through different sources: interviews, documents and participant observations (see template in Appendix 3)
 - A joint research protocol which the case researchers update regularly for each case during the research process describing choice of local initiatives, interview persons, omissions and additions of research questions, etc.
- Dialogues between AAU and each of the case study research groups
 - AAU is available for discussing issues that arise during the research process. It will also independently contact the different case study research groups to find out how things are going.
- Dialogue across case studies at joint skype calls and sessions at TRANSIT project meetings organised by AAU. The aim is to hold the following (skype) meetings:
 1. Beginning of July 2014 (skype call),
 2. End of August 2014 (skype call),
 3. October 20th- 24th, 2014 (TRANSIT project meeting),
 4. End-November 2014 (skype call),
 5. Beginning of January 2015 (skype call),
 6. Beginning of February 2015 (skype call)
 7. March 23rd-27th, 2015 (TRANSIT project meeting).

2.3 Overall time plan until 15 March 2015

March – May 2014:

- Initial dialogue with actors in relation to each case-study in order to initiate the planning of the case study research

June-July 2014:

- Dialogue within each case study research group planning the case study

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- Each case study coordinator informs AAU, which two local initiatives and transnational network(ing) will be studied and by whom.

June – December 2014:

- Conduct empirical work > see section 3 for more detailed information on data-collection
- Write case report using template > see section 5
- Ongoing dialogue between AAU and case study coordinators and case researchers about experiences and quality of case studies during scheduled skype calls.

Beginning of July 2014:

- Joint skype call of AAU, case study coordinators and case researchers updating each other on progress and experiences from the case study research.

End of August 2014:

- Joint skype call of AAU and case study coordinators and researchers for dialogue about progress in and experiences from the case study research.

October 20th- 24th, 2014:

- Session for case study coordinators and case researchers at the TRANSIT project meeting in Bruxelles about progress in and experiences from the case study research with focus on preparing first case study report. During this meeting, the final version of the case study report template will be discussed as well as possibilities for the second batch of case studies.

November 15th, 2014:

- **First draft of each case study report** (contribution to Deliverable 4.2). The report draft is sent to AAU and used for dialogue about preliminary findings and need for further data collection.

End of November 2014

- Joint skype call of AAU, case study coordinators and case researchers updating each other on progress and experiences from the case study research

Beginning of January 2015:

- Joint skype call of AAU, case study coordinators and case researchers updating each other on progress and experiences from the case study research.

January 15th, 2015:

- **Final case study reports ready.** The reports are sent to AAU and used for doing the cross-analysis of the 12 case study reports.

February 15th, 2015:

- **Final version of D4.2 ready for review** by UFRJ. AAU has written the cross-analysis (Analysis of the shaping, impacts and transnational transfer within the 12 social innovation cases') of the 12 case study reports together with ULB.

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February 22nd, 2015

- **Review comments for D4.2 ready.** UFRJ sends review comments on the final version of D4.2 to AAU and ULB.

February 26th, 2015

- **Final version of D4.2 (including review comments) ready.**
 - AAU submits final version of D4.2 (including review comments) to DRIFT for submission to the EU.
 - AAU sends final version as preparatory reading to all participants of the Theoretical Integration Workshop.

March 23rd-27th, 2015 (contributing to Milestone 11):

- TRANSIT project meeting and Theoretical integration workshop 1 in Norwich – with WP2, WP3, WP4 and WP5.

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3 Overall TRANSIT case study approach

This section describes the overall approach and quality guidelines in the first batch of the TRANSIT social innovation case studies.

Our in-depth case studies are based on a number of elements:

- Conceptually, on the cognitive map developed in D3.1. broadened by a historical perspective on both the transnational network(ing) and the local initiatives (**section 3.1**)
- Methodologically, on three main research methods (interviews, participant observation and document review) (**section 3.2**)
- Ethically, reflexivity with regard to researcher role and relation with the network/initiative (**section 3.3**)
- Practically, the depth of our research (**section 3.4**).

In doing our research, we should be aware of distinctions between:

- Discourses (what they say) and practices (what they do) of actors involved in the initiative/network
- Explicit and implicit uses of the concepts of TRANSIT's cognitive map (e.g. social innovation, system innovation)
- Different perspectives/framings upheld by actors within cases

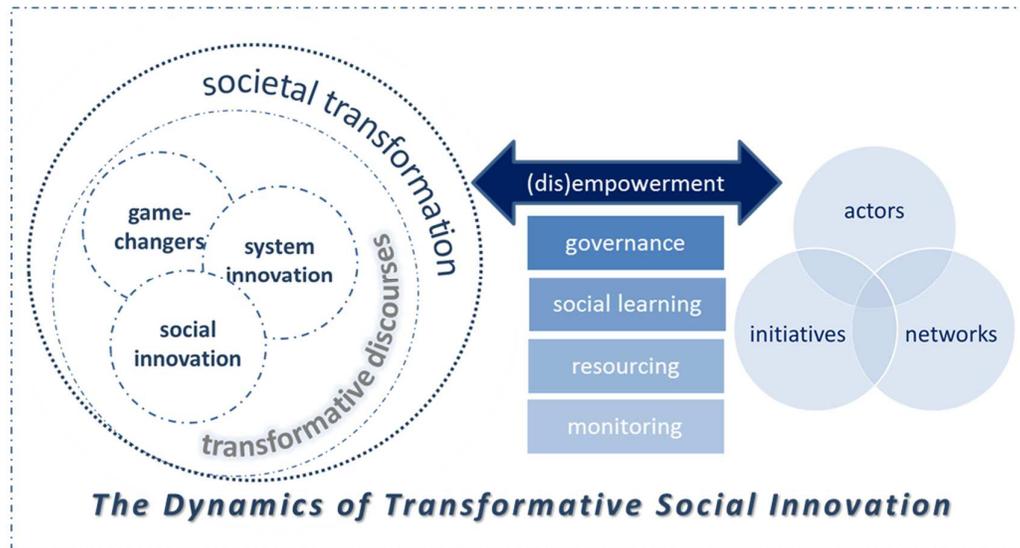
Overall, it is important that in our case reports we are explicit and specific about the choices we make in the research process and about whether or not concepts are relevant to the initiative/network under study.

3.1 The basics of the TRANSIT case study approach

As mentioned, we need to balance our desire for homogeneity and comparability with attentiveness to specifics of the single case studies and maybe wishes of a network and initiative. The former is served through the cognitive map (see Figure 1), as developed in D3.1, which gives an overview of important concepts for the first batch of case studies.

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Figure 1: Cognitive map for TRANSIT research questions (Source: D3.1)



This cognitive map developed in D3.1 served as a framework for four empirical research questions (see Textbox 1): On the right are the innovation initiatives, the actors involved with those and the (local/supralocal) networks they are embedded in. This leads to research question 1. On the left are the different concepts of innovation and change as distinguished within TRANSIT. How the initiatives relate to them is important; hence question 2. Moreover, TRANSIT seeks to uncover the many possible relations between initiatives on the one hand, and different concepts of innovation and change of the other. As the double arrow of (dis-)empowerment is crucial, this leads to research question 3 and the associated set of specifying questions concerning governance, social learning, resourcing, and monitoring of social innovation and whether and how such mechanisms contribute to (dis)empowerment. Finally, the cognitive map mainly serves to facilitate comparison; it highlights homogeneity. As case study research is also all about attention to the particular, it is essential to remain attentive to issues 'in between' the displayed figures, or even outside the cognitive map, as they present themselves during the research process. Please remember that TRANSIT seeks to be responsive to issues emerging from the single case study, too. This leads to research question 4, pertaining to emergent issues (that, after careful analysis and comparison, might inform amendments to that map). These four empirical questions are further operationalized in section 4.

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Textbox 1: Overview of four empirical research questions (slightly adapted from D3.1)

1. What is the **network/initiative** under study?
2. How does the **network/initiative engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'**? (How) has that changed?
3. How were/are **actors involved in the network/ initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation and change?** (How) has that changed?
4. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the network/initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?

A main focus of the in-depth case studies is on historical analysis up till today – the four empirical research questions of D3.1 have been adapted to reflect this emphasis. The specific time span back in time depends on the individual case study and its history, which may reach back 30-40 years (sustainable energy organisations) or just a few years (FabLabs and HackerSpaces). For initiatives and networks with a long history it may be necessary to focus the more detailed analysis on specific activities and periods, depending on advice and experience from internal actors or earlier studies of an initiative. It is **not** part of the TRANSIT project plan to follow the transnational networks/local initiatives during the four years TRANSIT runs. Instead, there is period of about seven months (June -Dec 2014 for the first batch of case studies) during which we can trace the history and the current development of two local manifestations and the transnational networking based on literature reviews, interviews and participant observations.

