

MANUAL PLATFORM IMPLEMENTATION IN YOUR AREA (FRONT-END)

How do you launch and activate an integral and collaborative urban transformation platform in your area? And how do you cleverly embed it in your overall external communication, keeping your work as light and efficient as possible while maximising your outreach and impact?

1. Have a clear understanding of your stakeholders and the local dynamic before you start. Who are they and how do they relate to each other and to the area? What are their interests and existing initiatives? This – together with your own local goals – informs how you position the platform through its sender and name, tone of voice and visual identity like logo, colour scheme, fonts and imagery.

2. Create a clear overview of what is going on in the area which is accessible and legible for all stakeholders, regardless of their background, expertise or tech-savviness. You need to create and guard an equal information position for the collective to build on. Next to that you need to create an open and inviting environment so that everybody feels empowered to use the platform and reach out to each other actively. This means your maps need to be inviting and easy to read and so do your texts. Perhaps you want to use simple diagrams and drawings to clarify your message. Avoid jargon and use active language and inspirational and relatable imagery.

3. Collect relevant (open) data, plans and projects from your organisation and upload or otherwise connect them. This does not have to be complete immediately, as discussed in the previous chapter. Take it step by step, the platform will become richer over time. Make arrangements with the responsible (project) managers to ensure that the data and content on the platform are up to date.

4. Make sure to engage a few active yet diverse stakeholders even before you launch the platform and ask them to share their project or idea on the platform. Keep the number of projects small at first, but make sure the types of projects and stakeholders represent a good cross-section of the whole area. Ideally have everybody include a request or call to action. Like this, they immediately have an interest in being active on the platform and sharing it with their own network for further outreach.

5. Different stakeholders are first reached in different ways. Some groups have their own networks or channels. Utilises these for maximum reach, but always deep-link back to the platform as the place where they can all meet, a central source of information where they can stay informed about relevant developments, exchange views and initiatives and build collaborations.

6. Next to existing channels you also need to structurally embed your platform in your own overall communication strategy. Link together different channels where possible. The source of the content is on the platform and from there deep-links can be shared on all other communication channels, such as social media, newsletters, personal mailings to key stakeholders and other relevant websites. For large projects, targeted Facebook or Google ads and also offline campaigns can be used, such as posters, flyers or tags and objects in public space, again with the deep-link to the project page on the platform.

7. As soon as the first content, data and projects have been uploaded, the communication channels connected and the existing local networks engaged, it is time to publicly launch your new platform in the area. Make the launch a joyful and social event, a nice starting point for collective creativity, innovation and cooperation. You can reinforce the launch with a (lightweight) campaign with flyers, posters and small interventions in the area. Your overall tone may be informal, as the platform should feel like a place for the whole area, a place they can adopt as their own.

8. During the launch you can present the platform, explain the ideas behind it and show how it works and you

can also ask the different stakeholders who already shared their project or idea to present this idea and invite the audience to share theirs too. You can have some assistants with laptops who can help people to use the tool, create an account or share their project. And of course, make sure there is enough time for drinks and bites and informal catching up. A local community does not only exist online, it grows and solidifies by meeting offline as well.

9. You may want to organise events like the launch regularly and use the period in-between to meet more stakeholders, grow the community and source for more projects and ideas to share. During these events new projects can be presented by their owners, progress and updates shared and of course milestones celebrated. Also use other activities you organise to for example use the platform to present new initiatives or to ask stakeholders to respond to project plans through the platform on their mobile phone or laptop. Or keep it simple and just refer to the platform during the meeting. Ask your key stakeholders to do the same when they organise meetings in the area.

10. After your big meet-ups you can communicate the meet-up and the topics discussed to the community and plug the platform at the same time. Send out a newsletter (with all items deep linking to the projects on the platform to increase the engagement there) and call on everyone to like, comment, share and of course post their own ideas there as well. And of course, invite them to come to the next event. Also distribute the newsletter through your social media and ask your local partners and networks to do the same. Keep your local network updated and engaged while continuously growing and diversifying it.