The MiT Framework
for the Pilots

Version Beta 1.1 (April 2018)

Framework:
An essential supporting structure of a building, vehicle, or object.
A basic structure underlying a system, concept, or text.

What we mean by "framework"

The main aim of the Municipalities in Transition project is to develop and test a structured way for municipalities and transition groups to create sustainable change together in a synergetic way, responding to the great challenges[1] of this historical period, adopting systemic thinking[2] and a specific set of methodologies, tools and principles.

The MiT Framework (MiTF) will provide a basic logical structure and methodology, a set of principles and cultural assets and a collections of Tools to be used to achieve the task.

Disclaimer

We are completely aware of the complexity of the project and we interpret our results as a first step of a longer process.
The MiTF is an experiment based on the general principle that what we propose was evaluated as "Good Enough for Now, Safe Enough to Try"[3].
This is for you to get the general meaning of the framework, and we don't advise using it in its current beta version.
The MiT team is working on a new, improved and usable version.

10 features of the framework

Here is a list of features we considered fundamental for a framework of this kind:

1. It's closely linked to the Transition principles
2. It's implementable both in a top-down and a bottom-up approaches.
3. It's powerful enough to cope with high levels of complexity and uncertainty
4. It's simple enough to be relatively easy to learn and to use in real life
5. It has a low level of preconditions for adoption (low resources, low technology)
6. It's effective
7. It's easily adaptable to a wide variety of very different contexts
8. It's designed to be iteratively evolved by the users
9. It's suitable for use in a context of shared/diffused governance

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[1] Climate Change (IPCC - AR5), scarcity of resources, loss of biodiversity, pollution, increase in inequalities … (Planetary Boundaries)

[2] For a primer on systemic thinking you can check the videos of the System Thinking Course of the Complexity Lab or refer to Thinking in Systems: a Primer by Donella Meadows.

[3] This is the basic principle in the governance methodology of Sociocracy and cognate to Agile approach to development. To refer to this sentence we can sometimes use the acronym "GENSET".

10. It's capable of improving the quality of the cooperation between the involved actors

Who is MiTF for

MiTF is designed to foster the process of transformative collaborations within the Community. An ideal implementation would see all the key Actors of the Community aware of the availability of the System and able to benefit from its use directly or indirectly.

During the design of the MiTF we considered three main starting point scenarios:

1. Process generated and led by the municipality
2. Process generated and led by civil society
3. Process generated and led by both together

Our intent is to provide a framework applicable to all these scenarios.

Some fundamental premises

We try to summarize here very briefly some of the principles and ideas that guided the design of the MiTF. The framework has been shaped by following these principles.

About Transition principles and the MiTF Final Purpose

The Head-Heart-Hands principles[4] at the core of the Transition Movement proved to be effective and disruptive in many different situations and socio-economic contexts. They were a central inspiration in the development of the MiTF:

> **Head**: act on the basis of the best information and evidence available and apply collective intelligence to find better ways of living, keeping a strong systemic vision.
>
> **Heart:** work with compassion, valuing and paying attention to the emotional, psychological, relational and social aspects of the ongoing work.
>
> **Hands**: turn our vision and ideas into a tangible reality, initiating practical projects and starting to build a new, healthy economy in the place you live.

For a better understanding of the statements above it can also be useful to broaden the way in which we define and express the same ideas through a set of goals to achieve:

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[4] https://transitionnetwork.org/about-the-movement/what-is-transition/principles-2/

Respect resource limits and create resilience – The urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases emissions, reduce strongly our reliance on fossil fuels and make wise use of precious resources is at the forefront of everything we do. Our aim is to build resilient communities that can adapt to external socio-ecological shocks as climate change or economic instability.

Promote inclusivity and social justice – The most disadvantaged and powerless people in our societies are likely to be most affected by rising fuel and food prices, resource shortages and extreme weather events. We need to Increase the chances of all groups in society to live well, healthily and with sustainable livelihoods.

Adopt subsidiarity (self-organisation and decision making at the appropriate level) – The intention of the Transition model is not to centralise or control decision making, but rather to work with everyone so that it is practiced at the most appropriate, practical and empowering level.

Pay attention to balance – In responding to urgent, global challenges, individuals and organizations can end up feeling stressed, closed or constrained rather than open, connected and creative. We create space for reflection, celebration and rest to compensate for the moments when we're busy getting things done. We explore different ways of working which engage our heads, hands and hearts and enable us to develop collaborative and trusting relationships.

Be part of an experimental, learning network – Transition is a real-life, real-time global social experiment. Being part of a network means we can create change more quickly and more effectively, drawing on each other's experiences and insights. We want to acknowledge and learn from failure as well as success – if we're going to be bold and find new ways of living and working, we won't always get it right on the first attempt. We will be open about our processes and will actively seek and respond positively to feedback.

Freely share ideas and power – Transition is a grassroots movement, where ideas can be taken up rapidly, widely and effectively because each community takes ownership of the process itself. Transition looks different in different places and we want to encourage rather than unhelpfully constrain that diversity.

Collaborate and look for synergies – The Transition approach is to work together as a community, unleashing our collective genius to obtain a greater impact together than we can as individuals. We will look for opportunities to build creative and powerful partnerships across and beyond the Transition movement and develop a collaborative culture, finding links between projects, creating open decision-making processes and designing events and activities that help people make connections.

