

URBAN FABRIC INITIATIVES: BUILDING CITIES TOGETHER

In contexts where large-scale projects radical transform local areas, maintaining the needs and habits of residents and users at the center of the conversation can be challenging. Preliminary technical studies, often conducted under significant time and resource constraints, do not always allow sufficient room for consultation, even though a participatory approach is essential to improving the relevance, inclusivity, and social impact of said projects.

On the African continent, the French Development Agency launched the Urban Fabric Initiatives program in 2018. Backed by major infrastructure projects, the Urban Fabric Initiatives aim to balance rapid implementation with community participation. Their goal: to provide concrete solutions to residents' needs while testing participatory approaches, particularly in terms of long-term management.

With support from the Urban Fabric Initiative (UFI) Network, each Urban Fabric Initiative is implemented by a consortium of operators. Implementation is therefore tailored to each specific context while being guided by common methodological principles centered on the participation of local residents and users, carried out in four main stages:

- **Assessment**, to understand the context before taking action, whether regarding existing uses, expressed needs, or social and spatial dynamics.
- **Design**, to co-develop the project with residents and users.
- **Construction**, to build by mobilizing local resources and skills.
- **Management**, to ensure the sustainability of the developments and structure their governance over time.

A TOOLKIT TO FACILITATE AND STRENGTHEN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

While each operator develops its own practices and every project context is unique, the effective involvement of residents and users is a common guiding principal across all Urban Fabric Initiative projects. This toolkit, developed by UFI network members, aims to facilitate and strengthen citizen participation by sharing tools tested in the field by UFI operators. It is therefore intended for future UFI operators as well as any urban planning professionals wishing to draw inspiration from the collaborative approach of the Urban Fabric Initiatives. Its goal is to provide concrete guidelines to support participatory initiatives. Designed as a living resource, this toolkit is intended to be questioned, reinterpreted, adapted to local contexts, enriched and shared..

READER'S NOTES

Creating a toolkit can simplify the complexities and uncertainties of a project and sometimes present an idealized view of certain situations. Any practitioner is familiar with the real challenges of implementation, particularly when seeking to place collective dynamics at the heart of the process.

This toolkit is intended as a guide -neither exhaustive nor set in stone- designed to inspire ideas on the tools to be deployed throughout a project. In this booklet, the left-hand page describes a generic typology of tools, and the right-hand page illustrates an example of its implementation by one of the Urban Fabric Initiatives deployed in Abidjan, Antananarivo, Dakar, Kigali, Ouagadougou, or Nairobi.

THE VARIOUS RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE AVAILABLE

Architect:

Translates ideas, needs and uses into built forms. Through a participatory approach, they co-design with residents and users and adapt their practice to make the project understandable and accessible to everyone.

Designer:

Translates requirements into design solutions and may be involved at various stages of the project depending on their specialty.

Facilitation Expert:

Designs participation processes and the necessary tools. They select and adapt methods based on the target audience, the issues at stake, and the project phases.

Facilitator:

Serves as a regular liaison between residents and users and the project team. Facilitates discussions alongside professionals during consultation sessions. They create an environment where everyone feels free to speak and ensure that everyone can contribute to the project, regardless of their ability to express themselves.

Governance Expert:

A specialist in decision-making processes and collective organization, they help structure management bodies, clarify individual roles, and establish transparent, shared rules of engagement.

Graphic Designer:

Designs tools to make them accessible and appealing. In a participatory project, they can play a key role in helping to visualize assumptions, present results, and inspire people to get involved in the process.

Local Artisans:

Contribute concrete expertise rooted in the local area. They are particularly familiar with local construction practices and materials. They contribute to the physical realization of projects and remain present in the neighborhood and may oversee maintenance post-delivery.

Social Expert:

A broader role than that of a sociologist, they have a background in the humanities or extensive experience in the social dynamics of the area. They ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups and equity in participatory processes.

Sociologist:

Analyzes the social dynamics, practices, and perceptions at play within a given area. Their observations inform project decisions and help anticipate the social impacts of urban transformations.

Technical Manager:

Oversees the technical aspects of the project. They coordinate specialized teams, ensure the proper execution of the work, and guarantee the quality of the completed improvements.

Technician:

Ensures the operational feasibility of projects: plans, quantity surveys, regulations, and interfaces with utility networks. They transform ideas into concrete, achievable solutions, taking into account on-the-ground constraints.

Urban Planner:

Responsible for the urban aspects of the project, they ensure consistency between the proposed developments and the neighborhood, the project's feasibility, risk mitigation, and more.

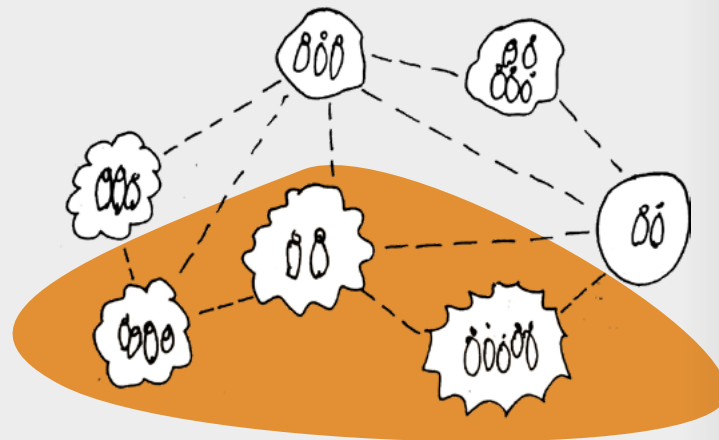


LOCAL STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

Local stakeholder mapping is a tool used to identify individuals, associations, businesses, institutions or any other entity with a particular role - or likely to have one - in the functioning of a specific site. It builds understanding of existing relationships, as well as each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities.



VALUE

By highlighting roles and responsibilities, the decision-making chain becomes clear, facilitating the engagement of all stakeholders in the process. It also helps identify and understand current and future uses of a site, supporting good governance. Sharing this mapping makes roles and responsibilities transparent for everyone involved in the project.

TIPS

It is important to take the time to conduct individual interviews in order to progressively refine the mapping, moving from one stakeholder to the next. In order to achieve the greatest possible objectivity it is essential to cross-reference information collected. This is an opportunity to engage potential key informants from the very beginning of a project, while demonstrating to institutional stakeholders the genuine dynamism of a local network.

