

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY AS A COMMON CONCERN

*European conference on
architectural policies*



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WALLONIE-BRUXELLES

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Architecture
Culture & the
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0 Introduction

For over 20 years, the European Conferences on Architectural Policies (ECAP) have been a means of sharing, on an international stage, the main concerns regarding the quality of our built and unbuilt environment, and its evolution.

Over the past few years, these policies have been widely developed at both European and national levels. As the climate transition has gradually become part of political agendas, numerous declarations and initiatives stress the importance of considering a more cultural perspective in favour of a technical-economic one in this transition, based on the development of a common, high-quality 'Baukultur'.

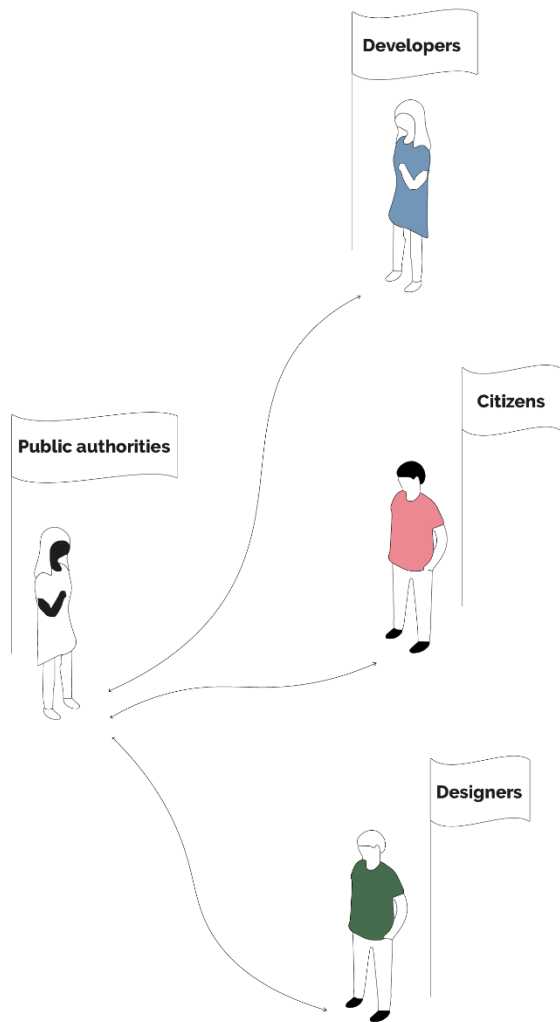
However, while tools have been created to provide a better understanding of this quality, the spaces where it can be tangibly established together have yet to be developed.

One of the many questions raised is that of the 'co-construction of public action', in terms of the ability to mobilise the various actors in a project. Although they have been invited to review their practices, many public organisations are still largely at a loss as to how to implement this renewal.

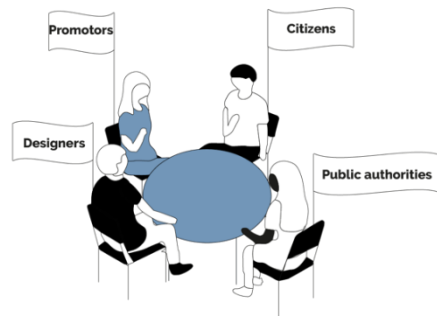
In project development, how can public project leaders interact with such diverse actors as private developers, designers and, even more so, citizens? What role do these different actors play? When? And through what mechanisms? Above all, how can we make the question of project quality central to these interactions?

By looking at each of these actors in turn, **the conference aims to examine how they can be mobilised by the public authorities.**

In preparation for the conference, **we hope to be informed about interesting projects by the EDAP and NEB partners.** Can you in one sentence describe the case study, indicate why the project fits the theme and provide us with a contact (mail and phone)? **We look for two supplementary projects per roundtable session.**



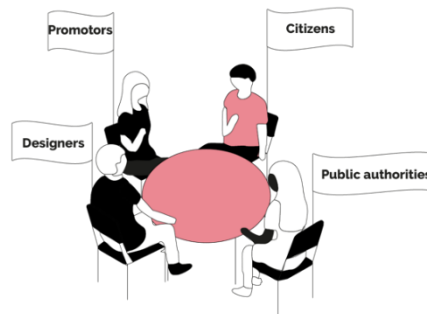
Three interactions, seven thematic workshops



