

**IBA ALZETTE-BELVAL+
A MEMORANDUM**

— Revised version —

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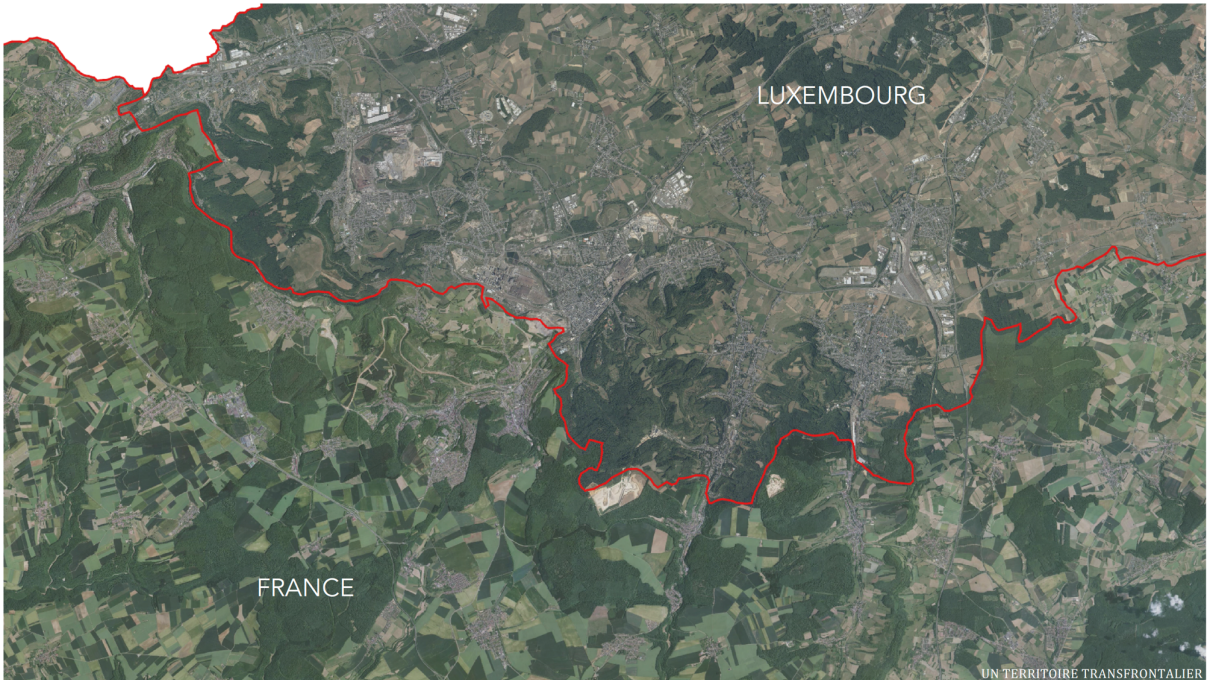
View on Belval, 1960s. Photograph by Marcel Schroeder

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Guideline for the reader

The text is written in a way that is as general as possible and as concrete as necessary. The goal of the memorandum is not to collect all the work that was done during the prefiguration mission, nor to synthesize all the work. The goal is to present the ambitions to a broad audience of citizens and potential future stakeholders.



Aerial photograph of the border region

1. IBA AB+ IN A NUTSHELL

Shaping the territory, the city or the landscape is neither solely the work of a government nor of large (semi-)public actors. Especially in a highly diversified environment such as this transborder region of Alzette-Belval, many actors are involved in shaping the territory – twice as much in this case, one could say, since we are talking about two national territories and their governance models. Moreover, each stakeholder aims to develop his own agenda, supported by his own audience. In such context, IBA is not about adding another agenda to the territory. IBA is rather an exercise in attuning the agendas of different stakeholders. It is an attempt to let the diverse approaches co-exist and to find added values in this co-existence through a number of common or complementary projects. Therefore IBA Alzette-Belval+ wants to experiment with alternative forms of governance in spatial and territorial production and search for new qualitative ways of promoting or commissioning projects, for housing, public facilities, hybrid buildings, public spaces, landscape. In this process IBA aims to support civic, cultural and economic initiatives that contribute to the development and the well-being of the different societies on the two sides of the border.

Governing a cross-border territory

The establishment of a governance model that manages the complexities of a cross-border territory and its different societies, is one of the major and very particular challenges for the region of Alzette-Belval. It is a challenge which might have an impact on many aspects of daily life of citizens and on the political governance in this region. Although the national borders are perhaps no longer visible in today's European Union, as customs posts have disappeared, they do continue to exist and have a highly underestimated impact on everyday lives in regions where people commute across the border on a daily basis. While goods, people and capital can now circulate freely between nations of the EU, there is still no fully-fledged transborder policy set in place. An IBA can help to overcome this legal vacuum and create leverage to solve some issues at stake in this cross-border territory.