PREPARATION

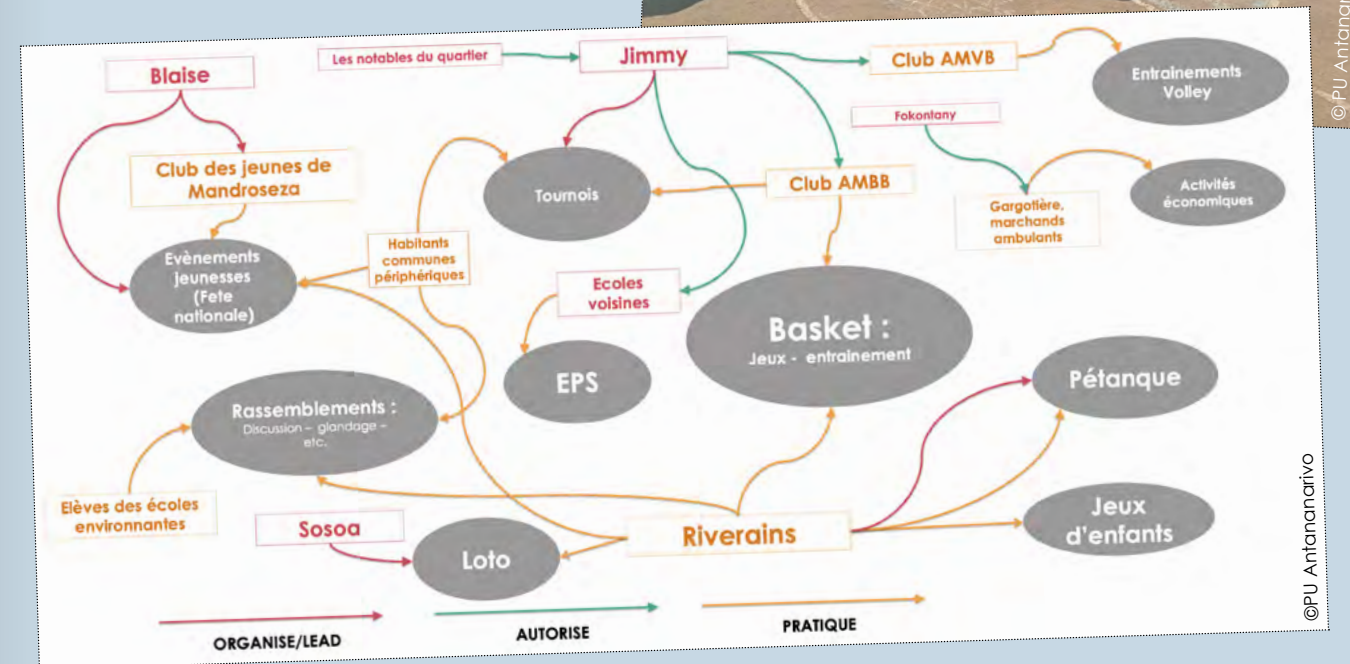
requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 prepared by **social expert**
urban planner

Interviews should begin with easily identifiable individuals, then broaden progressively, following leads as they emerge. A reliable method of recording and organising information must be established to avoid losing data along the way.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 facilitated by **social expert**
urban planner

Several methods can be used to build this mapping. These include individual or group interviews, data analysis, and on-site observation. Extended presence on site can help identify stakeholders who are often overlooked in such diagnostics, such as children.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Antananarivo** used this stakeholder mapping tool for each intervention site. Although certain types of stakeholders recur across these sites - such as local authorities, churches, or police - each has its own specificities. For example, at some sites sports associations play a central role in the space, while at others it may be a group of women who meet to play board games.

In addition to the focus on the spatial and architectural planning of the site, the benefit of this approach also lies in the activation and management of the site once the facility is completed.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the challenges of stakeholder mapping is ensuring that everyone is aware of the site's upcoming transformation. No person or piece of information should be overlooked, and careful attention must be paid to understanding the dynamics between stakeholders. This allows the decision-making chain to be identified, which then facilitates the effective implementation of the project.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details here:
<https://pepinieres-urbaines.org/fr/les-pepinieres-urbaines/antananarivo/>

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

A simple line drawing of a hand holding a document. The document features a large number '8' and several horizontal lines, suggesting a list or a form. The background is a solid orange oval.

EXPLORATORY WALK

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The exploratory walk is a tool used to identify uses, users, qualities, and shortcomings of a space. In small groups, participants move through a space along a defined route, observing its characteristics and highlighting its strengths and weaknesses from their own perspective.



VALUE

Being physically present in the space helps participants incorporate its current reality into their thinking. For example, if part of the site is flooded during the walk, participants can experience this directly — something they might not have mentioned in an off-site focus group. Exploratory walks thus draw on residents' practical knowledge of the space.

TIPS

Exploratory walks can be particularly valuable when conducted with specific population groups, such as people with reduced mobility. Participating in a walk with such a group allows the designer to understand their difficulties and needs. For example: what are the barriers to access? Are there adequate urban amenities allowing them to pause and take rest?

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 prepared by **social expert**

To prepare an exploratory walk, the participating group must be identified and invited. A route that can be completed within the allotted time — a maximum of one to two hours — is then identified, including planned stops in spots that are relevant to a particular line of questioning. Finally, a guide or questionnaire to be completed by participants during the walk must be developed.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 facilitated by **social expert**

The guide begins with questions about the participant's profile. It then includes questions about current uses, accessibility, issues, and so on, depending on the nature of the site and the project's priorities. Each participant fills in the guide progressively during the walk, so it must be intuitive and easy to understand. A collective debrief can take place at the end.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

Exploratory walks were one of five data collection tools used by the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou**. The aim was to carry out a mid-project assessment of the uses of the sports sites included in the project. Two walks were conducted per site, with various stakeholders (residents, institutional actors, community figures, etc) to collectively identify the physical characteristics of the sites, environment-related issues, and improvement proposals.

They also helped participants understand the accessibility challenges faced by people with limited mobility.

LESSONS LEARNED

Based on aerial photographs, routes were defined with different stopping points. The starting point was set outside the sites to allow participants to experience the journey required to reach them and assess their accessibility for people with reduced mobility. An aerial view of the site, printed in A0 format and mounted on a mobile board, served as a support for recording participants' observations at each stop along the route.

FURTHER READING

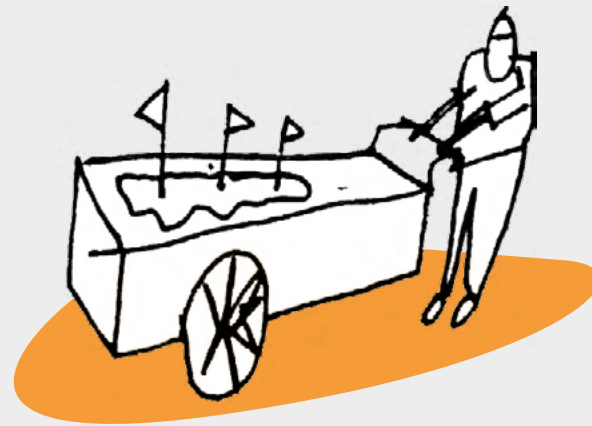
More photos and details here:
<https://pepinieres-urbaines.org/fr/experimenter/marche-exploratoire/>

MOBILE PARTICIPATION DEVICE

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A mobile participation device is an object that can be moved between workshops and meetings, and which acts as a visible marker of an ongoing dynamic. It has both a practical value (transporting materials, serving as a work table, serving drinks, etc.) and a symbolic one, functioning also as a broader communication tool for the project.



VALUE

This tool belongs to the same family as a fixed device, such as a kiosk or stand, but offers several advantages: it can reach alleyways and intimate spaces such as internal courtyards, moving the device towards the users rather than trying to attract users to a specific point; being mobile it can be deployed before land tenure issues are resolved, providing greater flexibility; it can be used across several neighbourhoods, becoming an identity marker at a larger scale.

TIPS

Before production begins, the specifications must carefully account for storage constraints (where to store it, how to retrieve it, which doors it needs to pass through, how many steps it must climb, etc.) as well as mobility constraints (dimensions of a vehicle's cargo area, bicycle attachment system, etc.). If it does not clearly address both families of constraints, its use will be cumbersome and it will quickly be abandoned.

PREPARATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
cost ☐ € ☒ €€ ☐ €€€
prepared by ☒ architect ☒ designer
made by ☒ local artisans

Designing such a device requires an analysis of the project team's expressed needs, a clear set of specifications accounting for budget constraints, implementation timelines, mobility and storage requirements, as well as an understanding of locally available materials and skills.

FACILITATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
cost ☒ € ☐ €€ ☐ €€€
facilitated by ☒ the whole team
☐ ☒ ☐

As a support device, its use depends on the activity being conducted. The number of chairs may prove insufficient, or the weather may be unfavourable (too hot or rainy). This should be addressed through supplementary elements, either permanently available (such as a gazebo) or temporarily rented (e.g. additional chairs).



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar** implemented a mobile participation device called the *penc'mobile*.

In Wolof, the word *penc* refers both to the moment and the place where the community gathers to address collective matters. The team drew on this meaning to create a mobile device enabling a range of activities, from public radio broadcasts to meetings and focus groups held directly in public space.

The choice of this system was guided by the number and diversity of the sites where Urban Fabric Initiatives would potentially work. Little by little, the *penc* also became the symbol of the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

The *penc* was painted by a local artist after its first uses, once the device had confirmed its usefulness to the project. Its weight had not been properly assessed: the internal storage compartment, designed to hold audio equipment, resulted in an overall unit that proved too heavy to lift into the back of a pick-up truck by hand.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details here:
<https://studiobainem.com/portfolio-item/penc-mobil/>

TRANSITIONAL PARTICIPATION DEVICE

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A transitional participation device is a micro-installation that acts as a visible marker of an ongoing dynamic. It has both a practical value (storing materials, serving as a work table, serving drinks, etc.) and a symbolic one as a broader communication tool for the project, and can be moved from site to site according to the project's activities.



VALUE

When no specific workshop is being held, it acts as a signal and opens up people's imagination about the future transformation of a space. It also serves to test new functions and assess potential risks. This can reveal positive aspects, such as a new proposed practice, as well as negative ones — for example, theft of resources or deterioration.

TIPS

Since it serves as a test, do not hesitate to take risks in terms of uses: this is the moment to validate or invalidate operational hypotheses that may be deployed in the project. Equally, it is worth thinking of this device through its multiple possible functions: as a communication support or for collective events, in addition to its capacity to host meetings and exchanges.

PREPARATION

requires hours days weeks
cost € €€ €€€
prepared by architect designer
made by local artisans

Designing such a device requires a clear set of specifications addressing both needs and the robustness constraints required of a structure installed in public space. An understanding of locally available materials and skills, as well as budget and implementation timeline constraints, is equally necessary.

FACILITATION

requires hours days weeks
cost € €€ €€€
facilitated by the whole team
1 person 2 people 3 people

As a support device, its use depends on the activity being conducted. When expressing needs, consider all the situations the device will need to serve: organised settings such as workshops or cultural events, but also more spontaneous situations in which the device must function autonomously.

A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Antananarivo** implemented a transitional participation device called *the Kiosk*. It was designed to be fixed but dismantlable, so that it could be relocated from site to site as projects progressed. Its aesthetic allowed it to prefigure what future developments might look like, and many activities took place around it.

This initiative also served as a signal and a tool for communication in the neighborhoods where the project was carried out. In addition, it provided an opportunity for the project team to test co-design methods, while identifying artisans capable of creating this type of micro-architecture.

LESSONS LEARNED

As one goal was to test uses, lockers were installed to store equipment and assess whether this option was viable in public space. The lockers were broken into, which led to the solution of building changing rooms instead. Testing therefore proved its worth!

FURTHER READING

More photos and details:
<https://pepinieres-urbaines.org/fr/actualites/antananarivo-inaugure-le-kianja-andraisoro-un-espace-public-pense-avec-les-habitantes/>





OBSERVATION TOOL

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

An observation tool allows for a shift in perspective on a space, or a more thorough understanding of a site. Changing one's focal point makes it possible to notice qualities or shortcomings that may otherwise not be perceived in a space one uses regularly.



VALUE

It is a playful tool with several advantages: firstly, it sparks curiosity, offering a friendly first point of contact with the project; secondly, it sparks unconventional discussions, encouraging residents to adopt a different angle of approach. Furthermore, it can be used by one person alone or by a group, allowing for a wide variety of interactions. Finally, its mobility allows for deployment in almost any situation that may emerge during the project, making each experience unique.

TIPS

Before production begins, storage constraints (where to store it, how to retrieve it, etc.) and mobility constraints (can one person handle it alone?) must be carefully considered. Further questions concern the experience one wishes to create and which senses to engage. Finally, how does one approach people in the street with such a device, and what should be retained from their responses?

PREPARATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
 cost ☐ € ☒ €€ ☐ €€€
 prepared by ☒ architect ☒ designer
 made by ☒ local artisans

In preparing such a device, locally available materials and skills must be carefully identified. Devices that are too fragile or too technological may be unsuited to intensive outdoor handling. Finally, the playful dimension must not overshadow the project's objectives.

FACILITATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
 cost ☐ € ☒ €€ ☐ €€€
 facilitated by ☒ the whole team
☒ ☐ ☐

The site on which the device is deployed must be chosen carefully: it should be strategically relevant to the questions being asked. The timing also matters: setting up outside a school is valuable in the late afternoon, but not at night. The encounter and data collection protocol should be prepared in advance, but do not hesitate to adapt it from the first attempts onward.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar** implemented a street observation tool called the *seentoukay*.

In Wolof, this means street observatory, which is precisely the role of these three portable objects designed and made by craftspeople from the suburbs. The *seentoukay* enabled interviews to be conducted directly in public space, facilitating discussions with residents and traders, and helping to understand how the space functions and the difficulties faced by its users. The team was able to use this method, which makes it possible to shift the interviewee's perspective and to capture their reactions to these new perceptions

LESSONS LEARNED

The *seentoukay* was painted by a local artist after its first uses, once the device had confirmed its usefulness for the project. Its legs are detachable and interchangeable, making it easier to store and handle. A range of observation modes could be developed and used across different project situations.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details:
<https://studiobainem.com/portfolio-item/sentoukay/>

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

ASSESSMENT

DESIGN

CONSTRUCTION

MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The interview is a tool used to elicit the particular subjective viewpoint of an individual, either spontaneously or in an organised manner, depending on the protocol in place. They all the interviewer to gain a depth of understanding of an individual life story, perception or strategy. It can be used alongside more collective data collection methods to deeper explore a subject.



VALUE

By virtue of its individual nature, this type of interview can free up speech and create space for expression on more intimate topics — such as women's access to sanitary facilities in public space — or more socially sensitive ones, such as tensions within a community. It can also be valuable for reaching individuals who are uncomfortable speaking in public, such as women or young people.

TIPS

The interview guide should be adapted according to the intention and objectives of the approach. If very short, it will gather an opinion, perception, or piece of information. A longer qualitative interview allows for deeper exploration of a topic, reconstruction of a life history, understanding of existing situations in historical and dynamic context, and collection of expectations, concerns, priorities, or contributions.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

prepared by **sociologist**

The design of interview guides determines the quality of the data collected. One must consider what information is sought, which questions will elicit it, and how to phrase them to minimise bias in responses. Open-ended questions should be prioritised. The selection of interviewees must also be carefully considered to ensure a wide diversity of profiles.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

facilitated by **the whole team**



Begin the interview with a few light questions to put the person at ease. The interview guide serves as a flexible conversational guide, not a script: do not hesitate to ask follow-up questions to explore an interesting or unclear topic. As long as all subjects are covered — even if not in the order set out in the guide — the interview will be successful.



