Urban Maestro

StadtLand
Co-creating a new urban-rural relationship

IBA Thüringen

UN@HABITAT
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

BOUWMEESTER MAITRE ARCHITECTE

@UCL

Phase 1 IBAs 1900 – 1957
Phase 2 IBAs 1980 – 1987
Phase 3 IBAs 2000 –

IBA
since 1900

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.
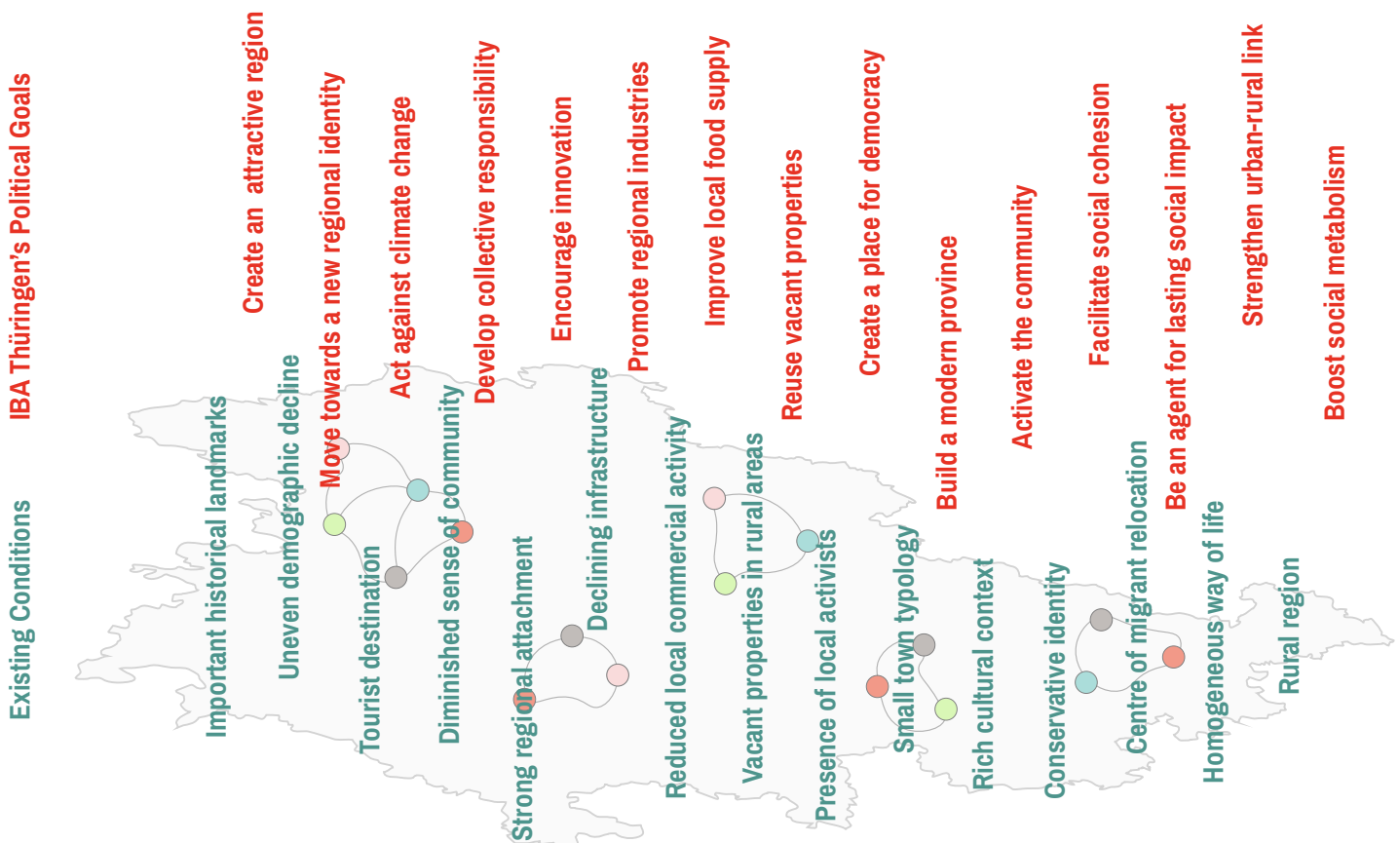
StadtLand
Co-creating a new urban-rural relationship

