

# Urban Governance in Practice

## Think differently - Act differently

[ Interact ]

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERACT FIELDBOOK

Since the 90's most European cities have been involved in the designing of comprehensive strategies, which seek to integrate such varied objectives as economic growth, social integration, quality of life, health, and respect for the environment. Today, in order to cope with the high level of complexity raised by these strategies, they are seeking to develop innovative approaches for their implementation.

However, at the same time, local authorities have less and less means to respond alone to this challenge:

- the globalisation of economy and the trend to decentralise functions and power at the level of the very local areas lead to the fragmentation of the political, economical and social systems in cities;
- the increased scarcity of public money forces local authority to find partners to achieve their goals.

As a consequence of this situation, our focus has been **to identify the key issues and potential levers helping the implementation of strategic projects or policies, in the complex environment of governance that cities offer today.**

Urban governance<sup>1</sup> has become, over the last decade, a catch word describing very different contexts that all refer to the crisis in the governing of urban territories. **Governance could be defined in a simple way as co-operation systems that have been introduced to bring coherence and cohesion within this fragmentation trend.** At the metropolitan level, governance finds a concrete expression in various systems: from formal partnerships to informal networks, from political institutions to organisations dedicated to specific projects or policies. Some bring different public partners together; others include the private and the community sector, or even the citizens themselves.

How to make these governance systems more effective and efficient in operational and democratic terms is the main question addressed by this Fieldbook. **It is all about urban governance in practice.**

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1- Bernard Jouve and Christian Lefèvre, *Métropoles ingouvernables, les villes européennes entre globalisation et décentralisation*, Elsevier, October 2002

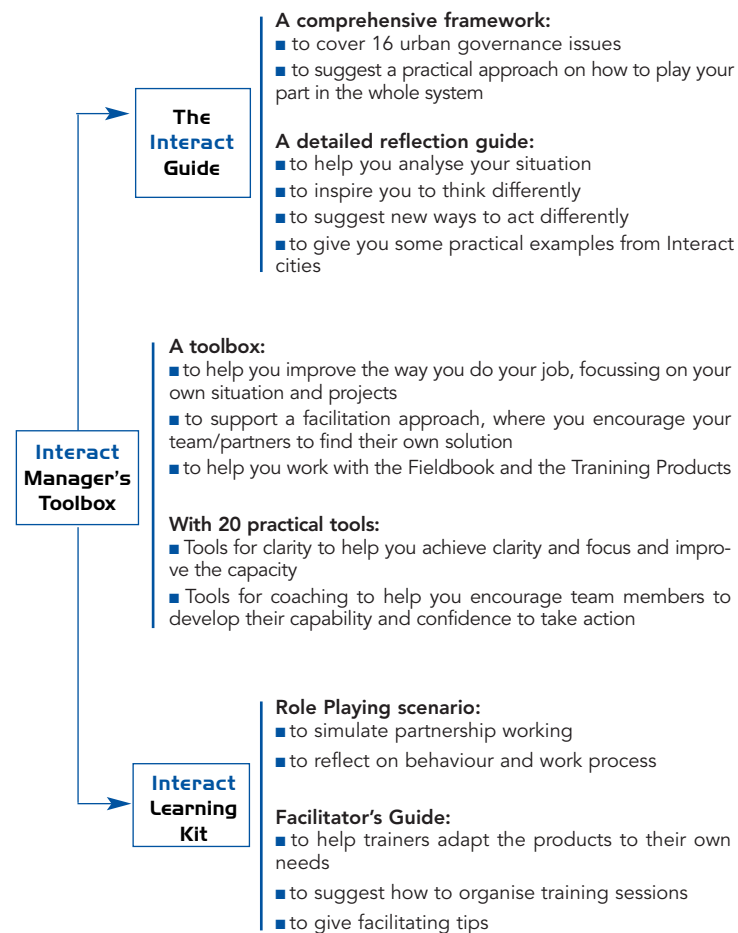


## WHAT IS THIS FIELDBOOK?

The practical approach that we suggest does not mean that we offer a ready-made methodology. The ambition of this Fieldbook is to help you ask yourself the good questions rather than giving you the answers.

Our experience as practitioners and three years of work in common, have lead us to suggest to you an open learning process, rather than explaining to you the infallible method for strategic management. For you, the first step is simply to believe that you and your colleagues/partners can do something to improve the implementation of a project or a policy.

The next step is to use one of the products from the Fieldbook, or a combination of them, in the way that suits you best:





## WHO IS THIS FIELDBOOK FOR AND HOW CAN IT BE USED?

This Fieldbook has been above all prepared **by cities officers for cities officers** (strategic planners or project managers), even if the questions raised can be adapted to other kind of stakeholders (councillors, head of departments in cities, project managers in partner organisations, etc.).

It has been devised **to help you deal with the important issues linked to the implementation of strategic projects or policies**. If you are in charge of such a strategy, or at least responsible for the implementation of some part of it, we suggest a pragmatic approach to help you:

- analyse your environment,
- think about your projects from a different perspective and imagine new ways of working,
- work together with your partners or colleagues, move forward and build better collaboration,
- train a group of people into changing their ways of working.



## HOW DID WE DESIGN THIS FIELDBOOK?

This Fieldbook was **designed by Interact**, which is a principally **a network of cities** with Belfast, Greater Lyon, Birmingham, Malmö, Brno, Munich, Budapest, Utrecht, Genoa, Venice, The Hague and Vienna and the Eurocities association. The network also comprises other participants who contribute at various levels: academics, PhD students, experts in training, and NGO representatives.

The work of the member cities is overseen by a **scientific committee** made up of Roberto Camagni of the Milan Polytechnic, Werner Heinz of the German Institute for Urban Affairs (DIFU) and Christian Lefèvre of France's Laboratory for Techniques, Territories and Societies (LATTs). The scientific committee provides a continuous support, helping the core group to focus on the main issues and ensuring the quality of the work.

The School of Governance at the University of Utrecht and the Rhône-Alpes-Lyon delegation to the National Centre for the Territorial Civil Service (CNFPT) form the Interact **training team** and work with the group on how to build and transmit knowledge about the issues discussed. They have contributed to this Fieldbook so that the insights and approach developed by the Interact group can be spread to a wider audience within European cities.

However, Interact is above all **a group of people**, from all the partners of the project. They have worked together for three years taking part in the following process:

- The officers of the partner cities developed a platform **for exchanging their experiences**. This was built step by step: first mutual understanding and trust, then deeper commitment and discussions, and finally co-production of insights and knowledge on key issues related to the implementation of strategic projects. All along, the discussions were enriched by contributions from various partners of the cities, academics, and other experts.

■ Each city carried out some **research work** locally, with the help of local universities, PhD students and the scientific committee: 24 strategic projects were analysed and discussed.

■ All cities took part in an **exchange of officers scheme**. The objective was to give several officers from all the partner cities the opportunity to visit a different city. This was an opportunity for them to understand different ways of working and to enrich their experience. But it also brought fresh ideas into the Interact group and contributed to enrich this guide.