Scaling Urban Transitions: From The MACBAM Living Lab To Replication Across European Cities

From Knowledge to Competitiveness

Portugal-US Partnerships 2026 Summit

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MPP Sustainable Cities

01 RESEARCH CONTEXT & OBJECTIVE

Urban transitions require more than infrastructure. They also depend on changing behaviours, attitudes, mindsets & institutional capacity.

MACBAM

CASE STUDY | CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN QUARTER, BRAGA • PORTUGAL • 2022–2024

Methodology to Accelerate Change in Behaviors, Attitudes and Mindsets towards Sustainable Urban Mobility.



The 2026 research question is no longer only whether MACBAM works in one Living Lab, but:

How can it be transferred, adapted and scaled across cities?

This research aims to identify the conditions, mechanisms and challenges for replicating and scaling MACBAM across contexts.

02 EVIDENCE FROM CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN QUARTER

2022 - 2024

CO-CREATION PROCESS





Various events for public participation to support the development of the preliminary framework and enhance the co-creation process, as well as the presentation of the final project and the evaluation of the actions.

• > 300 participants in public sessions; • 970 participants in focus groups; • > 100 participants in the Transition Arenas.

TRANSITION EXPERIMENTS

PARKLET (P)



COLLABORATIVE PAINTING (CP)



LIVABLE STREET (LS)



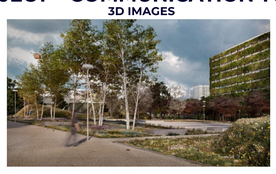
The majority agree with these measures (70% - P; 59,7% - CP; 81% LS);
Impact on changes in the use of public space: (18,1% - P; 31%- CP; 15.2%-LS).
Contribution to Furthering the Debate on SUM: (9.5% - P; 11,9%- CP; 44.8%-LS)

2050 PROJECT – COMMUNICATION TOOLS

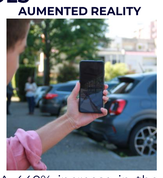
2D PROJECT



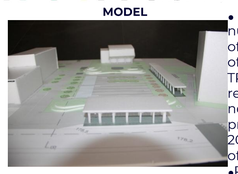
3D IMAGES



AUMENTED REALITY



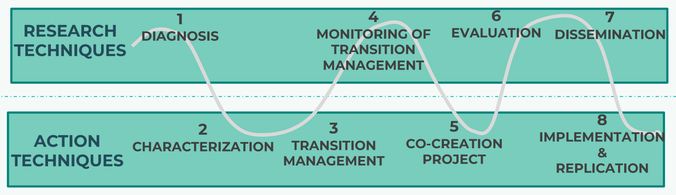
MODEL



• 750 surveys; • A 27% increase in walking; • A 440% increase in the number of residents who ride bicycles; • An increase in the percentage of residents who use the garage; • Reduction of road space & Reduction of illegal parking; • 70% of respondents moved up one level on the TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIORAL CHANGE, and the rest remained at the same level; • The communication tools ensured that nearly all respondents were aware of the project; ; • 98% agree with the project; ; • 84% would like to see the 2050 project implemented before 2030; • Value of the methodology for participatory governance; ; • Value of combining the project's communication tools (3D and AR); •Pioneering agents, in the majority, drive positive change among the rest (65% of participants improved by at least one level in terms of attitudes and mindsets, and 17% in terms of behaviors); • Those who were initially the least supportive came to accept the changes.