Interactions with Developers

Workshop 1.1.
Providing support for the private project of a developer/investor

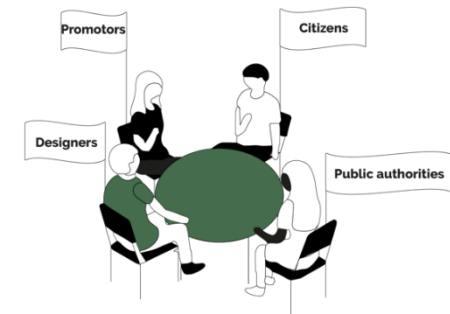
Workshop 1.2.
Getting support from the investor developer for a public project



Interactions with Citizens

Workshop 2.1.
Getting support from citizens for a public space project

Workshop 2.2.
Getting support from users for a housing project



Interactions with Designers

Workshop 3.1.
Designers assisting public authorities

Workshop 3.2.
Design Expertise embedded in a policy context

Workshop 3.3.
Design Research informing policies

Preparation of the conference

For each theme, we will look at a Belgian case study representative of the current local political practices. We provide a summary of the project's history, and identify, based on a "classic" project procedure timeline, the key turning points in terms of spatial quality.

Standard project procedure timeline



Preparation: these are all the stages before the launch of a project. This phase covers several key stages, such as drawing up regulatory or strategic plans, purchasing land, carrying out technical studies to gain a better understanding of the site, launching studies to define or programme the project to determine the requirements, etc.

Procedure: Once the framework has been established and the idea for the project defined, the second phase consists of selecting the team that will develop the project. This phase involves drafting specifications, analysing tenders and bids, and then awarding the project.

Project development: Once the project team has been appointed, the project development phase begins. This includes preparing a preliminary design, applying for planning permission, drawing up a pre-construction file, and, finally, supervising the construction work.

Use: Once the site is completed, we will discuss the usages, management, maintenance, and life of the project.

01 **Theme 1**
Interactions
with
Developers

Introduction

We propose to discuss two types of interactions between public authorities and property developers:

1. Providing support for the private project of a developer/investor: This section examines the role of the public authorities in providing a framework for the development of a private project, even though they are not the initiators or promoters of the project.
2. Getting support from the investor developer for a public project: This section specifically addresses the issue of public procurement, and how the public authority and the developer-investor interact to complete a public project. It focuses on the best way to develop a DBF(MO)-type PPP.

1.2. Getting support from the investor developer for a public project

- How to ensure a good DBFMO* public promotion contract
- What mechanisms are available?
- When are the key moments in terms of architectural quality?

