



INT-HERIT – IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK

HERITAGE STRATEGIES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED EUROPEAN CITIES

OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

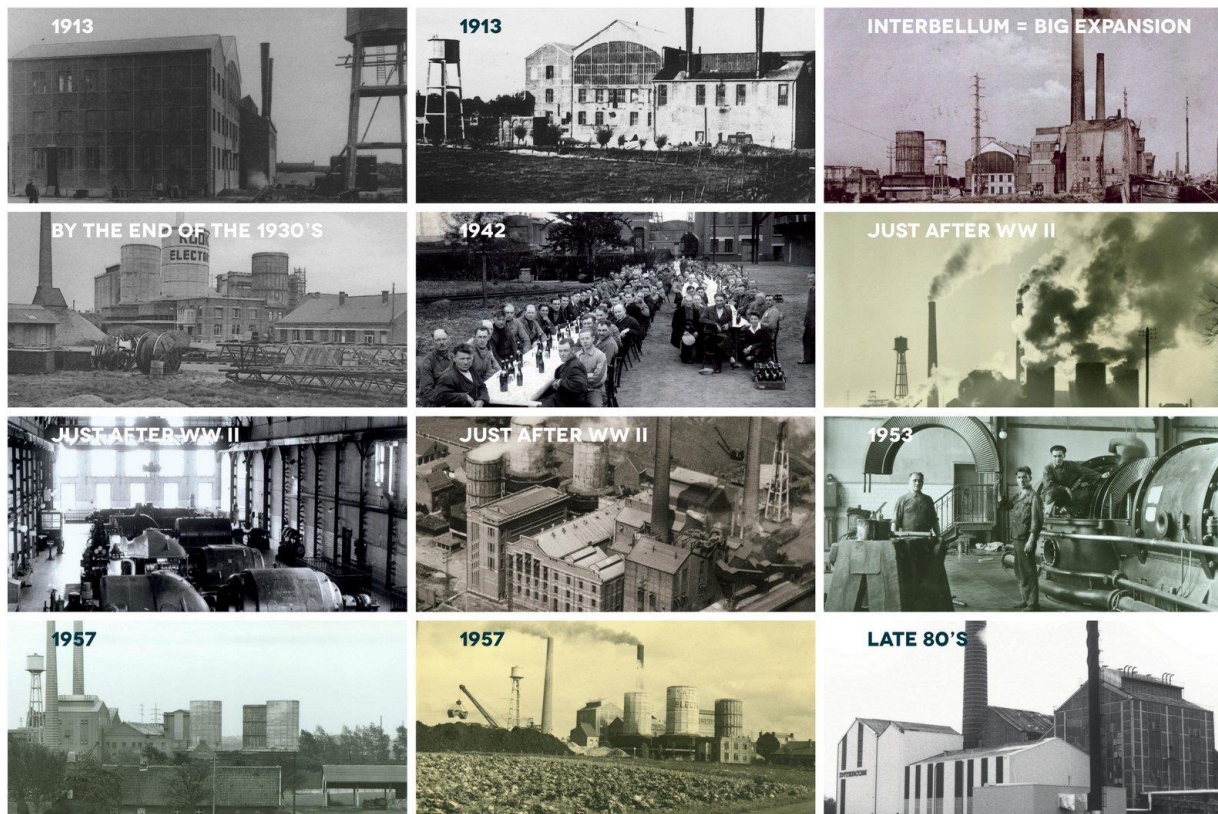
LEIEDAL, BELGIUM

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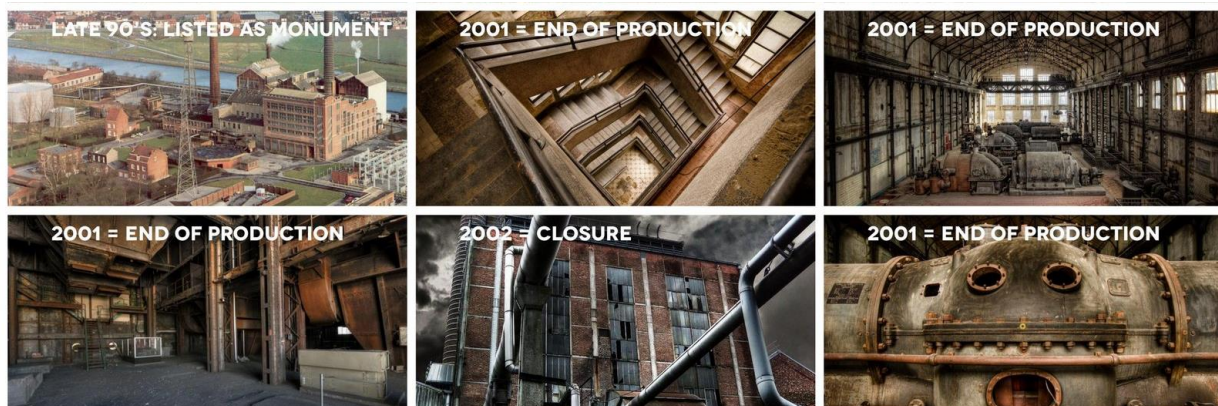
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INTRODUCTION

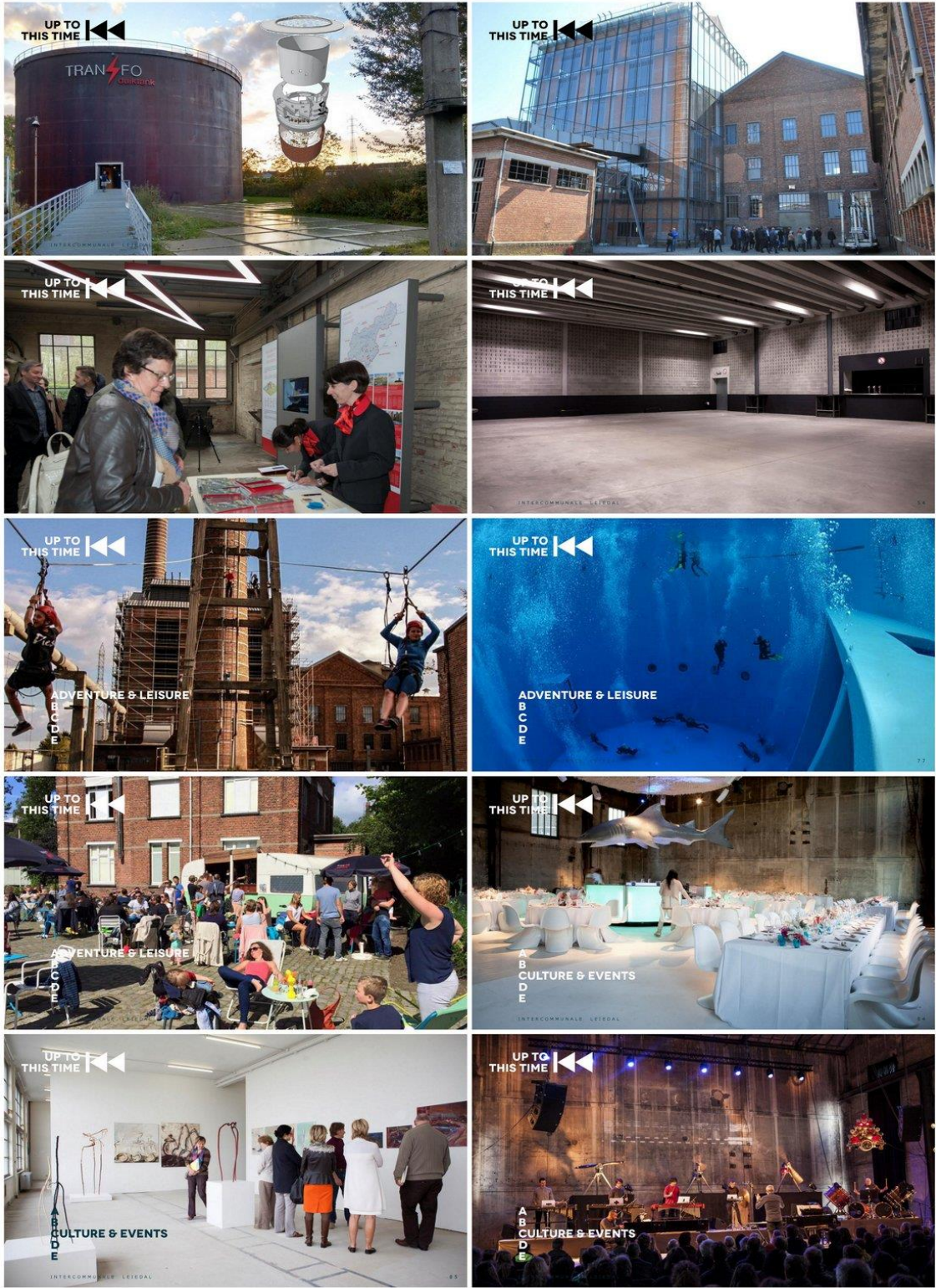
The Operational Implementation Framework covers the redevelopment of Transfo in Zwevegem, a town of 25.000 inhabitants on the west side of Belgium and part of the Kortrijk region. Transfo is a listed power plant, dating back to 1912. It is a unique ensemble of boiler rooms, a turbine hall, power distribution building and various additional buildings and machines.



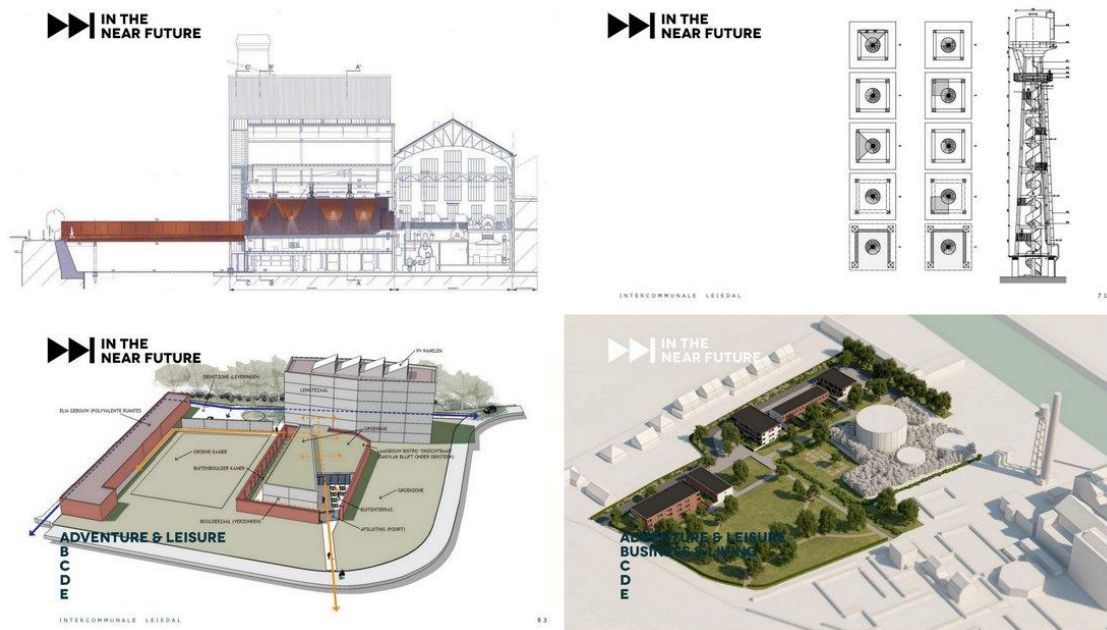
The production of electricity at the Transfo power plant was shut down in 1985. The production of steam continued until 2001, after which the plant was put out of use. The ceased power plant turned into a huge challenge for the municipality: the listed and abandoned industrial site undoubtedly had a strategic significance for the municipality of Zwevegem, but at the same time, it was quite clear that a thoughtful and sustainable re-use would be extremely difficult.