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.
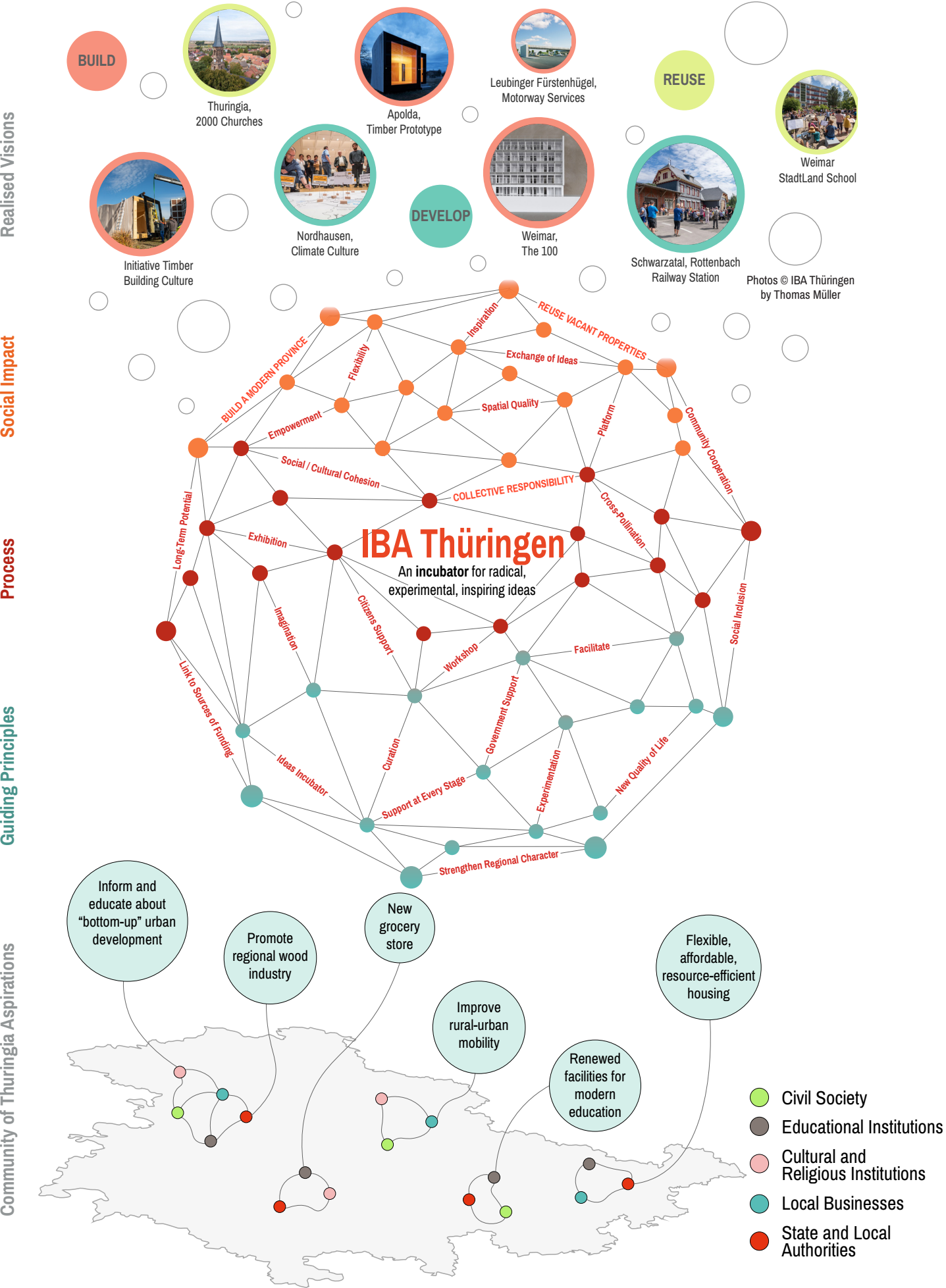
By choosing this theme, IBA Thüringen creates a framework in which the people behind the selected projects partake in developing and promoting a new quality of relationship between town and country. StadtLand thus becomes a vision of a collective mode of living and an agent of social change. Three key 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's Political Goals