Belgian case: Gastronomica

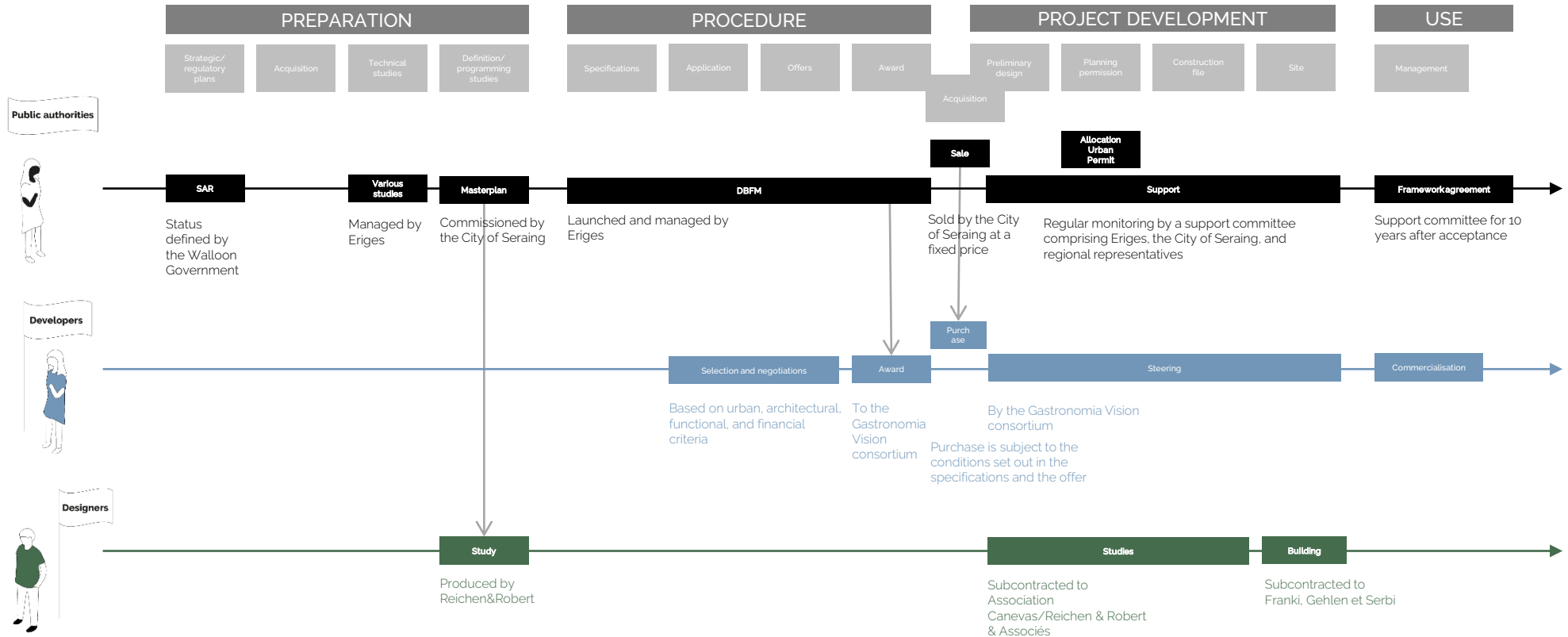
- Renovation of the industrial estate and construction of a building complex
- Rue Cockerill, Seraing - Belgium



Image of the project ©
Gastronomia Vision

Belgian case: Gastronomica

- Timeline



Belgian case: Gastronomía

- Narrative

In response to the devastating impact of the steel crisis on the town of Seraing and its residents, a comprehensive response on an unprecedented scale at the Belgian level was initiated in Seraing at the dawn of the 2000s. The town adopted an action plan for urban regeneration, to rebuild an attractive post-industrial town and create new jobs. Drawn up in 2006 by Reichen & Robert, the Seraing Valley Masterplan* is the main thread linking all the redevelopment and renovation works being carried out on the 800 hectares of heavy industry, shops, offices, and housing in the industrial valley.

The Seraing town centre is undergoing a revival with the completion of the Gastronomía project. Through its independent local authority (Régie Communale Autonome*) Eriges, the town is seeking to rehabilitate the heritage of a former industrial hall to transform and develop it into a commercial space primarily dedicated to food.

The site was completely decontaminated with the aid of Walloon funding. Subsequently, the site was recognised as a site to be redeveloped* (SAR) by the Walloon Government, opening up the area, which until then had been industrial, to other uses, including shops, offices, and housing. Seraing secured an additional €9.3 million in European ERDF* funding for the heritage renovation of the halles.

Eriges decided to enlist the help of a private partner to complete the overall project. An agreement from the Walloon government will allow the private partner to receive the European subsidy directly, enabling it to undertake the appropriate renovation of the former industrial building, in direct link with the final project that will be implemented there.

Belgian case: Gastronomica

Based on detailed technical studies (soil tests, stability study, etc.) and a feasibility study defining dimensions, locations, and urban and programmatic intentions, Eriges is launching a works contract in 2018 under a competitive procedure with DBFM-type negotiation.