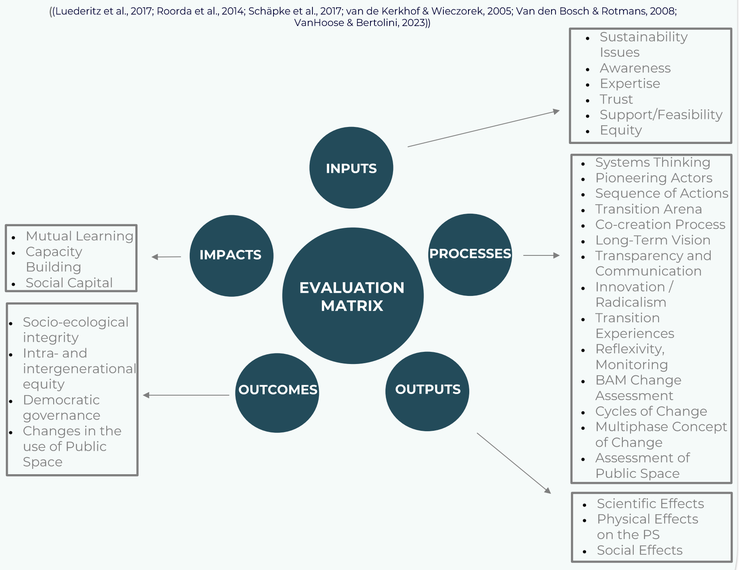
03 METHODOLOGY

FROM ONE LIVING LAB → A NETWORKED REPLICATION FRAMEWORK



EVALUATION MATRIX – COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

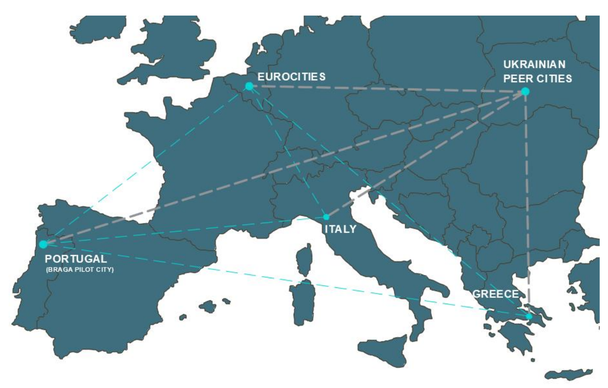
((Luederitz et al., 2017; Roorda et al., 2014; Schäpke et al., 2017; van de Kerkhof & Wieczorek, 2005; Van den Bosch & Rotmans, 2008; VanHoose & Bertolini, 2023))



Core mechanisms: Transition Arenas · Transition Experiments · Co-creation · Future Thinking · Spatial prototyping · Aumented Reality · Social learning · Capacity building

04 REPLICATION FIELD

EUROPEAN COLLABORATION AS A TEST BED



05 MAIN OUTCOMES

WHAT IS BEING TESTED THROUGH REPLICATION?

- Which MACBAM components remain robust across contexts?
- Which components require adaptation to local spatial, institutional and socio-cultural conditions?
- How can co-creation and capacity building strengthen acceptance of public-space redistribution?
- How can local experiments connect with long-term climate and sustainability goals?
- How can learning between cities support transfer without turning MACBAM into a prescriptive model?



EXPECTED OUTPUT

A transferable framework that combines methodological consistency with contextual adaptation.

06 SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION & IMPACT

MACBAM bridges three domains:

URBAN DESIGN
Spatial transformation

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE
Behaviours · attitudes · mindsets

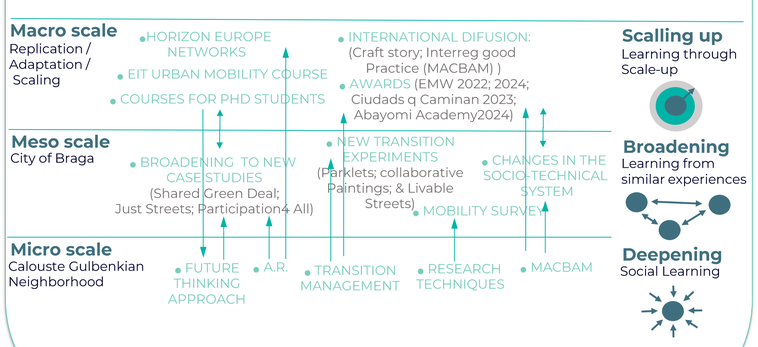
TRANSITION GOVERNANCE
Institutions · participation · learning

MULTILEVEL PERSPECTIVE

(Geels, 2002)

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

(Van den Bosch & Rotmans, 2008)



Broader impact: strengthen cities' capacity to implement inclusive, climate-responsive and sustainable urban systems through co-creation, experimentation and knowledge transfer.

Replication is being explored/evaluated through Horizon Europe, Eurocities and CIVITAS collaboration.

KEYWORDS

Urban Transitions · Living Labs · Co-creation · Capacity Building · Social Learning · Transition Management · Sustainable Urban Mobility

THE RESEARCH TRAJECTORY

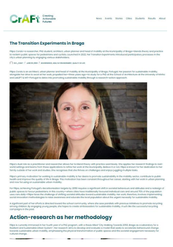
PLACE-BASED EXPERIMENTATION → EVIDENCE → REPLICATION → ADAPTATION → SCALING (TRANSFER+SOCIAL LEARNING) → SYSTEMIC URBAN TRANSITION

Drawing on the convergence of critical thinking, situated action, and transdisciplinary experimentation, this research sought to pave the way for a new way of conceiving and shaping the city—a way that recognizes co-creation, active listening, and the shared construction of the future as the pillars of a truly transformative transition. The MACBAM methodology, proposed and tested here, is part of this collective effort to reimagine public space as a field of possibilities, where changes in behaviors, attitudes, and mindsets are not an imposed agenda but a progressive process rooted in the local context and the bonds between its actors.Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

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DISSEMINATIONS



https://craft-cities.eu/stories/the-transition-experiments-in-braga/



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