EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	1– International New Town Institute INTI
PIC number:	917849115
Project name and acronym:	[New Towns	New Narratives] — [NTNN]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	101138023
Event name:	Network Lab #1 in Spijkenisse - Transformation of Identity
Type:	3-day workshops
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	[Netherlands], [Spijkenisse]
Date(s):	[20-21-22 March 2024]
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.newtowninstitute.org/spip.php?article1382
Participants	
Female:	24
Male:	22
Non-binary:	
From country 1 [Bosnia Herzegovina]:	2
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	2
From country 3 [Estonia]:	2
From country 4 [United Kingdom]:	1
From country 5 [France]:	3
From country 6 [Germany]:	3
From country 7 [Hungary]:	2
From country 8 [Italy]:	2
From country 9 [Lithuania]:	2

From country 10 [Netherlands]:	18		
From country 11 [Poland]:	2		
From country 12 [Romania]:	5		
From country 13 [Slovenia]:	2		
Total number of participants:	46	From total number of countries:	13

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The launch of the New Towns New Narratives program took place through the first Network Lab in Spijkenisse in the Netherlands on 20, 21, 22 March 2024 and it revolved around the topic 'Transformation of Identity'.

Spijkenisse is located in the south of the Netherlands near one of the biggest cities in the Netherlands, Rotterdam. Spijkenisse, originally a fishing village, has experienced tremendous expansion since its designation as a growth centre in 1966. From a village of around 3,000 inhabitants, in forty years it has grown into a town with a population of around 70,000, a significant proportion of whom - at that time and also today - work in the Rotterdam harbour. Spijkenisse is no longer just an 'overflow town' of Rotterdam, instead it is seeking greater independence and a more urban character. One of the main challenges of the city is to include inhabitants in the transformation and to use physical transitions as a means to improve the social wellbeing of its population. The municipality needs to learn how to work inclusively, work with participation processes and bottom up organisations. The New Towns is in need of a future vision for transformation which is green and inclusive, using its identity and urban heritage. This is a topic that is similar for many of the New Towns in the network.

Prior to the Network Lab, the New Towns were asked to react on the theme 'Transformation of Identity' from the context of their own New Town. This 'homework' was used during the Lab as input for the content. In this way the challenges of Spijkenisse were addressed in the broader context of the knowledge exchange. The homework was collected in a digital Reader that was sent to the participants in advance of the Lab. The Reader is an incremental document that will grow with every Network Lab and will collect also the results of every Network Lab. In this way the Reader, which also contains a description of the history and current situation of all the New Towns and organisations involved, will be the basis of the publication that will be made at the end of the New Towns | New Narratives Program.

Because it was the first event of the two year program, the start took place in Rotterdam at the HQ of the International New Town Institute, the coordinator of the network, located in Rotterdam. After a tour around Rotterdam, the mother city of Spijkenisse, there was a gathering at INTI were all the representatives of the European Network of New Towns could introduce themselves to one and other, which was followed by a welcome of the deputy mayor of Spijkenisse. Then the theme of the Lab, with an overview of the challenges gathered from the network was introduced, by INTI, which was followed by an informal dinner during which everyone could get to know each other.

During the following days the participants worked in Spijkenisse on the challenges and opportunities of the transformation of Spijkenisse through field trips, discussions and an interactive workshop.

Next to that two of the New Towns, Dimitrovgrad (Bulgaria) and Kohtla Jarve (Estonia) presented themselves and their urban challenges. The coming years this will be part of the program of every Network Lab: next to the host New Town, two other New Towns of the network will give a presentation to support the knowledge exchanges. Another recurring element of the events (Network Labs) will be a visual interpretation of either the New Town itself or the results of the Network Lab. This will be done by an independent artist/graphic designer/photographer/etc to stimulate the image and identity of the New Towns. During this first Network Lab a graphic interpreter visualised the results of the Lab.

What more have we learnt about Spijkenisse, and its universal challenges faced in other New Towns?

The interactive 'pressure cooking' Lab took the participants from the regional scale of Rotterdam and its harbour to the neighbourhoods Waterland and the Akkers in Spijkenisse. Everybody was asked to share four pictures of the challenges and opportunities of these parts of Spijkenisse and to do analysis in groups sharing insights and possible solutions. The range of perspectives unveiled alternative ways of viewing the New Town, like "systematic unplanning", a method of positive disturbance that raises awareness, and an approach on future Spijkenisse: what are the big questions that direct the development of Spijkenisse, for example in its relation to the harbour.

In the discussion, there was strong recognition that Spijkenisse's assets are not used to their full potential, such as the use and transformation of the many (semi) public spots, the canals and the green environment. Then there were suggestions for finding ways of including the inhabitants in re-shaping this area. Some groups proposed to take a step back and do in-depth research to fully understand Spijkenisse, others suggested to introduce temporal installations or events to make the transformation more approachable. The results were presented to one of the aldermen of the municipality, who was pleasantly surprised about the richness of the ideas that gave new insights in his New Town. The overall feeling among the participants was very positive, everybody was happy with this exchange of experiences, the much needed conversations and the ideas on the future of New Towns.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).
1.1	03.03.2024	Version New Town Lab 1 from NTNN