

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY AS A COMMON CONCERN

*European conference on
architectural policies*



FÉDÉRATION
WALLONIE-BRUXELLES

cellule.
archi,

BWMSTR



Vlaamse
overheid



GHENT
UNIVERSITY / A.C.C.
Architecture
Culture & the
Contemporary

CityTools Grounded
Urbanism

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'.

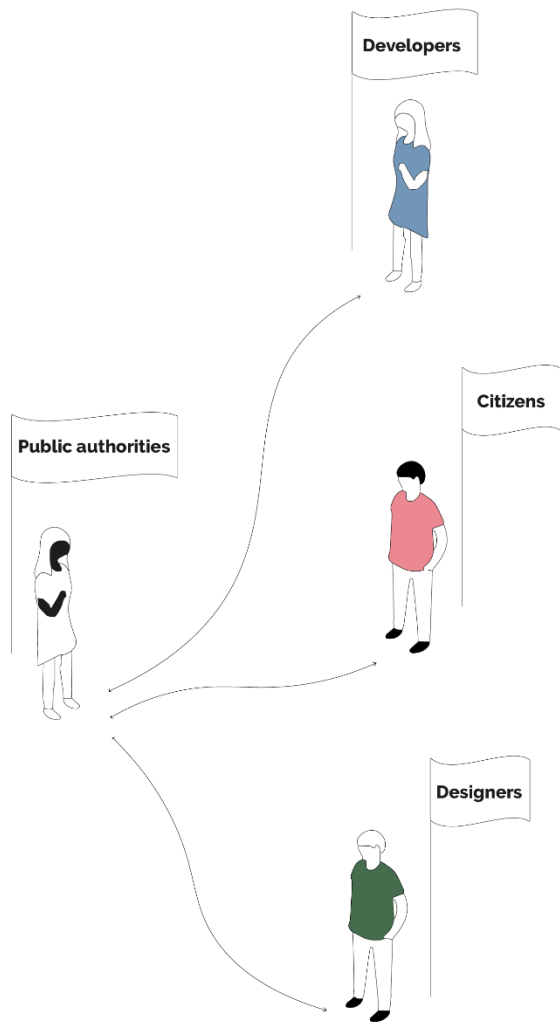
However, while tools have been created to provide a better understanding of this quality, the spaces where it can be tangibly established together have yet to be developed.

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.

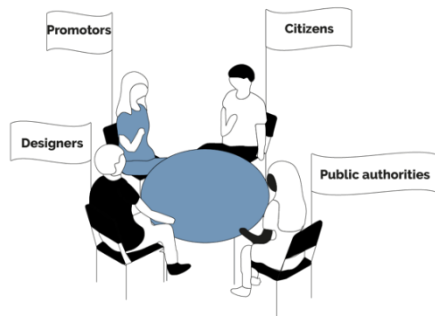
In project development, how can public project leaders interact with such diverse actors as private developers, designers and, even more so, citizens? What role do these different actors play? When? And through what mechanisms? Above all, how can we make the question of project quality central to these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



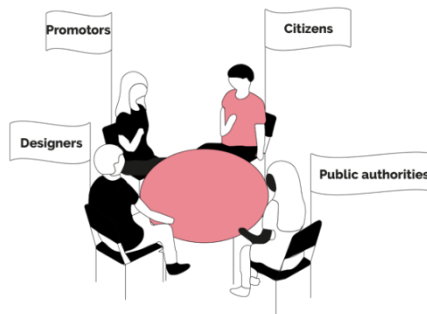
Three interactions, seven thematic workshops



Interactions with Developers

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

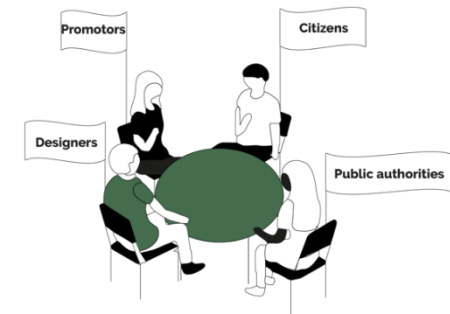
Workshop 1.2.
Getting support from the investor developer for a public project