3.2 Research methods in the case studies

In the DOW we specify the use of three data gathering methods, namely document review (referred to as 'secondary analysis in the DOW), interview and participant observation. Using three different kinds of data methods provides the possibility of triangulation of our research results.

Please note the following for the writing up of the case study reports: For all three types of empirical sources it is important that references are presented in the case study report. Furthermore, it is important that choices with regard to which sources were used and not used are presented in the case study report.

A number of different introductions to qualitative research have been published, trying to cover problems and methods in qualitative research. One of the most recent primers is the fourth edition of Uwe Flick's: *An introduction to Qualitative Research*, London 2014, Sage. This book serves as main background for the following paragraphs which provide an overview of methods for document review, interviews and participant observation.

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3.2.1 Document review

Document review should include three types of documents:

- Document review of primary sources: pamphlets, reports, etc. from a local social innovation initiative or transnational network
- Document review of secondary sources: reports, scientific articles, etc. written by others about this transnational network in general or specifically about the local manifestation, including documents describing and analysing public policies and institutional dynamics of the field of a case study.
- Media analysis: media exposure of the networks and local manifestations under study, like media articles, films etc. which can represent external views on initiatives and show specific transformative discourses in societal milieus.

3.2.1.1 Documents of primary sources

Documents related to the phenomenon you are studying can be used in the research. Documents can be minutes from meetings, newsletters, newspaper articles, handbooks, master plans, homepages, blogs etc. It is essential to reflect on who has written the documents, for whom and for what purpose. Flick (2014)¹ relates document review to recent developments in ethnomethodology, which addresses the question of how people produce social reality in and through interactive processes²:

- You need to be critical in your approach – even material from organisations can have the purpose of being a ‘sales-material’ for the organisation. Documents are not simply data.
- In some types of minutes from meetings, disagreements are suppressed and consensus appears in the text. Sometimes interesting things can be read between the lines.
- As a researcher you might also end up with ‘secret’ material that cannot be used directly – but only as background information for further research using interviews etc.

One of the central questions relating to document review is how to delimit the review: which documents are going to be reviewed, and which are left out? Some criteria could relate to authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.

¹ Flick, U (2014) *An introduction to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage

² Flick (2014) recommends four texts for further reading about document analysis:

- Prior, L. (2003): *Using Documents in Social Research*. London, SAGE
- Rapley, T. (2007): *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*, London, SAGE
- Scott, J. (1990): *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*, Cambridge, Polity Press
- Wolff, S. (2004): ‘Analysis of Documents and Records’, in U. Flick, E. v. Kardorff, and I. Stienke (eds): *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage, pp. 284-290.

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3.2.1.2 Documents of secondary sources

A search for documents of secondary sources relevant to the field of a case and the specific initiatives and networks, which are analysed, should be carried out. Such documents can include scientific articles and reports about this type of social innovation, including “grey” literature in terms of student reports. Also here a critical approach is necessary. Be aware about assumptions made in the documents and the type of data applied.

Relevant are documents about public regulation and institutions pertinent for a transnational network/local manifestation in a specific national or local context. An understanding of the political and institutional frames influencing (constraining and/or supporting) a social innovation initiative is an important element in the analysis of mechanisms behind the (dis)empowerment related to social innovation across different types of social innovations (and networks) and different types of socio-economic contexts. A search for relevant policy documents can be done in interaction with the mapping of activities and focus of the local initiatives and networks and their activities and attempts to influence societal development. Awareness about similarities and differences in policy landscape and institutional context between two countries where manifestations of the same network are studied is important both for planning of interviews and for the later comparative analysis of two local initiatives in a case study report.

3.2.1.3 Media analysis

For each case study a media analysis should be conducted as part of the data collection. The media co-create or at least influence the societal and political transformative discourse of change and innovation. How they write about social innovation initiatives is a practical expression of that. There might be a big difference in how much and how popular the initiatives have appeared in the media. Some initiatives might even not have been described in media, which is a result as well.

This analysis does not need to be extensive; rather it should capture the following aspects:

- A rough overview of how intense the media reputation of the initiative is:
- How many articles, films, radio contributions have been published? Can they be found on the internet (by external resources beyond the initiative)?
- What were the main reasons/pegs for the media contributions?
- Which media (mainstream newspaper, expert journals, internet platforms, You Tube, etc.)? Distinguishing e.g. between large and small media, and political orientation of the media

By way of an example: The German local ecovillage case study Schloss Tempelhof is covered by articles in the large newspapers Süddeutsche and Frankfurter Allgemeine. Both compare mainstream pictures of communal living with existing structures in the ecovillage. The

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media analysis shows different paradigms – also paradigms of social innovation which the initiative is seen as a projection of.

If a media analysis is not feasible, the network/initiative should be asked about their reputation in the media during the interviews:

- Has your initiative been covered in the media?
- Where/ in which media?
- What were the backgrounds/reasons/pegs for these articles?
- What did you like about the reputation of your initiative? What do you dislike about it?

3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews should be organized as so-called semi-structured qualitative research interviews (like described by e.g. Kvale 1996³). Each interview will probably have a length of 1-2 hours. The interviews should be recorded and the sound files safely stored for later further analysis and documentation. The interview should either be fully transcribed, transcribed into ‘thick’ summaries using the words and concepts by the interviewee or summarized in interview minutes using the words and concepts of the interviewee. Citations in the case report should be in English, but with reference to ‘interviewee type’ and interview date. If wished for, an interviewee should be anonymized in an interview transcript/thick summary.

One of the foci of interviews is on inquiring assumptions about impacts and mechanisms behind (lack of) impacts. However, it is possible that knowledge about past activities has faded or no longer present in detail. If aiming to triangulate data from interviews with data from document review, it can be that information about social innovations, their shaping and different types of impacts might only to a limited extent be available as written information or only as so-called grey literature not showing up in libraries. However, this does not disqualify assumptions expressed in interviews about impacts within a social innovation case. Written information is just as normative as the spoken word.

This inevitable normativity implies that the data collection in the case studies should also include interviews with different types of actors, like local government, users that experience the impact of the social innovation, actors involved in other ways of addressing the same societal needs, etc. Interviews can be carried out in a number of ways. The following touches upon the semi-structured research interview (which Flick⁴ calls semi-standardized interview) and group interviews (which Flick calls group discussions).

³ Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London, Sage

⁴ Flick, U (2014) *An introduction to Qualitative Research*, London, Sage.

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3.2.2.1 The semi-structured research interview

The Norwegian-Danish researcher Steinar Kvale ⁵ wrote several books introducing qualitative research interviewing. He defines the semi-structured research interview as “..an interview whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale 1996; p. 5). The interview should be understood as constructed by the social interaction between interviewer and the interviewee.

In order to carry out a semi-structured research interview, you have to know something about the phenomena, the interview is centred around. You need to reflect upon what you actually would like to learn from the interview. Based on this reflection, you can develop an interview guide, describing the themes that the interview should cover. The themes can be theoretically informed, but you have to remember that your interviewee probably will be a stranger to the theoretical concepts. Kvale (1996) has an example of a researcher, having studied a special kind of kinship relations, the moiety system. With excitement he asks tribal Indians in the Amazonas: ‘do you have moiety systems?’ But no tribal Indians knew the theoretical concept. It took him four months to figure out a way of asking the question in the right way. It is important to find good ways of asking the questions. They should be understandable for the interviewee and leave the interviewee room for her or his explanation.

A semi-structured interview allows you to get an insight in an understanding of parts of another person’s life-world. An essential part of the art of carrying out interviews is to be aware when to ask follow-up questions, for instance having the interviewee explaining something in more detail. Sometimes beginners are so relieved that a question has been answered that they forget to follow up. Another way of following up is by interpreting: ‘Is what you are saying that you feel that...?’

Kvale (1996) describes the quality criteria for an interview as:

- The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee
- The shorter the interviewer’s questions and the longer the subjects’ answer, the better
- The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers

Face-to-face interviews is the preferred method but in case of studies of an initiative located far away from the case researcher’s location some interviews can be conducted as interviews through telephone/skype.

3.2.2.2 Group interviews

In group interviews you have a small group of people brought together; discussing the themes you introduce them to. One of the tricky parts in this is finding the right composition

⁵ Kvale, S. (1996) *InterViews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London, Sage

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of the group: if the members are too different, they will have difficulties in relating to each other's views. If the group is too homogeneous, the members can have difficulties in starting a discussion – they just confirm that they are agreeing with each other. Flick (2014)⁶ describes the steps in the group interview as follows:

- At the beginning, an explanation of the procedure of the group interview is given and the expectations for the participants are formulated.
- A short introduction of the participants to one another and a warming up to the discussion. The moderator could emphasize the common ground of the members to reinforce the feeling of community.
- The moderator presents the first theme for discussion – through a provocative thesis, a short film, or a short lecture on a text.

