



# SUSTAINABLE & CIRCULAR RE-USE of spaces & buildings

## HANDBOOK

**URBAN AGENDA** FOR THE EU



**arco**  
RESEARCH  
THAT MAKES  
THE DIFFERENCE



Città di Prato





## URBAN AGENDA PARTNERSHIP ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY

### **Coordinator of the Action:**

Valerio BARBERIS (Municipality of Prato, Italy)

### **Scientific supervisor of the Action:**

Leonardo BORSACCHI (ARCO, PIN University of Florence, Italy)

### **Working group and contributors:**

Hughes BECQUART (DG EAC)

Letizia BENIGNI (Municipality of Prato, Italy)

Erja FAGELUND (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland)

Camilla GUASTI (ARCO, PIN University of Florence, Italy)

Veerle LABEEUW (OVAM, Flanders, Belgium)

Vassilis LIOGKAS (Ministry of Environment and Energy, Greece)

Siri KARLSEN BELLIKA (City of Oslo, Norway)

Janja KREITMAYER (Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia)

Philippe MICHEAUX NAUDET (ACR+)

Iván TOSICS (URBACT)

Pieter VERVINCKT (OVAM, Flanders, Belgium)

### **Coordinator of the Partnership:**

Håkon SANDVEN JENTOFT (Municipality of Oslo, Norway)

## URBAN AGENDA PARTNERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF LAND AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

### **Coordinators of the Action:**

Albert CIVIT (Catalan Land Institute INCASÒL, Government of Catalonia, Spain)

Cristina CLOTET OLLÉ (Catalan Land Institute INCASÒL, Government of Catalonia, Spain)

Marc DARDER (DTES)

Rosa GRIMA, Marc MARTÍNE (Catalan Land Institute INCASÒL, Government of Catalonia, Spain)

Pau MORATALLA (Catalan Land Institute INCASÒL, Government of Catalonia, Spain)

### **Working group and contributors:**

Alexandra ALMEIDA (CCDR-LVT, Portugal)

Ann BOGAN (Municipality of Cork, Ireland)

Natalija Fon BOSTAJANCIC (Slovenia)

Further contributes from: Métropole Européenne de Lille (France), Municipality of Antwerp (Belgium), Lithuania

### **Coordinators of the Partnership:**

Daniel BALINSKI (Ministry of Investment and Development of Poland)

Giovanni FINI (Municipality of Bologna, Italy)

with

Valentina BALLOTA (Municipality of Bologna, Italy)

Marta BYSTROWSKA (Ministry of Investment and Development of Poland))

### **Graphic layout and cover design:**

Matilde Masotti

The information and views contained in the present document are those of the Partnerships and do not reflect the official opinion of the European Commission nor that of the Partners. The Commission and the Partners do not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained therein. Neither the Commission, the Partners, nor any person acting on the Commission's or on the Partners' behalf may be held responsible for the content and the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

**Finished on December 2019**



# SUSTAINABLE & CIRCULAR RE-USE of spaces & buildings HANDBOOK



# Index

|              |  |           |
|--------------|--|-----------|
|              | Introduction .....   | 5         |
|              | Aims of the handbook .....   | 7         |
|              | Summary .....  | 10        |
|              | Background .....   | 12        |
| <b>ONE</b>   | <b>Circular Economy at the urban level .....</b>   | <b>15</b> |
|              | 1.1 Circular cities: a vision .....  | 16        |
|              | 1.2 Nature-Based Solutions: a Research and Innovation policy agenda ....                   | 18        |
| <b>TWO</b>   | <b>Urban circular re-use: a framework .....</b>  | <b>20</b> |
|              | 2.1 Mapping: exploring empty and underused properties .....                                | 21        |
|              | 2.2 Activating, envisioning, experimenting .....   | 23        |
|              | 2.3 Decision-making and financing .....  | 24        |
|              | 2.4 Management, creating institutional structure .....                                     | 27        |
|              | 2.4.1 Re-use planning and management: basic considerations .....                           | 27        |
|              | 2.4.2 Re-use planning and management as part of a local strategy .....                     | 28        |
|              | 2.4.3 New ideas towards the re-use of properties: temporary use<br>and urban commons ..... | 28        |
| <b>THREE</b> | <b>Management models and tools for urban circular re-use .....</b>                         | <b>32</b> |
|              | 3.1 Urban Agency for Re-use .....  | 33        |
|              | 3.2 Temporary use agencies .....   | 34        |
|              | 3.3 Funding and financing .....  | 34        |
|              | 3.4 Legal .....  | 36        |
|              | 3.5 Reusability Index: a proposal .....  | 38        |
|              | 3.6 Communication in support of the urban circular re-use .....                            | 42        |
| <b>FOUR</b>  | <b>Multi-Level governance elements for circular re-use strategies ..</b>                   | <b>44</b> |
|              | 4.1 From the national to the local level .....   | 44        |
|              | B) Bremen policy for temporary use: the ZwischenZeitZentrale .....                         | 46        |
|              | C) Model Urban Revitalization, Poland .....  | 47        |
|              | 4.2 From regional level to local level .....   | 48        |
|              | Appendix 1: Best practices of vacant buildings management .....                            | 52        |
|              | Appendix 2: Best practices of temporary use of buildings .....                             | 54        |
|              | Appendix 3: Best practices of re-use of buildings .....                                    | 59        |
|              | Appendix 4: Best practices of urban regeneration .....                                     | 64        |
|              | Bibliography .....   | 68        |
|              | Photo credits .....  | 70        |



# Introduction



**Valerio Barberis**

**Councilor for urban planning & circular economy of the Municipality of Prato**

At the urban level, society and the production sector undergo a constant process of change. In turn, the latter brings about new needs in terms of availability and usability of spaces and buildings. The urban regeneration process must effectively keep up with this process of change, managing to find an adequate solution for each phase of the city's transformation. Circular re-use of spaces and buildings opens up scenarios and challenges for regeneration that need to be managed in an integrated manner by administrators, companies, associations, and citizens. At the European level, there are many positive experiences of effective temporary or permanent employment of certain previously abandoned or unutilized places enabled through participation and active citizenship. Participatory processes must contribute to regeneration, however, it is up to public administrations to decide and facilitate re-use within a more comprehensive design based on medium-long term policies. In Prato, the concept of re-use is part of the genetic heritage of the city and its inhabitants. With this awareness, we hypothesize the creation of a management body in charge to facilitate urban regeneration and the circular re-use of unutilized buildings and spaces. Through the transformation of existing buildings and adaptive re-use, future cities will be more sustainable and resilient, favouring citizen well-being and quality of life, strengthening their identities, memories, culture, respect for the environment, fostering social inclusion and economic growth.



**Håkon Sandven Jentoff**

**Coordinator of the Urban Agenda Partnership on Circular Economy**

Most of the resources we use are still there, in our cities. Buildings, open spaces, parks and roads all represent a huge amount of used resources. As citizens, we are responsible for the best possible use of these resources. Experiences from cities all over Europe clearly show that there are alternatives to demolition and new construction. Re-use of existing properties is possible and, in many cases, better from both a resource and a human perspective. This handbook summarises some city examples turning them into a guideline for cities to develop a strategy for better use of abandoned buildings or spaces. The handbook is a first step in promoting such a strategy and the Partnership on Circular Economy will try to keep the process ongoing and to promote in other cities the concept of urban regeneration as part of the broader vision of circular economy.





**Daniel Baliński and Giovanni Fini**  
**Coordinators of the Urban Agenda**  
**Partnership on Sustainable Use of Land**  
**and Nature-based Solutions)**

Nowadays, many cities around the world grow in size and consume more and more natural and agricultural land. When the urban sprawl takes over, we are left with long commutes, pollution, poor access to services and a degrading sense of community. Sometimes, the space we need for these new developments is already there – in the city. Under-used urban land is a potential still to be explored in order to build more compact and liveable cities. But reusing abandoned buildings and spaces is not only about fighting urban sprawl. It is about re-thinking cities and mobilizing urban innovation, it is about inclusion, participation and co-creation of shared urban space, and it is also about money.

Land is not infinite; thus, we must learn how to use this resource in a more responsible and sustainable way. Examples from this guidebook will hopefully contribute to adopting new approaches and finding new solutions by utilizing under-used spaces. The partnership on Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions aims at mainstreaming this adaptive approach to the urban space, not as a novelty, but as a standard in sustainable urban development.



## Aims of the HANDBOOK

This handbook can be a useful tool to lay the foundations for an overall strategy that looks at a **new model of urban re-use management** following the principles of the circular economy.

In fact, disused and underutilized spaces and buildings in all European cities can become **opportunities for new jobs**, the promotion of a collaborative economy, social innovations and start-ups.

The book intends to serve as a stimulus and an incentive for strategic planning at the urban level, especially carried out by public authorities, but also supported by the regional and the national level. With a wide review and analysis of good practices of urban re-use offered by the handbook, cities may learn about the different solutions that can be adopted, taking into account their specific urban features. The approach could be bottom-up or, vice versa, top-down, adopting different models of governance for the management of specific situations. More, involving the media in the communication and, in particular, in the storytelling of the regeneration process of unused spaces and buildings is the first step in making citizens an active part of change. Informing citizens on the decision-making process is crucial to sensitise them and to promote re-use and regeneration as keystones for urban development.

The Urban Agenda partnerships on the Circular economy and on the Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions decided to work together because the re-use of abandoned or underused buildings and spaces emerged as a relevant topic for both partnerships. For this reason, they agreed in making joint efforts to develop a shared handbook merging the different perspectives.

The topic “**urban regeneration and re-use of buildings**” presented in this handbook covers SDG 11 (“**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**”) and SDG 15 (Life on land) concerning land saving.

In the first chapter, following a background overview, the vision of a circular city and its definition are outlined. In the second chapter, a framework for an urban circular re-use is provided. Chapter 3 mainly focuses on models and tools for urban circular re-use. Among the proposed models, the Urban Agency for Re-use is presented. The latter is designed to operate at the urban scale as a facilitating structure between the availability of existing public and private spaces and buildings ready for re-use and their demand. Chapter 4 provides examples of multi-level governance elements of circular strategies. After the conclusions and future perspectives, the handbook ends with four appendixes with examples of existing best practises in European cities.







Europe. Yet, the practice is still not widely acknowledged nor followed. Similarly to other natural resources, land is not infinite, thus we need to think more carefully of how we manage and use it. As the urban sprawl phenomena, meaning the scarcity of available land in cities, brings about burdensome and costly consequences, re-using existing buildings emerges as a valid alternative. Promoting re-use practices will help to ensure more sustainable urbanization, with multiple benefits not only for managing authorities, but also for citizens. In particular, within the partnership, the action on Urban Circular Re-use of buildings and spaces is led by INCASÒL.



Municipality  
of PRATO

The Municipality of Prato is one of the largest Italian industrial districts and one of the most important textile and clothing production centres in the world. According to the Prato Chamber of Commerce, the production district counts 35,000 direct employees and 7,200 companies producing 17% of Italian textile exports. Currently, the Municipality of Prato is the Italian representative in the European partnership initiative on circular economy, coordinating the debates on the issues of the re-use of wastewater, the economic incentives for the circular economy and the sustainable re-use of buildings and urban spaces.



ARCO (Action Research for CO-development)  
Pin, University of Florence

ARCO is a university research group founded in 2008 at PIN - Polo Universitario di Prato, University of Florence. ARCO works following an interdisciplinary logic on the themes of local development & circular economy, social economy, inclusive development, sustainable food commodities. ARCO provides the Municipality of Prato with technical and scientific support on the topic of circular economy within the partnership. [www.arcolab.org](http://www.arcolab.org)



# Summary

At the urban level, society and built areas undergo a **constant process of change**. In turn, the latter brings about new needs in terms of availability and usability of spaces and buildings. The urban regeneration process must effectively keep up with this process of change, managing to find an adequate solution for each phase of the city's transformation.

The accelerated and uncontrolled urbanization phenomena experienced in the past decades has often created **fragmentation and deterioration** of the quality of the urban environment. Cities are increasingly reconsidering the current settlement models in favour of solutions based on the re-use, recycling and development of innovative and creative communities.

As the available land is often scarce in cities and the urban sprawl is burdensome and costly, re-using existing buildings emerges as an alternative. Promoting re-use practices will help to ensure more sustainable urbanisation, with multiple benefits not only for managing authorities, but also for all citizens.

The partnership on Circular economy and the partnership on Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions decided to work together on this handbook because the re-use of abandoned or underused buildings and spaces emerged as relevant topic for both partnerships.

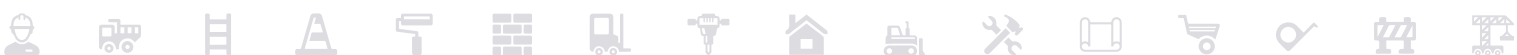
The re-use and the transformation of existing buildings (and spaces), in particular those unused ones ("Rethinking the city"), in particular, target the following **goals**:

- Create *new economic and social opportunities*, without consuming new land (following the paradigm of the no net land take);
- Improve the *environmental performance* of buildings and infrastructures in their entire life cycle;
- Propose *new urban scenarios*.

Nowadays, new policies have to take into consideration at urban level, involving both citizens and entrepreneurs, in order to reduce the gap within potential bad waste management and to help in a general rebuild of the social cohesion. Starting from this vision of circular city, the application of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) can inspire and facilitate the transition to circular economy. In fact, NBS are able to provide simultaneously environmental, social and economic positive impacts and facilitate the territories' resilience.

In the cities, practices of sustainable and circular re-use of abandoned or underused properties **usually consist of the following elements/phases**, based on the logic of planning cycles:

- Mapping: exploration of empty and underused properties and *creation of an inventory* explicating ownership and type of building;
- Activating, envisioning, experimenting: *definition of the incentives* for people to participate to the collection of bottom-up ideas for the re-use of vacant properties through transparent and inclusive participatory processes;



- Decision-making, financing: measurement of the *public usefulness of potential* new functions considering *economic and social impact* of different alternatives of use and creation of links between the new ideas for re-use and the general urban development strategy (with appropriate financing);
- *Monitoring and evaluation*: creation of a feed-back mechanism for regular revision and potential modification of the strategy.

.....

Among the possible solutions proposed by this handbook, an innovative management model designed by Prato Municipality is the Urban Agency for Re-use (UAR). It is strongly recommended for cities to establish such an agency in order to facilitate local public administrations in the definition and the application of building re-use strategies. Any city can institute its own agency for the promotion of re-use of buildings and spaces through an integrated approach and using new model of governance in order to manage and plan the various re-use strategies. Existing models of agencies are currently operating at the European level, each with their peculiar features.

One of the tools the Urban Agency for Re-use can use to analyse the propensity of a building to be re-used and/or to be changed in destination is the proposed Reusability Index (RI). At European level there are many indicators related to the environmental aspect which have already been proposed by several organisations. In particular, concerning the circular economy some indexes mainly focusing on recycling rates and material flows have already been defined. The newly designed RI is based on a multi-disciplinary approach. Thus, the index includes technical, environmental, economic and social indicators. Particularly, it has been inferred from the following methodologies: i) Due diligence; consisting of the overall evaluation of an existing building; the ii)

Life cycle assessment; calculating the potential environmental impacts and the resource consumption; and the iii) BES (Benessere Equo e Sostenibile); describing the level of well-being of a territory. In the application of the RI, starting from the proposed indicators, cities can choose their own effective parameters and define the calculation method applying different values to each indicator.

.....

Based on the experiences provided by the case studies, a series of **key suggestions** can be provided:

- *Partnership creation*: Different levels of the administration (local, regional, national) as well as private and social stakeholders need to create long lasting operational pacts to work together.
- *Decision-making power devolution*: it is essential for public administrations to delegate part of the decision-making power to organisations and stakeholders on the ground who are operationally reactivating the spaces, while still maintaining a supervision of the processes to protect the public interest. To this respect, *participatory processes should be warmly encouraged*.
- *Administrative flexibility*: public urban offices should adapt regulations in order to allow more flexibility in conformity to changing needs, thus increasing the building's long-term life cycle and propensity of re-use.
- *Funding*: buildings cannot be re-generated without financial investment; therefore, public administrations must be able to allocate appropriate resources to this purpose.



# Background

The work carried out within the partnerships includes the exploration of a series of strategies, actions, studies and guidelines used as a basis for setting up a reference knowledge base on the topic of the re-use of underused or abandoned spaces and buildings.

The following European URBACT projects were taken into account:

---



## 2ND CHANCE

Most European cities have to deal with the urban “voids”, abandoned places or underutilized premises often located in the proximity of the city centre. These sites frequently have a negative impact on the surrounding environment. On the other hand, they present a great opportunity: they can be used to complete a compact settlement structure or to provide space for the necessary functions in the city. Within this project, self-organized groups implemented ideas and new housing models that can restore these places.

<http://urbact.eu/2nd-chance>



## REFILL

(Re-use of empty spaces as a driving force for innovation at the local level). The network outlines the concept of temporary re-use of vacant spaces by “urban pioneers”, meaning entrepreneurs and initiatives that start from the bottom. These individuals often face various social challenges and create new opportunities for social innovation in cities. The cities involved in this network have already experimented the concept of temporary re-use of vacant spaces with different approaches and governance methods.

<http://urbact.eu/Refill>



## SUB>URBAN

(Reinventing sub-urban areas): Sub>urban network focuses on i) increasing population densities within city borders instead of expanding urban territory; ii) uncovering new planning practices, processes, instruments and partnerships to achieve the best possible local outcome; iii) strengthening regional coordination between historic inner cities, suburbs and greater metropolitan areas.