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

03 **Theme 3**
Interactions
with
Designers

Introduction

We distinguish three possible roles here:

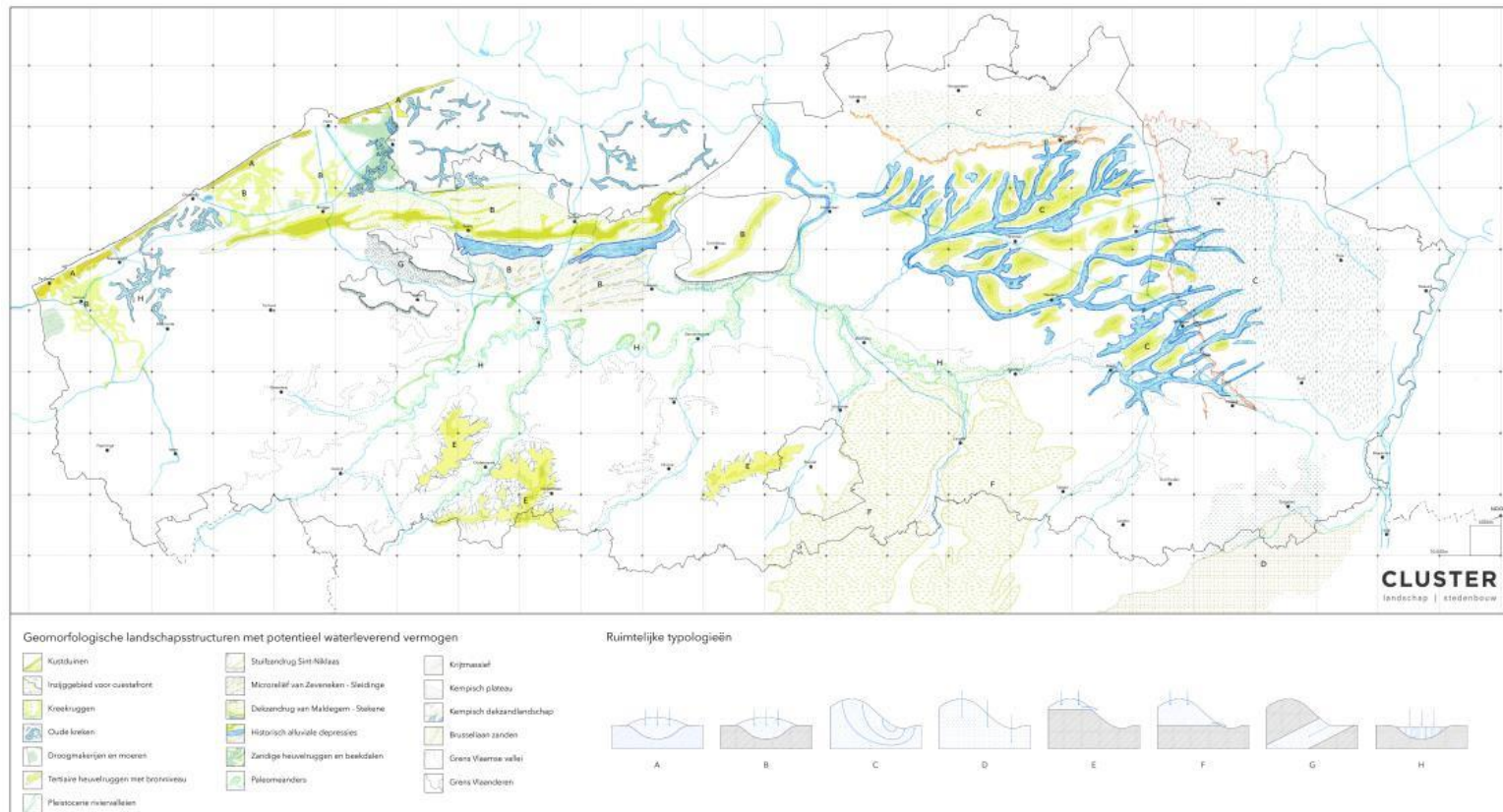
1. Designers assisting Public Authorities : Public authorities or local administrations – e.g. of smaller or mid-sized towns - might lack specific design expertise to tackle certain spatial questions and processes and hire designers to assist them. What kind of assistance, which procedures or tool kits allow for leveraging a good outcome?
2. Design expertise embedded in a policy context: This topic investigates how civil servants trained in architecture, and urban or landscape design are assigned responsibilities in a policy context. We refer to architects working within public administrations, City or Government Architects, architects, planners and engineers within technical services. How does their design-focused expertise support policy-making?
3. Research by design informing policy-making: How can research by design inform (long-term) policy? This topic reflects on the role of experimental studies and actors like think-and-do tanks in informing policy. Often, this kind of interaction engages with complex spatial questions or tries to develop innovative approaches to, for instance, issues of climate change.