One of the challenges is to know when to mediate the discussion. Is the discussion in alignment with the theme – or is the group engaging in a discussion that is irrelevant for the research? (You can face the same problem in the semi-structured research interview). As a moderator, you might have to keep the discussion going, if the group needs to be warmed up.

Another challenge with group interviews is to keep track of who says what in the interview. Group interview can be great because of the social dynamics that makes the interviewer/moderator aware of new relevant questions of interests. Members of the group might say things that you would not allow yourself to say as an interviewer. On the other hand power relations within a group participating in a group interview might also influence who is saying what and who is allowing themselves to (dis)agree with whom. Do not think that group interviewing is a way of economizing individual interviewing.

3.2.3 Participant observation

Participant observation as method refers to participant observations at public or internal meetings, public events, etc. involving actors within the social innovation case.

Participant observation can have a number of different forms; amongst those are short visits, participation in meetings and workshops, and longer stays – being a part of the group of people, you are studying, for a period. In the good old days, anthropologists lived together with the tribes; they were studying, for years. Nowadays, researchers are carrying out participant observation and ethnographical studies of groups of people, living and working round the corner – but some of the basic thoughts are still based on initial ideas of anthropologists. There is a short description of participant observation and ethnography in Flick (2014)⁷.

⁶ Flick, U (2014) An introduction to Qualitative Research, London, Sage

⁷ Flick, U (2014) An introduction to Qualitative Research, London, Sage

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In the TRANSIT case studies participant observation can be carried out with different levels of participation and dialogue with actors from an initiative/network. An example: Short informal interviews with participants during a visit or an event (what Flick (2014) calls 'episodic interviews') can be an element in participant observation.

Participant observation can lead to 'Thick Descriptions'. The concept can be interpreted in different ways; one working definition is given by Ponterotto (2006)⁸:

"Thick description refers to the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behavior) within its particular context. The context can be within a smaller unit (such as a couple, a family, a work environment) or within a larger unit (such as one's village, a community, or general culture). Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by way of the researcher's understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place. Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively "place" themselves within the research context."

Photography can be used as a supplementary tool in producing thick descriptions – it cannot stand alone, but needs to be accompanied by texts explaining the context – time and space, explaining some of the relevant details etc.

Being part of the organisation, you are studying, for a period, can give new insights. You learn some of the internal language, get an impression of the different interests of the people working in the organisation, learn something about the internal relations, the organisational culture etc. You can experience an unintended observation, opening your eyes for a phenomenon that you had no idea of as an outsider⁹.

The danger of in-depth participation is that you might end up 'going native' – being absorbed by the group of people, you are studying, and losing the ability to reflect critically. The balance between proximity and distance is discussed in the next section.

3.3 Research principles and relations in the case studies

The methodology in the case studies is based on considerations about principles and relations in the research process as were explored through a questionnaire with TRANSIT case study researchers in spring 2014.

⁸ Ponterotto, J. G. (2006): *Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative research concept 'thick description'*, The Qualitative Report, 11 (3), 538-549, Retrived the 3rd of June 2014 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR11-3/ponterotto.pdf>

⁹ Flick (2014) recommends as further reading on Participant Observation:

- Jorgensen, D.L. (1989): Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies, London, Sage
- Spradley, J. P. (1980): Participant Observation, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

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3.3.1 Proximity – distance

In each case study, we strive for a good balance between proximity (being close to, knowing a lot about and maybe even being part of an initiative/network being studied) and distance (being independent or at least being able to perform critical and documented analysis of the initiative/network and its dynamics). The concept of ‘a critical friend’ or ‘friendly outsider’ from action research might be a way of describing our relations to the social innovation case. This implies that we engage in critical conversations about the practices in the social innovation initiatives (Greenwood and Levin 2007)¹⁰. To increase transparency and enhance our reflexivity, the case study report should include a description of the researchers’ relation to the initiative/network.

3.3.2 Reciprocity and mutual benefits

In engaging in relations with the studied social innovation cases we strive for these to be mutually beneficial and ensure some degree of reciprocity. Reciprocal relations can be of various shades. Reciprocity can be discussed during the planning of the case by asking about challenges and perspectives which actors involved in the social innovation initiative or network would find interesting to get explored and analysed in the case study. Reciprocity can progress throughout the research process by offering participation in TRANSIT workshops or feedback meetings where a case study report is discussed with actors from a studied social innovation initiative.

The following could be what we can offer to the initiatives/network:

- The case study report: a report analysing social change processes related to two local initiatives and of the international activities among such initiatives, probably including findings from comparative studies of manifestations of a transnational network in different contexts and different manifestations of a transnational network in the same context.
- A personal meeting to discuss our analysis and report where we could present our findings to a larger audience.
- Opportunities for networking and discussions with other social innovation initiatives, researchers and policy makers, for example at workshops organised by the TRANSIT project.
- When we communicate about the TRANSIT project (e.g. at conferences, with flyers, with a first basic website that precedes the web based resource hub) we can mention the cooperation between TRANSIT and the network and/or local manifestations
- Later in the project TRANSIT can offer:

¹⁰ Greenwood, D.J. & M. Levin (2007) Introduction to Action Research. Social Research for Social Change. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

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- Access to the public, web-based resource hub about social innovation (an interactive website that provides access to various resources about transformative social innovation)
- Access to a set of tools ('tool box') that are theory-based and practice-tested and aim to support social innovation initiatives

3.3.3 Social innovation actors as research subjects or objects

This aspect relates to social innovation actors' participation in the research process as research subject and/or research object: As research subject in the case study, actors within the social innovation initiative might be active in the research process (e.g. counterchecking writings, interpretations, conclusions, research questions, ideas and needs for the web-based resource hub). Such an active role demands interest and available time of actors of the initiative/network – which might not always be given. However, despite limited available time from social innovation case actors to engage in the research process, we should strive for reciprocity and dialogue with actors within each initiative/network.

The case study coordinators and the case study researchers should during the planning of their case studies find out how the cooperation with each of the social innovation case studies can be carried out in a way that the social innovation actors find interesting and that is reasonable with respect to focus and time consumption (for both TRANSIT researchers and social innovation actors). This includes considering the mix of methods we strive for: document review, interviews and participant observation.

3.3.4 Normativity: Transparency and diversity in data sources

It is advisable, that TRANSIT researchers' make their normativity in relation to the studied initiatives and their impacts transparent in the case study report. Many researchers in the TRANSIT consortium have a positive attitude towards the social innovation initiatives they study. A normative stance is inevitable. However, it is important to reflect on it, be mindful of it, and make it transparent. The same goes for the normativity of interviewed social innovation actors and interviewed opponents or incumbent actors. Also here normativity is inevitable. It is not possible to find a 'truth' about social innovation dynamics, but data, analyses and conclusions should be documented and highly transparent. We cannot necessarily expect an incumbent actor within the banking or energy sector to acknowledge direct or indirect influence and inspiration from social innovation initiatives like credit unions or sustainable energy organisations. Likewise, it is a risk that internal social innovation case actors will be rather positive about their own impacts. Therefore each case study should be based on a diversity of sources, both in terms of types of sources and types of actors.

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3.4 Depth of our research

It is difficult to generalize how much data collection is necessary to ensure an appropriate basis for answering our research questions. The following numbers should give some indication on the depth (and its possible variety) that is expected as part of a TRANSIT in-depth case study. This is an indication, as the context of the research and the structure of each of the networks vary which might make e.g. participant observation at network level impossible at all or within the fieldwork budget. Deviations from these indications should be discussed in the research protocol and the case study report.

For each local initiative:

- 10-30 (primary/secondary) documents/media outputs
- 5-10 interviews of about 1-2 hours
- 10-80 hours of participant observation, including different types of dialogues and interactions as appropriate

For each transnational network:

- 5-10 (primary/secondary) documents/media outputs
- 3-5 interviews of about 1-2 hours
- 2-12 hours of participant observation, including different types of dialogues and interactions as appropriate

The interviews might be supplemented by short ad hoc interviews (what Flick (2014)¹¹ as earlier mentioned calls episodic interviews) with users during visits to e.g. a FabLab or an ecovillage or during events.

¹¹ Flick, U (2014) An introduction to Qualitative Research, London, Sage

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4 Research questions and guidance for data collection

Having sketched the overall case study approach, this section is the crucial part of the guidelines as it specifies the operationalization of the four empirical research questions (see Textbox 2) for our in-depth case study research. The research questions apply both to the local initiatives and the transnational network, if such a formalised network exists. In case a formalised transnational network does not exist, the aspect of international networking can be dealt with by focusing on the transnational networking of local initiatives.