<http://urbact.eu/sub.urban>



The following studies and initiatives were also taken into account at the local level:

---



### ATLAS OF RECYCLED LANDSCAPES

The study reflects on the recovery and reinvention of the landscape showcasing all the potential for land re-use.

It analyses many projects carried out all around the world dealing with land recovery. The latter succeeded in recovering portions of land which have undergone the process of industrialization and other transformation phenomena that compromised their original quality in the last century. These areas include reclaimed land, abandoned mines, former landfills, terrains vague, and unused areas later recognized as spaces that could bring new social, economic and environmental added value.

<http://www.skira.net/books/atlante-dei-paesaggi-riciclati>



### NOVOID

The Project intends to consider the qualities of the abandoned and degraded spaces in the city and to positively contemplate their value and potentialities. The goal is to debate and test innovative city planning and architectural solutions driven by low-cost, flexibility, ephemerality and sustainability criteria.

<http://www.ceg.ulisboa.pt/novoid/>



Diputació  
Barcelona

### TEMPORARY USES FOR EMPTY SPACES (BARCELONA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL)

As a result of the experiences that emerged from the economic crisis, the Barcelona Provincial Council (Diputació de Barcelona) published a document establishing the strategies for the re-use of underused or abandoned spaces and buildings. The latter aims to exemplify the great diversity of initiatives and possibilities offered by this new way of managing certain spaces and by the new forms of interaction between administration and citizenship which these practices trigger. The document also contains an adaptation and activation protocol for empty spaces, which aims to help local bodies to make the most of these unused spaces.

<http://www1.diba.cat/libreria/pdf/55963.pdf>



## CRITERIA & SUB-CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING URBAN BROWNFIELD AREAS - DUO2 - (FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE - UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA)

The paper provides a theoretical and methodological definition of the term 'unrevitalized areas' and a comprehensive definition of the criteria and sub-criteria for determining and categorising such spaces within the limits of urban settlements of particular city municipalities, following the provisions of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. Enumerating, defining, categorizing and analysing existing unrevitalized areas in eleven city municipalities will yield directly applicable results in order to apply financial measures.  
[https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MOP/Dokumenti/Urbani-razvoj/33c2a93f51/studija\\_duo.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MOP/Dokumenti/Urbani-razvoj/33c2a93f51/studija_duo.pdf)

### RE-CYCLE ITALY

#### RECYCLE ITALY

One of the first objectives of this research is to construct an articulated knowledge framework on the theme of recycling linked to the regulations, the methods, and rules of the restoration activity. The most common disciplines within the project, are architectural and urban planning. In recent years those sectors found a common field of work around the concept of landscape, with the contribution of landscape architecture.

<http://recycleitaly.net/il-progetto/>

### RIUSIAMO L'ITALIA®

#### REUSE ITALY

The book written by Giovanni Campagnoli shows that there are over six million urban empty spaces in Italy that no longer are functional for any type of use (i.e. former railway stations, former factories, barracks, empty shops, ghost towns, goods confiscated to the mafia, etc.). Being able to re-use even a small number of these spaces, entrusting them to cultural and social start-ups, can become a low-cost lever to promote youth employability.

<http://www.riusiamolitalia.it/>

.....

**The experiences collected from these sources will be deepened in this manual which further analyses the projects and the good practices.**

## 1. Circular Economy at the urban level

In 2015, the European Commission adopted the “Circular Economy Package” which includes proposals for revising the waste legislation in order to stimulate the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy. Nowadays, both the reasons for sustainability and environmental impacts suggest a radical transition to the circular paradigm (Ghisellini et al, 2016). One of the most important challenges the European Union faces is the need to design indicators able to assess the level of efficiency in terms of reduction, re-use and recycling of waste generated in the linear economy model (Molina - Moreno et al, 2017).

Even if the “Circular Economy Package” represents a significant development in EU policies, the EU approaches on land use are still weak. Although in the EU policy the processes avoiding new land take are generally seen as one of the benefits of circular economy, land itself is rarely viewed as a resource on its own. The main reason for that might be the fact that it is not easy to include land into consumption and production loops and, even more importantly, the EU has less direct influence on urban development and planning issues than on more concrete environmental aspects.

On a strategic level, there are some efforts to develop a European vision of **urban development** in which also land plays its role:

- Over recent decades, land recycling has become a *major concern in European regional policies*. The “**Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe**” sets the goal to achieve zero net land take by 2050. An important contribution to reaching this target is the *regeneration of brownfields* instead of greenfield development.

- An important aspect required to make *efficient use of soils* within a circular economy, is the clever use of space. It includes for instance, *the connection of the urban and synthetic storm water-systems* in spatial developments resulting in efficient use of space. (Breure et al, 2018)

These strategic statements are, however, much weaker than the EU compulsory directives adopted in the environmental field (regarding waste, wastewater, water, etc.). In this regard it is the national, regional and local administrations which have to make stronger, binding steps towards the re-use of land and buildings, underpinned by binding legislations. Local municipalities can potentially play an important role to this respect. With strong competences on development and planning issues, municipalities can and should include urban circular re-use of abandoned or underused properties into their urban development policies and strategies and should step up as initiators for corresponding regional and national policies and legislations.

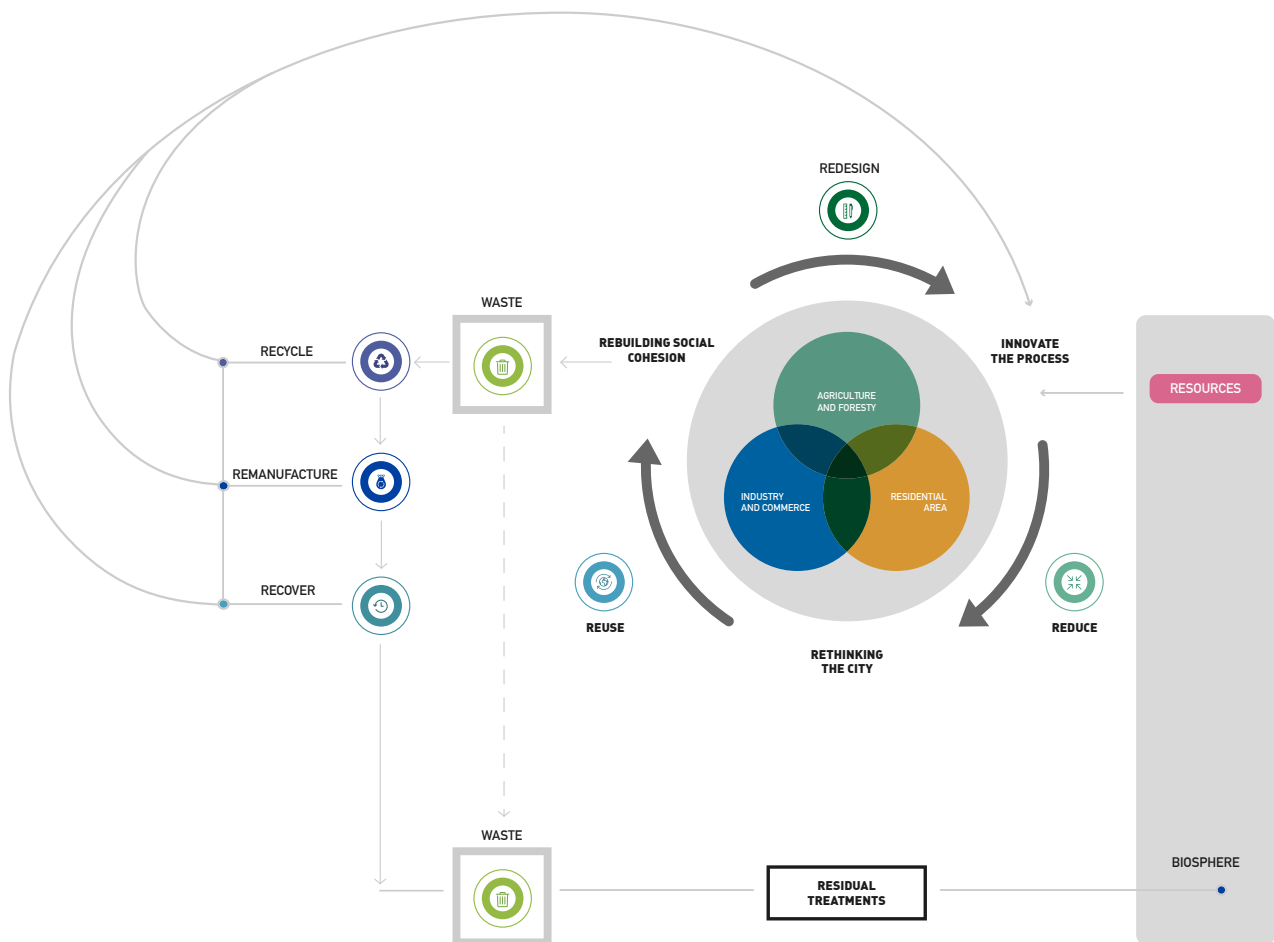




## 1.1 Circular cities: a vision

The application of the circular approach to a territory (e.g. the urban area) involves municipalities, production activities, relevant stakeholders and citizens in order to **create opportunities for reducing the depletion of new resources**.

The following proposed model for a circular city (Figure 1) introduces a holistic and systematic governance, bringing together public authorities, universities, enterprises, NGOs and citizens. The system includes the three interconnected traditional urban areas, namely residential, industrial, and agricultural land and forestry.



**Figure 1.**  
Circular model approach (Source: Borsacchi et al., 2019)

This model may enhance initiatives of research and innovation within circular approach as well as the engagement of citizens and NGOs in the development of start-up ideas for new business activities (both profit and non-profit). For enterprises, the transition to a circular economy requires innovation in order

to adequate technologies and processes (“**Innovate the process**”).

Therefore, a new challenge is the **re-use and the transformation of existing buildings** (and spaces), in particular those unused ones (“**Rethinking the city**”), with the logic to cre-



ate new **economic and social opportunities** without consuming new land (following the paradigm of the no net land take); **improve the environmental performance of buildings** and infrastructures in their entire life cycle; and propose new urban scenarios (Borsacchi et al., 2019).

Beyond the environmental aspect, the challenge of the circular city entails also economic and social facets. New policies have to be taken into consideration, involving both citizens and entrepreneurs, in order to reduce the gap within potential bad waste management and to help rebuilding social cohesion. In fact, one of the main goals of this approach is precisely to strengthen the social cohesion at the urban level (“**Rebuild Social Cohesion**”). The latter is pursued through the construction of an **inclusive and supportive community**, based on the principle of sharing and creative re-use as a means to stimulate innovative driving forces for business activities, also considering **social purposes and charity**, within the paradigm of the sharing economy (Borsacchi, et al., 2018).

In order to tackle the issue of Urban Circular Re-use of buildings and spaces the partnership started from the traditional approach on urban re-use, that, in theory, considers cultural diversity and creativity as fundamental resources for human, social and economic development. The approach also provides the tools for managing physical and social transformations and it ensures that contemporary interventions are harmoniously integrated (UNESCO, 2011). However, in practice, the rapid and uncontrolled urbanization experienced in the past decades has often created fragmentation and deterioration of the quality of the urban environment. Now it is time for city administrations to challenge expansive policies and to adopt a more sustainable approach to urban development. Cities are increasingly moving to actions aimed at reconsidering settlement models based above all on the re-use, recycling and development of creative economies.

In this framework the circular economy approach represents an extraordinary oppor-

tunity to define an innovative and complete agenda for cities and to create an environment in which urban authorities can develop and implement solutions for adaptive re-use and urban regeneration of spaces and buildings, thus promoting sustainable use of land. Before considering building any new constructions, it should first be acknowledged what is already in place, trying to figure out how can existing properties return to be efficient.

In fact, there is an important potential to reduce the use of new land, favouring a transition to the circular economy, aiming at reducing the environmental impacts, with adaptive re-use of old buildings. Furthermore, when considering the option of a new construction versus adaptive re-use of an existing structure it is important to examine the whole cycle, assessing the environmental effects and energy costs of demolition, pollutants, landfill waste, and carbon emissions. Additional aspects to be taken into account are the generation of new jobs, the development of innovative business models and the promotion of new cultural and social opportunities.

**Reduction, re-use and recycling** of construction and demolition materials play an important role in the policy of circular re-use of spaces and buildings.

Nowadays, most building and construction waste is generally created during the demolition and destruction process. With a little time and proper planning, many of these materials could be re-used or recycled, rather sent to the landfill (reduction). Deconstructing, referring to the systematic disassembly of a building with the purpose of recovering its materials, saves resources by keeping materials “in circle”. Reclamation involves the stripping of usable building materials for the purpose of re-use without affecting the structural elements or integrity of the building.





MILAN

## 1.2 Nature-Based Solutions: a Research and Innovation policy agenda

Starting from our vision of a **circular city** (see Section 1.1), the application of **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)** can inspire and facilitate the transition to a circular economy.

In fact, Nature-Based Solutions are solutions to societal challenges inspired and supported by nature. NBS are able to provide simultaneously environmental, social and economic positive impacts and facilitate resilience of territories. Such solutions bring more and more diverse and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. NBS could also help land re-use projects and thus limit urban sprawl.

The EU Research and Innovation policy agenda on Nature-Based Solutions and Re-Naturing Cities aims to position the EU as leader in 'Innovating with nature' for more sustainable and resilient societies. The agenda is implemented through Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, but also through other means to enhance the awareness and engagement of end-users, stir the supply and demand towards the market and develop an EU-wide knowledge base on nature-based solutions.

---

### The **main goals** of the EU for **Nature-Based Solutions** and **Re-Naturing Cities** are:

1. **Enhance** the *framework conditions* for nature-based solutions at the EU policy level;
2. **Develop** a European Research and Innovation Community for nature-based solutions;
3. **Provide the evidence** and knowledge base for nature-based solutions;
4. **Advance** the development, *uptake* and *upscale* of innovative nature-based solutions.



## 2. Urban circular re-use: a framework

Cities are taking their opportunities to improve efficiency and environmental impact by **embedding circular economy principles in urban context**. Making cities sustainable means **rethinking every element of urban living** and one of the circular city declinations concerns the re-use of buildings and spaces.

---

Contemporary cities, for various reasons, are increasingly subject to transformations that continue to produce empty spaces. Urban planning is not just about physically recovering spaces but also about responding to widespread and changing social, cultural and environmental needs. Urban authorities, therefore, find themselves having to rethink their urban planning strategies, and to adopt new philosophies to conceive the city of the future as an opportunity for local development through a new approach of “urban re-use management” that paves the way for the transformation of our cities into “circular cities”. To achieve this goal the idea is to promote a new model of city governance through the creation of a management capacity able to map disused/underused buildings and spaces, draw up a reusability index, and match these spaces with the various subjects able to transform them into new studios, start-ups, lodging, laboratories, creative residences, etc., giving life to new creative and innovative hubs.

---

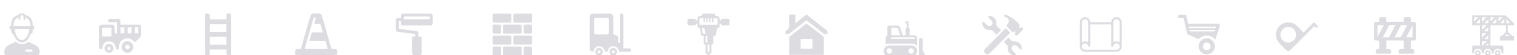
In the cities, practices of sustainable and **circular re-use of abandoned or underused properties** usually consist of the following elements/phases, based on the logic of planning cycles:

- **Mapping**: exploration of empty and underused properties and creation of an inventory explicating ownership and type of building;
- **Activating, envisioning, experimenting**: definition of the incentives for people to participate to the collec-

tion of bottom-up ideas for the re-use of vacant properties through transparent and inclusive participatory processes;

- **Decision-making, financing**: measurement of the public usefulness of potential new functions considering economic and social impact of different alternatives of use and creation of links between the new ideas for re-use and the general urban development strategy (with appropriate financing);
  - **Monitoring and evaluation**: creation of a feed-back mechanism for regular revision and potential modification of the strategy.
- 

These phases are hereinafter discussed one by one, highlighting good practices experienced by European cities.



## 2.1 Mapping: exploring empty and underused properties

Mapping is a **systematic and localised analysis** of issues and potentials of underused spaces in the urban context also taking into account the city/neighbourhood development perspective.

Mapping **should include an inventory**, a database of underused spaces, geo-localisation, a typology of use allowed (in accordance with the land use plan), an analysis of issues/potentials from different disciplines point of view (sociological, economic, environmental, etc.)

### Question #1:

#### How to define empty spaces?

This question is not easy to answer as empty spaces can be discovered but there can be many reasons for which they remain empty in a given moment.

Zürich is, at present, one of the rare examples of a city which approved a precise official definition of vacant property: “if over 500 m<sup>2</sup> spaces stay empty for more than one year, owners have to announce this to the city office”.

Cities avoid introducing defined regulations and limitations to elude negative reactions of property owners. During the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale, Vacant.nl research was exhibited, representing a ground breaking statement on vacant public buildings across the Netherlands which generated an international discourse on vacancy and the new role of architecture in operating in already-built environments. The research explored vacant public and government properties in the Netherlands built in different centuries including churches, convents, airports, palaces, prisons, water towers, lighthouses, fortresses and bunkers.

### Question #2:

#### How to map empty spaces?

Identification of empty housing is not difficult if based on water or electricity utility information. Crowdsourcing methods can also be used to establish a vacancy map of the city.

Cork City Council is currently developing a database of all vacant/derelict lands in its administrative area. Set up by Mayo County Council but available to all local authority areas, the latter allows the public to report vacant or derelict houses, then followed up by City and County Councils.