After 15 years of investment and hard work of the municipality of Zwevegem, intermunicipal organization for regional development Leiedal, the Province of West-Flanders and the Flemish Government, Transfo gains momentum: the Transfo site is subject to a growing number of initiatives and dynamics, which obviously is a good thing. Several initiatives and projects are in full development.



One of the latest announcements is the development of an indoor climbing hall and a microbrewery at Transfo, a public-private investment of about 2 and 0,4 million euros. These types of investments create a snowball effect, in the sense that they fuel and accelerate the enthusiasm to be part of the Transfo story.



From top left to bottom right: (1) footbridge and walking path in boiler room, linking the canal and the site, (2) lookout point in former water tower, (3) climbing hall for speed climbing, bouldering and lead climbing and (4) housing estate and public park through PPP, with 68 houses and apartments.

The project partners, however, are challenged in managing and embracing these dynamics and opportunities. IINT-HERIT offered the window of opportunity and framework to invest in an agile, collaborative, integrated and sustainable governance framework. Main challenge is to streamline and to integrate the growing number of initiatives and dynamics, without losing opportunities and to improve integration and final results.

The assignment is proving a greater challenge than anticipated: the growing number of dynamics coincides with the current disruptive changes in sectors like energy and mobility, having an impact on the energy and mobility strategies for Transfo and therefor fueling the need for an even deeper integration.

The URBACT INTHERIT project is a powerful lever for igniting change. It offers a mirror and a framework to enable change.

1.1. Baseline position

A bit of history

The production of electricity at the Transfo power plant was shut down in 1985. The production of steam continued until 2001, after which the plant was put out of use. Even before the closure of the power plant, the owner considered to demolish the plant and to redevelop the grounds into a residential project. However, the site became listed in 1999 and demolition was averted.

The municipality of Zwevegem and intermunicipal organization Leiedal bought the power plant in 2004. The ceased power plant turned into a huge challenge for the new owners: the listed and abandoned industrial site undoubtedly had a strategic significance for the municipality of Zwevegem and the broader region, but at the same time, it was quite clear that a thoughtful and sustainable re-use would be extremely difficult.

Getting together in 2002. An intensive cooperation has been set up in 2002 with the aim of developing and realizing an ambitious redevelopment project. On the initiative of the municipal administration, a steering committee was set up, in which various stakeholders were represented: the municipality of Zwevegem, the Flemish Heritage Agency, the Province of West Flanders, the intermunicipal organization Leiedal and the private sector (Elia, Bekaert).

Scouting and energizing stakeholders in 2003. In 2003, a group of international designers proposed a masterplan for the site, which demonstrated the enormous development opportunities of the site. It also became clear that those opportunities would exceed the municipal possibilities.

Anchoring engagements in 2004. A new challenge surfaced after the international workshop: bringing and keeping the project to cruising speed. This was achieved by developing a solid project organization (Transfo non-profit organization), looking for subsidy channels and sources of financing, investing in communication and market research, buying the site (The site is owned by the municipality of Zwevegem and Leiedal since 2004) and starting with the first conservation and restoration works.

Elaboration of concrete projects as from 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, a detailed program and masterplan was developed, taking into account the results of the international workshop.

Starting restoration in 2008. Since 2008, concrete restoration plans have been developed and executed.

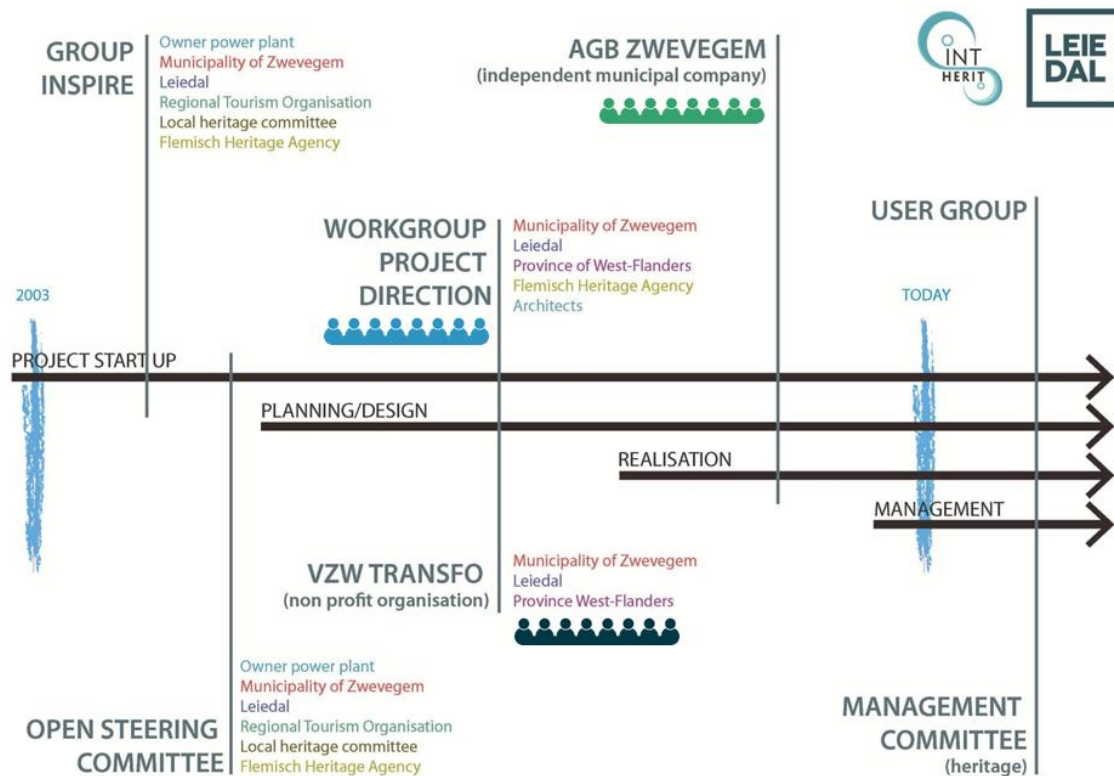
Gaining momentum as from 2018. The Transfo site still is in an early stage of development. However, the ongoing investments are paying off and the project gains momentum: the site is subject to a growing number of initiatives and dynamics.

Where did we stand at the beginning of the Int-Herit project, in terms of governance?

Since 2001, a lot of time and effort has been invested in the spatial development of the site, both in terms of concept (masterplan) as in restoration. These efforts have led to an increasing attractiveness of the site.

The governance model for Transfo today is a pragmatic one. “We just have to carry on” is the typical mindset in Flanders (and in the South of West-Flanders in particular). This approach works wonderfully as long as long as things do not get very complex. This mindset has brought Transfo to a point that the site gains momentum and becomes subject to a growing number of initiatives and dynamics.

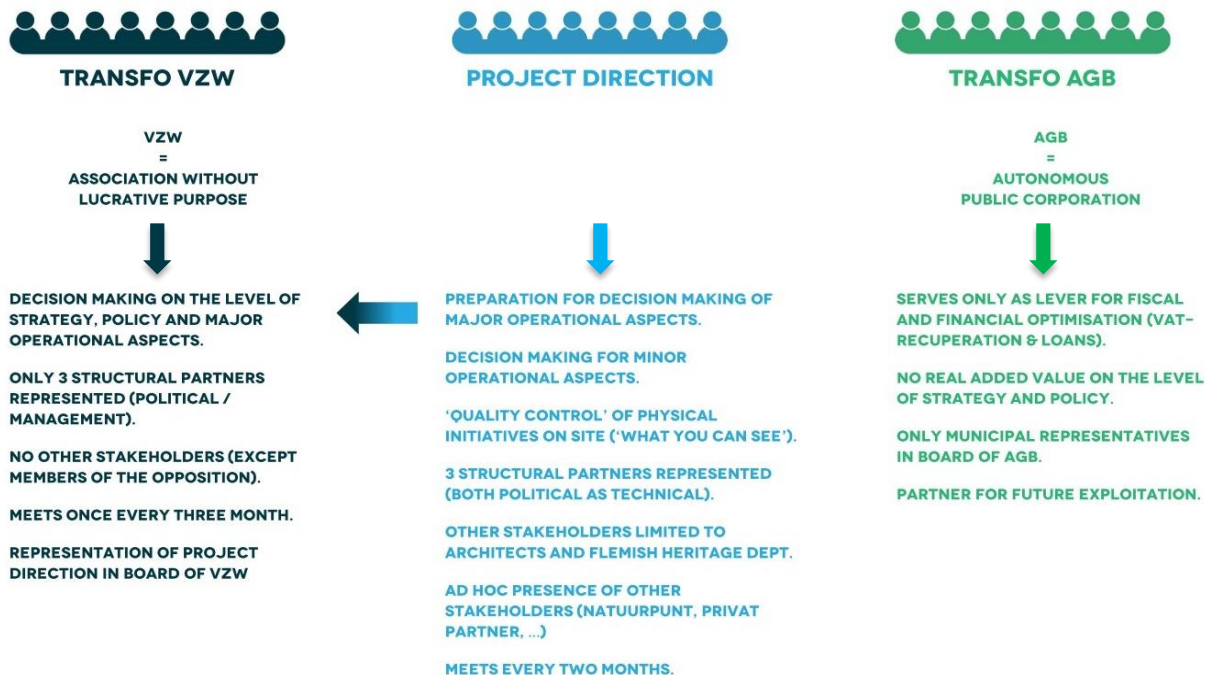
The current governance framework for the Transfo site has been a good model in the past. However, due to the growing number of initiatives and dynamics, the model shows traces of wear. Stakeholders feel that the pragmatic approach no longer meets the requirements. An overview of the evolution:



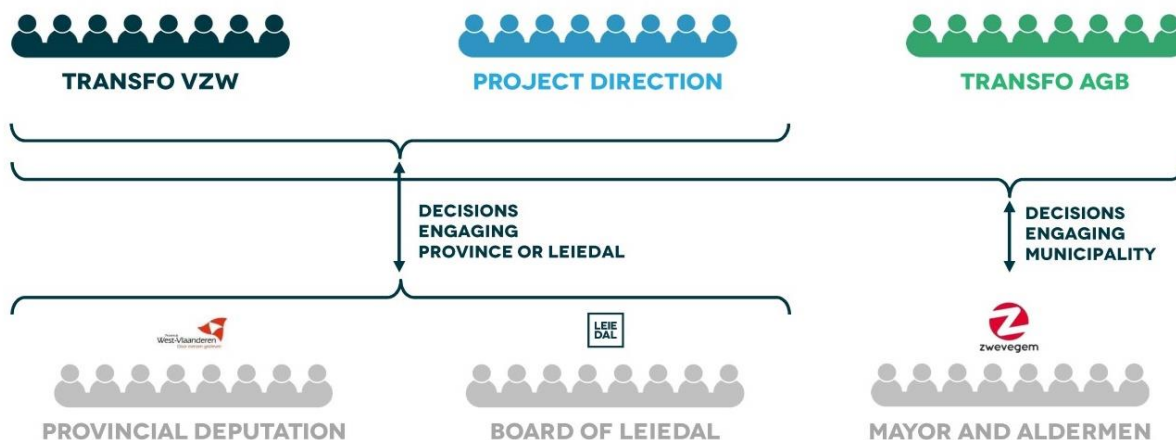
- Group Inspire: first informal gathering of organisations, which recognised the potential of the power plant. The ‘Group Inspire’ drafted the first ambitions for the site.
- Open Steering Committee: the formal version of the ‘Group Inspire’.
- Workgroup Project Direction: Group that discusses everything that is visible on Transfo (renovation, public space, etc.). The scope and responsibility of this group gradually broadened and is now at a point that it needs rethinking (more info: see next illustration).
- VZW Transfo: the not-for-profit organisation that is the legal entity covering the interests of Transfo. The board of directors sets the ambitions and monitors progress (more info: see next illustration).
- AGB Zwevegem: a public company, owned by the municipality, established for tax purposes (more info: see next illustration).

Today, 3 structures are responsible for the management of Transfo: Transfo VZW, Project Direction and Transfo AGB.

CURRENT FRAMEWORK SCOPE AND ROLE



CURRENT FRAMEWORK DECISION MAKING



All initiatives at Transfo are financed as follows:

CURRENT FRAMEWORK FINANCING



The governance model has also been influenced by changes in the political governance. Political parties, which at the time were not part of the municipal executive board, were very skeptical about what was happening at Transfo. Meanwhile, all political parties have been at the helm and experienced at first hand the complexity of this project. Today there is more openness and willingness towards Transfo and its future. Taking into account the political volatility, there is a strong need for a more robust governance framework that enjoys broad consensus and can call upon a certain degree of independence.

Within the context of URBACT, there is always the question about competences and competence building. The stakeholders at Transfo have concluded that there is no real problem with competences: the three structural partners of Transfo (municipality, Leiedal and the Province) have access to all the competences, which are needed to tackle the challenges ahead (in terms of heritage management, financial skills, project management, etc.). However, there are two main issues. First, several persons represent the structural partners and stakeholders, turning concertation and dialogue into a challenge. Nobody knows everything about the project. Second, stakeholder staff is not fully dedicated to Transfo in terms of work assignment. In other words, they have many other tasks next to Transfo. Those two issues combined results in a suboptimal co-operation: different persons work just periodically on the Transfo project, and all at different times. There is a risk of not seeing the wood for the trees.

1.2. Outline Implementation Plan

General challenges

The challenge today is to develop an agile, collaborative, (vertically and horizontally) integrated and sustainable governance and financial framework: how to streamline and integrate the growing number of initiatives and dynamics, without losing opportunities and to improve integration and final results?

Until this day, no real monitoring has been executed at Transfo. In order to have a performant governance framework, it is imperative to have an effective measurement and monitoring system. Questions to be asked: which knowledge to gain through measuring? Which tools and indicators can be used to measure? How to translate the data into actionable insights? How to integrate the actionable insights in the new governance framework?

Finale challenge for the partners is to evolve to a break-even site operation and to engage experienced private partners providing leverage in the (re)development of the site. Ambition is to have a sustainable project without (or at least with less) “life lines” that are the subsidies, grants, etc.

Work plan and time line

The table below shows the consecutive work steps and the time line. We reconfigured the initial timeline because of the municipal and provincial elections in Q4 of 2018. The result of the municipal elections did not create a policy shift that had important consequences for Transfo.

The provincial elections, however, did have an impact: the new legislature is the first one after a structural reform of the Flemish provinces, changing thematic scope and budget of this governance level. As Transfo partially depends on Provincial budgets, the engagements and future intentions towards Transfo are still uncertain at this point.

1.	Defining the governance framework ‘as is’: what is good, what is going wrong, what can be improved?	Q1 2018
2.	Getting inspired by reference cases of project partners and visits to reference sites	Q2/Q3 2018
3.	Collecting and describing the building blocks and prerequisites for a new governance framework and monitoring system ‘to be’	Q2/Q3 2018
4.	Developing different possible scenario’s and analyzing the S/W/O/T of every scenario	Q3/Q4 2018
5.	Choosing a scenario	Q1 2019
6.	Anchoring the new framework in a co-operation agreement and set of operation rules	Q2 2019
7.	Start working with the new framework (test run)	Q3 2019
8.	Evaluating the new framework and adjusting if necessary	Q1 2020

Specific implementation challenges (threats and weaknesses)

Integrated approach

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Some relevant challenges related to integrated approach:

- There is no framework for decision-making, resulting in fragmented decisions of decisions based on less than 100% of the information. How to streamline decision-making?
- Today there are three structural partners. Should the partnership be broadened?
- Decisions are not always verified against Transfo Masterplan and ambitions, leading to fragmentation and ad hoc initiatives. How to resolve this tension?
- Because of growing initiatives and opportunities, there is a real risk at not being able to see the forest for the trees. How to streamline these initiatives and dynamics, without losing opportunities and to improve integration and final results?
- How to ensure vertical and horizontal integration of the new framework?
- How to create more transparency in the way things are done at Transfo, without losing the effectiveness and creating red tape / bureaucracy?
- Partners have their own decision-making structure. This affects decision making for Transfo. As getting things done at Transfo would become more transparent, how to cope with decision-making? More transparency generates more decision-making. How to give more autonomy to the 'board' of Transfo, without losing accountability?
- There is a need for a 'captain' and 'liaison officer' to be the glue between governance, operations, stakeholders, etc.
- There is no dedicated staff for Transfo.
- No monitoring of outputs, results and processes. Which knowledge to gain through measuring?
- What should be the scope of monitoring? (For instance: ambitions vs. reality?)
- Which tools and indicators can we use to measure?
- How should we translate the data into actionable insights?
- In which way should actionable insights be processed by the improved governance framework?

Stakeholder involvement

Although Leiedal and other organisations from the ULG have experience in involving stakeholder, there is room for improvement. Involving stakeholders needs good methods, the right approach, etc. “Doing things on our own” is part of the character of many Flemish people, especially in (the south of) West-Flanders. Involving stakeholders sometimes is a duty, rather than a natural reflex.

It also remains a challenge to involve private partners / users without losing grip on quality, identity and sustainability (or in short: the future) of concerned architecture heritage.

Some relevant challenges related to stakeholder involvement:

- How to involve all stakeholders (Flemish Heritage Agency and users, especially) in the new framework?
- Today there is a fragmented ownership: “the site belongs to everyone and to nobody”. How to create a sense of community?
- Stakeholders tend to do what they please, often without consultation of other stakeholders, which results in informal ‘acquired rights’. What instruments are needed to avoid these negative outcomes?
- How to get buy-in of all political parties? Are partners familiar with the issues? Do they recognize these issues?
- How to convince current users of the necessity of the new governance model, which means abandoning the policy of tolerance?
- Stakeholders like neighbors, adjacent companies, users ... are not structurally informed about what is going / will happen in the future.

PPP

Finale challenge for the partners is to evolve to a break-even site operation and to engage experienced private partners providing leverage in the (re)development of the site. Ambition is to have a sustainable project without (or at least with less) “life lines” that are the subsidies, grants, etc.

Some relevant challenges related to PPP:

- All three of the structural partners experience many hidden costs related to the development of Transfo.
- No clear vision on which tasks to externalize.
- Acquired rights claimed by long time ‘temporary’ users
- Users only are paying ‘symbolic’ contributions, which do not meet the related operational expenses.
- The limited time budget that partners can (want to?) spend on Transfo suffocates the project: only time for operational aspects and ‘putting out fires’.
- No framework or instruments to avoid potential future conflicts (e.g. home owners vs. events and festivals on site?)
- As Transfo is a part of the public space of the municipality, which costs should be assigned to the municipality and which cost can be assigned to the users of the site?

From strategy to action plan

Some relevant challenges related to the challenge from strategy to action plan:

- Which tools / instruments/ deliverables / products are needed to make the new governance model work? (agreements, guidelines, ...)
- Which conflicts could occur if the current framework remains in place?
- How should the new framework be designed to enable a better result?
- What should be included in the 'house rules' of the Transfo site?