Textbox 2: Overview of four empirical research questions (slightly adapted from D3.1)

1. What is the **network/initiative** under study?
2. How does the **network/initiative engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'**? (How) has that changed?
3. How were/are **actors involved in the network/ initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation and change?** (How) has that changed?
4. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the network/initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?

The following sections present guidance on how each of the four empirical questions should be dealt with. Some key concepts and working definitions are presented in relation to the different empirical research questions (based on D3.1, but sometimes further specified or adapted for use in the case study research). Each of the four questions are divided in a number of sub-questions and for each sub-question a number of proposals for questions and issues are given, which can guide the review of documents (primary and secondary), interviews, and participant observation.

Important considerations:

- Whether the key concepts of the cognitive map (see Figure 1) and the empirical questions (see Textbox 2), like system innovation, are used directly in interviews and literature review should depend on the vocabulary of the network/initiative. Proposals are given for both direct use of the concepts in questions and for different ways of asking/looking for the same type of information by using other words. In general, it is recommended to start with overall and open questions and afterwards ask or probe in relation to more specific impacts, mechanisms, etc. and examples.
- Each case study should apply all four overall research questions (1.-4.) and should consider the relevance of the sub-questions 1.1-1.2, 2.1-2.5, and 3.1-3.6. Omissions and additions of (sub-)questions should be described and argued in the research protocol and included in the case study report (see section 5).

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- It is the responsibility of the case study coordinators and the local researchers to translate the suggested research sub-questions below into specific interview questions for their specific network/initiative under study (and in the appropriate language). As these are suggested now, choices need to be made by the case researchers and the case study coordinators. As also described in section 3.2.2., in a semi-structured interview, learning to ask the right interview question about a theoretical concept might be a key exploration of the empirical process. As such, be prepared to adapt your guiding questions throughout the process.
- The questions suggested below should also be translated into questions/themes for document review (primary and secondary analysis) as well as for participant observation. With regard to document review, ask yourself when reviewing a text what other authors (including the network/initiative itself) say about our research (sub-) questions. As indicated above, through participant observation we can observe interaction, dialogues, non-verbal communication, artefacts, physical space, etc. relevant to our research questions. Observing with the question of (dis)empowerment (part of research question 2) in the back of your head, you might want to focus on who is interacting with whom, who seems to be more isolated, how rooms/labs are designed or meeting spaces furnished. Maybe the initiative uses certain artefacts that tell about the hierarchy or function in the initiative, etc.
- All three research activities (document review, interview, participant observation) should be used in each case study. Omissions and additions of research activities should be described and argued in the research protocol, and included in the case study report (see section 5).

4.1 Research question 1: What is the network/initiative under study?

1. What is the network/initiative under study? (adapted from Question 1 in D3.1)

1.1 What is the local initiative under study?

1.2 What is the network under study?

4.1.1 Iterative mapping of structures, actors and activities in a case study

An important part of a case study is the identification of different types of actors and structures within and around this type of social innovation, both nationally in the two countries chosen for the local initiatives, and internationally with respect to the transnational network as organization and networking as activity among different actors and initiatives. This identification is on the one hand part of the initial case study research, and on the other an important ongoing activity throughout the case study research in interviews, document reviews, etc.

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Mapping structures

As outlined earlier, the terms “local initiative” and “network” should be related to what seems important in understanding a specific social innovation case. An example: Time banking in the UK comprises of around 300 initiatives, which are organized within the network Time Banking UK. If it is important for the understanding the dynamics and impacts of time banking in the UK, the research of the “local initiative” of time banking in the UK needs to focus both on a local time banking initiative to get an idea about the day-to-day activities, and on activities within Time Banking UK in order to understand their activities and how they try to support the local time banking initiatives.

It is important that we are aware that the case studies deal with a variety of types of networking (amongst others):

- Transnational networking organisations (e.g. Transition Towns)
- Multiple (sub)national networking organisations (e.g. Time banks)
- No formal networking organisation (e.g. Hackerspaces)

The existence of a network organization will significantly influence who we speak to and the kind of perspectives and knowledge that they have. We should not assume that a network is a single ‘actor’ with a specific view. Spanish time banks are for example different from UK time banks. This might also imply different perspectives on international networking. Studying two different local initiatives makes it possible to get different perspectives on international networking. In case a transnational network is structured in different regional and continental networks, like INFORSE – the network of sustainable energy organisations, it is important to include a focus on similarities and differences among such sub-networks in order not to simplify the complexity of actors, structures and mechanisms within social innovation.

It is important that the case study researchers’ choices of how a “local initiative” is defined and whether it for example includes a national network is described and argued in the research protocol during the research process. Important choices and arguments later should be included in the case study report.

Mapping actors

It is also important to identify different types of actors within and around a social innovation. For a FabLab some different actors could be employed staff, frequent users of the FabLab, and less frequent users. Differences in the purpose of using or not using the FabLab might in itself define different actor groups, which are relevant to interview as part of the research.

A “snowballing” technique where interview persons are asked about other persons whom it could be relevant “to talk to” can assist this iterative enactment of actors, structures and dynamics of a social innovation case. Also doing ‘counter-snowballing’, asking for actors ‘not to talk to’ can provide interesting insights.

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During the (iterative) identification process also public authorities, incumbent actors and similar competing initiatives should be identified. These types of actors could be called “external actors” in relation to a network or an initiative. Some of these actors should also (if possible) be interviewed.

It is important that the case study researchers’ choices in defining, mapping and interviewing (or not) actors is described and argued in the research protocol during the research process. Important choices and arguments later should be included in the case study report.

Mapping developments and activities

The development of a time line, which maps actors, events, publications, etc. that have been important in the development of an initiative or a network, can be an element in dialogues with social innovation actors within a case study. Such a map can also be an internal tool in the case study research group that can assist in the gradual development of an overview of the history and dynamics of an initiative or a network, and assist the planning of whom to interview.

Such a timeline will also be a component of the final case study report.

4.1.2 Sub-question 1.1: What is the local initiative under study?

The following questions aim at gaining an overall knowledge about the local initiative in focus and its networking.

- What is the (historical) origin of the local initiative?
 - How did the local initiative start? (where, why, and how?)
 - What has been the development of the local initiative until today?
 - In what forms does the local initiative manifest itself (physical/ knowledge/ cultural/etc.)?
- What are the stated aims, goals and values of the local initiative?
 - What societal problem(s) does this initiative address?
 - What evidence is there of the goals, aims and values in practice?
- What are the activities and structures of the local initiative?
- Who are active within the initiative? What are their roles (activists, residents, users, consumers, etc.)? What is their socio-economic background?
- What is the impact of the local initiative until now? [An overall question. Later questions in the guidelines address the dynamics in impacts and mechanisms behind]
- Have aims, goals, activities and structures of the local initiative changed over time? How? Why?

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- How is the national and international networking of the local initiative?
 - Is the local initiative member of formalized national and international networks?
Why?

4.1.3 Sub-question 1.2: What is the transnational network under study?

The following questions aim at gaining an overall knowledge about transnational networking and possibly formalized transnational network(s).

- How does the transnational network relate to the studied local initiative(s)?
- Who are the members in the network?
 - How many members does the network have?
- What is the historical origin of the network?
 - How did the network start? (where, why, and how?)
 - What has the development of the network been until today?
 - In what forms does the network manifest itself (physical/ knowledge/cultural/etc.)?
- What are the stated aims, goals and values of the network?
 - What societal problem(s) does the network address?
 - What evidence is there of the goals, aims, and values in practice?
- What are the activities and structures of the network?
- What is the impact of the network until now? [An overall question. Later questions in the guidelines address the dynamics in impacts and mechanisms behind]
- Have the aims, goals, activities and structures of the network changed over time? How? Why?
- Are there other transnational (formal and informal) networks covering the same field?
 - What are the similarities and differences?
 - Do the networks cooperate?

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4.2 Research question 2: How does the network/initiative engage with and relate to 'innovation' and 'change'?

2. How does the network/initiative engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'? (How) has that changed? In general, and specifically regarding:

- 2.1 Social innovation?
- 2.2 System innovation?
- 2.3 Game-changers?
- 2.4 Societal transformation?
- 2.5 Transformative discourses?

Key concepts and working definitions related to research question 2 (from D3.1)

Social innovation = new social practices, comprising new ideas, new models, new rules, new social relations, new services and/or new products. These innovations are 'social' both in their ends and in their means (BEPA 2010¹²) and thereby distinguishable from many technological¹³ product innovations or business-led service innovations¹⁴.

System innovation = a process of change at the level of societal sub-systems with functional and/or geographic delineations, e.g. an energy system, transport system, a particular city or region. Systemic innovation refers to a process by which a sub-system as a whole changes: at the level of institutions, social structures and physical infrastructures¹⁵.