The procedure will comprise two phases:

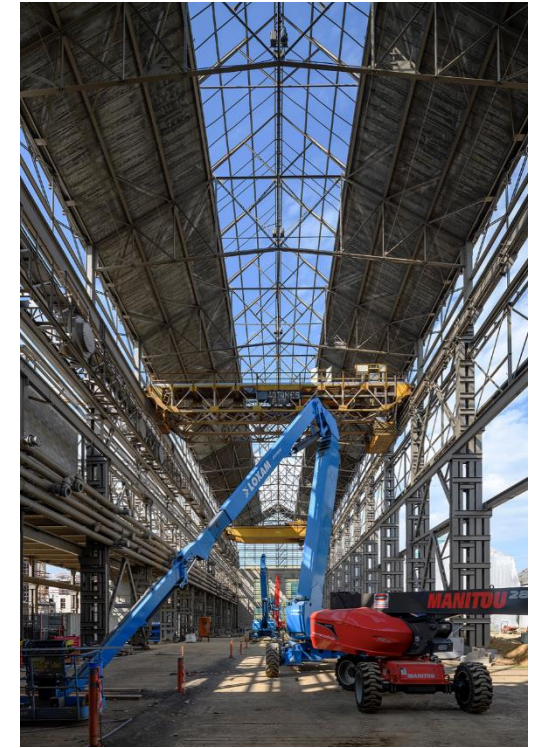
- (1) selection of teams based on references from developers and architects
- (2) selection of the best bid based on urban planning, architectural, technical feasibility, and financial criteria. The land purchase price was estimated and fixed before the contract was launched and is not included as an award criterion. The greater importance attached to urban planning and architectural criteria sends out a signal about the importance Eriges attaches to achieving a qualitative project.

The jury was made up of several experts, including nationally recognised architects, communal services, financial experts, and regional representatives.

After two rounds of negotiations, the Gastronomica Vision consortium finally won the contract in 2019. The consortium consists of developers and builders Dyls Construct, Gehlen Immo, Cœur de Ville, and Thomas&Piron. Architects Association Canevas/Reichen&Robert and builders Franki, Gehlen, and Serbi joined the team as subcontractors.

The land was sold to the Gastronomica Vision consortium on the condition that it met the conditions set out in the specifications and the project proposed in the bid. A framework contract was signed to oversee the project for up to 10 years after completion. It sets out support for the development of the private project by a committee made up of representatives of Eriges, communal services, and regional representatives (delegated official*, etc.).

The project is now in the final stages of completion.



Chantier de la Halle © Greisch

Belgian case: Gastronomica

- Glossary

DBMF type contract: Design, build, finance, maintain (DBFM) is a project delivery method that allows private sector consortium design, construction, financing, regular maintenance, and rehabilitation of the infrastructure asset over the term of the contract to meet predefined performance specifications.

Régie Communale Autonome (autonomous commune-controlled company): The autonomous commune-controlled company is unilaterally established by the local authority and tasked with managing one or more industrial or commercial activities in the interests of the local authority.

SAR (Site to be redeveloped): Site to be redeveloped: a property or group of properties intended or previously intended to be used for an activity other than housing, the maintenance of which in its present state is contrary to the proper development of the site or constitutes a threat to the urban fabric.

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

Delegated official: Regional administration official appointed by the Government to carry out various town planning tasks, notably giving opinions on communal permits or granting regional permits.

CSC: specifications

Lithuanian case : Tower Square (Bokšto skveras)

