

EMBEDDING INNOVATION ATELIERS

Breakout B1
ATELIER Final Conference – March 11, 2026

IN URBAN ECO-SYSTEMS



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AGENDA

- 15:30 - **Welcome**, introduction and programme (Jeroen) 5 min.
- 15:35 - Presentation of **Innovation Atelier Concept**, design model and learning (Jeroen / Juanita) 15 min.
- 15:50 - ***Making value co-creation last in urban ecosystems, evaluation*** (Sterre) 10 min.
- 16:00 - **Panel discussion** on IA Implementation (4 panel members) 40 min.
- 16:40 - **Interaction with audience** (Questions) 10 min.
- 16:50 - ***Presentation of practical Innovation Atelier guide*** (Inés) 10 min

Innovations required

technologies

connections

interoperability

policies & regulations

financial arrangements

perception of ownership

services for operation, management and guarantees

data sources availability, access and accountability



PED dont rely on one single product or process innovation, hence a system innovation.

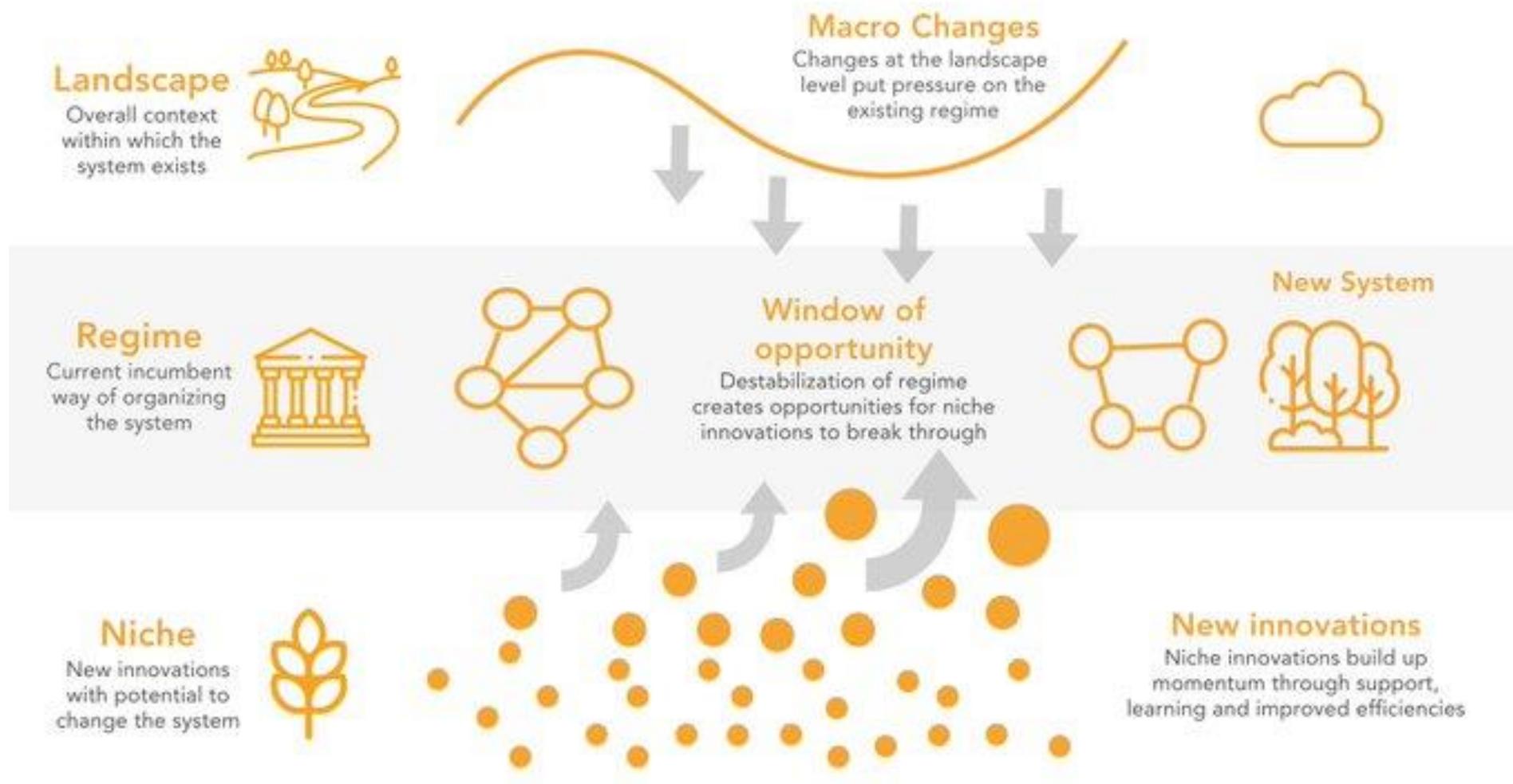
Collaboration & Learning

Innovations applied are new
Require an open collaboration
Learning, gaining experience and share



Fostering this process of collaboration, learning, sharing, co-creation and co-evolution, is the foundation of the Innovation Ateliers

Innovation Ateliers supporting the adoption of new innovations and change existing policies of regime system



Multilevel perspective on sustainable transitions (Geels 2011)



AMSTERDAM REPUBLICA

BOB W.