Current strengths and opportunities

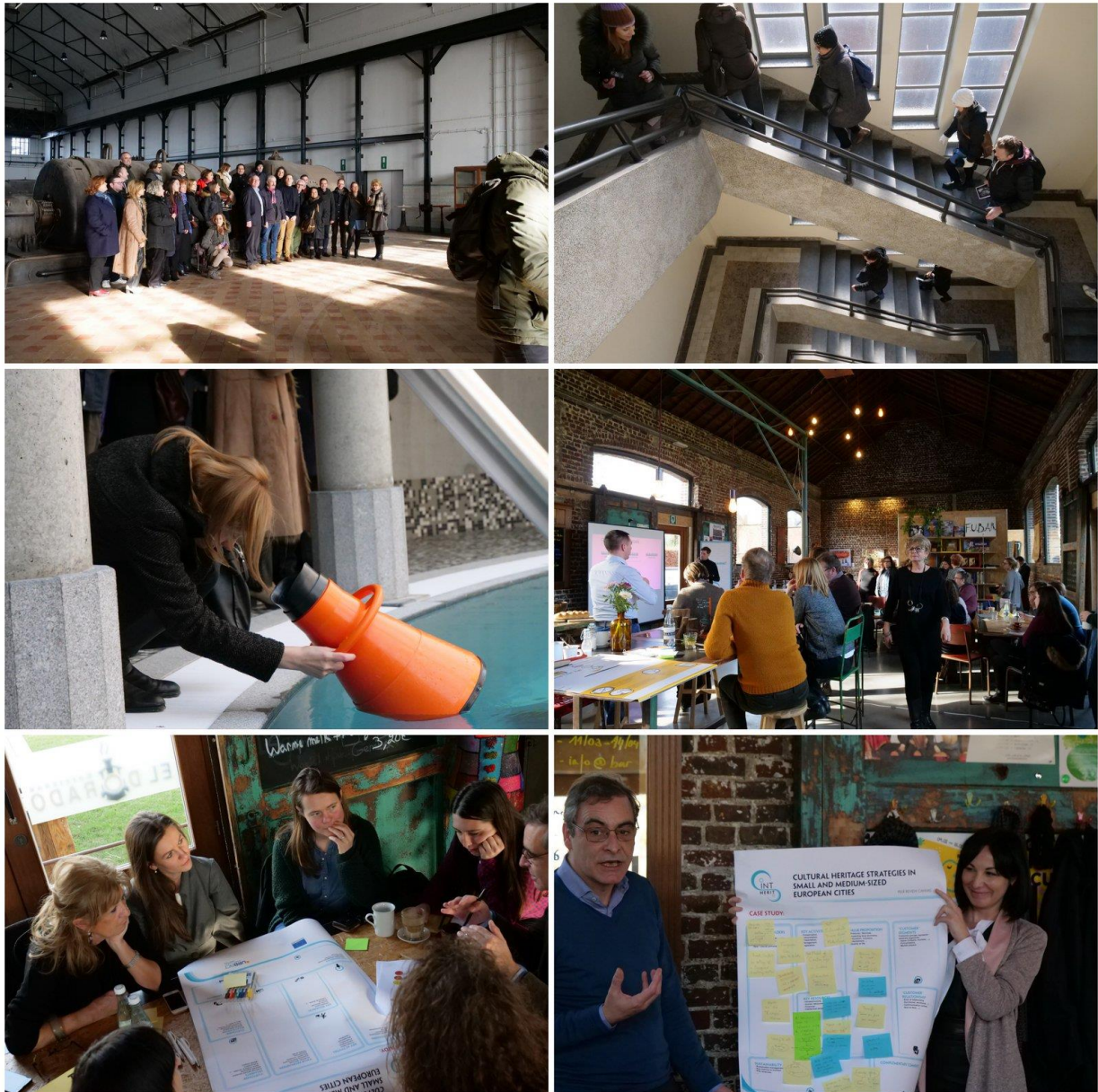
The ULG-members also indicated some strengths and opportunities:

- The different partners have all the necessary competences to achieve the wanted results. Key is to get the most out of these competences.
- Transfo is a unique asset in terms of scale, heritage value, partner involvement, appeal, etc.
- The site has been amazingly well managed in the past when you look at the relatively limited deployment of staff compared to other similar sites at home and abroad. Notwithstanding, the need for more support is high to prevent it from spinning out of control.
- We have all (or most off) the pieces to the puzzle. The challenge now is putting them together to achieve efficiency gains.

1.3. Response to the Implementation Challenges

Output of the peer review during the Kortrijk Transnational meeting in February 2018

Each partner within the INT-HERIT network had the honor of welcoming the other partners at a transnational meeting. INT-HERIT partner Leiedal emerged the other partners in an intense agenda of visits, discussions, two peer reviews and a conference about 'conservation through development'.



One of the peer reviews covered the Transfo project. Four groups (or ‘tables’) discussed three topics: monitoring, governance framework and storytelling. The ULG prepared a set of questions as guidelines for the table discussions:

CHALLENGES FOR TRANSFO

STORYTELLING
TOOLS AND METHODS TO KEEP THE HISTORY OF THE SITE ALIVE AND RELEVANT.

MONITORING
AN ONGOING MONITORING SYSTEM WITH RELEVANT INDICATORS TO MONITOR AND TO ASSESS THE ATTRACTIVENESS / LIVELINESS / PERFORMANCE / ... OF THE HERITAGE SITE DURING THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE (RE)DEVELOPMENT.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK
AN AGILE, COLLABORATIVE, (VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY) INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE MODEL TO IMPROVE INTEGRATION AND FINAL RESULTS.

PPP & SELF SUFFICIENCY
TOOLS AND METHODS TO FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND TO MAKE HERITAGE SITES PARTIALLY OR ENTIRELY SELF-SUFFICIENT.

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MONITORING

TABLE 1

TABLE 2

TABLE 3

- Which knowledge to gain through measuring?
- What should be the scope of monitoring? (for instance: ambitions vs. reality?)
- Which tools and indicators can we use to measure?
- How should we translate the data into actionable insights?
- In which way should actionable insights be processed by the improved governance framework?

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GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

TABLE 1

TABLE 2

TABLE 3

- Which conflicts could occur if the current framework remains in place?
- How should the new framework be designed to enable a better result?
- What should be included in the 'house rules' of the Transfo site?
- Which other deliverables / products are needed to make the new governance model work? (agreements, guidelines, ...)
- How to involve all stakeholders in the new framework?
- How to ensure vertical and horizontal integration of the new framework?
- Today there are 3 structural partners. Should the partnership be broadened?
- Are partners familiar with the issues? If yes, how to address these?

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STORYTELLING

TABLE 4

- How to guard the consistency of story telling, taking into account the increasing number of partners and stakeholders?
- How to integrate the aspect of communication into the governance framework?
- How to avoid 'old stories' getting lost or forgotten?
- How to intertwine the different narratives of Transfo?
- How to cope with the concept of 'open heritage', being the field of tension between public access and making some parts private?
- How to find the balance in introducing contemporary forms of communication (Virtual & Augmented Reality)?

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The plenary discussion afterwards revealed a number of insights, which proved valuable for the work to follow. What follows is a selection of the most valuable feedback. Underlined sentences explain how and to what extent the suggestions have been taken into account during the different ULG meetings.

- Transfo is becoming a mature project. Therefore, Transfo needs more dedicated people in order to keep the site running. Transfo really needs a dedicated project team (team of 'Transfo men and women'). The project is understaffed: the team, which is working on Transfo, is too 'skinny'. The project team should have its office on site. Have a 'captain' for the team who can build bridges.
The Transfo partners have become aware of the fact that dedicated staff is needed for Transfo to be able to move forward. This issue will be subject of the new cooperation agreement between the municipality, Leiedal and the Province of West-Flanders.
- Main focal points of the governance framework should be (1) the political decision-making, (2) the steering group with both public and private partners, (3) the marketing team and (4) citizens / stakeholders.
The new governance model takes into account all of these features (see chapter about 'synthesis').
- There should be a distinction between 'project development', which is a task for the partners, and 'site management', which can be externalized.
The new governance model takes into account these two separate tracks; however, site management will not be externalized for the time being.

- The project is at a point where all political parties have been involved at least once in governing the Transfo project. This is a good thing. Therefore, the project should be 'safe' for the future. Future discussion can be focused on content rather than on *raison d'être*.
This is really the case. At the closing press conference for the INT-HERIT project, the Mayor has admitted that at first he was very skeptical about the development of Transfo. However, since he bears government responsibility he has learned to appreciate the project and the opportunities it offers. He now sees it as a huge lever for the socio-economic development of the municipality. The visits to several comparable sites in Belgium and France have reinforced this conviction.
- The new governance model should have four layers: (1) core layer = operational and technical governance, which should be light and agile, (2) financial layer, (3) communication layer and (4) policy making layer.
The new governance model takes into account all of these features (see chapter about 'synthesis').
- The site is mature enough to think about external governance for non-strategic tasks like cleaning, calendar management, opening, etc. Give a fee as a percentage of the revenue.
- There is a need for a marketing plan, making distinction between the local community and other target groups. Make sure you have dedicated staff!
The new governance model takes into account the need of a marketing plan. The point about dedicated staff will be subject of the new cooperation agreement between the municipality, Leiedal and the Province of West-Flanders.
- It is important to create a sense of community on the site, because you will have a lot of people living, working, on the site.
The new governance model includes a board of users to enable collaboration, to ensure conflict management and to facilitate accurate information sharing between users, owners and other stakeholders on the site. The ULG-study visits to other reference sites (see 'looking over the fence' in the learning journey chapter) learned that a good ecosystem on a site is crucial in the long run.
- Within the current governance framework, partners are 'married' two times: one time in the VZW, one time in the Projectregie. Try to simplify, and make it more agile. Suggestion to use the ULG method as framework for the new governance model.
This was a correct observation of the INT-HERIT partners. The partners will suspend the VZW (not-for-profit organization) in June 2019.
- The task forces (as used by Leiedal linked to the ULG) are a good concept. Use these for different topics like communication, quality control, etc. Some task forces can be formal; others might be more informal. Some task forces are temporary; others might be continuous/structural.
The new governance model takes into account all of these features (see chapter about 'synthesis').
- Political representatives have to guard the strategic lines for the site and thus are not expected to be present in every task force meeting (perhaps occasionally). However, there should be a good interaction between the strategic group (vzw? steering group?) and the different task forces. There should also be a good interaction between the task forces themselves.
The new governance model takes into account the proposed way of working (see chapter about 'synthesis').
- Some basic house rules might include pricing, a template with technical information (f.i. 'where can I drink a beer' Here? Or not?), a list of matching activities (in order to avoid conflicting activities taking place at the



same time), ...

This was a correct observation of the INT-HERIT partners. The ULG-study visits to other reference sites (see 'looking over the fence' in the learning journey chapter) demonstrated the necessity of these kind of elements.

