

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING YOUR OWN LOCAL TOOLBOX

Look very consciously at how your toolbox can support your whole process. By choosing integral and multi-purpose tooling or implementing and combining different one-off and single-purpose tools in an ongoing and integral (multi-purpose) way, you hit as many birds possible with one stone. Have a critical look at all your different project goals. There is often the complexity of the scenario planning, calculation and design but also the complexity in organising support and collaboration around it. Your toolbox needs to address both and make smart combinations, cross-links and follow-ups between them where possible.

## 1. Data & analysis

Depending on the complexity of both the transformation and the different (energy, climate, biodiversity, etc) transitions you may benefit from advanced tooling to model and calculate different scenarios for the area based on a lot of different data and parameters. There are of course different ways of doing this and different solutions on the market.

You can build a super advanced and interactive digital twin, but you can also choose to use different tools in your process that are working with the same data.

There is a growing number of very interesting services who already integrated a lot of different data sources in their software to which you can add your own local data and parameters for accurate calculations and scenario designs for your specific project. Beware of the black box idea where you make complex calculations internally and then present the optimal scenario as a fact to your local stakeholders. If you want to build collective ownership over the execution of the vision, also the analysis, the parameters and the vision itself need to be collectively owned.

Even if you cannot publicly share all data or scenarios in an early phase, you can organise various stakeholder workshops around the calculations and scenarios. Some tools already offer this service so they really can augment your collective decision-making in a very transparent and fact-based manner. Besides, stakeholders may bring in parameters, considerations and even data you did not think about but are actually relevant for the quality and feasibility of the different scenarios.

You may also want to share some of these data with the broader local collective. Share as much relevant data with the collective as possible and make sure you present it in an accessible and legible way. Next to relevant source data, you can also present fact sheets with relevant data combinations, visualisations and explanations, so you allow a larger diversity of stakeholders to understand what is going on in the area and make a more conscious contribution. The output of some of the calculations can be input for the collective to respond to or add data to – perhaps using simpler and more analogue brainstorm material as well (think about our transformation game). Then the output of these sessions can be input again for a next round of more precise and locally supported calculations.

## 2. Plans, maps & models

In general, 3D models are easier to read than 2D maps. Especially when you are dealing with densification and adding building height to the area. When you have the resources you can build your own interactive 3D model or you can use existing models (in The Netherlands for example a nation-wide 3D GIS model is provided by the national land register) and add (interactive) functionalities to it. Working with existing sources can be very interesting as the updating is done there as well. Also the connection with different datasets may be already

integrated, so you can also benefit from that. Remember however that not all tooling needs to be both 3D and interactive. In some cases you can still work with simpler 2D online maps or for example make a combination in content presentation where you also use air photos, renders or even photos of foam models to talk about.

### **3. Projects & ideas**

Make sure you provide the necessary information, stimulation and practical tools to all different local stakeholders so that they feel inspired and empowered to start and share their own initiatives. The basic exchange of projects and ideas should probably be part of your integral tooling. Only then different stakeholders can also see each other's initiatives, see where they affect each other or where they have overlapping interests so they can join forces. If you want to really tap into the collective energy, capital and execution power for your area transformation, you need to proactively unlock all their projects and ideas, however big or small they may be.

Provide different tools for stakeholders to set up collaborations around the finetuning and execution of these projects together. Tools like crowdfunding for example can be very powerful. You do not have to build all of this yourself. Many crowdfunding platforms provide widgets or API's so you can use their platform but show and run it in your local community, safeguarding your engagement there and tapping in the local capital there.

Remember that a level playing field is not achieved automatically by putting interactive tooling online for everybody to use. Some stakeholder groups may need more active invitation and guidance than others to lower the thresholds for them to become more actively engaged. In order for all stakeholder groups to feel equally empowered, they may need different approaches. Creating and maintaining this is your role as a local platform organiser.

### **4. Community & collaboration**

The community building, management and interaction part of your tooling needs to be very integral. You want to bring all different big and small stakeholders together here and allow them to contact each other directly. By not being integral here you run the risk of creating parallel, disconnected and unequal circuits of information and decision-making around the area transformation. Basic networking and engagement needs a clear overview and is preferably organised in one online place supported by offline places as well, so you prevent confusion and engagement fatigue among stakeholders. This is the basis of your local platform function, both digitally but also organisationally.

You can use a whole range of existing (open-source) participation tooling for this. However, make sure that this tooling can a) be used structurally and not only for one-off participation rounds, and b) allows for distributed network building and direct exchange of ideas among different stakeholders. Don't become the central spider in the web here.

On top of this basic platform layer you can provide all kinds of more specific tooling for collaboration. Of course these can all be integrated in the same platform, but they can also be other tools that you either plug into the basic layer or simply leave it to the project group in question to choose the tooling that works best for them, whether it is digital like Slack or Trello or analogue like sitting around the table and make hand-written minutes afterwards. Tooling are a mere means, the people and the content the goal.