*The **distinction between social innovation and system innovation** is contested. Some scholars (e.g. Westley 2013) conceptualise social innovation as being 'systemic' (by definition). In TRANSIT, social innovation does not necessarily need to be at the level of societal sub-systems level (but it can be). So a new social practice within a local initiative can be considered a social innovation, regardless of its impact on surrounding societal systems.*

Game-changers = macro-trends that are perceived to change the rules of the game. (The 'game' refers to (parts of) society, the 'rules' refer to the 'ways we do/see things'). This notion is explicitly about perception: the purpose is to explore how macro-trends are interpreted - *perceived, (re)constructed, contested and dealt with* - as 'game-changing' (rather than deciding

¹² BEPA (2010) definition: "Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means... new ideas (products services, and models) that simultaneously meet social needs more effectively than alternatives and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act"

¹³ Even if we can conceptually distinguish social innovation from technological or business-led innovation, it remains necessary to consider one in relation to the other, especially crucial when aiming to understand how social innovation interacts with e.g. socio-technical system innovation.

¹⁴ Definitions of social innovation are highly contested and differ greatly across different interdisciplinary perspectives. In the next 4 years, our sister-project SI-DRIVE will systematically map out the many different interpretations of social innovation across the world.

¹⁵As such, system innovation is distinguished from product innovation. If we take the electric car as an example of a product innovation, the equivalent example of a 'system innovation' is the creation of an electricity-based transport system, including e.g. the replacement of petrol stations by charging points, tax-incentives, electric buses in public transportation, a new cultural status around electric cars, etc. (Geels et al. 2012).

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what is a game-changer ‘objectively’ speaking). This means that a ‘game-changer’ can refer to many different ‘things’; a demographic development (e.g. ageing population), an ecological phenomenon (e.g. climate change), a socio-political challenge (e.g. the economic ‘crisis’), a socio-technological revolution (e.g. the ICT-revolution), or a positively construed movement or discourse (e.g. ‘environmental movement’ or ‘the sharing economy’). The point is to acknowledge and map out the multiplicity of game-changing macro-trends as perceived by people¹⁶.

Societal transformation = fundamental and persistent change in society. It is distinguished from system innovation in that societal transformation (by our definition) exceeds individual sub-systems. Examples are the industrial revolution, European integration, or the rise of the market economy and the ideology of economic liberalism, as described by Polanyi in the ‘Great Transformation’ (1944). Such societal transformation requires simultaneous change in multiple dimensions (not in only one dimension) of social systems, with changes occurring widely across society (not in only one place)¹⁷.

(Transformative) discourses = discourses on change and innovation. A ‘discourse’ can be defined as “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer 1995: 44). Discourse includes various ‘story-lines’: “a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena. The key function of story-lines is that they suggest unity in the bewildering variety of separate discursive component parts of a problem” (ibid: 56). *Transformative discourses* refer to (any) discourses on *change and innovation*.

Distinction: game-changers - societal transformation - discourses. *A societal transformation can be perceived as a game-changer, but not every game-changer leads to societal transformation. A game-changer can also refer to a short-term trend or hype, possibly with the potential to have a long-lasting transformative impact. Game-changers can be seen as separate developments that interact with “discourses”, but at the same time, game-changers can also be considered as “discourses” in themselves (e.g. ‘climate change’ as a particular discourse that addresses ecological phenomena).*

¹⁶ The only conceptual preclusion is that it refers to a trend at the “macro-level”, meaning that it exceeds individual sub-systems or practices. But even that is up for interpretation, as the concept of the macro-level inherently depends on one’s sub-system focus. For instance, for someone who focuses on a city as a sub-system, a national political discourse may be perceived as a macro-trend. The aim is to challenge the interpreter to think about ‘bigger’ trends that go beyond one’s specific (sub-)system focus.

¹⁷ The concept of ‘societal transformation’ is also distinguished from the concept of ‘transition’. In transition studies, the notion of ‘transition’ is often used to refer to a specific type of change at the level of (socio-technical) sub-systems, i.e. what we here refer to as ‘system innovation’. We use ‘societal transformation’ to refer to a more fundamental change at a higher level of aggregation: i.e. ‘societies’ rather than functional sub-systems. In recent years, some transition scholars have argued that ‘societal transitions’ also ‘transcend individuals systems and comprise various system innovations at different scale-levels and over a long-term period of time’ (Loorbach & Rotmans 2010). In that case, a societal *transition* can still be distinguished from a societal *transformation* in the sense that a transition can be considered to be a *specific form of transformation*. A transition is defined as a radical change that follows a *particular non-linear path*, typically over a period of one to two generations. Such a societal transition can be considered as a type of societal transformation. However, not all societal transformations necessarily follow such a transition path. As such, ‘societal transformation’ is a broader (and more neutral) term than ‘societal transition’.

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4.2.1 Sub-question 2.1: How does the network/initiative relate to and engage with social innovation?

- (How) Does the network/initiative describe itself as developing new social practices, new ideas, new models, new rules, new social relations, new services and/or new products? Which ones?
- How are the network's/initiative's activities, products or services framed by the initiative in relation to "normal", "mainstream" or "competing" activities, products or services?
- Does the network/initiative refer to the network/initiative as a social innovation? How? Why?
- What definition(s) of social innovation seems to be applied by the network/initiative?
- Are there any rituals (in the broadest sense) or artefacts that symbolize the 'otherness' of the initiative?
- Are there any physical structures/artefacts/rituals through which the social innovation is expressed?

4.2.2 Sub-question 2.2: How does the network/initiative relate to and engage with system innovation?

- Does the network/initiative have a particular understanding/model/framing of what kind of system it aims to change (and how)?
- How is the network/initiative described by other actors in relation to system innovation?
- Does the network/initiative seem to fit within/or relate to existing "systems" or "structures"?
- What infrastructures and systems are the network/initiative interacting with (or depending on, contributing to, competing with, etc.)? How?
- Are there any physical structures/artefacts/rituals through which a possible system innovation ambition is expressed?

4.2.3 Sub-question 2.3: How does the network/initiative relate to and engage with game-changers?

- To what extent (and how) is the network/initiative claiming to respond to game changers/major societal changes/societal trends (if any, and which ones: ageing

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population, climate problems, development of information and communication technology (ICT), etc.)?

- What does the network/initiative experience to be relevant ‘game-changers’? How is the interaction with such game-changers? E.g. reframing the network/initiative to be seen as an answer to a game-changer?
- To what extent (and how) is the network/initiative influenced by game-changers (and which ones: ageing population, climate problems, development of information and communication technology, etc.)?
- How is the network/initiative and its interactions with game changers/major societal changes/societal trends discussed at meetings, events etc.?
- Are certain pictures/artefacts/... used to refer to game changers/major societal changes/societal trends?

4.2.4 Sub-question 2.4: How does the network/initiative relate to and engage with societal transformation?

- What societal transformations (overall societal changes) have (had) influence on the network/initiative? How?
- Has the network/initiative re-framed its activities with reference to societal transformations (overall societal changes)? How? Why?
- What kind of social transformations does the initiative/network aim for?
- How are the interactions between the network/initiative and societal transformations (overall societal changes) expressed and discussed at meetings, events etc.?

4.2.5 Sub-question 2.5: How does the network/initiative relate to and engage with transformative discourses?

- What (transformative) discourses and paradigms are influencing the network/initiative (sustainable development, equity, globalization, social responsibility, etc.)? How?
- Where are these (transformative) discourses and paradigms derived from? Have they changed over time? Are they linked to a broader social movement and/or other initiatives (and if so, how)?
- (How) is the influence of transformative discourses like sustainable development, equity, globalization, social responsibility on the network/initiative discussed at meetings and events?

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4.3 Research question 3: How were/are actors involved in the network/ initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation & change?

3. How were/are actors involved in the network/ initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation & change? (How) has that changed?

3.1 Which actors are involved in the network/initiative and how? How do they relate to each other?

3.2 (How and when) do these actors feel (dis)empowered and why?

3.3 What type of governance arrangements are in place? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

3.4 What types of (social) learning are present? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

3.5 How is resourcing taking place? (How) is this (dis)empowering?

3.6 What kind of monitoring process is used? (How) is this (dis)empowering?

Key Concepts & Working Definitions related to research question 3 (from D3.1)

Actors = entities that (can) act/ have 'agency'. For now we distinguish at least three types of actors: (1) sectors (state, market, community, Third Sector), (2) organisations (e.g. municipality, cooperative, university etc.), and (3) individual roles (e.g. citizen, consumer, activist, resident, neighbourhood, etc.). At this stage, the question about 'how actors relate to each other' is a very open question on social relations (e.g. professional vs. intimate, formal vs. informal, cooperative vs. competitive, hierarchical vs. egalitarian etc.).

