



**INT-HERIT**

IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK OF HERITAGE STRATEGIES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED EUROPEAN CITIES

# PEER REVIEW REPORT

## Spiere Pool



# 1. Peer Review Methodology

Within the frames of INT-HERIT project there will be organized Peer Reviews aiming to review the site visits performed during the transnational meetings. Outputs and conclusions will be derived to present in benchmarking format the Peer Reviews will help all partners to learn with each other. It will result in useful recommendations that will act as inputs for the project deliverables.

## 1.1. The Peer Review Process

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Peer review is the evaluation of a task, a project, a policy by one or more people of similar competence to the producers of the task/project/policy (peers). It constitutes a form of self-regulation and self-assessment by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field. Peer review approaches are employed to maintain standards of quality, improve performance, and provide credibility.

The European Union has been using peer review in the 'Open Method of Co-ordination' of policies in the fields of active labour market policy since 1999. A peer review is a process where dedicated representatives exchange information and experiences on a specific topic for an effective policy or practice. The Peer Review process comprises a range of presentations and interactive working groups there are included visits to local sites where the policy can be seen in operation.


## 1.2. Peer Review Implementation

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- Peer review will be organized after each site visit in all transnational meetings;
- An open innovation approach will be followed in the peer review process. That means peers as well as interviewers (host city) are put together in round tables to review the site:
- A good preparation of the “host city representative” taking part in the review is essential to ensure an effective and fruitful peer review;

- The LG should be invited for the peer review
- Presentation about the site to kick the peer review session (in attachment).
- Site visit - Visit of the Spiere pool - Visit of surrounding area and swimming pool, being the renovated pool house and derelict tub
- There were four tables, each dealing with a different thematic. The objective was to give a colour card to join one of the four discussion tables with the corresponding colour. Because of the fact that some people had thematic preferences, as well as the group being evenly divided between the four tables, the colour card method was skipped. Each table had one hour of discussion time. A half hour of time was spent on group debriefing.
- The peer review session had a duration of 1 hour and 15 minutes;
- In the end of the session, the host city representative makes a 5 minutes presentation about the work developed in each table;

## 2. The Site – Spiere Pool

Partner	Spiere Pool
	<p>In 1935, the state built a factory between Spierebeek and de Schelde, with the objective of conducting trials into water purification. On 18 May 1937, King Leopold III came to visit the water-treatment plant. The plans did not go through because it was too costly and caused too much pollution. The building was neglected and eventually transformed into a swimming pool by Mr Samain. The Espierres swimming pool was the first swimming pool in Belgium. The last time anyone swam there was 1955. Meanwhile, the former swimming pool has been granted the status of a protected monument. Now it will be restored for new uses.</p>

## 3. Peer Review Session

In 1935, the state built a water-treatment plant in Spiere. The project came to a halt because it was too costly and caused too much pollution. The building was neglected and eventually transformed into a swimming pool, the first outdoor swimming pool in Belgium. The listed building has been restored, the tub however remains neglected due to a lack of funds. Key is to develop a meaningful program on site which can contribute to a successful development of the site. This program should be embedded in a regional perspective.

### Questions:

#### Table 1 - Events

- Assessment of theme 'events': Good idea? Drawbacks? Suggestions? Insights? Business model? ...
- Specific question: which concept for basin? How to finance?

#### Table 2 - Culture

- Assessment of theme 'culture': Good idea? Drawbacks? Suggestions? Insights? Business model? ...
- Specific question: border and new barrage: how to turn a threat into an opportunity?

## Table 3 - Tourism

- Assessment of theme 'tourism': Good idea? Drawbacks? Suggestions? Insights? Business model? ...
- Specific question: How to make the site known and loved, instead of unknown and unloved?

## Table 4 - Silence

- Assessment of theme 'tranquillity /serenity': Good idea? Drawbacks? Suggestions? Insights? Business model? ...
- Specific question: How do you evaluate the statements in the 'vision for the future'?