## BEST PRACTICE - BRUSSELS

**The city of Brussels has developed a systematic inventory of vacant buildings.**

A database contains relevant information about these buildings and provides a geographic overview to support the city administration to define a territorial approach. The city carries out activities to identify and map abandoned and unoccupied buildings, i.e. i) field survey, estimating vacancy through a visual assessment of the public space; ii) collection of information from water and electricity companies that can monitor buildings having a low consumption of water and electricity; iii) analysis of the population register with the demographic department to find out if there are any residents in the building. Identified abandoned and unoccupied buildings and sites are centralised and mapped in a web-based GIS database. In this database all available information is important to support decision-making (i.e. potential building permits or applications-applied taxes-measures of security or prohibition of occupation-legal actions and affectations).

The web database is accessible for all users who work on unoccupied buildings issues.

### Question #3:

### What can be done with the empty spaces?

The case with publicly owned empty properties might be easier, however, the collection and publication of the information usually leads to processes which create pressures on the municipalities to deal with the vacancies. Nevertheless, legally binding regulations are rare.

Italian region Emilia Romagna has promoted a unique law which requires the mapping of all underused properties before any new land take (although the latter seems to have little practical effect).

Regarding the private ownership of empty properties, in most countries there are no enforceable rights against the owners.

In Germany, Hamburg and later many other cities introduced the Lehrstandsmelder “Empty property notification” platform collecting the information on the basis of which political pressure can then be built up to deal with vacant spaces. The platform can help to clarify ownership, which can be difficult for individual persons given that access to cadastre information is not always free and easy.



## 2.2 Activating, envisioning, experimenting

Through the mapping phase an inventory of empty/underused spaces and buildings of the city can be elaborated. In addition, it allows for the identification of the criteria and reusability score which can be added to the data-base. The elements for the creation of a database in the form of a due diligence on unused spaces and buildings might include the following themes: geolocalization, quantitative elements, type of uses allowed (in accordance with land use plans), graphs, images, properties, typology, and reusability index.

In recent years, many cities have begun to experiment with the temporary re-use of unused spaces and buildings, promoting urban development initiatives. Many of these initiatives have had a bottom-up approach, with local administrations facilitating these processes with legislative and economic initiatives (Re-fill, URBACT, 2018). Innovative frameworks in urban regeneration processes foresee the recognition by the municipal administration of the practice of temporary use; the subsequent intermediation between the interested parties facilitated by the municipal administration; the provision of support and advice for start-ups, social and cultural innovators, associations interested in temporary use. These actions should bring to regularity in the temporary use of spaces and buildings.

.....

**How can empty/abandoned or underused spaces and buildings be approached? Activating, envisioning and experimenting have the following meaning:**

- Activating people and spaces by initiating, promoting and match-making activities to change an inert situation. *Initiating*: taking the lead to make something happen and activate stakeholders to become engaged. *Promoting*: laun-

ching PR and awareness raising activities addressing the potentials of an underused space or the importance of a challenge to be addressed.

- *Envisioning*: collaborative development of one or more scenarios, visions or objectives for temporary or permanent uses of underused spaces within their urban context. This should be related to the public interest and can involve a mix of bottom-up and top-down approaches.
- *Experimenting “solutions”* by testing, incubating and developing them step by step. Testing is about practices that experiment, test or simulate new approaches and methods of reactivation and revitalisation, investigating new and different uses, functions and management structures. Incubating is about providing space to people, initiatives, enterprises allowing for their ideas and activities to grow.

.....

All these activities can be developed step by step as these practices do not have a ready-made action plan nor a predetermined final stage to be reached. By following one step after the other new opportunities are created, leading the way for the reactivation and revitalisation of space.





## 2.3 Decision-making and financing

Decision-making is the process of **identifying and choosing alternatives** in order to make the “right” decision based on **analysis, needs, and opportunities**.

---

It is important to create a link between the new ideas for re-use and the general urban development strategy with appropriate financing. In fact, at the municipality level, there is a need for involving multiple departments (e.g. urban planning, environment/waste, social/economic, cultural/educational departments) under the same strategic umbrella. It is advisable to create a coordination office among different departments.

Financing includes the adaptation of the financing model to the intervention (initial investment, management and maintenance, etc.). The costs/benefits, subsidy elements and their justification all have to be taken into account and the non-material benefits have to be translated into monetary terms during the process. All the different financing sources (public, private, user fee, alternative sources such as crowd sourcing, etc.) have to be considered (see Section 3.1). Moreover, participatory processes could be a useful resource allowing the direct involvement of citizens (e.g. via participatory budgets, selection of projects for urban development, etc.).

A well-managed internet platform can add new aspects to temporary use. For example, if a space remains vacant, the platform can include information about missing functions in the given part of the city and, if someone comes up with a similar idea of use, the rent could be cheaper. Hamburg has developed a clever solution: the Business Agency can subsidize temporary use of a space if it is thought to be worth for certain purposes.

### A) Diversified strategies for the re-use of **publicly owned** spaces and buildings

In the process of innovative financing, the aim is to move from the equity model to the model of efficiency and socio-economic value of re-use. In this sense, economic models must be identified to evaluate the effectiveness and socio-economic convenience of making available (even for free), temporary or permanently, buildings and spaces of public ownership to public or private operators (see Table 1). The assignees must guarantee compliance with the current legislation in addition to the required tax and contractual obligations.

Temporary use of spaces and buildings is an innovative and functional methodology for reusing an abandoned or degraded space or building. This aspect is elaborated in detail in the final publication of the Refill Project (Refill, 2018). Evidences indicate the importance of the mediating function by the city administration between property owners and people or organisations looking for a space. The mediation should include all stakeholders: residents, economic operators, urban planning experts, developers, decision makers, and other. As demonstrated by REFILL partner cities, citizen initiatives in temporary re-use projects greatly affect the atmosphere and quality of life in their neighbourhoods. Transformation is a great, gradual experiment in urban planning and the evolution of neighbourhoods. In this sense each urban authority may promote these practices.

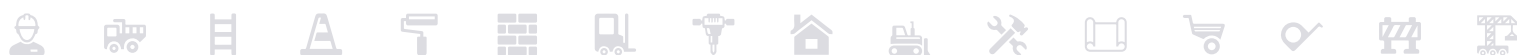


Table 1  
Possible types of activities and associated operators

| ACTIVITIES   | SUBJECTS  |
|--|---|
| Service <b>activities</b>  | Start-ups and private companies that want to establish their activities in these buildings with the guarantee of incentives.  |
| <b>Continuous supply</b> of food and beverages                                       | Private organizations with commercial purposes, or non-profit organizations and recognized entities belonging to the third sector. The identified individual must guarantee compliance with the current legislation on food hygiene and safety.                                 |
| Continuous use for <b>educational, recreational</b> and <b>cultural activities</b> . | Public operators, non-profit organizations and recognized entities belonging to the third sector.   |
| <b>Temporary activity</b> (e.g. fair or event) for the supply of food & beverages    | Private organizations with commercial purposes, or non-profit organizations and recognized subjects belonging to the third sector, or informal groups of citizens. The identified individual must guarantee compliance with the current legislation on food hygiene and safety. |
| <b>Temporary use</b> for educational, recreational and cultural activities.          | Public operators, private organizations with commercial purposes, i.e. non-profit organizations and third sector entities, or informal groups of citizens.  |
| <b>Organization</b> of sporting <b>events</b> and <b>tournaments</b>                 | Public operators, non-profit organizations, sports clubs and recognized entities belonging to the third sector.   |
| <b>Organization</b> of <b>activities</b> to promote health and well-being            | Public operators, non-profit organizations, sports clubs and third sector entities.   |
| <b>Organization</b> of <b>musical</b> and theatre shows                              | Public operators, private organizations with commercial purposes, non-profit organizations, or informal groups of citizens. The identified individual must guarantee compliance with the current legislation on safety and noise control, respect for copyright.                |



If public interventions are considered in the re-use process, it is always important to calculate the public usefulness of potential new functions (among which also re-greening can be taken into account). In an optimal case, measurable indicators can help to explore what new functions can be satisfied: i.e. how much can public interventions bring about public returns.

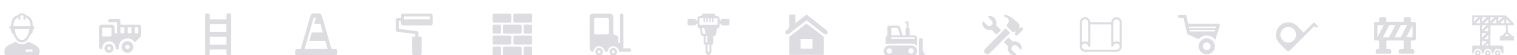
When calculating the public return, also less direct and less measurable impacts should be considered, such as the value of cultural production, the number of new jobs created, the indirect value of involving marginalized groups of society, etc. All these impacts have to be turned into monetary terms. Such calculations may help to decide whether sufficient amount of newly created public value can be achieved which would justify to give the property into new use for free (See also 3.5 Reusability Index).

## B) Diversified strategies for the re-use of privately-owned spaces and buildings

Two different approaches can be taken into account:

- **Incentives** (tax, waste tax, VAT, etc.) aimed at the introduction into the unused spaces and buildings of the strategic functions defined at the level of urban policies, to facilitate the private sector to make the property available in the inventory;
- **Business models** that are able to activate private-private economic relations: in this sense the activities of the agencies for urban re-use are fundamental.

Similarly to publicly owned properties, the possibility of making temporarily or permanently available (even for free) privately owned buildings and spaces to public or private operators should be considered.



## 2.4 Management, creating institutional structure

The mainstreaming of the innovative approaches can be achieved through different measures, such as establishing institutional structures and organisations that are responsible for the reactivation and revitalisation of underused spaces; setting up regulations, by-laws, legal instruments that support the reactivation and revitalisation of underused spaces; introducing integrated management structures that allow a joint management of the spaces. This section deals with the issues of the creation of institutional structures.

Temporary use requires an **accurate and dedicated mediation** between stakeholders and a solid support on the field all along the temporary use period and beyond.

### 2.4.1 Re-use planning and management: basic considerations

Innovative urban development strategies have to include the goal of re-use of abandoned or underused spaces and buildings. As alternative to land take and/or the construction of a new building it should always be considered whether the already existing opportunities can be used.

The starting points for such strategies are the **re-usable properties**. The main issues are the type of the real estate, the ownership and the existing planning prescriptions. Besides these, it is also important to make a distinction between **abandoned** areas/buildings and **underused** ones:

- **Abandoned and empty spaces/buildings** were once in use but now have no functions and no inhabitants, such as: disused production sites, abandoned areas, empty buildings, but also disused railway stations, cinemas, commercial premises, offices and spaces used for services, up to entire abandoned villages (especially in the most peripheral areas);
- **Underused spaces/buildings** have currently some type of use which could be densified.

In this handbook the majority of examples refer to abandoned and empty spaces/buildings. These cases are easier to discuss and handle than those which refer to underused spaces/buildings. The latter are very much context-dependent, thus the few examples on such cases in this handbook are far from describing the possible varieties of problems and relative approaches.

The temporary use of abandoned/underused places and buildings is a powerful tool for our cities to “adapt to the future” and it interrelates with many other urban dynamics, creating the right environment for the development of social innovation.

If public interventions are considered in the re-use process, it is always important to evaluate needs and impacts of potential new functions (among which also re-greening can be taken into account). Measurable indicators can help on the matter.

Moreover, indirect impacts should be considered, such as the value of cultural production, the number of new jobs created, the indirect value of involving marginalized groups of society, etc. All these have to be turned at the end into monetary terms. Such calculations may help to decide the use for free, or on a discounted value.



## 2.4.2 Re-use planning and management as part of a local strategy

Adaptive re-use and regeneration of existing urban assets are at the basis of renewal principles that should inspire all the operational plans of European urban authorities in accordance with the logic of “zero volume” increase and “no net land take”. Unused and underused buildings and spaces represent enormous potential for cities in terms of the activation of specific urban policy strategies. Often the city administrators lack the vision and the tools to adopt a change in planning and urban management, failing to recognise the social, economic and environmental potential these places could bring to the city.

It is necessary to **rethink the cities** taking into account the real housing, economic-productive and social needs by developing **new synergies between public, private and social actors**.

This approach on how to rethink the city can start from the identification of the areas to be used in a temporary way, then define the urban strategy based on an overall, more sustainable, resilient, inclusive vision of the city.

The re-use of existing properties, whether buildings or spaces for different types of activities, offers the opportunity for citizens and communities to affirm their right to participate to the city life through what is called a “proximity activism” (Harvey, 2012). Compared to new extensions and new constructions, which usually depend only on the decisions of developers, re-use offers a greater possibility of transforming and reinventing the city according to one’s desires and through forms of social and civic activism (Scandurra, Attili, 2013).

---

## 2.4.3 New ideas towards the re-use of properties: temporary use and urban commons

There is a **contrasting dynamic** between the slow change of the built-up structure and the much faster sociological and demographic changes of the city. Moreover, the economic crisis exacerbated this incongruity (Oosterlynck, 2018).

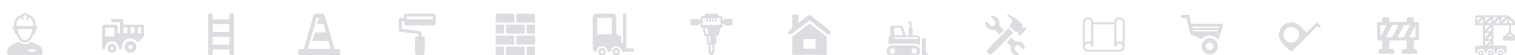
**The capacity to adapt the built environment to the changing needs decreased due to lock-in mechanisms:**

- Large parts of the city were built for the earlier, **industrial society**, tailored **different needs** (factories, working class housing, railways and trams, churches, ...) and to a **different population size**;
- Some parts of the cities were particularly affected by the **fast re-structuring processes** (de-industrialization, suburbanization, later re-urbanization, ...);

- **Resources** for changing the urban structure diminished, both new construction and urban renewal of existing buildings slowed down.

---

In this situation temporary use, i.e. giving temporary answers to growing tensions, gained ground. Temporary use offers space for new needs and ambitions with relatively little costs (e.g. changing parking lots into parks; giving access to housing for poor families partly with squatting; opening access to cheap places for new economic activities).



Temporary use can give new functions and identity to existing buildings and places that have lost functions and meaning; at the same time their past history might become one of the mobilizing factors.

While temporary use projects are usually advantageous from an economic perspective, the social inclusion aspect is not automatic: the temporary use of places usually functions with social and spatial selectivity. Thus, ensuring the inclusivity of temporary use projects requires special efforts and expertise.

.....

Even if not easy to achieve, the **social dimensions of temporary use** are potentially very beneficial. In fact:

- Temporary use helps *making needs and possibilities* visible and trigger public debates;
- *Targeted people*, who are involved through temporary use projects, might become member of (or return to) the mainstream society;
- *Volunteers*, who participate in temporary use projects, committing with their time and energy, can become *active social innovators*.

.....

Despite the many positive social aspects of temporary use projects, they do not solve the structural problems of society, therefore the role played by the public intervention to this respect remains crucial.

During periods of financial crisis, which see the shrinking of public sector resources and the freezing of real estate markets, the inhabitants themselves might play an important role to dynamize the city. The empty, abandoned buildings and spaces of the city offer the best tool for this new direction of urban change.

Urban commons can function well if new legal and policy tools are introduced to establi-

sh new partnership with the citizens, allowing them to properly use, manage and own these spaces in the city. The commons might become the new infrastructure for social development to happen. These places have to be protected and the users (under certain conditions, e.g. ensuring the access for all) have to be granted ownership rights to ensure sustainability.

The State should enable collective actions of inhabitants (Ostrom, 2009). In an optimal situation, the public sector recognizes the new opportunity and changes its approach to urban development. Firstly, the municipality has to acknowledge what are the unmet needs of its residents. This can be followed by making long-term plans to guarantee durable sustainability of social movements and collective institutions. Political crises, financial problems are threats which can only be avoided if the commons are given political power, i.e. there is a real change in the allocation of power in the city. The commons have to be recognized as not only social but also economic potentials.



### **BEST PRACTICE - GHENT**

**The area of the industrial laundries was previously noisy and polluting.**

Residents openly complained and the site was closed down in 2011, remaining empty for many years. Through an urban renewal company, an open call for ideas for temporary use of the area was launched.

**See Appendix 3 to learn more**

### **BEST PRACTICE - LEIPZIG**

**People called “house guardians” are free to design and refurbish vacant houses according to their needs and aesthetics.**

The care and maintenance works on the apartments replaced their rent obligation to the owner.

**See Appendix 1 to learn more**

### **BEST PRACTICE - NAPLES**

**The city Council has recognised the “Urban Civic Use Regulation” of common goods.**

Thanks to this policy, many projects have come to life, fostering spontaneous bottom-up initiatives which are now institutionalised, ensuring the autonomy of the parties involved, both the proactive citizens and the institutions.

**See Appendix 3 to learn more**





**GHENT**



**LEIPZIG**



**NAPLES**



### 3. Management models and tools for urban circular re-use

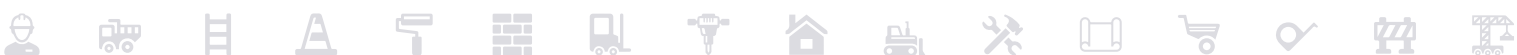
European cities started to develop a number of policies to facilitate the circular re-use of vacant properties, to develop new uses and functions for vacant and underused areas, as well as to give visibility to development projects. Such policies include a variety of approaches, such as creating transparency in public and private real estate management, mediating between property owners and potential users, designing incentives for the re-use of vacant spaces, relaxing regulations and granting permissions, or providing funding and guarantees for loans. While these policies correspond largely to their specific political, economic, social and cultural contexts, they converge in their attempt to include emerging actors in the governance of urban development and to create a better connection between citizen and community initiatives and owners of unused public and private properties.