3.3: Research by Design informing Policy Making

- What's the role of a design team (architects, planners, landscape architects, etc...) within layered processes of inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary knowledge exchange?
- In what way are the design work or the research trajectories affecting intersectoral decision-making – f.i. in light of regional transition, or climate adaptation processes?
- How are the outcomes of the design research implemented?

Belgian Case: Labo Ruimte

- Mapping and Design research in the context of long-term climate adaptation project
- Moervaart Valley, Dender Valley, Kleine Nete Valley, Belgium



Geomorphological Landscape Structures, synthesizing the diagnosis phase – © CLUSTER landschape and urbanism

Labo Ruimte: The Dry Delta

- Infographs (discussion sheet available in large prints in roundtable session)

DRAFT VERSION

LABO RUIJTE: THE DRY DELTA (BE)

THEME 3: INTERACTIONS WITH DESIGNERS
SUBTHEME 3.3: RESEARCH BY DESIGN INFORMING POLICY MAKING

BWMSTR

experts, actors, policymakers

LABO RUIJTE AS 'FREE SPACE'

LABO RUIJTE is a collaboration between the Department of the Environment and the Flemish Government Architect. It is a laboratory for complex spatial issues in which design research is central. LABO RUIJTE wants to look beyond tomorrow and beyond prevailing paradigms. Depending on the theme, LABO RUIJTE involves administrations, experts, actors and policymakers who are prepared to work together across the boundaries of disciplines on an urgent theme for which there are no ready-made solutions yet. In complete freedom, but never without obligation. Characteristically, Labo Ruimte does not consider design as an end product, but as a process tool to gain useful insights in order to hold the conversation about possible futures'. (10 Years LABO RUIJTE, Designing the future, december 23).

10 Years LABO RUIJTE

Projects overview

december 2023

PROCESS

© Els Verlooy in 10 Years LABO RUIJTE.

EXPLORATION

During the exploration phase, work on setting the design agenda starts in the background. The aim is to arrive at a clear brief. In the case of The Dry Delta Project, challenges and possibilities of drought in Flanders were mapped and possible spatial strategies were defined. This resulted in an end report and an 'Atlas' titled 'Spatial levers in the fight against water scarcity'. (10 Years LABO RUIJTE).

04/2022

Start of analysis phase, Test cases and research areas, The design brief, Collaboration with partners and experts

DESIGN

LABO RUIJTE launches a study brief for multidisciplinary design teams. With the analysis and strategies defined in the exploration phase, three design teams start testing out scenarios in three concrete areas: the 'Denderflanken', the 'Kleine Nete' and the 'Moervaartvallei'. The 'Dendervallei' project investigated how soil can combat drought and flooding, the 'Kleine Nete' project looked at the area's possibilities for drinking water and the 'Moervaartvallei' project investigated the implementation of a fresh water buffer against draught and salinization. (10 Years LABO RUIJTE).

05/2023

Publication of study brief and candidacy of multidisciplinary teams, Design research guided by LABO RUIJTE and external experts, Subsector briefings and knowledge development, Forming coalitions: building a community around the brief

IMPACT

The LABO RUIJTE team compiles the insights into a publication. The process usually ends with the formulation and release of policy, process and project recommendations. In many cases, this ending marks the beginning of a follow-up outside LABO RUIJTE. In the case of the Dry Delta, the publication was titled 'How to turn Flanders into a sponge again'. The Dry Delta project won the Flemish Prize for Urban Planning of 2023. (10 Years LABO RUIJTE).