## 4. Peer Review Output

### Table 1 - Events

- You need a dedicated person to work on the development of the site and, preferably one or more days per week.
- The site needs storytelling. The 'Fifties' can be a cornerstone in the storytelling: post-war era where the Spiere pool was a synonym for 'joy', 'optimism' and 'happy times'. Even during the WWII the pool was a place where people could forget about the daily wartime stress. The short movie showed this very well and can be integrated into the storytelling.
- The idea to operate a swimming pool in the summer and use the tub for events during winter was welcomed by all but raises questions from a financial point of view. The building works on the weir can be an incentive to cross-border cooperation (Interreg?) in order to find the necessary funds. The pool tub being right on the border between Flanders and Wallonia is certainly a good USP for an EU- project proposal!
- Suggestion to turn the pool tub into a multipurpose place after full restoration (choice of the group to go for the most expensive model, with stairs over the entire length of the tub walls), with the possibility to integrate a terrace or kind of esplanade.
- Suggestion to provide a playground near the site.
- Suggestion to introduce a pub or restaurant. Work with a theme, such as fish
- Use the site as a resting point / pit stop for cyclists and pleasure boats (provide bikes for those visitors coming by boat/yachts)

## Table 2 - Culture

- The Spiere pool is a unique place, so you need to offer unique activities / experiences.
- The lack of parking is a weakness you can turn into an opportunity: focus on cycling and walkers
- Central theme can be '*Silence*' or '*Tranquility*'. Another possibility is to work on the '*historic conviviality*' the place represents:
  - use the tub as an agora for concertation, participation, discussion, philosophy
  - use the tub for (ephemeral) cultural activities like dance, theatre, ...
  - can it be a swimming pool again?
  - food as a connector: picnic site? outdoor gastrobar? selfcooking? Linked to local farming?
  - use the site for land art? contemporary art?
  - place for sports, like BMX park in tub, padel, skateboarding, ...
- Think outside the box, as they did at Transfo (diving tank in old fuel oil tank)
- The pool sits on the border between Flanders and Wallonia. This is both a weakness and strength. It is a unique situation which gives opportunities in EU-funding. It touches the EU-DNA. It symbolises division versus unity. It is also the Roman versus the Germanic cultural world.
- Integrate the story of the site (historic conviviality, water purification, ...) in the further development of the site.
- The site is technically OK (except the swimming tub), now is the time to invest in people and to make a good content program.



## Table 3 - Tourism

- Three strong attractive factors of the site are (1) landscape, (2) water and (3) bicycle recreation. Everything should be centred on those factors. These factors are of a limited tourist interest today, but can be enhanced by a unique experience, embedded in a regional network of unique activities.
- The group examined the potential of the place within the theme 'water experience': the architecture of the tub (scale, composition, flexibility) and the location is perfect for *flowriding/flowboarding* (example: surf-pool.com). Flowriding is an adventurous niches port, for surfers, but the simpler variant with a bodyboard also lends itself for a business activity/team building and for children.
- Wikipedia: *Flowriding (or flowboarding) is a late-20th century alternative boardsport incorporating elements of surfing, body boarding, skateboarding, skimboarding, snowboarding and wakeboarding. Flowriders ride on artificial waves that are technically called "sheet waves". Powerful pumps project a three-inch layer of water at speeds ranging from 20 MPH to 30 MPH. The water flows up and over surfaces engineered to replicate the shape of ocean waves. Sheet waves are stationary waves, in that the wave does not move forward, and the movement is derived from water flowing over a stationary surface. Flowriders get their speed from the energy of the water flowing at them, and can perform basic to sophisticated turns and tricks within a relatively small area. The sports has two main divisions, based on the type or board: the flow board and the body board.*
- The electricity for the flowriding pumps can be generated by the turbine for the new weir?
- A small slope in the landscape should be provided for spectators of the show.
- The middle and top floor of the pool building can be turned into a (pop-up) fish bar (fish & chips with Belgian beers). Possibly linked to local farms / local fish, lobster and or mussels breeding in pool house top floor basin?
- There is an obvious and promising link with the Transfo diving tank in Zwevegem, a similar activity that falls within the water experience. You can offer a 'adventurous water experience day' with (1) diving and (2) flowriding, linking both with (3) bike ride or (4) boat trip:
  - (electric) bike ride: bike rental points on Transfo and near the pool, using the bicycle paths along the canal Bossuit-Kortrijk and the river Schelde (= water theme remains).
  - (electric) boat trip: via Canal Bossuit-Kortrijk and river Schelde with boats or rafts (e.g. vlotgent.be) (= water theme remains).



