

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Mirte Hoitink
Student number	5888115

Studio		
Name / Theme	AR3MBE100 MSc 3 Graduation Laboratory Management in the Built Environment / Area Development	
Main mentor	Erwin Heurkens	Urban Development Management (UDM)
Second mentor	Hilde Remøy	Real Estate Management (REM)
Argumentation of the choice of the studio	I chose the theme of area development because I am very interested in its complexity, particularly regarding the variety of actors involved, their different interests, and the underlying power dynamics. This is also why I decided to focus my thesis on stakeholder collaborations.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The Role of Institutional Entrepreneurs in Stakeholder Collaborations <i>Towards Sustainable Urban Transformations</i>
Goal	
Location:	Case studies will be conducted, with the selection of cases based on predefined criteria (see section 2.2.2 in the thesis report). Therefore, the specific locations have not been determined yet.
The posed problem,	Recently, there has been growing interest in the role of collaboration in establishing sustainable urban developments or transformations (Liao and Liu, 2023; Wang et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Silva, 2008; McCormick et al., 2013; Bradley et al., 2022; Common Eye, 2016). Studies have examined practices, challenges and lessons learned from urban development collaborations (Khan, 2013; Hamann and April, 2013; Block and Paredis, 2013), the role of institutional entrepreneurs in driving institutional change (Pacheco et al., 2010) and their role in initiating and establishing sustainable urban developments (Klein Woolthuis et al., 2013). However, limited

	<p>research has explored how institutional entrepreneurs can stimulate stakeholder collaborations within existing urban contexts towards sustainable urban transformations.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>Main research question: <i>'How can institutional entrepreneurs stimulate collaboration between stakeholders towards sustainable urban transformations?'</i></p> <p>Sub-questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can the relationship between collaboration, institutional entrepreneurs, and sustainable urban transformations be conceptualised? 2. What barriers and enablers related to collaboration are encountered in existing case studies that influence the widespread adoption of sustainable urban transformations? 3. What role do institutional entrepreneurs play in these case studies, and what interventions have they implemented to overcome barriers and establish more effective collaborations? 4. How can the role of institutional entrepreneurs in stimulating collaboration between stakeholders towards sustainable urban transformations be captured in a set of guidelines?
<p>design assignment in which these results.</p>	<p>To address the first sub-question, an extensive literature review will be conducted to develop a conceptual framework that illustrates the interrelation between the three concepts of collaboration, institutional entrepreneurs, and sustainable urban transformations.</p> <p>To answer the second and third sub-questions, case study analyses of existing urban transformation projects will be carried out, focusing on identifying the barriers and enablers in the collaboration process, the perspectives of stakeholders, and the role and interventions of institutional entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Finally, based on the findings from the case study analyses, a set of guidelines will be developed for institutional entrepreneurs to stimulate effective stakeholder collaborations in sustainable urban transformation projects. This set of guidelines will represent the main design assignment and the final output of the research.</p>

Process

Method description

This research adopts a qualitative approach and utilises a combination of data-collection techniques: a literature review, semi-structured interviews and content analysis of documents (both conducted within case studies), and an expert meeting. These data collection techniques are discussed below.

Literature Review

During the development of the problem statement and the early stages of the research, a literature review is conducted. Initially, the aim was to gain insight into the topic of stakeholder collaboration in urban area transformations, which led to identifying a gap in the literature. Additionally, this initial step helped assess the worthiness of this research, examining whether the topic contributes to the growing body of knowledge and has both societal and scientific relevance.

After establishing the research question and sub-questions, the literature review aims to gather the most relevant existing literature on the three concepts: collaboration, institutional entrepreneurs, and sustainable urban transformations. Ultimately, this review develops a conceptual framework, which will guide the analysis and interpretation of the collected data throughout the next steps of the research. Therefore, this part of the literature study answers the first sub-question: *'How can the relationship between collaboration, institutional entrepreneurs, and sustainable urban transformations be conceptualised?'*

Case Studies – Content Analysis of Documents and Semi-structured Interviews

After addressing the first sub-question, the research moves on to the empirical part, where case studies are used to allow an in-depth exploration of the collaboration processes among various stakeholders in current and past sustainable urban transformation projects. The focus lies on identifying stakeholders' perceptions and experiences of the collaboration process, the barriers and enablers of effective collaboration, and the role and intervention of institutional entrepreneurs in overcoming these barriers. These objectives align with sub-questions two and three. Sub-question two: *'What barriers and enablers related to collaboration are encountered in existing case studies that influence the widespread adoption of sustainable urban transformations?'* Sub-question three: *'What role do institutional entrepreneurs play in these case studies, and what interventions have they implemented to overcome barriers and establish more effective collaborations?'*

To answer both questions, a combination of data collection methods is used, including content analysis of documents and semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The data for the content analysis is derived from sources such as minutes of meetings, project-related reports, formal contracts, etc. The content analysis provides insights into the context of specific urban area transformation projects, information about the involved stakeholders, the organisational structure, and the evolution of the collaboration process over time.