Distinction initiative - network - actor. *A local initiative can itself be a network organisation and as such also an 'actor'. Each case-study should start by clarifying what are the two embedded objects of analysis, one at the (1) 'transnational network' level, and one at the (2) 'local' level. This is part of research question 1. From then onwards, the first is referred to as 'network' and the latter as 'initiative'. If the chosen 'initiative' is an organisation and thus an actor in itself, then the question about actors becomes a question about other actors.*

(Dis)empowerment = a process in which people gain (or loose) the feeling/idea that they can influence their surroundings and the direction of events. The question on how people feel (dis)empowered regarding change/innovation, means a question about how people gain/loose the feeling/idea that they can influence the direction of change/innovation. The 'feeling/idea of being able to influence' can be further specified in terms of gaining/loosing a sense of impact ("I make a difference"), meaning ("I care about what I do"), choice ("I can determine what I do") & competence ("I am good at what I do").

How do 'relations' and 'empowerment' relate to 'power'? *Open questions about 'relations between actors' and 'feelings of (dis)empowerment' are likely to bring up answers on*

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(perceived) power relations (without having to theorise or ask about power directly). So at this stage, we do not employ a specific concept of 'power'.

Governance = processes of governing (regulating, decision-making, steering) by all types of actors (including but not confined to government).

(Social) learning = processes of learning (acquiring information, knowledge, experience), between individuals and groups at the level of the initiative/network, but also beyond the initiative/network to the broader social context.

Resourcing = the process by which actors acquire the resources they need to attain their goals. Resources can refer to monetary resources, but also to natural resources, artefacts, information or 'human resources' (i.e. man hours).

Monitoring = the process that actors use to evaluate the impact/progress of their initiative/network on/in the context of the surrounding societal systems.

How do 'governance', 'social learning', 'resourcing', and 'monitoring' relate to 'empowerment'? *We are first interested to know how actors are '(dis)empowered' in 'general'. Then we are specifically interested in how actors feel (dis)empowered by the specific processes of governance, (social) learning, resourcing and monitoring. We hypothesise that these are important factors in (dis)empowerment, while acknowledging there may also be other relevant factors involved in (dis)empowerment processes – which we aim to explore with the general/open question on (dis)empowerment. So the question about whether/how e.g. governance arrangements are (dis)empowering, is a question about whether/how actors feel (dis)empowered by these governance arrangements, i.e. whether/how the governance arrangements are increasing/decreasing their impact, meaning, choice and competence.*

4.3.1 Sub-question 3.1: Which actors are involved in the network/initiative and how? How do they relate to each other?

- What (types of) documents are produced by the network/initiative about aims, goals, strategies, activities, events, impacts?
- What strategies and techniques does the network/initiative use to enrol actors and hold them together spatially and temporally (“across spaces and time”)?
- What seems to motivate actors to join the network/initiative?
- With whom does the network/initiative cooperate and how is this cooperation described? [Ask about different sectors'/organisations'/individuals' roles. Also ask who they are not cooperating with and why]
- What is the involvement of different type of (1) sectors (state, market, community, Third Sector) and (2) organisations (e.g. municipality, cooperative, university, etc.)?
- What are individuals' roles (e.g. member, user, citizen, consumer, activist, resident, neighbour, etc.)?

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- Are actors perceived as homogeneous from the outside? What are the identities attributed to members of initiatives? What social status is associated with belonging to a network/initiative?
- What level of internal (dis)agreement is there between members of the network/initiative on relevant issues?
 - Is there specific activities or events that show this (dis)agreement?
 - What level of (dis)agreement is there between members of a network/ initiative on how to frame positions on issues?
- How do these other sectors/organisations/people contribute with knowledge, personal resources, economic support, etc. to [the goals of the network/initiative] and/or [different forms of change and innovation]?
- (How) have the roles of different actors and their relations changed over time? Why?
 - Is there specific activities or events that show this?

4.3.2 Sub-question 3.2. (How and when) do (these) actors feel (dis)empowered and why?

- How and on what does the network/initiative try to obtain influence and impact?
 - Has there been a change over time in goals, strategies, efforts and impacts? Why?
 - What are the roles of and experiences from formalizing, spreading and/or scaling-up initiatives, activities, etc.?
 - What are the roles of and experiences from obtaining influence and impact through changing goals and activities to make them 'fit' to other actors' values and strategies?
- (When) do the network/the initiative feel/ have felt enabled to (i.e. empowered) to contribute to...../influence...?
 - Do specific activities, events, changes, impacts, etc. show this empowerment?
- (When) does the network/the initiative feel/ have felt hampered (i.e. disempowered) to contribute to.../influence...?
 - Do specific activities, events, changes or (lack of) impacts show this disempowerment?
- (To what extent) does the network/the initiative feel capable/confident that it can contribute to.../are contributing to...?
- (When) does the network/initiative feel that it can influence the direction of ...? [probe into different dimensions of (dis)empowerment: impact, meaning, choice, competence]
 - ["Contributing to" and "influence the direction of..." can be filled with various issues [e.g. the goals/ activities of the network/initiative] and/or [different forms of change and innovation]
- [Probing: Why? How? Who? + any (remaining) questions from the document reviews/ participant observation]

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4.3.3 Sub-question 3.3: What type of governance arrangements are in place? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

- Which internal processes of regulating, decision-making and steering does the network/initiative work with?
- Which formal structures and institutions are in place within the initiative/network? [depending on context, you need to ask more specific question here – e.g. what is the legal entity of the network/initiative, what is ownership structure, etc.]
- What is the relation with different levels of government and governmental regulation? [Depending on case and context, you need to ask more specific question here – e.g. ask about relation with municipality/ regional authority/ national government etc.]
- Which external formal structures and institutions is the initiative/network interacting with? [Depending on case and context, you need to ask more specific question here – e.g. ask about a specific law or regulation or interaction in relation to specific activities and events. This might already be answered in the question about government, but if not, it might be worthwhile probing]
- (How) do actors feel (dis)empowered by these processes/ institutions/ government? [see sub-question 3.2 – might have already been brought up there and/or use translations of (dis)empowerment if necessary]
 - Do specific activities, events, changes, impacts, etc. show this (dis)empowerment?

4.3.4 Sub-question 3.4. What types of (social) learning are present?? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

- (How) does the network/initiative reflect and learn about social (/transformative/systemic) change/impact from your activities and events?
- How are learning processes taking place within and among initiatives? Is learning accidental and ad hoc, or is it organized by and within particular actors, events, structures?
- How do learning processes materialize in websites, newsletters, leaflets, books, films, checklists, advisory activities, etc.? Does some of these materials get circulated and/or reproduced among initiatives and networks?
- How has reflections and learning (re-)shaped the goals, activities and strategies of the network/initiative over time?
- Have there been benefits from learning processes in terms of more influence and impacts? How?

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4.3.5 Sub-question 3.5: How is resourcing taking place? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

- Through what processes do which actors in the network/initiative acquire resources they need trying to reach their goals? [Resources can refer to monetary resources, natural resources, artefacts, information, 'human resources' (i.e. man hours), legitimacy, etc.]
- (How) do the members of the network/initiative exchange ideas, knowledge, practices, materials and other resources across geographical and/or organizational borders?
- What roles has (lack of) resources played in attempts to reach goals, perform activities, organize learning processes, etc.?
- Have the need for different types of resources changed over time? Why?

4.3.6 Sub-question 3.6. What kind of monitoring process is used? (How) are these (dis)empowering?

- What monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place for the network/initiative?
- Are they externally imposed/specified or have they been developed internally?
- What is the purpose of monitoring and evaluation? (Probing: inform policy/governmental actors? Provide feedback to actors in the network/initiative?)
- How are the procedures for monitoring and evaluation used in practice?
- (How) do the network/initiative seek to demonstrate the value of outputs and outcomes?
- What different kinds of metrics/criteria are being used/imposed/projected onto the network/initiative?
- Is there any attempt to evaluate the 'systemic' or 'transformative' impacts of the network/initiative?
- (How) do monitoring and evaluation link to learning in the network/initiative?
- (How) do the monitoring and evaluation procedures (dis-)empower the network/initiative?

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4.4 Research question 4: Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the network/initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?

4. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the network/initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?

This question is an open question for the case study research groups' reflections about questions/issues/themes which emerge as relevant during the course of the study of a network/initiative.

Within one case study the questions emerging from one local manifestation might be interesting to share/test with the other manifestation under study well.

Include in your interviews a question on what kind of (research) questions the local initiative/transnational network has for us as TRANSIT. Collecting and comparing the questions of the initiatives/networks can help us work on the relevancy of our research and the emerging theory.