In the past decade, the re-use of vacant properties has become an important topic in the regeneration and development of European cities, and in relation with the 2008 economic crisis (Dewar and Thomas 2012; Grossmann et al. 2013). While the first experiments of the 90s in the re-use of vacant properties can be considered as pioneering acts (Overmeyer 2004), spontaneous, bottom-up interventions (Oswalt 2006) and, later, city governments have begun to engage with the development of policies to facilitate the circular re-use of vacant properties (SenStadt 2007). In 2010, when the impact of the economic crisis on European cities became evident, many civic, professional and public initiatives followed in establishing new means and methods for the circular re-use of vacant spaces. A lot of interest in the phenomenon of vacancy and circular land use turned towards temporary use (Bishop and Williams 2012) conceived as a catalyst (Oswalt et al. 2013) of urban regeneration. The issue ranged from artistic and architectural interventions (Rietveld 2014) to

a professionalised form of “spatial entrepreneurship” (Buttenberg et al. 2014) with case inventories and toolkits (Ziehl et al. 2012) or business models (Killing 2014).

With the emergence of new competences and new professional roles in facilitating the circular re-use of vacant properties and land, the focus of academic research and policy innovation has gradually shifted from short-term re-use to long-term strategies and methodologies of adaptive re-use (Baum and Christiaanse 2012). Mainly in Southern European cities, the long-term perspective in the re-use of vacant land and spaces has relied on experiences of self-organisation (Cellamare et al. 2014) supported by the newly discovered theory of the commons (Mattei 2014), giving ideological-theoretical arguments (Stavrides 2016) as well as legal and policy tools (Foster and Iacone 2016) for the civic re-use of vacant spaces. In Northwest and Central European cities, on the other hand, there has been a growing movement of developing innovative financial and legal instruments, ownership and procurement models to help the community-led, non-speculative re-use of vacant or underused spaces (Patti and Polyak 2017).

Several cities, regions and or countries have started to **generate several management models** to manage the urban circular **re-use of properties**.



### 3.1 Urban Agency for Re-use

Governance agencies have recently emerged to carry out **inventories** of **vacant properties** and facilitate their re-use and set up **networks of property owners**, **prospective users** and **local authorities** interested in creating accessible spaces for entrepreneurs, social initiatives and community groups.

Thanks to facilitating bodies, like the case of Prato municipality and its Urban Agency for Re-use, or temporary use agencies acting as facilitating bodies, it is possible to connect public and private property owners, to support initiatives with legal advice and project development, as well as with start-up funding (see Section 3.2).

An innovative management model designed by Prato Municipality is the Urban Agency for Re-use (UAR). The agency can significantly facilitate local public administrations in the definition and the application of strategies for building re-use at the city level. The agency can act as a facilitator in the functional transition of parts of the city with the aim to manage the public and private spaces and buildings included in the urban re-use program and to connect the potential demand for new functions with privately owned properties (private to private match), following diversified models for public and private spaces and buildings. This model has a high degree of transferability. Any city can establish its own agency for the promotion of re-use of buildings and spaces through an integrated approach and using new models of governance in order to manage and plan the various re-use strategies. The Urban Agency of Re-use can bring to light innovative projects of circularity. It is advisable to establish guidelines and methodology for the creation of such agencies at the national or regional level.

The **roles** of the agency can be to:

- **Convey** and **collect** the existing demand at the city level;
- **Create the demand** for the use of empty spaces or buildings on the basis of urban strategies for economic development, social cohesion & cultural policies;
- Keep the **inventory** of unused spaces and buildings **constantly updated** in the form of due diligence (property, type, reusability);
- **Coordinate**, **intercept**, **aggregate** & **promote** the formation of demand for unused spaces and buildings;
- **Develop strategies** to re-use buildings and urban spaces according to different models based on the needs, the vision of the cities, and on the basis of the demand (if existing or to be generated), then **establishing a Plan for Urban Re-use**;
- **Enhance** the different areas and harmonize the forms of **active participation** in the territory;
- **Promote** and **develop** appropriate communication strategies.



The agency can be governed by a steering committee consisting of representatives of the municipal administration and the economic and social stakeholders, responsible for delivering policies and their connection with existing activities. The steering committee meets periodically with the main purpose of defining the strategy for the re-use of abandoned spaces and buildings and for rationalizing common objectives and resources from other projects in the territory. At the organizational level, the main functions and roles within the agency should be, at least: direction; administration and reporting; communication and marketing.

---

## 3.2 Temporary use agencies

**There is no unique model** of temporary use agencies in Europe, but their structure change city by city.

For instance, in London, Meanwhile Space was created from a national organisation (see Section 4.1.1), while in Bremen (see Section 4.1.2) there is a semi-independent agency outside the municipality but financed by municipal budgets. Ghent has no specific temporary use agency, but the coordinated work of various municipal offices plays this same role. In Paris, temporary use projects, now accommodated and encouraged by various municipalities, are mostly organised by companies, cooperatives or associations outside the public sector.

### BEST PRACTICE - GHENT

**The municipality has been experimenting temporary use for over 10 years.**

The city engages with property owners and citizen initiatives offering mediation and juridical support as well as start-up funding.

[See Appendix 2 to learn more](#)

---

## 3.3 Funding and financing

While most municipalities only have these “soft tools” at their disposal, many regulatory issues being dependant on national governments, some cities have the competence to introduce binding “hard tools” such as **taxation** and **tax relief** and can agree on **rent-to-investment mechanisms** to allow the **re-furbishment** of derelict structures (see Section 3.4).

In the past decades, Riga has been suffering from a dire demographic challenge. Since the 1990, the city lost about a quarter of its population, and this change had a significant impact on the urban landscape and land use in the city. According to estimates by the activist group Free Riga, there are between 500 and 1000 entirely abandoned buildings in the city, many of them of historical value, often with an unclear ownership situation.



### BEST PRACTICE - RIGA

In Latvian capital, the City council has been struggling with the problem of vacant buildings that not only created an impression of decay but often also caused environment degradation or security issues. Using its right to apply different tax rates, in 2016 the Riga City council introduced an increased rate of 3% tax applied to neglected land (calculated from the cadastral value of the land). In order to encourage the re-use of vacant land and buildings, it also used its right to grant tax allowances ranging from 25% to 90%. Up to 90% tax relief can be applied to buildings that are recognised as having local educational, sports, cultural and social functions. This means, for example, that if a private owner of the building offers his premises to public benefit organisations (with or without remuneration), then the owner is entitled to 90% discount for annual property tax.

Besides motivating owners to make use of their properties, this incentive is also a good basis for creating opportunities for non-profit organisations in delivering services for local communities. In Riga, some associations are using this opportunity to engage private property owners to open their properties for community use. For instance, this regulation has helped the organisation Free Riga to make agreements with private property owners who would otherwise pay significant property taxes for their buildings remaining empty.

Many vacant buildings in Europe remain empty or underused because of prohibitive renovation prices. Rent-to-investment schemes like in the case of Bratislava's Old Market Hall allow private or civic initiatives to access public buildings, develop viable economic models and reinvest their profit into the renovation of these buildings.

### BEST PRACTICE - BRATISLAVA

The Old Market Hall in Bratislava (Slovakia) closed down in 2008 after years of unsuccessful attempts by the municipality to keep the market alive. The reopening of the market hall in 2013 was due to the NGO Old Market hall Alliance which advanced a financial proposal to the municipality to reopen the building, combining a food market every Saturday with cultural events during the other days of the week, as well as two cafés, a grocery shop, a cooking school and a soda water manufacture. Rethinking the opportunities of the Old Market Hall allowed the organisation to run the building in an economically sustainable way, while gradually renovating it and creating a new event venue and meeting space in the heart of the city. The model of the Old Market Hall served as a well-functioning example of the rent-to-investment model. The latter was fundamental in convincing politicians and property owners to open up their buildings for civic uses.



The city of Brussels has developed a global strategy of actions with a gradual system of tools to first incite and then force the **rehabilitation** and **re-use** of **vacant buildings**. **The strategy works as a cascade.**

### BEST PRACTICE - BRUSSELS

To incentive re-use Brussels offers different tools to help the owner with the occupation of their buildings (subsidies, consultations, mediation for temporary use, etc.). Authorities can have a right of first option to buy a building on sale. If these incentive tools do not resolve the issue, repressive and financial tools are applied varying from relatively “light” to “severe”, as defined by the legal framework. For example, there is a tax on abandoned and unoccupied buildings/lands. This tax is charged according to running meters façade \* the number of floors. It is due on yearly basis, for every past year of vacancy. If the building/site is still problematic despite the municipal taxes, following measures are possible, for either protected buildings or a building that is intended for a residential development. The city of Brussels can request, as well the region of Brussels, to deploy a regional fine for neglected heritage on top of the municipal tax. In addition, the city of Brussels can go to court to force the owner to renovate the protected building. The application of the different tools depends strongly on the political support. The tools cannot be applied automatically. The tax fines and other tools need the approval of the city council.



### 3.4 Legal

Due to the **emergence** of new legal forms of **shared ownership** and the municipalities efforts to secure land from **speculation**, some cities have introduced **new procurement procedures** to open access to available land for a broader set of stakeholders.

Shared ownership schemes of various kinds have been developed in Central and Northwest European cities to counter real estate speculation and address unaffordability problems. In such schemes, land to be (re)developed remains in public or community ownership and its use is controlled by a public office or a community organisation. Guaranteeing long-term uses through various forms of property leases (of 25, 50, 75 or 99 years) gives users sufficient space and time to mobilise significant investments for the circular re-use of land.

In the Anglo-Saxon context, and spreading to the European continent through Belgium, France and the Netherlands, the format of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) has been instrumental in helping residents create inclusive economic ecosystems and sustainable development models. CLTs are a model of community-led development, where local organisations develop and manage homes and other assets important to their communities, such as community enterprises, vegetable gardens or workspaces. By owning land (or leasing it from public owners) and leasing apartments, entire buildings or other types of properties to individuals, families or community groups, CLTs can control the use and price of such properties. CLTs therefore can use this leverage to guarantee that spaces in their management remain affordable, based on the income level of the locals living in the area.

In Switzerland, German and Austrian cities, the similar legal form of “Heritable Building Right” (Erbbaurecht in German) became widely used by community-led development projects. Heritable Building Right is a form of transferable and heritable long-term lease, popular in German-speaking countries that allows the right-holder to build or develop the land. Generally granted for 30-99 years, the heritable building right makes development possible by paying an annual interest or lease fee, without buying the land that would require the upfront payment of large sums. Such lease fee does not work as a mortgage as it is not paid off within 25-30 years, but in the long term, for 99 years.



## 3.5 Reusability Index: a proposal

### 3.5.1 Introduction

For local administrators, as well as building owners, the debate around the opportunity to re-use a building is mainly focused on its function, while very little attention has been given to its immaterial legacies which is disconnected from the economic dimension and thus difficult to evaluate (Muraldo, 2017). In fact, a building may have played different roles through time, both in terms of function but also as a “symbol” for the community with regard to its role and destination. Through urban offices, a city could enforce mapping disused/underused buildings and spaces. The introduction and application of a newly designed Reusability Index (RI) can provide useful information and ideas to change the destination of spaces and buildings and give life to new creative and innovative hubs. In general, a circular building can be defined as a building that is developed, used and re-used without unnecessary resource depletion, environmental pollution and ecosystem degradation.

---

RI aims at providing to local policy makers **useful information** about:

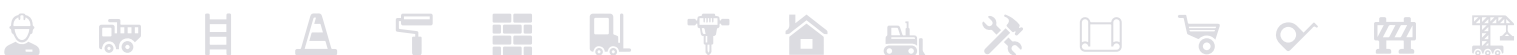
- **Building condition**, including site and development of the area which surrounds the building;
- **Environmental impacts**, maximising positive impacts, for instance by making sure that materials are sourced locally to minimise transport, or by being more efficient;
- **Wellbeing** of people and citizens.

---

### 3.5.2 Materials and methods

There are many indicators related to environment which have already been proposed by several organisations. In particular, in a circular economy, some indexes, mainly focused on **recycling rates** and **material flows**, have already been defined.

The newly designed RI is based on a multi-disciplinary approach. Thus, the index includes technical, environmental, economic & social indicators. Beyond the physical condition of a building, evaluated through a building condition assessment, many intangibles have to be also considered and included in the overall analysis.



Particularly, RI considers and integrates requirements and indicators taken from the following methodologies:

- **Due diligence.** It consists of a survey aimed at the overall evaluation of an existing building. It is therefore an activity to identify the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of a building subject to a possible change. In fact, the evaluation consists of at least **three aspects**: **technical**, with relative assessment of the costs and time necessary for the adaptation of the building's renovations, change of use or demolition; **economical**, *evaluating the building in relation to the actual and potential use, to the location and to the trend of the reference market*; **legal**, *verifying the documentation relating to the property*.
- **Life cycle assessment (LCA)** is a method used to evaluate the potential **environmental impacts** of products and services and their resource consumption. LCA is also being used in the building sector, where it is a crucial part of the assessment of buildings **environmental sustainability**.
- **BES (Benessere Equo e Sostenibile)** defined by CNEL and ISTAT. The BES does not aim at identifying a single synthetic index, but rather it is a system of indicators grouped into 12 complex and multidimensional domains which describe the level of well-being of a territory.

When evaluating a building, information is generally unavailable. For these reasons the combination of specific requirements and indicators taken from the Due diligence, the LCA and the BES are well suited to set and correctly manage the valuation of a property, in order to provide all the necessary information to policy makers.

### 3.5.3 Results and discussion

The abovementioned methodologies each provide for a set of indicators among which we selected a total of 24 in order to elaborate the final index. The latter will identify the most appropriate building to perform a new function requiring the least number of restructuring and adjustments and producing the least amount of construction waste.

The **waste** produced during **adaptive re-use** or **demolition processes** shall be reduced to a minimum and the residues that are unavoidable should be recycled or re-used.

In **regeneration process**, emphasis should be given to new construction methods and technologies such as **lightweight construction**, **modular construction**, **prefabrication** and **industrial construction**.





---

## GENERAL BUILDING DATA

- *Type/destination* of building
  - *Location* of the building
  - *Total GFA* of the building (m<sup>2</sup>)
  - *Seismic* area
  - *Climatic* area
- 

## DUE DILIGENCE

|                           | Selected requirements                           | Questions                               |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>SITE AND GROUNDS</b>   |   |   |
| 1                         | External walls                                  | Are the external walls well preserved?  |
| 2                         | Pavement, walks                                 | Is the pavement well preserved?         |
| 3                         | Landscape                                       | What about the surrounding landscape?   |
| <b>STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS</b> |   |   |
| 4                         | Foundations and structural framing of the walls | Are there cracks in the foundation?     |
| 5                         | Internal walls                                  | Are there cracks in the walls?          |
| <b>MECHANICAL SYSTEMS</b> |   |   |
| 6                         | Electrical system                               | How much longer will it last?           |
| 7                         | Plumbing system                                 | How much longer will it last?           |
| 8                         | Heating ventilation                             | How much longer will it last?           |
| 9                         | Air conditioning                                | How much longer will it last?           |
| <b>BUILDING ENVELOPE</b>  |   |   |
| 10                        | Exterior fixtures, doors and windows            | Are these components well preserved?    |
| 11                        | Roof  | When will the roof need to be replaced? |



## LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT

|   | <b>Selected indicators</b>    | <b>Weight</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>POTENTIAL WASTE FLOWS</b>                    |                               |               |
| 12  | Hazardous waste disposed      | kg            |
| 13  | Non-hazardous waste disposed  | kg            |
| <b>POTENTIAL OTHER FLOWS LEAVING THE SYSTEM</b> |                               |               |
| 14  | Components for re-use         | kg            |
| 15  | Materials for recycling       | kg            |
| 16  | Materials for energy recovery | kg            |

## BES

|   | <b>Selected indicators</b>            | <b>Area of reference</b>       |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>5. SOCIAL RELATIONS</b>                  |                                       |                                |
| 17  | 5.4 Social participation              | Urban                          |
| 18  | 5.8 Non-profit organizations          | Urban                          |
| <b>9. LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>   |                                       |                                |
| 19  | 9.3 Illegal buildings                 | Urban                          |
| 20  | 9.9 Density of historic greenery      | Urban and building surrounding |
| <b>10. ENVIRONMENT</b>                      |                                       |                                |
| 21  | 10.5 Air quality PM10                 | Building surrounding           |
| 22  | 10.8 Availability of urban greenery   | Building surrounding           |
| <b>11. INNOVATION, RESEARCH, CREATIVITY</b> |                                       |                                |
| 23  | 11.6 Occupied by creative enterprises | Urban                          |
| <b>12. QUALITY OF SERVICES</b>              |                                       |                                |
| 24  | 12.5 Broadband coverage               | Building surrounding           |



The proposed approach integrates structural, environmental and social criteria regarding the buildings and its immediate surroundings. The realization of the due diligence assessment, life cycle assessment or BES can also be carried out separately. Starting from the results of the individual assessments, data relating to the selected requirements and indicators can be extrapolated. Time needs to be taken into account as a key variable for local administrators and owners when considering beginning a re-use process of an empty building.

When applying the RI starting from the proposed indicators, cities can arbitrarily **choose their own effective parameters** and define the calculation method giving more or less importance to each indicator.

