Peer Review – criteria and parameters for good practice analysis and selection

What is a practice?

A practice is:
- a course of actions based on the utilisation of approaches, methods and tools that has become familiar to knowledge, behaviour and capacities of the concerned persons and social communities
- produced by a continuously open learning process among persons and social community
- the result of a combination between different temporal and spatial dimensions that form the framework of knowledge, experience, feeling, thinking and acting
- the result and symbolic expression of social interaction as a nested process between several actors (persons and groups) that reciprocally orient their ways of thinking and acting while mutually influencing their own motivations and behaviours
- an individual framework of reference as far as it is socially determined and shared by persons, groups and/or the society as a whole

A practice is not good by itself as a whole, for ever and for any context, but it depends on specific local contexts, purposes and situations.

A **local context** is a whole (system) of relationships between persons, organisations, behaviours, cultures and rules.

A **purpose** is the reason for which a course of actions (policy, initiative, strategy, project etc.) is elaborated and performed or an instrument (tool, institutional mechanisms, measure, rule etc.) is created.

A **situation** is what is happening in a particular place at a particular time, a set of circumstances linked to the combination of time and space dimensions.

A practise is good as far as it stimulates innovation and change in the context where the practice has been determined as well as in other contexts and other purposes and situations through:
- a process of trial and error that improve knowledge, skills and competence (capacity building)
- a process of codified (formal) and tacit (informal) learning and knowledge based on a permanent comparison and exchange between our own and other ways of acting and thinking

A (good) practice can be learnt if it combines at least three effects:
- demonstration, that is the perception of concreteness by which a practice that works well in a specific context (or for a specific purpose or situation) can be implemented in other context (or for other purpose or situation)
- involvement, that is the perception of possible dissemination by which a practice performed by other actors (persons and groups) can be implemented also in our own context (or for our purposes or situations)
- novelty, that is the perception of dissonance by which a practice emerging from a specific context (or a specific purpose, or situation) can open new options and perspectives with respect to practices currently performed in our own context (or for our purposes or situations)

For the above-mentioned reasons, a practice should be analysed to learn lessons that can be utilised to nourish new practices.

What are lessons – ingredients of a practice?

Useful lessons are not generic but specifically anchored to the existing <u>problems</u> and <u>solutions</u> envisaged and / or found by means of the ingredients that form the practice.

Therefore a practice must be carefully fragmented into its <u>relevant ingredients</u>.

Good practices (e.g. projects, plans and other local initiatives)	
Ingredients (lessons) - definition	**Examples**
Approaches constitute the theoretical framework of a good practice. Approaches are ways of thinking about and dealing with specific issues and problems. Approaches contain concepts expressed in definitions that allow the concerned partners to share a common language. Approaches are at the basis of strategies utilised by the partners in a given context.	**Documents, studies, reports (etc.)** that explain the orientation towards change and innovation processes **Case studies** (that explain relevant concepts, approaches or strategies) **Training content** that explain their theory-based orientation **Mission/vision statement of projects**
Methods constitute the operational framework of a good practice. Methods are ways of applying the approaches. Methods describe how the theoretical framework can be put into operation (operationalised) in the concerned context	**Handbook** that explain how analyses, needs assessment, case studies, etc. are carried out in practice (step-by-step) **Training manuals etc.**
Tools put the methods into operation. Tools are practical means (e.g. products) that allow methods to be implemented in a specific context while following the defined approaches / concepts /strategies (theoretical framework).	**Training tools and techniques** Adaptability **index & other measurements** **E-learning platform and other software** **Assessment tools** **Website and other equipments**

What are the AWARDS parameters to extract ingredients from a practice?

In the AWARDS project good practices should be selected both inside the directly concerned local case study areas (Piacenza, Arezzo, Ferrol and Murcia) and from other 10 European Union case studies.

Selection must be focused on:
- approaches, methods and tools aimed at combining several policies (e.g. employment, social inclusion, education, training, age and gender management) within a sustainable development strategy.

In other words, the above-mentioned ingredients must be extracted from practices according to AWARDS vision and missions.