BILBAO Zorrozaurre



CHARACTERISTICS INNOVATION ATELIERS

(Urban) Living Labs

Innovation Public-Private Partnerships

Innovation Atelier



Stimulating open innovation in ecosystem Quadruple Helix



Co-creation of solutions and supporting measures



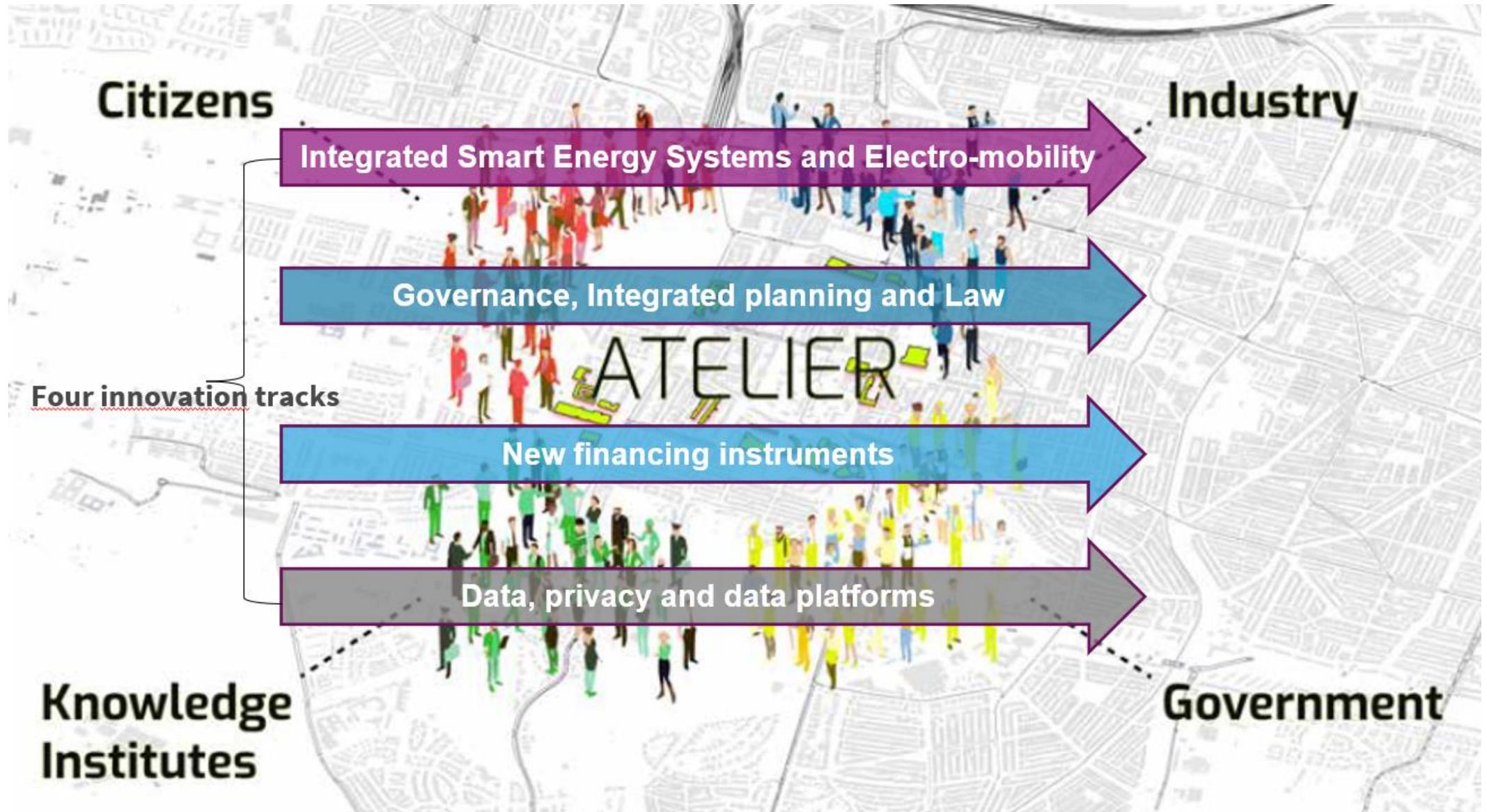
Sustaining partnerships



INNOVATION ATELIERS

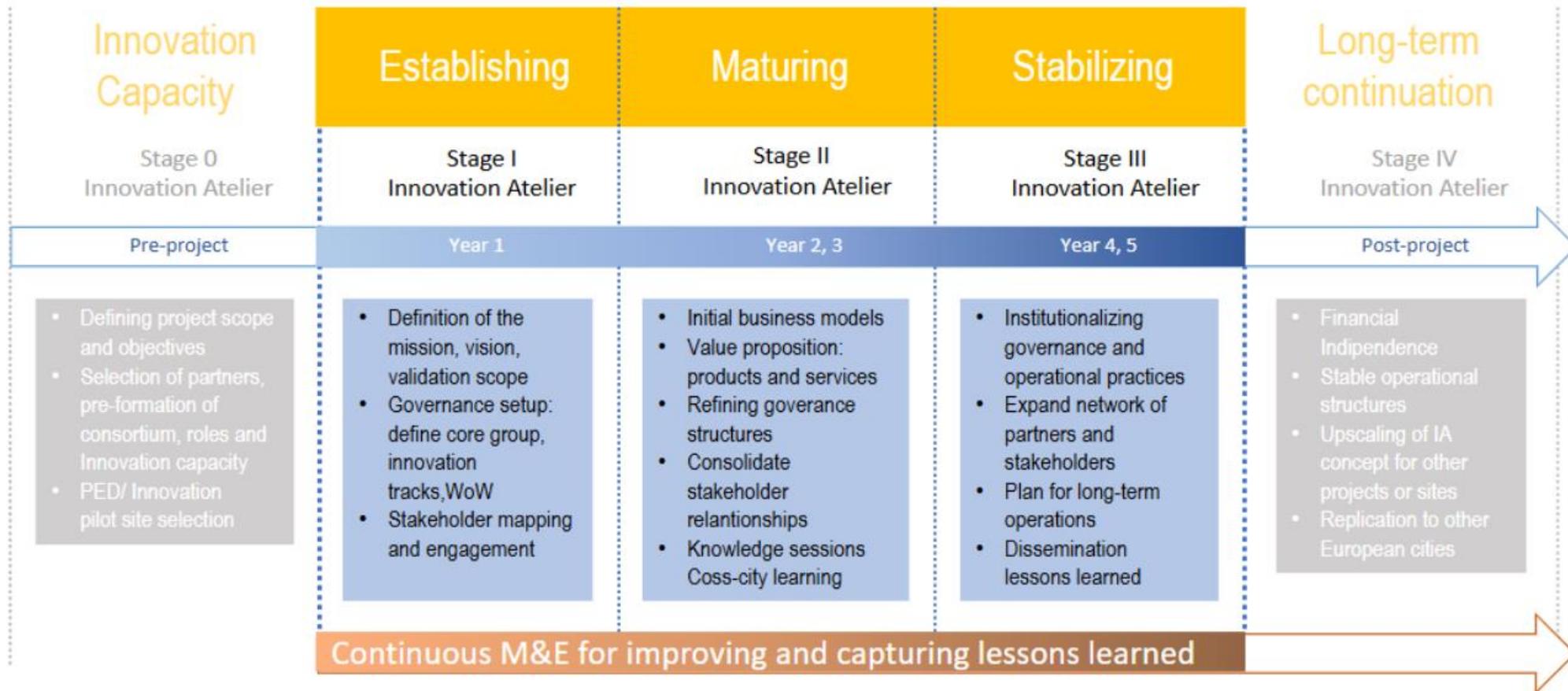
The goal of the Innovation Atelier is to support the process of realization and implementation of Positive Energy Districts in cities by setting up a collaboration for innovation between the various partners and stakeholders, to foster exploring, co-creating new solutions, building up the capacity to learn and to innovate.