- Transfo definitely needs a communication plan (Who are we? Who is our target audience? What do we want to tell? ...). Communication is important in order to attract and to engage community, businesses, visitors, users, sponsors ...
The Transfo partners have indeed detected some carelessness in communications initiatives of users on the site, emphasizing the need of a communication plan. The new governance model includes a 'communication task force', which will determine communication objectives, target groups, budget, strategy, channels, message, etc. (see chapter about 'synthesis').
- There are so many activities at Transfo. So what is the identity? The different story lines should find common ground. The identity should be easy to understand. Use the attributes present on site. Center the identity of the site on 'energy'. This defines the past as well as future.
- Avoid conflicts by setting up a transparent monitoring system. It can serve as a tool to inform people. Not knowing = potential conflict. Knowing = peace of mind.
- Define intermediate finish lines, because the final finish line is not (will never be?) in view. Look for intermediate target levels and build your story from this point.
- The housing project and the park will bring life to the site and a sense of community. This project will make a bridge to the town centre. A vibrant place needs people!
The ULG-study visits to other reference sites (see 'looking over the fence' in the learning journey chapter) learned that a basic layer of (free of charge) crowd puller / attraction is key for the liveliness of the site. Two concrete examples are a lookout tower (water tower at Transfo) and an experience centre (for instance about past and future energy production).
- Involve former workers and encourage the creation of a non-profit association 'friends of Transfo'.
- Do we know what the level of appropriation of the local people is? Try to have local ambassadors for the projects at Transfo. Why not updating masterplan in parallel with public concertation?
- Make sure that people living and working on the site get some advantages and/or exclusives in exchange for the nuisance/annoyances they might have because of other activities on site (e.g. festival, visitors, etc.). F.i. free diving once a year, discount on parties, privileged use of certain spaces, etc.
- Selling parts of Transfo (or have a long-term lease) creates stability, which is important in order to make agreements. When it is more 'coming and going', it is more difficult to enforce some basic house rules on site and which could generate conflicts.
- Measuring = knowing: measure the operation costs, otherwise how do you know that/when you are running break-even?
- As 'energy' is the main theme of Transfo, try to invest in renewable energy to (1) lower running costs and (2) make it an asset for the site.

Leiedal and the Province have recently managed to engage Transfo as pivotal point in the EMPOWER 2.0 project (North Sea Region program). The objective of the project is to support development of tools and methods that enable more consumers across the EU to generate electricity for their own consumption, to store it, share it, consume it or to sell it back to the market. It should make it easier for households and businesses to become more involved in the energy system, to better control their energy consumption and respond to price signals.

- Investment decision making should not only look at the investment cost, but also to the running costs which follows the investment (f.i. investing in diving tank = more than investment cost > running costs are high!). Operations of the site are still in red, so this means that there is an ‘unsustainable’ use of public funds. This cannot be continued on the long run.
The Transfo partners have learned that sites like Transfo have some profit centers, but that obtaining a break-even result is challenging. Visits to reference sites in Belgium and France have learned that many of these large-scale industrial heritage sites are struggling with operational costs.
- The project is legislation transcending, so how to get buy-in from all political parties? So that the story does not change after elections.

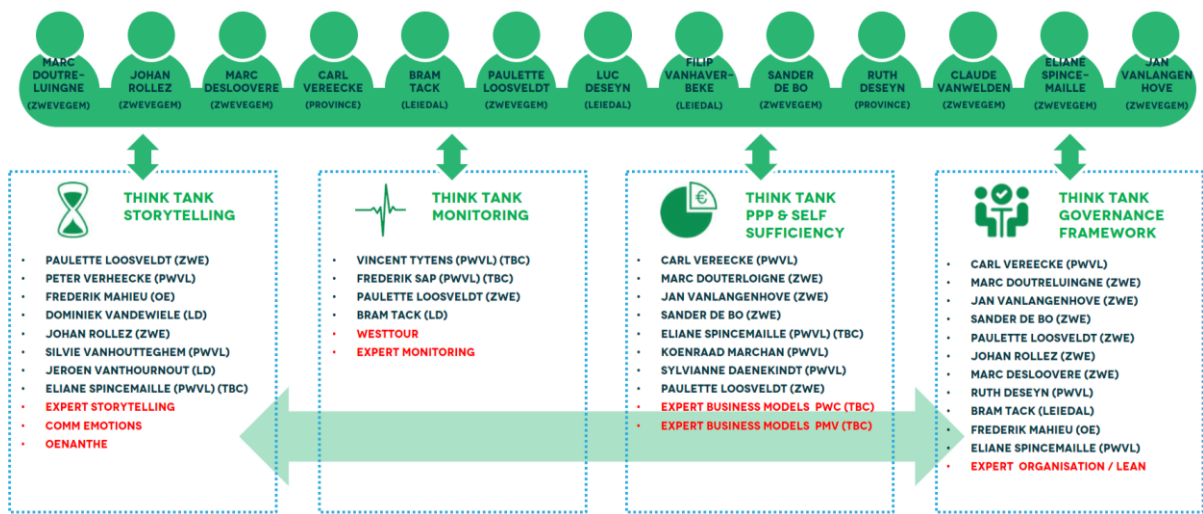
Different partner representatives have given their impressions in following testimonials:

- [Interview with Céline Julien](#) (City of Cahors)
- [Interview with Raquel Moreno](#) (Municipality of Baena)
- [Interview with Miquel Sousa](#) (lead expert)
- [Interview with Sam Nicholson](#) (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council)
- [Interview with Ruth Deseyn](#) (Province of West-Flanders)
- [Interview with Johan Rollez](#) (Municipality of Zwevegem)
- [General Aftermovie of the Transnational Meeting](#)

Urbact Local Group meetings

The URBACT Local Group (or ULG) was set up and had about 11 meetings. Initial objective was to have task forces on four topics, being (1) storytelling, (2) monitoring, (3) PPP and (4) governance framework. Soon, the ULG realized that the governance framework is a prerequisite for the other three topics. This entailed that the ULG focused primarily on the governance framework. During the study visits and peer review, however, the other topics have been discussed.

URBACT LOCAL GROUP ~ THINK TANKS

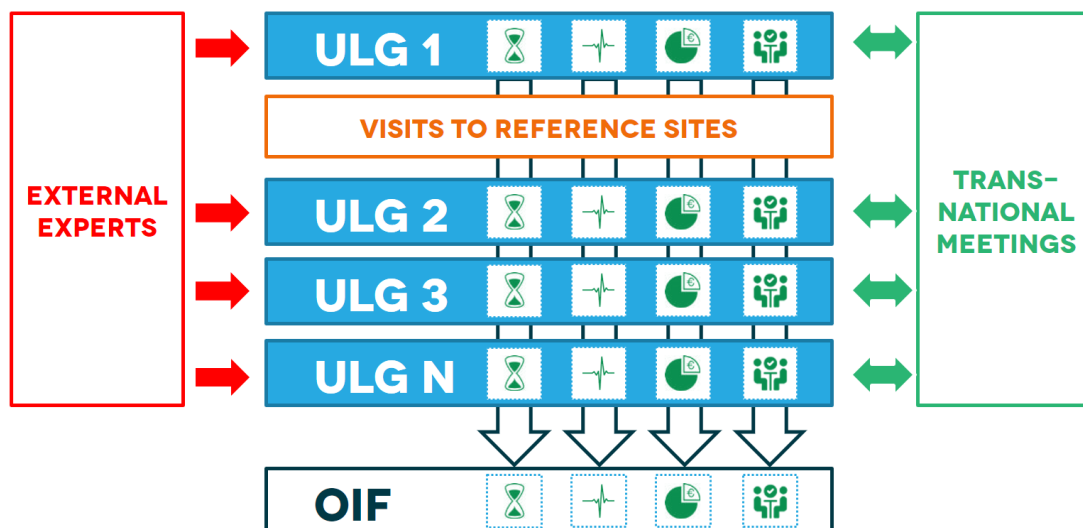


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11



PROPOSED APPROACH



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Implementation challenges which could (not) be tackled during the project

1.	Defining the governance framework 'as is': what is good, what is going wrong, what can be improved?	An internal audit demonstrated clearly the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of the current governance framework. The rather informal and
2.	Getting inspired by reference cases of project partners and visits to reference sites	With the support of the INT-HERIT project, Leiedal organized inspiration visits to six sites that are similar to Transfo. Participants were the stakeholders of the Transfo project. Ultimate goal is to set up an informal network that facilitates regular exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices. These sites are at the same development level as Transfo, or are one or more steps ahead.
3.	Collecting and describing the building blocks and prerequisites for a new governance framework and monitoring system 'to be'	The new governance framework is the result of (1) desk research, (2) discussions in different ULG meetings, (3) the local as well as the other international peer reviews and (4) benchmarking with similar sites as Transfo (study visits). More info about the results: see 'synthesis' chapter.
4.	Developing different possible scenario's and analyzing the S/W/O/T of every scenario	
5.	Choosing a scenario	
6.	Anchoring the new framework in a co-operation agreement and set of operation rules	The co-operation agreement is currently being prepared and will be signed in the month of June.
7.	Start working with the new framework (test run)	The framework is ready but not implemented because it needs the approval of all of the Transfo partners (co-operation agreement).
8.	Evaluating the new framework and adjusting if necessary	

1.4. Learning Journey

Peer review during the Transnational meeting

See chapter about 'Response to the Implementation Challenges'.

Looking over the fence

Because of the intensive interaction within the INT-HERIT network, project partner Leiedal became aware of the benefits of looking over the fence: the exchange between partners enables Leiedal to gain practical experience in implementing a new governance model for Transfo.

There is, however, still a need to exchange experiences with (public) authorities managing heritage sites, similar to the Transfo site. Coalmines, ironworks and other power plants relate to Transfo in terms of scale, spatial structures, age and challenges. A structural exchange of ideas and experiences between the managing authorities of similar heritage sites will contribute to a better and more integrated result. It will lower the risk of making suboptimal decisions and will speed up the development process because we can avoid reinventing the proverbial wheel.

With the support of the INT-HERIT project, Leiedal organizes inspiration visits to sites that are similar to Transfo. Participants are the stakeholders of the Transfo project. Ultimate goal is to set up an informal network that facilitates regular exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices.

