

URBAN MAESTRO

ILLUSTRATING
INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN
INFORMAL URBAN DESIGN
GOVERNANCE ACROSS EUROPE



BOUWMEESTERMAITREARCHITECTE

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As a part of the project's scoping phase, URBAN MAESTRO explored a wide range of European institutions and practices in search of innovative approaches in the governance of the urban design.

This report presents the first selection of examples that successfully use informal and formal governance tools and demonstrate high ambition in improving the quality of the built environment, and, therefore, the quality of life.



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1. Place Standard
 2. International Building Exhibition (IBA)
 3. “More Than Housing” Cooperative
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1. Place Standard

PLACE	Scotland, UK
FULL NAME	Place Standard
REMIT	Regional (national)
TOOL	Rating

WHAT

Place Standard is a formative evaluation tool designed to provide a framework for structuring conversations around space. It includes 14 questions on physical aspects (buildings, open spaces, transport) as well as social ones (e.g. whether people feel they have a say in decision making), each scored on a scale of 1-7. Place Standard was officially launched in December 2015.

WHO

The tool was developed by Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) together with NHS Health Scotland and the Planning & Architecture Department of the Scottish Government.

HOW

4 The Place Standard tool is structured around fourteen themes covering both physical and social aspects of place, from movement and traffic to sense of belonging and having a voice in how things change. Each theme has one central question for participants to answer, aided by secondary ones highlighting particular aspects for people to consider. All questions are phrased in such a way that they always refer to people's experience of the place. The answer is then turned into a simple scoring on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means there is a lot to improve and 7 that there is little need for changes. All fourteen themes are plotted in a spider diagram, which allows for an immediate visual representation of perceived strengths and weaknesses for the places being analysed.

WHY

The Place Standard rating tool is not only aimed at analysing a site, but rather brings people together across professional and non-professional boundaries to discuss places against a structured framework. It is a flexible model that can be adapted to different scales and methods of inquiry. Effectively, a coordinated effort to push implementation has led to a variety of applications across and beyond Scotland.

LINKS

<https://www.placestandard.scot/>
<https://www.ads.org.uk/placestandard/>

2. International Building Exhibition (IBA)

PLACE	Germany (several cities) / Switzerland / Austria
FULL NAME	Internationale Bauausstellung (International Building Exhibition)
REMIT	Local (for individual IBAs) / cross-border (DE-AU-CH)
TOOL	Exploration

WHAT

Originally, International Building Exhibitions (IBAs) were simply conceived as a showcase for architectural achievement. The format, which is now more than 100 years old, has however expanded beyond its country of origin (Germany). Its fundamental character as an architectural and urban exhibition has shifted towards promoting integrated approaches to urban development. IBAs are area-specific, time-limited programs, usually over 7 to 10 years. They often cover several themes, under which a variety of initiatives are planned and implemented; from housing prototypes and public space interventions to engagement models, alternative educational initiatives and more.

WHO

The IBAs are set up by the city councils.

HOW

An IBA aims to be an instrument of visionary urban development and therefore more than just a building exhibition. Visitors are able to participate in the process of researching and developing urban concepts. Similar to an 'Urban lab', IBAs focus on an entire area of the city within a given time frame. This means that today's building exhibitions are 'workshops' over several years, focusing on social, economic and cultural matters. Every IBA exhibition contains some significant and forward-looking concept aiming to inspire others and demonstrate innovation. It is an opportunity to explore models for new urban approaches and to gradually optimise the featured projects, all of which go through an approval process. One of the IBAs main advantages is their ability to overcome institutional barriers and establish practical cooperation on specific projects with a wide range of different players.

WHY

An IBA is based on a non-formal process that aims to enhance horizontal and vertical cooperation through the shared work on projects. The use of an IBA can strengthen planning perspectives and help to overcome systemic barriers in the formal planning processes. IBAs have included the ambitious projects in Berlin (1979-1987) and Escher Park (1989-1999) and now ongoing processes in Parkstadt, Hamburg, Basel, Heidelberg, Vienna, Stuttgart, and Thüringen.

LINKS

<http://www.open-iba.de/>

<https://www.internationale-bauausstellungen.de/>

<https://www.worldurbancampaign.org/format-international-building-exhibitions-iba-cross-border-planning-concepts>

3. “More Than Housing” Cooperative

PLACE	Switzerland, Zurich
FULL NAME	Mehr Als Wohnen (More Than Housing)
REMIT	Local
TOOL	Support (financial)

WHAT

The Swiss Housing Cooperatives are set up to secure high-quality living environments with associated economic or social benefits for their members through joint economic operations.

WHO

The Hunziker Areal in Zurich Leutschenbach was the first project for the housing cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen (more than housing), which was founded in 2007. It is a flagship project that strengthens the identity of the growing district of Zurich North. It also increases awareness of the Swiss cooperative scene and its important role in building affordable and high-quality living and working spaces. As the name suggests, the Hunziker Areal, with more than 40,200 square meters under its management, is much more than a typical housing cooperative: it is an urban microcosm containing 370 apartments, restaurants, guesthouse, shops, studios and more. The project also offers around 150 jobs and housing for 1,200 people with very different housing requirements and backgrounds.

HOW

Swiss housing cooperatives are well established non-profit legal entities, usually a cooperative or a corporation, which owns real estate that can manage the development of a few units to over a thousand dwellings. They are a distinctive form of affordable home ownership with characteristics that distinguish them from other housing suppliers such as single-family home ownership, condominiums or renting. In Switzerland, housing cooperatives represent more than 5 per cent of the entire country's housing stock (nearly a quarter Zurich). Mehr Als Wohnen co-op is financed by a mix of sources: members of the cooperative pay an equity deposit which is refunded (with interest) on leaving; the state grants special low interest loans; the co-op issues bonds; and borrows through mortgages from banking institutions. The weight of each of those funding instruments is respectively 10%, 10%, 15%, 65%.

WHY

The project provides a stable long-term living environment for residents across different generations, cultures and social backgrounds, offering a mixture of traditional and new housing types, additional rooms or workspaces to let, large scale flat-sharing communities, satellite homes, and a wide variety of common rooms and recreational facilities. The residents help develop the area by working together in teams, participating in workshops and ballots, and actively engaging in political processes.

LINKS

<https://www.mehralswohnen.ch/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WB90Qgvkbb>

4. Les Grands Voisins

PLACE	Paris, France
FULL NAME	Les Grands Voisins
REMIT	Local
TOOL	Exploration

WHAT

The project Les Grands Voisins encompasses a temporary occupation of the former Saint-Vincent-de-Paul hospital in the 14th district of Paris, while waiting for renovation works to start. Owned by the municipality of Paris, the space is managed by three non-profit organizations that developed a wide range of activities, with the aim of enhancing social inclusion and testing out new cooperative and supportive ways of living. From 2015 to 2017, the temporary occupation offered 600 accommodation spaces to people in vulnerable situations and enabled 250 associations, start-ups, artisans and artists to use this unique environment. Following the success of the project, a second phase was launched to promote new forms of experimentation, on the site and in the broader 14th district of Paris.

WHO

The site is supervised by the SPL Paris & Métropole aménagement, the planning agency of the City of Paris and the Metropolis of Greater Paris, together with three non-profit organizations: Aurore, Plateau Urban & Yes We Camp.

HOW

The city of Paris temporarily handed over the management of a former hospital (10.000m² of buildings and 3.500m² of outdoor area) to three non-profit organisations, which occupied the space with a mix of activities and functions. The governance model is based on three thematic working groups and a committee for the shared decisions as well as a general council. Currently used by more than 2,000 people who either live and/or work on the site, the project includes temporary homes for vulnerable peoples, meeting places for neighbours, work spaces for small businesses, associations, craftspeople, artists, and urban farmers, and services such as a social restaurant, well-being centre, cultural centre, and so on.

WHY

This project has become one of the most successful examples of temporary occupation across Europe, featuring a diversity of activities that emphasise solidarity, circular economy and place-based solutions. Les Grands Voisins demonstrates the possibility to experiment with new ways of living the city, highlighting the diversity and creativity of uses that can emerge from such temporary developments and serving as an example for other projects in France and the rest of Europe.

LINKS

<https://lesgrandsvoisins.org/>

5. Panorama Lokaal

PLACE	The Netherlands
FULL NAME	Panorama Lokaal
REMIT	Local (seven cities)
TOOL	Rating

WHAT

Launched in 2019, Panorama Lokaal is a two-phase design competition focused on residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city. In the first phase, local stakeholders can form a coalition and register a location. A maximum of seven locations will be chosen for which local coalitions formulate a design assignment aimed at innovation. In the second phase, creative teams develop design proposals for those locations and a jury selects a winner.

WHO

The tool is an initiative of the Board of Government Advisers of The Netherlands, chaired by the Chief Government Architect (Rijksbouwmeester), which advises the government on spatial quality.

HOW

During the first phase, local coalitions are invited to submit a location focusing on a residential area built in the 1960s, 70s or 80s, on the edge of the city. To do this, municipalities, housing associations, residents and other local parties form a coalition and jointly register a location. The Board of Government Advisors selects a maximum of seven locations, and for each, the local coalitions formulate a joint assignment aimed at innovation. This, in turn, provides the brief for the creative teams in the next phase. In the second phase, the design teams working on the assignments are required to constitute a multidisciplinary team, of which at least one member must be on the architectural register. An expert jury, led by the Government Architect, selects three teams per location who are then allowed to develop their proposals further. Ultimately, the jury selects one proposal as the winning team. Panorama Local will work to provide a followup assignment to this team, aimed at the realization of the plans.

WHY

The Panorama Lokaal is an innovative design competition focused on residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city, promoting partnerships among the municipality and local stakeholders and the establishment of multidisciplinary design teams. In doing so the process goes beyond a simple design competition, encouraging a particular approach to the design of projects. Although only one project will be ultimately realized, the overall process of the design competition promotes and fosters a placemaking culture.

LINKS

<https://panoramalokaal.nl/>

6. Warsaw City Architect

PLACE	Warsaw, Poland
FULL NAME	Architekt miasta (city architect)
REMIT	Local
TOOL	Analysis / Information / Persuasion / Rating / Support / Exploration

WHAT

The City Architect of Warsaw is the director of the Architecture and Spatial Planning Office, which is responsible for the spatial development policy of the City of Warsaw. The office assumes a wide range of competences such as the preparation and assessment of municipal local plans, supervision of the design quality of building proposals, and the organization of architectural awards and related initiatives.

WHO

The City Architect manages the Architecture and Spatial Planning Office of the City of Warsaw.

HOW

The scope of the Office includes a wide range of competences and uses a range of urban design governance tools, namely preparing and implementing spatial development policy; assessing the progress of developing local plans; coordinating the implementation and monitoring of key projects under the City Revitalization Programme; conducting projects related to comprehensive transformations of public space; operating the Urban and Architectural Commission; preparation and implementation of architectural and urban design competitions and prizes, including for public facilities and public spaces; and handling matters related to promotion of architecture within the city.

WHY

The City Architect of Warsaw assumes the role of the City design champion, explicitly tasked with providing urban design leadership, cross-stakeholder advocacy and cultivating the conditions under which place-making is prioritised in the city, ultimately enabling the delivery of better outcomes on the ground. The office has a direct impact on the quality of urban areas, with its tools covering both the formal and informal sides of the urban design governance toolbox.

LINKS

<https://architektura.um.warszawa.pl/baipp>

7. Grenoble Public Space Programme

PLACE	Grenoble-Alpes Metropole, France
FULL NAME	Guide métropolitain des espaces publics et de la voirie
REMIT	Regional (Metropole area - 49 municipalities)
TOOL	Exploration / Information / Support (financial)

WHAT

The Grenoble-Alpes Metropole administration is promoting an experimental and design-led community participatory process for improving public spaces. To facilitate this, a guide for public spaces was developed, including an evaluation system via a participatory and incremental process that gradually scales up temporary interventions. Citizens define specific needs and brings this to the city administration leading to a range of explorative projects over the course of three months. After an evaluation, each initiative may be expanded for 1 to 3 years. If successful, a final intervention will be carried out with a higher budget.

WHO

The initiative is managed by Grenoble-Alpes Metropole covering 49 municipalities.

HOW

In 2015 a national law transferred the management of public spaces from the municipalities to the Metropole administrative body. Through a process of co-creation with the 49 administrations and the Metropole, a Guide was developed around five main principles and practice sheets, to ensure a common understanding and approach to public space over the region. The Guide also includes an Evaluation Grid with the aim of building a common policy on public spaces within the Metropole. This grid works as a roadmap, enabling project leaders to follow a set of defined steps over time and ensuring that the objectives of the initiative are fulfilled. The administration is using an “incremental model” for public spaces projects, allowing experimentation and testing through temporary projects. This follows several steps: 1. the specific need/demand is identified by citizens and brought to the administration; 2. the public administration has a small budget (3 months/ 3,000 €) and 3 months to deliver a temporary intervention; 3. a period of evaluation of the results of this first intervention follows, that may lead to a second project with a higher budget (e.g. 20,000€) and a longer period of testing (1-3 years); 4. If successful, a permanent intervention may be put in place, drawing from a much larger budget (e.g. 200,000 €).

WHY

Citizen-led proposals, incremental implementation, and the related financial model enables practical experimentation in public space projects, with the potential for scaling up opportunities and modifying them to better respond to user’s needs.

LINKS

<https://www.lametro.fr/483-guide-de-l-espace-public-et-de-la-voirie.htm>

https://www.lametro.fr/cms_viewFile.php?idtf=2497&path=Dossier-guide-des-espaces-publics-fiches.zip

8. BIP-ZIP Programme

PLACE	Lisbon / Portugal
FULL NAME	Place Standard
REMIT	Regional (national)
TOOL	Exploration / Support (financial)

WHAT

The BIP/ZIP programme supports small-scale, community-driven projects in deprived neighbourhoods, allowing bottom-up experimentation in the form of co-governance models, design solutions and cultural initiatives, to name only a few. BIP/ZIP officially started in 2011 and is still active today.

WHO

The BIP-ZIP programme is managed by the City Council of Lisbon.

HOW

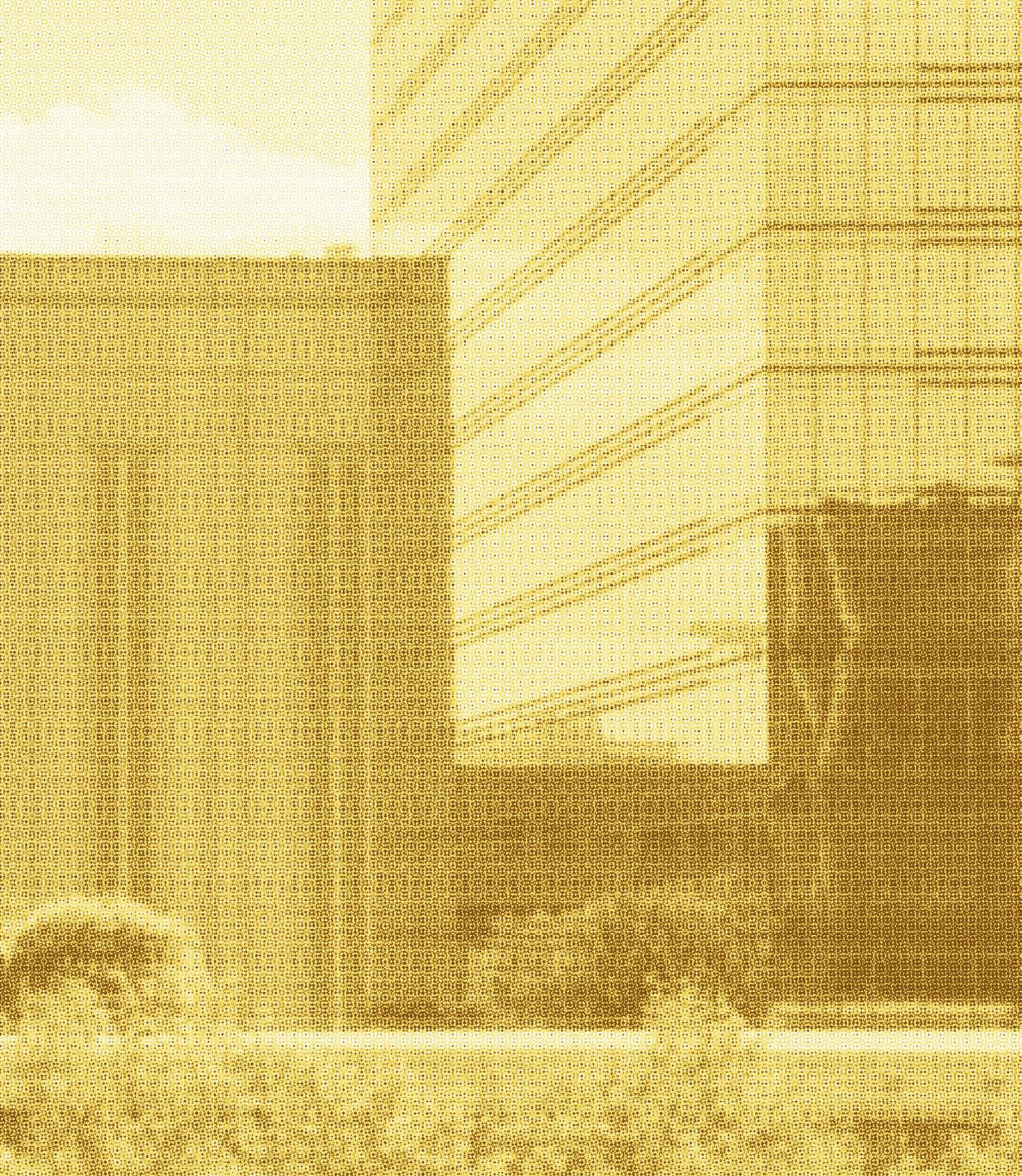
The BIP/ZIP Programme first appeared in the objectives of the Local Housing Programme (PLH), approved by the City in late 2009. Since 2011 the programme has aimed to implement small local interventions that promote the emergence of activities in neighbourhoods and in Priority Intervention Zones able to “make viable responses to social and urban emergencies” as a “challenge to the well-being of the whole community”. The programme is very open in terms of partnerships and themes, among which stand out: the promotion of citizenship, skills and entrepreneurship, prevention and inclusion, rehabilitation and redevelopment areas, and the improvement of life in neighbourhoods. Its philosophy is based on the establishment of local partnerships, together with the parish and local associations, communities and non-governmental organizations, contributing to the strengthening of social and territorial cohesion in the city. The programme’s primary goal is the promotion of active citizenship that will strengthen the integration of these territories in the city (see CRESPO, 2008).

WHY

The BIP/ZIP has a strong participatory dimension, including participatory budgeting. It successfully creates links between scales: city-wide strategic development and local, small-scale projects.

LINKS

<http://bipzip.cm-lisboa.pt/>



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