LEVERS

LEVERS

Learning Ventures

Field Guide - Version 1.0

Deliverable 1.2

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UK Research and Innovation

Project funded by

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI

D1.2 Learning Ventures Field Guide - Version 1.0			
Work Package	1: ESTABLISH		
Task	T1.2/1.3		
Deliverable	D1.2		
Lead Partner	Forth		
Author(s)	Dee Halligan, Viandira Athia		
Due date	29.02.2024		
Submitted date	29.02.2024		
Website	www.leversforclimate.eu		
Version number	1.0	Status	Final

Project information	
Project number	101094825
Start date	01.03.2023
Duration	36 months
Call identifier	HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-70
Type of Action	CSA

Dissemination level	
PU: Public	✔
PP: Restricted to other programme Participants (including the European Commission)	☐
RE: Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the European Commission)	☐
CO: Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the European Commission)	☐

Revision history		
Version	*Date*	*Description*
1.0	22.02.2024	First version
1.1	29.02.2024	Second version
1.2	29.02.2024	Final version

Quality control	
Reviewed by	*Review date*
Aleksandra Kozyra (EAEA)	26.02.2024
Anne Kearns (TCD)	29.02.2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVERS, or Learning Ventures for Climate Justice, is a collaborative project engaged with delivering climate action learning initiatives to nine European locations, as part of the Horizon Europe programme.

LEVERS champions the creation of learning ecosystems, with the goal of building knowledge and skills to address locally significant climate challenges. It aims to be a catalyst for positive change through the use of transformational approaches and methods. Together these projects will build capable communities committed to climate justice.

This document compiles the approach taken towards, and evidence of the delivery of, the LEVERS Field Guide (D1.2), a resource intended to share practical insights and guidance based on our real experiences of building learning communities in nine locations across Europe.

The first section outlines the brief and purpose of the Field Guide. The second introduces the strategy taken towards the Field Guide. The Appendices are then split into four sections to represent the different outputs produced by Forth to deliver this strategy:

1. Screen capture of the digital tool used to compile the content of the Field Guide
2. Screen capture of the resulting database
3. Screen captures of the current online version of the Field Guide
4. The shareable PDF which accompanies the Field Guide

1. BRIEF

The *LEVERS Field Guide* is one of a number of outputs created to support (during the 3 year development and delivery period) and disseminate (post project) the building of Learning Ventures.

The *LEVERS Field Guide* is an account of how we are building the Learning Ventures via 'notes from the field'. It offers practical insights and guidance based on our real experiences. This serves to connect, inspire and equip multiple audiences, including direct project partners, their wider local networks and wider interested parties.

This first version (D1.2) documents the approach taken and experiences of initiating nine Learning Ventures of different natures in different contexts over 5 months between September 2023 and January 2024. This period coincides with a series of development workshops and the structure of the Field Guide mirrors this chronology in 4 'chapters'.

Updates will continue periodically until a second version delivered in October 2025 (month 32/D1.3) will update the story, detailing the outcomes and outputs of the intervening period, including their business models.

The *LEVERS Field Guide* is distinct from the *LEVERS Learning Framework* (D1.1), which contains the vision and strategy, pedagogical basis and evaluation framework for the Learning Ventures and which compiles a wide array of inspirational best practice. The *LEVERS Field Guide* takes the theoretical ideas and approaches of the *LEVERS Learning Framework* into real application.

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE LEVERS FIELD GUIDE

The primary purpose of the Field Guide is to collate practical guidance to support the building of (further) Learning Ventures. The bid describes it as supporting: "all adopters (during and post project) to examine the systems within which they operate, and to develop effective partnerships accordingly".

1.2 LEVERS FIELD GUIDE AUDIENCES

There are 3 overlapping audiences or user groups within the LEVERS project:

- The LEVERS direct project partners: As instigators of the Learning Ventures, the Field Guide will document their work, reflect their experiences and draw on their insights. It serves us as a tool for reflection and collaboration.
- The local Learning Venture partnerships which might draw on the Field Guide for stimulus or guidance.
- The Extended Learning Venture or Delivery teams - which may be a wider group than the core local Learning Venture members.