Thème générale	Eléments qu'on cherche à savoir – si dans leur réponse à la question ils ne donnent pas des éléments sur l'un des aspects ci-dessous, pense à poser une autre question plus précise après d'avoir laissé répondre librement
Profil de la personne	Lieu de résidence, âge, emploi – soit à réaliser au début, soit à la fin
Pratiques culturelles actuelles	Les loisirs culturels pratiqués par la personne Les loisirs culturels pratiqués par les autres membres de leur famille, les enfants Fréquentation des sites de la PUO – vient-il ou elle souvent et pour quoi faire ? Fréquentation d'autres espaces culturels – où, avec quelle fréquence, pour quoi faire ?
Les attentes et envies pour les sites de la PUO	Les activités et aménagements qu'il ou elle souhaiterait y voir, qui les motiverait à venir plus souvent Les services pour lesquels il ou elle serait prêt.e à payer – est-ce que dans d'autres espaces qu'il ou elle fréquente certaines services ou activités sont payantes ?

A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

Qualitative interviews were conducted at different stages of the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou**.

At the start of the project, over a two-month period, men, women, children, teenagers, elders, economic actors, athletes, artists, craftspeople, as well as religious and community leaders, were questioned on their uses of the sites, the problems encountered there, their aspirations for future cultural and sports facilities, and their concerns about the development of the sites.

These elements then helped to inform the diagnostic, but the team was also able to use the data collected as the first basis for co-design.

LESSONS LEARNED

Before starting interviews, it is recommended to take the time to clearly define the objectives, the survey plan (number and profiles of people, locations, modalities, etc) and the tools to be used (guides, supports).

CALL FOR INITIATIVES

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The call for initiatives is a form of community consultation. It aims to identify potential sites and community partners. It also ensures that planned investments respond to locally expressed daily priorities and that outcomes are well managed from the very start of the project.



VALUE

This tool transforms the top-down selection of sites for development as public space into a participatory process that reveals the community's genuine priorities. When sufficiently structured, it can reduce risks of elite capture or clientelism. By assessing readiness (land availability, group cohesion, governance capacity), it helps identify partners capable of ensuring sound long-term management.

TIPS

Building safeguards into the process can prevent the loudest or best-connected groups from dominating it. Expectations must also be managed from the outset, particularly regarding fund management, with as much clarity and pedagogy as possible. A public meeting should also be planned to ensure transparency by communicating decisions and their rationale.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 prepared by **governance expert**
facilitator expert

Eligibility criteria and a clear scoring grid must be defined in advance, alongside accessible — and potentially assisted — application formats. An awareness-raising strategy deliberately targeting women, young people, people with disabilities, or tenants can be valuable. Knowledge of other ongoing or planned projects in the neighbourhood is also necessary to avoid duplication.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 facilitated by **the whole team**
  

The call unfolds in six stages:
 1/ Mobilisation and awareness-raising;
 2/ Submission of proposals;
 3/ Verification and due diligence;
 4/ Refinement of proposals with pre-selected groups;
 5/ Final selection;
 6/ Clear communication of results.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A call for initiatives was organised by the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Nairobi.**

It ran from May to August, for a period of 14 weeks.

Sixty-six proposals were received across the three intervention neighbourhoods: City Carton (9 proposals), Kahawa Soweto (24 proposals) and Kayole Soweto (33 proposals). Twenty-one groups were shortlisted for site visits, eight were submitted to the steering committee for review, and four were ultimately selected for the development of facilities.

LESSONS LEARNED

The process demonstrated the importance of managing expectations from the outset. Misinformation spread quickly, with many groups believing they would receive direct cash payments when in fact budgets were allocated to infrastructure delivery. Despite efforts to raise awareness, some proposals came from groups whose governance was unclear or whose land claims were disputed, which required thorough verification. Transparency in communicating results helped maintain trust in the Urban Fabric Initiative operator, even among groups that were not selected.

DRAWING WORKSHOP

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A drawing workshop aims to stimulate participants' creativity in order to bring perceptions to light or to allow proposals for uses and spatial designs to emerge. By varying the tools provided and the instructions given, it engages the imagination and diversifies responses through a medium other than speech or text.

VALUE

Oral participation, commonly used in consultation processes, has its own limitations: some people dominate the discussion, different languages are spoken, etc. Using another medium is an effective way to vary modes of expression and redistribute roles among participants. Drawing — whether free or guided by instructions and supports — is accessible to many people, including children.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

prepared by **architect** **designer**

The workshop sequence must be planned in advance: the materials (markers, paper, base maps, etc), the implementation instructions (individual or collective drawings, one or several colours, etc), and the objectives of the representation (a play area, a type of equipment, a specific use, etc). The outputs must then be synthesised to make use of the material produced.



TIPS

Fear of the blank page is common when people are asked to draw. It can therefore be helpful to provide either simple instructions or supports with a starting point already represented. Using thick markers can also help demystify drawing, since it signals that fine lines are not what matters — what counts is the expression of a feeling and a response to the brief.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

facilitated by **the whole team**



Once participants are present — individually or in groups — the facilitator must explain the instructions and objectives. A time limit can be set for each sequence. Discussion can take place while drawing is in progress, or at the end — for example through a general explanation of the expressed intention, leading to a collective debate.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

As part of the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar**, drawing workshops were held.

While a number of focus-group workshops were conducted with adults, children present around the site took part in co-design through drawing workshops. They were asked to imagine what an ideal playground would look like, drawing shapes and objects in response. The project team interpreted these children's drawings to design facilities that best matched their wishes.

LESSONS LEARNED

The children were clearly eager and numerous. More workshops could have been held, with varied questions to generate a wider range of responses. The energy produced by children drawing on site is genuinely exciting, but it must be well channelled in order to move beyond the purely playful dimension of the exercise.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details here:
<https://studiobainem.com/portfolio-item/cite-icotaf/>



PROGRAMMING WORKSHOP

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A participative spatial planning workshop aims to establish the future design of a public space or collective facility, particularly from a uses perspective. It defines desires and needs, and more specifically their spatial and temporal distribution, seeking to best respond to the full range of requests.



VALUE

By involving future users of a site in the design of the upcoming space, the likelihood that the space will be adopted by the local community increases considerably: not only will proposals respond to a genuinely expressed need, but the act of playing a role in the design strengthens the sense of ownership, with a long-term impact. This will be particularly evident in its management, if this question has been properly formulated here.

TIPS

A wide diversity of actors must be involved across the various workshops. A simple open call will not suffice. Identifying participants and developing a facilitation method are two key elements of a successful process. A third key element is the ability to rank and prioritise the various requests, particularly by clearly framing implementation constraints — whether spatial, budgetary, or related to governance modalities.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 prepared by **social expert**
technical expert

The facilitation must allow for the expression of equipment needs, spatialisation proposals for the site, discovery of an estimated cost for each proposal, and finally prioritisation and arbitration. A facilitation sequence adapted to the number of participants, their age, etc., as well as a spatialisation support, must be prepared.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
 facilitated by **facilitator**

The facilitator's role is to ensure that everyone speaks and that contributions are distributed equitably. They also play a consensus-building role, since costing and spatialisation activities compel participants to acknowledge that not all requested facilities can be delivered. Participants must therefore be guided to move beyond their personal interests.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou** organised several programming workshops.