## Table 4 - Silence

- *'Nature'* and *'Water'* can be a central theme, the building is located between two water lines (canal and river) which surrounds, isolates, protects and embraces the site.
- The origin of the building lies within the theme of *'Water'*, which can be used to develop adventurous and extreme open water activities. This can also be linked to the Transfo diving tank. Possible activities can be found on [openwaterpedia.com](http://openwaterpedia.com). These kinds of activities need more basic infrastructure. For instance:
  - ice swimming in winter (water sports which gains appeal)
  - ice skating in winter
  - exercise pool for swimmers to cross the canal (cold water training in protected environment)
  - a specific Armagh reference is *'Wild Water Armagh'* in Conroys Pond:  
<https://wildswim.wordpress.com/2015/02/06/wild-water-armagh-conroys-pond/>
  - *'ordinary'* open water for summer swimming
- Because of its location, the surrounding water and landscape, the site offers silence and tranquillity, no disturbance. It is a remote place for people looking for a resting place. Therefore the site can be a co-working place for writers, painters, artist in residence. These artists can get inspiration from the place (tranquillity, water, landscape, nature, concept of purification, ecology,...).
- Within the same theme of silence and tranquillity, it should also offer opportunities for local people / the local community: yoga classes / meditation / mindfulness / bird watching / ...
- The video showed a happy time in the past: try to bring back this ambiance today! Publish QR-code to moving pool documentary on information panel.
- The site can be a place for different activities, one not excluding the other.
- The border is an important element: overcoming the border, look for unity instead of differences.
- The new weir will be a disruptive element in the landscape: turn it into art, make the weir beautiful.



## 5. Main Findings

The Main Findings intends to highlight the strong ideas developed during the peer review activity and should be used as a working document for the city local group. The outcomes of the 3 working groups are presented below accordingly to the 5 project dimensions, namely:

### **Culture4Development:**

MF1: Storytelling for place branding: *“The site needs storytelling. The ‘Fifties’ can be a cornerstone in the storytelling: post-war era where the Spiere pool was a synonym for ‘joy’, ‘optimism’ and ‘happy times’. Even during the WWII the pool was a place where people could forget about the daily wartime stress. The short movie showed this very well and can be integrated into the storytelling.”* - Storytelling has become very important for the marketing and branding of places like Spiere Pool. At this stage, Spiere Pool needs to move the narrative and story of the place further. First it should stick with the core values and build an authentic story, staying true to the core identity of the place and creating an expectation of an experience. Second, focus on key factors of place attractiveness, monitoring key factors linked to place attractiveness makes it easier to undertake effective adjustments for the future. Third, Involve the community, there is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about. Whatever the problem, the community is the answer. Fourth, set the right priorities, the importance of guaranteeing the quality of life of the local people, making sure the Spiere Pool is for them and also tourists will love it.

MF2: Spiere Pool as an integration element: *“Integrate the story of the site (historic conviviality, water purification, ...) in the further development of the site”; “The pool sits on the border between Flanders and Wallonia. This is both a weakness and strength. It is a unique situation which gives opportunities in EU-funding. It touches the EU-DNA. It symbolises division versus unity. It is also the Roman versus the Germanic cultural world”; “The border is an important element: overcoming the border, look for unity instead of differences”; “use the tub as an agora for concertation, participation, discussion, philosophy”; “use the tub for (ephemeral) cultural activities like dance, theatre, ...”; “use the site for land art? contemporary art?”* – the Spiere Pool

can benefit from the geographical local at the borders of 2 Belgium regions. It's important to open communication doors with both regions at political, social and economic level.

#### **Culture4Engagement:**

MF3 – Community is the answer: *“The video showed a happy time in the past: try to bring back this ambiance today! Publish QR-code to moving pool documentary on information panel.” “food as a connector: picnic site? outdoor gastrobar? selfcooking? Linked to local farming?”*- The LG is a good basis but is necessary to bring the community to the discussion and make them feel that they will have a role in the transformation in progress. Developing partnerships involving local authorities (including different departments within the local administration), beneficiaries/users, NGOs, public agencies, the private sector and the civil society (citizens and inhabitants) has proven to be a key component in the design and implementation of efficient urban policies. The main objective of the LG is to bring around the table the different interests at stakes and different perspectives to frame problems and agree policy priorities, and design concrete solutions so as to address these problems in the most efficient way. LG are expected to co-produce ideas and solutions for the Spiere Pool. Eventually, it leads to rigorous and innovative results and contributes to strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders to develop efficient policies.