Architecture and urban planning for a societal project

In that sense IBA is above all a societal project. But it is a societal project in which architecture and urban planning have a leading role to play. Projects in architecture and urban planning ought to serve the experiment that IBA has set itself as main objective. This socially engaged experimentation by IBA is unique as it aims to transcend the traditional urban planning objectives established within the frameworks of national and municipal

administrations and public services. IBA is more than the sum of its parts and in that sense it aims to offer new opportunities for the territory, by working in a multidisciplinary manner, backed up on different levels by politics, economy and civic society. While the current tendency in Western European spatial planning is to set up urban projects quickly and purposefully, also — and especially — when they have to comply with climate policy objectives, IBA Alzette-Belval+ wishes to challenge rapid spatial development. While it may seem contradictory to argue for 'patient development' in the face of an urgent climate crisis, IBA Alzette-Belval+ intends to work 'with' time (and not engage in a race against time over the next 10 years) to achieve a more sustainable form of spatial planning.

Connecting climate challenges to the territory

The transborder approach of IBA Alzette-Belval+ is indeed also of the highest importance in the light of contemporary and future climate change. IBA has the potential to become an exemplary case on this matter. As climate challenges are rising to the top of the political agendas in many parts of Europe, it will be of paramount importance for nation states to cooperate in the future since the climate crisis will not be 'solved' within national borders. As a transdisciplinary and cross-border project, IBA Alzette-Belval+ offers the unique opportunity to link climate challenges to the issues on the ground on both sides of the border. This is crucial, since climate issues are not something you solve on top of all the other problems. The transition towards a more ecologically robust and sustainable environment is not an exercise that happens on a blank page. It requires an integrated approach that deals with the qualities, opportunities and problems on the territory.

An exceptional event

Through its comprehensive approach, IBA has the potential to become an exceptional event that interrupts the business-as-usual. First of all because it is, as the German word *International Bauaustellung* explains, a temporary exhibition. An exhibition, on a 1/1 scale, not in the museum but in the real world. An exhibition that aims to attract and inform an international audience. As an exhibition it is also an instrument that provides the necessary momentum to initiate changes in a planning, housing or design culture. In order to make this cultural shift happen, it is crucial that IBA strives for concrete, visible and architecturally ambitious projects, setting new benchmarks for the decades to come. In that sense the realisation of innovative projects in the context of IBA is the starting point of a process that aims to bring long-term changes to the territory, beyond the time horizon of the IBA exhibition. IBA gives shape to a territory which ought to function as a 'living laboratory', a 'real world school' of knowledge and experience.

A declaration of intent

The above-mentioned thoughts can be summarized in a short list of ambitions, which were decided upon by the political steering committee of this prefiguration mission. This list, entitled 'declaration of intent', outlines some of the major thoughts and intentions which found political support on the highest level during the prefiguration period. The exercise of this memorandum is then to provide further content for this declaration of intent so it can become a solid guide for the future reality of this territory.

1/ A transboundary cooperation

'The IBA AB+ aims to tackle the urgencies of the franco-luxembourgish cross-border agglomeration of Alzette Belval and its neighbouring territories, by integrating the greater climate change-related challenges and through the initiation of a new culture in spatial planning.'

2/ A federating landscape

'Focused on the territory of Alzette Belval, the IBA AB+ aims to valorise the green and transboundary ensemble that is the Côtes du Dogger as a federating landscape, a common ground integrating ecological, productive and leisure spaces.'

3/ Building a qualitative living environment

'The IBA AB+ aims to engage a multitude of people and actors, both locals and externals, in order to enable the collective organisation of high-quality transboundary living conditions.'

4/ Patient development

'The IBA AB+ aims to install a sustainable governance of its various resources (land, water, forests, food, energy) in respect of local biodiversity and in support of a patient development of the territory during and beyond the momentum of IBA.'

5/ Strong architecture(s)

'On this basis and by the example of its projects, the IBA AB+ aims to install on the franco-luxembourgish territory a new culture of architectural and urbanistic ambition, both experimental and innovative.'

6/ Capacity building

'The IBA AB+ is a unique moment in time and an invitation to true societal experimentation that contributes to the emancipation of citizens and capacity building among citizens to endorse the societal challenges that are awaiting us.'



Aerial photographs of the territory around Belval, municipality of Sanem © Sanem

2. CHALLENGES AND URGENCIES FOR THE REGION

How to 'make place' in the larger region? The border region of Alzette-Belval is experiencing an exceptionally high dynamic of development today, both on the French and the Luxembourgian side, albeit in different forms and proportions. We should be grateful for that, as it offers plenty of opportunities. However, it also necessitates strategy, attention and care. It requires a framework of concepts, ideas and actions to steer this development in the good direction. Under the current rapid changes of this territory, with new large-scale projects popping up at an unprecedented pace, the model/image of a metropolitan or polycentric region is lurking around the corner to serve as a guide. However, before we embrace such notion, the question must be asked as to what exactly we understand by (cross-border) metropolitan development, and under what form and under which conditions we should embrace this as a future image of this territory.

A new cross-border urban question

The spatial, socio-economic and environmental issues facing this cross-border region — with GECT AB at its center in the case of this IBA mission — are diverse and complex, but not necessarily more so than in other urban or peri-urban areas of Western Europe. The dynamics that prevail are first and foremost typically urban and encompass issues such as access to housing, public transport and improved mobility, migration, employment, the organisation of public amenities, segregation and gentrification, liveability, public health, green spaces, etc. The development of land markets and the related scarcity of housing in general and affordable housing in particular tends to be most problematic across Europe, hence providing a specific challenge for Alzette-Belval. In addition, the multitude of issues we are facing is also linked to a fundamental transition that has been going on for several decades: the transformation of society from an industrial age of production to an age where an industrial — and increasingly financialized — service economy drives economic development.