06/2023

Final reports, Policy recommendations, Publication by LABO RUIJTE, Joint learning process, Wide dissemination of the insights and recommendations through study days, presentations, ...

EXPERTISE

LABO RUIJTE's main goal is to bring together different expertises around complex spatial issues. In the case of The Dry Delta multiple design teams came together throughout the process. The team of Sweco-Cluster-UAntwerpen executed the explorative phase and afterwards functioned as an advisory board for the three teams that were involved in the design phase of the project.

TEAM

SWECO project coordination, CLUSTER design research, Universiteit Antwerpen Research Group Ecosystem Management quantitative research and modelling

TEAMS

Dendervallei

H+N+S+ landscape design, IMDC hydraulic design, TRACTEBEL engineering

Kleine Nete

HO GENT GIS, LAMA landscape design

Moervaartvallei

OMOEVING landscape design, HESSELTEER ecology

Labo Ruimte: The Dry Delta



Photography Michiel De Cleene, assignment in light of the Dry Delta project

- Narrative

'The Research project Droge Delta (Dry Delta) was initiated within the context of LABO Ruimte, a collaboration between the Department of Environment and the Flemish Government Architect. The Dry Delta project ran between 2020 and 2023. This speculative research aims for a desired spatial development in the longer term; and investigates spatial levers in the fight against water scarcity on a regional scale.'

Information based on: www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/subsite/de-droge-delta