Further users and audiences during and post-project includes anyone who might consider setting up their own Learning Venture/learning ecosystem, including:

- Local governments and educational institutions
- Educators and learning providers

1.3 DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Visibility of the development approach and experiences of the Learning Venture partners to and between each other, with the Field Guide and associated exchanges becoming a tool for mutual support and the creation of new knowledge.
- The revealing of themes and insights relevant to the development process of the nine Learning Ventures and making them available for wider communication and dissemination.
- The uptake of the Field Guide as a practical tool by wider audiences including inspiring and supporting the development of further Learning Ventures.

2. STRATEGY

The Field Guide has been developed as a collaborative online database (using an online app called Airtable) and publication (via an online app called Softr). It has been populated directly by the project partners in the form of diary entries and can be updated dynamically during the course of the project. A further editorial layer in the form of a shareable PDF aids interpretation. The first version of the Field Guide is complete and live on a temporary URL: www.leversfieldguide.eu. It will be available via the LEVERS website in March 2024.

The benefits of the approach taken over a traditional editorial style publication (i.e. static toolkit or guidebook) include the creation of multiple opportunities:

- To directly involve project partners in a collaborative exercise, building shared insights, relationships and skills.
- To model the collaborative and co-creational approaches that LEVERS advocates.
- To test the potential of dynamic new technologies which are increasingly accessible - approaching mainstream - and which unlock new ways of interacting with information within collaborative communities.

2.1 STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE FIELD GUIDE

The Field Guide is made up of:

- A 'development diary' database populated by the project partners, documenting their experiences, approaches and insights from the initiation process of their Learning Ventures.
- A website which presents the database dynamically, with the addition of an editorial framing of the entries. The editorial positions the diary entries in relation to the structured systemic design development process they followed in autumn 2023 and enables the diary entries to be viewed as a chronology.
- A short, shareable PDF overview.

The 'development diary' is a database of entries made by each of the LEVERS project partners over the course of 5 months. This database was initiated in September 2023 and will continue to compile content until October 2025. The

database holds reflections and evidence of the development process of the nine Learning Ventures, submitted by each partner via a short form.

Over time the entries have built to become an interesting resource which can be sorted and read in a number of ways. It has been structured according to the stages of a systemic design process, echoing a series of capacity building workshops undertaken by all partners during this period.

The database is held in an online app called Airtable which is a kind of rich, visual excel table which can be manipulated to create different views of the data. An additional app called Softr has been used to create a simple website interface through which to view the data.

The database is downloadable in the form of an excel table and so is a tangible deliverable not reliant on Airtable as a software interface. The database can be updated dynamically, and it is intended that partners will continue to contribute to the database throughout the course of the project.

The short, shareable PDF overview is an editorial taster of the database content, summarising and enabling interpretation of the material while signposting other assets and resources such as the Learning Framework.

2.2 CONTENT OF THE FIELD GUIDE

1. Diary entries relating to the nine Learning Ventures including descriptive text, tags, imagery, diagrams, media.
2. Contextualising/editorial material relating to the initiation stages of development. This is divided into four stages which could be considered as chapters. These chapters relate directly to the systemic design capacity building programmes which partners undertook between September and December 2023:
    a. Stage 1: Vision
    b. Stage 2: Understand
    c. Stage 3: Design
    d. Stage 4: Iterate

3. CONCLUSION

The Field Guide is now live and accessible online. The process of harvesting information and reflections directly from the project partners is continuing.