This evolution is more complex than it seems. This new (socio-)economic reality entails changed spatial relationships between people, the city, the region and the world: people no longer work in the office or in the factory around the corner, food and groceries are no longer purchased in the local (neighbourhood) shop, the perimeter of daily life is no longer situated within the boundaries of the municipalities but within the boundaries of the Greater Region, social relationships are no longer mainly created in the café, on the church square or at the factory gate. The lived space and the space of politics and planning are no

longer congruent. All this calls for a different conception of the territory and of its use of space. The search for an adapted spatial and social constellation that accommodates these changes, whereby a precarious balance is struck between local, regional and supra-national interests, is a key to this story for the future of this territory — and for IBA Alzette-Belval+. Moreover, the focus on the service economy as driving force for economic development, has pushed several actors involved in the spatial development of a region in a precarious position. Planning actors are often regarded as relatively ‘soft’ powers (compared to real estate, for example), but are in need of more substantial leverage. By involving them in a more integrated approach to steering this metropolitan region would also be beneficial for climate change adaptation.

Connecting agendas for the territory

Many of the challenges which this region is facing today, are specific but not necessarily exceptional. Recipes are available that can be suggested, encouraged, implemented and/or realised by the responsible authorities or by private stakeholders. Solutions and good practices are available to be integrated in this territory. Agricultural production can be organised on a smaller scale, with more attention for organic food production and consumption, and closer to the market. Enhanced public transport and increased participation in shared mobility can remedy the saturation of the road network and the emission of CO₂. The renovation of the existing housing stock can help addressing the region’s currently most pressing issue. The revaluation of formerly polluted industrial sites and the expansion of ecologically valuable zones can support climate adaptation. Therefore, the true value of an IBA is not a matter of finding new solutions. The challenge is to link different issues and seek public support to put into practice a wide set of sustainable spatial policies in the region. It is through connecting different agendas and policies that IBA can realize added value for the stakeholders, users and residents of this territory.

This idea of connecting agendas is also crucial in terms of the design challenge that IBA is facing. The principal goal of an IBA is to raise the ambitions regarding the quality of the built environment, which involves architecture, public infrastructure and the landscape. However, criteria for architectural quality are never merely a matter of good or bad taste. Instead, the quality of an architecture project can be addressed through various topics: spatial quality, degrees of appropriation, flexibility, sustainability, energy-efficiency, cost-efficiency, impact on mobility, innovative construction methods, social inclusion, interaction with the spatial context of the site, etc. These topics should not be evaluated separately. The overall quality of a project is based on the interaction between them: architecture is a holistic practice. One of the major challenges for the region is also to set up an spread a

design practice that is embedded in the territory, and which profoundly engages with the challenges and qualities of the local context – instead of merely importing models and solutions from elsewhere

IBA as a guide towards spatial justice

What is at stake then, when someone asserts that the territory of the GECT Alzette-Belval — and the municipalities in its vicinity — will become part of a new metropolis on the border between Luxembourg and France? And what are the opportunities for IBA in this process of urbanisation? A metropolis, just like any other kind of built environment, is not a 'thing'. It is not a final project that appears on the horizon. The metropolis is the way in which many processes of accumulation interact and crystallise on a specific place at a particular moment in time: the accumulation of people, jobs, buildings, infrastructure, capital, wealth, pollution, public amenities, and the like. The essence of the metropolis — and of the city — is the continuous process of change. An IBA mission is an attempt to get a better grip on various aspects of accumulation and urbanisation, thus making it more sustainable and above all more just. An effort to correct what can easily get out of hand (the accumulation of capital in unbound real estate development and the segregation that results from it, to give an example) and to integrate people, processes and places that are normally not part of the production of the city. This enlarged ambition in terms of integration is something to aspire to, as it allows to create and reach a larger/broader 'audience' — of stakeholders, inhabitants, users — and contribute to the creation of a true transborder infrastructure that meets up to the needs of different societies that inhabit the Franco-Luxembourgian border region.

IBA and the citification of the region

It is exactly at this point that one can find one of the major challenges for the region of Alzette-Belval+: in accepting the metropolisation and providing an appropriate governance framework to guide this process. A framework that brings along the expectation of reduced institutional fragmentation and improved transborder governance, since a more unified metropolitan policy can make a region more attractive to inhabitants, stakeholders and investors.

IBA Alzette-Belval+ could be the medium that accompanies this metropolisation, in an attempt to improve the co-existence of a diverse set of political, administrative cultures and their audiences. The municipalities would play a crucial role in this process, based on the idea that the metropolis is not a process in which the city spreads its tentacles over the region, but a process in which the region transforms itself into a network of 'urban' entities

– which means we would evolve from a 'regionalization of the city' to a 'citification of the region' (Cardoso & Meijers, 'Metropolisation: the winding road towards the citification of the region', 2021). It allows the local entities (municipalities) to retain their 'individuality' and to develop a diversified urban pattern for the metropolis. The territory of Alzette-Belval+ as an urbanized transborder patchwork of powerful municipalities.