Include also a question about what challenges the local initiative/transnational network experience and what wishes these actors could have for the Resource Hub that TRANSIT is developing in order for the Resource Hub to be a support for the initiative/network in future activities (including in what language the Resource Hub should be available).

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5 Outline of a TRANSIT case study report

In this section, a first version of a template for the case study reports is presented. The template will be updated in September and discussed during the partner meeting in October. Each report should cover a number of different chapters that focus on the analyses of two local initiatives and the transnational network(ing). The estimated number of pages for each chapter is indicated between brackets.

1. Introduction to the case study (4 pages)
 - a. Relation to TRANSIT aims and other cases, overview of report/line of argumentation, preview on key findings
 - b. The local initiatives in focus
 - c. The international networking in focus (including clear demarcations, and thereby clarification of what/who counts as internal/external)
2. Methodology (3 pages)
 - a. Outline which methods you used (including the number of interviews, participant observations and document reviews), in which time period the research took place
 - b. Outline the case demarcation and your specific focus (which local initiatives and which networks were studied; omissions of research questions, related sub-questions and research activities (based on a summary of the case study protocol)
 - c. Outline and reflect on your relation with the social innovation case as well as your choices and possible challenges/opportunities with regard to proximity vs. distance, normativity, reciprocity, research subject vs. research object (based on a summary of the case study protocol).
3. Description and analysis of local initiative (1), including national and international networking with similar initiatives (10-15 pages)
 - a. Include timeline and map of internal and external actors and relations over time (template to be provided)
 - b. Answer to each of the four research questions:
 - i. What is the initiative under study?
 - ii. How does the initiative engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'? (How) has that changed?
 - iii. How were/are actors involved in the initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation and change? (How) has that changed?
 - iv. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?
4. Description and analysis of local initiative (2), including national and international networking with similar initiatives (10-15 pages)
 - a. Include timeline and map of internal and external actors and relations over time (template to be provided)
 - b. Summary of each of the four research questions:

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- i. What is the initiative under study?
 - ii. How does the initiative engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'? (How) has that changed?
 - iii. How were/are actors involved in the initiative (dis)empowered regarding innovation and change? (How) has that changed?
 - iv. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the initiative, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?
5. Analysis of transnational network (10-15 pages)
 - a. Should cover both formal and informal network and networking over time
 - b. Include time line and map of internal and external actors and relations over time
 - c. Summary of each of the four research questions:
 - i. What is the network under study?
 - ii. How does the network engage with and relate to (different forms of) 'innovation' and 'change'? (How) has that changed?
 - iii. How were/are actors involved in the network (dis)empowered regarding innovation and change? (How) has that changed?
 - iv. Which other questions/ issues/ themes emerged as relevant in the in-depth case-study of the network, for understanding the dynamics of transformative social innovation?
6. Comparative analysis of the two local initiatives based on similarities and differences in relation to each of the four research questions (6-8 pages)
7. List of references
8. Annexes:
 - a. Bibliography of materials identified about the case (including those materials directly applied in the case study)
 - b. List of interviewees (positions, dates, duration of interview),
 - c. List of meetings and events attended

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Annex 1: Aims and frames of TRANSIT in-depth case studies (summary from memo from March 2014)

The sub-objectives of WP4 are (adapted from the DOW):

- Select, explore, characterise and analyse approx. 20 types of social innovation cases, the international networking and 40 local manifestations (two for each social innovation case, geographically spread across Europe and Latin America).
- Test and ensure a broad and detailed empirical grounding of the theory prototype about transformative social innovation from WP 3 Theory and concepts
- Contribute with in-depth case studies of transnational social innovation to the grounding of the theory about transformative social innovation in WP3, and to the meta-analyses of social innovation across societal domains and the data-base development in WP5.

About the case study activities it is said in the DOW:

- The embedded case study approach allows capturing interactions between transnational networks (i.e. types of social innovation) and their national, regional and local origins and manifestations over time.
- This work develops part of the empirical grounding for the middle-range theory about transformative social innovation.
- A case study approach is applied in order to give a rich exploration, description and analyses of these shaping processes.
- In interaction with WP2, attention is given to the four cross-cutting themes of social innovation in the case studies: governance, social learning, finance, and monitoring.
- In interaction with the research questions developed in WP3, the following analytical dimensions will be in focus in the case studies:
 - Mechanisms & Processes, i.e. internal organisation and governance of social innovation initiatives and their networking at different levels;
 - Contexts & Dynamics, i.e. external governance and shaping of social innovation initiatives;
 - Valuation & Metrics, i.e. impacts and values connected with social innovation

Selection of case studies

The first batch of networks has been selected on the basis of the following criteria (DOW p13):

Selection criteria for individual networks:

- Network facilitates social innovations in local sites and initiatives across six social models in Europe & Latin America.

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- Network engages with at least one of the 3 “transformative discourses”: climate change, ICT revolution, financial crisis.
- network has a website with an international contact point

Selection criteria for sample of overall approx. 20 networks:

- Sample engages with all 3 “transformative discourses”: climate change, ICT revolution, financial crisis.
- Local initiatives are geographically spread across Europe & Latin America
- Sample represents different levels of formalisation
- Networks vary in terms of the involvement of Third Sector, government, community, market

TRANSIT partners’ resources for case study activities

- The following resources are available in WP4:
 - 2 x 3 person months for case study researchers for researching and analysing two local manifestations
 - 2 person months for case study coordinators for coordination of the social innovation case study, analysis of the international networking in relation to this type of social innovation, and comparative analysis of the two local manifestations
 - 1 person month for participation in theoretical integration activities in cooperation with WP3 and reviewing/coordinating within WP4
- Additional resources are allocated in WP3 for all partners for participation in theory development from the case studies
- Each TRANSIT partner has a budget, which can be used for field work as part of the case studies: travel costs for researchers and social innovation stakeholders, food and drinks at meetings with stakeholders, translation of material, etc.

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Annex 2: Preparation of a TRANSIT in-depth case study (summary from memo from March 2014)

An important element in the preparation of each case study is to find out:

- How a local manifestation of the social innovation should be understood and which two local initiatives to focus on?
- How networking takes place at local, national and international levels?
- How the international networking should be analysed?

Furthermore, the preparation should focus on how cooperation between TRANSIT and the stakeholders involved in this kind of social innovation (e.g. as represented through local manifestations and actors involved in formal or informal international networking) can be organised in a way that is of mutual benefit to these social innovation stakeholders and to TRANSIT.

Initial planning of a case study

The following issues are important to address as part of the initial planning of the individual case study. It is important as part of the planning to have 'good' dialogue with actors at local and international level within each social innovation case about these issues. The descriptions of the issues and questions in the following are considerations for the case study researchers to make and questions for the dialogue with contact persons involved in the local manifestations and the international networking in relation to the social innovation case.

The purpose of the following issues 1-7 is to:

- Guide the initial insight into and mapping of actors, activities and structures at local, national and international level of the different social innovation cases
 - Support the dialogue with local and international stakeholders involved in this type of social innovation about cooperation with TRANSIT
1. Literature about the social innovation case: What formal and informal literature has been written about the type of social innovation and its international and national activities, impacts and underlying mechanisms? What other written and electronic sources are available about the type of social innovation?
 - a. What publications about or related to your initiative are you aware of? Are there internal documents that are relevant to TRANSIT, which case actors are willing to share with TRANSIT?
 2. Local manifestations: How could a local initiative, which could be seen as a local manifestation of this type of social innovation, be understood: A local or regional unit? A national branch?
 - a. What is the smallest unit of this type of social innovation that operates somewhat independently from an overall network (e.g. makes independent

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- decisions, organizes independent activities, and develops strategies for its particular context)?
- b. Which two local manifestations are suggested as focus in the case study? How are these local manifestations defined in terms of organisational structure and geographical coverage?
3. National and international networking: What is the level of formalization of national and international activities and structures, the geographical coverage, number of members, etc.?
 - a. Level of formalization: Are there particular rules, guidelines or statutes that apply to local manifestations of this type of social innovation? How were they developed, when and by whom? To what extent do they need to be followed?
 - b. National structures: What are the national structures and levels in relation to this type of social innovation? Whom do the local stakeholders cooperate with on national level and in what ways?
 - c. International structures: What are the international structures and levels in relation to this type of social innovation? Whom do the local stakeholders cooperate with on international level and in what ways?
 4. Goals and visions of the social innovation stakeholders: What are goals, visions, ambitions and motivations stakeholders have in relation to this type of social innovation and the related network?
 5. Impacts of this type of social innovation: What are the impacts this type of social innovation and the related network have (had) at different levels, e.g. locally, regionally, nationally and internationally?
 - a. How can these impacts be identified?
 - b. Have these impacts been studied?
 - c. Can the impacts be quantified?
 - d. What is the understanding of mechanisms behind the impacts?
 - e. Is it likely that these impacts and the role of the social innovation are recognized by other stakeholders?
 6. Time perspectives in a TRANSIT case study: What should be the time perspectives of the TRANSIT case study and why?
 - a. Historical processes (more than around 5 years ago)?
 - b. Recent processes (up till around 5 years ago)?
 - c. Contemporary processes (activities while we are analysing this social innovation case, June – December 2014)?
 7. Stakeholders' expectations to a TRANSIT case study: What issues would actors involved in this type of social innovation like TRANSIT to address in a case study about local and international activities and networking in relation to this kind of social innovation?