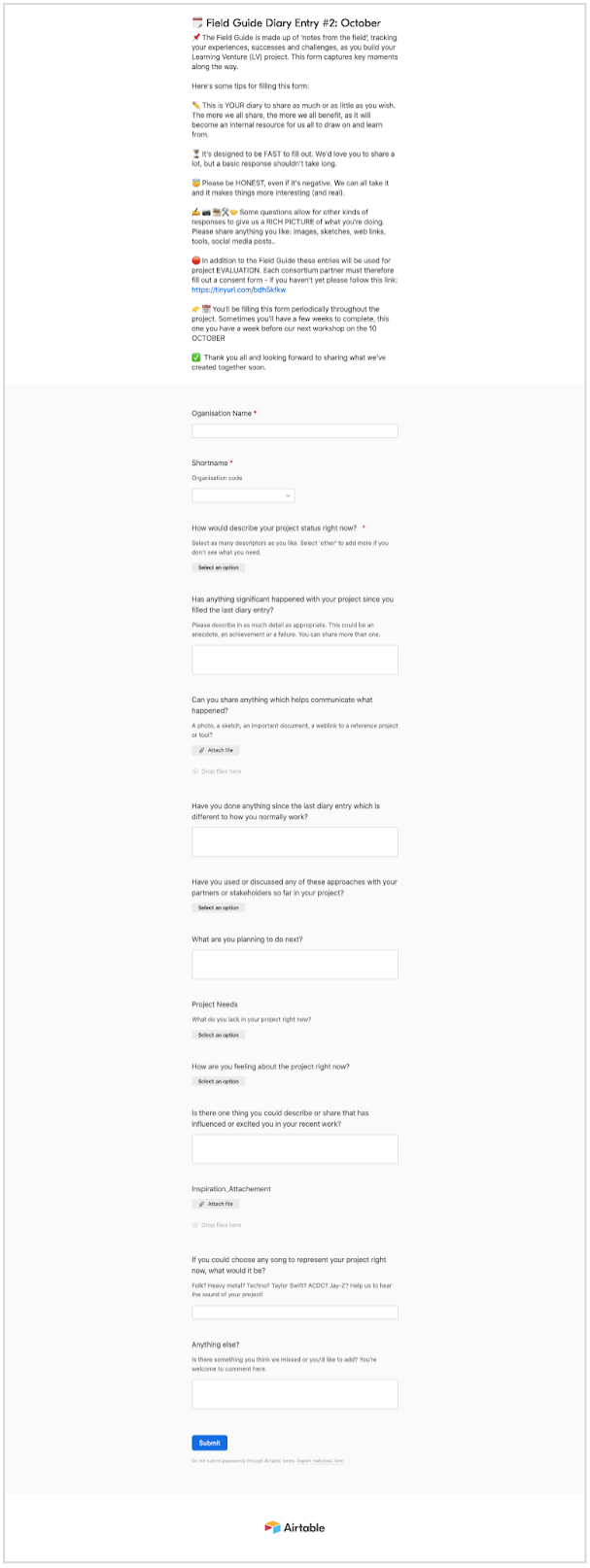
The process of developing and designing the Field Guide yielded a number of insights and raised questions pertinent to the next round of development (Field Guide V2.0, D1.3 due in October 2025). These insights and questions have the potential to inform broader conversations about the collaborative partnerships operating at multiple levels in the LEVERS project.

For example:

- Multiple partners expressed a wish to continue the process of submitting diary entries on a more regular basis than originally planned. They found it a useful tool for reflection, as it required them to think about the project in a different way, even for a short 10-15 minute period each month. Could this work elsewhere in the project, in the other partnerships we're convening?
- New collaboration and knowledge sharing digital tools are proliferating. They are increasingly sophisticated, accessible and useful. They are now integrating elements of ai and it is likely that they will advance, and be adopted further, even in the course of this project. How do we balance the creative and even transformational opportunities this situation presents with other needs, like due diligence, questions of legacy, and (true, broad) accessibility for all?

APPENDICES

A1: SCREEN CAPTURE OF THE DIARY SUBMISSION FORM



🗓️ Field Guide Diary Entry #2: October

📌 The Field Guide is made up of 'notes from the field', tracking your experiences, successes and challenges, as you build your Learning Venture (LV) project. This form captures key moments along the way.

Here's some tips for filling this form:

✏️ This is YOUR diary to share as much or as little as you wish. The more we all share, the more we all benefit, as it will become an internal resource for us all to draw on and learn from.

⏳ It's designed to be FAST to fill out. We'd love you to share a lot, but a basic response shouldn't take long.

🤝 Please be HONEST, even if it's negative. We can all take it and it makes things more interesting (and real).

✍️📸🎥🛠️🤝 Some questions allow for other kinds of responses to give us a RICH PICTURE of what you're doing. Please share anything you like: images, sketches, web links, tools, social media posts...

🔴 In addition to the Field Guide these entries will be used for project EVALUATION. Each consortium partner must therefore fill out a consent form - if you haven't yet please follow this link: https://tinyurl.com/bdh5kfkw

👉📅 You'll be filling this form periodically throughout the project. Sometimes you'll have a few weeks to complete, this one you have a week before our next workshop on the 10 OCTOBER

✅ Thank you all and looking forward to sharing what we've created together soon.