This was the case for sports sites, bringing together athletes, local notables, and the Directorate of Sports, enabling them to discuss and make decisions about priority developments. The team encouraged participants not only to express their needs but also to take into account the strengths and limitations of their proposals by considering how they would be managed over time, their construction and maintenance costs, and the space they would occupy. Gradually, the workshop participants eliminated certain proposals deemed too difficult to manage, too expensive, too bulky or unnecessary, and prioritised the developments that garnered the most support.

LESSONS LEARNED

To kick off discussion, the Urban Fabric Initiative team prepared various examples — such as a swimming pool: how would it be cleaned daily? Who would supervise children swimming? The team also invited participants to think about where facilities would be located on the sites, by placing them on large plans to encourage prioritisation between proposed elements.

SERIOUS GAME

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

Serious game that aim to integrate residents more effectively — in a playful way — into the planning of a public space or collective facility. The game sensitises participants to construction costs, long-term management requirements, and context-specific priorities.



VALUE

The serious game approach encourages strategic thinking and recognition of the trade-offs inherent in project design, with particular emphasis on balancing immediate benefits and long-term sustainability. It allows participants to better understand the decisions made by the project team, minimising the risk of future disappointment if suggestions made by future users must be set aside.

TIPS

To be truly context-appropriate, the game must build on data previously collected via other tools, such as interviews or exploratory walks. These will have helped identify needs and desires, as well as potential points of tension. In this way, the serious game can unlock complex situations while generating new ideas through a playful approach.

PREPARATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 prepared by architect designer
 made by graphic designer

Depending on the facilities to be designed, the types of physical elements to include in the game must be determined. These may be existing or future elements responding to expressed needs. Each element is represented on a game card with its objectives and requirements, and its estimated cost.

FACILITATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 facilitated by facilitator
1 person 2 people 3 people

Cards are distributed to participants and the rules of the game are explained. Debates can begin on the basis of the cards played: for example, an estimated cost for facilities can help players make decisions about prioritising developments.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Kigali** implemented the Community Design Card Game.

It was designed to facilitate co-design workshops in which participants were invited to imagine new collective facilities.

The game takes place in two stages.
 · First, participants must estimate the operation and maintenance (O&M) frequency for the various facilities, then compare these estimates with the ranges predefined by the project team. This stage highlights the various maintenance requirements and their potential long-term impact.
 · Next, participants are given points and a set of stickers representing the various components, which they must allocate among the facilities based on local priorities and resource constraints. This exercise challenges participants to balance their aspirations with available budgets, and to consider the consequences of their decisions in terms of operation and maintenance.

LESSONS LEARNED

The game was progressively refined over successive sessions, with the addition of elements such as joker cards and multiplier cards to introduce an element of unpredictability and reflect the real conditions of projects. Group discussions and negotiations, at the heart of the process, ensure that decisions are collectively debated and approved. The exercise ultimately leads to the design of a facility that illustrates how communities can prioritize investments while taking into account both immediate and future implications.

SITE MODEL

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A site model is a tool used to spatialise existing or potential uses. As such, it is useful both at the diagnostic and co-design stages. As a mediation tool, it facilitates discussions by helping participants to imagine future changes, and subsequently serves as a collective restitution tool.



VALUE

For people who are not design specialists, it can be difficult to visualise spaces from technical plans or aerial photographs. The model facilitates this projection while having a significant playful dimension. It can also serve as a game table, in the sense that pre-prepared elements can be placed directly on the model to appreciate their impact and debate it.

TIPS

The scale of the model to be built must be carefully considered. If too small or too large, it will be unusable. To help participants visualise the space, it can be useful to include a few elements of commonly familiar dimensions — people or vehicles, for example. Elements that can be added or removed according to the discussion must also be prepared.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

prepared by **architect** **designer**

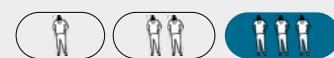
The first step is to choose the right framing and print a base plan to serve as the foundation for building volumes. Materials must then be chosen — grey cardboard is the most readily available and easy to work with, but there are no creative limits. Finally, do not get lost in details: go for the essentials, keeping in mind that this is a working model, not simply a communication tool.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost **€** **€€** **€€€**

facilitated by **architect** **technician**



The model is the central element of the discussion: beginning with a description exercise can help participants familiarise themselves with the tool and orient themselves. Different elements to be manipulated according to the topics to be addressed must be prepared in advance, and do not hesitate to modify the model in real time — the most important thing is that decisions are made collectively!



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar** built and used a model at the Pikine site.

Both initially envisaged sites were represented on a single model, with the two functioning together. Part of the neighbourhood and railway lines were also visible, facilitating orientation. It was used during various focus groups, as well as during the public restitution of the overall process.

LESSONS LEARNED

The model has a genuine attractive power, in that its playful dimension draws curious onlookers and readily sparks discussion. During exchanges, the model was heavily handled — which is precisely its purpose — but this must be anticipated in its design. Time for reassembly before the final restitution should be planned, so that it accurately conveys the project's intentions.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details here:
<https://studiobainem.com/portfolio-item/cite-icotaf/>

DROP-IN OFFICE

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A drop-in office allows the project team to offer on site office hours where anyone can have direct contact to ask a question, express an opinion etc. Its objective is to inform and gather desires and needs on an ongoing basis, adapting to the availability of users and residents. It can also serve as a resource space for consultation or observation activities.



VALUE

A regular presence at the drop-in office makes the project team highly accessible to users. Clearly visible, it signals that something is happening. Being outdoors rather than in a room at, for example, the town hall makes the relationship with the project team more horizontal and less intimidating, which can but users at greater ease so that they may find it easier to raise concerns or make grounded proposals.

TIPS

A drop-in office must be an attractive space that invites people to approach. It should be positioned in a visible, accessible location with maximum footfall. It must have seating, shelter, and a surface to support activities such as drawing workshops or individual interviews. Drinks can be offered, music played, or games provided for children so their parents can speak freely without distractions.

PREPARATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 prepared by architect designer
 made by local artisans

Identify a location on the site that meets the criteria for a drop-in office — visible, accessible, on a thoroughfare. Verify the necessary permissions for an installation in this space and inform site managers. Acquire the necessary materials: gazebo, tables, chairs, cups, paint, pencils and paper, etc, according to your needs.

FACILITATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 facilitated by the whole team
1 person 2 people 3 people

The facilitation approach should be defined according to the project's needs. The facilitation team must be present at different times of day to meet a diverse range of people (parents, workers, children etc). The drop-in office can serve, for example, as a space for drawing workshops, as the start and end point of an exploratory walk to facilitate conversations, or as a space for interviews.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The drop-in office was implemented by the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou**.

Organised as part of the mid-project assessment of sports site uses in the project's second year, the offices consisted of gazebos equipped with tables and chairs. They were used to organise multiple activities aimed at evaluating the use of the various sites, including interviews, exploratory walks, observation sessions, and photographic commentary. It also served the simple function of being a spot for regular meetings where any could come and ask a question or contribute a comment at the moment that best suited their lifestyle.

LESSONS LEARNED

The drop-in office was relatively easy to set up in this case as the project team was already well known to neighbourhood residents. Trust had been established beforehand, given that the project had already carried out actions in line with the neighbourhood's requests. Holding regular office hours is useful for building a comprehensive and ongoing picture of life at the sites, and effective for reaching a diverse public — particularly when sessions are held outside normal working hours. On the other hand, it is a time-consuming process, which requires teams to be present at all times in conditions that are sometimes less comfortable than an office (heat, dust).