Leiedal has identified a small number of similar sites which are at the same development level as Transfo, or which are one or more steps ahead. These sites are at a maximum distance of 200 km of Zwevegem, in order to avoid a lot of travel. The sites are:

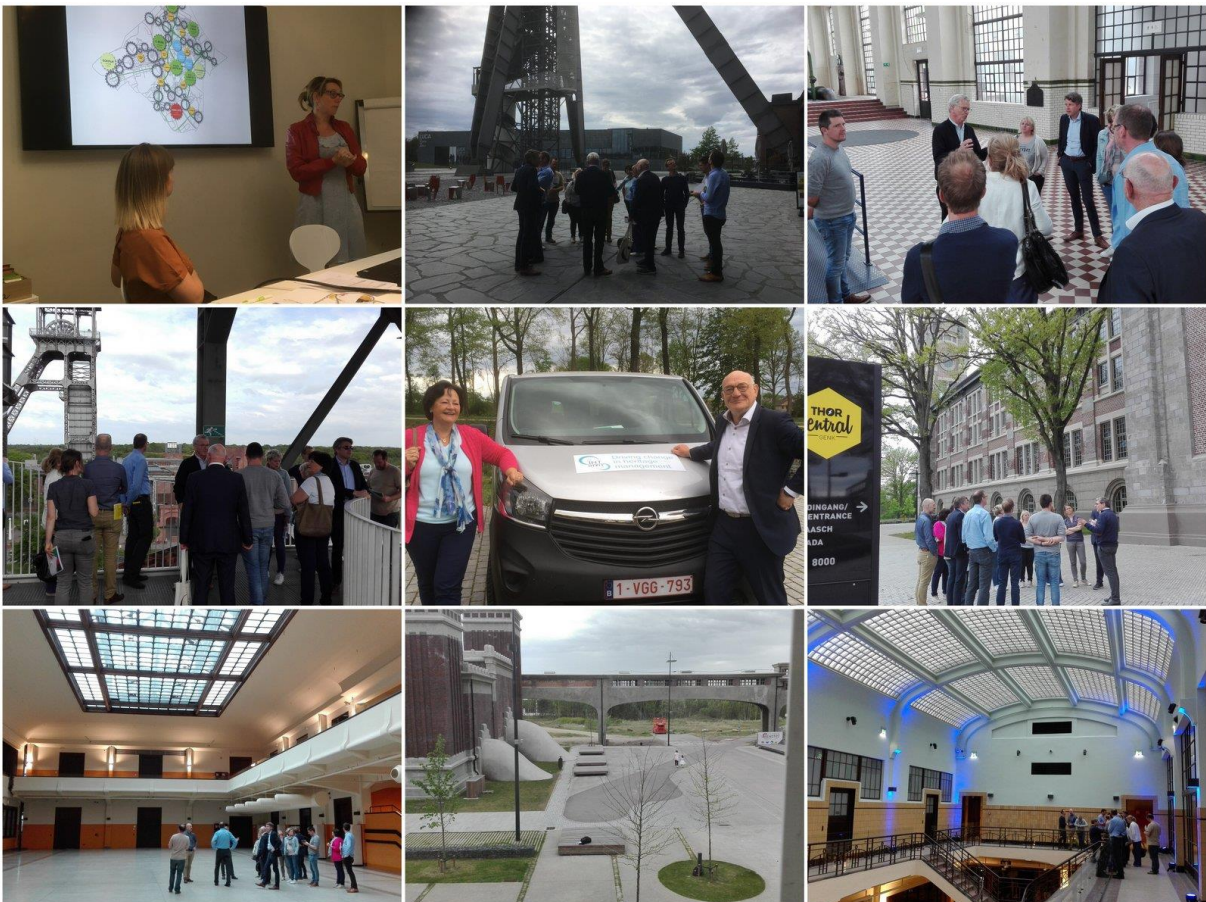
1. Arenberg Creative Mine (France) – visit on 11th of September 2018
2. Le Pass (Belgium) – visit on 25th of September 2018
3. C-mine (Belgium) – visit on 24th of April 2019
4. Thor Park (Belgium) – visit on 24th of April 2019
5. B-mine (Belgium) – visit on 25th of April 2019
6. ZLDR Luchtfabriek / Watt17 (Belgium) – visit on 25th of April 2019

The first visits, to Arenberg Creative Mine and Le Pass, were very enriching for the Transfo stakeholders. Being former coalmines, both sites share the same history. However, the development path of each site has been very different, since their respective closures.

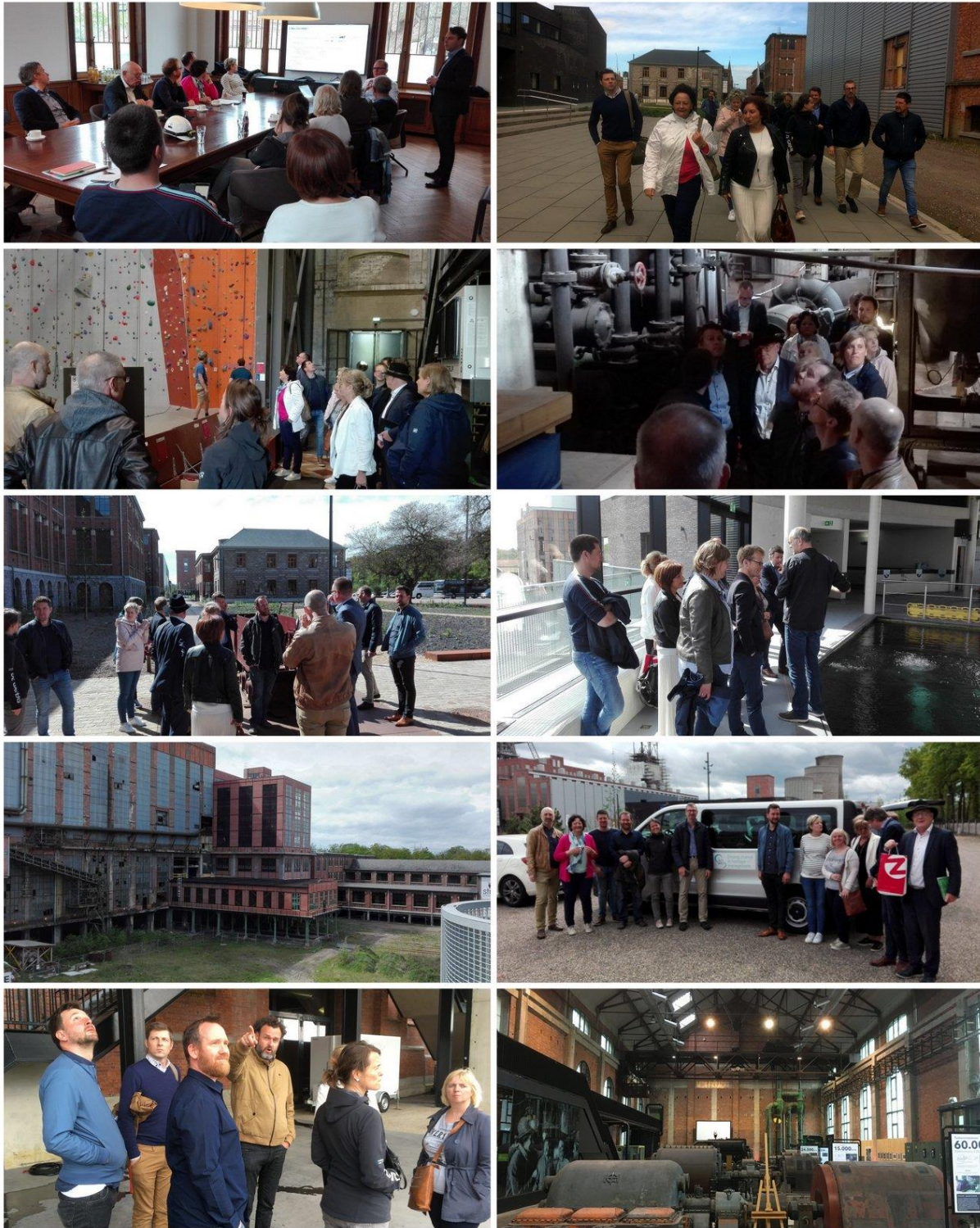


ULG visiting Le Pass (Mons, Belgium) and Arenberg Creative Mine (Waller, France), both former mining sites.

The other four visits were combined in a two-day journey. This approach offered some advantages, like the possibility to visit four sites on a short time, to reduce travel time and to be able to compare the different sites with the same group of people (being the ULG). The set-up of this journey offered also the possibility for the ULG-members to get to know each other in a more informal setting, which can lead to a better co-operation.



ULG visiting C-mine (Genk, Belgium) and Thor Park (Genk, Belgium), both former mining sites.



ULG visiting be-MINE (Beringen, Belgium) and ZLDR Luchtfabriek (Heusden-Zolder, Belgium), both former mining sites.

The exchange focused primarily on the governance model of both sites. Typical questions relate to cost allocation for overhead costs (green maintenance, site management, small repairs, etc.), decision-making, steering of dynamics, selection procedure for new projects on site, conflict management between users and stakeholders, user and stakeholder involvement, ways of working with PPP, etc.

As all mining sites boast similar components as Transfo has (housing development, business incubator, adventurous sports, etc.), it was also very interesting to learn how they ‘conserve through development’. How do they negotiate with the heritage agency? How do they assess architectural and spatial interventions? How do these interventions contribute to a sustainable development of the heritage site? Etc.

What follows are the main findings, thematically ordered:

Some general lessons learnt

- The visits to reference sites demonstrated clearly that public authorities or organizations must take the lead in the redevelopment of important and iconic heritage sites. *Added value for society before return on investment!* However, this does not mean that public authorities should not be striving to an economic optimum and that commercial activities or public-private partnerships are excluded.
- “Reculer pour mieux sauter”: good things need time. The visits learn that conservation through development takes 20 years or more. Moreover, the work is never finished: there is no ‘final result’. It is, however, important to gain momentum. These are moments of acceleration in the redevelopment process, which you should grasp to get the most out of them. Like a surfer catching the good wave.
- The glass is not half-empty: it is more than half-full. Take the time to recognize the positive evolution and the milestones already achieved. Other similar projects also have challenges to tackle and issues to solve.
- In most of the visited sites, the local or regional authority keeps in charge of the public spaces. This means that these authorities have full autonomy in deciding how things should be organized and should look like. These authorities are also carrying the related costs and investments. The partners of Transfo, however, want other users and stakeholders to participate in these running costs. Introducing this concept after contract closure will prove to be difficult. Be-Mine in Beringen has the same ambition (and problem).

Money is (not the most) important

- The visits learn that it remains very difficult to have a self-supporting development of these large heritage sites. All sites demonstrate the need of public funding, in terms of investment as well as in terms of operations. Public-private partnerships reduce the financial pressure, but remain insufficient to have a break-even result.
- The public authorities managing these large heritage sites have to deal with the tension between financial and social interests. Should public authorities aspire a break-even result, considering the benefits to society? The better question to be asked is “What value do we get for our money?”. Clearly define the things from which a profit is expected, as well as the things that are not (or should not be) profitable.
- Invest more capacity in finding financial levers for the Transfo project. Different (EU) programs offer opportunities to multiply your local euro coin. These programs often entail other major intangible benefits, such as a good partnership, a discerning eye, etc.
- Think also about small and smart interventions that can really make a difference. A lot can be achieved without huge investments.

- Invest in the development of good concepts. A good concept sells itself.
- Integrate a park management fee (green fee for public spaces, contribution for public facilities on site ...) in future leasing or selling contracts (or when renegotiating existing ones).

'Boots on the ground'

- Sufficient competent people, fully dedicated to the project are key to ensure an integrated and sustainable development of the project. Projects, which enjoy a better staffing, obtain a (sometimes better) result in a shorter period.
- People on-site ('boots on the ground') are crucial for the success of the ecosystem. A single point of contact streamlines and facilitates cooperation. The fact that this person (or persons) are physically present at the site lowers the threshold to cooperate and creates a sense of community. There should also be someone present in the info point.