Oganisation Name *

Shortname *

Organisation code

How would describe your project status right now? *

Select as many descriptors as you like. Select 'other' to add more if you don't see what you need.

Select an option

Has anything significant happened with your project since you filled the last diary entry?

Please describe in as much detail as appropriate. This could be an anecdote, an achievement or a failure. You can share more than one.

Can you share anything which helps communicate what happened?

A photo, a sketch, an important document, a weblink to a reference project or tool?

Attach file

Drop files here

Have you done anything since the last diary entry which is different to how you normally work?

Have you used or discussed any of these approaches with your partners or stakeholders so far in your project?

Select an option

What are you planning to do next?

Project Needs

What do you lack in your project right now?

Select an option

How are you feeling about the project right now?

Select an option

Is there one thing you could describe or share that has influenced or excited you in your recent work?

Inspiration_Attachement

Attach file

Drop files here

If you could choose any song to represent your project right now, what would it be?

Folk? Heavy metal? Techno? Taylor Swift? ACDC? Jay-Z? Help us to hear the sound of your project!

Anything else?

Is there something you think we missed or you'd like to add? You're welcome to comment here.

Submit

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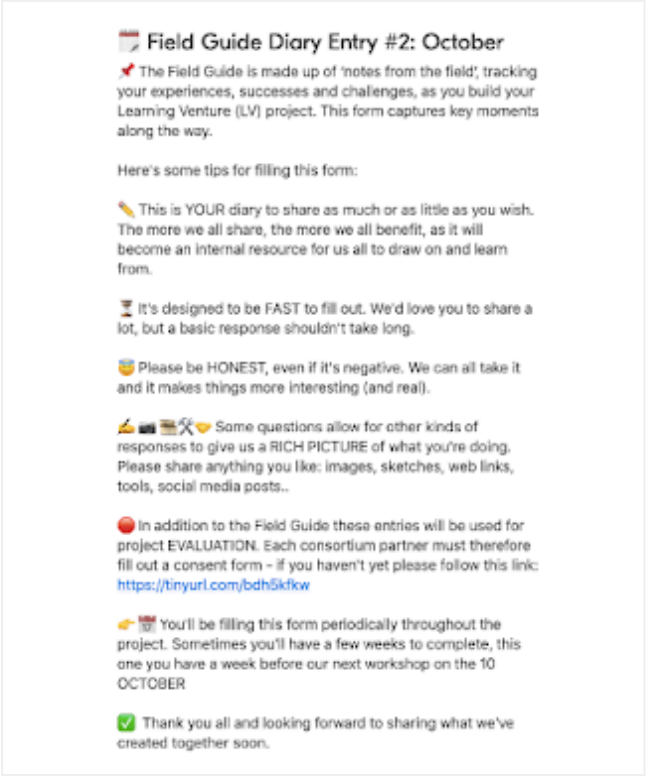
Airtable



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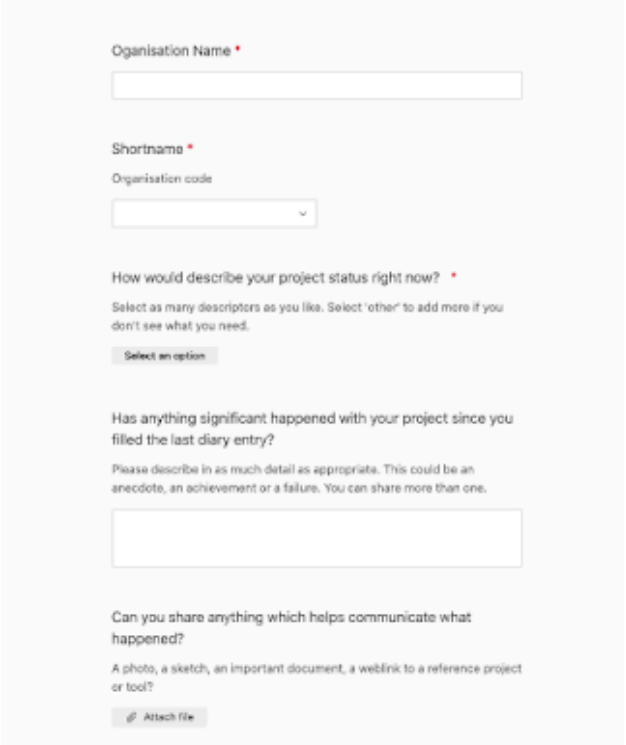

