International Building Exhibitions (IBAs) demonstrate what can be achieved with social, environmental and built projects.

More than 100 years ago, the first IBA showcased 20th-century German building expertise. Today’s IBAs have evolved to explore and experiment with social cohesion and local empowerment through small interventions and large strategic regional projects to promote good building culture and innovative regional development, becoming internationally recognised.

In search of a new vision for the province, IBA Thüringen (2013 – 2023) has chosen StadtLand as its central theme.

A combination of the German words städtisch and ländlich, meaning urban and rural respectively, StadtLand aims to highlight the continuous dynamic between the small-scale towns and villages that make up the Free State of Thuringia.

By choosing this theme, IBA Thüringen creates a framework in which the people behind the selected projects partake in developing and promoting a new quality of relationship between town and country. StadtLand thus becomes a vision of a collective mode of living and an agent of social change. Three key areas of action have been established to achieve this vision: BUILD a modern province, DEVELOP collective responsibility, and REUSE vacant properties.

Following an initial lobbying effort from the Thuringian Chamber of Architects and other regional institutions, such as the Bauhaus University in Weimar, as well as formal ideation workshops and feasibility studies, IBA Thüringen GmbH was founded by the Free State of Thuringia in 2012.
IBA Thüringen

Employing Baukultur to lead a comprehensive territorial development

Guiding Principles
- Build
- Develop
- Reuse

Realised Visions
- Thuringia, 2000 Churches
- Apolda, Timber Prototype
- Nordhausen, Climate Culture
- Weimar, The 100
- Schwalbach, Rottenbach Railway Station

Social Impact
- Community Cooperation
- Flexibility
- Strengthen Regional Character
- Facilitate
- Link to Sources of Funding
- Inform and educate about “bottom-up” urban development
- Promote regional wood industry
- New grocery store
- Improve rural-urban mobility
- Renewed facilities for modern education
- Flexible, affordable, resource-efficient housing

Process
- Exchange of Ideas
- Spatial Quality
- Empowerment
- Workshop
- Support at Every Stage
- Ideas Incubator
- Inspiration
- Exhibition
- Social / Cultural Cohesion
- Imagination
- Citizens Support
- New Quality of Life
- Social Inclusion
- Platform

IBA Thüringen
An incubator for radical, experimental, inspiring ideas

Community of Thuringia Aspirations
- Civil Society
- Educational Institutions
- Cultural and Religious Institutions
- Local Businesses
- State and Local Authorities

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**Proposed Framework for Good Urban Design Governance: D-A-D**

Discourse, Appraisal, Dissemination: The Urban Design Governance of IBA Thüringen

Tasked with visualising good urban design governance through the lens of IBA Thüringen, we have arrived at a basic framework that aims to illustrate the incremental and cumulative process of decision-making and stakeholder relations: D-A-D.

With our contribution, D-A-D, we argue that urban design governance is the constant process of discussing, appraising, and disseminating (D-A-D). When in action, D-A-D is non-linear and non-delineated. Some processes exist somewhere in between appraisal and dissemination (such as the IBA reports), or between discussion or appraisal (such as the Fachbeirat).

The D-A-D framework is also an illustration of what the IBA Thüringen team calls ‘research in discovery’, or simply, incrementalism. At the end of this incremental and cumulative process is an outcome: a completed project; a new building culture; a new participatory design framework; etc. Crucially, the process of experimentation, as illustrated by the D-A-D framework is itself an outcome.

Good governance is the accumulation of different decisions and stakeholders that together comprise a) a good process and b) a good outcome. That's the definition according to Frédéric J. Saliez, Programme Officer at UN-Habitat Office for Europe and European Institutions and Urban Maestro Project Co-ordinator.
International Building Exhibitions (IBAs) were initially conceived as events to showcase architectural achievements. The concept has evolved significantly over the years, and today IBAs are explorative projects that promote an integrated approach to urban and regional development. Through an experimentation-like process, they promote ideas and projects that regard aesthetic and technological aspects as well as complex social, economic and ecological issues in order to effect change.

Each IBA exhibition presents a common theme and narrative in line with the specific needs and the vision of the city/region. Projects are proposed by local stakeholders and selected by IBA’s curatorial team. In this way, IBA acts as both a facilitator and an incubator, providing a space for discussion around new ideas; a cross-pollinator of those ideas; and a platform to highlight selected projects. Flexible appraisal processes and broadly defined themes encourage the submission of innovative projects, including both place-based architectural interventions as well as novel social and cultural programming proposals. IBA’s discussion-based approach encourages discourse between local communities and politicians on the socio-cultural and built implication of projects. This is significantly related to the concept of ‘Baukultur’, a German term that embraces every human activity that changes the built environment, from detailed craftsmanship to the planning and execution of infrastructure projects, and which highlights the value of cultural heritage assets as well as innovative building techniques.

IBA is framed as a non-formal instrument that, unlike common formal urban processes, can react with flexibility and promptness, and is less constrained by the rigidities of ordinary urban planning frameworks. This provides a window of opportunity for innovation and inspiration while enhancing horizontal and vertical cooperation through shared work on projects. As part of the Urban Maestro Masterclass, we developed the D-A-D Framework, a didactic tool to represent IBA’s core process. This framework is replicable and can be effectively deployed in different geographic and cultural contexts, regardless of the existing formal structures for territorial development. Examples of its replicability across different contexts exist already (e.g. IBA Ethiopia and IBA Vienna).

The IBA process is a really powerful tool to test innovative ideas for the future of urban life, as well as to engage and give voice to local communities about their built, social and political environment. Reproducing such process in different places has the potential to empower communities to draw and implement innovative approaches for a renewed, integrated vision of their city/region.