The semi-structured, open-ended interviews are conducted with stakeholders involved in existing collaborations of sustainable urban transformation projects. Interviews will be conducted with the institutional entrepreneurs and other public and private actors involved in the collaboration. The focus here lies on identifying the individual experiences of stakeholders involved in the collaboration process (the interaction), uncovering barriers and enablers, and getting a deeper understanding of how and to what extent institutional entrepreneurs can influence the collaboration process.

Expert Meeting

Following the case study analyses, an expert meeting with practitioners and scholars is organised to support answering sub-question four: *'How can the role of institutional entrepreneurs in stimulating collaboration between stakeholders towards sustainable urban transformations be captured in a set of guidelines?'*

Participants of the expert meeting are selected based on their experience with urban area transformation projects, either in practice or academically, to ensure a diverse mix of perspectives during the co-creative

session. Furthermore, to maintain the integrity of the research, participants should not have been involved earlier in the research to ensure a neutral and objective view. First, the findings from the case study analyses and a preliminary outline of the guidelines are presented. Subsequently, through an interactive discussion, the practitioners and scholars are invited to collaboratively refine the guidelines by reflecting on the presented findings, adding missing elements, and suggesting improvements based on their professional experience and knowledge.

Literature and general practical references

For the full list of references, see my thesis report (it's 11 pages, therefore a bit too long to add in this document).

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My thesis investigates the role of institutional entrepreneurs in stimulating stakeholder collaborations towards sustainable urban transformations. This directly relates to the graduation theme of area development, which examines the game of area development, played by a variety of actors, and explores how it can be improved to tackle societal challenges such as climate change (Daamen, 2025).

The master track Management in the Built Environment (MBE) focuses on the development and management of buildings, real estate portfolios and urban area projects (BKTUDelft, 2023). A key focus of this track is guiding and coordinating the many stakeholders to achieve high-quality outcomes (ibid.). It emphasises future-proof development and addressing societal challenges such as the circular economy and the housing crisis (ibid.). My thesis aligns closely with this master track as it examines how institutional entrepreneurs can stimulate stakeholder collaborations (stakeholder management) in the context of urban development, towards sustainable urban transformations (addressing a societal challenge).

Abovementioned sources:

BKTUDelft. (2023). TU Delft | MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences | Management in the Built Environment. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4-i1FeBr3s>

Daamen, T. (2025). Advancing sustainable area development - balancing values, actors and interests through area-based urban or rural development.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

Societal Relevance

The urgency of climate change, combined with the fact that the building and construction sector is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for 37% (UN Environment Programme, 2023), has placed enormous pressure on cities and urban areas to drive sustainable transformations. With the majority of the global population already living in urban areas and expectations indicating this will rise to 70% by 2050 (UB-Habitat, 2008), urban areas have become key players in addressing sustainability challenges.

However, cities and urban areas face complex pressures from above (national and local policies) and below (community demands), alongside additional challenges related to climate change and resource concerns (McCormick et al., 2013). These factors contribute to sustainable urban development's 'wicked' nature (Bossink, 2011), making a universal, 'top-down' approach impossible (Klein Woolthuis et al., 2013). Furthermore, conflicting interests, a lack of understanding among stakeholders, and the existing

formal and informal institutions within the sector hinder the widespread adoption of sustainable urban development practices (TNO, 2012).

Collaboration among diverse stakeholders is widely recognised as essential for driving sustainable urban transformations (Campbell, 2009; Zilahy and Huisingsh, 2009). Moreover, institutional entrepreneurs play a significant role in initiating and driving institutional change and sustainable development (Klein Woolthuis et al., 2013). However, while existing research focuses on how institutional entrepreneurs initiate and realise sustainable urban development projects, little is known about their role in stimulating and strengthening collaborations within existing urban contexts towards sustainable urban transformations. This research addresses this gap by exploring how institutional entrepreneurs can stimulate stakeholder collaborations, thereby accelerating the transition towards sustainable urban areas.

Scientific Relevance

This research is scientifically relevant because little is known about the role of institutional entrepreneurs in stimulating stakeholder collaborations towards the realisation of sustainable urban transformations. While existing studies examine practices, challenges and lessons learned from urban development collaborations (Khan, 2013; Hamann and April, 2013; Block and Paredis, 2013), as well as the role of institutional entrepreneurs in driving institutional change (Pacheco et al., 2010), and their role in initiating and establishing sustainable urban developments, there is a gap in understanding how they can actively stimulate stakeholder collaboration within complex urban settings towards more widespread sustainable urban transformations.

Therefore, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on institutional entrepreneurship, collaborations, and sustainable urban transformations by providing insight into the barriers and enablers within current and past collaborations and the interventions through which institutional entrepreneurs can influence stakeholder collaborations towards sustainable urban transformations.