Foster positive visioning and creativity – Our primary focus is not on being against things, but on developing and promoting positive possibilities. We believe in using creative ways to engage and involve people, encouraging them to imagine the future

they want to inhabit. The generation of new stories is central to this visioning work, as is having fun and celebrating success.

The MiTF Final Purpose

This list of goals above is probably also the best way to explain what the use of the MiTF is trying to produce in a community that adopts it: what we could call the MiTF Final Purpose.
"**To create deep cultural and practical changes towards sustainability and wellbeing through the implementation of the Transition Principles**"

Resilience principles

Another concept that is central for Transition processes and ideas is resilience, and many of the indications, methodologies, tools we are proposing are designed to contribute towards resilience at several levels[5].

Theory of fluxes

As far as we know this is not something already defined at the academic level[6]. It derives mainly from empirical work on the field with municipalities and communities, as well as marketing theories, and it was partially inspired by the work of the economist David Lane[7] on complexity and social interactions.

The point is that we often try to produce change and new cultural assets creating "groups".

> *A group in sociology exhibits cohesiveness to a larger degree. Aspects that members in the group may share include: interests, values, ethnic/linguistic background, roles and kinship. One way of determining if a collection of people can be considered a group is if individuals who belong to that collection use the self-referent pronoun "we;" using "we" to refer to a collection of people often implies that the collection thinks of itself as a group.*

However when we organize ourselves in groups we automatically set some conditions that are inherent to groups that allow certain dynamics and forbid others.

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[5] A useful reference is the "Principles for Building Resilience Sustaining Ecosystem Services in Social-Ecological Systems" - Biggs, R. M. Schlüter - ISBN: 9781107082656 - Link
[6] A further exploration of this subject is certainly necessary, Particularly in the field of social innovation theories.
[7] David A. Lane - Complexity and Innovation Dynamics; Envisioning a Socially Sustainable Future.

Some of the conditions that we see in groups and we considered particularly interesting for our project purpose are the following:

GROUPS	
Common analysis	A group normally needs to have a common/similar analysis of the reality.
Common vision and goals	A group normally needs to have common/similar general vision and goals.
We are similar, we are WE	A group normally develops an identity and borders/edges. In a group we define who is in and who is out.
Direct relations	A group operates in direct relationship within its membership (in person or virtual).
Time and space unity	A group normally acts within a definite space and time, it needs some synchronicity in the way it operates.
Common projects	A group normally develops common projects.

Observing these characteristics it is easy to understand that groups are not particularly suitable to support a **transversal** change, like the one we need, in order to produce sustainability for human societies. For this reason we developed the concept of fluxes: social structures with the characteristic to move and influence wider portions of society in a transversal way.

To better understand this concept we can think of what the marketing system does to promote, for instance, a technology like the "smart phone". The system sends a signal to everyone to convince them that a smartphone is something they need/want. This signal works as a flux hitting simultaneously different targets at different levels (the top manager and the unemployed, the young person and the old one). However the final product (the smartphone) will be sold focusing on "groups" (targeting the customers): smartphones for rich people, for geeks, very cheap models ("even you can have one!"), and so on. The point is that if you want to sell that product to *everyone* you need first a "flux" informing, connecting and fostering as many groups as possible at the same time.

By analogy, if you'd like to produce systemic change, a wide social evolution, you should probably generate, promote, support and take care of the right fluxes or you'll end up involving only certain niches of the system.

If we compare the characteristics of fluxes with those of groups we can note some interesting differences:

GROUPS	FLUXES[8]
Common analysis and need	**Common analysis and need**
Common vision and goals	**No need for common vision and goals**
We are similar, we are WE	**No need to be WE**
Direct relations	**No need for direct relations**
Time and space unity	**No need for time and space unity**
Common projects	**No need for common projects**

With fluxes we can do things that we can't do with groups, like making people with different views produce positive effects in a community without fighting each other, or without having to connect between them. This can prove quite life-changing for everyone active in social innovation processes.

All this to say that the MiTF design tries to incorporate the use and care of fluxes in its model (in addition and as a complement to the care of groups).

Stochastic design

Another basic concept that guided the creation of MiTF concerns the need to face extreme complexity and resource scarcity for those trying to promote systemic change in our society.

One of the purposes of the MiTF is to help every actor to "design and plan" observing the opportunities arising around them, and when and where "energy" is available. Energy and opportunities can manifest themselves in many different forms, such as the availability of human and economic resources, the material availability of space, equipment, skills, the need for solutions to specific problems, etc.

Often we tend to design certain actions because we believe they are right and important. However, it may occur that not all the necessary conditions are present to make it happen (e.g. the local context, the lack of commitment of people, the lack of resources etc.). Hence, this could lead to a situation where we spend a lot of time and resources, eventually getting a disproportion between the effort made and the results obtained, and in many cases not reaching the goal expected.

Acting mainly on "opportunities" and "energy" availability (i.e. the necessary conditions) makes things easier and increases the number of actions that can be performed with higher impacts on reality. We call this attitude "stochastic design" to stress the concept of having a constant attention to the random evolution of the environment, recognizing and accepting variables, and designing on that attitude **without losing the scope of our work**. The risk is in fact that

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[8] It may be necessary, in the future, to arrive at a different and more complete definition of the characteristics of the fluxes.

following the opportunities, say money available through a government incentive campaign, we end up doing what the campaign is asking to us even if we don't really need it, or it is not aligned with our scope, but only because there are funds. This can be as ineffective and time consuming as the pursuit of unattainable goals.