---

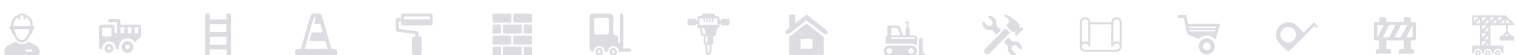
### 3.6 Communication in support of the urban circular re-use

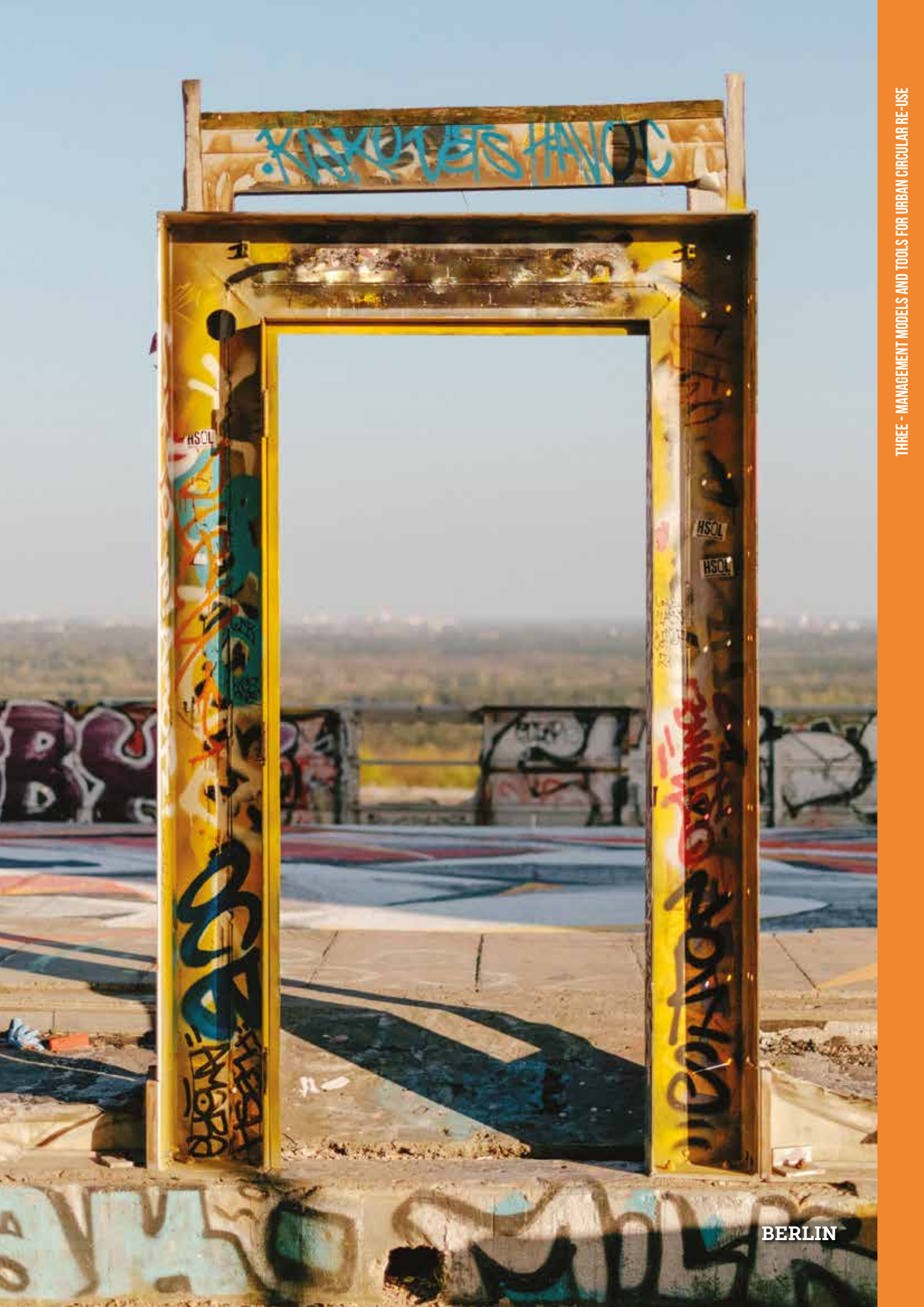
**Involving the media** in communication and in particular in the narration of the regeneration of unused spaces and buildings is the **first step in making citizens an active part of change**. Informing citizens on the undergoing process starting from the decision-making is crucial to sensitize them and to **promote re-use** and **regeneration** as the keystone for urban renewal.

Highlighting the **key points** and the **positive effects** of urban circular change is therefore essential to encourage citizen participation in public choices, with the ultimate goal of creating a feeling of ownership of the regenerative process by citizens.

Therefore, a good communication strategy should keep citizens up-to-date and involve them at every stage of the urban regeneration process, from the decision-making step to the presentation of the first approved projects and the intended use plans of the newly regenerated spaces. The dissemination of news related to the project and its work in progress should include the contribution of technicians (town planners, architects or representatives of the organization who will use the regenerated spaces) and potential partners.

Therefore the technical communication must run parallel to a narrative communication focusing on the story of the urban space, its history and its social aggregating function. To this respect, the storytelling methodology proves to be a great ally to create an effective and engaging communication. The narrative of the evolution of the building's history, from its birth, to its first destination, to its decay up to its rebirth, is a fundamental tool for the development of a sense of belonging and attachment to the urban space on the part of citizens. Furthermore, presenting successful cases of reactivated vacant buildings can positively influence the way in which the public perceives these interventions.





BERLIN

## 4. Multi-Level governance elements for circular re-use strategies

In order to establish effective strategies of circular re-use of empty properties, the development of a multi-level governance model is essential. The collaboration between the different stakeholders responsible for the various aspects related to the reactivation of underused or abandoned properties is key to a successful strategy (Sørensen, 2004, 2009). These may be stakeholders from public, private, civic or research sectors. Yet, how this cooperation should go about is highly dependent on local conditions and stakeholders (Healey, 2004). For the strategy of re-use to be more resilient and effective on the long term, the circularity of the approach is key to its success (Bevir, 2003; Barnes, 2006). Therefore, being able to host new functions within buildings originally designed for other activities, to accommodate flexible uses with a positive effect on the surroundings, to create a social impact through job opportunities and service delivery, proves to be highly relevant (Bellamy, 2010).

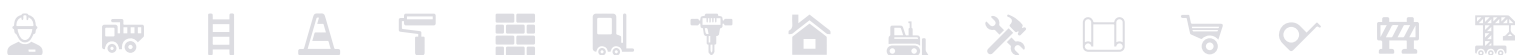
The chapter aims at providing a series of **case studies** from different cities and regions in Europe which experimented **successful models** for **establishing organisational structures, economic models** (Gudeman, 2011), and participatory co-decision making processes (Arnstein, 1969) in the reactivation of properties through a circular strategy.

---

### 4.1 From the national to the local level

#### A) British policy to activate local communities: the Localism Act.

In 2011 the British Government passed the so-called Localism Act, which impacted on the distribution of powers and competences of local governments, facilitating the empowerment of individuals and local communities. The Localism Act created a number of possibilities for local communities, amongst which the possibility of establishing a Community Land Trust. The latter is particularly relevant with respects to the possibility of improving the re-use and regeneration of buildings through a multi-governance dimension. In fact, the Right to Challenge and the Right to Bid favours the engagement of local communities in delivering services and managing of public spaces. The Right to Challenge makes it easier for charities, non-profit or voluntary organisations and community groups to submit an expression of interest in delivering local public services, which, if accepted, can be opened for public tender. The benefit for local communities is to be directly involved in the delivery of services of public interest as well as to support a local economy. On the part of the municipality, the advantage of this mechanism is the opportunity to offer a better-quality service at a lower price. The Community Right to Bid for assets of community value applies to all those buildings and amenities that have an important role in local life, such as community centres, swimming pools, markets, local shops, libraries, pubs, etc. The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value nominated by the local community. When these open for sale, the Act then gives the community the time to raise the money to bid for the purchase of the property on the open market. The interest for local communities is to maintain local assets public, possibly activating a local economy. The advantage for the Public Administra-



tion is to ensure the community interest of the asset whilst still earning profit from the sale. If, on the one hand, the Localism Act is the expression of the devolution of public responsibility towards local communities, it is also an attempt to preserve the wider public interest.

### BEST PRACTICE - LONDON

Meanwhile Space is a Community Interest Company (CIC) founded in 2009 in London. The CIC began as the delivery arm of the Department for Communities and Local Government and then funded the Meanwhile Project which aimed to boost community uses of empty properties and sites. The project has built a 'library' of ideas and information, including the Meanwhile Manual, Lease and Insurance policies, as a resource to make it easier for both the landlord and users to realise Meanwhile opportunities. As a result of the project, several British municipalities like Glasgow or London published standardised modules of temporary use contracts facilitating the agreement between owners and users, by defining terms of purpose, duration, rent and liabilities. The work of Meanwhile Space has been facilitated by the Rating (Empty Property) Act adopted in 2007 by the national government encouraging private owners to give community initiatives access to their properties. In fact, the latter increased the empty property rate from 50% to 100% of the basic occupied business rate and allowed tax exemptions for properties that accommodate charities or non-profit organisations.

Besides cooperating with central and local administrations to reduce barriers to the temporary use of vacant spaces, Meanwhile Space also works with landlords, landowners, developers and local authorities to advise and deliver projects that temporarily relieve them from liabilities (insurance, rates, security etc.) associated with holding redundant shops, offices, cleared land etc. whilst an appropriate commercial solution is being sought. By advising, training and collaborating with local communities and other stakeholders, temporary uses are deployed to reanimate the space and provide opportunities for the benefit of the community and opportunities to social enterprises. One of the flagship projects of Meanwhile Space is the Cottrell House in Wembley, where the lack of local services made it important to open spaces for new initiatives. By inviting local residents to reflect on the needed services, and advising initiatives to propose functions for the spaces, Meanwhile Space engaged over 600 people in discussing, redesigning and reusing the former gas station for offices, art studios, co-working spaces and cafeterias.



## B) Bremen policy for temporary use: the ZwischenZeitZentrale

The City of Bremen saw vacant spaces as an opportunity to address its demographic challenges. Eager to revitalize its economy and keep young graduates in town, the municipality began to regenerate its brownfields, turning industrial buildings into art studios, incubators and working spaces. In 2007, the Department of Economics, Labour and Ports of the city of Bremen came up with the idea of a temporary use agency for the city which then became a pilot project within the Nationale Stadtentwicklungspolitik, a program of the Federal Ministry of Building.

City officials decided to create an agency to connect owners and users, the administration and young entrepreneurs. Through an open call in 2009, the municipality selected a group of architects to run the agency named ZwischenZeitZentrale (ZZZ). The ZZZ links the potential users with the projects, the available buildings and the administration. The agency is responsible to support, to initiate and to carry out temporary use projects all over Bremen. These projects can vary from economic to social and cultural projects and from short-term events to long-term uses.

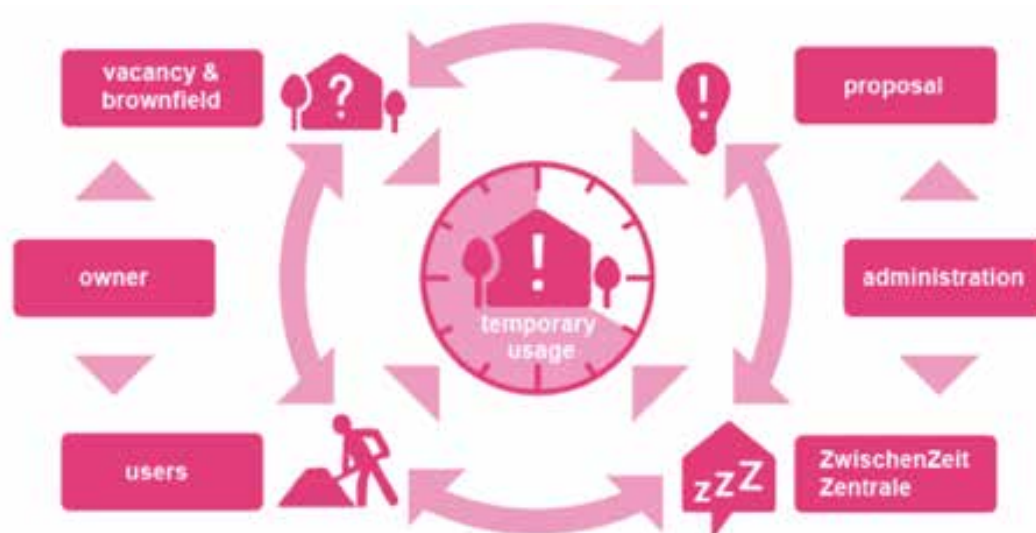
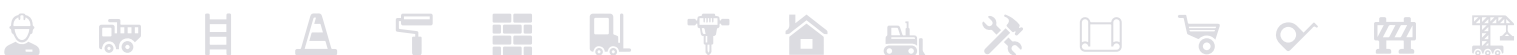


Figure 2  
The ZZZ process. Source: ZZZ

The ZZZ is financed by the Senator resorts of Economic Affairs, Labour and Ports, Sustainability, City Development and Transportation and Finances. The Agency's priority areas are identified by a steering group which is the operational arm of the administration's strategy composed by members of the three departments. For example, the ZZZ agency was firstly concentrated on the urban redevelopment area Überseestadt. A survey about temporary uses was prepared as a first step. The development of the former port area was a huge challenge for the urban development and their ordinary tools.

While many public administrations struggle to choose the proper organisation for the right space, the Bremen Municipality allows ZwischenZeitZentrale to make this choice, avoiding decelerating the process with long public competitions.

The main advantage of temporary use is that it allows to gain time to understand the community needs and to decide on the final use.



## C) Model Urban Revitalization, Poland

In 2015 Poland applied and started implementing a **new approach to urban revitalization** that has been defined as a “process of **upgrading degraded areas** by integrating actions for the local community, its spaces and economy carried out by revitalization stakeholders following a revitalization program” (Act on revitalization, 2015).

According to the Act on revitalization (2015), **municipalities should identify their degraded areas and special revitalization zones** that generally include under-used areas and vacant buildings. All revitalization activities should follow a common **revitalization program**.

To foster the revitalization processes in Poland, the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development launched the project called Model Urban Revitalization, which helps cities to implement innovative ideas and share knowledge on revitalization processes. The project is worth over 40 mln PLN in subsidies.

The Model Urban Revitalisation contest was addressed to municipalities with city status and aimed at developing models for revitalization activities. The idea is simple: solutions are developed to serve as a model for others.

The proposals had to develop a model for conducting revitalization in one of these nine topics: social policy, participation in public life, housing, shaping of space, environmental protection, protection of heritage, stimulation of the economy, urban mobility, financing of revitalisation. In a two-stage competition, 20 best projects out of almost 250 applications were selected (Chorzów, Dabrowa Górnicza, Dobiegniew, Elk, Grajewo, Hrubieszów, Konin, Leszno, Lublin, Milicz, Opole Lubelskie, Rybnik, Słupsk, Stalowa Wola, Starachowice, Szczecin, Warszawa, Włocławek, Wrocław, Żyrardów).

Three other cities, Bytom, Łódź, Wałbrzych which needed large-scale revitalization activities, were supported by the Ministry to carry out the pilot projects, each tailored to the needs of the three cities. The Pilot actions concerned the following topics: participation in public life, housing policy, shaping of space and revitalization management. Grants and expert support were provide for the implementation of the pilots.

### BEST PRACTICE - ELK

**The title of the project is: “New Downtown of the City of Elk – formula for revitalization”** Revitalization actions at Elk concentrate at conviction, that “PEOPLE ACT to create PLACES”. This slogan „taken apart” refers to: i) participation (people), ii) activation, iii) creation of a new public space (places). These three pillars of revitalization are expected to contribute to the revival of Elk Downtown and to provide good examples for other cities. As part of the first pillar “Participation” the city developed a model to involve city residents in the revitalization programme and in the projects resulting from the programme. The second pillar “Activation” was associated with the “Model School of Social Animators and Educators” and carried out small projects in tenements’ backyards. The third pillar “New space” develops the concept of “Social Revitalization Centre”, the programme for housing resource management responding to revitalization challenges and creating a friendly public spaces for city residents.





## BEST PRACTICE - DĄBROWA GÓRNICZA

The title of the model project is: “Factory Full of Life - revitalization of Dabrowa Gornicza downtown”. The project aimed at shaping a new city centre of Dabrowa Gornicza. However, because Factory Full of Life will become an area of different activities, in fact the planned actions will be associated with broad spectrum of issues, as transport, support of entrepreneurship, culture or development of civil society. The social participation is of particular importance – is considered to be a natural element of each action under the project, not a separate topic.

### 4.2 From regional level to local level

#### A) Catalan Law of Districts

Law 2/2004 (hereinafter Law of Districts) adopted by the Government of Catalonia in the seventh legislature of the current Generalitat, was the **first legal framework** approved in Spain specifically aimed at the **improvement of neighbourhoods** with social problems with the intention of solving the causes that affected the processes of **socio-spatial segregation**. It targets different areas: urban transformation, rehabilitation of buildings, removal of architectural barriers, gender equity and improvement of the economic and social conditions of the population.

The Law of Districts contributed to a qualitative and substantial change in the way of intervening in neighbourhoods with social issues. The latter requires inter-administrative collaboration and the participation of all stakeholders, including local actors and neighbours. In fact, neighbourhoods’ involvement is crucial to understand and target the real problems of the area. The local authorities asked the Government of Catalonia for inter-administrative collaboration to create the economic fund called the Districts Fund. The Government contributed to the latter which covered 50% of the improvement project. On their part, the

local bodies covered the rest of the fund and dealt with the management of the project.

Two selection criteria were set to access the Fund. The first criterion forced to explain the urban, demographic, economic and social problems in order to justify that the area required special attention through a diagnosis. The second criterion was that the presented project should respond to the main issues identified in the diagnosis, and of course, focusing on all the axes included in the Law to guarantee the integrity through the intervention in different fields. Both criteria forced an effort to identify problems at the local level, but also the need to apply a methodological tool similar to all projects in Catalonia.

