

CULTUUR&CAMPUS PUTSELAAN

Evidence-based policy recommendations

Deliverable D7.8



Gemeente Rotterdam



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Acronyms and Definitions

Acronym	Meaning
AWC	Afrikaanderwijk Coöperatie
BUZ	Stichting Buzinezzclub Foundation
C&CP	Cultuur&Campus Putselaan
CA	Consortium Agreement
COD	Stichting Codarts voor de Kunsten
EC	European Commission
ELIA	European League of Institutes of the Arts
EUR	Erasmus University Rotterdam
HR	Stichting Hogeschool Rotterdam
ICLEI	ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
RDAM	Gemeente Rotterdam
TU Delft	Technische Universiteit Delft
WDKA	Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam
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1. Abstract

As described in the Grant Agreement, the evidence-based policy recommendations deliverable (7.8) provides a set of policy recommendations based on the findings of the project and lived experiences of participants and stakeholders. The goal of the policy recommendations is to inspire and stimulate policy makers to create a policy framework conducive to the conditions that nurture co-creative and daring projects in a similar vein to Culture&Campus Putselaan (C&CP). The set of policy recommendations is sub-divided into two categories. The first set focusses on presence: the ideas and insights that drive projects such as C&CP, the importance of co-creation. As logical as these recommendations may sound, co-creation appears one of the biggest challenges for institutional partners. The second set aims to provide more practical guidance during such projects. The policy recommendations will be published online on the project website.

2. About the Cultuur & Campus Putselaan Project

Cultuur&Campus Putselaan (C&CP) pilots a new approach to city making through education, research, policy and culture at the heart of Rotterdam South. The C&CP is located on the Putselaan. In our approach, we facilitate the coming together of different types of knowledge - theoretical, practical, from the arts and sciences - with the lived experiences of citizens. We do so in three ways.

First, by co-creating a vibrant site of encounter, dialogue and shared learning. The C&CP is housed in a historical building, the refurbishment of which unites a sustainable re-design vision of students of architecture and built environment, with the wishes and needs of local stakeholders, in a part of town where education and cultural institutions are scarce. This is a hub for students, residents, social enterprise start-ups, lecturers and researchers – a place for learning, studying, community, art and culture. C&CP connects to existing initiatives and spaces, while also providing a unique hub for higher education in the area.

Second, we facilitate empowering the co-design of impact-oriented learning curricula that can make the area more sustainable, inclusive, and enriching. From sustainable crafts and repair workshops open to all, to lifelong learning formats and Master level courses, we will test innovative didactic approaches geared towards activating and inspiring citizens, students, and lecturers in shaping a better future for Rotterdam South.

Third, we ground our approach to research in participatory research and citizen science, that empowers residents to take part in the processes that shape their city and delivers a sound understanding of the area, its challenges and opportunities, based on shared ownership.

With C&CP, we aim to create a positive and lasting impact, working together towards a thriving future for Rotterdam Zuid.

Consortium

- Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
- Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam
- Hogeschool Rotterdam (Affiliate of WDKA)
- Codarts University for the Arts
- Afrikaanderwijk Coöperatie
- Municipality of Rotterdam
- Buzinezzclub
- ELIA
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

3. Introduction to the evidence-based policy recommendations

We have drawn up these recommendations for policymakers at the municipal and local levels who are launching projects aimed at territorial transformation. Most recommendations are applicable to any territorial transformation project, but some are focused on projects that rely on external funding bodies. The recommendations focus on two categories from which we have learnt the most.

The first set of recommendations concerns your presence in the area. Your presence is determined by who you are and how you wish to relate to other stakeholders in the area. Co-creation is not merely a technique; it is primarily about the understanding of roles (who has which responsibilities) and the vision of one's own identity. If there is a (hidden) conviction that, as an institution or collective of institutions, you do not bear ultimate responsibility for objectives, then there is scope for genuine co-creation and co-ownership.

The second set concerns the organisational aspects. This revolves around the paradox between, on the one hand, decisiveness, predictability and accountability and, on the other hand, leaving as much scope as possible for determining the course and filling in the programme in collaboration with local partners. This requires trust in the process and in partners whom you do not yet know, even partially, beforehand.

We have summarised these two sets into 10 recommendations. Together with the toolkit, these recommendations form a single whole. The recommendations are evidence-based. They are supported by academic literature, research and known best practices, but above all by the experiences we have gained and gathered in the lessons learned reports of the project. Other sources include the MOOC on the project website¹²

The recommendations do not reflect in every respect how C&CP approached the project. We have also written them for ourselves. They have become recommendations not just for the next stage of C&CP, but also for our other future projects. Co-creation, in particular, proved more difficult than anticipated. We incorporated it wholeheartedly into our approach and took action on it, but part of the co-creation was subsequently lost in the attempt to fit the concept into our organisations' systems. The co-creation of communal spaces open to the neighbourhood simply became a classroom in the final phase of the renovation. Security and cleaning staff were supposed to be people living in the neighbourhood but were instead sourced from outside the neighbourhood, in accordance with existing contracts. The good news is that C&CP is not

² [Co-creation at Cultuur&Campus Putselaan: a MOOC and Online Repository](#)

finished with the opening of the building or the completion of the NEB phase. We are continuing to build, with our own recommendations in mind.

4. Policy recommendations set I – Presence

'Het gaat over vertrouwen, en dat zit 'm niet in indicatoren, toolkits of handelingsrepertoires. Het gaat over allerlei onhandige, ondoordachte en vaak onbedoelde momenten die, bij elkaar opgeteld, de kloof tussen de leef- en systeemwereld veroorzaken.'

'It is about trust, and it does not lie in indicators, toolkits or action repertoires. It's about all kinds of awkward, unconsidered and often unintended moments which, when taken together, cause the divide between the lived world and the system world.' — Prof. Nanke Verloo (2023)

4.1 Think big, start small

In urban regeneration, there is significant investment in small, temporary projects. These types of projects are relatively quick and easy to set up, but have little impact and often disappear from view without anyone noticing. Investment is also made in very large-scale projects. These are attractive to piggyback on and, if successful, are highly visible. However, these projects often struggle to get off the ground, or fail to do so at all, because the lead time is too long. They often lack a connection with local residents, partly because it is unclear when it is in their interests to get involved. Successful area development lies somewhere in the middle: you need to think big but start small, with the prospect of scaling up if successful.³

Recommendations:

1. Stakeholders will get on board if you have a lofty goal and if you are ambitious. The investment you make must contribute to a social goal. A lofty goal is your compass.
2. The goal must, however, be specific. An 'area regeneration' or 'resilient society' is too abstract and lacks sufficient meaning. You won't get partners on board with that. 'A qualification for everyone based on the skills and knowledge they possess' is also a lofty goal, but specific enough that you know what your project stands for and what value it adds to the city.⁴
3. If you start on a large scale straight away, the chances of success are slim. There is a high risk that other interests will take precedence over the original aim of the project. The pressure to succeed immediately makes it difficult to develop the concept iteratively and thus learn as you go. Ultimately, large-scale projects are too big to be genuinely co-created with residents and other stakeholders. The bigger you are, the less responsive you can be to the needs of the neighbourhood. So start small, but big enough to make an impact in the long run.⁵

4.2 Commit for the long run

Area regeneration is a long-term endeavour. The government often launches initiatives in deprived neighbourhoods. Residents see these initiatives arrive and then disappear again within a few years or even months. Residents have therefore become sceptical about the sincerity of

³ Timmermans, Frauke. *Periodic Lessons Learned #3*. Deliverable D7.5, Cultuur&Campus Putselaan / Erasmus University Rotterdam, 3 July 2025, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101079929/results>. Accessed 2nd of July 2026, p 22.

⁴ Idem, p 21.

⁵ Idem, p 24.

these initiatives and have little or no confidence that it is worthwhile to contribute to them. This temporary nature reinforces residents' belief that the government does not take these neighbourhoods seriously: 'for the council, the only thing that matters is ticking a project off the list, not the impact it is supposed to have'⁶. It is predictable that the government will subsequently become disappointed in what they perceive as residents' limited willingness to take action for their own neighbourhood.

Recommendations:

1. If you launch a project intended to make an impact, commit to it for at least seven years. Every project needs two to three years to become visibly successful and to connect with the local community. The impact lies in the programming, not in the building. Ensure long-term programming.⁷
2. Do not create pop-up venues. These are appealing to policymakers, but both their temporary nature and their 'vintage' or 'raw industrial' aesthetic only reinforce residents' sense of marginalisation. In these neighbourhoods, many people have a background of poverty, and a vintage or raw industrial look is perceived as shabby. This is evident from conversations we have had with local residents on this subject. By providing facilities that radiate poverty, the government inadvertently widens the gap with residents.⁸
3. Be aware that the neighbourhood's trust in the government and other institutions – and therefore also its trust in the project – is a two-way street. It requires constant attention against a backdrop of deep mistrust in the government. Ensure that the facility manager is 100% aware of this.⁹

4.3 Co-creation: a path towards co-ownership

Co-creation is an important precondition in many projects, yet in practice it frequently goes wrong. Stakeholders and residents become frustrated because they are occasionally invited to contribute ideas but see little of their input reflected in the final result. Most projects originate within institutions and are only presented to residents and co-creators at a later stage, by which point a vision is already in place or there is too little time to develop one together. The decision to proceed with the project has, after all, already been taken. In that case any invite of co-creation will turn out false. If you do not wish for, or able to integrate, co-creation, it is also alright as long as you are honest about it. One can expect opposition from the stakeholders and residents if you 'co-wash' your project: claiming after the fact that it was based co-creation.

⁶ Culture Campus & Community Participation (C&CP). (2023). Needs Assessment Plan and Implementation (Deliverable D2.1). Ares (2023)3801142.

⁷ Frauke Timmermans, *Periodic Lessons Learned #3*, Deliverable D7.5, Cultuur&Campus Putselaan / Erasmus University Rotterdam, 3 July 2025, EC Document Ref. Ares(2025)5347916, p. 24.

⁸ Culture Campus & Community Participation (C&CP). (2023). Needs Assessment Plan and Implementation (Deliverable D2.1). Ares (2023)3801142, p 69.

⁹ Idem, p 51.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a roadmap. Draw up a timeline with clear phases, indicating at which moments people are invited to contribute and on which topics. Co-creation does not mean that everyone can weigh in on everything at any time. Contributors want to know where they stand and what they can expect. A roadmap also supports continuity when project team members change.¹⁰
2. Build in space for co-creation in the proposal. When submitting a proposal to a granting authority or a funding body such as the EU, ensure that the content of individual roadmap steps is kept as open as possible. A fully elaborated proposal anticipates the outcomes of a co-creation process before that process has taken place.
3. As a funder, steer towards results, not prescriptions. The recommendation to grant-makers is to require concrete outcomes whilst leaving room for flexibility in how those outcomes are achieved.¹¹
4. Be transparent about expectations and pace. Smaller parties and residents (the lived world) tend to expect swift solutions, whilst institutional players (the system world) require considerably more time to reach formally authorised decisions. Making this difference explicit ensures that co-creators have a realistic understanding of what the process entails.¹²
5. Follow co-creation with co-implementation. This keeps local stakeholders engaged and committed. Co-implementation also presents an opportunity to actively involve local residents and small businesses as contributing parties.¹³
6. Work towards co-ownership from the outset. Co-ownership as an end-goal should inform decisions throughout the entire project. Shared decision-making power — distinct from questions of property ownership — should be formally enshrined in the relevant legal agreements. And if you cannot work with co-creation, let alone co-ownership, be frank about it.

4.4 Define your core identity – it shapes your context

Your identity determines how you design the building, how you organise yourself, how you relate to the neighbourhood, what kind of partners you seek, who you want to programme events in your building, who handles day-to-day management, and what house rules you apply. No matter how well you have conceived and developed the concept in advance, over time your understanding of what you are at your core and what you have to offer will change.¹⁴

Recommendations:

¹⁰ Frauke Timmermans, *Periodic Lessons Learned #3*, Deliverable D7.5, Cultuur&Campus Putselaan / Erasmus University Rotterdam, 3 July 2025, EC Document Ref. Ares(2025)5347916, p 25.

¹¹ Idem, p 21.

¹² Idem, p 22.

¹³ Also see Cultuurcampus Lexicon (D8.4, Aïssatou Traoré, Max Kloppers, 31st of October 2025) for the C&CP definitions of co-creation, co-implementation and co-ownership: <https://doi.org/10.3030/101079929>

¹⁴ Frauke Timmermans, *Periodic Lessons Learned #3*, Deliverable D7.5, Cultuur&Campus Putselaan / Erasmus University Rotterdam, 3 July 2025, EC Document Ref. Ares(2025)5347916, p. 21.

1. Define what you are. It helps to give it a single word (school, university, workshop, debate centre, etc.) that largely captures the essence. Also define the core principles on which you wish to operate. Avoid the trap of listing every appealing-sounding principle in succession. Every fine principle has significant implications for who you are (or are not), what you do (or do not do) and how you operate (or do not operate). It is better to choose one or two principles rather than ten and work them out in detail.
2. Work this out not only with people who are passionate about the content, but also with those who provide the enabling conditions: property, security, insurance, legal affairs and finance. Their job is to manage risks and ensure everything fits within the established institutional frameworks. The later they become involved, the greater the chance that the previously chosen identity will still change in the final phase.

4.5 Redefine your institutional role – towards brokering

This policy recommendation is specifically aimed at public authorities. Projects such as Cultuur&Campus are about sustainable collaboration with organisations and individuals in the city to enable social and territorial transformation. By working together locally, in a physical location, you can achieve a greater impact than through remote collaboration. This requires a way of working that is not common in many of the government's traditional roles. This is the commitment of civil servants who collaborate sustainably with partners in the city, maintain a strong local presence, actively connect parties with one another and bring their own interests to bear, with the aim of strengthening those relationships, finding space by pushing boundaries and achieving more successful interventions. This role is described as that of a 'broker'. Actively connecting actors whilst also being an actor with a stake of one's own creates tension. In projects such as C&CP, these are not incidental or peripheral phenomena; rather, these tensions must form the very core of the government's remit. The recommendation is to assign at least one civil servant this role as a broker and to align the back office accordingly.¹⁵

Brokerage

- Brokerage in governance is not the same as mediation. It is an intermediary function that enhances the relationship between actors but does so also serve its own interests.
- Brokers are boundary spanners. These are individuals who keep the cogwheels turning in a collaboration, by maintaining interactions with the partnering organizations Boundary spanners can strengthen the interpersonal trust at the interface between the partner organisation and the home organisation. Boundary spanning often comes with tensions as it challenges the established ways of working.
- Brokers have a long-term commitment to a project, network or neighbourhood, and they are often present at the site. A lot of information is gathered incidentally and can be noticed only by being present. Furthermore, many things occur spontaneously and outside of any planning.

¹⁵ Idem, p 22.

- Brokers need active support from their own organisation. Brokers come up with all sorts of projects and collaborations that do not always fit in with the administrative rules of the home organisation. They are often regarded as disruptive by internal management. A broker can only fulfill the role if there is an explicit mandate to be disruptive in order to help opening up the home organisation for developments in society.

New government perspective

Brokerage requires a new understanding of the government's role.

The Netherlands School of Public Administration (NSOB) developed a model distinguishing four governance philosophies arranged in a two-by-two matrix. The axes distinguish between government-led and society-led steering, and between result-oriented and condition-oriented approaches.

NSOB distinguishes four types of government:¹⁶

- The legitimate government formulates policy objectives and civil servants implement them. In doing so, the government safeguards rights and obligations and performs well if the agreed procedures are followed. Government steering is hierarchical. The focus is on delivering good governance.
- The performance-oriented government focuses on performance. Effectiveness and efficiency are key aspects of this role. Results must be measurable and assessable against criteria such as time, money and specific objectives.
- Just as with the performance-oriented government, the networking government is all about achieving results. But the approach is different: the government does not act alone. It seeks partnerships to achieve objectives or responds to invitations from other parties to collaborate. From this networking role, there is scope for consultation and negotiation with stakeholders. The government acts as a connector and guardian of the process, monitoring progress and substantive steps.
- The responsive government is one that engages with relevant parties and social movements and combines these with its own administrative remit. These mutual relationships are not laid down in formal processes or contracts but exist through maintaining contact with one another.

Brokerage lies on the boundary between the network-oriented and responsive government. A broker represents their own interests more clearly than the responsive government does but is less controlling and directive than the network-oriented government would require. An open attitude towards partners in the network that appears to be focused on cooperation but ultimately turns out to have a hidden agenda is fatal to cooperation. This is referred to in the literature as 'the shadow of hierarchy'. The art of brokerage (the broker and his or her organisation) lies in avoiding this pitfall.

Recommendations:

¹⁶ <https://communicatiekompas.nl/vakmanschap/rollen-van-de-overheid>

1. In a project such as this, include the objective of learning from residents and partners within and around the project. In doing so, you explicitly take on the role of a responsive government.
2. Appoint at least one broker, with a broad mandate to collaborate with partners and to use their own organisation as one of those partners. Sometimes it helps to have a colleague represent the interests of the home organisation, so that the broker can act on behalf of all parties.
3. Give the broker the freedom to push boundaries, so that this person can collaborate with new parties and organise new forms of crossovers between topics, but also by supporting them in arranging payments and other administrative tasks if these do not fit within the system.
4. Appoint the broker for a longer period (preferably for the duration of the project; at least two years) and give this person sufficient hours to be on site for the majority (or at least half) of their working time.

5. Policy recommendations set II – Organisation

5.1 Assemble a project team with a comprehensive mandate

Projects in which various parties share responsibility have the potential to be highly effective. In such projects, the partners each contribute their own expertise and make personnel and resources available. In the grant that funded C&CP, a New European Bauhaus grant as part of the EU's Horizon Europe program, the tasks are divided into work packages. Each partner has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of one or more work packages.¹⁷ Those responsible for the work packages work together as a team. The structure is clear but potentially leads to inefficient practices. Too narrowly scoped work packages result in a fragmentation of responsibilities, leaving no single party with the authority to ensure that the individual elements and deliverables are properly aligned.¹⁸

These risks are manageable when considered in the proposals to prospective funding bodies or project sponsors.

Furthermore, the individual project team-members loyalties do not always completely align with the team (the whole) but sometimes with their own organisation's.¹⁹ Especially when budgets and responsibilities are fragmented. This makes it difficult to manage people and decisions as a team.²⁰ It also leads to a lack of financial transparency, as each partner is responsible for a portion of the budget.²¹

Recommendations:

1. Put together a team with a project leader who manages the team members and is given the mandate to do so by the participating parties. Although the team members are provided by the parties, they should work under the leadership of the project leader for the execution of this project. This allows the team and the project leader to make adjustments where necessary.
2. Give the team and the project leader the mandate to implement the results of the co-creation process. This will enable the team to clarify more quickly what the team and its partner organisations can deliver. Otherwise, co-creation is nothing more than a suggestion or opinion for the decision-makers within the institutions.
3. Have the entire budget managed by one of the parties acting as treasurer. Only allocate the budgets for staffing across the various organisations, not procurement of materials and services. Agree on a procedure for deciding on budget deviations and assign

¹⁷ Frauke Timmermans, *Periodic Lessons Learned #3*, Deliverable D7.5, Cultuur&Campus Putselaan / Erasmus University Rotterdam, 3 July 2025, EC Document Ref. Ares(2025)5347916, p 13-14.

¹⁸ Idem, p. 14.

¹⁹ Idem, p 13.

²⁰ Idem, p 9-10.

²¹ Idem, p 21.

responsibility to the project leader or a designated team member. This promotes both transparent financial management and the speed at which decisions can be made.²²

5.2 Organise to be agile and responsive to ideas from co-creators

At some point in time you will have set up your project through co-creation, co-implementation and co-ownership. Long-term agreements and governance arrangements are in place. Even though local residents and stakeholders are included and have decision-making power, this does not mean that the projects should become static. It is important to stay agile. To stay responsive. New local initiatives or ideas will pop up or might be discovered through outreach. If they do, you want to be able to facilitate such bottom-up initiatives. In order to achieve this you need to be able to broker between existing activities, planned activities and different groups of stakeholders. Not by deciding top-down, but by brokering between stakeholders in the network. You also need design your organisation and governance in such a way that you maintain flexibility.

Recommendations:

1. Keep capacity available in the building for new spontaneous ideas, initiatives etc.
2. Make a provision in your budget for such initiatives which can be used on short notice without complicated procedures.

5.3 Ensure availability of funds and mandates to pay non-professional co-creators

The basis of successful co-creation is equality. In practice, this is limited, as institutional partners often have more time for this than residents and also experience the work differently. The inequality also lies in who is and who is not paid for their collaboration. The starting point is often that residents do not need to be paid because they reap the benefits of the project in other ways, but this is usually not the case. They invest more time and effort than they gain from it personally.

Recommendations:

1. Include in the budget provision for paying residents who contribute ideas and work towards the joint outcome. Ensure fair pay.
2. Receiving volunteer contributions is subject to restrictions. Also support and advise non-professional co-creators in this regard: take into account the impact on benefits and taxes.

²² Ibidem.

3. Employ residents for a number of roles and offer them an employment contract. Genuine co-creation with the neighbourhood cannot happen without some of these people.

5.4 Formalize long term institutional financial commitments early on

A sustainable commitment to the neighbourhood requires a sustainable commitment between the partners themselves. They must set out very clear agreements regarding the continuity of the project in the neighbourhood. Experience shows that many collaborative initiatives receive less attention from the partners once they have started, after which, during a round of budget cuts, their involvement is reduced or terminated, or the project's continuation remains uncertain right up until the last moment each year. This undermines the project's effectiveness and also causes other partners to drop out. This is a persistent pattern that requires firm agreements to be made in advance.

Recommendations:

1. Draw up a multi-year budget right from the early stages of the project, covering not only the building but also its operation and programming. Make this for a minimum of 7 years and include a funding plan. Adjust this as the project takes shape. Budget generously from the outset to avoid disappointment later on.
2. Funding is never certain in the long term. However, a multi-year project cannot be made dependent on securing funding from third parties. Draw up a funding plan in which each partner guarantees a percentage of that funding and formalise this agreement. Base this on a budget which, in the absence of better information, is fixed for seven years, adjusted for an estimated average inflation rate.
3. As partners, draw up a legally binding agreement on this matter. Or agree on a structural grant guarantee. These agreements must be formally recorded. This must also stipulate that the parties cannot unilaterally withdraw from these obligations.

5.5 Strategically consider a legal entity for the project in the long term

Every partnership must have a legal structure that suits the purpose and form of the project. This is particularly important if the project is large-scale and/or long-term. There is often no single best alternative, and every solution has its pros and cons.

Recommendations:

1. Choose a legal form that offers the greatest clarity.
2. A foundation (non-profit legal entity) is the most obvious legal entity. In that case, set out the agreements between the parties and the foundation. The advantage is that the foundation is more flexible because it can make payments itself, enter into financial commitments independently and hire staff. However, it also entails risks for which the founding parties are held ultimately responsible.

3. Without a legal entity, the project cannot make payments, open accounts, issue contracts or hire staff itself. That remains the responsibility of the participating partners. In that case, draw up detailed agreements (who is responsible for what, insurance, liability, etc.) and set these out in a cooperation agreement, tenancy agreements and service documents.