Labo Ruimte: The Dry Delta

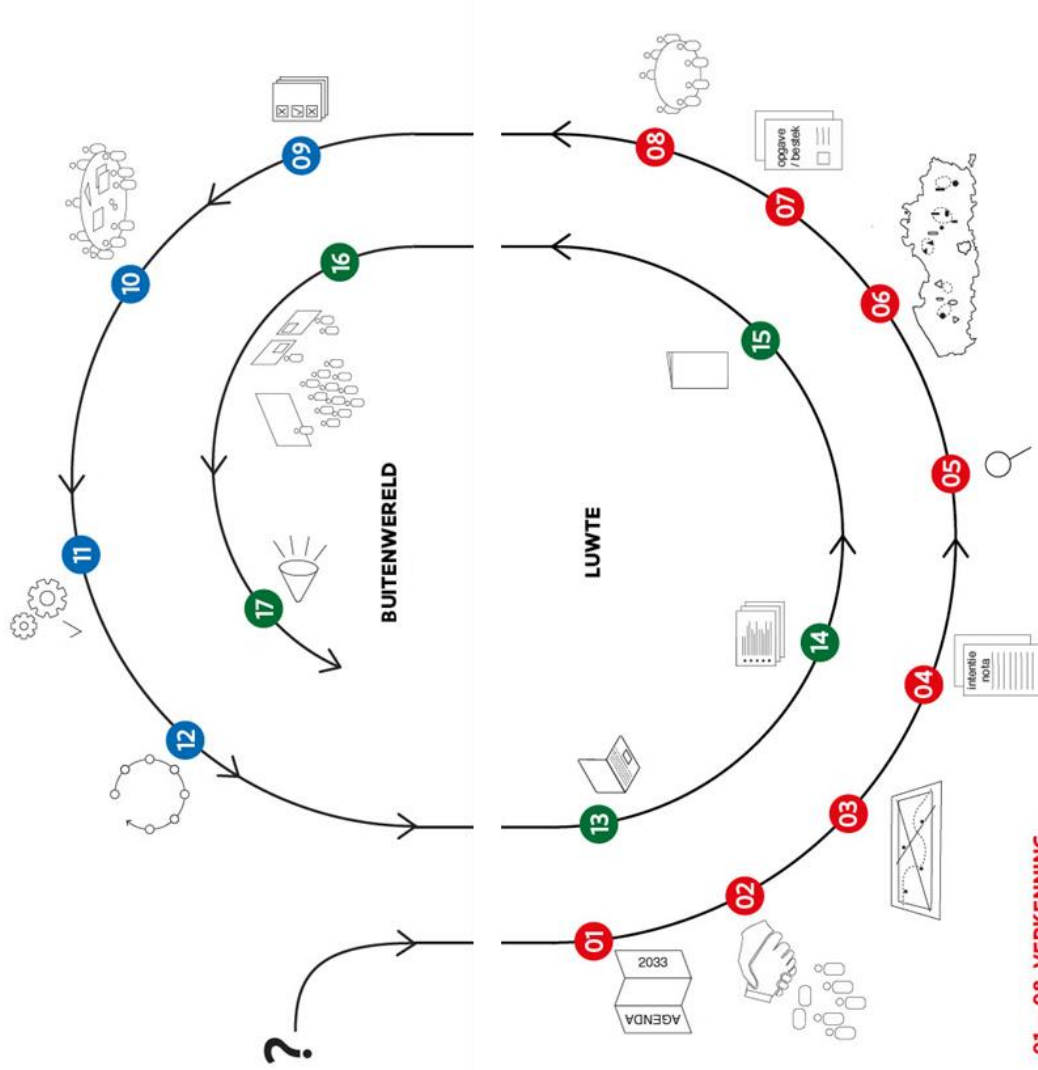
09 – 12 ONTWERP

- 09. Publicatie van een studie-opdracht voor ontwerpend onderzoek: multidisciplinaire teams stellen zich kandidaat.
- 10. Ontwerpend onderzoek begeleid door LABO RUIMTE team & externe experts

- 11. inhoudelijke doorbraken en kennisontwikkeling
- 12. Coalitievorming: bouwen aan een gemeenschap rond de opgave

13 – 17 IMPACT

- 13. Opmaak eindrapporten door de onderzoeksteams
- 14. Formulieren van beleidsaanbevelingen
- 15. Opmaak publicatie door LABO RUIMTE
- 16. Gezamenlijk leerproces voor alle betrokkenen gedurende het hele traject
- 17. Breed verspreiden van de inzichten en aanbevelingen via studiedagen, gerichte presentaties, beleidsfora, tijdschriftartikels, een-op-een-gesprekken...



01 – 08 VERKENNING

- 01. Bepalen van de ontwerpagenda: keuze van het thema & de opgaven
- 02. Mogelijke partners, stakeholders en experts identificeren en activeren, een-op-een-gesprekken om de problematiek beter te begrijpen en het vertrouwen op te bouwen

- 03. Definieren van de ruimtelijke component: in de opgave
- 04. Opmaak van een Intentienota of ambitienota met betrekking tot het thema: wat weten we al, welke gevoeligheden, welke focus?

- 05. Start van een analyse- of diagnosefase in samenwerking met extern studieteam & experts

- 06. Bepalen van de testcases of onderzoeksgebieden

- 07. inhoudelijke scherpstelling van de opgaven voor ontwerp
- 08. LABO RUIMTE maakt een samenwerkingsalliantie met partners en experts

Diagram describing the phases of the research done by Labo Ruimte, stressing the continuous alternation between working in the lee, and the dissemination to the outside world – © Els Vervloesem, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester

Labo Ruimte: The Dry Delta

Covers of the atlas, the 3 'research by design' studies, and the synthesizing reflection report of the Dry Delta – © Department Environment of the Flemish Community, Team Flemish Government architect



'Increasing periods of drought have shown that the urbanized region of Flanders is not prepared for the effects of climate change. While there are numerous scientific reports and specialist studies on water scarcity, the link with spatial development and the characteristics of the existent landscape are not well-known. Knowledge among spatial planners, urban planners and designers about drought problems is still too limited. In the study, designers, researchers and experts alike shared their insights, mapping the spatial challenges, but also visualizing possible solutions to drought in Flanders.

This study was set up in a policy context, with a thoroughly interdisciplinary approach. The combined expertise was used to explore the problems and causes of drought and to map the connection with how we use space. The research was made up of three phases. It started with a diagnostic phase resulting in an atlas. Secondly, a number of river valleys were chosen for the research by design conducted by three multidisciplinary teams. Finally, during a reflective phase, policy recommendations are formulated in a written report while coalitions were forged to implement the desired changes.'

