

Call for good practices - Peer-learning activities on high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone at national, regional, and local level



Call for good practices: A spotlight on your work on high-quality architecture and built environment

WORKING IN ARCHITECTURE FOR YOUR LOCAL OR REGIONAL AUTHORITY?
SHARE YOUR GOOD PRACTICES!

Deadline 11 August 2023



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Sharing your best practice

We want to share your best practices throughout Europe and beyond! If you are part of the administration of a city, region, or a rural area in the EU, this is your chance to highlight your work in high-quality architecture and built environment. All you need to do is fill out an [online form](#) with a description of a practice in your area.

30 practices will be selected for publication and promotion. From these selected cities and regions, 12 will get the opportunity to host a peer-learning visit¹, allowing participants to learn from each other and from experts.

¹ The programme will fund travel, accommodation, and catering for 20 international delegates to the peer-learning visit as well as cover interpretation costs (if needed). More information will be delivered to applying cities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THIS CALL FOR GOOD PRACTICES

What is the peer-learning programme about?

Eurocities and the Architects' Council of Europe were recently selected by the European Commission to implement a peer-learning programme on high-quality architecture in cities and regions, under the European Union's Creative Europe programme.

High-quality architecture and the built environment should activate urban transformation, be sustainable, beautiful, inclusive, participatory, and improve the well-being of citizens.

Building on the recommendations of the [European Member States Expert Group on high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone](#), this peer-learning scheme will facilitate exchanges among the European Union's cities, regions, Member States and relevant stakeholders on processes and good practices.

Peer-learning activities will demonstrate that building and planning for everyone improves cohesion, attractiveness and the sustainability of our cities and regions.

This will be done through:

- a catalogue of 30 good practices from across the European Union, emphasising impacts and transferability from one local context to others;
- 12 onsite peer-learning visits in European cities and regions (EU 27) taking place in 2024, allowing participants to learn from each other and from experts.

What will happen next?

Peer-learning visits are aimed at 20 policymakers and city practitioners (at political/decision-making and technical levels from city, rural or regional administrations), urban planners and architects, civil society organisations, NGOs, cultural initiatives/projects, local/regional organisations, thematic associations.

If you are interested in hosting a peer learning visit in your city or region, please indicate it in the form. We will get back to you with more information.

We are looking for good practices:

- that are innovative
- that are inspiring for other cities and regions
- that have a real impact on the ground and with the local communities

Practices can be policies, projects, events, or organisational structures developed and co-funded by local and regional authorities. They can be implemented by the authorities themselves or by other local stakeholders!

This call is open to local and regional administrations of all sizes (rural areas, medium size cities, large and capital cities, regions) from the 27 European Union countries. In some cases, the questionnaire can be filled in "on behalf of" a local/regional administration, for example by a university, an architect, or a local/regional stakeholder. In this case, please provide a written endorsement by a representative of the local/regional administration at the origin of the practice.

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Why should you apply?

- Get international visibility for your city/region and be featured in an online catalogue of good practices.
- Give your city/region a chance to host one of the peer-learning visits.
- Be part of a large community of practice.
- Join fellow experts, stakeholders and decision makers in sharing knowledge and experience on high-quality architecture and built environment projects and policies.

How to apply?

Submit your application to us [online](#).

The deadline for submitting good practices is **11 August 2023** (before midnight Central European Time).

If you have any questions, please contact us: clementine.daubeuf@eurocities.eu

What we are looking for

Any architectural or built environment example that your city/region has implemented, that takes into account at least one of the following: context, diversity, sense of place and/or beauty² (see the detailed description below).

Our built environment covers buildings, public spaces, architecture, green and natural spaces. It is not static: it evolves to incorporate new ideas and values; nor is it monolithic, it has different, though intertwining, meanings and expressions for different purposes and different people. In its variety of forms, high-quality architecture generates new social, economic, and sustainable processes and is a powerful driver of local regeneration. At the same time, it strengthens a sense of place, builds community, and fosters social cohesion.

With this understanding, architecture and the built environment are a resource for the future of the EU, its cities, and its regions. Rich and diverse architecture and built environment shapes our lives. As for heritage, our built environment is to be safeguarded, enhanced, and promoted. Building and planning for everyone improves cohesion, well-being and the sustainability of our cities and regions.

Send us architectural or built environment examples/practices that your city or /region has implemented that take into account at least one of the following topics.

- **Context - no 'one size fits all'**

Key words: place-based solutions, climate, history, landscape, people, economy

A place-based approach is an essential to ensure quality in the built environment. When creating or altering buildings or spaces, one should ensure that the result will fit well into the existing built, natural, and social environment. As stated in the Davos Baukultur Quality System, one of the key questions is: does the place dialogue with the surrounding open landscape, urban grain, colour, and materiality?

² These are four out of the eight criteria that define high-quality architecture and high-quality environment according to the [Davos Baukultur Quality System](#). You can find out more in the [report](#) from the European Member States Expert Group on high quality architecture and built environment for everyone.