INNOVATION TRACKS

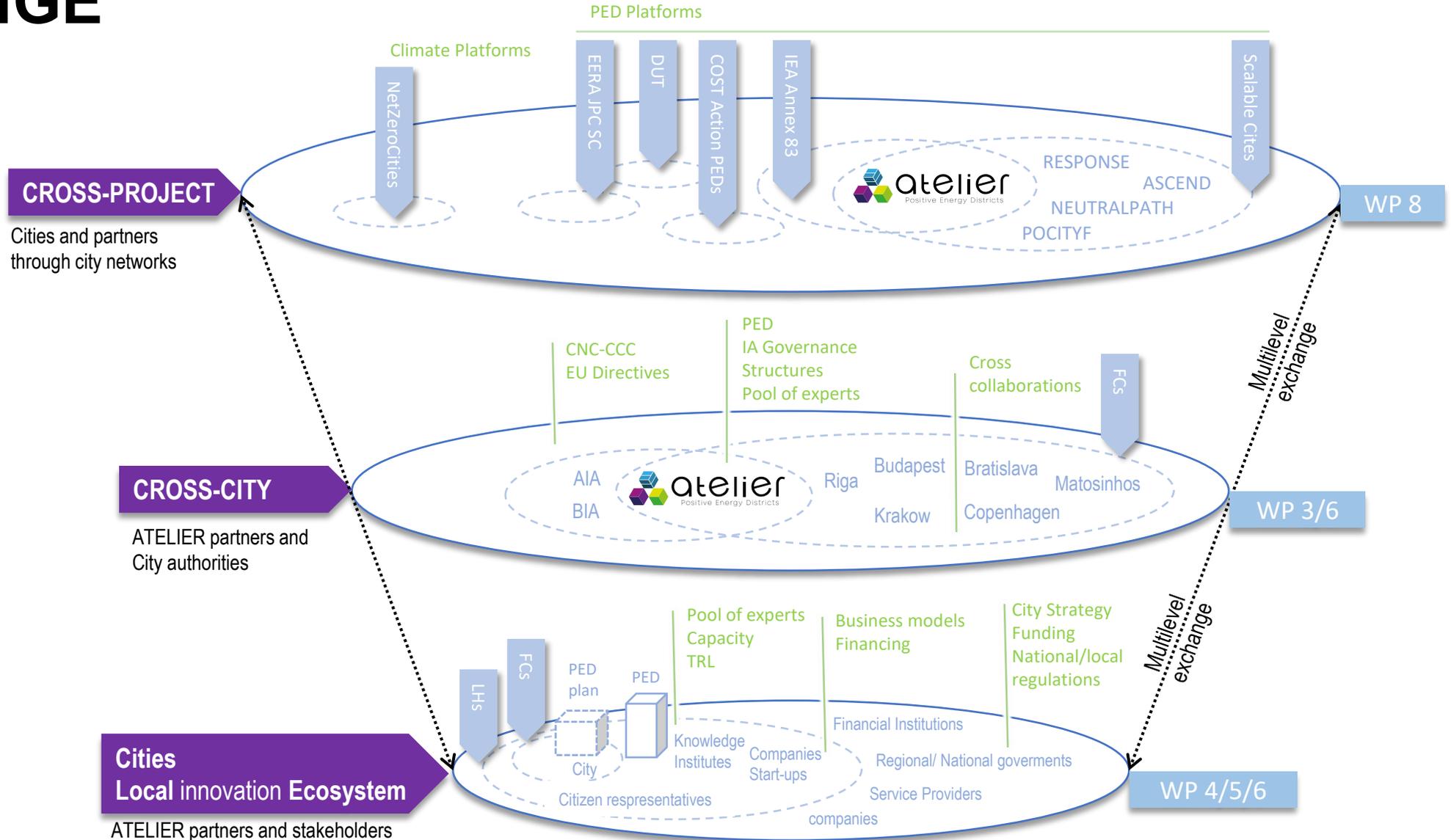


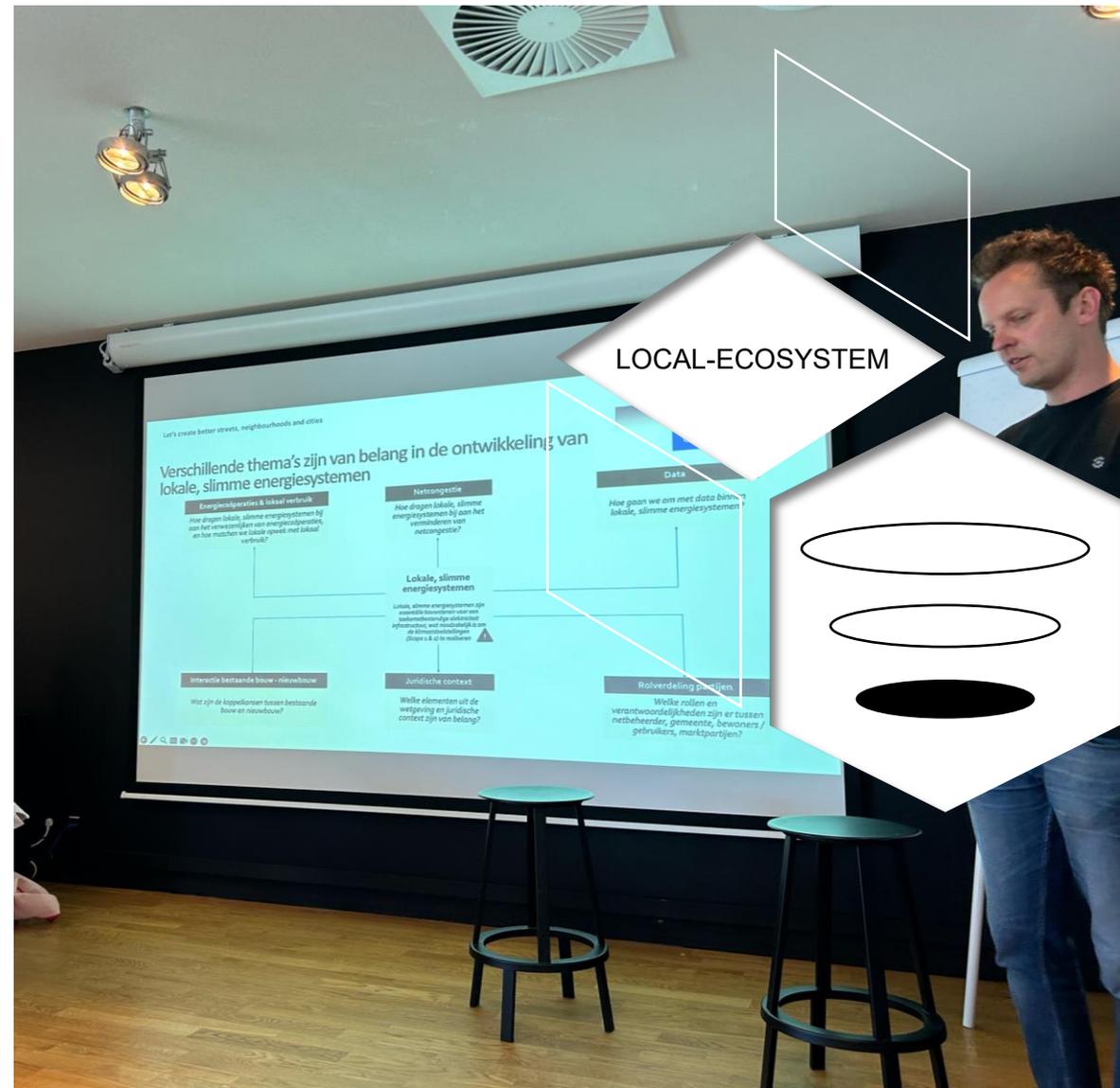
INNOVATION ATELIER

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

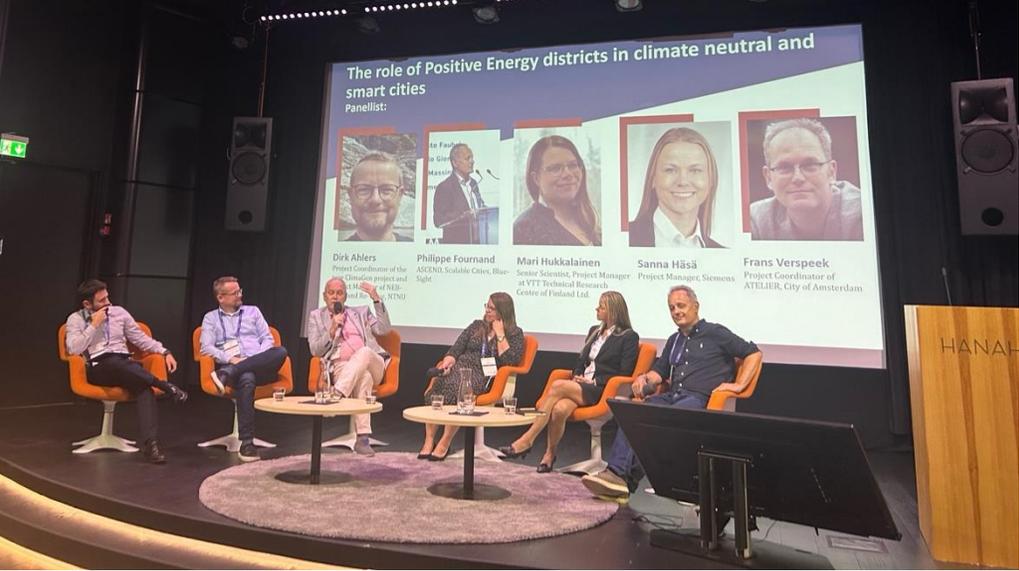


MULTI LEVEL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE









CONCEPT OF INNOVATION ATELIERS

KEY COMPONENTS

MISSION



What sustainable change the Innovation Atelier aims to contribute and how?
E.g., accelerate energy transition

VALUE PROPOSITION



What products or services the Innovation Atelier offers to whom? These can vary per stakeholder group.

STRATEGIC COORDINATION



How is the Innovation Atelier embedded and connected to local and extended decision-making processes in an innovation ecosystem?

OPEN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES



What the Innovation Atelier does and what its resulting outputs and outcomes are?
E.g., workshops

LEARNING & DIFFUSION



How the Innovation Atelier learns from its activities and how these learnings are diffused?

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY



How is the Innovation Atelier organized and what resources it needs?
E.g., core team, Innovation tracks

MONITORING & EVALUATION (M&E)

Use real-time tracking, adaptive learning, and impact assessment to ensure continuous impact.

MISSION

From PED to Energy Transition and Climate Neutral Cities.

All the cities expanded and the scope of their mission focus on PED to fit to the needs of their local ecosystem.

- **Climate Neutral Cities** 6 out of 8 cities have received a Climate City Contract
- Bilbao Innovation Atelier is planning to **expand the geographical** to support the needs of the Basque Region
- Amsterdam **expanded the scope of their mission to energy transition**, connecting with local stakeholders and initiatives connected to grid congestion energy sharing



MISSION

Expand scope of your initial mission to align with the needs of the local ecosystem working on the same domain.