By the way, thereway there is no need for the users to learn much more about it, the concept is embedded in the whole system. Every suggested procedure is oriented towards this attitude.

Managers are not confronted with problems that are independent of each other, but with dynamic situations that consist of complex systems of changing problems that interact with each other. I call such situations messes. Problems are extracted from messes by analysis. Managers do not solve problems, they manage messes.

Russell L. Ackoff
(organizational theorist)

Basic functions and structure of the MiTF

We begin now outlining the key elements of this methodology:

- the Functions
- the Grid
- The Database
- the Community of Practice.

> ## Warning!
>
> All the following elements are designed to be eventually adapted to local contexts. However, we suggest you don't make adaptations while in the early phase of using the System (unless the need is absolutely clear and with an agreement with your Tutor). See more on "MiTF adaptation" chapter in this document.

The Functions

The MiTF is designed to perform a set of functions that we consider extremely important for every community trying to evolve and change.

These are:

1. **The Evaluation and Diagnosis Function** - A way for the community to easily evaluate its initiative in an approximate way, but still sensible enough for the present purpose, and to set a Baseline from where its path toward the MiTS Purpose is starting. This will also let the same community to keep track of the progresses and changes over time. At the same time the MiTS helps to spot energy, resources, weak points of the community systems and Actions, providing a diagnosis tool to inform other activities.

2. **The Co-Design Function** - A better way to connect different actors and let them co-design plans and actions. The way the MiTF works tends to break walls and compartments making the power of connections, cooperation and sharing more visible and valuable.

3. **The Co-Implementation Function** - This is a consequence of the previous function. In a world facing various levels of scarcity, the need of doing a lot with less can be a key effect to pursue. By taking actions together, and fostering subsidiarity, we are more likely to be able to support shifts in culture and behaviour and to achieve impacts which are more proportionate to the ecological and social crises we face.

4. **The ToolBox Function** - The MiTF tries to make easily available in its Database a variety of Tools experimented so far around the world and particularly suitable for the kind of process we are trying to foster. It also suggests how to connect and use them in the most effective way, highlighting strengths, risks and weaknesses for each one of them.

5. **Cultural Leverage Function** - Everyone getting in touch with the MiTF will likely gravitate towards systemic thinking and the key patterns towards sustainability. This will happen for those aware and in direct contact with the MiTF but also for those that will use the Tools or that are part of processes designed within the MiTF logic. The basic principles will be replicated in a fractal way all over the framework elements (or at least this is our aim and hope).

The grid overview

As we already pointed out, municipalities, activists and all the Actors of a community have to face the complexity of their local system day by day. Like in a boardgame, the first element of the MiTF is designed to provide a clearer, more systemic view of the "playing field".

The Grid performs three specific functions:

- Identifies **Actors and Actions Categories**
- Shows **Relational Proximity** between the actors
- Act as an organizer of Actions and **Tools**

Below the basic layout of the **Grid**.

								Actors Categories
Actions Categories	A Municipality Political	B Municipality Organization	C Controlled Entities	D Suppliers	E Organizations	F Businesses	G Public	H Networks
1 Vision								
2 Organization								
3 Planning								
4 Technical aspects								
5 Relation								
6 Cultural change								
7 Networking								

Refer to the MiTF Grid Template document for a full view of the table. Printing a copy of it can help you while reading the present document.

The Actors Categories

The upper horizontal row shows the key **Actors Categories** organized in eight columns. The way they are ordered suggests the relational distance between them.

This indication of distance must not be considered in a rigid way: reality can show us a great variety of situations. We highly encourage the use of the present column distribution, with some possible slight modifications, as discussed with the Tutor. You can see a different color for the first and the last column that indicates that those Actors are out of the community domain and/or space.

Here is the list of the basic Actors Categories:

							Actors Categories
A. Municipality Political	B. Municipality Organization	C. Controlled Entities	D. Suppliers	E. Organizations	F. Businesses	G. Public	H. Networks

For example, considering the relational distance among categories as the distance between columns, the **Political** level of the municipality can interact more easily with the **Organization** level of the municipality than with the **Suppliers**. This gives a very quick way to roughly estimate the amount of effort (energy, resources) one actor needs to reach and interact with another actor (particularly when the goal is to produce support, suggest changes, etc.).

The list below will help you to identify the **Actors** and focus on a few important traits they present:

A.   **MUNICIPALITY**: Political level
Elected (they care about votes and voters), they have to deal with political opponents and competitors, they often stay only a few years, often have or are forced to practice a "short-term thinking" attitude. Almost volunteers in small municipalities, well paid and powerful in many big cities.

B.   **MUNICIPALITY**: Organization level
Employees (civil servants) or freelancers often stay for a long time, very often have a deep understanding of the "municipality machine", they are the practical "door to action". They can easily be overwhelmed by the workload and suffer scarcity of resources.