CAPACITY BUILDING

ASSESSMENT DESIGN **CONSTRUCTION** MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

Capacity building for local craftspeople is an approach that seeks to improve skills, so that project works, both current and future can be carried out to a higher quality. It also encourages the replication of innovations achieved. Its objective is to support craftspeople in strengthening their professional practices, from quotation to delivery.



VALUE

By ensuring the involvement of local labour and craftspeople, the project contributes to creating or strengthening local skills that will endure well beyond the project's end. While this approach may require spending more time on training before launching construction (which may be perceived as slowing down the process), this short-term investment will increase the long-term impact of a project in a given territory.

TIPS

Working with better-trained craftspeople who produce accurate quotations and quality work is an asset for the project. Beyond the benefit to the craftspeople themselves, this aspect must not be underestimated — integrating trainings starting from the very first construction site, will produce effects on subsequent ones. Local craftspeople should also be recognised as the de facto experts of the local market that they are.

PREPARATION

requires hours days weeks

cost € €€ €€€

prepared by architect technician

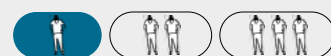
Before design even begins, it is best to have a thorough knowledge of locally available materials and skills, so as to know exactly what is feasible. Artisan support can then start at the quotation stage, to ensure their estimates are as accurate as possible and the construction site can be well managed.

FACILITATION

requires hours days weeks

cost € €€ €€€

facilitated by architect technician



Throughout the project process, regular check-ins with craftspeople are valuable. This can improve invoicing practices, accounting, material restocking methods, or dosage calculations — and can extend to tool management, construction waste disposal, or handling of surplus materials.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou**, supported by AMGT, carried out multiple construction works over the course of the project, building a wide range of sports facilities, a stage, two dismountable performance halls, and a reading room.

Some facilities posed genuine technical challenges, particularly children's play areas, since safe and durable models did not exist in Ouagadougou. In order to accompany their construction an expert-volunteer travelling to Ouagadougou several times in order to provide expertise to Gret and to work with the local artisans on the construction of playground elements that were compatible with local materials and constructions practices.

The equipment provided was innovative for Ouagadougou but very challenging for the workers.

The craftsmen spoke of the difficulty in meeting the standards of precision required for such a project. However, this rigorous training opened up other opportunities: nursery managers contacted the craftsmen to commission similar installations from them

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the challenges was sourcing materials such as high-quality timber or steel components that were strong enough to meet the specifications for a durable and safe children's playground.

It may be worth considering post-completion insurance, and therefore making tradespeople aware of their own responsibilities.

TRAINING CONSTRUCTION SITE

ASSESSMENT DESIGN **CONSTRUCTION** MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The training construction site is a modality of capacity building for local craftspeople, linked to a specific technique or to working with a particular material. It therefore also aims to improve conditions for construction work, while encouraging the replicability of innovations achieved.



VALUE

The construction site can be a stage for the transmission of knowledge and skills, serving a dual logic of improving local skills and of encouraging the replication of techniques. This moment is also an opportunity to strengthen ties between craftspeople from the same territory, fostering collaboration rather than competition. It also allows for the introduction of new materials (such as innovative low-carbon options) by training craftspeople in their use.

TIPS

It is important to identify who can serve as a trainer, depending on the technique to be acquired or the material to be used. It can also be valuable to strategically target the craftspeople to be trained, so they can be re-engaged on subsequent construction sites. Finally, the logistics of such an activity must be carefully planned — including transport and meals for participants — and the format must be well calibrated to the time available.

PREPARATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
cost ☐ € ☒ €€ ☐ €€€
prepared by ☒ technical manager

All participants must be identified and invited well in advance of the training, specifying the subject, date, and hours, as well as the conditions (transport and meals paid for, per diem, etc). A reminder should be sent a few days beforehand to confirm attendance. The workshop must be well calibrated, and all implementation and safety equipment for all participants must be prepared in advance.

FACILITATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks
cost ☐ € ☒ €€ ☐ €€€
facilitated by ☒ technical manager
☐ ☐ ☒

Each participant introduces themselves and explains their motivations. A general presentation of the project can then begin, to understand the context of the intervention. The technique or material and its implementation are then explained theoretically, before moving to practice — after distributing safety equipment and reviewing instructions.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A training construction site was set up in Pikine by the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar**.

It is important to adapt the type of training to locally identified skills. In the case of Dakar, the first training focused on paving — a technique whose complexity is often underestimated or overlooked. This reflects the broader lack of theoretical and technical training that the project modestly contributes to addressing.

LESSONS LEARNED

A training construction site was set up in Pikine by the Urban Fabric Initiative in Dakar. It is important to adapt the type of training to locally identified skills. In the case of Dakar, the first training focused on paving — a technique whose complexity is often underestimated or overlooked. This reflects the broader lack of theoretical and technical training that the project modestly contributes to addressing.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details here:
<https://studiobainem.com/portfolio-item/cite-icotaf/>



LABOUR-INTENSIVE CONSTRUCTION (LIC)

ASSESSMENT DESIGN **CONSTRUCTION** MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The aim of Labour-Intensive Construction (LIC) is to minimise disruption to essential daily services while strengthening local skills, confidence, and long-term prospects. In this way, construction works strengthen community capacities rather than extracting labour from the community.



VALUE

This approach addresses common challenges in construction in informal settlements: service disruption, exclusion of local labour, and insufficient transfer of responsibilities. By using local labour rather than machinery, construction remains embedded in the social fabric, sites remain functional, and communities acquire skills while benefiting from the economic impact of the project.

TIPS

Construction is not neutral. Clearly indicate who will benefit from employment opportunities and how rotations will be managed to prevent any group from monopolising hiring decisions. Some flexibility in schedules must be planned, particularly during festive periods. Training should be practical and linked to real tasks, not abstract sessions delivered after construction is complete.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
prepared by **social expert**
prepared by **technical expert**

It is essential to map existing services and daily routines before construction begins. Services that must remain operational should be identified, and construction should be phased accordingly. Principles of labour rotation — including hiring eligibility and duration — should also be designed from the outset with community organisations.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
cost **€** **€€** **€€€**
facilitated by **social expert**
technical expert
  

It is important to build in phases to maintain access to water, sanitation, and circulation for local residents. Using a rotating community workforce for defined tasks under professional supervision can be effective, as can integrating training focused on construction quality, safety, and skills related to future maintenance.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Nairobi** implemented labour-intensive construction works, aiming to serve as a model for staged construction and delivery.

Construction was phased to avoid disruption to essential services. Community labour was used on a rotating basis alongside qualified contractors, enabling residents to participate without any single group monopolising opportunities.

Trainings during construction mainly focused on maintenance and safe use of the facilities post-delivery, in order to facilitate the transition into their long-term management.

LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges included planning works around community availability and maintaining consistency across rotating teams. Going forward, clearer labour rotation protocols and additional safety supervision would be beneficial.

CALL FOR ACTIVATION PROJECTS

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

A call for activation projects aims to support activities that can take place on the project site, and to mobilise and encourage initiatives led by residents and associations on and around the site. Through a dedicated support fund, it encourages collective dynamics and contributes to energising neighbourhood life.



VALUE

A call for projects can be useful both at project launch and post-delivery. At launch it develops activities at potential sites before any facilities are delivered. These can serve as "experiments", where design and use hypotheses can be validated or invalidated before construction. Once facilities are delivered, on-site activities help inform locals that the site is ready for use. This may also encourage local laureate organisations to provide the lighter equipment needed to activate the space.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost € €€ €€€
 prepared by **social expert**
technical expert

Eligibility criteria and a clear scoring grid must be defined in advance, to ensure maximum transparency throughout the selection process. To encourage as many people as possible to submit, various training sessions can be offered, and a solid dissemination and communication strategy must be designed and implemented as early as possible.