Mission Label under the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission – Amsterdam, Bratislava

VALUE PROPOSITION

All the cities evolved towards a similar value proposition:

- Access to a pool of ATELIER experts
- Network of key stakeholders
- Integrated funding strategies
- Expert sessions
- Capacity building
- Sharing Knowledge and Experiences
- Collaboration across city networks

VALUE PROPOSITION



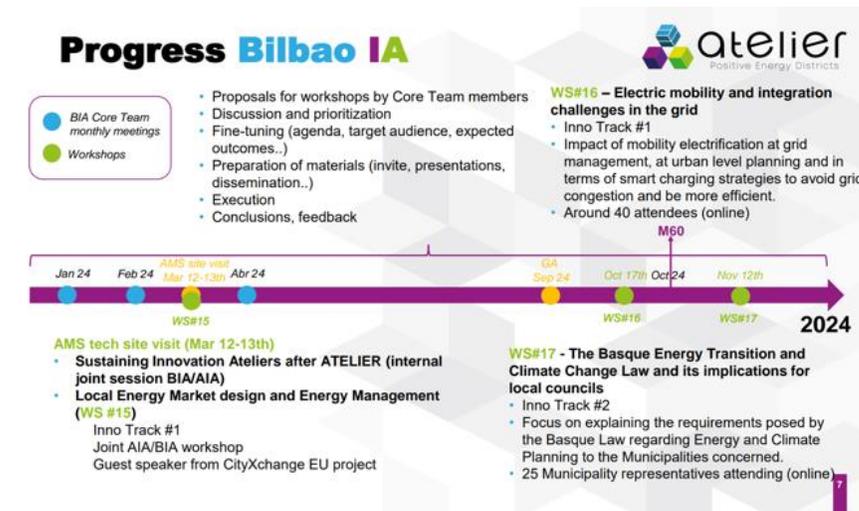
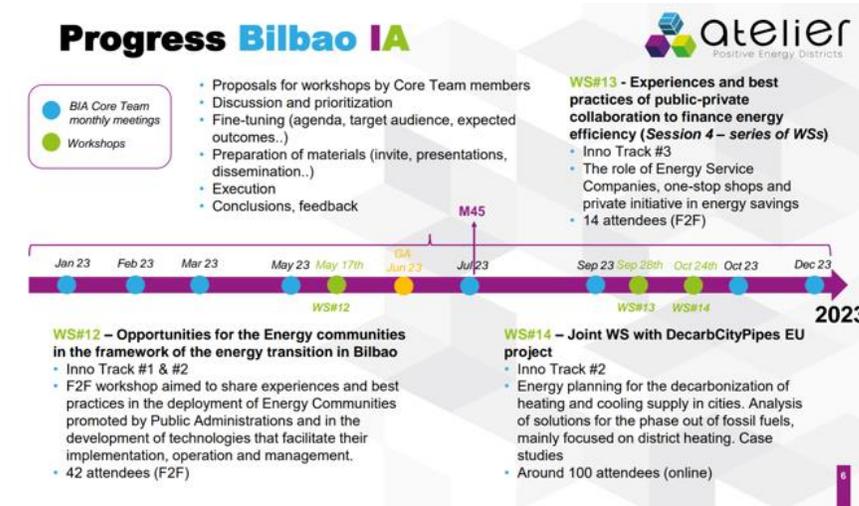
Identify the unique role, activities and added value your IA brings to the local ecosystem working on that domain.



Session on financing multiple investments simultaneously during Amsterdam Network Event Nov 2024

OPEN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES

- Expert sessions
- Webinars and dissemination events
- Workshops and activities
- Cross-city learning

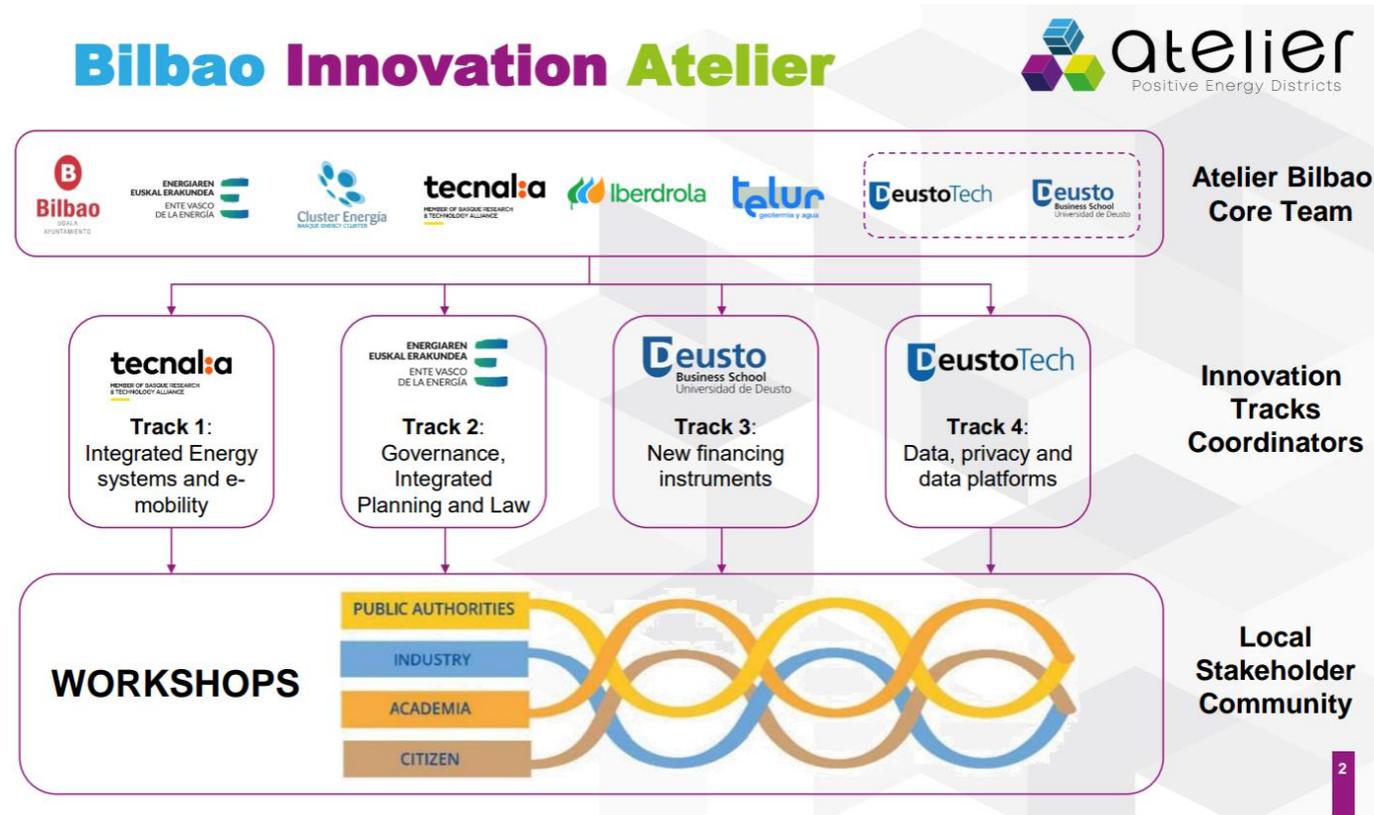


OPEN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES

Frame your activities in a broader domain context to be more attractive to key actors. When possible, use existing platforms and events.



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Establish IA core group that include knowledge institutes, local governments, companies. Define few innovation tracks based on the needs of your IA.

BUDAPEST

Long-term continuation IA in cities



(SUSTAINABILITY) MISSION

Describe how your mission has and will evolve
The ClimatePlatform will continue its work on various topic, while the Atelier team will advance the implementation of PEDs and related technologies in Budapest through projects and studies



VALUE PROPOSITION

What is the unique value (services and products) that your IA will continue offering to the local ecosystem on a given transition?

- Knowledge sharing, consulting
- Wide variety of experts
- Adaptability to topics
- Experience in working together



OPEN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES

What are the type of knowledge activities IA will keep doing after the ATELIER project termination.