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Select an option

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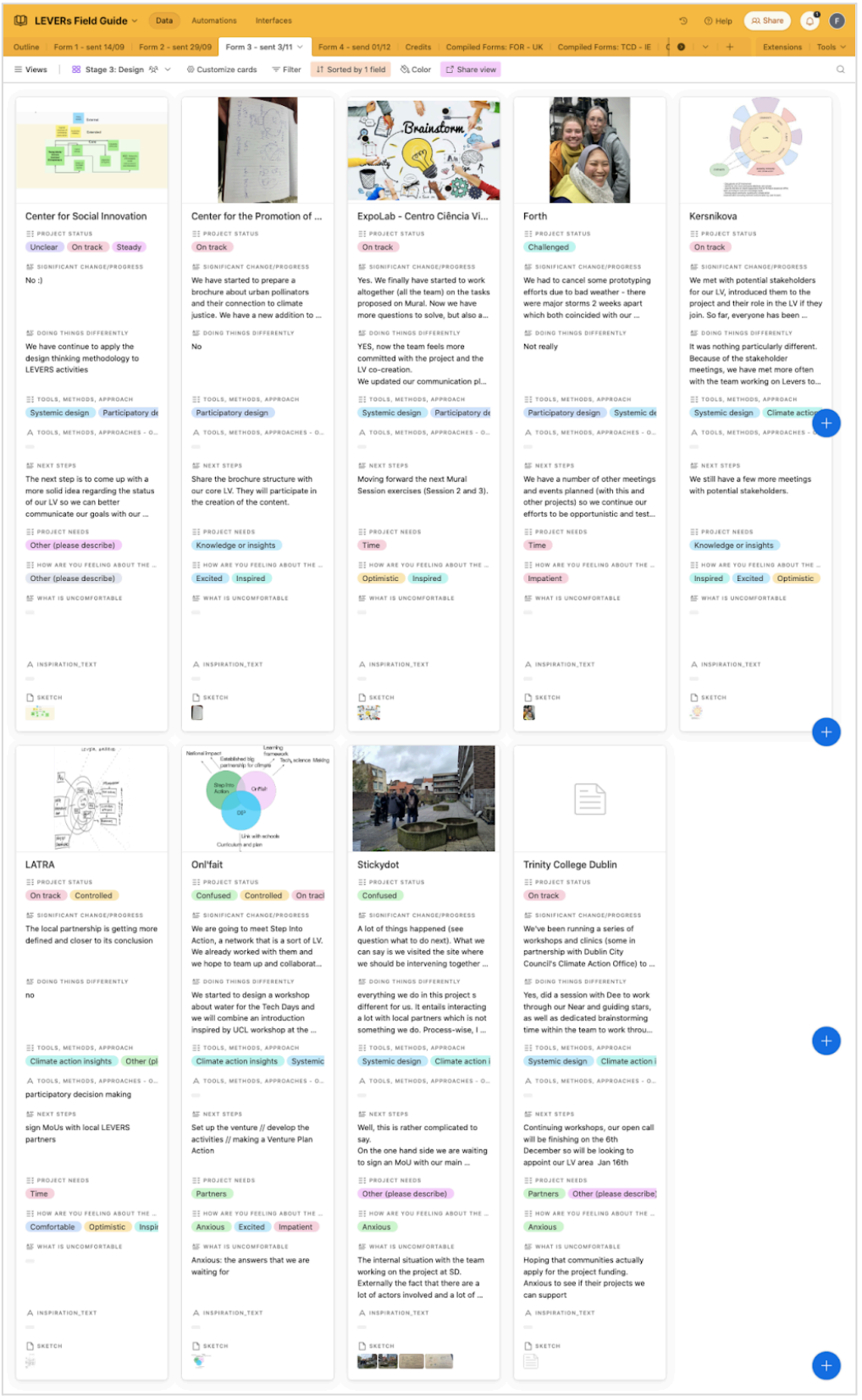
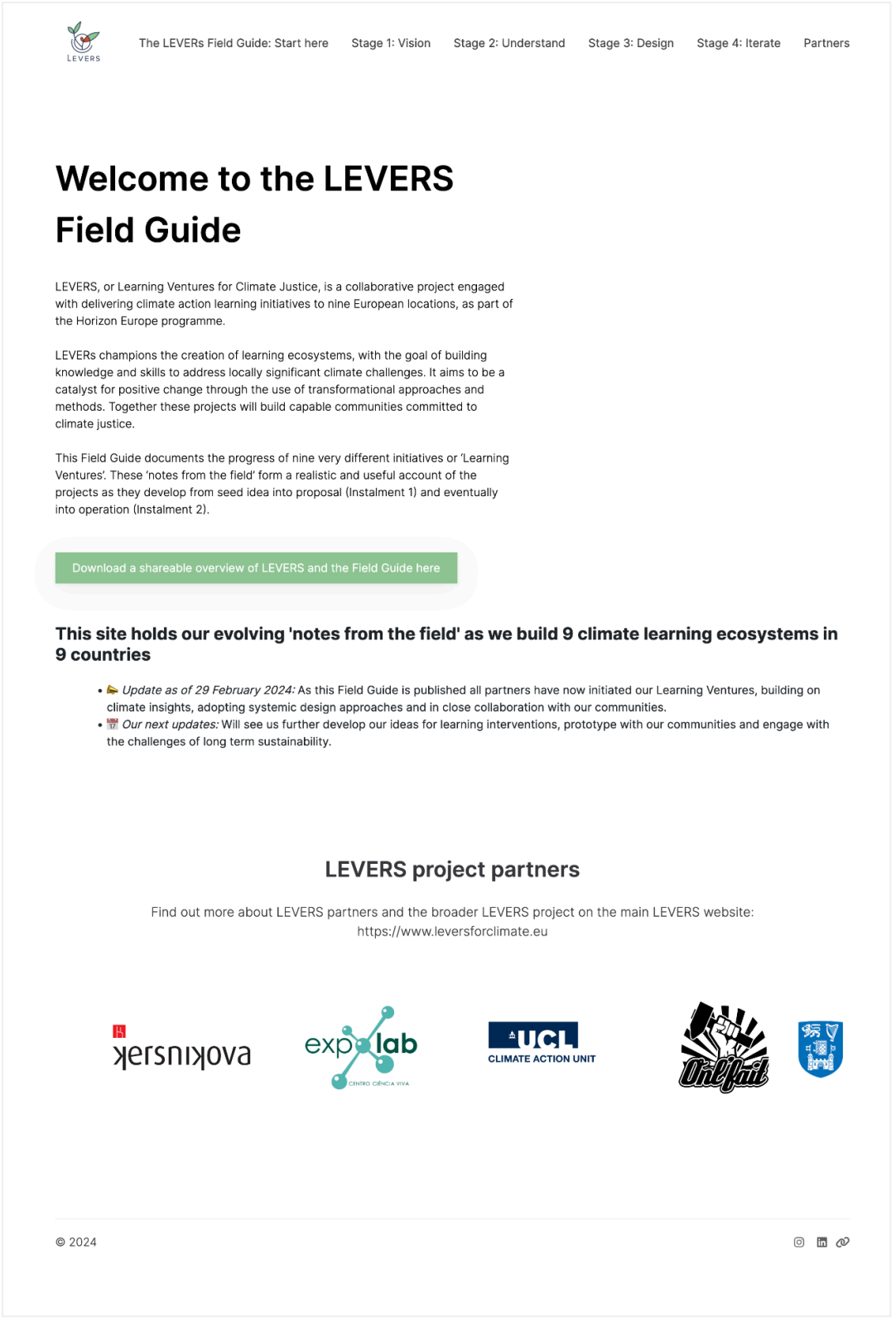