C.   **CONTROLLED ENTITIES**: structures, consortia, companies controlled by the Municipality
Entities that are strongly connected to the municipality (public water services, waste, maintenance, social services), they can be controlled in a very direct way, they have to act as the municipality wants (if they don't, move them on another appropriate column).

D.   **SUPPLIERS**: public and private suppliers
Entities connected through stable or occasional economic contracts.

E.   **ORGANIZATIONS**:   non-profit, associations, schools, universities, unions, parties

Non-profit organized entities that are present on the territory, organized activists.

F.   **BUSINESSES[9]**:
Companies, cooperatives, freelancers, private schools and universities, businesses oriented organizations

G.   **PUBLIC**: families, citizens, individuals, people
Taken as single unity (one citizen, one family) or as not organized groups (all the people living in that street, an area...).

H.   **NETWORKS**: other municipalities, municipality consortia, regions, other actors (far away) …
Entities that may or may not be present in the territory but that we know are important to achieve a particular goal.

Sometime you may find Actors not so easy to classify, don't spend much time in finding "the perfect column" just place it in the most plausible position and be consistent if a similar case re-occurs.

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[9] We are not completely convinced of the need to have Organizations and Businesses as separated categories, we might decide in future to simplify the Grid merging those two columns.

The Actions Categories

The first vertical column on the left indicates the Actions categories we want to focus on in our "playing field". Again this is not to be taken with rigidity and we acknowledge that we can have overlaps.

Actions Categories
1. Vision
2. Organization
3. Planning
4. Technical aspects
5. Relations
6. Cult Change
7. Networking

1.   **VISION:** where do we want to go, what we see in the future
Actions and processes that tend to create/evolve/change a vision.

2.   **ORGANIZATION:** people, roles, structures, governance, procedures…
Action and processes that tend to create or modify aspects about how the actors are organising/governing themselves or with others.

3.   **PLANNING:** sector plans, policies integrations, budgets…
Action and processes that tend to create an action plan, step by step procedures.

4.   **TECHNICAL ASPECTS:** monitoring, data, technicalities …
Action and processes that modify the state of the system through technology and technical aspects in general (also social technologies).

5.   **RELATIONS:** within actors, social aspects …
Action and processes that want to create or improve relations between actors (key sentence: the way we talk to each other).

6. **CULTURAL CHANGE:** communication, trainings, involvement, empowerment …
    Action and processes that tend to modify or improve the knowledge and the understanding of the "world".

7. **NETWORKING:** networking, diversity, info exchange, comparison …
    Action and processes that tend to create stable/new connections between actors (key sentence: the way we share and work together).

The cells

Obviously Actors and Actions Categories intersect in Cells that we are going to use as containers when we perform the functions of our Framework. We can also imagine the Grid like a well organized cupboard where we can store everything we need for our "transition" activity with the community, and the Cells as drawers. Each cell can be identified by the letter of its column and the number of its row; this will be very useful to connect the cells to the records of the MiTF database as we will see in the next chapter.

When we move inside a Cell using the MiTF we will often use processes that we call Cells Cycles (CC): a way to avoid errors and focus on the most important aspects of the Functions that we are trying to do.

The Cells Cycles

The first Cycle (CC1) is a way to verify if the action we observe or plan within a Cell fulfills the Head/Heart/Hands (HHH) transition logic.It can be performed in a very rapid way answering to the following 3 questions:

1. Is this Action based on the best available data? (Head step)
2. Is it considering and taking care of emotional/relational consequences for everyone involved? (Heart step)
3. Does it produce practical effects? (Hands step)

The CC1 can be used for evaluation, correction and planning. It can be used at different levels of complexity to fine tune its effectiveness. Here is a more complete way to see it:

4. Is it based on the best available data? (Head step)
    a. Would you classify the data as very solid and true[10]?
    b. Would you classify the data as good but with some doubts?
    c. Would you classify the data as quite uncertain?

5. Is it considering and taking care of emotional/relational consequences on everyone involved? (Heart step)
    a. Is this producing fear or conflict?
    b. Is this highlighting positivity, happiness, joy… ?
    c. Is there "space" and "time" to take care for emotions?
    d. Are participants feeling empowered?

6. Does it produce practical effects? (Hands step)
    a. Can this produce change?
    b. Can the change last?
    c. Can the change foster further change?

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[10] Official data are not always solid and true so are not enough to answer "yes".

The second Cycle (CC2) should always follow the first as a safety reminder of the power of connections and inclusion. It is based on the following 3 very simple questions:

1. Who is there?
2. Who is missing?
3. Who should be there?

Easy but very powerful.

More CCs could be added if necessary in the future and depending on the local conditions.

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*"The way to build a complex system that works
is to build it from very simple systems that work."*

Kevin Kelly
(founder of Wired magazine)

The Database overview

The second element of the MiTF is a database where we collect all the transition patterns that we already know and those that we will discover in the future.

The word *patterns*[11] is the most appropriate to describe the contents of the database, but it is also abstract and unusual for the most. From now on we will use the words Actions and Tools instead, choosing one or the other depending of the type of pattern we are referring to. Don't worry too much about using the right word, it really doesn't have effects on the use of the database.

What are Tools in the database?

They can be a simple way to solve or handle a very specific problem:

> **Problem:** Where do I get reliable information about new PV technology?
> **Tool:** Subscribe to the XYW web newsletter!