In 2009 after five public calls and a broad deployment of projects, the Government of Catalonia started a new phase activating the small municipalities and projects that had already completed the Integral Intervention Projects. It opened a new line for municipalities with less than ten thousand inhabitants and another for those municipalities that had completed the four-year period. The manifest wish was that municipalities with less economic capacity and infrastructures could also work for the social and territorial cohesion of segregated areas or segregation areas. The second addition was that they could continue to



receive support from the Districts Fund and the Government for those projects that considered that it was necessary to continue working in one of the fields of intervention given its singularity, or to address new problems that arose and were not identified in the initial diagnosis.

The Law of Districts activated 7 calls for grants. It has approved, promoted and financed 143 intervention projects and 4 continuity proposals, of which 31 have been completed. A total of 1,330 million euros of public investment by the Government of Catalonia and the municipalities were allocated to the various actions of the integral intervention projects in order to improve neighbourhoods in 117 municipalities.

Finally, the application of the Law of Districts has received great attention from architects, town planners and professionals also at the international level. In July 2008, the jury of the International Union of Architects (UIA) during the UIA XXIII World Congress in Turin publicly recognized the distinctive effort of the Government of Catalonia towards urban regeneration and urban development.

## B) Bologna's policy experimentations: the Incredible grant and the Regulation of the urban commons

The Region of Emilia Romagna in Italy has a long tradition in terms of **citizen's participation** which has brought to some of the innovative policies and practices in place today.

In 2010, the Region and the City of Bologna started to support the creative sector through Incredibol3 . This Creative Innovation grant is coordinated by the City and financed by the Region, in cooperation with private and public sector. Incredibol yearly supports creative start-ups and the internationalisation of existing creative companies in the Region, providing also advice and support. The grant also includes the free assignment of spaces owned by the City of Bologna for creative enterprises. Therefore, companies operating in these spaces do not pay rent but only operational costs, while any refurbishment expense is covered by the Municipality.

### BEST PRACTICE - BOLOGNA

**Over the years a number of innovative start-up companies have been supported through grants and the assignment of spaces.**

Dynamo Velostation was opened in 2015 with the support of Incredibol promoted by the Municipality of Bologna. Behind Parco della Montagnola, a few hundred meters away from Bologna Central Train Station, the site has become an intermodal hub for urban cyclists and commuters. It provides a safe parking space for bicycles and a variety of services, giving access to proper accessories and maintenance. A private start-up providing a public service, Dynamo also aims at strengthening the cyclist community facilitating the use of bikes in the city.

Kilowatt is a co-working space inside the Margherita Gardens in Bologna. Opened in 2012, it was developed through Incredibol and became a hub for environmental and social innovation. Besides the co-working space, it features a community garden, a kindergarten, a restaurant and an open area where cultural and social events are organized during the summer.

Mercato Sonato is a project aiming at requalifying an unused market hall in Bologna. It was carried out by an association of musicians in need of a rehearsal space for their orchestra, and it soon evolved into a multimodal hub for music and performative arts. Involving many associations whose work ranges from music to arts and crafts, Mercato Sonato now hosts a variety of music schools, choirs and crafts courses, along its daily music rehearsals.



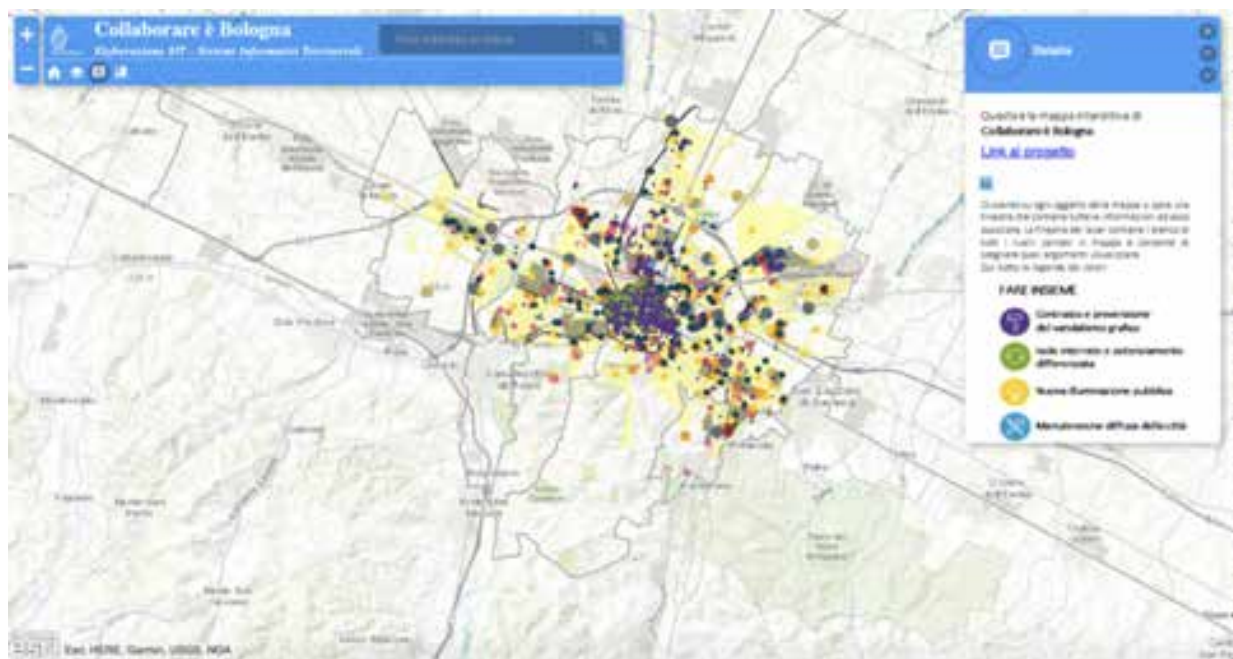
The City of Bologna was also the **first city** in Italy pioneering the **Regulations of the Commons**, gaining much visibility both at national level and abroad. The Regulation of the Commons, the first ever developed, have gained great attention and were soon adopted, with small variations, by a large number of cities across the peninsula.

The Regulation of the Commons give application of the Principle of Subsidiarity foreseen by the art.118 of the Italian Constitution. The latter invites public administrations to actively support citizens in the development of autonomous initiatives to the advantage of the collective interest. Therefore, in 2014, Bologna's City Council officially adopted the Regulation formalizing the collaboration between citizens and the public administration on activities aiming at the care and regeneration of urban commons. The Regulation acts as a general framework within which citizens, both individually or in groups, can spontaneously submit projects proposals offering their competences, resources and energy for the sake of collective goods. Such projects are disciplined by the Re-

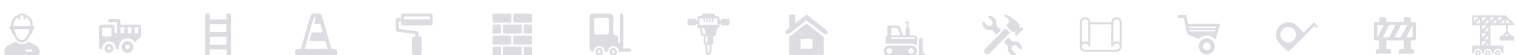
gulation through a series of specific agreements, called Collaborations Pacts, in which both the citizens and the Public Administration agree to the terms of their cooperation.

The commons targeted by this Regulation are material spaces as public squares, green areas or schools, immaterial commons, such as education and social inclusion, and digital commons, such as applications and digital alphabetisation.

The value of this pioneering Regulation is to provide a legal framework for already existing spontaneous activities and projects which, sometimes, resulted in contrast to existing regulations. At the same time, this Regulation has the limitation of addressing only the less problematic situations of collaboration between civil and public stakeholders when promoting the urban commons, such as collective cleaning of public spaces, paintings of murals or creation of street furniture. Conversely, Urban Commons involving higher stakes in terms of ownership, management and economic conditions, as in the case of public buildings or even private ones, are not part of the scope of the Bologna Regulation of the Commons.



**Figure 3**  
**Map of the Collaboration Pacts in Bologna. Source: City of Bologna**





**ELK**



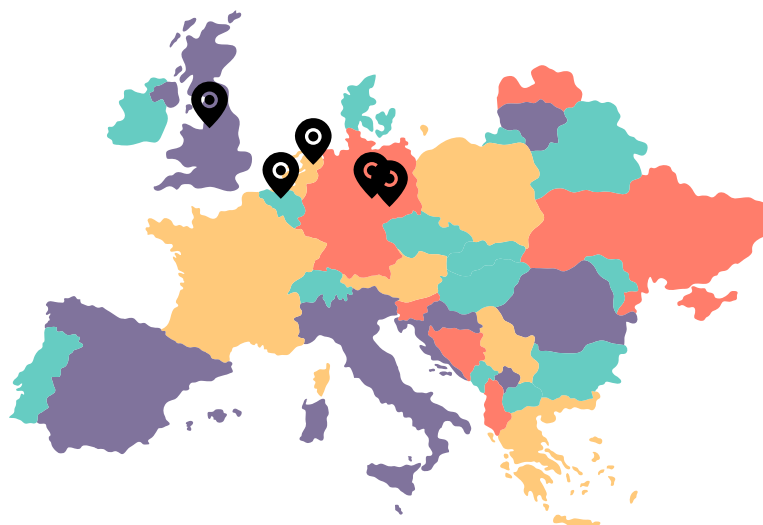
**DĄBROWA GÓRNICZA**



**BOLOGNA**

# Appendix 1

## Best practices of vacant buildings management



---

### BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

#### Bourse d'Achat for empty properties, for collective purchase of vacant real estate

The project matched abandoned industrial buildings with people searching for living accommodations and workspaces at affordable prices.

The project was co-ordinated by the Délégation au développement de la Ville which identified empty properties, negotiated a fixed purchase price with the owner and then assembled a group or co-operative of individuals to purchase the building. Bourse d'Achat supported new ways of bringing people together to cooperate. To this respect, the leading role of the municipality (neutral matchmaker) was instrumental in building trust and allowing for flexible agreements. However, unattended difficulties include cumbersome bureaucracy and the appearance of speculators, which distorted the target groups causing prices to rise.

*Source: URBACT, 2019*

*<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/sales-bourse-for-empty-properties-brussels-belgium--41.case>*

---

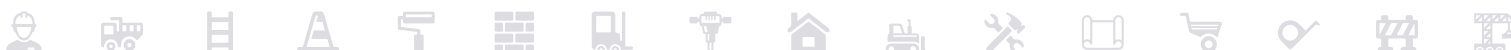
### THE NETHERLANDS

#### Crowdfunding, online platform to re-use vacant buildings

CrowdBuilding is a platform run by a cooperation of architects. The platform showcases vacant buildings for interested people which can join efforts and collectively buy and share the property. CrowdBuilding is an example of how the reuse of vacant buildings can be initiated and organised by the private sector, using community networks, online platforms and existing resources, connecting vacant office spaces with potential users.

*Source: URBACT, 2019*

*<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/crowdfunding-netherlands--30.case> - Polyák-Oravec, 2015*



## CHEMNITZ (GERMANY)

### Public Consulting Agency to connect owners of neglected houses with new users

The “Housing agency” is a consulting service supporting the match making between abandoned tenement heritage buildings with people looking for living accommodation and work space at affordable prices. The task of the agency is to function as a coordination body, which connects owners, potential users, investors and local authorities, providing them with free-of-charge consulting services for the reactivation of vacant apartment and buildings in the inner city areas where the free real estate market had failed. The services are carried out by a local private urban development company, appointed through a public tender, which proceeds as follows: i) identification of the abandoned buildings; ii) collection of basic data about the buildings; iii) contacting the owner to know about his intentions over the property; iv) if the owner agrees, publication of the building profile on the agency’s website and other platforms; v) planning of visits to the buildings with interested people; vi) connection of potential buyers with the owners; vii) support to the buyers to liaise with municipal departments and other relevant actors.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/public-consulting-agency-chemnitz-germany--40.case>

---

## LEIPZIG (GERMANY)

### Acquisition of new tenants for vacant buildings

Haushalten e.V. is a registered private association working for the preservation and rehabilitation of endangered and abandoned heritage buildings in Leipzig. The tenants, called “house guardians”, are free to use their craft and arts skills to design and refurbish the buildings as they prefer.

Their maintenance work becomes the reimbursement to the owner instead of paying rent. This mechanism helps prevent vandalism, hinders the buildings’ decay and insures general maintenance. Moreover, the owner is relieved of the house maintenance costs, while he remains responsible for the provision of electrical, heating and water supplies.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/guardian-houses-leipzig-germany--32.case>

---

## LIVERPOOL (UK)

### The use of costed options appraisals to identify optimum uses for vacant buildings

The costed option appraisal is a method of determining the most profitable development options for any given building. In short, the technique involves estimating the value of a property after restoration and subtracting the cost of renovation works to identify the most cost-effective option. For most buildings this will identify the most profitable option. Costed options appraisals require input from property professionals with knowledge of the local property market having access to information about nearby, recent property transactions. It also helps to identify the most appropriate long-term use of the building.

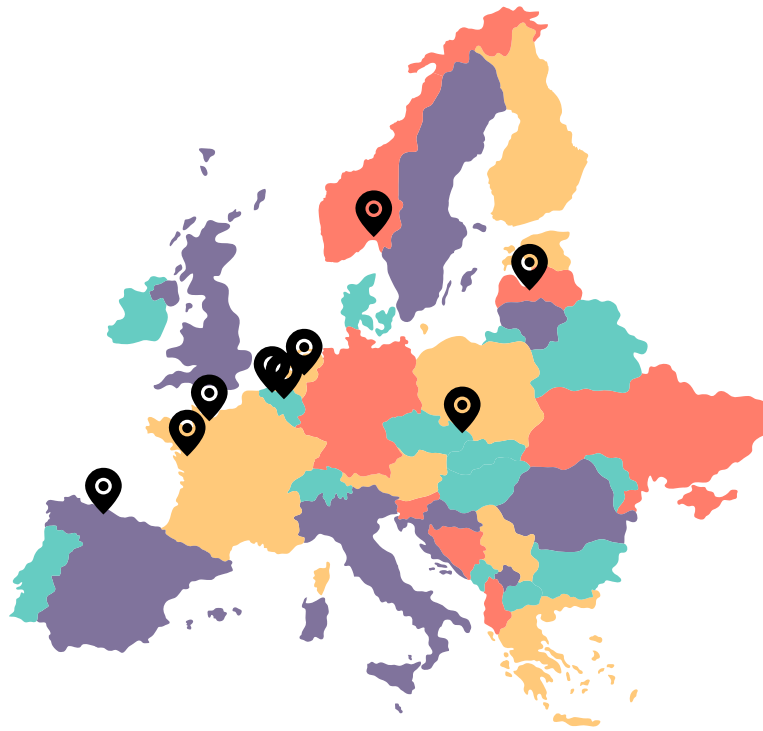
**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/costed-options-appraisal-liverpool-great-britain--29.case>



## Appendix 2

### Best practices of temporary use of buildings



---

#### AMERSFOORT (THE NETHERLAND)

Organize match making, non-profit bridging between temporary use demands with vacant spaces availability in the city

Most of the empty spaces in Amersfoort are private properties. Amersfoort initiated a network with the help of Matchpoint to match companies, non-profit organisations and real estate owners.

The intention is to bring together the owners and ideas from non-profit organisations so that there will be more space for creativity and less space unused. Matchpoint already has large experience with matchmaking social activities of companies and non-profit organisations. The project started with an experiment of temporary use in a developing industrial area. There was a tender for non-profit organisations to come up with proposals of initiatives of circular economy and temporary use in the area. There were more than 60 proposals. Another experiment was carried out in the street between Central Station and the city centre.

*Source: URBACT, 2019*

*<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/matchpoint-organize-match-making-amersfoort-netherlands--57.case>*



## ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM)

### Creative entrepreneurs as seeds of change in fertile soils of (sub)urban shopping areas

Supporting pop-up shops is not an innovative solution for transforming run-down neighbourhoods into vibrant city districts. Many local authorities experimented pop-up policies. However, the integrated multi-stakeholder approach, which brings together different government levels, entrepreneurs, non-profit actors and local inhabitants, experimented in Antwerp's Oud Berchem neighbourhood, has proven to be an effective as well as inspiring methodology to transform a depleted shopping area into a lively centre for creativity. The activities of Pop-up-to-Date pivot around the conversion of vacant commercial properties into springboards for creative entrepreneurship. What's most essential is the radical choice for a collaborative multi-stakeholder approach, which brings together different government levels, entrepreneurs, non-profit actors and local inhabitants.

The success ratio for the conversion of vacant retail units stands at 70%, with 60% of the units being long-term rented, and 10% being sold to entrepreneurs. In this project, the local government takes up a role as enabler and funder

Non-profit organisations build on their close links with local communities and property owners to match vacant properties with creative entrepreneurial spirits. The approach starts with identifying the owners of vacant retail units on the one hand, and creative entrepreneurs on the other.