A3: EXAMPLE SCREEN CAPTURES OF THE SOFTR WEBSITE



An introduction to the LEVERs Field Guide

The LEVERs Field Guide is an evolving digital resource which draws together accounts of the development (and eventually operation) of nine 'Learning Ventures' (LVs) being created as part of the collaborative Horizon Europe funded project LEVERs (Learning Ventures for Climate Justice).

Learning Ventures are community partnerships, often called 'learning ecosystems', which are created to support and improve learning initiatives in any kind of communities.

The LEVERs Field Guide is intended as a 'useful account' of our progress as we establish nine 'Learning Ventures' across Europe. We're sharing our experiences openly as we adopt new and emerging practices and forge new partnerships and initiatives. This is an ongoing process, with the Field Guide updating periodically between 2024 and 2026.

The LEVERs Learning Framework

Complementing this Field Guide, the LEVERs 'Learning Framework' is a resource we've created which holds the approaches and methods relevant to our process, primary among these being Climate Insights, Systemic design and Participatory processes. The framework includes approaches to equity and Climate Justice.

This Field Guide puts these tools in context as they are used in building our Learning Ventures.

How to read the Field Guide

The Field Guide is divided into four chronological sections which follow the systemic design development process that partners followed in 2023: Vision, Understand, Design and Iterate. These are linked in the menu above.

Each page holds an overview of that stage of work and the associated diary entries completed by each partner. This offers an insight into that moment for each of the nine - very different - projects. As seen below the feelings that are captured through the diary entry change and evolve through the uncertainty of the development process. As they emerge the dominant feeling is optimism.

The diary entries to date span from September 2023 to January 2024. The Field Guide will be updated periodically until December 2025. Check back to keep up with the unfolding stories of these nine LVs and gain practical insights into the challenges and achievements along the way.

1

Stage 1: Vision

In this stage of work the nine Learning Ventures are setting a course, by expressing their ambition and finding shared goals. It's not about a preferred course of action, but describing – and interrogating - desired outcomes. This starting point can be revisited as the process progresses.

2

Stage 2: Understand

In this stage of work the Learning Ventures take a step back to ask: what makes the existing system the way it is? Why is it not better already? Asking these questions helps identify where in the system we might work to maximise our impact

3

Stage 3: Design

In this stage of work, building on the ambition and knowledge accrued in the first two stages, we move towards ideas - the mechanisms that might be used to shift the system. This requires further study, of who this is for and who it might affect.

4

Stage 4: Iterate

The nine Learning Ventures are now at varying stages of this firming up and commitment making process, reflecting how different scales of work and organisational contexts require different toolkits even within similar approaches.

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Stage 03 | Design

Go straight to diary entries

Introduction

**'Design' 'Create' 'Devise' Whatever language used to describe it, this is the point to build on the ambition and knowledge established in the first two stages, and develop ideas - the mechanisms that might be used to shift the system. **But before jumping in, we need to think about who this is for and who it might affect.

User-centred approaches, including design thinking, focus on addressing need and creating impact for users and direct stakeholders. It can neglect to register the consequences or negative impacts to society or on the environment. In a climate emergency the idea of 'stakeholders' becomes more expansive and critical to consider closely. When sustainability - both social and environmental - is centred, questions of climate justice and impact on the planet need to be considered equally.

"We had been working exclusively with the Brussels Region housing organisation - but it increasingly seemed too narrow. So we've widened our approach and decided to try and diversify our activities by working with other organisations working on summer/holiday camps for kids/adults that stay in the city during holidays." - Stickydot (Belgium)

What tools are useful?

Stakeholder maps are a common tool that is used in business development. Here it plays a slightly different role in helping you identify who are the key players in the system that you want to affect - that you may interact with in your Learning Venture. This process should create both insights and options - by thinking about stakeholders in terms of the role they play in the system you might find your target user or audience shifting.

Hypothesis statements are used to articulate your assumptions about how your interactions with key stakeholders will help achieve the outcomes for your LV. Looking at your stakeholder map, your near star, the forces/factors you identified using the framing questions and the cause diagram, you can now formulate one or more hypothesis statements about your stakeholders.

- *"Because we think A, we think that if we do X with stakeholder Y, we expect Z to happen."* Doing X is your mechanism. Z is the impact or influence you want to have.
  Good hypotheses come from good observations and insights, so the role of 'Because we think A' and who Stakeholder Y is (and why they might be interested) are critical. Hypotheses build from the deep work we've already done, resisting the jump to mechanisms (exhibition, book, campaign) in favour of building a considered and strategic scenario.

We might create multiple hypothesis statements and evaluate between them. Once we have formulated our hypothesis statements, they then form the basis for our stakeholder research and testing during which they can be refined and improved.

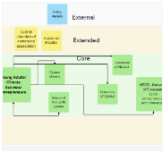
What are the Learning Ventures feeling / thinking / doing?

As the nine LVs close in on ideas, questions of partnerships and collaborations are now in focus. Many are already working in conversation with potential partners, this stage of the project presents the opportunity and challenge of initiating further conversations, and firming up on how different partners might contribute in the longer term.

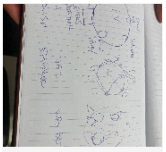
These questions dominate current diary entries: difficulty finding partners, the work going into onboarding partners, changing and opening up working styles to accommodate different partner interests and motivations. This creates an uncertainty which is characteristic of the early stages of partnership working before things are fixed, and the wordcloud for this period reflects this with excited, inspired and optimistic sitting equally alongside anxious, frustrated and impatient.

Key link 1	Key link 2	Key link 3
-	-	-

Design: Diary entries



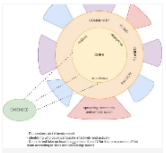
Name
Center for Social Innovation
Project Status
Unclear | On track | Steady
Feelings
Other (please describe)



Name
Center for the Promotion of Science
Project Status
On track
Feelings
Excited | Inspired

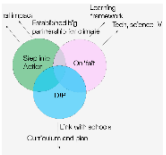
Name
ExpoLab - Centro Ciência Viva
Project Status
On track
Feelings
Optimistic | Inspired

Name
Forth
Project Status
Challenged
Feelings
Impatient



Name
Kersnikova
Project Status
On track
Feelings
Inspired | Excited | Optimistic | Confident

Name
LATRA
Project Status
On track | Controlled
Feelings
Comfortable | Optimistic | Involved | Confident



Name
Onlfait
Project Status
Confused | Controlled | On track
Feelings
Anxious | Excited | Impatient

Name
Stickydot
Project Status
Confused
Feelings
Anxious

Name
Trinity College Dublin
Project Status
On track
Feelings
Anxious

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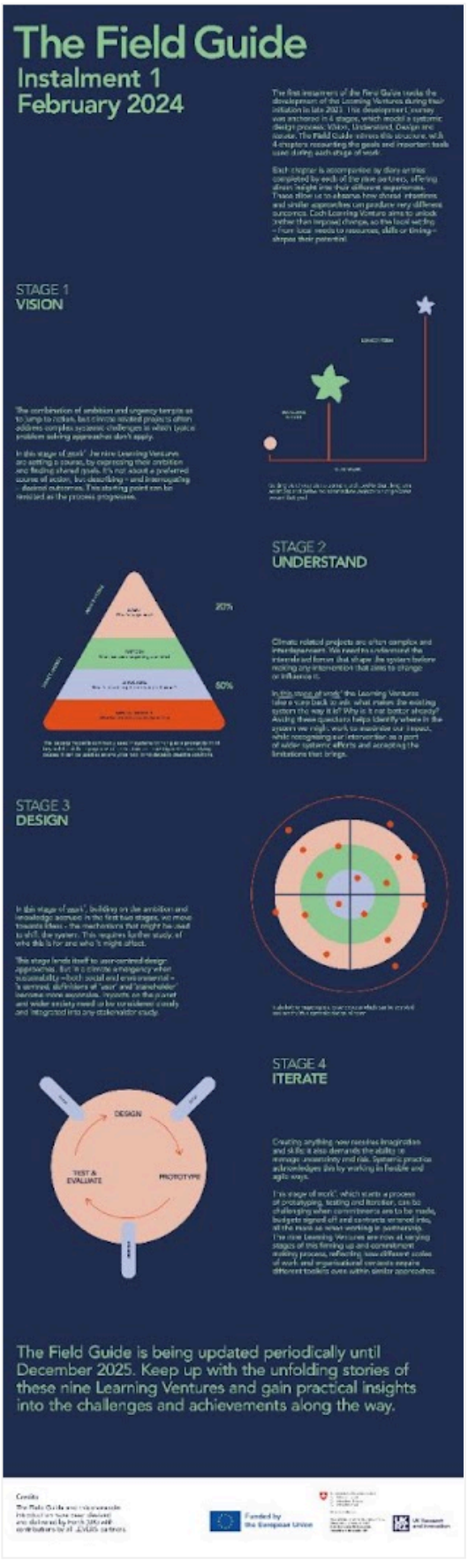
A4: THE SHAREABLE PDF