1. Expert discussions
2. Workshops
3. Consultations



STRATEGIC COORDINATION

How is your IA (core team) embedded now, and will be embedded in the future?

- **Local ecosystem** (e.g. Government, companies, Knowledge Institutes)
 - **ClimatePlatform**
 - Members are also in 3 governmental branches
- **Cross-city**
 - International collaborations (DUT)
 - National dissemination of knowledge
- **Cross-project**
 - from **Atelier**
 - To **ASCEND**
 - And **DUT - Energy4All**



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KEEP?

Describe what you would like to maintain after the project termination.

- Knowledge sharing between cities
- Possibility to ask PED related questions in close project circle
- ~yearly meeting on advancement in PEDs
- Updates on Amsterdam and Bilbao PED operations: what worked, what didnt, how is it functioning, etc.



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Describe how your core group and innovation tracks will evolve after the project termination. Who is taking up what role?

- **Coordination of the IA**
 - **2 part: ClimatePlatform will continue work on various topics, while the Atelier team will try to advance the implementation of PEDs in Budapest through projects**
- **Core group changes:**
 - Expanding with new partners (**Ascend**)
- **Funding and framing**
 - Project based funding
 - Some municipal funding



LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION

How to your IA will continue learning after the project termination?

- Through continuing working on PED related projects and topics in general.
- Integrating knowledge from various projects into the PED concept (BPCARES, mobility calculation, etc.)



BRATISLAVA

Should the architect trust the engineer? He should and he has to get along with him from the first study to the final design.

MATOSINHOS

Achieving climate neutrality is not just a municipal goal—it is a shared responsibility.

Civic Lab for Climate Transition in Matosinhos

Achieving climate neutrality requires a collective effort beyond municipal actions alone. In Matosinhos, it was estimated that direct municipal interventions could only address up to less than 10% of the decarbonization goal. To bridge this gap, citizen and organizational engagement was crucial. However, there was a lack of structured spaces for communities to co-create solutions and actively participate in climate policies. Recognizing this need, the municipality sought to mobilize citizens, businesses, and local organizations in the transition to a low-carbon future. The challenge was to ensure meaningful public participation in climate action through a structured, inclusive, and innovative approach that would accelerate the 2050 carbon neutrality target to 2030.

Matosinhos launched Portugal's first Civic Lab for Climate Transition, co-developed with the University of Aveiro. This initiative engaged citizens in hands-on climate action through open, collaborative sessions. Participants submitted 56 proposals, leading to 12 pilot projects on mobility, energy, circular economy, and biodiversity, fostering local solutions for a carbon-neutral city.



Municipality of Matosinhos, University of Aveiro, Local community members, NGOs and environmental groups, Businesses and industries

April 2023 - ongoing



Lessons learned:

- One of the key takeaways from the Citizen Lab was realizing that communities are eager to participate in climate action—they have ideas, motivation, and a willingness to engage. However, they often lack the necessary resources, knowledge, or platforms to turn their ideas into reality.
- By providing a structured space for co-creation, access to expertise, and support for pilot initiatives, the Lab bridged this gap. This experience, leveraged by the ATELIER project, reinforced the importance of fostering participatory processes that empower citizens, demonstrating that collective action is a powerful tool for accelerating the transition to climate neutrality.

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Lessons learned:

- The first phase, involving academic cooperation, brought creativity and initial energy efficiency calculations for the PED. However, the students' work didn't fully align with the master plan or feasibility in all contexts.
- In the second phase, architects from the Chamber of Architects finalized the design, ensuring it adhered to land-planning documents and was grounded in the city's reality. Focused group work with architects, urban planners, energy engineers, and technology providers proved successful.



AMSTERDAM

Making a difference starts with determining what is the Unique Selling Point of Innovation Ateliers.

COPENHAGEN

IA MISSION: The mission is to further the members' development and demonstration of sustainable energy solutions in the North Harbour district (Living Lab) and thus contribute to developing and keeping this district one of Europe's leading and most visible city labs for sustainable solutions.

The EnergyLab Nordhavn Association

Creating a forum for innovation leveraging old project partners

Innovation efforts are often confined to the project period and the given funding timelines as many initiatives are individual projects relying on e.g. EU or national funding. In order to tackle the complex societal and technical change that the strive for sustainability requires, more ad hoc and formal exchange and dialogue between all types of stakeholders is required.

The EnergyLab Nordhavn Association was founded in March 2020 and served as a forum for regular meetings to present and discuss latest ideas, findings and news relating to smart city solutions across different types of stakeholders.

The Copenhagen Innovation Atelier started in the collaboration between two EUDP projects in the North Harbour – however, only with part of the collaborating entities. The reason for this choice is that the collaboration was quite successful not only in achieving the project goals but also in branding their activities and district locally, nationally, and internationally. It therefore made sense to try to build on this foundation and develop a structure for collaboration on innovation – a structure with a longer lifespan just a single project period.

We built on the foundation and developed a structure for collaboration on innovation – a structure with a longer lifespan just a single project period. The collaboration between the two projects proved quite successful not only in achieving the project



The Innovation Atelier kick-off workshop in 2020

Lessons learned:

- Setting up an IA as an organizational structure for regular informal meetings helps create trust and opportunity to innovate. However, the forum loses relevance in people's busy work lives if it does not lead to specific collaborations, activities or projects.
- Citizen engagement in such an Innovation Atelier could be stronger in an existing built-up area together with inhabitants.
- Even a minimal secretariat function helps to avoid burdening members with administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on the content of discussions instead.



Copenhagen Municipality Climate Secretariat, CPH City & Port, HOFOR Greater Copenhagen Utility, Solution developers, Technical University of Denmark, Private citizens

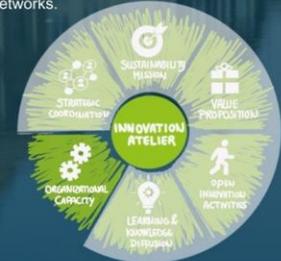
March 2020 - February 2023



Signing the collaboration agreement

Lessons learned:

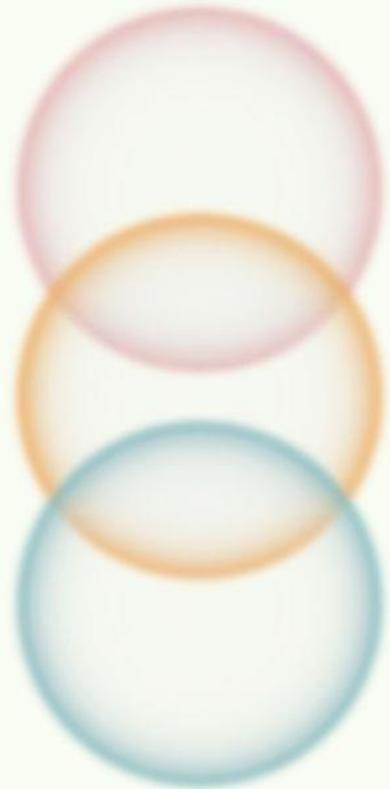
- A shared mission, vision and strategy definition is the foundation for collaboration.
- Take time to bring all relevant stakeholders together in the formation process.
- Have an external chair guide the formation process to ask tough questions, challenge ideas, and maintain objectivity.
- Focus on customers' pains, the offered products/services, and value creation through unique selling points and assets.
- Observe and learn from others' examples and experiences.
- Be open to learning and collaborating with successful existing initiatives and networks.



MAKING VALUE CO-CREATION LAST IN URBAN ECOSYSTEMS

Evaluation

Sterre Versluijs-de Jager
PhD Candidate TU Delft



DESIGN METHODOLOGIES

STRONG & CONTINUOUS NETWORKS

OWNERSHIP & LEGACY

VALUE CO-CREATION IN PROJECTS TACKLING URBAN SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

- Cities face **complex societal challenges** (e.g. climate, energy, mobility, inclusion), and can simultaneously be seen as key arenas for addressing these challenges (Baccarne et al., 2014; Van Kempen et al., 2025)
- These challenges **exceed the capacity of single organisations** (Ferraro et al., 2015)
- Increasingly addressed through interorganisational collaboration in projects (Sydow et al., 2016; Martinsuo & Ahola, 2022)
- Public, private, research, and civic actors
- Many interorganisational projects now explicitly **aim to co-create value** (e.g. social or ecological value, next to economic value) in the urban sphere.