Urgencies for an IBA

Although the nature of the issues at stake for this region, on both sides of the border, is quite variegated, the Steering Committee of the prefiguration mission has decided in September 2020 that the destination of a future IBA could be summarized as four urgencies. They refine the previously defined elements from the declaration of intent and offer the possibility to further develop a shared/common project for this transborder territory:

(1) The urgency of cross-border coordination of cooperative and open projects / *L'urgence du pilotage transfrontalier de projets coopératifs et ouverts.*

(2) The urgent need to produce affordable housing that is more diverse and meets the needs of a territory in transformation / *L'urgence de production d'un habitat abordable, plus varié et répondant aux besoins d'un territoire en mutation*

(3) The urgency of a common and sustainable management of local resources / *L'urgence d'une gestion commune et durable des ressources locales*

(4) The quest for connection: spatial stitching, functional hybridization and the relationship with history / *La quête du lien: coutures spatiales, hybridations fonctionnelles et le rapport avec l'histoire*



ARBED. Vue d'ensemble des usines d'Esch-sur-Alzette et d'Audun-le-Tiche, 1920s-1930s

3. ALZETTE-BELVAL AND/IN ITS REGION

The project area of this IBA is located on the western edge of the Franco-Luxembourgian border. A post-industrial region that reaches from Longwy in the east over Differdange, Esch-sur-alzette, Audun-le-Tiche, Villerupt, Rumelange, Ottange until Dudelange and Volmerange-les-Mines. Due to the 19th-century development of the steel and mining industry, this cross-border strip has experienced unprecedented urbanisation that nestled in the valleys of a hillside landscape. While this urbanisation has further extended over vast parts of the territory on the Luxembourgian side, in France it was limited to the areas surrounding former industrial sites while the higher plateaus retained their agricultural function and atmosphere. Today, this vast territory is at the heart of a dynamic (post-)industrial renewal that affects all municipalities and towns on the territory, no matter how urban or rural they are.

The continuity of the past

Although the gradual closure of factories and mines has had a heavy impact on the societal situation in this territory, the industrial past continues to characterize the spatial and socio-economic identity of this region. The former industrial development, its housing projects and transport infrastructure, the sites of mining and slagheap disposal have all become an inherent part of the landscape of this region. The way they are part of the region is subject to constant change: former mining sites are now valuable nature reserves. Housing settlements from the industrial era are now the starting points for future densification and urbanisation. Former industrial buildings form a rich set of built cultural heritage. So these places that originated in an industrial past now have their own characteristics and qualities, as places of ecological value, as places of recreation, as "places of memory", as places with development potential.

Although these traces and characteristics can be found on both sides of the border, it is not difficult to pinpoint the differences neither between France and Luxembourg. After the closure of most of the steel and mining industry, the way out of this socio-economic crisis differed substantially in both countries, and this brought about different spatial dynamics. Since the 1970s, Luxembourg made significant efforts to diversify its economy, turning the country into an attractive environment for the (global) service economy. This brought about an unprecedented dynamic in terms of (international) capital investment and offer of employment, resulting in tremendous growth of population, employment, GDP and development of the urban fabric. In order to accommodate and steer this process, the

southern urban region of the national territory around Esch-sur-Alzette — called *Südregion* — was appointed as one of the three key areas for a polycentric spatial development in 2004, next to Nordstad and the City of Luxembourg. As a result, a lot of means were invested in the (re)development of the wider territory around Esch-sur-Alzette. The urban renewal of the 'Science City Belval' since 2001 (based on a masterplan by Jo Coenen) on the site of a former steel factory, was a key project in this process. Its goal — which is still in the process of realisation — is to provide housing for 7,000 residents and realize 20,000 work and study places, with university and various enterprises in the service industry as main actors in this development. Over the next 20 to 30 years the planned redevelopment of the 'Quartier Alzette' on the territory of the municipalities of Esch-sur-Alzette and Schifflange, aims to welcome another 10,000 new residents, turning Belval and Quartier Alzette into spearheads in the urban development policy on the Luxembourg side. Various other sites — i.e. *friches industrielles* — can be expected to join this development logic in the near future in order to consolidate the *Südregion* as a metropolitan or urban environment.

Alzette-Belval in a functional region

The effects of this economic turnover in Luxembourg were not limited to the national territory. Due to the excess supply of labour — the number of jobs exceeds the human resources — an immense culture of commuting has developed in the border regions of Luxembourg, including Alzette-Belval. As a result, thousands of people cross the border on a daily or regular basis to work in Luxembourg while still residing in the territory of one of the neighbouring countries. This led to the description of a functional region around Luxembourg, where a significant part of the 'inhabitants' have a very particular relationship with the place where they reside — as they work and pay taxes in Luxembourg,

As one of the reactions to that situation, ten years after the ambitions for the south of Luxembourg were formulated, a Strategic and Operational Project (PSO) has been activated on the French side of the border in 2014. It is part of an Operation of National Interest (Opération d'Intérêt National, OIN), making this particular part of the territory into one of the key places for urban development in France, which is being implemented by the EPA Alzette-Belval (Etablissement Public d'Aménagement). In its approach, the strategic plan of the EPA is partially anticipating the dynamics (high labour supply) and problems (housing shortage and high prices of real estate) emerging on the Luxembourgian side, and aims to manage and accelerate the revitalisation of this French part of the territory. The strategic plan presents a vision for 20 years, aiming to provide housing for 20,000 new residents (8300 new housing units and 300 cases of housing renovation) spread over a

territory of 248 hectares in 27 zones of intervention (of which 158 hectares are *friches industrielles*)