AWARDS vision

"Sustainable Life is the human behaviour

- *based on the capabilities to access to resources*

- *integrating their economic, environmental and socio-cultural functions*

- *to meet simultaneously the needs of different persons, generations and territories."*

AWARDS missions (overall objectives)

- to improve the employability (capacity to participate in the labour market) of ageing women workers
- to develop appropriate vocational guidance and training systems
- to harmonise social inclusion, employment, health, socio-cultural and other associated policies towards sustainable development
- to co-ordinate measures between public policy (e.g. community services, social security) and enterprise (e.g. workplace, work organisation) levels
- to create a supportive environment at a territorial and entrepreneurial context
- to involve governments, social partners, other stakeholders and the workers themselves into every local initiative

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As a logical consequence, the parameters of reference to carry out the analysis of good practices and to extract their useful ingredients are constituted by the 10 Orientation aspects of the SLD approach.

SLD Orientation aspects and descriptors	
WHAT	*Sustainable Life Development (SLD) orients life styles towards*:
OR1. Environment	Reduction of natural resource consumption, Re-utilisation of products, Recycling of products, spare parts, semi-products and wastes ("3 R" principle to protect the ecosystems) Dissemination of clean technologies, products and processes Pollution prevention and reduction Utilisation of renewable sources of energy Housing quality
OR2. Economy	Active labour market policies to enable women to enter, remain in or return to employment Integration of the value of unpaid work, generally designated "domestic", in resource accounting mechanisms in order better to represent the contribution of women to the economy Quality employment in activities aimed at safeguarding the ecosystems, developing environmentally sound products and processes Accessibility to goods, services, people and places lessening the environmental, social and health costs Integration of the environmental, social and health costs in the economy
OR3. Socio-culture	Increase in availability of human resources along the entire population life cycle Reduction in intimidation and discrimination, sexual harassment against women Abatement of gender barriers and stereotypes in employment policies Reduction of unemployed people Increase in people participation in the labour market Increase in people literacy and education Dissemination of knowledge and expertise on environmental issues and sustainable development Dissemination of knowledge and expertise on gender policies

SLD Orientation aspects and descriptors	
WHY	*Sustainable Life Development (SLD) orients life styles towards*:
OR4. Social equity / between individuals	Equal opportunities between men and women (employment, pay, access to education and other services)
	Increase in the proportion of women in decision making processes
	Pro-active measures to prevent life crises and risks of social exclusion while helping the most vulnerable persons (children, elderly, those with different abilities, immigrants, nomads, those with particular forms of dependency)
	Social support systems and services to ensure child care and day-care facilities
	Reconciliation between working and "non-working" life supported by a more suitable organisation of "social time" (school, services, stores and shops, leisure activities, etc.)
	Safety measures both at work and in physical mobility
OR5. Inter-local equity / between territories	Balanced inter-local development
	Fair and solidarity relationships between different local communities
	Dissemination of connecting high technology systems to facilitate economic and socio-cultural exchanges
OR6. Inter-temporal equity / between generations	Equal opportunities between generations without gender discrimination
	Education to nourish integration between generations of different cultures
	Studies and strategic impact assessment on projects (long-term risks and damaging changes) considering conservation and development of environmental resources

SLD Orientation aspects and descriptors	
HOW	*Sustainable Life Development (SLD) orients life styles towards*:
OR7. Diversity	Innovation and diversification in economy and socio-culture, propelled by merging endogenous with exogenous resources
	Local identities and fabrics (traditions, arts and crafts, biodiversity, habitat, socio-cultural heritage, economy vocations, etc.)
OR8. Subsidiarity	Capacity building and empowerment of local communities through:
	• Additional resources to the spending of local authorities without replacing their own structural revenue while nourishing devolution of public responsibilities
	• Involvement of civil society in service delivery (e.g. management of proximity services like home care for families and for the elderly, day care for young children, social housing services and so on)
	• Improvement and creation of local networks of production, distribution and consumption
	• Integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches in streamlined decision making processes
OR9. Networking and partnership	Improvement and creation of relational networks (e.g. women associations, NGOs)
	Networked organisations (e.g. consortia between businesses)
	Alliances and collaboration between public, private and social sectors especially in employment, training, education, social services
	Exchange of experiences and good practice of sustainable development between different local and regional contexts
OR10. Participation	Increase in awareness on policies for age and gender management, labour and social inclusion, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development
	Involvement of the stakeholders since the early beginning in the analysis of territorial and corporate problems and in the elaboration of adequate solutions

What is the first step to analyse a practice within the AWARDS project?

The first step to analyse a practice consists in filling in a form like the following one.