Create an attractive region
Move towards a new regional identity
Act against climate change
Develop collective responsibility
Encourage innovation
Promote regional industries
Improve local food supply
Reuse vacant properties
Create a place for democracy
Build a modern province
Activate the community
Facilitate social cohesion
Be an agent for lasting social impact
Strengthen urban-rural link
Boost social metabolism

Existing Conditions

Important historical landmarks
Uneven demographic decline
Tourist destination
Diminished sense of community
Strong regional attachment
Declining infrastructure
Reduced local commercial activity
Vacant properties in rural areas
Presence of local activists
Small town typology
Rich cultural context
Conservative identity
Centre of migrant relocation
Homogeneous way of life
Rural region

IBA Thüringen

Employing Baukultur to lead a comprehensive territorial development

Realised Visions

BUILD

Thuringia,
2000 Churches

Apolda,
Timber Prototype

Leubinger Fürstenhügel,
Motorway Services

REUSE

Weimar
StadtLand School

Initiative Timber
Building Culture

Nordhausen,
Climate Culture

DEVELOP

Weimar,
The 100

Schwarzatal, Rottenbach
Railway Station

Photos © IBA Thüringen
by Thomas Müller

Social Impact

Inspiration

REUSE VACANT PROPERTIES

BUILD A MODERN PROVINCE

Flexibility

Exchange of Ideas

Empowerment

Spatial Quality

Community Cooperation

Social / Cultural Cohesion

Platform

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Cross-Pollination

Process

Long-Term Potential

Exhibition

IBA Thüringen

An **incubator** for radical,
experimental, inspiring ideas

Social Inclusion

Imagination

Citizens Support

Workshop

Facilitate

Guiding Principles

Link to Sources of Funding

Ideas Incubator

Curation

Government Support

Experimentation

New Quality of Life

Support at Every Stage

Strengthen Regional Character

Community of Thuringia Aspirations

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

- ● Civil Society
- ● Educational Institutions
- ● Cultural and Religious Institutions
- ● Local Businesses
- ● State and Local Authorities