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[11] Pattern: any form of correlation between the state of elements within a system.

Or more complex questions:

> **Problem:** How we can evolve the vision of the municipality employees?
> **Tool:** Awareness raising and team building training program and methodology.
> **Tool:** Deep ecology training program and methodology.
> **Tool:** U-Lab training program
> **Tool:** Guided tour of the National Climate Observatory Center
> **...**

Or an even larger approach:

> **Problem:** How do we involve citizens in that area of town?
> **Tool 1:** Transition Street projects (examples, methodologies..)
> **Tool 2:** REconomy projects (examples, methodologies..)
> **Tool 3:** CSA scheme
> **Tool ...**

How do we organize the Tools in the database?

The main features of the MiTF database are:

1. It is organized as Pattern Language database[12]
2. Therefore database records are connected with other relevant database records and we could call them *patterns,* according to the original definition of the Pattern Language methodology
3. Database records are connected to Grid cells (one or more)
4. The Database contains specific and transverse Tools

The Pattern Language concept was created for city planning, but in general it is a very interesting way to organize information when you are trying to keep and foster a systemic view. The way it works is quite self-explanatory, there is basically no learning curve for those that have to use the database and virtually no limits in the expandability of the system.

Our Pattern Language is organized around a logic of process[13]. Let's see how it works.

The database records (patterns)

Here is the general layout of every item of the MiTF database (more or less the same suggested by the original pattern language methodology, in fact we could say that a Tool is a Pattern):

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[12] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Pattern_Language
[13] In the original you can see that the organization was around the scale of the area you wanted to plan on, from regions to single rooms.

The record template

Grid positions Tags Categories Trust ranking Languages	**Title of the Tool**
	Up links (what we need to get ready to use this Tool)
	Description of the problem we are trying to solve
	Short summary (what is this for?)

	Analysis of the problem and Tool description
	    Analysis and tool description
	    Risks and precautions
	    Advantages
	    Case study
	    Tips for adaptation

	Solution (what action we propose, resources)
	Down links (what else you should see to complete this action)

Let's have a look at an example with some data inside (we are using fake link here simply to give you a general idea of how the item can look like). Refer to the Grid Template document when you need:

ID: 00345 **Grid positions** G.4 **Tags** Energy Efficiency, Low Income, Homes, Volunteers, Insulation **Categories** G. Public **Trust ranking** *** **Languages:** English Spanish	Neighborhood Draft Busters Group
	Up links Check before "Cheap insulation techniques" and "How to connect with your municipality for common actions". See also "How to run effective actions groups" and "Groups governance suggestions".
	Description of the problem Buildings lose a great amount of energy through bad isolation and air leaks but in many cases complete renovations are not possible, particularly for people with low income. This means that millions of homes will never see the necessary actions to reduce energy needs.
	Short summary Draft Busters Groups are self organized groups of volunteers helping people in the Neighborhood to improve houses insulation with simple and affordable techniques.
	Analysis of the problem and Tool description The existing houses represent in many communities one of the major causes of energy consumption (around 40% in Europe) heating and cooling being the most impactful aspects for energy use and resulting emissions.

Full retrofitting would be the best solution to take these houses at the best possible level of efficiency, but this is possible only when a lot of financial power is in place.

To help those house owners and tenants without the possibility to resorting to complete retrofitting volunteers local groups can be created under the name of "Draft Busters". They train themselves to do very easy insulation works DIY style and help others to spot and eliminate draft, insulate the attics, windows, hot water pipes, etc.

The groups are organized [...]

Sometimes creating a buying group to get the materials at a cheaper price and support local suppliers can be a nice consequence of this activity.

Risks and precautions

This kind of activity must be pre analyzed for legal aspects country by country. There are also practical risks (use of tools, damages to property and people, etc) to be seen to consider appropriate insurance coverage for the group [...]

Identification of the Groups Member can be an issue, a good coordination with local authorities and security forces can be very important to protect citizens from possible fraud. [...]

Advantages

This strategy allows to reach in a capillary way the citizens potentially house by house, in the less affluent sections of the population. Can be also a good connection tool and a way to raise awareness on energy efficiency in general.

Case study

Particularly interesting is the experience of the DBG of the town of XXXXX. You can read about it following this link.

Solution **Form groups of volunteers to help people to do basic insulations actions at home.**

Down links
See also "Full energy efficiency retrofit plans" and "ESCO strategies" for a different approach to the same problem. Similar to this see also "Draft Busters Thermal Imager Tours" or "Draft Busters DIY Training".

As you can see, the main body of the database record contains the most important information about the Tool and there is a number of fixed sections that are the same for each item. They should be quite self-explanatory and with use, this way of organizing information becomes quickly familiar.

> **Please note:** What is very peculiar is the presence of the **Up Links** and **Down Links.** This is the way a Pattern Language database structure gently (or not so gently) pushes the user to keep a systemic view of the problems. It basically teaches this kind of attitude becoming an educational tool in itself. It suggests connections, prerequisites, consequences, possible further developments, alternatives and so on.

On the left column we collect a number of other very useful information:

> **Item ID:**
> This is the identification number of the item.

> **Grid Position**
> It indicates the best position or positions in the Grid where you can use this Tool. The first letter indicates the column, and the number the row (like in the battleship game). A Tool can have a very specific position or more than one.

