Urban Maestro

New governance strategies for Urban Design

Panorama Lokaal

urban design competition on urban-rural fringe visions (NL)

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UN-Habitat
United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement n° 831704
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1. SUMMARY

Panorama Lokaal was launched in 2019 by the Dutch Board of Government Advisors together with other partners. Inspired by the ‘Panorama Nederland’ campaign, this initiative consisted of a two-phase design competition of ideas focused on residential neighbourhoods lying on the outskirts of Dutch cities in order to enable their renovation and adaption to current challenges in places of livelihood. In its first phase, local stakeholders were invited to form a coalition and register a location on the Panorama Lokaal website, from which a jury selected seven as the competition sites. For each site, the seven coalitions formulated a design assignment aimed at innovation and framing local constraints, the needs of the communities, etc. In its second phase, an open call was launched for design teams to present a multidisciplinary team, with a portfolio and a motivation letter for one or more locations. For each site, three teams were selected to develop a design proposal through a collaborative process. Finally, a jury selected a winner for each site and the visionary proposals were presented and discussed in a symposium.

2. CONTEXT AND ADMINISTRATION

In terms of administrative structure, the Dutch public administration is composed of four tiers: the central government, the provinces, the municipalities and the local water authorities.1 The central government is comprised of 12 ministries responsible for policy-making and for drafting and adopting legislation, subject to parliamentary enquiry. At the sub-national level, the Netherlands is divided into 12 provinces, 21 water authorities, and 355 municipalities.2 According to Meer (2018, p. 763), despite this clear structure, the Dutch administration is a “compound system of multi-level governance as many task areas are shared by various governments with different responsibilities according to scale of service delivery.”3 This is the case of spatial planning and urban design, the public policy competences of which are shared both by the local and national administrations (Tosics et al., 2010, p. 199), as well as by the provinces which also have spatial development responsibilities, including water and environmental management, energy, and the climate, among other areas (Meer, 2018).

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1 The Netherlands has been a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with a decentralized unitary state since the middle of the 19th century. For more info: https://www.government.nl/topics/constitution (accessed on 08/06/2020)
2 https://www.government.nl/topics/public-administration, (accessed on 08/06/2020)
3 Some of the exceptions are defence, foreign affairs, and support for the judicial system, public prosecution and prison system which are each a part of the central government (Ibidem).
2.1. National policy

With a long tradition in land-use planning and urban design, the Netherlands was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a national policy on architecture, entitled 'Space for Architecture' (Ruimte voor Architectuur), in 1991 (Cousins, 2009, p. 9). With a non-legislative nature, the Dutch policy aimed to promote good practices among public authorities and to create a favourable climate for architecture (Dings, 2009, p. 133). The first policy objective intended to set an example for society at large and development actors in particular by developing high quality public buildings and projects (The Netherlands, 1991, p. 13), as the second policy objective was intended to improve the architectural climate and promote a culture of design, for which a set of architectural institutions and a wide range of measures were put in place (Bento, 2017).

As with most innovations, this pioneering Dutch policy did not start from scratch. Ten years prior, a bottom-up movement of local initiatives started to develop, giving impetus to an overall improvement of the architectural climate in the Netherlands (Ibidem). This architectural grassroots movement that occurred throughout the 1980s was also a reflection of the dissatisfaction with the quality of buildings and urban spaces developed in the preceding decades. A huge amount of low-quality housing had been developed during the 1970s, influenced by post-war housing models in which design was not valued by the market (Figueiredo, 2010). This discontent reinforced the notion that design quality needed to be promoted, both socially and in market terms. Another important factor was the restructuring of the national cultural policy at the end of the 1980s, which led the then-Minister of Culture and Minister of Housing, Planning and Environment to work together on a joint architectural policy, ultimately adopted in 1991.5

Since then, the Dutch government continues to renew its architectural policy every four years in order to approve its multi-year policy budget, introduce new themes and update its action plan. Alongside the different versions, several partners have come on board, with the last one adopted in 2017 having involved four ministries, and entitled "Working Together on the Strength of Design. Action Agenda for Spatial Design 2017–2020."6

5 In 1989, Hedy d’Ancona (Minister of Culture) and J.G.M. Alders (Minister of Housing, Planning and Environment) followed up on the idea of their predecessors by developing a joint architectural policy that could politically frame “The Netherlands Architecture Institute” (NAi) and bring building and cultural policy closer together through the establishment of a policy platform shared between the two ministries.
6 For more info see: https://www.samenwerkenaonwerpkracht.nl/en/index.html
Throughout the last 30 years, the scope of the architectural policy has been expanding. Although the first policy (1991) was mainly focused on the concept of “architectural quality,” in its second policy version (1996) the notion of ‘spatial design’ was introduced, thereby broadening concerns about design quality to the city and regional scales by embracing the idea of ‘spatial quality,’ in doing so cross-cutting other disciplinary fields, such as urban development, physical planning, landscape architecture and infrastructural design (The Netherlands 1996, p. 8). This broadening has continued until today and, more recently, the concept of “environmental quality” was introduced in the new Environmental and Planning Act, which intends to achieve and maintain good spatial and environment quality, including aspects like ‘cultural heritage, architectonic quality, urban quality, landscape quality and nature quality’ (Assen & Campen, 2020).