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

Setting standards for good urban design governance

e.g. via innovative and inclusive committees and approval forums

Discourse + Approval

e.g. via boards including external advisors

Appraisal + Dissemination

e.g. via public reviews and external contributions

Appraisal

Discourse

Good Urban Design Governance
=
A Good Process
+
A Good Outcome

Dissemination

internal processes

public engagement

Discussing good urban design governance

e.g. via open and inclusive discussions about how to co-operate and plan

Spreading the word about good urban design governance

e.g. via publications such as IBA reports

Discourse + Dissemination

e.g. via exhibitions

Discourse, Appraisal, Dissemination: The Urban Design Governance of IBA Thüringen
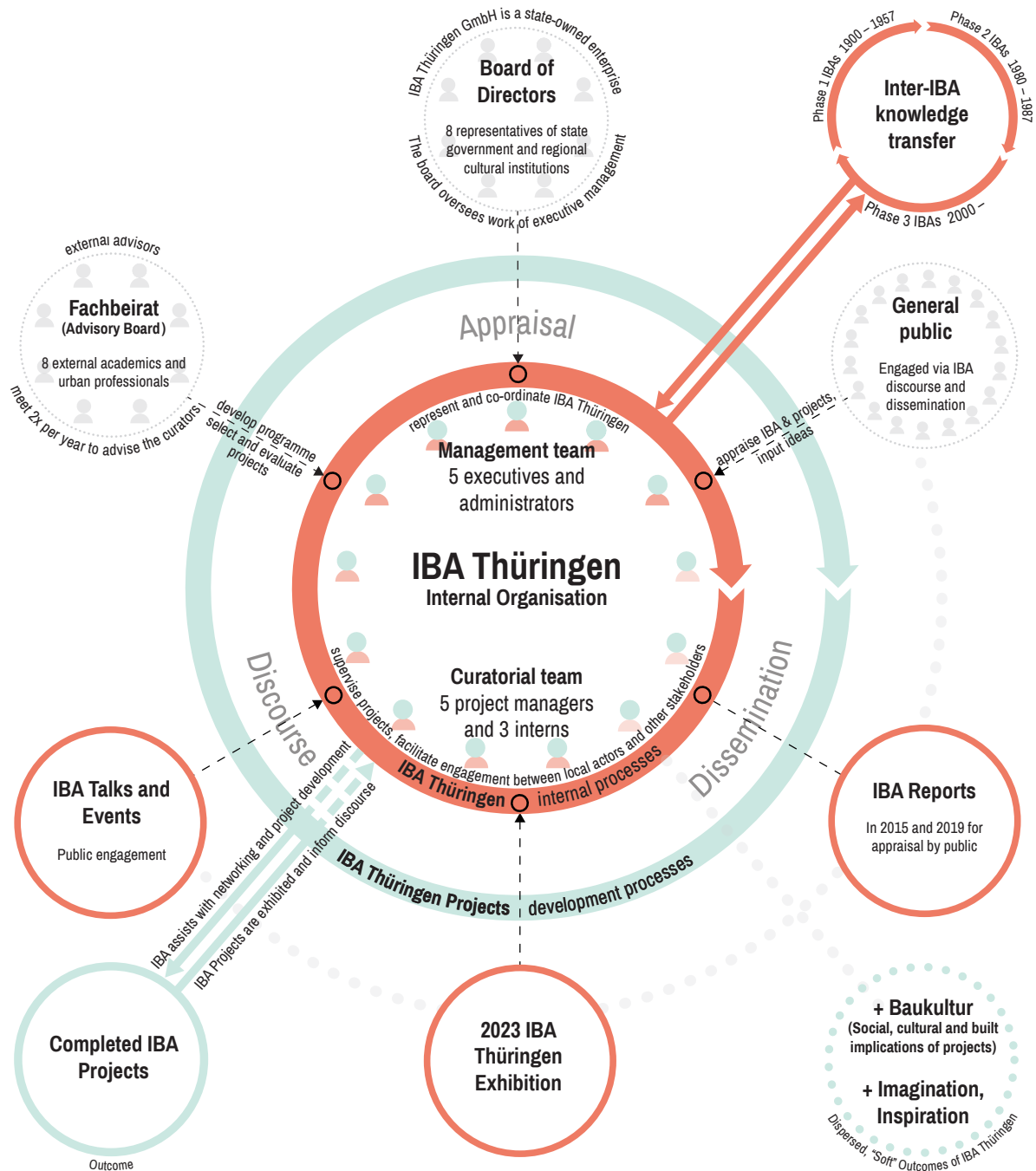
Tasked with visualising good urban design governance through the lens of IBA Thüringen, we have arrived at a basic framework that aims to illustrate the incremental and cumulative process of decision-making and stakeholder relations: D-A-D.
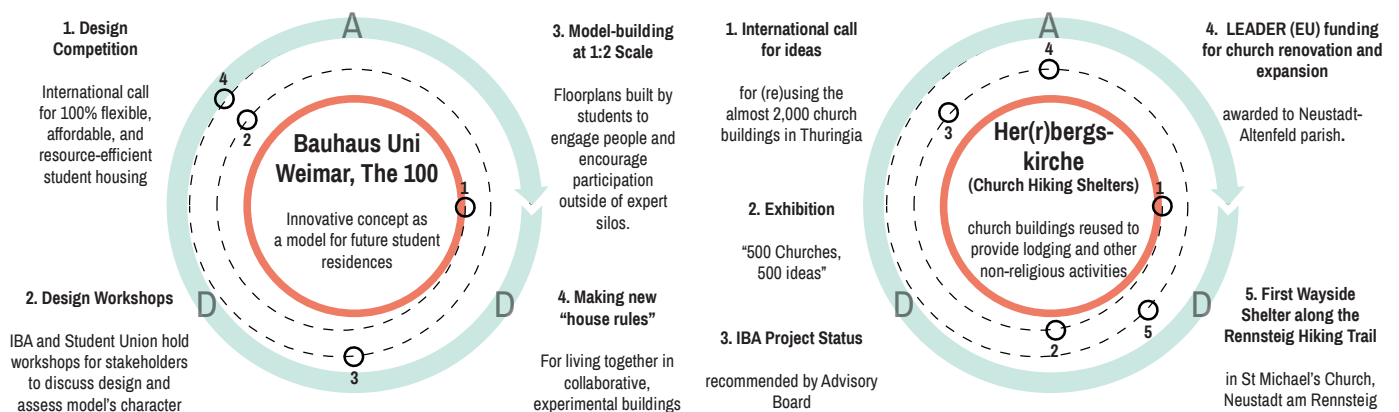
With our contribution, D-A-D, we argue that urban design governance is the constant process of discussing, appraising, and disseminating (D-A-D). When in action, D-A-D is non-linear and non-delineated. Some processes exist somewhere in between appraisal and dissemination (such as the IBA reports), or 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.