Value co-creation (VCC) is a **collaborative process** in which multiple actors directly and continuously **interact** with each other, integrating resources, knowledge, and skills to **jointly develop mutually satisfactory value over time**, in which each actor holds a similar contribution to the creation of that value.

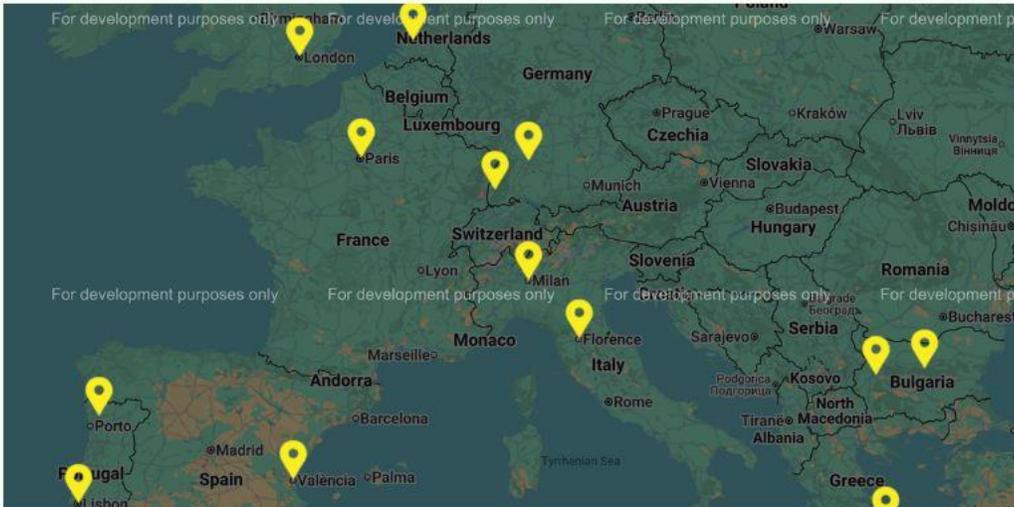
(Chih et al., 2019; Galvagno & Dalli, 2014; Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2013; Toukola et al., 2023; Wetter-Edman et al., 2014).



DESIGN METHODOLOGIES

100 VALUE-DRIVEN PROJECTS

Researching working examples of design enabled innovation in urban ecosystems.



Distributed across Europe

Value creation for urban transformations through design-enabled innovation: stimulate the generative potential of urban environments in the highest possible number of European Cities.

The focus was on learning to apply design tools and methods, since this offers a systematic approach to conceive user-driven innovations. Design-enabled innovation was strengthened through financial support for flagship initiatives and broad capacity building across stakeholder groups, helping connect research, policy, and practice while contributing in making Europe a global leader in the domain of value co-creation.

- Mulder, I. & Magni, A. (2022). A collaborative learning infrastructure to build capacity for urban transformations. *Interaction Design & Architecture(s)*, N. 52, Spring 2022. pp. 119 – 140. <https://doi.org/10.55612/s-5002-052-007>

Recap/evaluation

STRONG & CONTINUOUS NETWORKS

RELATIONAL CONTINUITY IN NETWORK (BUILDING)

- Continuation of value co-creation often depends on whether **at least several actors in and across organizations remain connected** into follow-up initiatives, in other words on preserving relational continuity across projects.
- **Strong (pre-)existing networks** in some cities lowered barriers for collaboration previously and is expected to make continuation easier after formal project closure, whereas in other cities this is currently a bigger challenge to overcome.
- Repeated collaboration with familiar actors **created trust, shared language, and faster alignment around complex urban themes in the local ecosystem**. Also in connection to citizen engagement, although this was stated to be receiving more attention in the future.

Embedding value co-creation at the European level

Participants:	Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants stressed that what counts as value co-creation differed strongly across local contexts when developing Positive Energy Districts. • Values attached to collaboration were shaped by cultural, political, social, and technological priorities within “100km” • This made direct transfer between cities difficult and local dependencies and relevant values were not always immediately visible, YET... <p><i>“Development was very local, and it was not easy to transfer knowledge between the cities. Probably there are many many more things that could be of help to the Lighthouse cities learning more from the Fellow Cities. I feel it was more an impression than collaboration.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants suggested that more continuous training, transfer, and reflection sessions could have strengthened shared learning from other cities earlier and more regularly. • Sharing across cities and regions about how we are planning to embed value co-creation, at any point in the process bridging to the future (early on, regularly again, and especially in the final phase), helps articulation and action (since embedding of VCC is an often invisible practice)

OWNERSHIP & LEGACY

INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY THROUGH STRONGER OWNERSHIP

- A recurring challenge was **unclear ownership of who carries value co-creation forward** inside e.g. the municipality (i.e. an ecosystem layer).
- Actors often shared similar ambitions, but did not always know who was responsible, who decided, or where relevant internal connections existed.
- This makes **embedding of value co-creation sometimes highly dependent on individual initiative and commitment** rather than **stable organizational arrangements**.
 - Even when collaboration was strong externally, embedding remains fragile without wider internal alignment.
- Without internal continuity, promising collaborative processes can easily disappear even despite broad organizational motivation.

KEEPING LEGACY IS NOT AN AUTOMATED PROCESS



Last interviews and ethnography for analysis of final phase now, as well as following up with projects next-up to study embedding VCC of ATELIER longitudinally in one urban ecosystem (Amsterdam)