> As already mentioned there are also Tools that are completely transverse, therefore they don't have a Grid Position indication and are collected in a separate category.

> In the example above the "Neighborhood Draft Busters Group" item would be best used in the cell G.4.

> **Tags and Categories**
> These are indications to make the record searchable and easy to reach within a database that can become potentially very large. While Tags are used in a keywords logic (therefore they can vary a lot) Categories correspond to the columns of the Grid plus some additional category that can make the search easier.

> **Trust ranking**
> Social innovation and work on change, sustainability, etc. is about trial and error. Some of the Tools are well known, experimented and trustworthy, while others are new and trying to solve problems that no one has been able to solve before.

> The "editorial staff" of the database will try to rank the records assigning following these general rules:

> > ***** 3 stars = High Trust**
> > Known for a long time and experimented with success.

> > **** 2 stars = Medium Trust**
> > Known for a long time and experimented but with with alternating results.

Not so old, good so far.

* 1 star = Low Trust
Very new, promising but not enough data
Known, with alternating results and very often failures, problems, etc.

0 stars = No evaluation available
Be aware, use at your own risk

Languages

Indicates the availability of translations of the record in other languages.

We might decide in future to add to this same area some other indications that can be useful for fast references, for instance something about the ease of implementation.

You show me a successful complex system, and I will show you a system that has evolved through trial and error.

Tim Harford
(economist)

The Community of Practice (CoP)

So we have a set of principles, a Grid and a Database - what we need now are the users. The MiTF is designed to provide to local administrators and civil society organized groups a way to connect and work together in a better way.

In our complex society and in the current complex times, this is a goal that can not be achieved through something written on stones, the framework and everything around it need to be used and evolved by a live community of practice (CoP).

What we can imagine from now on is to have a local CoP in the municipalities where the framework will be in use, connected with a wider network of users at national and international level. Within the MiT Project we are designing and will begin the implementation of this community at the international level[14].

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[14] A specific document on CoP will be available soon.

A recommendation regarding local governance

At the local level what we strongly recommend to those trying to use the MiTF is to keep in mind that, as soon as possible, they should make an agreement between the main actors involved in the use of the framework about the governance model they intend to use.

Important!

At this stage we are not suggesting a particular governance model, but we are pushing you to choose a model accepted by all the actors in the most clear and transparent possible way. You should all be able to identify roles, responsibilities, domains, ways to make decisions and policies.

This agreement on a governance model can be something quite light and informal or something structured and officially signed. It can be in place from the beginning or arise as soon as the conditions are right, but we see this agreement as an essential part of the MiTF. We will talk again about this in the chapter about the practical uses of the MitF.

Today the network of relationships linking the human race to itself and to the rest of the biosphere is so complex that all aspects affect all others to an extraordinary degree. Someone should be studying the whole system, however crudely that has to be done, because no gluing together of partial studies of a complex nonlinear system can give a good idea of the behavior of the whole.

Murray Gell-Mann
(physicist, Nobel laureate, father of the quark theory)

Using the MiTF for the Pilots

Facing complexity at the local level while simultaneously paying attention to the global scenario will prove difficult and messy even using the MiTF, so be ready for that. What we suggest is to trust the process and see what happens after a while.

At the beginning it can be strange and confusing, seeing the complexity around us is a quite anxiogenic task, particularly if you resist the temptation of trying to control it.

Our suggestion is: take it easy, follow the instructions and think that this is just an experiment. The instructions in this document are developed for the MiT Project Pilots and not intended for a general use of the MiTF.

The MiTF Facilitators Training

Those with the responsibility of the Pilots will take part in a 3 or 4 day training to learn more about the MiTF and its use and the Pilots management. In this chapter you can have a quick overview of the required activities and the use of the MiTF.

Starting point

As we stated before, the MiTF should be useful for processes driven by civil society organizations, local governments or both acting together, the last being the ideal condition. Different starting conditions can bring different needs and strategies but in this phase of the MiT Project we are selecting pilots where we can have both together from the beginning.

Set a governance model as soon as possible

We are trying to provide the best conditions for the Pilots and our suggestion is to try to set an agreement about the governance model for this experiment. There are many ways to create a governance policy, so choose the one you are more familiar with.

A few examples are:

> Form a steering group with members of the different actors involved, agree on an agenda for meetings, make decisions together by majority, consensus, etc.

> Hire a project team and form a circle of consultants with members of the different organizations involved.

> Etc.

Our suggestion on governance models

It's very likely that the Transition Hub of your area will be involved in the Pilot. If possible, and if trained people are available, try to use a sociocratic methodology[15] to run the governance of the Pilot (the people in the Hub might be ready for that being the model that we use at Hubs level within the Transition movement).

This can add another layer of innovation and cultural change and it will increase the potential of the experiment. At the same time, if you don't know the methodology and don't have people ready to help you with its use, it adds another level of complexity to the task.

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[15] In particular you can get inspired by [Sociocracy 3.0](#)

Starting from the baseline using the Grid

The first step in the use of the MiTF is the creation of a local baseline. It is a way to set a starting point, taking a picture of the state of the art of the municipality and its community. We are performing the **Evaluation and Diagnostics Function** of the framework.