2.2. Board of Government Advisors

The Chief Government Architect plays an important role in the development of the national policy on architecture and spatial design in the Netherlands, as their mission is to promote the design quality of public buildings across governmental departments and to stimulate a culture of design. As advisor to the entire government, the Chief Government Architect provides the various ministries with ‘solicited and unsolicited advice on matters of policy and strategic developments on architecture, urban and rural planning, infrastructure, landscape and ensuring that spatial design is properly covered in legislation and in education’ (The Netherlands, 2006). Among other tasks, they actively contribute to the definition and monitoring of the architecture and spatial design policy, for example by commissioning regular assessment studies on policy outcomes and impacts, promoting debates on specific themes, etc. In addition, the Chief Government Architect is officially the design advisor for the Central Government Real Estate Agency on the architecture and urban surroundings of state-owned property.

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7 The Dutch Fourth Memorandum on Spatial Planning (1988) included for the first time the broader concept of ‘spatial quality,’ which was widely used in the development of residential areas and industrial estates (Dings, 2009).
8 Although its interpretation is left to the sub-national levels, the notion of good spatial and environmental quality is situated as one of the three social objectives of the new Environmental and Planning Act.
9 This position has existed within the Dutch public administration since the beginning of the 19th century (The Netherlands, 2006).
10 Since the 1960s, the Chief Government Architect’s mission has shifted from producing designs to advising the central government and the government buildings agency on public projects alongside offering guidance on architectural policy (The Netherlands, 2006).
11 Initially, CRa was composed of four policy advisors: the Chief Government Architect, and the Government Advisors on Landscape, Infrastructure, and Cultural Heritage. In 2012, the mission and composition of the CRa was revised by reducing its number of advisors to three. https://english.rijksvastgoedbedrijf.nl/about-us/government-architect
Due to the high number of requests, since 2005 the Chief Government Architect has been assisted by two additional government advisors, one focused on landscape policy and the other on urban planning issues. Supported by a small staff and chaired by the Chief Government Architect, the three comprise the Board of Government Advisors (College van Rijksadviseurs - CRa). Describing itself as an independent advisory body, the CRa fosters a place making culture and design quality agenda (e.g. organizing initiatives and events) through a variety of soft power tools (policies, research by design, and quality-teams). In this context, it provides advice on urban planning and architectural policy, promotes design competitions, as well as assuring the quality supervision of new developments. Panorama Lokaal is one of several other design competitions organised by the Board in recent years, which have addressed issues like housing for refugees, new forms of care and support for the elderly, and deals between farmers and citizens.

2.3. Panorama Nederland

In early 2018, the CRa launched the campaign “Panorama Nederland’ that aimed to promote a debate about the future of spatial planning in the Netherlands by addressing ‘how the major social issues of today can be the key to welcome structural improvements in the future” (Rijksadviseurs, 2019, p. 3). A hypothetical future landscape was developed in the form of a circular panorama intended to promote a debate about how the main social and spatial challenges for the Netherlands could be envisaged across the Dutch landscape. This visual panorama included new spatial interventions in different built and unbuilt spaces across the Dutch territory (e.g. the seacoast, urban centres, residential neighbourhoods, agricultural and rural spaces, etc.) (Fig. 1).

The underlying goal of ‘Panorama Nederland’ was to raise awareness about the importance of design and interdisciplinary collaboration when it comes to tackling new spatial transformations that result from social and economic challenges (e.g. energy transition, urbanization, climate change, etc.) in a coherent and integrated manner (Ibidem). ‘Panorama Nederland’ travelled across the country as an itinerant


For more info see: https://www.collegevanrijksadviseurs.nl/projecten/panorama-nederland (accessed on 03/06/2020)
exposition, where people could step into the panorama and be able to peer into this future vision of the Dutch landscape, animated by a series of debates on the future spatial visions for their village, city or province that was holding the exposition. In early 2019, inspired by this initiative, the CRa decided to launch the ‘Panorama Lokaal’ competition in order to reimagine the urban-rural fringes in the Netherlands and provide a practical way of implementing the ideas of the past initiative.

Fig. 1 – One of ‘Panorama Nederland’ public events (Source: College van Rijksadviseurs)

3. OBJECTIVES

Operating under the following subtitle of “how do we prepare the city edges for the future?”, Panorama Lokaal is a two-stage design competition focused on residential neighbourhoods on the fringes of cities that aims to encourage new methods and means of collaboration among municipalities and local stakeholders with the design support of multidisciplinary teams. The focus of the competition is to promote experimental approaches that enable local actors to improve their neighbourhoods and the interconnection between urban and rural areas.

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15 The exposition ‘Panorama Nederland’ was held in 25 different locations across the Netherlands with the CRa promoting around 100 presentations and debates regarding the topics associated with the future transformation of the Dutch landscape.
According to the competition’s regulations, Panorama Lokaal holds the following objectives:

1. Place the ongoing transformation of existing residential and rural areas in Dutch municipalities on the political agenda, involving both the design and construction community alongside residents and politicians, so that the connections with the landscape may be improved;

2. To stimulate innovation, design power and multidisciplinary cooperation;

3. To encourage promising coalitions and new partnerships that actively work on the competition’s results in the neighbourhoods and adjacent landscapes;

4. To actively share new insights and concepts with a wider audience;

5. To promote sustainability and the future-proofing of residential and rural areas, and to encourage the ultimate realization of the selected proposals;

6. To encourage proposals that eschew the construction chain and are innovative in terms of speed and affordability, in combination with sustainability and the associated public space, when it comes to housing construction (renovation, transformation and/or new construction).