Writing of publications and development of co-designed platform



Give back to practice (you!) as final ambition of the PhD

PANEL MEMBERS



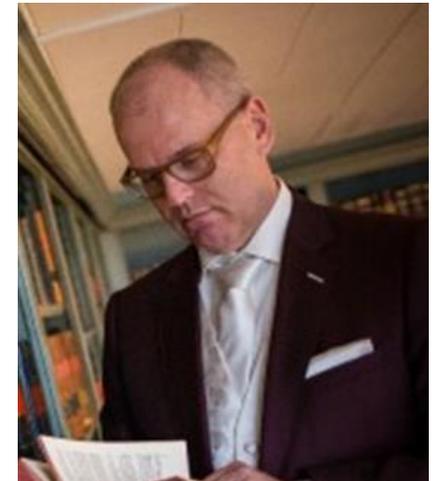
Almos Papp
CITY OF BUDAPEST



Begoña Molinete
BASQUE ENERGY CLUSTER -
BILBAO



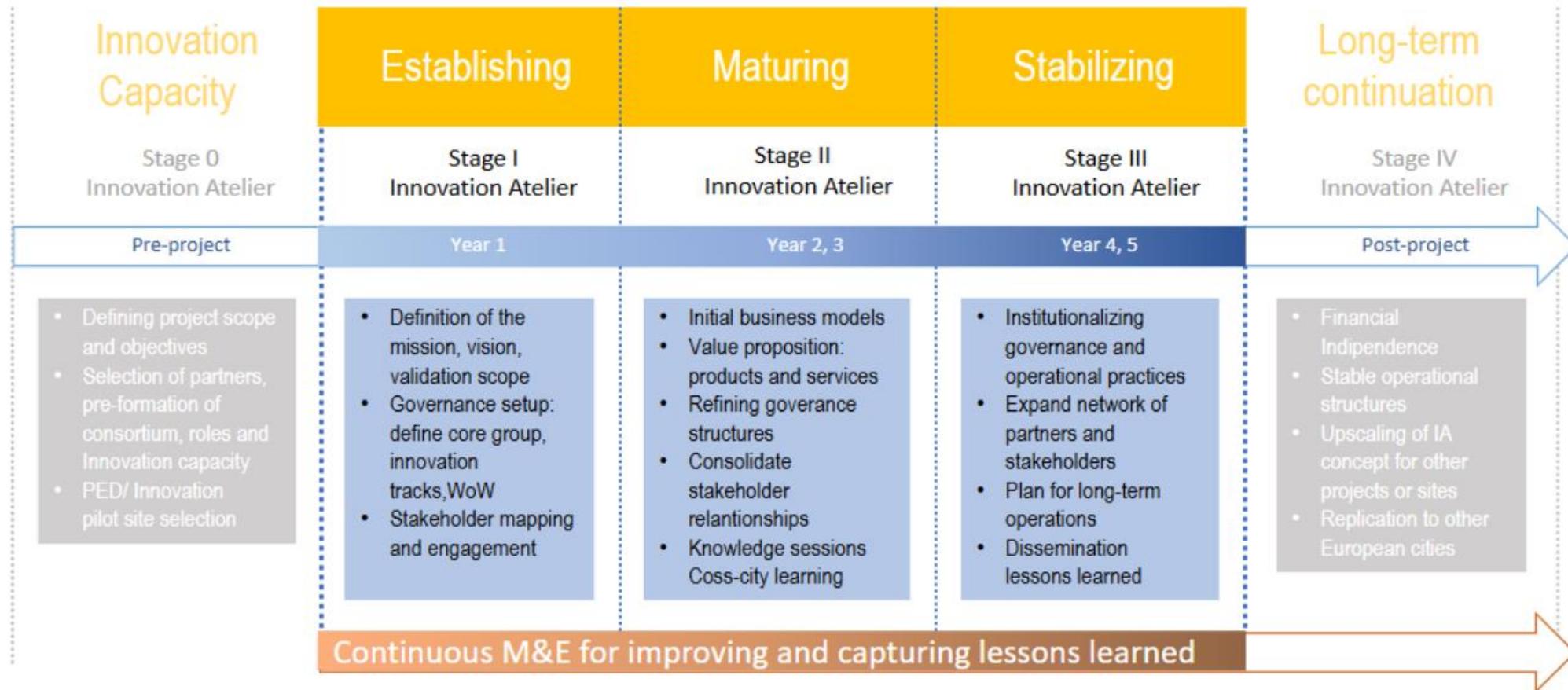
Kirsten Dyhr-Mikkelsen
- CITY OF COPENHAGEN



Frans Verspeek
City of Amsterdam

INNOVATION ATELIER

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION





ESTABLISHMENT
COPENHAGEN

ESTABLISHMENT

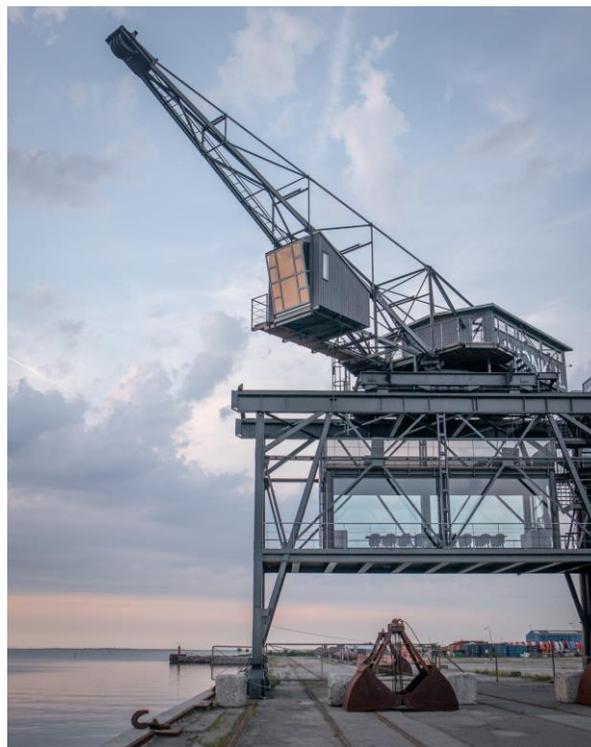
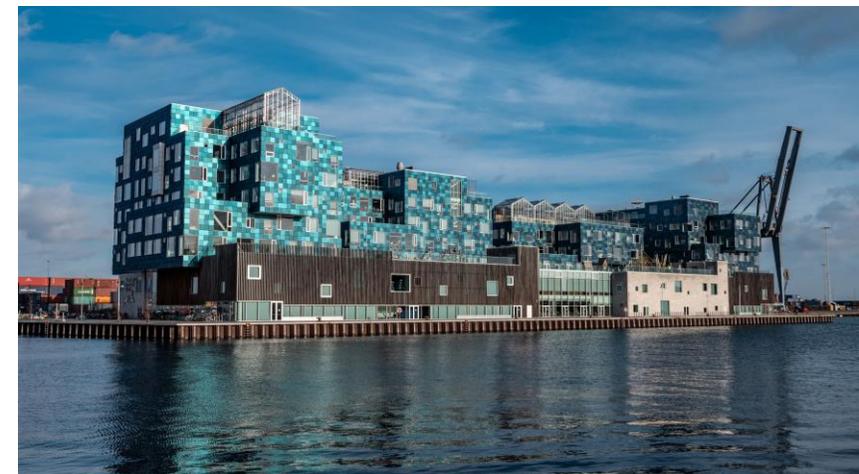
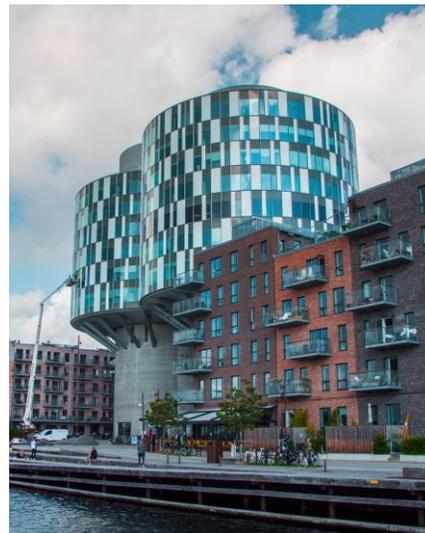
COPENHAGEN

Opportunistic

Joint value creation as ambition

Clear framework for collaboration

Agreed ownership





MATURATION BUDAPEST

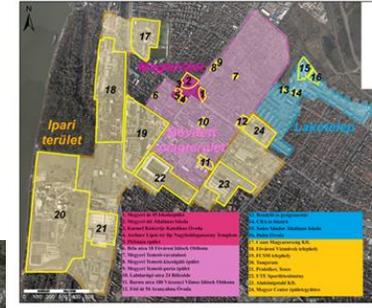
MATURATION

BUDAPEST



- IA core team, a horizontal workforce
- Knowledge exchange, stakeholder involvement
- Assigning new PED locations – upscaling, replication

- ASCEND
- ENERGY4ALL
- SOLAR4CE
- POSITIVE CITIES
- RÁKOSRENDEZŐ
- Energy transition of city owned companies
- Future potential opportunities via 100 CCC



- Energy community trainings to core team



STABILIZING AMSTERDAM



STABILIZING

AMSTERDAM

- Continue showing added value
- Explore interested partners
- (to continue and extend network)

- Signed initial co-operation agreement
 - Joint value creation as ambition
 - Clear framework for collaboration
 - Agreed ownership

- However, situation became fluid:
- Network organization dismantled
- Re-organisation at Municipality
- New platform approached
- Situation at present uncertain