Practice Title			
Place and date			
Partners involved			
Contact person			
Beneficiaries			
Main problems			
Main solutions			
SLD Orientation	**Approaches**	**Methods**	**Tools**
OR1. Environment			
OR2. Economy			
OR3. Socio-culture			
OR4. Social Equity			
OR5. Inter-local Equity			
OR6. Inter-generational Equity			
OR7. Diversity			
OR8. Subsidiarity			
OR9. Networking / partnership			
OR10. Participation			

Once allocated into the specific SLD aspects, the ingredients (lessons) of a practice have been separated from the original local context, the specific purpose and situation.

These ingredients should now be assessed to determine their usability in other local contexts, for other purposes and situations.

What are the properties that favour exchange of practices?

Unfortunately usability is influenced also by some conditional attitudes and behaviours that act generally as facilitating or impeding factors both on individual and communities, both in alternate and erratic ways:
- falling in love that consists in considering beautiful, interesting and exciting everything coming from other experiences or, on the contrary, what is currently experienced by one's own community
- standing back that consists in disregarding other experiences or considering them already tested or present in one's own community

- <u>resisting</u> that consists in considering not applicable to one's own community experiences stemming from outside but only those endogenously (internally) determined
- <u>blocking</u> that consists in believing experiences cannot be imported or exported because of too different cultures and situations existing in one's own and other communities

For the above-mentioned reasons, usability of an ingredient should be assessed carefully highlighting what is its most relevant property among the following ones.

Good practices (e.g. projects, plans and other local initiatives)	
Property of the ingredients (lessons) - definition	**Examples**
Transfer-ability is the property to be passed to and be used by another local context without any change. An ingredient elaborated and tested in a specific local context can be easily passed to another specific context. Transfer-ability is very near to the ecological property of Re-utilisation: the utility of materials and products continues to exist for a long period of time without changing their ways of utilisation.	**Approach**: a concept definition, a series of strategic guidelines can be used in another context as they were originally formulated. **Method**: a manual is easy usable in another course of actions as it was originally formulated. **Tool**: an index / indicator or a training technique can be easy translated in other similar instruments
Adaptation-ability is the property to become suitable for a new purpose or situation through small changes. Although an ingredient has been tested for a specific purpose or situation, it can be worked out in a suitable manner to be used for another purpose or situation. Adaptation-ability is very near to the ecological property of Re-cycling: existing products are collected as "raw" materials and transformed into new products generally changing their main purposes and ways of utilisation.	**Approach**: some change in concept definitions, in components of a strategic document can allow another purpose or another situation to be better and carefully understood in order to deal with it. **Method**: some change in a training manual can allow it to be used as a facilitator's field book. **Tool**: an index / indicator or a training technique can be easy translated in other different instruments
Integration-ability is the property to be combined with other components. An ingredient tested in a specific context or for specific purposes can forms part of other ingredients existing in other contexts and for other purposes. Integration-ability is very near to the ecological property Reduction of consumption: precious resources are saved increasing efficiency by "doing more with less".	**Approach**: some definitions and strategic components can become closely linked to and mixed with other definitions and components saving resources (time included) to produce new concepts and documents **Method**: methods in training manuals can be combined with other methods to form new handbooks. **Tool**: an index / indicator or a training technique can be mixed with other instruments to support evaluation and decisions in other policy fields.

What is the second and final step to analyse a practice within the AWARDS project?

Having allocated the ingredients of the examined practices into specific SLD aspects , the second step is constituted by filling in 3 separated forms like the following ones.

Practice Title			
TRANSFER (ability) OF			
SLD Orientation	**Approaches**	**Methods**	**Tools**
OR1. Environment			
OR2. Economy			
OR3. Socio-culture			
OR4. Social Equity			
OR5. Inter-local Equity			
OR6. Inter-generational Equity			
OR7. Diversity			
OR8. Subsidiarity			
OR9. Networking / partnership			
OR10. Participation			

Practice Title			
ADAPTATION (ability) OF			
SLD Orientation	**Approaches**	**Methods**	**Tools**
OR1. Environment			
OR2. Economy			
OR3. Socio-culture			
OR4. Social Equity			
OR5. Inter-local Equity			
OR6. Inter-generational Equity			
OR7. Diversity			
OR8. Subsidiarity			
OR9. Networking / partnership			
OR10. Participation			

Practice Title			
INTEGRATION (ability) OF			
SLD Orientation	**Approaches**	**Methods**	**Tools**
OR1. Environment			
OR2. Economy			
OR3. Socio-culture			
OR4. Social Equity			
OR5. Inter-local Equity			
OR6. Inter-generational Equity			
OR7. Diversity			
OR8. Subsidiarity			
OR9. Networking / partnership			
OR10. Participation			