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- a. What problems or challenges are the stakeholders experiencing or struggling with at the moment? Would you like a TRANSIT case study to address some of these problems and challenges?
- b. Do you have questions in relation to your activities, your network and the larger societal system you would like to see addressed by a TRANSIT case study?
- c. How could the cooperation between TRANSIT and the case stakeholders be organized at the local level and at the international level?

Draft text blocks for use in emails etc. when approaching social innovation stakeholders about cooperation with TRANSIT

The extent, to which the TRANSIT case study coordinators and researchers already have had dialogue with stakeholders within the type of social innovation they are responsible for studying, varies significantly.

Some TRANSIT researchers have been involved in founding or activities of local manifestations and/or the international networking and others have studied the activities of such initiatives for several years already, while others might not have had much interaction with stakeholders within the type of social innovation they are going to study. The following text blocks might inspire emails etc. in the initial contact with the social innovation contact persons when preparing a first, tailor-made e-mail or an introductory meeting.

The reason for contacting the social innovation stakeholders

We are part of a research project called Transformative Social Innovation Theory project (TRANSIT) which aims at developing a framework for informing and supporting the practice of transformative social innovation (please see below for more information about the project). For this, we would like to engage with, study and learn from initiatives like yours that exist in several places across the world, which address social or ecological problems and that contribute to societal change in different ways. The reason we would like to learn directly from you and this type of social innovation is that we believe that it is important to understand the problems and challenges, but also the successes and achievements in order to get a better understanding of how social and ecological initiatives can contribute to societal changes.

What TRANSIT might offer the social innovation initiatives?

To social innovation cases which cooperate with the TRANSIT project, we can offer:

- A report analysing social change processes related to the two local manifestations of this type of social innovation and of the international activities among such initiatives
- A personal meeting to discuss our analysis and report where we could present our findings to a larger audience
- Opportunities for networking and discussions with other social innovation initiatives, researchers and policy makers, for example at workshops organised by the TRANSIT project

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- When we communicate about the TRANSIT project (e.g. at conferences, with flyers, with a first basic website that precedes the web based resource hub) we can mention the cooperation between TRANSIT and the network and/or local manifestations
- Later in the project TRANSIT can offer:
 - Access to a public, web-based resource hub about social innovation (an interactive website that provides access to various resources about transformative social innovation)
 - Access to a set of tools ('tool box') that are theory-based and practice-tested and aim to support social innovation initiatives

How we would like to cooperate with the social innovation initiatives

1. During spring 2014 we would like to have a telephone interview or personal meeting and discuss the possibility of cooperation and plan the cooperation between TRANSIT and stakeholders involved with this type of social innovation and its local and international activities. We would like to address the following issues:
 - a. Activities in relation to this type of social innovation at different levels,
 - b. Local and international structures around this type of social innovation,
 - c. Different types of impacts of the initiatives,
 - d. Existing literature about this type of social innovation,
 - e. Issues the stakeholders might want us to consider in a case study,
 - f. The organization of cooperation about a case study at international and local levels
2. During summer and autumn 2014 we would like to collect information and have dialogue with persons involved at international and local levels about the historical development, impacts and current activities of this type of social innovation. This will be the basis for a case study report describing and analysing activities at local and international levels as an example of social innovation addressing societal challenges and with transformative potentials.
3. There is a possibility of joining a TRANSIT workshop and contribute to discussion with others involved in social innovation initiatives. (These workshops are spread over the course of the next four years.)

Elements for introductory text about TRANSIT for contact to case study actors

TRANSIT is a research project that involves ten partner organisations from across Europe and two from Latin America. It is co-funded by the European Commission and the partner organisations and runs for four years in total, from January 2014 until December 2017. In the project we aim at developing a framework for informing and supporting the practice of transformative social innovation, i.e. innovation that is social in its ends and its means and contributes to societal change. This framework should be useful and meaningful for

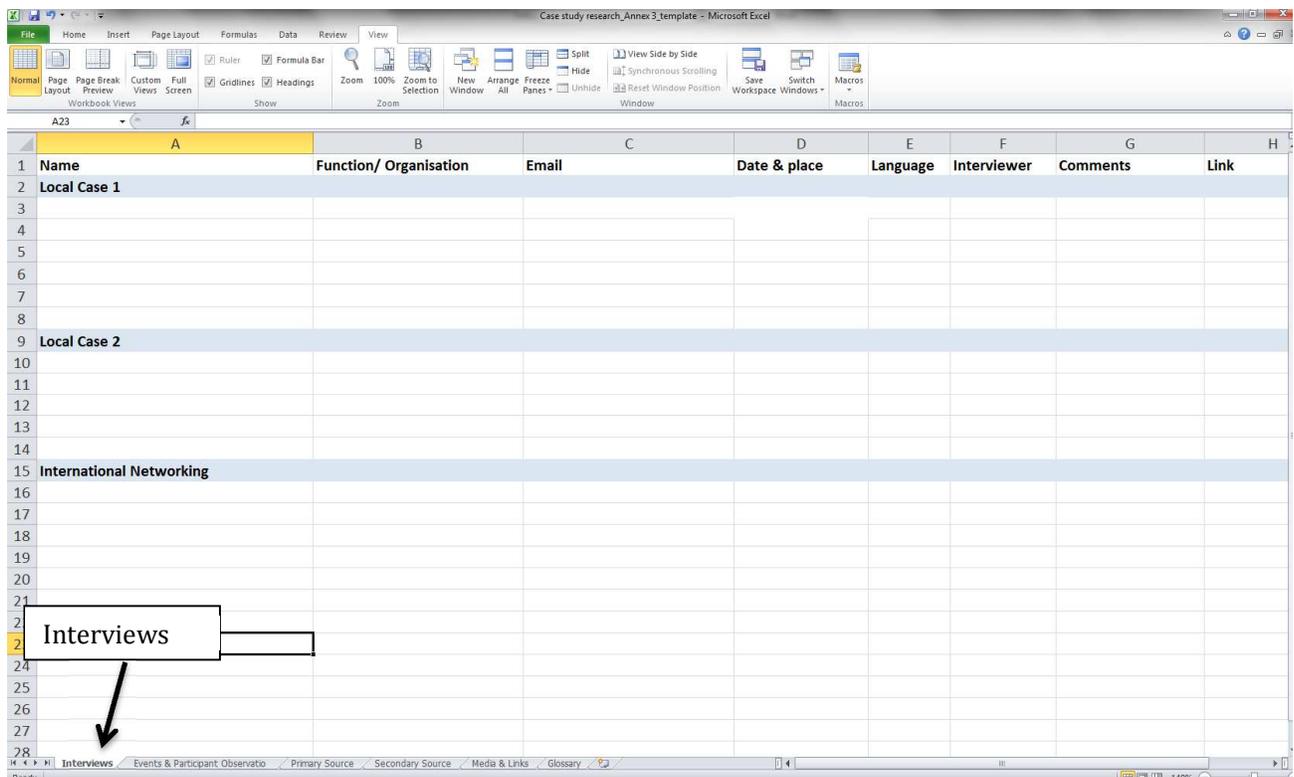
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researchers, people involved in social innovation practice, and policy makers, who wish to learn about and support social innovation initiatives. In addition, this framework will be used to develop a set of tools supporting social innovation initiatives and networks of initiatives. The framework and practice tools will be developed by the TRANSIT project team in collaboration with others, e.g. social innovation initiatives, renowned experts and policy makers. Different types of workshops will be organized to bring the different groups together and learn from each other. The main outcomes of the project will be the mentioned framework and tools as well as a number of information leaflets for policy makers and practitioners and a large, searchable database with about 200 examples of social innovation initiatives.

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Annex 3: Template for keeping overview of data-collection

The template for keeping an overview of the data collection is an Excel-file, which is available on Box. There are Tabs for filing information on Interviews, Events & Participant Observation, Primary Sources, Secondary Sources, Media & Links and an optional tab on Glossary (keywords, labels, abbreviations). Here we show screenshots of the first three tabs for your information.



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