In this context, Panorama Lokaal goes beyond a simple design competition of ideas by encouraging a special approach to the design of projects, based on multi-actor collaboration and partnerships among different stakeholders and design professionals, thereby enabling conditions for spatial experiments with a social impact. Although it is ultimately not guaranteed that the winning proposals will end up being realized by the municipalities or housing associations, the overall process of the competition fosters a place making culture and collaborative action between different stakeholders.

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36 Available at: https://panoramalokaal.nl/files/nvg/00011/190702ReglementPanoramaLokaal.pdf

37 https://panoramalokaal.nl/prijsvraag/english+summary/
4. THE TOOL / INITIATIVE: DETAILED DESCRIPTION

4.1. Main themes and challenges

With an unusual brief, the Panorama Lokaal competition focused on residential areas located on the outskirts of the cities, that had been built in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Most of these areas are located in transitional zones between rural-urban areas, areas that are not yet considered rural yet are situated outside urban clusters, also classified as peri-urban areas (Piorr et al., 2011). Similar to the numerous urban-rural areas located on the peripheries of European cities, these residential areas are described by the competition as a mix of housing blocks and single-family houses, parking lots and some recreational or sports facilities, typically surrounded by nature or agricultural fields (Fig. 2).

Considering that several decades have passed since they were originally planned, one of the main challenges posed by Panorama Lokaal was how to transform these residential neighbourhoods into diverse, flexible and attractive places. As the Dutch Government advisor highlighted (interview, 2020):

“We saw several post-war suburban areas that were not being paid much attention and being neglected and that they would suffer in our eyes in the next decades.”

Inspired by the past initiative ‘Panorama Nederland’, the competition brief identified several challenges that needed innovative design strategies in order to enable and facilitate the desired positive transformation of these areas. Although interrelated, the following nine challenges were identified:

1. From monoculture to diversity – Most post-war residential neighbourhoods located on the periphery of cities are monofunctional, where single-family dwellings predominate. However, nowadays there is a strong demand for different types of housing as well as for mixed urban environments with both commercial and working places. Therefore, the first challenge posed by the competition was how to transform and adapt these monofunctional neighbourhoods in order to generate a more diversified, urban environment with various housing patterns and mixed uses.
2. Connecting the city and countryside – A second challenge was the lack of any interconnection between urban and rural areas, namely residential areas and their close natural surroundings. In an ideal scenario, a resident would be able to take advantage of their proximity to the natural landscape or agricultural areas and make better use of these zones (e.g. food production or natural recreational paths).

3. Suitable and affordable home for everyone – Currently there is a housing shortage in the Netherlands, which continues to raise market values and reduce the availability of affordable housing. To solve this challenge, it is necessary to build new housing as well as to improve vacant houses and reintroduce them into the market to be able to raise the number of affordable homes\(^{19}\).

4. New forms of housing, in line with new housing requirements – Designed and built five or six decades ago, most of these residential buildings are not adapted to current needs and changes in family lifestyles\(^{19}\). Therefore, a major challenge ahead remains how to modernize and adapt this housing stock in order to meet the requirements of the residents.

5. More biodiversity and natural experience – Although most of these residential neighbourhoods comprise abundant open spaces and green areas, they tend to have low levels of biodiversity and nature. Therefore, an additional challenge was the creation of more natural spaces in order to increase the level of biodiversity and improve the connection of these areas to their natural surroundings.

6. Building social structures – A current tendency is the growth in loneliness and social isolation as family sizes get smaller and social connections become weaker. This constituted the sixth challenge: how to create conditions that foster social interaction and to realize spaces for encounters.

7. More time for each other – An additional challenge was the economic dependence of these residential areas on the city centres, which results in large commuting patterns. Considering that the car is one of the most used means of transport, a large percentage of these areas are occupied by parking lots and infrastructure. A possible solution was replacing some of these parking areas with new office spaces that could help reduce the need to commute and use the car.

8. New energy – Most of the buildings in post-war residential districts use non-climate-friendly energy sources (e.g. gas) and the neighbourhood’s infrastructure is...
often obsolete. The challenge proposed was how to introduce other energy sources to make these areas more sustainable.

9. Water as a connecting factor – The last challenge presented by the competition was the need to make these residential areas more resilient to climate change through the introduction of water elements. Creating new water basins and channels could help mitigate undesired heat waves and absorb excess rainwater from more regular precipitation peaks. In addition, it would help improve the connection between the urban and rural areas through ecological channels.