Basics for creating a vibrant place

- It is essential that the local community embraces the site. Some basic interventions can help to intertwine the daily life of the local community with the heritage site. Simple things like a good bicycle path or walking trail through the site, a park to walk the dog or a small playground help to break the gated character of these sites.
- All functions, activities and facilities contribute to a unique ecosystem. This ecosystem should be well balanced, multifaceted and layered. When there is too much emphasis on one single function or activity, the ecosystem becomes unbalanced. A niche-based approach carries the risk of pushing away other functions. A layered approach ensures that more audiences are targeted.
- Typical for sites like Arenberg, Le Pass and Transfo is that they are fairly isolated. Not that these sites always lie in the middle of nowhere, but they are generally secluded enclaves within the surrounding area. This means that most visitors come with a purpose, and are not just passers-by. The challenge here is to get people across the threshold, so to speak. The liveliness of these places is therefore strongly correlated with (the quality of) the functions that they offer.
- Large (industrial) heritage sites need two or three basic crowd pullers / crowd pleasers. These attractions ensure a constant flow of visitors and are the basis for a general liveliness. The visits reveal the most popular attractions: (1) a lookout point, (2) an experience center, (3) a trendy bar or restaurant and (4) general amenities like a playground or park. The visits have convinced the ULG to reignite and to go forward with the plans for the lookout point (in the former water tower) and an experience center related to 'energy' (in the boiler room and condenser hall). More niche activities come on top of this 'base layer'. For instance for Transfo: diving tank, climbing hall, microbrewery, etc.

Basics for an attractive place

- All visited sites are (almost) car-free. This results in more shared/open spaces, more social interaction and more safety. The visits have convinced the ULG-members to go forward with the plans of making a car-free area at Transfo and to centralize parking and logistics (like deliveries for events).
- The boiler room and condenser room (room under turbine hall) are hidden gems. Today at Transfo, these large halls with impressive layout and machinery are not accessible. The visits, however, demonstrated very well how to disclose these types of rooms, which often are dark and secluded. A fenced walking platform guides visitor through these rooms. Well-positioned lighting brings out the best of these spaces.

- The layout of the public space and use of materials in the public space proves to be very important in the general impression of these heritage sites. The layout and materials should be sober, sturdy, functional and related to the scale of the site and surrounding buildings. These sites are no shopping malls or fun parks, so public spaces should not be too shiny.

Identity as common thread

- It is striking that each site has a niche-based approach. Nevertheless, the three sites do also share similar offerings because of their spatial characteristics: the buildings for example are perfectly suited for MICE-activities (meetings, incentives, congresses and events). These niches help shaping the identity of the site.
- All initiatives on the Transfo site should adopt the 'corporate identity' of Transfo. The visits shows good as well as bad examples. This 'corporate identity' is a set of rules that guard and reinforce the image of Transfo. Typical items are a logo (which exists for Transfo), naming (no out-of-the-blue names for activities at Transfo), use of a specific color palette, signage and wayfinding, etc.
- Former employees can help in the production of a short film, explaining the functioning of the former power plant and telling personal stories. Both C-mine and ZLDR Luchtfabriek did an excellent job in producing these kind of short films.

Vox Pop

The [Vox Pop](#) video was shot during the Open Heritage Days 2018 at Transfo. Several people gave their opinion about the future of Transfo. Some relevant feedback:

- Suggestion to incorporate an escape room. This initiative has been elaborated and Transfo will welcome an escape room 'Plong' (Dutch for 'electric switch') in the coming months.
- Transfo should be more easily accessible. Compared to other sites (like the mining sites the ULG has visited), Transfo is really closed. The future development of the lookout point and experience center will be an answer to this concern.
- People want to be more informed about what is going on at Transfo. That is why more will be invested in communication. The new governance framework will introduce a communication task force and a communication quality supervision board.
- Visitors really miss a restaurant at Transfo. The ULG is aware of this issue. The idea was to have a pop-up restaurant at Transfo during summertime, but did not work out because of financial restraints.

Learning journey on the concept of an Urbact Implementation Network

The Urbact Implementation Network offered the Transfo stakeholders the opportunity (and the time) for an introspective journey. The project also created a certain pressure to deliver and to stay focused. Without this project, the stakeholders would be working on the 'issues of the day'. The feedback from the INTHERIT-partners is very valuable, as the peer review report demonstrates.

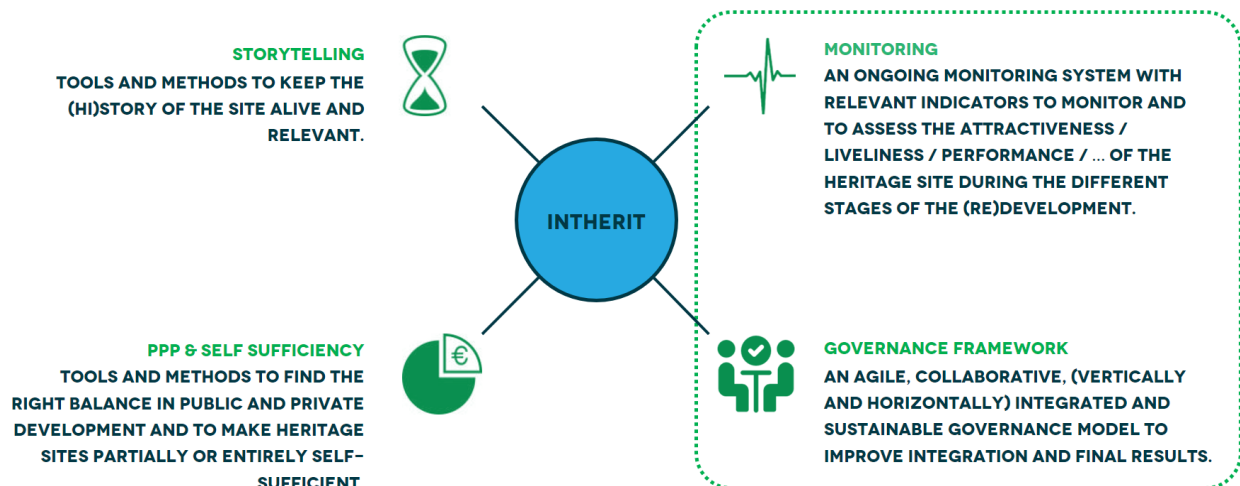
The transnational meetings made it possible to get to know the local challenges of the INT-HERIT partners. It is clear that the global challenge of each of the partners is the same: *how to cope with large and often important heritage sits when you are a small or medium-sized municipality or city?* The way to get to a solution, however, differs from partner to partner.

Related to this: the sites of the INTHERIT partners were sometimes very different in terms of scale, spatial structures, age and concrete issues and challenges. That is why there was still a need to exchange experiences with (public) authorities managing heritage sites, similar to the Transfo site. The visits to similar sites as Transfo (ULG study visits) delivered some valuable insights.

The transnational meetings also offered to opportunity to discuss the way of working and the structure and content of the OIF. These discussions were necessary, because of the fact that the most important deliverable of the project, being the OIF, is not very self-explanatory. Unfortunately, this topic took a lot of valuable time of each of the meetings resulting in (1) limited time to have an in-depth peer review and (2) little time for each of the partners to report on progress, lessons learnt and the work delivered by the local ULG.

1.5. Synthesis

At the beginning of the INT-HERIT project, the ULG defined four challenges for the development of the Transfo site:



It soon became clear that the governance framework is a prerequisite for all the other challenges. That is why the ULG spent most of its energy on the development of this model. The result is a framework to be implemented at the beginning of the next cooperation period; starting Q3 2019 (output 1). The cooperation agreement between the three structural partners is being elaborated (output 2).

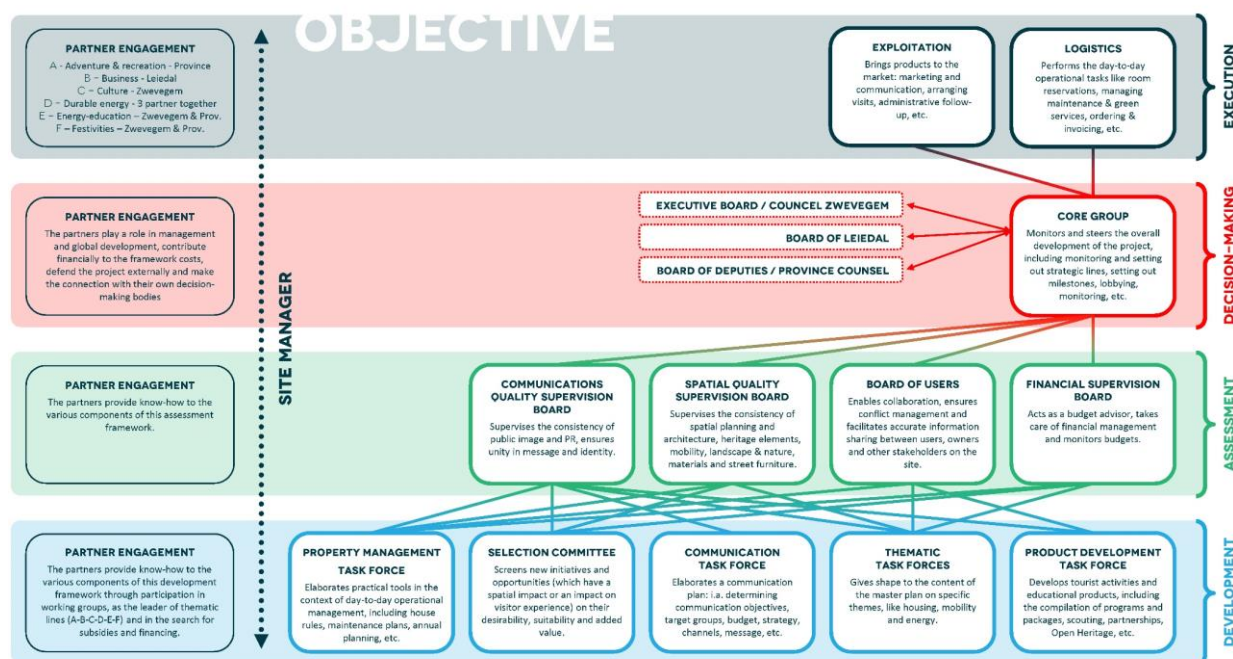
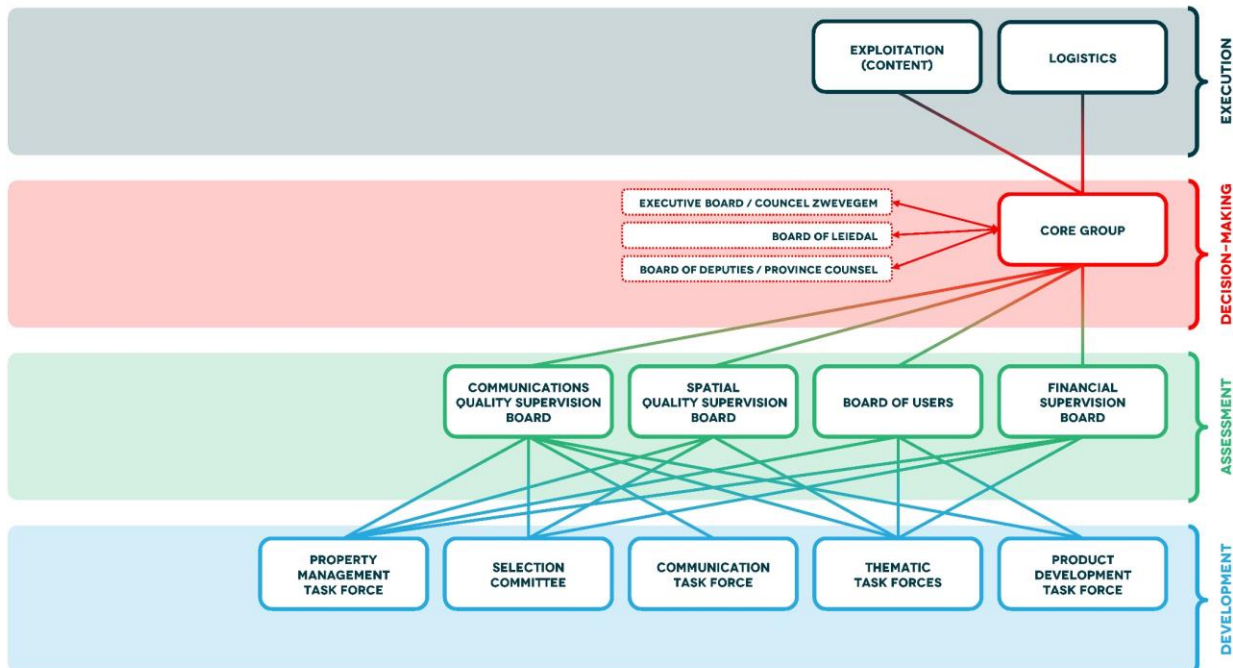
A nice and unforeseen side effect are the lessons learnt from the peer review and visits to six reference sites. These moments of reflection and introspection offered some unprecedented insights and interesting perspectives (output 3).