#### **Culture4Value:**

MF4 – Uniqueness: *“The Spiere pool is a unique place, so you need to offer unique activities / experiences”; “The lack of parking is a weakness you can turn into an opportunity: focus on cycling and walkers; Central theme can be ‘Silence’ or ‘Tranquility’”; “Another possibility is to work on the ‘historic conviviality’ the place represents; Integrate the story of the site (historic conviviality, water purification, ...) in the further development of the site”; “Three strong attractive factors of the site are (1) landscape, (2) water and (3) bicycle recreation. Everything should be centred on those factors. These factors are of a limited tourist interest today, but can be enhanced by a*

*unique experience, embedded in a regional network of unique activities”; “(electric) bike ride: bike rental points on Transfo and near the pool, using the bicycle paths along the canal Bossuit-Kortrijk and the river Schelde (= water theme remains); “(electric) boat trip: via Canal Bossuit-Kortrijk and river Schelde with boats or rafts (e.g. vlotgent.be) (= water theme remains); “Because of its location, the surrounding water and landscape, the site offers silence and tranquillity, no disturbance. It is a remote place for people looking for a resting place”; “Therefore the site can be a co-working place for writers, painters, artist in residence. These artists can get inspiration from the place (tranquillity, water, landscape, nature, concept of purification, ecology,...); “Within the same theme of silence and tranquillity, it should also offer opportunities for local people / the local community: yoga classes / meditation / mindfulness / bird watching / ...” – the uniqueness of Spiere Pool is highlighted in several comments made during the peer review.*

**MF5 Ideas for new uses:** *“The idea to operate a swimming pool in the summer and use the tub for events during winter was welcomed by all but raises questions from a financial point of view”; “The building works on the weir can be an incentive to cross-border cooperation (Interreg?) in order to find the necessary funds”; “The pool tub being right on the border between Flanders and Wallonia is certainly a good USP for an EU- project proposal!”; “Suggestion to turn the pool tub into a multipurpose place after full restoration (choice of the group to go for the most expensive model, with stairs over the entire length of the tub walls), with the possibility to integrate a terrace or kind of esplanade”; “Suggestion to provide a playground near the site”; “Suggestion to introduce a pub or restaurant”; “Work with a theme, such as fish”; “Use the site as a resting point / pit stop for cyclists and pleasure boats (provide bikes for those visitors coming by boat/yachts)”; “use the site for land art? contemporary art? place for sports, like BMX park in tub, padel, skateboarding, ...”; “The group examined the potential of the place within the theme ‘water experience’: the architecture of the tub (scale, composition, flexibility) and the location is perfect for flowriding/flowboarding (example: surf-pool.com)”; “The middle and top floor of the pool building can be turned into a (pop-up) fish bar (fish & chips with Belgian beers)”; “Possibly linked to local farms / local fish, lobster and or mussels breeding in pool house top floor basin?”; “There is an obvious and promising link with the Transfo diving tank in Zwevegem, a similar activity that falls within the water experience. You can offer a ‘adventurous water experience day’ with (1)*



*diving and (2) flowriding, linking both with (3) bike ride or (4) boat trip; ice swimming in winter (water sports which gains appeal)”; “ice skating in winter; exercise pool for swimmers to cross the canal (cold water training in protected environment)” - many new uses suggested during the peer review exercise make it clear the high potential that Spiere Pool offers.*

**Culture4Measures:**

MF6 Sustainability: *“You need a dedicated person to work on the development of the site and, preferably one or more days per week”; “There is an obvious and promising link with the Transfo diving tank in Zwevegem, a similar activity that falls within the water experience. You can offer a ‘adventurous water experience day’ with (1) diving and (2) flowriding, linking both with (3) bike ride or (4) boat trip” – linking Spiere Pool and Transfo was an idea that different groups during the peer review discussed. The assets (Spiere and Transfo) are already there. The delivery of an integrated experience between both sites links with many partners involved in the region from the public, private, community and voluntary organisations. Spiere, which is on a on yearly stage of development of could benefit of the learning and experience of Transfo site.*