4.2. Procedure

Officially launched in May 2019, the Panorama Lokaal competition intended to attract creative teams who could be interested in tackling the themes referred to above (among others) on behalf of local coalitions of municipalities, housing associations and other relevant parties. This competition was structured in two separate phases, each consisting of two parts:

- In the first phase, an open call was launched for the submission of places by local coalitions to participate in the competition, from which a jury selected seven sites (1A); for each site, the local coalitions formulated a design assignment in collaboration with the CRa aimed at innovation and framing local constraints, the needs of communities, etc. (1B);

- In the second phase, a design competition was launched for each site, where the design teams applied with a portfolio for one or more locations (2A); for each site, three design teams were selected to develop a design proposal in a collaborative environment (2B).

Finally, a jury determined a winner for each site and the results were presented at a symposium. According to the resources of the client (the municipality or one of the local partners), the winning teams would receive a design assignment to develop the projects (Table 1).
20 Considering the experimental nature of the competition, its procedure was tested in two locations (Schalkwijk in Haarlem; Tilburg-Noord in Tilburg), in collaboration with the municipalities and local partners. In May 2019, these two coalitions and sites were presented as examples at the launch event for the competition in order to explain the procedure and incentivise submissions.

21 The seven selected sites were located in the following cities: Bargeres in Emmen, Schalkwijk in Haarlem, Julianadorp in Den Helder, Bevenwaard in Rotterdam, Tilburg-Noord in Tilburg, Westwijk in Vlaardingen and Mosterdhof in Westervoort.

Throughout the entire process, the local coalitions were supported by the CRa team, namely, when it came to defining the competition program, drawing up the competition’s regulations, the programming site visits and workshops, selecting the design teams, and formulating the follow-up assignment (CRa, 2019).

### 4.3. Phase 1: Call for coalitions with places located on the edges of cities

#### 1A. Selection of coalitions and sites

The first step of the competition was the launch of an open call for coalitions to propose and register a location in a residential area built in the 1960s, 70s or 80s, located on the edge of a city, including its adjacent rural areas. The local coalitions had to be constituted of at least one municipality, a housing corporation and a third party (e.g. a group of residents or other local stakeholders). According to the competition’s regulations, each joint application had to provide a letter of motivation and a description of the proposed residential area, its main problems, and the future role the different parties would have in the implementation of the competition’s follow-up phase (Ibidem).

In October 2019, the CRa received 14 applications from which seven locations were selected according to the following criteria: nationwide distribution, residential areas from different periods, areas inside and outside the Randstad, large and small locations, and differences in rural contexts (Fig. 3).
1B. Definition of design assignments

The second step of the competition was dedicated to the definition of the design assignments. For each of the seven locations, the CRa promoted dedicated ‘Panorama sessions’ with the local coalitions to discuss and analyse the neighbourhood’s specificities and close surroundings, which included a site visit, in order to develop and define the design assignments (Fig. 4).

According to the competition’s regulations, in each session the ‘context and ambitions are explored, substantive reflections will be given by experts and the contours of the assignment will be formulated in an interactive way’ (Ibid.). Based on the workshop’s results, an Architectuur Lokaal expert partner made a proposal for the associated design competition regulations for each of the seven locations, based on the procedures of the KOMPAS light competitions framework. This first-phase concluded with the adoption of the regulations for each of the seven design competitions by the parties involved.

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Fig. 3 – Location of the seven selected sites in The Netherlands
(Source: College van Rijksadviseurs)

Fig. 4 – One of the ‘Panorama Lokaal’ sessions with local coalitions
(Source: College van Rijksadviseurs - CRa)

22 Founded in 1992, Architectuur Lokaal is an independent, non-commercial foundation with ANBI status (Organisation for the Public Good), with a small team of officers and a director. It presents itself as a national centre of expertise devoted to building culture, preparing and moderating (council) debates, conducting evaluation studies, organising excursions, providing in-company training, and organising prizes and competitions: https://arch-lokaal.nl/english-summary/

23 KOMPAS light is a digital handbook and step-by-step guide for commissioning architectural services, resulting in a clear, ready-to-use guideline for invitations to tender, including standard application forms, including rules for design competitions endorsed by the various Ministries and professional organisations. For more information: https://www.architecturopdrachten.nl/
4.4. Phase 2: Design competitions and workshops

2A. Selection of design teams

The first part of the second phase was dedicated to the selection of the design teams. In December 2019, an open call for seven autonomous competitions (independent procedures) was launched on the Panorama Lokaal website, with the main questions for each site and specific regulations. To be able to participate and register an application, the design teams had to constitute a multidisciplinary team that included architects, urban planners, landscape architects and other designers, as well as people with other knowledge or experience according to the needs of each place (e.g. people from the social domain, energy or water experts, experts with knowledge of agricultural transitions, etc.). The design teams had to deliver a motivation letter and to substantiate why their team could provide the best answer to the design questions for that particular site. In addition, they had to include a portfolio of the team and/or of the team members, providing evidence of their expertise with reference projects. 24 (Ibid.).

At the end of January 2020, the CRa received 147 entries. For each location, an expert jury, led by the Chief Government Architect and comprised of at least four experts, selected three teams per location to develop design proposals for the seven locations in a collaborative environment. Each design team received a fee of €10,000 to cover their participation costs (amount excl. VAT). Although no prize money was foreseen at the start, in January 2020, before the call period for submission of the design teams ended, it was announced that an additional €10,000 would be distributed to the seven winning teams.