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Context encompasses:

- geographic: taking the climate of the area into account; using regional and traditional material, colours, and resources; considering the historical context, its coherence and identity; preserving the local heritage; considering the natural and built environment when commissioning contemporary creation.
- social: considering the population and its specific needs; providing easy access to infrastructures and efficient public transport.
- economic: planning for uses that match local needs; ensuring that areas dedicated to business are accessible by public transport and provide catering and leisure activities.

Key aspects your practice can feature:

- A strong political vision, as well as working with multiple stakeholders: public, private, and community.
- Good governance, coherence and coordination to align long-term goals, often involving many decision makers from different entities (local, regional, national).
- Local innovative governance models that could inspire other cities and regions.

- **Diversity - connecting people through the built environment**

Key words: inclusion, gender, interaction, demography, accessibility

‘High-quality Baukultur ensures diversity by conceiving barrier-free and gender-equitable places - taking into account the needs of children and young people equally - to be able to contribute to social diversity and inclusion for all’ (Davos Baukultur Quality System).

Well-designed places encourage people to connect, resulting in communities with a high level of interaction, and more inclusive and cohesive societies.

Planning for all means taking demographics into account: ensuring that senior citizens, child, women, and people with disability have easy access to buildings and spaces and can enjoy them without constraints (adapted public furniture, footpaths, etc.). It also means creating places where people from various age groups, genders, social and ethnic origins, and abilities can live and work.

Public spaces play a key role: they should be well-designed, barrier-free and safe.

Planning for all also means listening to people’s needs and wishes. This can be done through participatory governance.

Key challenges your practice can contribute to:

- How can villages, cities and regions, through high-quality architecture, planning and the built environment, meet the needs and expectations of changing populations and lifestyles? In the meantime, how to avoid segregation, gentrification and ghettoization?
- How do you ensure that participatory models include all population groups, and not only those who are educated and informed about future developments in their area?

- **Sense of place - focus on spatial coherence**

Key words: place attachment, identity, belonging, meaning, heritage

Sense of place in relation to Baukultur describes the relationship between people and their spatial settings, including concepts such as place attachment, place identity and place dependence.

People perceive the same city or area in different ways. However, they usually recognise

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common features (built environment or not) that they associate to it: a main square where festivals take place in the summer; a tower that you cannot miss in the landscape; a café that is part of the local heritage... Such elements foster authentic human attachment and belonging and give a special meaning to places.

Local cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, plays a key role in the sense of a place and we should enhance and maintain them. Sense of place can be particularly present in regions that have a strong identity, local culture and language.

Creating or maintaining a sense of place is a guiding principle in designing liveable and high-quality built environments. Quality places can create and sustain a sense of place and to strengthen identities and engender civic pride.

Specific points your practice can address:

- Will the building/space be coherent with the existing landscape and with the sense of the place?
- Will locals be proud of a new building or of a new square?
- Will its use be coherent with existing and traditional activities or landscapes?
- How does your city / region handle heritage linked to colonialism or totalitarianism in the public space?
- Acknowledging the architectural heritage and historical significance of dissonant heritage across Europe, and activating its full potential, requires a sensitive, careful and integrated approach that involves a variety of multiple actors. What can we learn from your experience?

- **Beauty - aesthetic, spatial and emotional impacts**

Key words: emotions, value, quality, well-being, sustainability

Beauty as understood in Baukultur means that a place or landscape has a highly positive aesthetic, spatial and emotional impact on the person looking at it or living there. A 'beautiful' place provides a perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction, leading to feelings of attraction and emotional well-being.

Beauty should always be connected to quality, ethics and sustainability.

Questions your practice may answer to:

- Does the place have an aesthetic, spatial and atmospheric impact on people? Does the place make people feel at ease?
- Do people perceive the place as beautiful?
- Is the place attributed specific aesthetic values, balanced between its formal qualities and its integration in its complex context?
- Does the place contribute to people's well-being and life satisfaction?

Examples of submissions

With these topics in mind your practice could be about:

- Decision-making and good governance of high-quality architecture and built environment
- Transitioning towards more sustainable ways of life
- Applying circular economy principles to high-quality architecture and built environment
- Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Fostering inclusion in the built environment
- New uses for buildings and mixed spaces

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- Attractive and qualitative public spaces
- Regeneration and attractiveness of city centres
- Participatory governance: planning with people
- New local and regional partnerships
- Financial and non-financial resources for high quality architecture and built environment
- Future-fit local administrations for high quality architecture and built environment
- Demonstrating that investing in high-quality architecture and built environment has positive impacts for the city / region

We welcome practices that cover several of these topics with a transversal approach.

Selection process

Our consortium's team of experts will review the received practices and select good practices for the catalogue based on:

- Strategic vision for high-quality architecture and built environment, including regeneration, revitalisation and adaptive-reuse of existing buildings
- Relevance regarding EU policy developments in the field of architecture and sustainable built environment, including the [New European Bauhaus](#) initiative
- Innovative aspects
- Engagement with communities and people
- Potential for replicability
- High impacts and results
- Thematic balance
- Geographical balance and spatial dimension