TIPS

It is essential to clearly frame the terms of reference for the call for projects, in order to avoid inappropriate proposals. It can also be valuable to support resident groups or associations that wish to participate in drafting and budgeting their proposals, to ensure they are at least eligible. This will open the competition to all types of organisation, regardless of their level of formal structure.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**
 cost € €€ €€€
 facilitated by **social expert**
technical expert
 (1 person icon) (2 people icon) (3 people icon)

The call for projects must be widely disseminated to ensure a diversity of proposals. The whole process can then draw on different resource persons, whether within the project team or external, according to identified local needs.



LESSONS LEARNED

Project selection is a strategic step that can either build trust in the project or, conversely, lead to frustration and tension. To minimise the latter, there are several options available: one of these is to set up a selection committee comprising individuals from outside the project who are appreciated and respected. The project team can act as the committee's secretariat but must not vote, as it is not neutral – having supported the organisations during the set-up and assessment stages – and to avoid any suspicion following the selection process. Another option could be to allow inhabitants and service users to vote.

A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

The **Urban Fabric Initiative in Antananarivo** launched calls for activation projects at several of its sites.

This enabled the organisation of multiple events, following a selection process conducted over several months with strong support for organisations wishing to participate. Training sessions were notably offered on budgeting and financial management for proposals related to income-generating activities.

Groups and individuals submitting projects had the opportunity to participate in a two day training session to ensure that this subject was properly taken into account in their proposed projects.

FURTHER READING

More photos and details:
<https://pepinieres-urbaines.org/fr/actualites/antananarivo-inaugure-le-kianja-andraisoro-un-espace-public-pense-avec-les-habitantes/>

SHARED MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

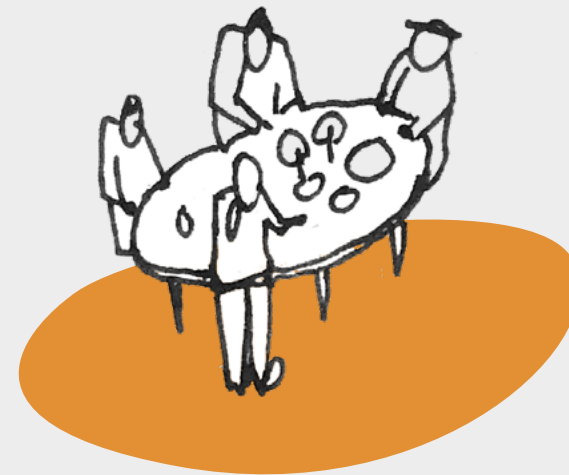
ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION **MANAGEMENT**

OBJECTIVES

To guarantee the sound functioning of public infrastructure and minimise risks of post-delivery deterioration, a shared management agreement formalises the division of responsibilities amongst maintenance stakeholders. The shared management agreement defines ownership of developments, daily operations, budgets, and the roles of each stakeholder.

VALUE

By defining who does what, when, and at what cost — and linking these questions to potential income-generating activities — shared responsibility and sustainability are created. Unlike services entirely managed by public actors or entirely by residents, this hybrid model offers a flexible structure. It creates a credible path for infrastructure to remain functional and responsive to local needs.



TIPS

Negotiate agreements from the design stage, not at the point of handover. Agreements alone are not sufficient to guarantee implementation: put in place inspection routines, reporting schedules, and feedback mechanisms that genuinely function. Do not underestimate the time required to negotiate roles between different public actors.

PREPARATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

cost € €€ €€€

prepared by **governance expert**

Identify the relevant local authority departments from the outset. Clarify the legal ownership of developments. Develop a simple shared agreement model covering, for example, asset ownership, the roles of community organisations, and minimum service standards. Link operations to revenue generation where appropriate.

FACILITATION

requires **hours** **days** **weeks**

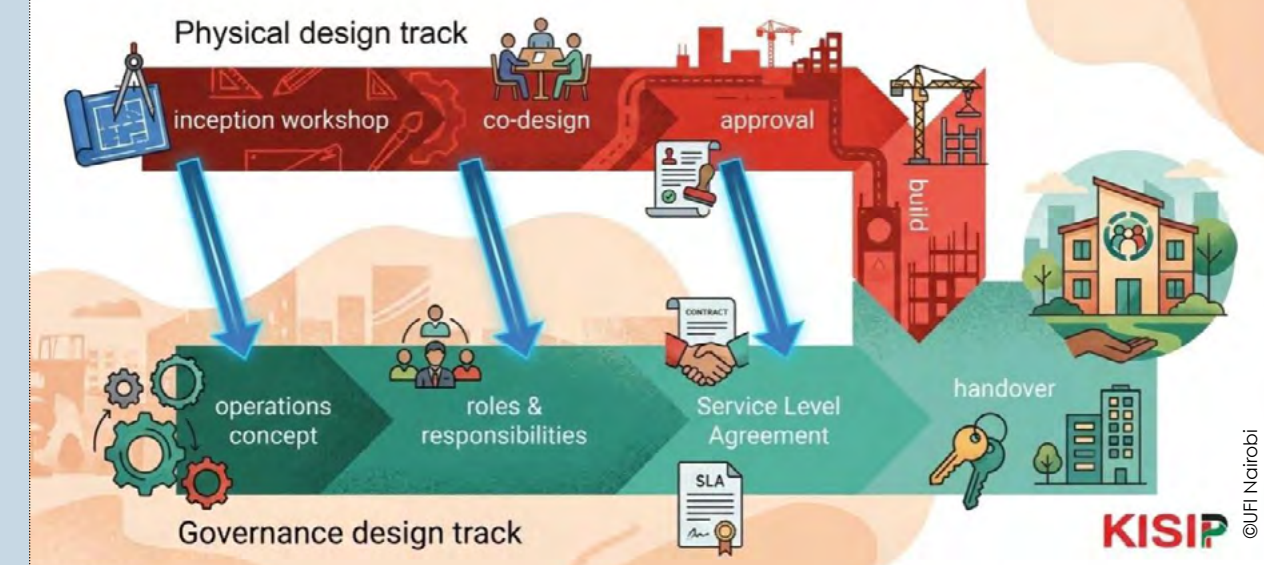
cost € €€ €€€

facilitated by **the whole team**

Ensure that revenues cover running costs through transparent financial reporting. Offer capacity building to community organisations as needed: on basic accounting, financial management, customer service and conflict resolution, or maintenance planning and minor repairs.



operations & maintenance | la gestion durable



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

In the case of the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Nairobi**, post-construction management was formalised through shared management agreements between local associations and the municipal services of the City of Nairobi.

For example, at the City Carton market site, the agreement assigned the City responsibility for structural integrity, quarterly safety inspections, and major repairs. The community organisation of market vendors manages daily operations: attribution of stalls, cleaning schedule, fee collection, minor repairs and conflict management amongst vendors. The income from stall hire covers the wages of two attendants, cleaning supplies, public utilities and a maintenance reserve fund.

LESSONS LEARNED

Negotiations took longer than expected — four months instead of the initially planned six weeks — as several city departments needed to clarify overlapping mandates. The most difficult question to resolve was defining the boundary between minor repairs (the OSC's responsibility) and major repairs (the county's responsibility). Ultimately, a monetary threshold and a safety criterion were established.

RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

ASSESSMENT

DESIGN

CONSTRUCTION

MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The responsibility matrix aims to specify and reach agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the different actors in charge of managing a site or facility, in order to ensure its longevity. Presented in table form, this matrix is designed to formalise the commitment made by each person or actor.



VALUE

In contexts where management of a public space and collective facilities is shared among multiple actors (residents, site facilitators, public authority employees, etc), the responsibility matrix clarifies the division of tasks. For each function, it determines where each entity's responsibility begins and ends, verifies complementarities, and avoids duplication.

TIPS

Identifying all the tasks required to maintain the space in question is a key step for successful management: overlooking a single link can block the entire chain and contribute to the progressive deterioration of the site. For each task, an entity or individual must be designated as responsible. Given its importance, this tool should be used from the design stage, so that construction and management are aligned from the outset.

PREPARATION

requires

hours

days

weeks

cost

€

€€

€€€

prepared by

governance expert

A responsibility matrix takes the simple form of a table: all tasks or responsibilities to be assumed are listed in a vertical column, and actors with a role in management — however minor — are listed in a horizontal row. Once all cells are filled in, the document must be shared with all persons involved.

FACILITATION

requires

hours

days

weeks

cost

€

€€

€€€

facilitated by

facilitator

This responsibility matrix must be completed in the presence of all stakeholders, in order to verify that they are able to carry out the tasks assigned to them and to create a shared sense of responsibility in managing the space. Each task is examined one by one, and primary and substitute responsible parties must be entered in the table.



FONCTIONS	MISSIONS	Autorité locale	Service X	Service Y	Usager.e.s
Gestion quotidienne	Activité A				
	Activité B				
	Activité C				
Entretien et maintenance des équipements et des aménagements	Activité D				
	Activité E				
	Activité F				
Sensibilisation et communication	Activité G				
	Activité H				
	Activité I				
Résolution des conflits potentiels ou existants entre les parties prenantes de l'initiative	Activité J				
Collecte et gestion des fonds pour le financement de l'initiative urbaine	Activité K				
	Activité L				



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

From the very design stage of the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Ouagadougou**, the question of management was raised. In a context where the local authority was struggling to maintain collective structures, the initiative proposed a hybrid management model: the creation of management committees that directly involve users in the daily management of the sites.

Given the multiplicity of stakeholders intervening on the sites, the responsibility matrix clarified the roles of each one, allowing each one not only to propose and understand their own responsibilities but also identify those of other stakeholders so as to know who to contact in the event of a given problem or repair need.

LESSONS LEARNED

The management system was progressively improved as new needs were identified: for example, security surveillance, which had not been planned initially, proved necessary at certain sites. As a project advances, it may be wise to review the matrix in order to identify who is responsible for these newly emerging tasks.

USAGE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The usage assessment enables improvement first of the design and then the management of a site. By observing what activities actually take place on the site and conducting a detailed review of its functioning — what works, what does not, and what is needed — the aim is to achieve a facility that is as well-designed as possible and as well-managed as possible by the stakeholders.

VALUE

The usage assessment is akin to a mid-term diagnostic of how a space is functioning. It allows for evaluation of changes in use after a public space has been developed, in order to adapt management, strengthen appropriation, and improve future projects. To do this, it combines several data collection methods — quantitative and qualitative — such as site observations, interviews, or focus groups.

PREPARATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 prepared by governance expert
technical manager

Decide which data collection methods will be used in your usage assessment and prepare them in advance. Data collected at each stage of the assessment should feed into the tools for the next stage: if the team observes a dysfunction in the space, users should be interviewed to find its cause. Documents must therefore be updated on an ongoing basis.



TIPS

The usage assessment is an opportunity to identify dysfunctions or oversights in a project. Particular attention can be paid to how more vulnerable people use the sites, if reflection on the inclusivity of the space was not specifically integrated into the project's design. How are spaces used, for example, by women, people with disabilities, or children?

FACILITATION

requires hours days weeks
 cost € €€ €€€
 facilitated by governance expert
1 person 2 people 3 people

Once data has been collected, it must be analysed by the project team to identify the space's issues, their causes, and possible avenues for improvement to guide the project going forward. The results of the usage assessment can be presented to the stakeholders of the space in question, to sustain this community mobilisation.



A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

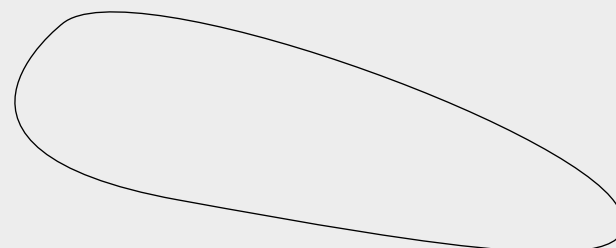
A mid-project usage assessment was conducted by the team of the **Urban Fabric Initiative in Antananarivo**. It began with observations of the sites developed by the project. Observation grids included questions on weather conditions, users present, age and gender, activities taking place, the most-used zones, and conversely the inactive ones. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with people at the sites, to ask for their opinion on the space, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. Finally, focus groups were organised amongst target groups (neighbourhood organisation, small business owners, etc.) in order to delve deeper on specific subjects.

LESSONS LEARNED

The usage assessment aims to evaluate the impact of facilities on how the space is used, and also to adapt them based on what emerges. While relevant new requests were expressed during the assessment, the project did not have a budget to finance these additional works. This possible post-use adaptation of works should be factored into the project's initial budget, in order to retain an envelope for adapting facilities after the assessment.



OBJECTIVES

This image shows a blank sheet of handwriting practice paper. It features a solid wavy line at the top, followed by ten horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page for writing practice.

VALUE

[illegible]

TIPS

[illegible]

PREPARATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks

hours

days

weeks

cost

€

€€

€€€

prepared by (.....)

[illegible]

FACILITATION

requires ☐ hours ☒ days ☐ weeks

hours

days

weeks

cost

€

€€

€€€

facilitated by (.....)

[illegible]

A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

[illegible]

LESSONS LEARNED

[illegible]

FURTHER READING

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.....

.....

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U.F.I. ABIDJAN

2020-2022
CRSR / urbaplan / Cabanon Vertical

U.F.I. ANTANANARIVO

2023-2026
Gret / Cabanon Vertical

U.F.I. DAKAR

2020-2023
Gret / urbaSEN / urbaMonde
Studio Baïnem / Transitec

U.F.I. KIGALI

2023-2026
Rwanda Women Network / Bantu /
Espelia

U.F.I. OUAGADOUGOU

2018-2025
Gret / Humanité & Inclusion

U.F.I. NAIROBI

2022-2026
Konkuey Design Initiative / Slumdweller's
International Kenya / Akiba Mashinani
Trust

CREDITS

This toolkit was developed by Ciara Hamilton (Gret) and Florent Chiappero (urbaMonde), based on tools designed and created by the operators of the Urban Fabric Initiatives, and with the support of the Urban Fabric Initiatives Coordination Team: Bénédicte Hinschberger (urbaMonde), Fatou-Maty Diouf (Gret), Clémentine Laratte (Gret), Naïk Lashermes (Gret), Olivier Bedu (Cabanon Vertical), and Virginie Rachmuhl (Gret). It was designed by Florent Chiappero (urbaMonde/StudioBaïnem). Thank you to the Urban Fabric Initiatives operators for their contributions.

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July 2026



En partenariat
avec