Labo Ruimte:

The Dry Delta

- [Glossary](#)
- **Flemish Government Architect** (NL: Vlaams Bouwmeester): an office advising the Flemish government and other public authorities in Flanders to stimulate the architectural quality of the built environment. Established in 1999, and since 2020 embedded in the transversal Departement Chancellery and Foreign Affairs, under the political responsibility of the Flemish Minister-President. The Government Architect is an expert appointed for five years, a Team of functionaries, and an experts group.
- **Labo Ruimte**: is a collaboration between the Team Flemish Government Architect and Department of the Environment, thematically expanded with committed administrations, experts, relevant organizations and actors. Labo Ruimte's ambition is to provide a laboratory for complex spatial issues. Through design and social debate, the partnership investigates how the evolution toward a more sustainable society can be given spatial shape.

Luxembourg Case: Luxembourg in Transition

- an international urban, architecture and landscape consultation, aiming to develop zero-carbon transition scenarios for the Grand Duchy
- Luxembourg and its cross-border regions



Still website,
Luxembourg in
Transition
<https://luxembourg.intransition.lu/en/>

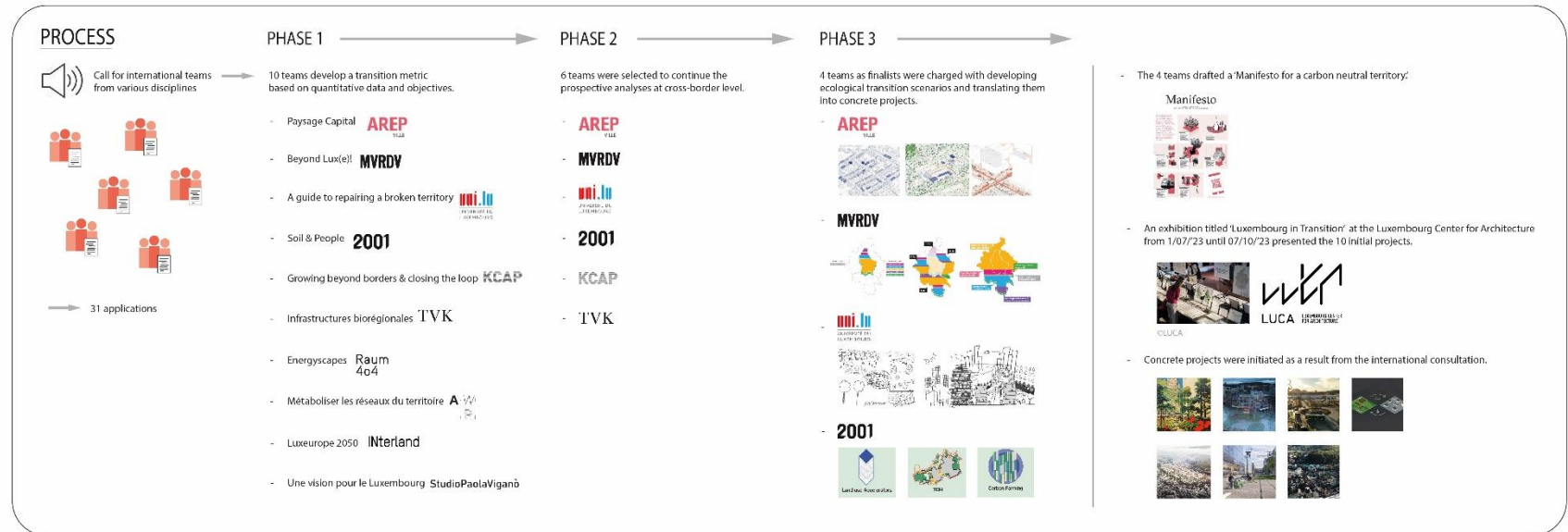
Luxembourg in Transition: International urban, architecture and landscape consultation

- Infographs (discussion sheet available in large prints in roundtable session)

DRAFT VERSION

LUXEMBOURG IN TRANSITION (LU)

THEME 3: INTERACTIONS WITH DESIGNERS
SUBTHEME 3.3: RESEARCH BY DESIGN INFORMING POLICY MAKING



CONSULTATION

The Luxembourg in Transition process was guided by a range of advisory committees. There was a Citizens Committee, a Scientific Committee, an Interministerial Committee and an Advisory Committee.