2B. Design workshops

In the final part of the competition, the 21 selected teams developed design proposals that responded to the competition brief and created project proposals that were: ‘innovative, feasible, scalable and reproducible, and that can also serve as inspiration for other locations’ (Ibid). To provide an example, for the competition regarding the Mosterdhof district, in Westervoort, the three design teams were asked to provide:

- a longer-term vision in which the tasks related to climate and energy were connected to each other and linked to the overall redesign of the

24 The design teams could register for multiple locations, but the team members could not participate in more than one team per competition, because they cannot be in several places at the same time (like with the workshops).
The second workshop sessions were planned to be held two months after the first session, in April 2020. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, the second workshop meetings were postponed to July 2020.

With the support of the CRa, the local coalitions promoted and organized two design workshops for each site with local experts deployed from the local coalitions to facilitate future implementation. In the first workshop session, in February 2020, the design teams conducted a site visit to the neighbourhood, received relevant information and had the opportunity to meet local stakeholders, residents and other local parties (Fig. 5). The second workshop session was focused on interim design presentations and feedback from (among others) local stakeholders, jury members and residents. If needed, the organizers and the teams could arrange additional meetings.
4.5. Presentation and selection

The final part of the competition was dedicated to the presentation of the 21 design proposals to an audience and the selection of the best proposal for each site by the different juries (one for each site). According to the competition’s regulations (art. 4.2), the juries evaluate the proposals according to the following assessment criteria:

- the way in which the proposals respond to the assignment;
- the degree of innovation and integrity of the proposals;
- the extent to which the proposals can generate acceleration or breakthroughs;
- the visibility of the solution offered in the neighbourhood and its spatial quality;
- the extent to which there is a positive impact on the functioning of the district and on the lives and housing of the inhabitants;
- the example effect for other locations and its feasibility.

Finally, the seven winning teams were announced on the 24th of September and the competition’s results were communicated to a wider audience via a broadcast on television with a series of interviews in the preceding days. Although it was not an obligation, the coalition teams who co-supported the initiative (see below) were expected to do as much as possible to provide the winning design teams with a follow-up design assignment focused on implementing the plans.

4.6. Coordination and cooperation

As the main coordinator of the initiative, CRa managed the entire competition process ensuring that it would run smoothly, and efficiently provided all the necessary administrative and logistical conditions, replied to all of the questions from interested people or organizations, communicated and publicized the initiative, etc. Considering that ‘Panorama Lokaal’ aimed to foster collaboration among different parties that usually do not tend to work together, in order to set an example, the CRa promoted the competition in collaboration with four ministries26 and two other national organizations: the Social Housing Network Organization27 and the State of Infrastructure and Water Management, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.


27 For more info see: https://www.aedes.nl/
Forestry Authority\textsuperscript{28}. As the focal point of the initiative, the CRa reported back to the consortium, who jointly financed the competition.

In addition to the above partnership, the seven individual competitions were co-organized between CRa and the seven local coalitions that applied for the site projects. When submitting their applications, the local coalitions were requested to formally commit themselves\textsuperscript{29} to cooperating with the CRa in promoting the initiative and assuming the organization of their own design competition, with the support of Architectuur Lokaal, and to actively participate in the workshop sessions, as well as, to undertake the following set of tasks: a) ensure that at least one person will be responsible for organizing the workshops and for supervising the work of the design teams\textsuperscript{30}, supported by the Panorama Lokaal project team; b) provide a suitable location for the workshops; c) provide one person to conduct the workshop sessions; d) collaborate with two local judges for the selection of three teams and the selection of a winner; and e) financially contribute towards the costs of the competition, with €10,000 for each design team (excluding VAT).

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH FORMAL (REGULATORY) TOOLS

The Panorama Lokaal competition is an informal rating tool, which is not related to the formal regulatory framework, such as the urban planning system. In addition, the competition does not follow the normal tender procedures imposed by the EU's Public Procurement Directive. Despite the soft power approach, a regulation was defined and published before the launch of the competition of ideas. In addition, for each of the seven design competitions, an individual regulation was formulated and adopted by the stakeholders involved. These formalities were intended to offer participants a structured and transparent set of rules about the procedure and the set of criteria used for the selection and awards.

\textsuperscript{28} For more info see: https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/english

\textsuperscript{29} This is provided in the form of a signed declaration (a proforma), available at the conclusion of the competition.

\textsuperscript{30} The Local Panorama regulation specifies that the time investment is at least 60 hours per person (incl. participation in the Panorama session and four workshop sessions).
6. ALLIED FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

Panorama Lokaal does not have any allied financial mechanisms associated with the tool (e.g. financial support for implementing the winning proposals). Nevertheless, the competition process is financed by public funding (e.g. logistical and technical support, communication resources, payment to the jury, site visits, etc.). According to the Government Advisor (interview, 2020), setting up and implementing Panorama Lokaal involved a budget of roughly €1.000.000. This budget was shared by the financial contribution of the various parties involved, namely the CRa’s own budget, the four ministries involved, the two national partners and the seven local authorities. This budget does not include the person/cost of the board government advisors, the public officials and the secretariat, as their salaries are already assured by public expenditure. The highest rubric of the initiative was the financial compensation to each of the 21 design teams, which was assured by the seven local authorities.