The vacant retail unit is rented by a non-profit organisation on behalf of the local authority. Because the focus lies on decayed properties, it is lightly refurbished by means of local government funding prior to the rental period. During a fixed period of two months, it is then offered at a reduced tariff to allow creative entrepreneurs to try out their business in a real-life environment. After the project period, the profitability of the business and further ambitions of the new entrepreneurs are evaluated, and customised coaching and counselling are made available.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/pop-up-to-date-antwer-belgium--85.case>

---

## CAEN (FRANCE)

### Territorial marketing actions to attract people to “invade” the underused peninsula

Caen has developed a variety of artistic and cultural marketing actions to draw the attention of their citizens to the former harbour area and to become involved in the reactivation of this underused space. Examples of such actions are: «Drawing walks», «bike rides», «canoeing tours», guided site visits, the Street Art Festival and the «Palma Festival», and workshops for children. The activities have promoted the revitalization and development of the area.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/territorial-marketing-actions-caen-france--45.case>





## GHENT (BELGIUM)

### Social and cultural temporary use pilot projects to experiment and orient redevelopment of industrial brownfield areas

The City of Ghent has been experimenting with the temporary use of brown field sites and empty buildings for over a decade, often in the context of urban planning. Temporary use counters neglect, bringing a new dynamic to neighbourhoods, and offering added value for the city's development. "De Site" and "DOK" are two iconic projects marking the start of temporary use in Ghent, inspiring many future temporary use initiatives. In 2007, the City of Ghent, the social partner Samenlevingsopbouw Gent (Social Structures Ghent), and the social-artistic organisation Kunst in de Stad (Arts in the City) started the temporary use project De Site on the location of former telecom factory Alcatel Bell in the Rabot district. De Site became a creative meeting place involving residents with the district life and its renewal. In fact, the latter actively helped to reshape their neighbourhood setting up allotments, a greenhouse, urban horticultural plots, a football pitch, a bike playground, and an urban farmstead with a chicken coop.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/de-site-and-dok-two-iconic-temporary-use-based-redevelopment-processes-ghent-belgium--50.case>

---

## GIJON (SPAIN)

### Involving citizens in the reactivation of the former tobacco factory

To define the uses for the derelict Tabacalera, abandoned since 2002, several activities like workshops, citizens' survey and Sectorial and transversal working tables were combined and carried out in the Cimavilla neighbourhood, where the Tabacalera is located. These workshops allowed to acknowledge the citizens' vision, interest and expectations for the re-use of the Tabacalera, opening the debate about its potential uses in accordance with their own needs and interests.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/participa-tabacalera-gijon-spain--38.case>

---

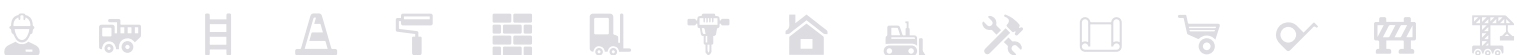
## OSTRAVA (CZECH REPUBLIC)

### Analysis of interest for temporary use

The concept of temporary use already existed in Ostrava but not on a non-official and bottom-up basis. Thanks to the engagement in the REFILL project, the perception of the temporary use activities by the city administration has started to change. A need analysis was conducted in 2017 in order to give proof to city decision makers on a real need for temporary use spaces. The intent was to analyse interest in temporary use by the general public combining quantitative and qualitative research. The analysis consists of the following steps: i) analysis of "REFILL" good practices – categorisation of projects according to field of focus (art, culture, social, commercial) or for-profit and non-for-profit; ii) on-line questionnaire; iii) face to face interviews; iv) dissemination event. It was an important step in order to move the project of temporary use service forward.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/analysis-of-interest-for-temporary-use-ostlava-czech-republic--67.case>



## NANTES (FRANCE)

### Slow urban planning through temporary use incubators

In the middle of the Loire river in Nantes lies a small island. For a long time, its use was primarily related to transport and industry. By the late 20th century, however—much like elsewhere in Europe—the shipyard and port productivity had started to decline. The island soon turned into an abandoned wasteland. In 1989, the newly elected mayor Jean-Marc Ayrault adopted a new approach. The island was to be developed as the Nantes' city -centre. One of the city's first steps was to build a new courthouse, in a time when no one wanted to build in the island. In 2003, an organisation was established for the purpose of bringing new life to the area. The SAMOA (Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique) buys land, rezones it and resells it under strict conditions for redevelopment. Temporary use agreements play a crucial role in the Nantes approach for urban development. They offer the city a way to keep empty buildings in public ownership while also giving incentives to creative ventures. The SAMOA's task of buying and developing deserted plots is successfully combined with its role of offering empty spaces to innovative companies.

*Source: URBACT, 2019*

*<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/slow-urban-planning-through-temporary-use-incubators-nantes-france--61.case>*

---

## OSLO (NORWAY)

### Vollebekk Fabrikker

Vollebekk Fabrikker is a newly established temporary project in the eastern part of Oslo, located in an old industrial area that soon will be transformed into a new residential area. The project is located in an old factory that will be demolished in some years. Vollebekk Fabrikker is a community and co-working space for social innovators, green entrepreneurs, musicians and artists from the private, public and voluntary sector. The main activities are based on the triple bottom line, that means everything refers to the social, environmental (or ecological) and financial performance. The concept is built around the ideas of co-creation, social entrepreneurship and circular economy. Vollebekk Fabrikker was co-created by four different stakeholders in the area, namely the property developer Aspelin Ramm, the cooperative building association OBOS, a sustainable development network called Pådriv and the local borough Bjerke. The four different partners met during a URBACT network meeting in the sub>urban network, where the idea of the project started. All involved parties have a mutual interest in creating more activities and attracting businesses and local start-ups, building on the principles of sustainable urban development. The old factory was abandoned and together with the two other partners, Pådriv and the local borough Bjerke, the partners decided to start a project of temporary use of the factory. Vollebekk Fabrikker opened in March 2018. Entrepreneurs and local businesses with a circular and sustainable focus were invited. The factory includes a conference venue, meeting rooms, office spaces, a café and a large industrial workshop. The activities range from growing oyster mushrooms on coffee left-over grains, building micro houses on re-used building materials, vintage furniture storage to hosting the local dance crew.

Up to July 2018, there were 21 businesses and organisations at Vollebekk Fabrikker.

**LINK:** <https://vollebekkfabrikker.no/>



## RIGA (LATVIA)

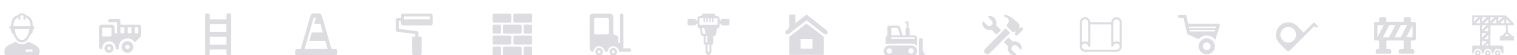
**The Free Riga model, go-between organization scouting cultural project to match vacant spaces opportunities offered by private and public owners**

The 2008 crisis interrupted the development projects of the city of Riga. Subsequently, many hundreds of buildings have been left empty, unheated and not well maintained. Now the cultural sector is booming and looking for space. Although this sector had started some successful ad-hoc temporary use projects already in 2005, these had been local and unknown to most of the property owners. The Free Riga movement, later became NGO, is as a group of activists who have worked increasingly with the Municipality on temporary use matters. Free Riga looks for empty buildings, approaches owners and convinces them of the benefits of temporary use, negotiating temporary use contracts, working as an organiser of temporary use projects and as a curator of temporary use initiatives that correspond to the needs of a space and its owner. “Free Riga” has emerged as an intermediary between owners of the empty spaces and prospective users of vacancy aiming to establish recognition and the much needed credibility for temporary use as a new and still unknown instrument dealing with vacancy.

Working closely with activists with expertise and skills from and on the ground ensures the municipality an access to information but also the ability to communicate (translate) in the right language. The NGOs’ resources go well beyond those of the Municipality and complete them.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

***<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/the-free-riga-model-riga-latvia--65.case>***



## Appendix 3

### Best practices of re-use of buildings



---

#### BOLOGNA (ITALY)

##### Co-housing project

The building is located in an area originally owned by the municipality of San Lazzaro. The area was sold, through a public auction, to a building cooperative set up for the specific purpose of participating in this auction. The members of the cooperative are the families that now live in the building.

The innovativeness of the project is based on the materials used for the construction and on the technical solution that were adopted. The building is made of wood and, also thanks to the solar panels installed on the roof, it saves a high level of energy and has a low environmental impact. In addition to technical and architectural innovation, the co-housing in San Lazzaro is also an example of social innovation considering the process that led to its realization, the amount of services and the shared spaces it offers, and the activities it provides to all residents in the neighbourhood (i.e. warehouse for ethical purchasing groups, power plant, bicycle repair room, car sharing, car-pooling, common living room, common garden, vegetable garden, etc.).

**LINK:** <http://www.terranuova.it/MappaEcovillaggi/Cohousing/Mura-San-Carlo>

---

#### LONDON (UK)

##### Acme Studios

Supporting artists since 1972, Acme is a non-profit association in London founded by a group of seven artists which provides affordable studios, work/living space and a programme of residencies and awards. In 1973 Acme asked the Greater London council for an empty property in East London. Since then, its goal is to identify unused buildings, public or private property in the territory of London, and to rent them in the medium or long term as studios and / or accommodation for artists. The mixed-use project, therefore, includes both private residence and affordable housing. Since 1972 ACME has supported and funded opportunities, awards and residencies for over 7,000 artists.

**LINK:** <http://www.acme.org.uk/>



## CLUJ (ROMANIA)

### Temporary use in disused factory building

Fabrica de Pensule is a former paintbrush factory in the historical industrial area of Cluj near the river and the railway track. It remained empty since the activity stopped in 2000.

In 2008 Istvan Szakats and his fellows from the art scene of Cluj discovered the place that for both its size and its symbolic heritage appeared as the perfect place for hosting an independent art centre. They contacted the owner and managed to negotiate a preferential rent and a shared renovation agreement: the owner would refurbish the outside of the building and they would take care of the inside.

After 8 years, this impressive five-story industrial building became an incubator of new talents. It gained international prestige and finally gained attention and support from the municipality.

**Source:** *URBACT, 2019*

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/fabrica-de-pensule-cluj-rumania--51.case>

---

## GHENT (BELGIUM)

### De wasserij

The area was one of the industrial laundries of Ghent, noisy and polluting. Residents openly complained and the site was later closed down in 2011, remaining empty for many years.

Ghent has a public urban renewal company but not located in the municipal building and acting relatively independently (an “arm-length agency”). As a quick decision by the politicians on the final use of De Wasserij was not to be expected, the urban renewal company launched an open call for ideas for temporary use. Applicants had to bid presenting their business plans and the final decision on the successful temporary users was taken by the city council.

As a first step, small start-ups, such as ‘flower from the field to the vase’, a carpenter, beer-makers, journalists, were allowed to use the space for free (with the exception of utilities).

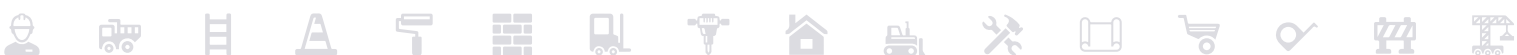
**Source:** *Ghent DE WASSERIJ dia1803a: 444, 446, 465, 482, 494*

---

## LISBON (PORTUGAL)

Chapitò, a former reformatory owned by the Ministry of Justice, is a building dating back to the 1800s and recovered in the early 1900s to house the juvenile prison in Lisbon. The collaboration with the Instituto de Reinseração Social of the “Ministério” started at the end of the 80s and consolidated with the creation of the Chapitò school, gave life to the project which is part of the artistic movements of the 70s. The circus arts, the popular performative shows and the socio-cultural interventions were some of the actions developed during the ‘70s with the aim of working on social integration of young people. The project is part of a unitary idea but can be broken down into 4 thematic areas: social action, training, culture, production.

**LINK:** <http://chapito.org/>



## LJUBLJANA (SLOVENIA)

### Rog factory project

Since 2007 the Municipality has developed plans to renovate the spaces and transform them into a centre for contemporary art and creative industries. The main building (protected site) is designed to be transformed into the Rog Contemporary Arts Centre including exhibition spaces, studios and artistic programs, art shops, educational spaces, etc.

The initial hypothesis was to create a public-private partnership. However, following the economic crisis, no private investor came forward. The municipality of Ljubljana advanced some projects for the redevelopment of the area, in contrast with the users' requests. This has led to increasing tensions over the years, culminating in 2016 with an attempt to forcibly demolish the factory, later stopped by the judicial authorities. The future of the Rog factory remains uncertain and the struggle between the municipality and civil society continues, leaving an unsolved situation.

**LINK:** <http://urbact.eu/squatting-cultural-use-toward-commons-case-rog-factory-ljubljana>

---

## MARIBOR (SLOVENIA)

### Student workshop & idea competition for the re-use of a former prison

To launch new ideas and vision for the reactivation of the former prison 'KPD' in Maribor, the Faculty of Architecture, University of Maribor, in cooperation with the municipality of Maribor, organised within the regular master study programme a student workshop and competition. After a comprehensive analysis of the site and gathering examples of comparable projects from Slovenia and abroad a first student workshop under the mentorship of architect Nussmüller from Graz took place. Key aim of the workshop was the joint formulation of ideas for recommended uses, taking into account the perspectives of potential investors, the major, spatial planners, etc. During an additional workshop the results were presented to the public and advantages, disadvantages and opportunities were discussed with the city key stakeholders and an international audience.

**Source:** *URBACT, 2019*

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/the-former-prison-kpd-maribor-slovenia--44.case>

---

## NAPLES (ITALY)

### Ex-asilo Filangieri

The complex dating back to the 16th century, is centrally located. The building became one of the first legal urban commons of Naples. After many years staying empty, by 2012 the building was largely renovated with the aim to become the headquarters of the 2014 Forum of Cultures. In the meantime, however, it has been occupied by a group cultural operators. The city council gave up the original idea and agreed to use the building as a commons. The municipality ensures water and electricity, while the users have to pay other costs but no rent. The condition is that access should be open to everyone.

**Source:** *URBACT, Second Chance project*



## NAPLES (ITALY)

### Civic uses and new policy tools for the community

Naples city council aims at guaranteeing the collective and equal enjoyment of common goods such as water, public services, schools, knowledge, cultural and natural heritage, and their preservation for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, the city has recognised the “Urban Civic Use Regulation” of common goods. Thanks to the new governance model, more than 250 projects came to life, breaking down the production costs by using free and shared spaces, resources, knowledge and skills.

The first good to be recognised as a common, and therefore proposed as a good practice, is the Ex-Asilo Filangeri, a building that by resolution n.400 (2012) was already identified by the city of Naples as a “place with a complex use in the cultural field, and whose spaces are used to experiment in participative democracy”. At that time, it had been occupied by a group of art and culture professionals protesting against the restoration and new abandonment of the premises. With the following decision, n.893/2015, the city of Naples recognised the “Urban Civic Use Regulation” of the good. The self-managed Ex-Asilo is based on the principles of cooperation and mutualism, and aims at strengthening individual and collective responsibility. Empowerment is established by cooperation: each member of the community, whether guest or resident, contributes to the community’s activities and management.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/lost-found-naples-italy--87.case>

---

## NAPLES (ITALY)

### Reactivating the ex-Military Hospital SS Trinità delle Monache

The city of Naples, following the urban commons regulation, initiated a participative process with citizens and neighbourhood organisations to transform the abandoned military hospital into the “Community Hub Trinità – Active Citizenship Incubator”. Citizens and interested stakeholders were involved through an open call in the inspection of the building and its surrounding through site visits. A series of participatory activities and public workshops were organised in order to collect ideas on potential uses of the building.

Associations, enterprises, institutions and informal groups or networks contributed with projects, ideas or suggestions for temporary use. The further involvement of the stakeholders in the envisioning and action planning process has generated a reactivation strategy that is supported by the majority of the stakeholders.

**Source: URBACT, 2019: Re-making the city. Online webtool**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/>

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/ss-trinitA-delle-monache-complex-naples-italy--43.case>



## PORTO (PORTUGAL)

### Critical Concrete, refurbishment of social relevant spaces

Critical Concrete, an academic and social initiative, has developed a new model to refurbish socially-relevant spaces – social housing, cultural centres and public spaces – through educational programmes. They offer a summer school program for architecture and design students including both the theory of sustainable architecture and practical experience in construction work.

One example was the Summer school during which Critical Concrete, its partner and students worked on an Ilha house. This traditional social housing configuration of Porto has been used since the 19th century to host the workers coming to the city attracted by the new jobs in the industry sector. Through the project 40 students from abroad came to Porto to conduct a thorough refurbishment to transform the house into a functioning home within three weeks plus an additional two weeks of refinement.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/critical-concrete-porto-portugal--35.case>

---

## POZNAN (POLAND)

### Preferential rent for vacant spaces to accommodate cultural and creative stakeholders in the dismissed Lazarz's neighbourhood

In the 90s, due to the urban sprawl, many people moved out from the Lazarz district and the Glogowska main street of the area mostly became a transit road from the main city centre to neighbouring municipalities out of Poznan. The general deterioration process of the entire district was partly countered in “Upper Lazarz”, where beautiful “fin de siècle” architecture and park greenery attracted developers and the creative sector. At the same time “Lower Lazarz” was somehow forgotten and left to its declining economic and social conditions. Among the most visible signal of this decay were the “empty spaces” – former shops and workshops abandoned by craftsmen and traders who moved out from the area. The idea of “reviving Lazarz” through cultural and social activities was developed by an umbrella organisation called “Open Zone of Culture”. It includes several local NGOs and galleries that found “Lower Lazarz” a very interesting part of Poznan to develop their activities. In 2014, they developed a revitalising program to transform Lower Lazarz through culture and social activities in order to activate local inhabitants, improve the districts’ spatial conditions and its general reputation. One of the most interesting strategies was to develop a programme for preferential rent in order to “fill in” local empty shops located in the most neglected streets.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

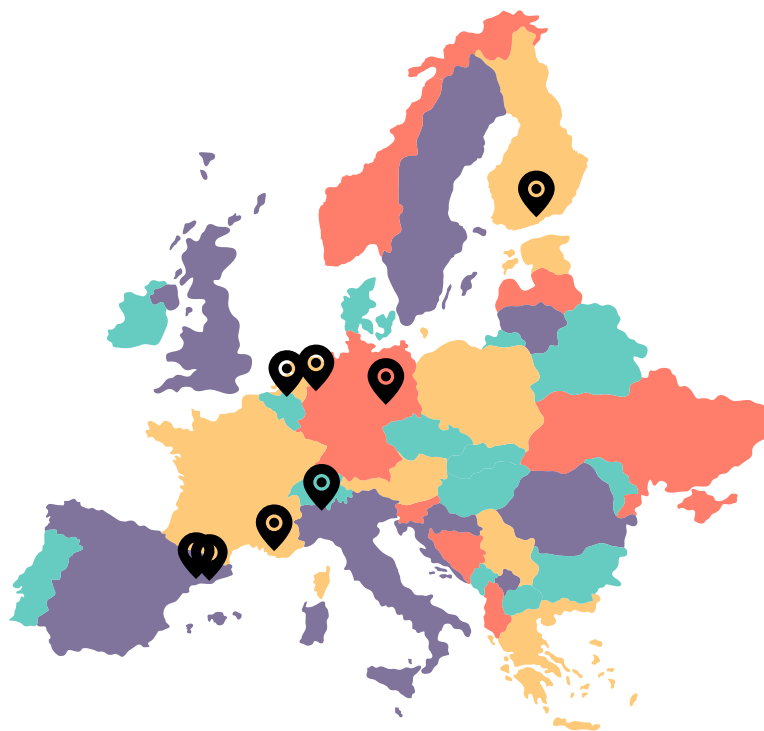
<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/lazarz-s-open-zone-for-culture-poznan-poland--63.case>





## Appendix 4

### Best practices of urban regeneration



---

#### ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM)

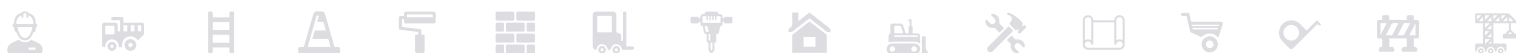
##### Multi-plot development in the hybrid environment and fragmented ownership of Lageweg

The Lageweg project site is situated in a semi-industrial part of Antwerp's fringes. The area has been in decline for years and has become a "no-go" zone. The latter is characterised by large, empty factories, an inaccessible locked-in green space and rundown buildings. Bars are closing down in the area, there is an increase in small criminality, inhabitants are complaining about the noise and the dust generated by the still operating industry and bailiffs collecting back pays are more and more common. The Lageweg project site is a hybrid building block, where different zoning areas (industry and housing) are adjacent. Almost all the land is privately owned and there is barely any social connection between inhabitants and users of the place. The latter is in urgent need of renewal.