Output 1: A working governance framework in place

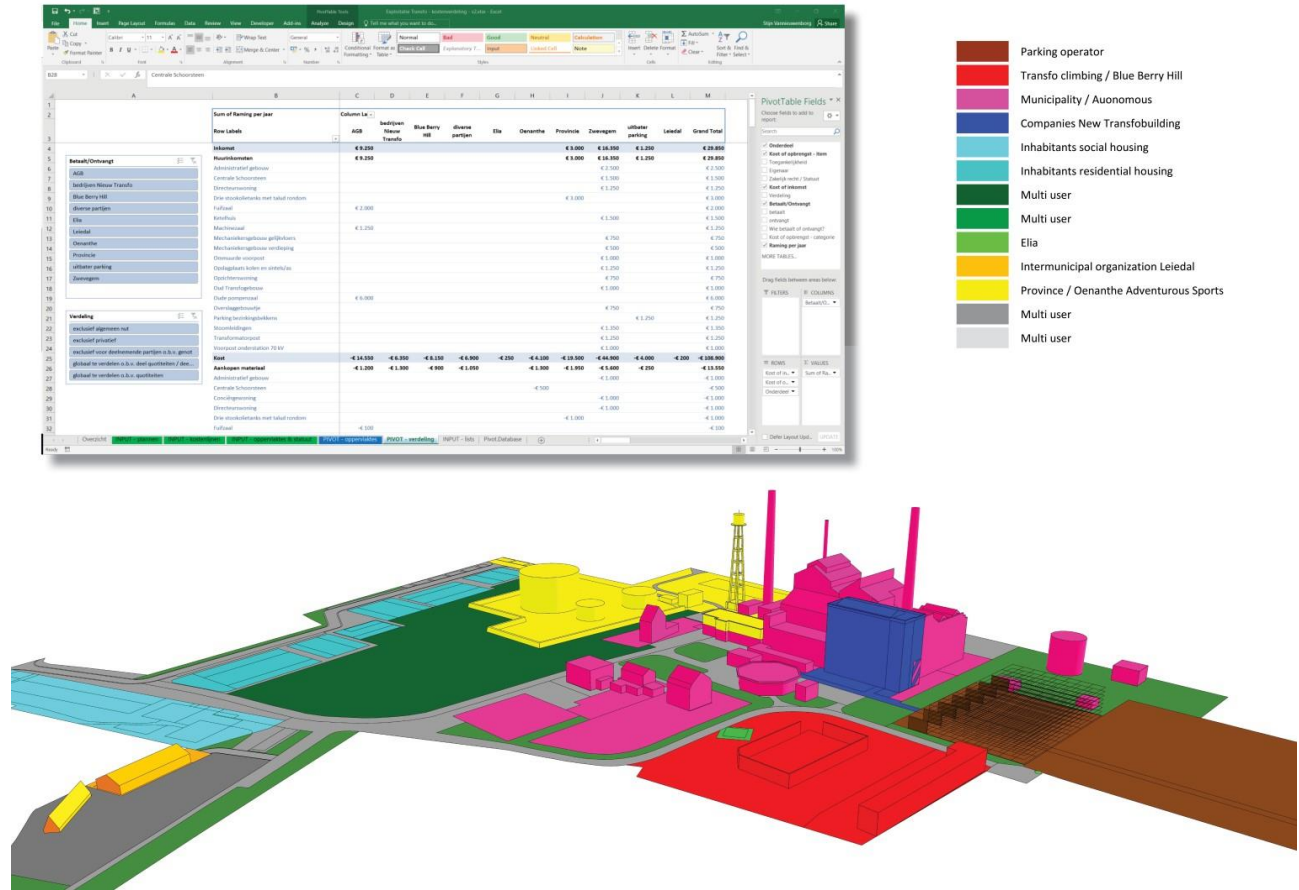
The Framework. Intermunicipal organization Leiedal is elaborating the governance framework, together with stakeholders from the municipality and the Province, taking into account suggestions from external expert, the Flemish Heritage Agency and users of the site.

The new governance framework include a set of instruments, which are still under construction. The instruments that are developed are (1) a new organization chart, (2) a dynamic 3D model of the site to visualize cost allocation and to manage property rights and rights of use and (3) a model for a co-operation agreement between the structural partners of Transfo. Gradually, other complementary instruments will be developed.

The improved organization chart includes new elements, like the introduction of (a) a consultative body for users, (b) a selection committee evaluating new initiatives on the site, (c) a quality supervision committee and (d) a financial working group. It also suggests improvement of the existing structures, especially the board supervising the quality of architectural and restorative interventions.



The dynamic 3D model is linked to a database, translating the complicated horizontal and vertical structure of owners, tenants and users into one comprehensive visualization. The model is a preliminary one, in anticipation of a detailed professional model.



The partners have learned that the framework is not just one but a set of instruments that allow to streamline initiatives and dynamics, to improve integration and final results.

Building on the sustainable and integrated approach. The implementation of an improved governance model has, in essence, the objective to make it more sustainable and resilient, more integrated (both vertically as horizontally), more flexible and more collaborative. It covers both aspects on macro level (*masterplanning / strategy*) as well as aspects on micro level (*How do we renegotiate contract so that current users contribute in maintenance of public spaces? Who will manage collective utilities? How do all the partners and users streamline their communication within the Transfo brand? etc.*). The new organization chart and cost allocation model will offer the tools to manage this kind of questions.

Based on a participatory approach. Intermunicipal organization Leiedal is elaborating the governance framework, together with the stakeholders from the municipality and the Province, taking into account suggestions from external expert, the Flemish Heritage Agency and users of the site.

Shaping an organizational and financial governance framework typically is not something that is very open to citizens and community participation, because of the high level of technicality of the subject.

It is, however, the objective to include stakeholders in the governance of the site. The user group for instance will discuss both small and big issues and opportunities, coordinating and cooperating with the quality supervision committee, the financial working group, etc. The user group includes amongst others a representative of the housing development, the operator of *Transfo Diving*, the operator of *Transfo Climbing*, the event agency responsible for the management of the event halls at Transfo, a representative of the businesses of the *New Transfobuilding*, etc. The group meets twice a year and in between if necessary. The meetings are also a platform to communicate new initiatives, to align different interests and to resolve dilemmas and conflicts.

Why should other EU cities use it? The governance framework (being the set of instruments) might be of interest for the management of (large) heritage sites where there are both different owners and different users. The framework offers / will offer instruments to allocate costs, to keep track of property and user rights, to streamline decision making and communication, to monitor quality, etc.

Taking into account the disruptive changes in the field of energy and mobility (and even the combination of both), the governance structure has to be able to manage an even more complex future. The Transfo partners, for instance, have recently tendered a study examining the introduction of a LECO (Local Energy Community) at Transfo. Transfo has a high concentration of both energy demand (diving tank, houses) and supply (a solar park of about 2.000 panels will be installed on top of the new Transfo parking in 2021).

Output 2: A co-operation agreement between the partners with financial engagements and engagements on governance of the site

The existing co-operation agreement between current structural partners (Leiedal, municipality of Zwevegem and Province) ends in Q2 2019. The insights provided by the INT-HERIT project will definitely lead to an improved and joined-up agreement. The partners are shaping the model for the co-operation agreement, following the political discussions between the municipality of Zwevegem and the Province of West-Flanders.

The co-operation agreement includes decisions on:

- the budget and financial contributions of the different partners
- the items this budget will be spent on (amongst which a dedicated site manager)
- the milestones that the partnership wants to achieve in the next coming 6 years
- the responsibilities and engagements of each of the partners
- the blueprint of the new governance framework to be implemented at the beginning of the next co-operation period

A draft of the agreement is not available at this time. The agreement will be elaborated in May and June of this year.

Output 3: unprecedented insights and interesting perspectives

The peer review and six visits to similar heritage sites revealed some new ideas and reignited existing ones. A selection of ideas, which will be elaborated thanks to this initiative:

- the introduction of a site manager and single point of contact
- the development of a lookout point in the former water tower
- the development of an experience trail related to energy
- the shutdown of the VZW, relieving Transfo of an administrative burden
- the development (and recent approval) of the EMPOWER 2.0 project, focusing on renewable energy for Transfo