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](mailto: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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal information</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Name / Theme</strong></td>
<td>Graduation Laboratory: Sustainable Private Sector-led Urban Development</td>
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| **Teachers / tutors** | 1st mentor: dr. ir. E.W.T.M. (Erwin) Heurkens (Urban Development Management)  
2nd mentor: mr. dr. F.A.M. (Fred) Hobma (Planning and Development Law)  
External examiner: dr. R.J. (Reinout) Kleinhans (Urban Regeneration and Neighbourhood Change) |
| **Argumentation of choice of the studio** | This Graduation Plan is written within the framework of the AR3R010 Graduation Laboratory 2015-2016 of MSc track Real Estate and Housing, Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology. The graduation research is conducted at chair Urban Development Management. The graduation laboratory chosen is Sustainable Private Sector-led Urban Development.  
The research topic chosen within the context of the graduation laboratory is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In particular, this research is about the CSR of developing investors in Dutch investor-led urban development projects.  
My personal interest in this graduation laboratory and research topic relates to the fact that the world is urbanising at an unprecedented rate. More than one half of the world population lives now in urban areas. Cities and urban regions are places of continuing change. They need to adapt to challenging economic and environmental conditions, and social demands. Adaptations entail significant changes to the built environment, involving and affecting people and organisations locally and globally. I would like to gain a better understanding of these processes of change and how to manage them.  
Particularly, I have an interest in understanding the social aspects of urban development. Due to a changing state-market relationship in the Netherlands, and a shift in power to enforce and regulate land uses and planning activities, the Dutch government faces challenges |
Therefore new roles and responsibilities for private actors involved in urban development arise. Here, the question arises if private actors can bear and take social responsibilities and safeguard public interests and values within urban development—former governmental duties. Therefore, within this context, the principles of CSR are interesting to explore.

In this graduation research, my ambition is to provide insight in the interpretation, definition and relationship between concepts CSR and sustainable urban development, within the context of Dutch investor-led urban development projects.

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<td><strong>Problem statement</strong></td>
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One of the (sub) aims of this research is to understand the Dutch investor-led urban development practice, and the use of CSR by developing investors herein, by means of:
- Exploring the current use of CSR by developing investors in investor-led urban development projects in the Netherlands;
- Exploring developing investors’ interest in (improved) use of CSR;
- Exploring developing investors’ possibilities of use of CSR.

Another (sub) aim of this research is to draw inspirational lessons for the Dutch (Rhineland) practice from Anglo-Saxon investor-led urban development projects, in which developing investors strategically use(d) CSR as a means to realise sustainable areas. The assumption here is that developing investors who do business according to Anglo-Saxon principles go in front considering the application of CSR in their projects – confirmed by the notion that CSR emerged in liberal market economies (Brammer, Jackson, & Matten, 2012).

Main research question

Based upon the research objectives, the following main research question is formulated: How can developing investors in Dutch investor-led urban development projects use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to develop sustainable urban areas?

Intended end product

The intended end product of research is an insight in the social role of developing investors in investor-led urban development projects in the Netherlands, highlighting:
- Inspirational lessons for the Dutch practice, drawn from Anglo-Saxon investor-led urban development projects, in which developing investors strategically used(d) CSR as a means to realise sustainable areas;
- The current use of CSR by developing investors in investor-led urban development projects in the Netherlands;
- Developing investors’ interest in (improved) use of CSR;
- Developing investors’ possibilities of use of CSR.

The latter point, developing investors’ possibilities of use of CSR, is reported in the form of an “assessment tool” (or “measurement tool”, “ruler”, “gradation bar”, etc.) indicating the possible gradations/levels of CSR application, for example in terms of “beginner” and “expert” – like BREEAM and LEED assessment tools, but in this case indicating the social level instead of environmental level of the project or the investor. Note, in the research process is to be determined if this assessment tool indicates the social level of the realised investor-led urban development project (product-oriented) or the business management/conduct of the developing investor itself (more process-oriented).

Process

Method description

The research process consists of several phases (P1 to P5), each including data collection (methods) and data analysis (methods).

During the P1/P2 phase, a research proposal is written including research topic, research relevance, problem analysis, problem statement, research objective, research questions, definitions, research demarcation, review of literature, and research design.

The first part of the empirical research, conducted in the P3 phase, consists of drawing inspirational lessons for Dutch investor-led urban development practice from Anglo-Saxon case studies. Therefore, first, the differences in urban development management and culture between the Anglo-Saxon
model and the Rhineland model must be made clear, by means of literature review. Second, two Anglo-Saxon investor-led urban development projects are analysed, using case study methods, involving semi-structured interviews with key players, and analysis of case documents. Third, these two cases are subjected to a cross case analysis. Then, in the Netherlands, the results of the cross case analysis are presented to an expert panel. Together with the expert panel, inspirational lessons for the Dutch practice are drawn, taking into account context dependent factors (characteristics of Anglo-Saxon model vs. Rhineland model, institutional factors, culture, law, etc.).

The second part of the empirical research, also conducted in the P3 phase, consists of generating understanding of the Dutch investor-led urban development practice, and the use of CSR by developing investors herein.

The following research scenarios for data collection and analysis are identified:
- Scenario 1: research internship at Dutch developing investor;
- Scenario 2: research internship at professional service/consultancy company;
- Scenario 3: desk research at Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology.

Within these research scenarios, the following data collection and analysis methods are applicable:
- Multiple empirical case studies, using case study methods, involving semi-structured interviews with key players, and analysis of case documents. Cases can be compared in a cross case analysis. The case study criteria and selection depend on the chosen research scenario – on the condition that cases are Dutch investor-led urban development projects.
- Quantitative research involving structured interview (digital survey) for (preferably all) Dutch developing investors. The sample of the survey depends on the chosen research scenario.
- Literature review.

Based upon theory, the inspirational lessons from Anglo-Saxon practice, and the research scenario chosen in P3 phase part 2, the CSR assessment tool can be designed in the P4 phase. This design process is iterative. Feedback loops involving experts (at research company or at university) are necessary. Note, in the P3 phase is determined if the CSR assessment tool indicates the social level of the realised investor-led urban development project (product-oriented) or the business management/conduct of the developing investor itself (more process-oriented).

In the P5 phase the main research question and all (sub) questions are answered. Part of the answer to the main research question is the designed CSR assessment tool. Note, as this graduation research is bound by time and means, the designed CSR assessment tool is not tested in practice/reality – only the design is provided in the final graduation thesis.

**Literature and general practical preference**

**Literature about the changing state-market relationship in the Netherlands, increased influence of the private sector in Dutch urban development, and Anglo-Saxon influence in the Dutch Rhineland planning model**


Literature about the rise of developing investors and (Dutch) investor-led urban development (projects)


Literature about CSR

Literature about sustainability and sustainable (urban) development


**Reflection**

**Relevance**
The utilisation potential (value) of this research is explained from a societal and scientific perspective.

**Societal perspective**

In Dutch urban development practice, new types of governance are recognisable, due to the changing relationship between state and market, and the changing private sector influence. The increased influence of private actors in urban development is accompanied by new societal roles and responsibilities. The principles of CSR come up here. Concerning CSR, the question is how private actors in urban development can bear a responsibility to society and a broader set of stakeholders
beyond their shareholders. In this research, this question is answered for a particular type of private actors, namely developing investors, within the context of investor-led urban development projects. This research provides insight in the social role of developing investors in (private sector-led) urban development projects, by exploring their strategic use of CSR as a means to realise sustainable urban areas. By exploring this strategic use, benchmarking of CSR application by developing investors is made possible.

Scientific perspective

This research provides insight in the interpretation, definition and relationship between concepts CSR and sustainable development, within the context of Dutch investor-led urban development projects. Due to relating CSR and sustainable urban development, different scientific field are brought together/integrated: urban planning, urban development management, social sciences, public administration, business administration, ecology and economy.

Time planning

The research process consists of several phases (P1 to P5), each including data collection (methods) and data analysis (methods), in accordance with the Figure below.