In this project, the city government has to assume the role of facilitator to engage all stakeholders in supporting a co-creative vision, also ensuring that the owners contribute to the project. At the same time, it is necessary to safeguard the common interest. This will lead to a sustainable form of urban renewal.

**Source: URBACT, 2019**

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/lageweg-antwerp-belgium--98.case>



## BARCELONA (SPAIN)

### Hangar

Hangar is a former warehouse, located in an industrial area in the Poblenou district, on the outskirts of Barcelona. Dismissed in the 80s at the same time as other sites in the city, it remained empty for many years. In the early 1980s, the Federació Sindical d'Artistes Plàstics de Catalunya asked the City of Barcelona for permission to use the old port warehouses for workshops and artistic activities. Hangar was opened in 1997.

The centre was opened to promote artistic production and research, it provides equipment and services for artists and designers and for the international dissemination of the artworks. Hangar provides three important services to the artistic community: spaces for rent, access to equipment, program support through qualified and specialized technicians, international exchanges and artists residency. The activities produced belong to the world of digital arts.

Hangar is a private foundation. The centre is financed by the Catalan Government and the Municipality of Barcelona, and is managed by AAVC – Association of Visual Arts of Catalonia. The individual projects are financed by the Catalan Government, the City of Barcelona, the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Province of Barcelona and the Banad Sabadell Foundation.

*LINK: <https://hangar.org/en/>*

---

## HELSINKI (FINLAND)

### Kaapeli

The Kaapelitehdas was a former factory of electric and telephone cables built in 1939 in Tallberginkatu. Once ceased its activities in the mid-1980s, it was occupied by artists looking for spaces. Later the occupiers founded an association, the Pro Kaapeli, and developed an alternative project to recover buildings and to promote cultural activities. In 1991 the management of the building was taken over by the city of Helsinki, which started the reconversion of the cable factory in the largest multi-functional cultural centre in Europe.

The Kaapeli project was designed to promote artistic and cultural diversity. In fact, the activities of the centre are aimed at: i) increasing the city's cultural offer, proposing spaces and opportunities for exhibitions related to theatre, dance, music, sport, arts, cultural events of various kinds; ii) supporting artistic and cultural projects aimed at communicating messages of cultural and social integration; ii) promoting the creativity of emerging artists, guaranteeing dedicated spaces and equipped facilities.

At the organizational level, in 1991 the Municipality and the cable company jointly founded the Kaapelitalo Oy Kaapelitalo, a company dedicated to the management of the centre and to monitor the progress of the project. The company manages the renting of the centre's spaces through which it finances the programming of cultural initiatives, including programs for disadvantaged people.

*LINK: <https://www.kaapelitehdas.fi/en>*



## DUISBURG (GERMANY)

### Landschaftspark

In the summer of 1994 the Duisburg-Nord Country Park, a former steel industrial area located along the Emscher river in the Ruhr region, was opened as a multifunctional park combining industrial and cultural heritage.

The project was designed for different uses: i) The Sports Park offers the opportunity to practice different sports; ii) the Industrial Park allows visitors to learn the history of the place through guided tours; iii) The Natural and Agricultural Park hosts a great variety of birds, trees and plants species. The Park has its own farm, with goats and horses right next to the mill, where a pedagogical farm was set up to promote the responsible use of natural resources; iv) The Park for Events is an entertainment centre hosting major events and cultural programs.

The project was promoted by the City of Duisburg with the support of private sponsors. The Park is managed by Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord GmbH, which has structured a system of sponsors to support the promotion and the development of the projects and activities.

**LINK:** <https://www.landschaftspark.de/en/>

---

## LEIPZIG (GERMANY)

### The reactivation of the Schaubühne Lindenfels through community shares

Schaubühne Lindenfels is a charitable, non-profit stock company founded by theatre actors, which uses its stocks as community shares to acquire funds for the rehabilitation of the building.

The aim is to finance the re-use of the building as a community based theatre including a movie theatre, a gastronomy and a space for young artists. Through the involvement of the shareholders, a strong identification with the Schaubühne Lindenfels could be achieved as well as the strengthening of the civic engagement. So far there are around 1.200 shareholders, through which 112.800€ was earned for the project. All incomes together cover around 50 % of the project's costs. The other 50% is gained through public cultural subsidies.

**Source:** *URBACT, 2019*

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/schaubAhne-lindenfels-leipzig-germany--42.case>

---

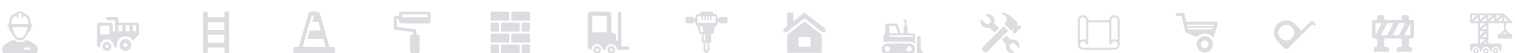
## VERBANIA (ITALY)

### Re-use Verbania

The project is an urban regeneration experiment aiming at youth employability. The Municipality has launched a support service via a free platform to identify disused buildings to develop new forms of social, cultural, tourism-hospitality, aggregation and production.

The program aims to encourage the matching between immediately reusable empty spaces and re-users in the creative, artistic, social and cultural areas.

**LINK:** [https://www.riusiamolitalia.it/ita/04\\_azioni\\_e\\_progetti.aspx](https://www.riusiamolitalia.it/ita/04_azioni_e_progetti.aspx)



## MARSEILLE (FRANCE)

### La Friche project

The former tobacco factory, built in 1848, is located in the Belle de Mai district to the north-west of the Marseille station. In 1992, after the dismantling of the factory, a group of artists started to recover a part of the structure to promote a cultural project for the neighbourhood. Following a public debate, the City of Marseille has appointed a commission to include the site in an overall plan to recover the area. The aim of the project is to create a local and international hub for artists and the neighbourhood, stimulating new ways of socializing and energizing the cultural spaces of the city of Marseille. The centre is designed as a creative container for the neighbourhood and is based on the sharing of information in terms of social, economic and urban development. It represents a space where artists are invited to produce their works and, in return, to contribute to the arrangement of the structure. From a conceptual point of view, project is based on three principles: i) the internationalization of local activities; ii) education and awareness of cultural activities; iii) the enhancement of artistic creation as an opportunity for the entire local area. Most of the assets belong to the City of Marseille which allows the use of the rent-free spaces provided that the activities are carried out to the benefit of the district. The activities are financed by the City of Marseille, the Ministry of Education of Provence, and the Alpes Côte d'Azur of the Bouches du Rhône Region. The managing body is an association made up of 45 artists and cultural entities working in the field of contemporary arts - artistic companies, independent artists, service and training organizations.

**LINK:** <http://www.lafriche.org/en/>

---

## VILAFRANCA DEL PENEDES (SPAIN)

### From empty housing to social inclusion

In a context of high poverty, social exclusion and an increasing number of empty housing units, the Vilafranca Inclusion programme deals with the renovation and rehabilitation of vacant housing for social purposes. The programme is carried out with a multiannual approach which brings together the municipality, social actors, NGOs and property owners. The renovated properties are used for job training programs to boost employment among people at risk of social exclusion and poverty. The practice has been recognised by Un Habitat Europe and the Pi i Sunyer Foundation.

Vilafranca Inclusion exemplifies the three pillars of the URBACT principles: i) a horizontal integration between various municipal services; ii) vertical integration between promoters and beneficiaries. iii) territorial integration in degraded areas for their rehabilitation. The social impact of Vilafranca Inclusion programme has been multiple and largely beneficial. In fact, since its implementation in 1992, it has provided families with a regular income, allowed beneficiaries to follow training programmes and to build professional skills, and increased their chances of finding a job.

**Source:** URBACT, 2019

<http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/from-empty-housing-to-social-inclusion-vilafranca-del-penedes-spain--106.case>



# Bibliography

Arnstein S. R., 1969, A Ladder of Citizen Participation, JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4

Barnes P., 2006, Capitalism 3.0: A Guide for Reclaiming the Commons, Berrett-Koehler Pub.

Baum M., Christiaanse, K. (eds.), 2012, City as Loft. Adaptive reuse as a resource for sustainable urban development. Gta Verlag, Zürich

Bellamy R., Palumbo A., 2010, From Government to Governance, Ashgate

Bevir M., Rhodes R., Weller P., 2003, Comparative governance: prospects and lessons, Public Administration Journal

Bishop P., Williams L., 2012, The Temporary City. Routledge, Oxon

Borsacchi L., Pinelli P., 2019, Sustainable and innovative practices of small and medium-sized enterprises in the water and waste management sector. In: Innovation Strategies in Environmental Science, pp. 255-290 Elsevier, ISBN:978-0-12-817382-4.

Breure A.M., Lijzen J.P.A., Maring L., 2018, Soil and land management in a circular economy. In: Science of the Total Environment 624 (2018) 1125–1130. Elsevier

Buttenberg L., Overmeyer K., Spars G., 2014, Raumunternehmen. Wie Nutzer selbst Räume entwickeln. Jovis, Berlin

Campagnoli G., 2014, Riusiamo l'Italia, da spazi vuoti a start-up culturali e sociali. Gruppo 24 Ore

Cellamare C., De Angelis R., Ilardi M., Scandurra E. (eds.), 2014, Recinti Urbani: Roma e i luoghi dell'abitare. Manifesto Libri, Rome

Cottino P., 2010, Assegno di ricerca semestrale per lo sviluppo di una analisi comparata di casi internazionali di riuso sociale e creativo di spazi dismessi

Dewar M., Thomas J.M. (eds.), 2012, The City After Abandonment. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia

Gudeman, B., 2011, The Anthropology of Economy: Community, Market and Culture. Blackwell, Oxford

Ghisellini P. et al., 2015, A review on circular economy: the expected transition to a balanced interplay of environmental and economic systems. Journal of Cleaner Production

Grossmann K., Bontje M., Haase A., Mykhnenko V. 2013. Shrinking cities: Notes for the further research agenda. Cities 35, pp.221-225

Harvey D., 2012, REBEL CITIES From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution. Verso

Healey P., 2004, The treatment of space and place in the new strategic planning in Europe. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 28(1): 45–67.

Killing A., 2014, The Business of Temporary Use. Killing Architects, Rotterdam

Kirchherr J., 2017, Conceptualizing the circular economy: An analysis of 114 definitions, Resources, Conservation and Recycling Volume 127, December 2017, Pages 221-232

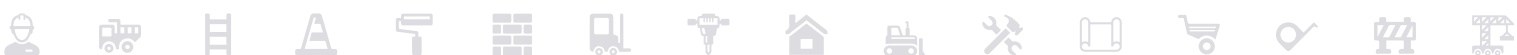
Mattei U., 2014, Beni comuni. Un manifesto. Laterza, Rome

Molina - Moreno et al, 2017, Circular Economy in Wastewater Treatment Plant—Challenges and Barriers;

Nelson G., 2000, Self-Governance in communities and Families, Berret-Koehler Pub. Shin, D.M. 2000, 'Economic policy and social policy: Policy-linkages in an era of globalisation'. International Journal of Social Welfare, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 17-30.

Ostrom, E, 2009: A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems. In: Science 24 Jul 2009: Vol. 325, Issue 5939, pp. 419-422

Oswalt P., 2005, Shrinking Cities. Hatje Cantz Verlag, Leipzig



Oswalt P., 2006, Shrinking cities – Volume 2: Interventions. Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz.

Oswalt P., Overmeyer K., Misselwitz P., 2013, Urban Catalyst. The Power of Temporary Use. Dom Publishers, Berlin

Overmeyer K., 2004, Raumpioniere: Ideen, Stadtentwicklung durch Zwischennutzung. Studio Urban Catalyst, Berlin

Patti D., Polyak L. (eds), 2017, Funding the Cooperative City. Community Finance and the Economy of Civic Spaces. Cooperative City Books, Vienna

Polyák L., Oravecz J. (eds), 2015, Vacant City. Experiments in inclusive urban transformation Netherlands/Hungary. KÉK Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre, Budapest

Refill, URBACT 2018, final publication. <http://urbact.eu/Refill>

Scandurra E., Attili G., 2013, Pratiche di trasformazione dell'urbano, Franco Angeli

SenStadt Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007, Urban pioneers. Berlin: Stadtentwicklung durch Zwischennutzung. Temporary use and urban development in Berlin (pp. 102–109). Architektenkammer & Jovis Verlag, Berlin

Sørensen E., 2004, Democratic governance and the role of public administrators. in Tampering with tradition: The unrealized authority of democratic agency, Eds. Bogason P., Kensen S., Miller H., Lexington Books

Sørensen E., Torfing J., 2009, Making governance networks effective and democratic through metagovernance, Public Administration, Vol. 87, No. 2, pp. 234-258.

Stavrides S., 2016m The City as Commons. Zed Books, London

Ramsden P., 2010, Report of the workshop 'Re-Using Brownfield Sites and Buildings' held at the Regions for Economic Change workshop in Brussels

Rietveld R., Rietveld E., eds., 2014, Vacancy Studies. Experiments & Strategic Interventions in Architecture. Nai010 publishers, Rotterdam

URBACT, 2019, Re-making the city. Online webtool. <http://remakingthecity.urbact.eu/>

World Economic Forum, 2018, White paper "Circular Economy in Cities Evolving the model for a sustainable urban future"

Ziehl M., Oßwald S., Hasemann O., Schnier D. (eds.), 2012, Second Hand Spaces Recycling sites undergoing urban transformation. JOVIS Verlag GmbH Berlin.



## Photo Credits

**Cover:** photo by Tama66 / Peter H

link: <https://pixabay.com/it/photos/hall-stock-luoghi-perduti-1929422/>

**Pag.1:** Prato, Macrolotto Zero. Photo by Fernando Guerra

**Pag.18:** link: <https://www.ohga.it/green-city-chi-semina-sostenibilita-raccoglie-benessere-le-vento-ohga-nella-milano-digital-week-2019/>

**Pag.31:** photo of Ghent link: <https://refillthecity.wordpress.com/2017/09/08/temporary-use-in-the-spotlight-during-open-monument-days-in-ghent/>

photo of Leipzig link: <https://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/in-leipzig-sind-mieter-waechter>

photo of Naples by Fernando Guerra

**Pag.36:** photo of Riga link: <https://www.10cose.it/riga/cosa-vedere-riga>

photo of Bratislava link: <https://apps.derstandard.at/privacywall/story/2000091217415/user-rei-sefuehrer-wohin-in-bratislava>

photo of Brussels by Karina Hof

link: <https://sprudge.com/where-to-drink-coffee-in-brussels-142493.html>

**Pag.43:** photo by Samuel Zeller

link: <https://www.dbsmusic.net/blog/berlin-best-film-hotspots/samuel-zeller-419445-unsplash/>

**Pag.45:** photo 1 link: <https://wembley.blogontheblock.com/2016/05/blueroom-restaurant-in-wembley-to-close-and-developed-into-flats/>

photo 2 link: <https://www.dezeen.com/2013/07/30/cottrell-house-workspace-by-the-decorators-and-meanwhile-space/>

**Pag.51:** photo of Ełk link: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ełk-ul.Wojska\\_Polskiego.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ełk-ul.Wojska_Polskiego.jpg)

photo of Dąbrowa Górnicza link: <http://twojezaglenie.pl/dabrowa-gornicza-jednym-z-najzamosniejszych-samorzadow-w-kraju/>

photo of Bologna link: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/emilia-romagna-and-san-marino/bologna>



# SUSTAINABLE & CIRCULAR RE-USE of spaces & buildings



## HANDBOOK

This handbook can be a useful tool to lay the foundations for an **overall strategy** that looks at a new model of urban re-use management following the principles of the circular economy.

In fact, **disused** and **underutilized spaces** and buildings in all European cities can become opportunities for new jobs, the promotion of a collaborative economy, social innovations and start-ups.