7. CHALLENGES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

The main challenge of Panorama Lokaal was the uncertainty about whether the design proposals would be implemented or at least be able to influence local planning policy. As in all design competitions of ideas, the proposals usually provide innovative solutions to complex problems yet their implementation is dependent on a wide set of variables. Firstly, the proposals are defined on a strategic level, establishing a vision for complex areas and a toolbox that may inspire local parties. To transform these ideas into concrete plans and instruments, one of the steps would be to commission the projects to the design teams by the client, the municipality or one of the local partners, which is not an obligation. Another possibility is to opt for in-house development, which will be dependent on the capacity and knowledge of the internal design staff. Secondly, the social, political and economic contexts will have a strong influence on the institutional capacity to mobilize resources to invest in the improvement of the residential neighbourhoods’ conditions. Thirdly, the investment capacity of other local partners, such as the housing associations or residents, will also be strongly dependent on the economic situation and the financial support they may receive from the local authority or other central administration funding bodies. Most likely, the recent global pandemic (COVID-19) will strongly affect all European economies, raising the level of uncertainty.

About equality issues, Panorama Lokaal was open to anyone who wished to participate, including two open calls: one for local coalitions in the first phase and
another for multidisciplinary design teams in the second phase. There were no application fees and the events were free of charge. In addition, the competition process was driven by local stakeholders, led by the municipality, yet involved housing associations which represented the interests of the residents. For the first local sessions at all of the seven sites, local residents were invited to participate and report on the main problems and issues affecting the area, including socially disadvantaged people. In the second workshop sessions, local residents were also invited to provide feedback on the interim design proposals. This means that there was a concern for promoting local participation and the involvement of the residents throughout the competition process.

8. KEY INNOVATIONS, SUCCESSES AND IMPACTS

Panorama Lokaal is an innovative design competition of ideas focused on post-war residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of a city, promoting partnerships among municipalities and local stakeholders together with multidisciplinary design teams. Through a cooperative planning approach, Panorama Lokaal aims to potentiate collective action towards social, economic and environmental challenges. By promoting the combination of different perspectives, the process transcends a simple design competition, instead encouraging a particular approach to the design of projects based on cooperation among actors that traditionally do not work together. As the Dutch Government Advisor mentioned (Interview, 2020):

“It is all about discovering through design, through people who are trained in seeing links between issues that others are not used to think off.”

Therefore, following a co-design approach, the Panorama Lokaal competition provides the preconditions necessary for effective cooperation between various local stakeholders and designers, firstly to frame the needs and then to develop an assignment for complex areas. As the Dutch Government Advisor argued (Ibidem):

“It is not only about design teams that are going to participate, it is also a way to educate clients, to let them form and discover that they have alliances within their own environment”

This means that the process is driven by local stakeholders with the aim that they will buy into the results, appropriate the proposals, and ultimately achieve something in the end. Nevertheless, the role of creative thinking in the whole process...
is crucial in order to exhibit multiple visions and solutions that embrace current challenges in a practical and feasible manner in order to inform and select the best way to proceed. The voluntary participation of the seven local coalitions, which implied assuming the costs of three design teams, organizing their own competition, site visits, meetings, etc., demonstrates the positive will of local actors towards work together and developing visions for future urban transformations in a collaborative manner.

One of the achievements of Panorama Lokaal was placing residential suburbs and their surroundings on the political agenda. Using the competition to promote a national debate on the topic, the Board of Government Advisors was able to persuade policy makers and relevant actors to pay attention to these often-forgotten neighbourhoods in their strategic urban planning visions. Therefore, Panorama Lokaal was used not just as a rating tool (a competition) but also as an informal quality culture tool fostering a place making culture through dedicated events, publications, websites, etc.

Another achievement of Panorama Lokaal was the development of a wide range of innovative proposals for residential areas in the fringes of cities through research by design, demonstrating the importance of design thinking when it comes to solving complex issues. The development of visionary strategies for residential neighbourhoods, as well as the cooperative method of multiple stakeholders, will act as a catalyst and have an inspirational effect for other cities and municipalities across the Netherlands.

Considering its informal nature, the impacts of Panorama Lokaal are long-term and difficult to measure. Essentially, it is a design competition of ideas, which resulted in 21 design proposals, from which three were considered the winners. However, its indirect impacts were much broader. Firstly, the competition allowed for a learning process among all the stakeholders and designers involved. Secondly, the initiative was widely disseminated through the media including several public events, gathering a community of practitioners to debate innovative solutions in order to adapt post-war residential neighbourhoods to future social, economic and environmental challenges. Therefore, Panorama Lokaal assisted CRa with promoting and raising public awareness on the importance of addressing residential areas on the outskirts of cities and influencing policy makers, practitioners, community representatives, activists and others, on changing mindsets and introducing new ways and means of design collaboration among different stakeholders.
9. EXAMPLE | TILBURG NOORD

To better illustrate how Panorama Lokaal was implemented and the type of proposals delivered by the competition, one of its seven locations - Tilburg Noord - and its corresponding design competition will be briefly described below. The information provided about the location, challenges and brief, as well as the summary of the three proposals were based on the Panorama Lokaal competition website.