Local empowerment across borders

While these state-led initiatives are of key importance to steer the development of the region, it is at the municipal level that the effects of the border and the international neighbourliness are experienced on a daily basis. It was also there that the first cooperation initiatives have often been launched. As early as in the 1980s, mayors, municipalities and local associations organised informal meetings on various subjects. The new European cooperation tools have made it possible to institutionalise, stabilise and professionalise this cooperation in order to achieve the first major joint projects. In the French-Luxembourg cross-border territory of Alzette Belval, several administrative entities overlap and interact with each other, each with its own territorial basis: the CCPHVA, the Opération d'Intérêt National and the EPA d'Alzette Belval, the Syndicat Pro Sud and the GECT Alzette-Belval. These actors, although they have different forms, functions and competences, have similar goals: to continue the post-industrial transformation and to position themselves in relation to a rapid process of transformation that unfolds on the territory around Esch-sur-Alzette, which is the main city in this region.

Any transborder project — such as IBA — ought to undergird this ambition and aim to strengthen local partnerships in order to initiate an unprecedented collaboration around shared and ambitious transborder planning objectives. Given the high dynamic that is present in this territory, the region is an excellent place to be positioned on the international arena as a model of a European cross-border region in terms of project management, with projects that put forward the agendas of sustainability, equality and social justice. In this context, there is an urgent need to further develop projects that contribute to the functioning of a polycentric agglomeration, adapted to the day-to-day needs of inhabitants, in an equitable approach that respects the existing situation. Part of the urgency here also resides in the need for enhanced coordination of these different initiatives in order to confirm the coherence of this territory and to instil a new level of cross-border cooperation. The IBA thus corresponds to an additional effort on spatial planning allowing to answer in an effective way the global and local stakes with contextual, effective and original solutions.



Contemporary photographs of the territory ©David Vincent

4. GENERAL COMMITMENTS OF IBA

Nothing is as characteristic of a spatial policy as its architecture, its attitude to land use, urban planning and public space. They are the lasting witnesses of past or contemporary decisions, the ultimate test of a visionary societal project. In this respect, an IBA should be understood as a laboratory, offering a complementary path to existing spatial development strategies. This conception of IBA presumes more flexibility than traditional spatial planning tools, allowing the initiation of innovative processes that reach beyond established ways of doing things.

Experiments with open outcomes

This is entirely in line with the Memorandum on the Future of International Building Exhibitions, which states that IBA projects ‘are experiments with open outcomes and, at times, generate new ideas through the means of provocation which may cause contradiction. Contentious issues and productive controversies are important aspects of planning culture. All stakeholders – especially administration and politics as well as the public – must be made aware of this from the outset to enable initiatives to step outside the realms of standard practice and to generate widespread interest in their projects.’ (IBA Advisory Board, 2017) So the experimental character is firmly anchored in the DNA of an IBA. The *Ausnahmezustand auf Zeit* (‘the temporary state of exception’) and a certain autonomy provide the right framework conditions for this experiment. The aim of an IBA is not to uncritically follow the prevalent planning culture, to accompany agendas that have already been planned or to implement projects in the usual patterns, but to creatively reinterpret the existing tools and to find new, innovative ways for spatial development. The importance and necessity of the required distance from given planning practices is often made clear by the fact that the region-specific challenges could not be solved with the traditional tools so far. The IBA is looking for the ‘next practice’ on its territory to solve the prevailing problems, since (in most cases) there is no ‘best practice’ to rely on. Those who are not willing to mentally exclude or rethink familiar planning mechanisms and processes and to seek for more innovative methods cannot carry out an IBA in its true form – since the experimental character of an IBA is one of the most crucial prerequisites for its success. IBA can also be considered a so-called ‘living lab(oratory)’, where the test is part of real life. Its success does not simply depend on the excellence of the ‘building exhibition’ itself, but it is measured through the impact of an IBA on a vast territory (in the broadest sense) beyond the (official) time-frame of the IBA.