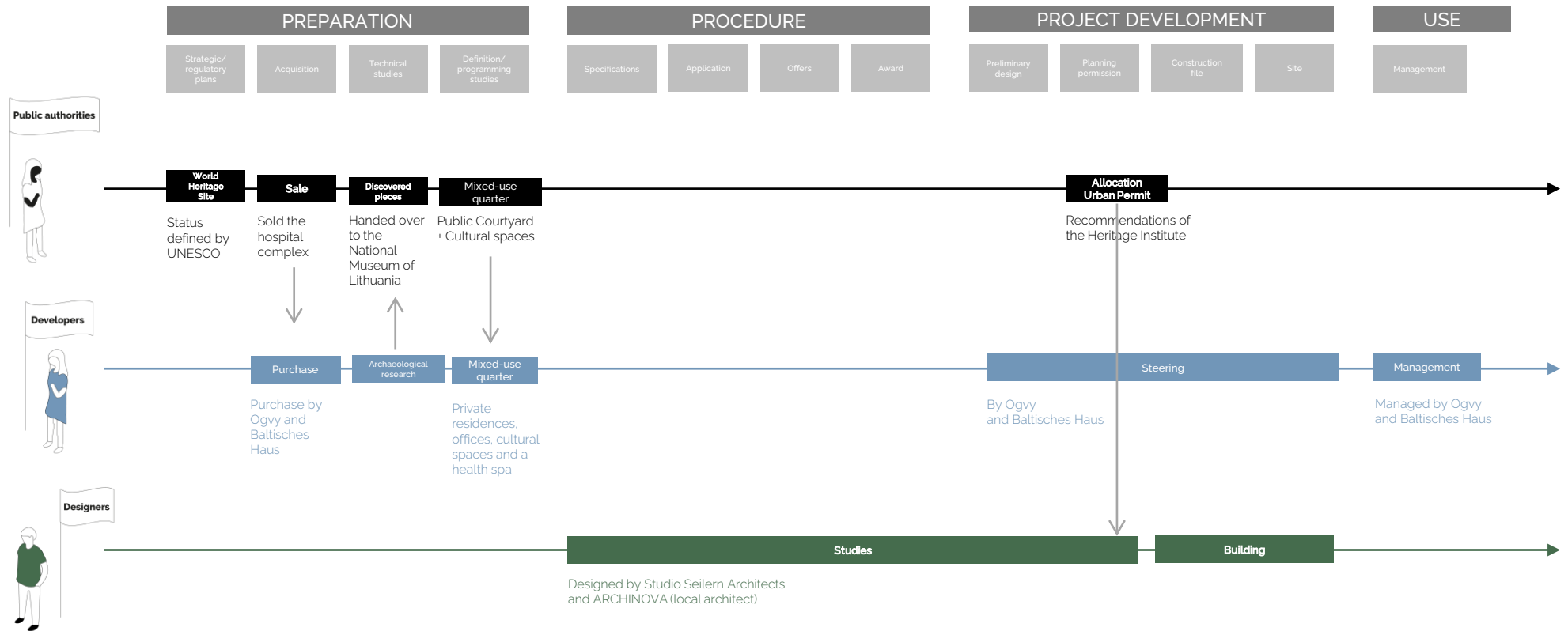
- The conversion of the derelict complex of an hospital to a multifunctional site
- Vilnius Old Town, Lithuania



Image of the project ©
Studio Seilern
Architects

Lithuanian case : Tower Square (Bokšto skveras)

- Timeline



Lithuanian case : Tower Square (Bokšto skveras)

- Narrative

Bokšto Skveras is located in Vilnius Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and covers a significant part of the 44th district. It consists of 6 blocks and 4 courtyards.

The project was initiated 14 years ago by the Ortiz brothers, patrons and shareholders of the property development and management company Baltisches Haus, who acquired the complex.

All the necessary tests were then carried out. The archaeological investigations of this complex took seven years. Cultural layers dating back to the 13th century were unearthed, and valuable finds were handed over to museums. As a result of this research, the history of the evolution of Vilnius has been enriched with "new pages".

The area was subsequently cleared, leaving the foundations and cellars intact.

In adapting the buildings to their new use, the surviving architectural elements of the most valuable buildings of the Baroque period have been restored and recreated. The Baroque urban structure has been restored, with the demolition of inferior extensions. The plan structure of the buildings and the space of the chapel have been restored.

Elements of the Baroque period have been restored and recreated based on iconographic material: roof turrets, the gates of Bokšto St., and facade openings. The basement masonry has been restored, and the polychrome painted decoration has been found - uncovered, conserved, restored, and the missing parts have been regenerated. The wooden beams found in the ceiling have been restored and are on display in the interior.

Lithuanian case : Tower Square (Bokšto skveras)

- Narrative

The reconstruction of more than 13 000 square metres of Bokšto Skveras took thirteen years, including seven years of archaeological research.

The design work started in 2009 and lasted 13 years until the project was completed in 2022

The complex has become multifunctional: administrative and residential premises, a restaurant, a spa with a sauna complex in the underground part of the plot, and an underground car park. The courtyards are publicly accessible, with some open for both public and private public events.

The result of this project is a harmony between historic and modern architecture.

Such a qualitative change is only possible with the necessary attention, time and the developer 's (almost unlimited) resources.