9.1. Local coalition (Phase 1)

Within the fourteen applications received, Tilburg Noord (in English, Tilburg North) was one of the seven local coalitions selected to participate in the competition. The Tilburg Noord coalition involved four local institutional partners - the Municipality of Tilburg, a housing association (LivingBreburg), a real estate developer (Van Wanrooij Building and Development) and a water authority (De Dommel river water board) - as well as several residents that were involved in the process of PACT Noord, which is currently still being promoted by the city council.

Tilburg-Noord is a residential area (district) in the city of Tilburg, which is located in the southern part of the Netherlands, near the border with Flanders. With 23,500 inhabitants hailing from 120 different cultural backgrounds, Tilburg-Noord is situated between the city centre and the landscape Park Pauwels in the northern part of the city, harbouring business parks on its east and west sides.

Challenges

The Tilburg-Noord neighbourhood is characterized by its predominantly residential use with very few commercial or industrial activities. The area presents several broad challenges, such as those stemming from climate change and the energy transition, as well as specific social and economic challenges. According to Panorama Lokaal's regulations, the existing inhabitants are aging and most of the new residents are within disadvantaged social classes, with low levels of education.

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31 Tilburg Noord was also one of the locations where CRa tested the Panorama Lokaal procedure in collaboration with the municipalities and local partners before launching the competition (see note 20).

32 PACT comes from 'People Acting in Community Together,' which involves residents and professional partners with the aim of promoting other ways of thinking, acting and organizing social experiments to tackle poverty, exclusion and the refugee crisis, among other social issues. The municipality of Tilburg is coordinating a PACT approach involving the deprived neighbourhoods of Tilburg Noord, West and Groenewoud. See: https://www.tilburg.nl/stad-bestuur/stad/wijken/
and suffering from economic fragility. In total, 40% of the residents live below the poverty line. In addition, the existing housing stock is mostly single-family, which does not offer enough variety or affordable homes to attract new residents. Furthermore, the numerous open green spaces in the area do not have a clear function and present low levels of biodiversity.

According to Panorama Lokaal, the municipality and various partners have been working on these issues for a long time. However, it has not yet been possible to achieve sufficient structural changes. On the contrary, poverty has deepened and expanded in recent years, partly due to international trends, such as the economic and refugee crises. In this context, both the built environment and the socio-economic situation required a lasting urban regeneration plan in order to improve the local residents’ quality of life. This could include different approaches, such as creating better connections with the Pauwels Landscape Park in the northern part; introduce mixed uses and building more homes, creating natural spaces with water canals, etc.

Design statement

Together with the Board of Government advisors’ experts, the local coalition drafted a design brief for the Tilburg Noord Panorama competition. This was undertaken by first asking designers to investigate opportunities to improve the area when it comes to meeting the current challenges of energy transition, climate adaptation and an acute housing shortage. In addition, the designers had to develop a rationale for an integrated business model for the area, so that optimal social returns could be obtained from the existing programs and planned investments. The proposals also had to offer a vision for action that would include all local stakeholders, including citizens, local authorities and market actors, so they could follow up and implement the vision in the long run following the competition. Additionally, the proposals had to be innovative, feasible, realizable and scalable, so they could serve as an inspiration for other locations in response to the competition brief.

9.2. Design competition (Phase 2)

As mentioned previously, the second phase of Panorama Lokaal included two parts: the pre-selection (part A) and the design phase (part B). For the pre-selection (part A), multidisciplinary design teams were invited to register an application on the competition’s website with a portfolio and motivation letter. For this first phase, CRa
received 24 applications33. In February 2020, a jury including residents and local coalition members selected three teams for the Tilburg Noord design competition34.

In the design phase (part B), two design workshops were organized. In the first workshop, the three teams received all of the necessary information about Tilburg Noord necessary to help them with developing their proposals, including a site visit and a meeting with stakeholders, residents and other local parties. In a second workshop, the teams presented their first intentions and had the opportunity to discuss them with the local coalition and residents. Finally, the urban design proposals were submitted on 14th July and the results announced on the 24th of September 2020.

Fig. 6 – ‘The Makers’ spatial proposal: an overview of Tilburg North in 2040
(Source: Panorama Lokaal website)

Proposal ‘The Makers of Tilburg Noord’

The first team proposed establishing a new organizational structure, called “The Makers of Tilburg Noord”, a neighbourhood company: (Wijkbedrijf) consisting of a representative for the residents, educational institutions, local businesses and local institutions. This new cooperative organization would work as an independent body capitalizing on the experience gained from the ongoing PACT process (see above), bringing together existing initiatives, goals, interests, financial resources and results.

33 For all seven sites of the competition, Panorama Lokaal received 147 applications (see Section 4.4).
34 The three selected teams were: KAW; Spacefolks; and Baudoin van Alphen Bergers.
The necessary funding would come from the various involved partners, and residents could contribute with their time and knowledge. The central principle behind this proposal was the fostering of an active collaboration among local stakeholders and residents. The neighbourhood company could be established in the short term and offer a long-term perspective based on a jointly drawn up agenda. In addition, a spatial proposal was also presented entitled "Neighbourhood Renewal 3.0" for Tilburg Noord and its adjacent rural area.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Program was based on the principles of the "challenging city," aiming to contribute to higher environmental quality, a sustainable living environment and an inclusive society. The proposal involved a substantial densification of 2,000 homes through demolition/new construction, whereby the share of social factors would relatively decrease and there would be slight growth. In the countryside, a program was proposed that builds on the thematic axes of the existing spatial vision of Noord: with a pond, care homes and a city farm and centre for Food, Culture & Sport.