Urgency, coherence and clarity

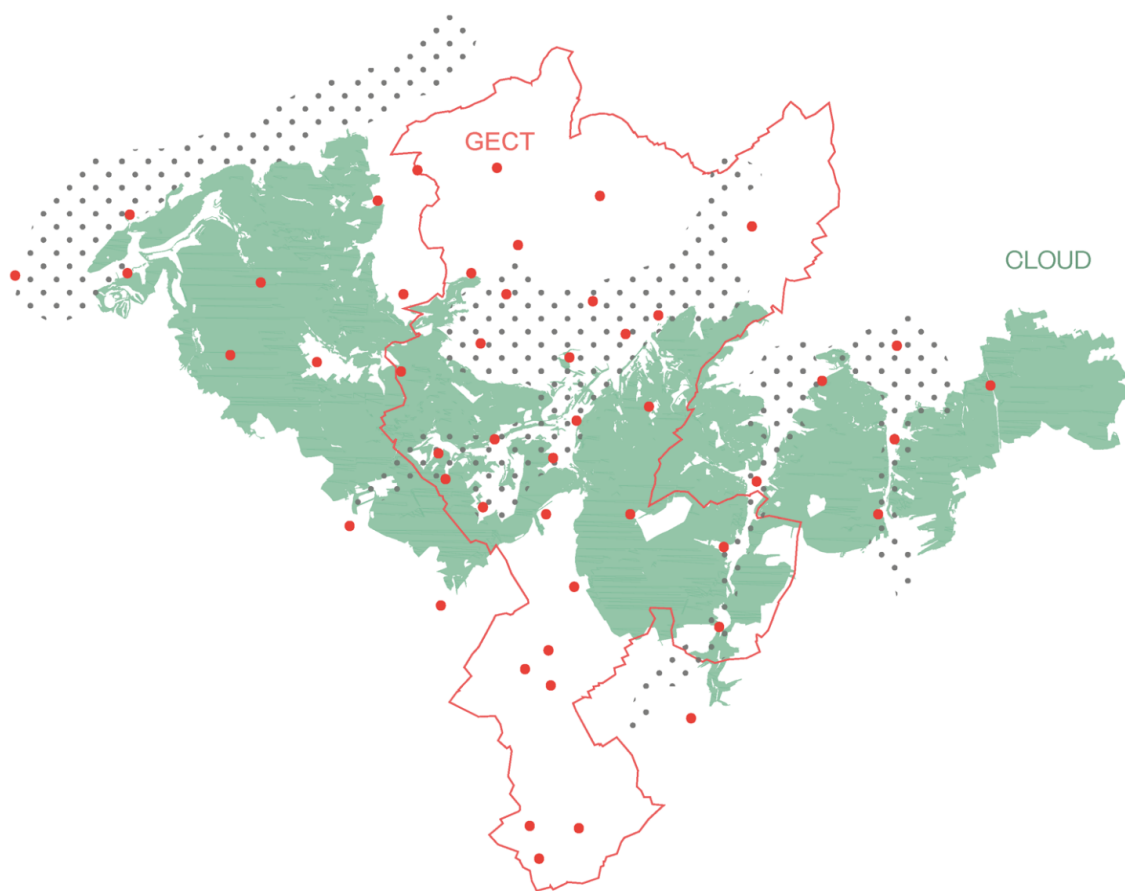
In response to the great challenges of their respective periods, several IBA projects (from the German Internationale Bauausstellung) emerged during the 20th century. Each of them had a contextual approach with corresponding themes and a willingness to implement a clear conceptual path, enabling the prompt mobilisation of parties likely to take calculated risks (through architectural experimentation). The history of IBA projects highlights the importance of an initial choice of unifying themes characterised by urgency, coherence and clarity, in creating a successful IBA trajectory. Each IBA is also unique: developed on the basis of an in-depth analysis of local or regional issues, these themes are intended to stimulate lively debates on spatial development. They are then representative of the specific situation of the territory at a given moment, but also reflect more broadly the complexity of societal and global issues (emergency). All the themes are grouped around a vision recognised as guiding the IBA programme (coherence). Finally, good formulation and obvious relevance will make them suitable for communication to the local population and technicians, as well as to outside experts (clarity). Through these notions, the IBA is able to communicate its impact within the political debate.

Building IBA from the ground up

One of the major challenges of the key themes of any IBA process — cf. Section 5 of this memorandum — lies in their translation into concrete and palpable projects that matter and make a difference. For IBA to be truly innovative does not mean IBA can simply project a number of ideals, or ideal projects, onto an actual territory, like Alzette-Belval. The outcome of such approach would be doomed to be both generic and ineffective. The solution to a housing crisis is not merely the production of more housing. The solution to a climate crisis is not merely the production of less carbon dioxide. The success of any truly experimental IBA will instead depend on its ability to address real-world planning problems in a visionary manner. This means that a new vision is not imposed as a *deus ex machina*, but integrated into and based upon urgencies on the terrain. As a project-based research tool, an IBA should not concern itself with the ideal image of an urban region, which by this point enjoys a certain European macro-political consensus, but with the structural policies that could underpin it. For real transitions to happen, they need to take root.

Therefore, the realization of a good practice in spatial planning and architecture must be understood as a continuous interaction between issues of livability, territoriality, governance and reflective practice. (Bishwapriya Sanyal et al, *Planning ideas that matter*, 2012). This means that, in case of an IBA, it is not only the projects themselves — as built objects — that matter. It is (also) about how projects facilitate/steer the interaction

between livability, territoriality, governance and reflective practice. The added value of IBA projects can/should be measured as a positive externality in terms of livability, governance, territoriality and reflective practice for the region of Alzette-Belval. Any future strategy for the implementation of IBA projects should exactly take into account these positive externalities, in order to avoid that IBA is reduced to merely a label.



Map of the GECT AB and the forest mass of Dogger, as a possible territory – respectively CORE and CLOUD – for the future IBA projects. © uni.lu / CRIT.

5. KEY THEMES AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

IBA is a cross-border project that represents the ambition of a Franco-Luxembourgian partnership that is keen to raise the level of cooperation in spatial planning to another level. The main objective is to position the territory on the international arena as a model of a European cross-border region in terms of project management. This IBA aims to do so with an agenda and with projects that address issues of territorial cohesion, related to ecology, equality, spatial and social justice

The territory of Alzette-Belval is made up of a diverse mix of habitats, agricultural land and natural areas with different characteristics which can be (re-)valorised in a new discourse and in a new project for the revival of this territory.

In order to work on a broad scope of intertwined issues and in order to demonstrate the resilience and potential of the territory, it seems necessary for IBA to take into account different projects that deal with various 'sectors' of the territory. As a cooperative and comprehensive project, IBA aims to work on five topics and objectives in order to bring a wide variety of actors to the table. Five strong themes, not 'spectacular', distinct and naturally intertwined, are at the heart of the prefiguration programme

1/5 Federating Landscape

The enhancement of an archipelago of green spaces into a coherent landscape with various functions (nature, agriculture, tourism), which may represent the ecological heart of this cross-border territory. By talking about the Federating Landscape, IBA invokes to identify the possibilities of giving a new coherence to the developments of a politically fragmented territory. This landscape is subject to a large number of claims (for housing, infrastructure, nature, agriculture) which are often juxtaposed or difficult to reconcile. IBA should commit itself to preserving the qualities of the more urbanised landscape and to positioning this landscape as a qualitative support for future transformations of the built-up area.

2/5 Affordable collective housing

The question of housing is today one of the challenges of growing cities and territories on a global scale. This is also the case for the territory of the GECT Alzette-Belval which aims to welcome 35,000 new inhabitants (+35%) by 2030. This growth is synonymous with an increased demand for housing. The IBA will therefore have to position itself as a real laboratory in this regard. A laboratory that guides the transition of the real estate offer — existing and new — towards an offer that responds better to the aspirations of residents

and to climate emergencies. A laboratory that provides more possibilities for housing (financially, spatially, typologically) to the inhabitants.

3/5 Urban hybrids

Demographic growth in this cross-border context cannot be translated simply into an increased number of housing units that are being built. Starting from the fact that an urban fabric is made up of much more than housing, it is essential to define the planning mode for the remaining entities, such as public facilities, parks, economic, industrial and agricultural activities. The realisation of innovative building projects that combine housing with commercial, productive or public programmes can provide alternatives to zoning, which has long proven its social and environmental limits. These buildings offer opportunities to enrich the social fabric of the area and create potential for a sustainable and economic recovery.

4/5 New sustainable resources

In order to achieve the ambition laid out in the 'European Green Deal', in addition to the various national initiatives, IBA plans to verify the possibilities of a sustainable energy landscape and its impact on construction and settlement projects. In that respect, the notion of resources allows for reflection on the conditions of urbanisation in a broader sense. It includes energy issues, but also issues of soil quality, water quality and the role of ecosystem services in urban and territorial development.

5/5 Strong public initiative

Economic and governance issues determine the success of an architectural or urban project. IBA should therefore position itself clearly on these subjects so that it becomes a precursor of a just, sustainable and inclusive territorial transition, backed up by civic society. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to anchor the IBA in a solid public initiative, capable of supporting new innovative tools.



Aerial photographs of the territory around Belval, municipality of Sanem © Sanem

6. ASPECTS OF GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND ORGANISATION

A key component of an IBA is to provide innovation for the practice of governance: how the territory of Alzette-Belval+ will be developed in the future, how the mechanisms of policy making will adapt to change, and how the IBA itself will be organised. Governance comprises the systems and practices of decision making as concerns planning and building, architecture, and urban-regional development, including the definition of problems and the development of strategies. The concept of governance is distinct from the actual government, as it looks how different scales (national, local) intersect and includes private actors in related processes. This seems to be particularly appropriate in a cross-border setting where state, regional and local administration work together. The key implication of an IBA is that it confronts usual practice with the call for innovation, experiment, and sustainability. Therefore, we aim to show how such implications – IBA as an innovative, experimental setting – can become effective for planning, building, architecture in the Alzette-Belval+ area. Also, the question is in how far ideas and experiments fostered by the IBA may be relevant for practice beyond the duration of this temporary event. Finally, this section also includes some cornerstones of the actual governance and organisation of the IBA itself and the associated activities.

Governing the IBA Alzette-Belval+

Framing governance in the context of the IBA Alzette-Belval+ is guided by the following considerations. First and foremost, there is a need to reflect the governance-specificities of the joint cross-border terrain of Alzette-Belval+, which are both a product of its past and a result of recent growth pressures and accelerated urbanisation. Second, it is important to analyse the governing conditions for building, planning and politics not only in the overlapping territory of Alzette-Belval, but also on both sides of the border as a case in point. Spatial governance is mainly practiced at national and regional levels at either side, on French and on Luxembourgian territory. Either side is confronted with a range of challenges in urban-regional terms in specific ways, to which the institutions in charge have to respond to. This needs to be reflected when considering innovation and experimentation for a better, more sustainable pathway in the future. Third, the ideas outlined here would focus particularly on practice – that is, the main emphasis is placed on implementation and effectiveness of the strategies and measures proposed by the IBA, rather than addressing future visions or long-term guidelines only.