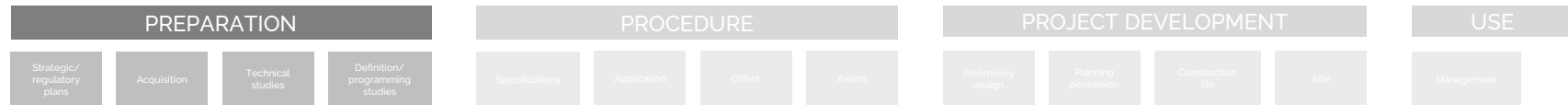
In 2023, Bokšto skveras was awarded the Grand Prix of the Ministry of Environment National Architecture Awards as the best work chosen from all the winning entries in other categories.



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Questions

- Preparing the ground for high-quality architecture?



Framework:

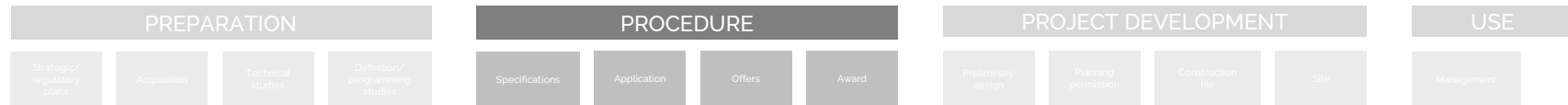
- How to establish high-quality regulatory and strategic plans providing a framework for the project? For example: templates, authorised programme, master plan*, etc.
- What conditions should be attached to the sale of public land?

Procedure:

- What is the best way of preparing the procedure to avoid unknown factors (and hence risks impacting deadlines, costs, and consequently the quality of the project)? For example: preliminary studies: soil quality, stability, archaeology: getting to know the site well
- How do you define the question asked and expectations for the project?

Questions

- Choosing the right team to deliver a high-quality project.



Procedure:

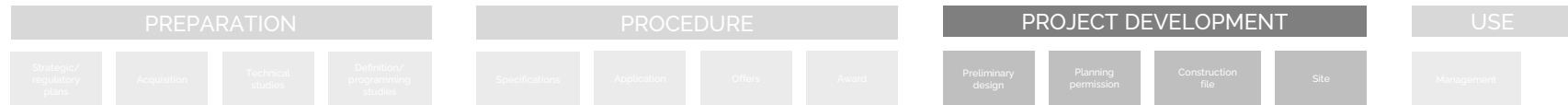
- Choosing the right procedure/type of PPP? Guidelines for choosing a procedure?
- Defining the specifications Award criteria The right balance between price and quality?
- Opening up competition and avoiding working with the same companies, time and again?
- Organising a two-stage procedure: the role of architects in the selection procedure (balance between architects and developers)

Support:

- Providing information on the launch of the procedure: which channels should be used? Example: BMA* newsletter in Brussels
- Participating in the award of the contract How can we then involve people in supporting the project? How can we involve the people who issue planning permission, etc., at an early stage?

Questions

- Maintaining the quality of the project, from sketch to completion?



Framework:

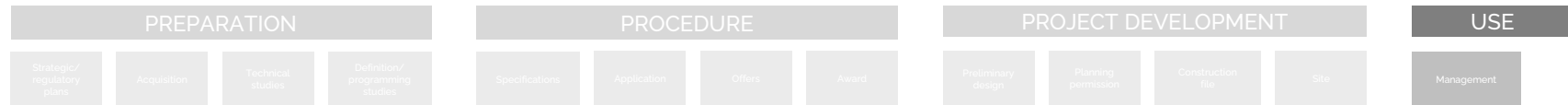
- Preparing to apply for planning permission For example: quality chamber*, project meetings*
- Where do architects and contractors stand in relation to developers?

Support:

- How can the project be controlled and monitored?
- How much flexibility is given in developing the project? What key figures can be involved in providing support?
Examples: support committee, urban planning consultant, BMA, etc.

Questions

- What are the long-term guarantees once the project has been completed?



Framework:

- How do you ensure the quality management of the project? Example: setting conditions for resale
- Where do the contractor and manager stand after construction?

Support:

- What role will the support committee play at the end of the project?
- What tools should be used to maintain quality elements once the project team has disappeared?



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