Fig. 7 – An overview of the 'MOSAIC Tilburg-Noord' proposal. (Source: Panorama Lokaal website)

Proposal 'MOSAIC Tilburg-Noord' (Winning team)

The second proposal was based on the idea of a 'Neighbourhood Work Plan', entitled 'MOSAIC Tilburg-Noord', which comprised a strategy that links tasks, stakeholders and projects together based on three pillars: housing and public space; closing the energy chain; and establishing a connection between farm production and consumption. This proposal aimed to enrich existing programs and functions related

to food and education by investing in the local food chain, which could result in higher production, reduced logistical costs and the increased affordability of food. The ambition of the proposal was that, by developing a variety of small interventions, it would provide added value for the neighbourhood, district, city and residents.

To achieve the aforementioned ambitions, the second proposal included a variety of tools and specific actions, such as: the deployment of a city-land route that greens and connects strategic and iconic places (see Fig. 7); the installation of insulating façades that contribute to energy consumption and also enrich the architectural appearance of the neighbourhood; split existing houses whenever possible so that new, smaller housing types would be introduced into the neighbourhood; and create small-scale food collection points in the neighbourhood where local products from the countryside can be bought for a satisfactory price through online sales. By providing organizational capacity to its residents, it will foster a positive transformation of Tilburg-Noord from a monotonous city district into a rich and diverse environment.

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36 For more information see: https://panoramalokaal.nl/files/inzendingen/00005/samenvatting.pdf
37 Ibidem.
38 TiBoKa is an abbreviation of the expression 'Tilburg Boven het Kanaal' (in English: Tilburg Above the Canal).
which would contribute to a community garden nursery and a new market hall as well.

The proposal also included the introduction of recreational and daytime activities in the Kouwenberg Gardens as well as a new pedestrian crossing to Pauwels Park in the north. The natural landscape of the park would function as water storage and a garden, and its fields would host biological products in co-operation with the existing farmers. Another prominent project was the inclusion of a Tuk-tuk, which would provide an accessible and safe means of transport for elderly people. Among numerous other proposals, there is also a new vocational school (VMBO) for continuous learning programs.

Fig. 9 – One of Tiboka thematic maps focused on young people of Tilburg North
(Source: Panorama Lokaal website)
10. KEY LESSONS AND TRANSFERABILITY

The organization and delivery of Panorama Lokaal involved multiple methods of design leadership, namely governmental promotion to raise awareness on the importance of design thinking and collaborative approaches to solve complex problems. Design competitions are a highly valuable tool for promoting debate and innovative ideas, and can be used for more than just high-profile prestige projects. Using competitions to focus on ordinary places and on common design problems can be very valuable, providing generalizable lessons for sites beyond those that are subject to the competition. In this respect, competitions as a design governance tool are not about defining winners (although that is necessary to encourage involvement) but are instead part of a learning culture in which innovative solutions to different problems can inform ongoing practices. Competitions themselves require infrastructure and resourcing to make them work, but the outcomes are often less important than the process itself. The aim should be for competitions to inform an ongoing debate and to be part of a process of change, but not necessarily to identify all the answers. As the Dutch Government Advisor argued:

“We should embrace the change and the challenges of the future as opportunities to make life better. Competitions (…) have the potential of mobilizing a variety of actors to work together on responding to such challenges.” (Interview, 2020)

Another key lesson is the multi-level governance model of Panorama Lokaal, which involves both the central and local administrations as well as non-governmental actors (housing associations) and residents. The sharing of costs and responsibilities in the competition’s organization is a practical method of buying into the different partners and receiving support for the initiative, which may facilitate the implementation of the competition’s results. The topic of the competition is also highly relevant, as the majority of the European cities have expanded heavily outside their administrative borders into the countryside where most citizens live. Using design competitions as research by design could be a practical way to define guidelines and strategies to improve residential suburbs and their connections with their surrounding landscapes.

Although design competitions are widely used across several European countries, be it by governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and even private companies, in certain other countries they are rarely employed (Carmona et al., 2020). Panorama Lokaal’s decentralized approach that involves local stakeholders
in several project sites could be a useful model to follow in countries where this tradition is not so present in delivering a design leadership agenda. Nevertheless, its transferability to other contexts will always be dependent on the willingness of national and local stakeholders to collaborate and push for such types of informal design governance tools.
KEY REFERENCES


KEY ONLINE RESOURCES

https://panoramalokaal.nl/
https://www.collegevanriksadviseurs.nl/
URBAN MAESTRO

This paper was drafted as an external contribution to the Coordination and Support Action “URBAN DESIGN GOVERNANCE - Exploring formal and informal means of improving spatial quality in cities across Europe and beyond”, also known as “Urban Maestro”. The Action was funded by European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 831704 and implemented from 2019 to 2021 by a consortium comprising the University College London, Brussels Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte and UN-Habitat.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Design and layout: Kidnap Your Designer, Brussels
Brussels Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA)