

CityLab (ByLap)

Stakeholder Engagement Platform

CDW



Description

This tool is a physical and virtual platform for stakeholder engagement on Bodø's city development. Hosted at the town hall or other municipal premises, the CityLab (ByLab in Norwegian) integrates the 3D visualisation of Bodø to stimulate imagination and opinions on the city's future. It also offers an information portal to solicit inputs from citizens, civil society organisations and local businesses to involve them in planning and decision making. Specific outreach efforts target underrepresented groups such as youth, elderly, or non-national residents. The CityLab facilitates the quadruple-helix dialogue necessary to align behind the city's circular economy ambitions and to jointly face barriers (legal, technical or knowledge) with creativity and innovation. Bodø sees citizen buy-in and local business development as key to its success in transitioning to a circular economy, and uses the CityLab platform as the vehicle to achieve that.

Keywords:

- #Decision making; #Planning
- #Stakeholder Engagement; #Citizen involvement
- #Coordination

Complementary tools:

- 3D GIS-based visualisation tool for monitoring and planning

Target user:



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- Local governments (e.g. departments of buildings & infrastructure, urban development and environment)
- Businesses (e.g. building owners, environmental consultants, construction and demolition contractors, waste managers)
- Citizens and civil society organisations
- Research institutions

Format:

- Physical and virtual information and engagement platform, for Bodø (in Norwegian)
- Report documenting the strategies, the process and solution properties (in English)

Development

The CityLab has been in use in Bodø since 2019 – and online participation mechanisms for citizens are being constantly improved. To develop it, the municipality has teamed up with relevant partners:

- Ongoing CityLab-project in Municipality of Bodø
- Academic stakeholders in Nord University and Nordland Research Institute
- New Airport, New City Project team

The first step for the collaboration group was to identify the need for citizen involvement in city development:

- *Why is this a useful tool?*
 - Literature studies
 - Relevance to UNs (social) sustainability goals
- *What are our priorities?*
 - Representativeness of participants
 - Competence & interest

Next, they focused on establishing a physical arena for CityLab e.g. a permanent space at the town hall, and arrangements for periodic targeted events to inform stakeholders and collect citizen inputs and ideas to urban development processes. The CityLab is supported by a communications and social media strategy for recruiting stakeholders (such as professionals, local businesses or civil society organisations) and citizens, which includes partnerships with local media.

Stakeholders involved in the CityLab include:

- Municipality of Bodø, departments of Building & construction, technical, business and development
- Competent companies or professionals, Landscape architects (parallel assignments)
- Young people, children (“The Reuse Lab”)
- All Bodø residents, as invited participants to the New City CityLab events and festival
- Nordland Research Institute and Nord University (Academic)

These stakeholders were selected based on geographical affiliation, business interest in the city development project, targeted inclusion of under-represented citizens and a full span of age groups. Bodø has the condition that young adults (18-34) are relocating to typically bigger cities, so the city aims to involve this group more in decision making processes in order to give them a voice in how the city grows and encourage them to remain.



Barriers:

It is challenging to get a satisfactory citizen engagement in our online CityLab, and physical workshops have been cancelled or postponed due to the health situation. There is a special concern to involving “under-represented” citizens, like immigrants, elderly people, and “unengaged” young people. Bodø has teamed up with Nord University to collaborate in finding methods on involving these groups.

Deployment

In Bodø, the CityLab will be used to showcase the city’s plans for the demolition of a military airport, and the development of a new part of the city for stakeholders and citizens. Furthermore, it will be used to proactively involve these groups in the planning processes. The 3D GIS-based visualisation tool for monitoring and planning will be a central feature to clearly communicate and create ideas with the public in the CityLab arrangements. In the CityLab events, circularity is the focus, using this arena not only for planning purposes but also building awareness of the importance of a more sustainable way of treating our resources.

Replication

The concept of citizen involvement is adaptable to all cities, and the CityLab is a tool developed to stimulate just that. Bodø will publish a guide that other cities may use when developing and using their own CityLab platform. The guide will contain information about:

- Social media and communications strategy to raise citizen awareness and engage them
- Using a 3D GIS-based visualisation tool for monitoring and planning in stakeholder and citizen involvement processes
- Methodological analysis of focus groups in stakeholder involvement processes
- Case study: *The Reuse Lab*

To ensure success, Bodo recommends that others start by joining forces with other departments, projects and initiatives with the same ambitions for stakeholder and citizen involvement in city development.

Developed by

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