The BK2050 Citizen's Committee

The Citizen's Committee or *Bürgerkomitee* 'Lëtzebuerg 2050' consisted of 30 participants who attended conferences, discussions and information sessions with a wide range of experts. In the end, they presented 9 principles and 44 proposals to a range of Ministers involved.



The Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee evaluated the applications and the team's reports. In this process, they were accompanied by the opinions of the Interministerial Committee and the Advisory Committee.



The Interministerial Committee

The Interministerial Committee was under the direction of the Department of territorial Development. The composition of the Committee changed during the process.



The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee consisted of actors from different organisations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Trade and the Chamber of Employees, as well as a representative from the Luxembourg Center for Architecture.



Luxembourg in Transition:

International urban, architecture and landscape consultation

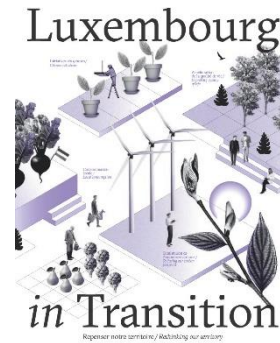
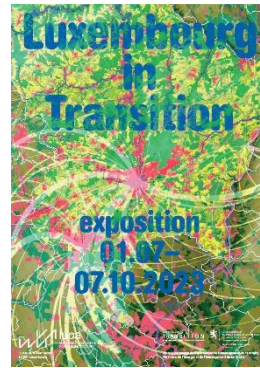
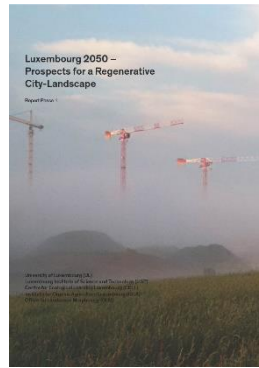
- Narrative

For two years, several design teams, international experts and Luxembourg Citizens – including residents and cross-border workers – have been consulted to reflect on the ecological transition of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and its envioning regions. The work has been carried out within the framework of drafting the governing programming for spatial planning known as PDAT (*Programme Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire*) toward 2050. The project gathered various stakeholders, committed citizens, and experts from different disciplinary backgrounds around this project for the future.

The project consisted of 4 phases. In a preliminary phase, the institutional set-up was conceived and an international call was launched. In the first phase 10 transdisciplinary teams were selected to develop a transition metric based on quantitative data and objectives. When this phase was complete, 6 teams were withheld to continue the prospective analyses this time at a cross-border level. Finally, 4 teams were selected for the third and final stage of the process. These teams were charged with developing transition scenarios for the territory and translating them into emblematic and concrete projects for the entire region.[°]

[°] Text is based on information provided on the website <https://luxembourginttransition.lu/en>

Luxembourg in Transition: International urban, architecture and landscape consultation



From left to right:
Cover Report Phase 1, Consortium
Université de Luxembourg; Poster of
the Exhibition at Luca Luxembourg
Center for Architecture; cover of the
magazine Luxembourg in
Transition.

Luxembourg in Transition involved three bodies responsible for monitoring the overall process: the Interministerial Committee, the Advisory Committee and the Scientific Committee, set up to provide advice and support. In parallel to this, a Citizens' Committee/*Biergerkommitee Lëtzebuerg 2050* was put in place. The 30 members of the Citizens' Committee had the opportunity to, throughout 2021, attend some twenty conferences, discussions, exchanges, and information sessions on various aspects of land-use planning.

The final results were exhibited at the Luca – Luxembourg Center for Architecture, and were published in a magazine and while key take-aways were issued as a manifesto. The integral reports can be consulted on a website. The consultation will help define the government's strategy for implementing ecological transition as part of the spatial planning policy by the *Ministère de l'Aménagement du territoire*, the governmental body that initiated and directed the project.⁹



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