Urban Maestro

The D-A-D of IBA Thüringen

Board of Directors

IBA Thüringen GmbH is a state-owned enterprise

8 representatives of state government and regional cultural institutions

The board oversees work of executive management

Inter-IBA knowledge transfer

Phase 1 IBAs 1900 – 1957
Phase 2 IBAs 1980 – 1987
Phase 3 IBAs 2000 –

Fachbeirat (Advisory Board)

external advisors

8 external academics and urban professionals

meet 2x per year to advise the curators

develop programme, select and evaluate projects

Appraisal

General public

Engaged via IBA discourse and dissemination

represent and co-ordinate IBA Thüringen

appraise IBA & projects, input ideas

Management team
5 executives and administrators

IBA Thüringen
Internal Organisation

Curatorial team
5 project managers and 3 interns

supervise projects, facilitate engagement between local actors and other stakeholders

Discourse

Dissemination

IBA Thüringen internal processes

IBA Talks and Events

Public engagement

IBA Reports

In 2015 and 2019 for appraisal by public

IBA Thüringen Projects development processes

IBA assists with networking and project development

IBA Projects are exhibited and inform discourse

Completed IBA Projects

Outcome

2023 IBA Thüringen Exhibition

+ Baukultur
(Social, cultural and built implications of projects)

+ Imagination, Inspiration

Dispersed, "Soft" Outcomes of IBA Thüringen

D-A-D at Project Level

1. Design Competition

International call for 100% flexible, affordable, and resource-efficient student housing

A

Bauhaus Uni Weimar, The 100

Innovative concept as a model for future student residences

D   D

2. Design Workshops

IBA and Student Union hold workshops for stakeholders to discuss design and assess model's character

3. Model-building at 1:2 Scale

Floorplans built by students to engage people and encourage participation outside of expert silos.

4. Making new "house rules"

For living together in collaborative, experimental buildings

1. International call for ideas

for (re)using the almost 2,000 church buildings in Thuringia

2. Exhibition

"500 Churches, 500 ideas"

3. IBA Project Status

recommended by Advisory Board

A

Her(r)bergs-kirche (Church Hiking Shelters)

church buildings reused to provide lodging and other non-religious activities

D   D

4. LEADER (EU) funding for church renovation and expansion

awarded to Neustadt-Altenfeld parish.

5. First Wayside Shelter along the Rennsteig Hiking Trail

in St Michael's Church, Neustadt am Rennsteig

Scalability and Conclusions

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.

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