The idea is to use the MiTF Grid to collect in an organized way every action, plan, process we can spot around us. Examples of what we are looking for are: trainings on sustainable waste management, low emissions mobility plans, local food production schemes, information campaigns on energy efficiency, climate change adaptation trainings, circular and sharing economy activities, etc. From now on we will indicate all these different elements (as many as you can think of) with the generic word **action**.

We are trying to be easy, cheap, and effective. This framework is designed by practitioners trying to make it as usable as possible and adaptable to very different starting point conditions. Therefore this collection of actions can be done in a very orderly and systematic way or in a disorderly and casual way. The actors can act together (synchronicity) or in different moments depending on the available conditions, work capacity, etc.

We suggest to use this form to collect the items.

The baseline in practice: collect data

The precise design of this activity will be to define together during the MiTF Facilitators Training. The scope of the Baseline is not to provide a precise scientific measurement methodology but a way to more clearly see "the big picture" of the community.

1. Define a small team responsible for this activity (with at least one member on the side of municipality and one on the side of civil society). Their task is to collect and report on the Grid all the available data.

2. Print a copy of the MiTF Grid for the Baseline document. Having it in a big format (UNI A2) would be ideal, but you can use it in smaller formats or in a digital format if you prefer. If you act in a low technology environment you can just redraw the table on a big piece of paper, the back of a poster or a billboard.

3. Start to list all the activities you can spot in the municipality and in the community that are oriented toward ecological sustainability, emissions and pollutants reductions, energy efficiency, food, goods and services relocalization, resources care and balanced distribution, and so on. To make the list you can use the List section of the Grid Calculator spreadsheet, and you can use this form to collect the single actions.

4. Don't ask too much of yourself from the beginning. Start from what is obvious, plain and easy to spot (complexity will then emerge). You can invite other actors to create similar lists if you can't create a synchronous process.

One possibility to foster synchronicity is the organization of a Baseline Workshop Day inviting all the interesting actors of the community and work together for one day building the list. This can be done with an "in-person" gathering, through a virtual meeting or a mix of the two.

5. Now move the collected info to the Grid, trying to find the most appropriate Cell for every item of the list. Sometimes you can have doubts about the perfect position, but don't worry and choose the one that you believe is most appropriate. Sometimes you can have complex actions that are present (that have effect) in many different Cells - no problem, do it. During the training we will play a lot with real life examples to make this task easier.

The baseline in practice: baseline quantitative evaluation

Having the Grid with all the info correctly positioned, we are now ready to evaluate the situation (to observe the big picture). A community strongly committed to change toward sustainability should produce a Grid with every Cell seeing many bold actions going on. Reality will probably bring different results.

Analysing the number of "active" Cells (cells containing at least one action) and the number of actions noted in the grid we have a first raw quantitative indicator of the commitment of the community. We can also transform the situation in a number assigning 1 point to every action present on the Grid.

E.g. in the table below each **X** represents the presence of an action.

Actions Categories	Actors Categories							
	A Municipality Political	B Municipality Organization	C Controlled Entities	D Suppliers	E Organizations	F Businesses	G Public	H Networks
1 Vision	X				X			
2 Organization	X	X			X		X	
3 Planning		X						
4 Technical aspects						X		
5 Relation			X					
6 Cultural change							XXX	
7 Networking								

We can count 12 action presences, the Baseline Quantitative Score is 12.

The baseline in practice: baseline qualitative evaluation

We can also add some qualitative meaning to our data in different ways. The easiest way is to give different values to the Cells. The empirical experience makes us think that there are positions in the grid that have a value greater than others. Actions in those positions can produce bigger, longer lasting results; therefore, we can give them a greater value.

In our view this remains a hypothesis, and one of the objectives of the Pilots is a first attempt to test this assumption.

Let's use the same results using a Grid that has some of the Cells marked with different colors.

Actions Categories	A Municipality Political	B Municipality Organization	C Controlled Entities	D Suppliers	E Organizations	F Businesses	G Public	H Networks
Actors Categories								
1 Vision	X				X			
2 Organization	X	X			X		X	
3 Planning		X						
4 Technical aspects						X		
5 Relation			X					
6 Cultural change							XXX	
7 Networking								

Now just apply a simple multiplier for the Cells we consider most important:

Total actions in white cells (*1)	5
Total actions in orange cells (*3)	6
Total actions in red cells (*5)	25
Total Grid Score	**36**

As you can see, now the same set of actions returns a score of 36.
We have a Grid Calculator to do all this with a spreadsheet.

The baseline in practice: baseline quantitative evaluation adding CC

During the training we will see also the use of Cells Cycles to add a ranking of the single actions to "the game". The principle is simple but it adds some work to the activity.

You can use the form to register this information.

Analyze every single item you placed on the Grid using the following cycles and scoring:

CC1

Head step - Is it based on the best available data? (0-2)	
Heart step - Is it considering and taking care of emotional/relational consequences on everyone involved? (0-2)	
Hands steps - Does it produce practical effects? (0-2)	
CC1 Tot	

For CC1 consider 0 when the answer would be "absolutely not", 1 for "uncertainty", and 2 when you can answer "yes".

CC2

Are all the "natural" actors involved? (0-2)	

For CC2 consider 0 when the answer would be "no", 1 for "maybe" , 2 for "yes".

The sum of the values gives you the CC score of a particular Action.