CONTINUATION

BILBAO



CONTINUATION

BILBAO

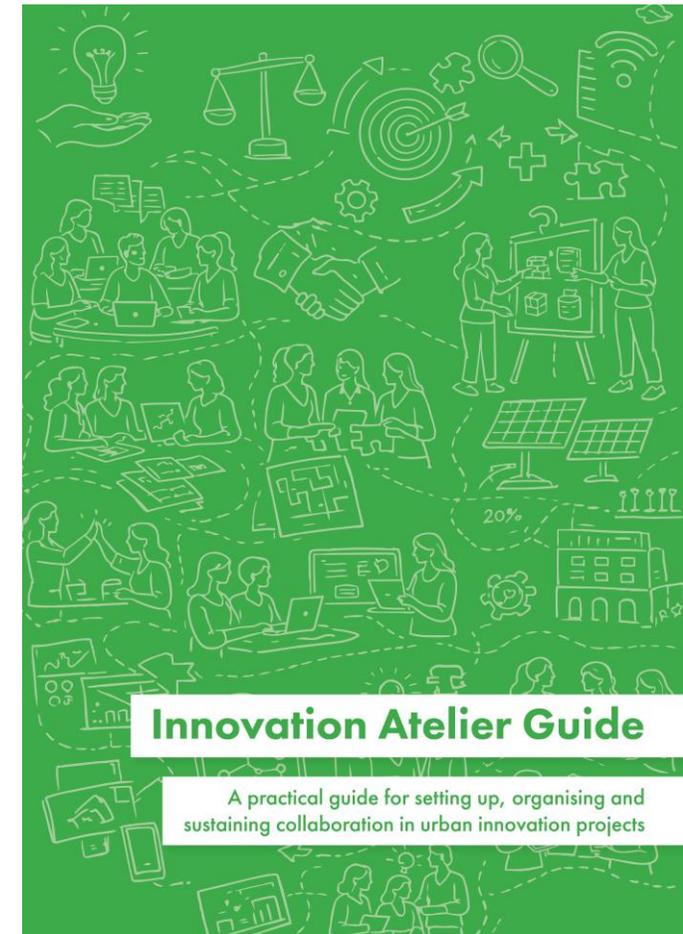
Bilbao Innovation Atelier fits naturally as a "Working Group" into BASQUENERGY Cluster activity and organisational structure as a "Cluster Association" targeted to boost the competitiveness of the Basque energy sector through collaboration



Why this guide was developed

Why not just use the deliverables?

EU project deliverables → A practical guide for organising collaboration



Five Phases, six Building Blocks

Five phases

- *Time*
- Preconditions → Establishing → Maturing → Stabilising → Continuation

Building blocks

- *Quality*
- Vision, Value, Coordination, Activities, Learning, Capacity



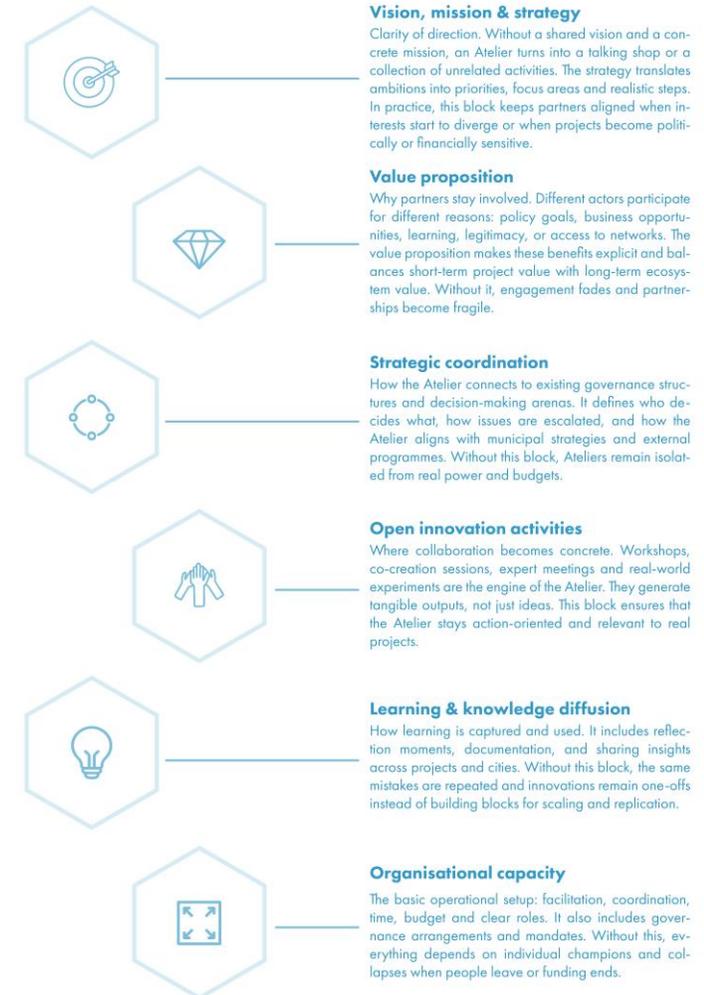
Five Phases, six Building Blocks

Five phases

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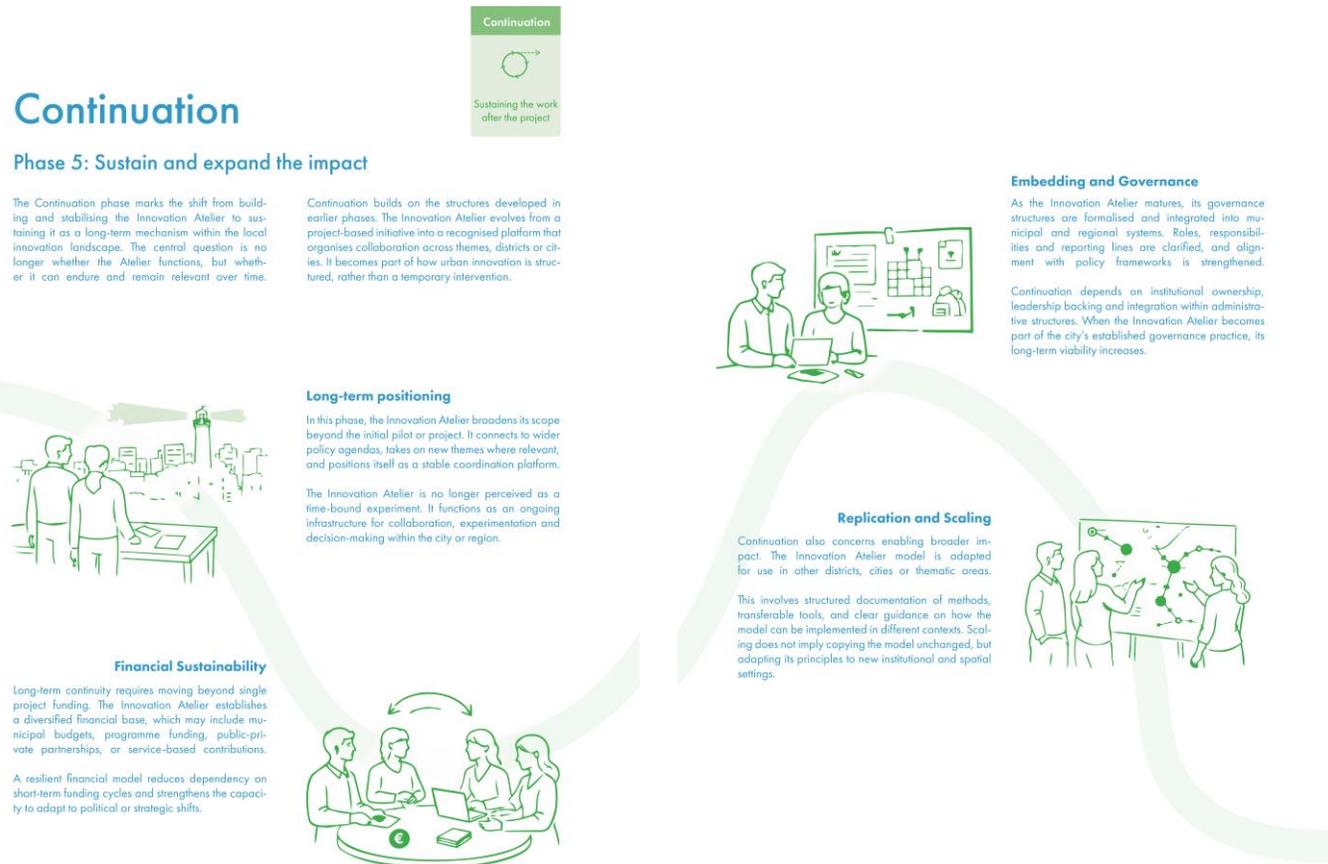
- *Quality*
- Vision, Value, Coordination, Activities, Learning, Capacity



What practitioners can do with it

From temporary projects to institutionalised collaboration

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 864374



Thank you!