The sum of all the CC scores of all the Actions in the Grid gives a general indicator of the quality of the activities in your area.

When a single Action can be assigned to many different cells in the Grid we calculate only a general CC score for that Action.

The baseline in practice: baseline quantitative evaluation by average action range of impact

One last way to evaluate the baseline is calculating the average action range of impact of the actions we listed. This can be done by dividing the number of presences in the Cells by the number of listed actions. The Grid Calculator will do this for you automatically.

The number we obtain will range from a minimum of 1 (meaning that each shows only in one Cell) to greater numbers. The higher the values, the more the listed actions are producing

effects in different Cells of the Grid. This indicates a more systemic action, probably a greater efficiency, more possibilities of subsequent extension, etc.

Let's start planning (the Planning Cycle)

After the creation of the Baseline for your community, what we'd like to see in the Pilots is the creation of a very basic initial systemic plan for the community.

Practically speaking, having a sort of full picture in front of you will allow you to work with this Planning Cycle[16]:

1. **Spot where "energy" is already operating** - If a successful action was spotted then there must be a lot of energy there, so you can ask yourself (the community of the involved actors) a few questions:

   a. Is there an easy way to support or increase the available "energy" there?
   b. Are there other actors that should be naturally involved (apply CC2)?
   c. Could this action fulfill other functions (increasing therefore the number of categories with which it can be associated to)?
   d. Can we easily connect this energy/action to other actions on the Grid?

2. **Write a simple plan to do what it is needed** (apply CCs) if you find good and easy answers to those questions. If not, go to point 3 of this cycle.

3. **Move to another action.**

The meaning of this planning cycle is to facilitate you in putting resources (time, people, energy, money) **where there are the best conditions for positive use and results.** When you have good results, then the subsequent planning becomes easier (more energy in place, more will, more commitment, etc).

During the pilots we will better plan together this activity, but we are confident that you should find some good actions on which you can plan (well, basically we know that from the harvesting Phases of our project).

Move to action using Database and Cells Cycles

In addition to planning on existing actions, you can start planning completely new actions. There are many ways to use your Baseline for this. E.g.:

1. You may spot empty cells where nothing is happening (maybe orange or red Cells which clearly are important) and you can decide to do something to fill the void.

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[16] This way to plan is strongly inspired and evolved by the insights of David Holmgren's permaculture framework - Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability - D. Holmgren's - Holmgren Design Services 2002 - ISBN-13: 978-0646418445

2. You may spot Cells with a lot of activities, which for some reason do not score high after analysing them through the CCs. So you know that there is potential energy there (probably people ready to act, maybe other resources) and you could plan a completely new action.
3. You may already have projects going on (Covenant of Mayors, EU projects, National projects, etc.) and you can inform the planning using the MiTF.
4. And so on…

To plan a new action you can first check what the MiT Database offers that can be useful in the cell of your interest. You can search the database in different ways, indicating the Cell of your interest, by Actors, by topics … What you get is a set of suggested actions and all the connections to other actions related.

The Tools in the database are designed with the transition principles and the CCs (Cells Cycles) in mind. This should lead to common synergic actions (when possible), effectiveness and a good balance between efficiency and resilience.

But the MiT Database is just at the beginning, so you might not find what you are looking for already there. If you then design an Action from scratch, following the CCs logic, that will go towards enriching the database in the future.

Evaluate

Whenever possible each action implemented should be evaluated in its specific impact in terms of technological, social or institutional change and community resilience (e.g. climate adaptation, equity, cross-community links…), using appropriate indicators. Tools for this will be included in the database.

We already saw that we can use the Grid, the Cells and the CCs as an evaluation system, and this will be the last step for these first experiments. Going through a process similar to the one used for the Baseline, each community can compare the starting point situation to the present and draw some conclusions.

Alongside this, there are other aspects we can evaluate. For instance, the number of new Actors involved, the experience of the Actors in using the framework and the CCs, the quality of the relations between the Actors, the effectiveness of the model of governance in place and so on…

Enrich and populate the Database

Within the Transition movement we have quite a lot of Tools that we can consider ready to be loaded into the MiTF Database. It will take a little time and a dedicated team to do this job in a proper way, but we are confident that we can do this (at least in English) in time to provide a basic version of the database to the Pilots.

But this will only be the starting point, since the plan is to see the collection of records grow over time with the help of the pilots and other practitioners.

MiTF Adaptation

As we already mentioned we can imagine many ways to change the elements of the MiTF to serve different contexts. But now that you know a little more about it you can easily understand how deeply a change in a portion of the structure can affect the others.

The most delicate aspect is the relationship between the Grid and the Database. As you know, the records in the database are connected to the Cells; therefore, if you move the cells and/or the columns around, the records in the database should be updated accordingly.

Therefore for this phase of testing of the MiTF through the Pilots, we strongly suggest to use everything as it is.

Columns position change

One change we might consider feasible is about the column position. In other words, a change of the Relational Distance between Actors Categories. This can help the correct visualization of a different structure of your reality and you could do this without changing the identification letter assigned to the column (this way the references in the database will stay the same).

Columns elimination

We can already imagine situations where column C (Controlled Entities) might not exist. In that case we can imagine a Grid without that column without necessarily touching the database structure (the records of the database referring to that column will simply not be used).

END OF DOCUMENT