As outlined in the previous sections of this Memorandum, the institutions in charge of planning, building and architecture are challenged by the speed and scope of development in both parts of the cross-border region. Planning for enduring growth in a fragmented spatial and institutional setting is complex, uncertain and takes time to materialise. In turn, it could be argued that development, most notably the production of housing, the creation of liveable urban quarters, or the protection of green spaces, needs to be accelerated and implemented. However, this probably needs to be done in higher quality, more effectively and more inclusive than before. The IBA offers the ideal platform for doing exactly this. In this context, the main rationale of an IBA is to look beyond usual practice and to support ideas, strategies and measures that are led by innovation and experimentation. This may apply not only to the products that can be expected to evolve from the IBA, but also to the ways in which planning procedures are set up and thus inform and instruct concrete practice.

Overcoming borders: from leitmotif to action

Against this background, what is the main governance-related offer and promise that can be expected from an IBA Alzette-Belval+? We argue that the related commitment of the IBA could be overcoming borders in various regards: territorial borders; demarcations between different fields (sectors) of action; borders of responsibility. The cross-border territory of Alzette-Belval+ would function as a signifier for breaking up the barriers and demarcations so as to implement a more coherent, balanced and sustainable pattern of spatial development. The IBA can thus be understood as an invitation to civil society, professionals and stakeholders of various kinds to engage in an open process of re-inventing the cross-border territory. The borders that we consider in need to be overcome are manifold and include the following dimensions:

- In the sense of a truly collaborative cross-border approach, the two participating nation states should be committed to engage in this joint project, by developing creative measures as to both the direction of the territorial future and the necessary planning, design and policy making practices. This is easier said than done, as even within the EU, national sovereignty exerts a lasting impact on effective cross-border planning practice. However, the efforts of the past to collaborate in practice – i.e. under the roof of the Greater Region – offer some useful guidance as to what could, and should, be done by whom in the foreseeable future.

- The existing mismatch between the two (or three) major levels of decision making needs to be addressed. This is a common problem for planning and building (e.g. housing) policies in many countries, regardless whether they are organised in more federal or in more centralistic ways. There is a constant need for streamlining and harmonising state and local interests (and the respective powers to act), regardless of whether the central government is situated relatively remote (FR) or relatively close (LUX) to what actually happens locally in Alzette-Belval+. When considering implementation, a particular emphasis should be placed on municipal decision-making, as this level is still the final frontier for planning and building.

- The mismatch between public and private spheres of authority and influence is another field that deserves more experimentation and innovation. In order to be successful, IBA is an endeavour that requires the active participation of corporate actors. This applies even more to a region whose past was massively shaped by mining and steel production, where the remainders of the heavy industries are still overly present, and where the patrons of the steel industry have had, and still have, a lot to say in urban-regional development terms. As recent cases of development revealed, this offers both limitations and potentials to urban development – but it provides in any way good reason to include corporate partners as early as possible.

- Planning and building for sustainable development are essentially about integration of different sectors, thus considering common perspectives for the built and the unbuilt environment, integrated planning for land use and infrastructure (such as mobility), or the food-water nexus, and the like. While again this is easier said than done (this applies for example to the co-ordination of transport infrastructure and settlement investments), international experience also reveals that the various sectors are characterised by different dynamics, budgets and power to unfold. This needs to be taken into account. However, the IBA offers a playing field to experiment with selective cases where practice can engage in more integrative ways.

- Last but not least, IBAs usually aim to be decidedly open to the active involvement of civil society, thus making the practice more permeable between official/professional players and the interested public than it is normally the case. Given that there is a rising interest in making planning more participative at both sides of the border, the IBA offers a platform for co-ordinating related activities. Participation taken seriously can provide a range of benefits to planning, building and architecture. Most notably,

it can deliver innovative ideas from broader societal and community backgrounds; moreover, it can help identify conflict at the earliest convenience, so planning processes may turn more efficient and effective when assisted by public participation. However, as we know from international experience, civil society involvement is not without its flaws and shortcomings, which have led some commentators already speak of the “nightmare” of participation. This is not an argument against involving the interested public, but one may consider it a means that will be wisely used. In most general terms, an engaged public can make development processes truly transformative, and institutions in charge should not be afraid of controversies and conflict: they are simply an important element of planning and building that needs to be dealt with.

Elements for an organisation

A wide variety of tools and instruments can be imagined to give shape to some of the above-mentioned ambitions and considerations. The IBA Büro is the entity that carries and animates this process, and which takes care of the organisation. It is usually made up of a multidisciplinary team of professions relevant to the IBA mission. Without the appropriate staff or the creativity to navigate through the field of legal, political and budgetary issues, the IBA Büro has no prospect of achieving its mission of developing an experimental pathway in architecture and urban planning over the next 10 years, and risks to get entangled in well established bureaucratic logics. Therefore, the ‘architecture’ of this IBA Büro is one of the key issues for the success of the IBA mission. Traditionally, the core work of the IBA Büro consists mainly of three tasks that steer the mission, which are further described underneath in a preliminary and non-exhaustive way:

- Stimulating projects: IBA proactive and IBA call
- Supporting projects: IBA guidance and consultation
- Facilitating a debate platform: IBA Forum

Stimulating projects : IBA proactive and IBA call

IBA’s **proactive** approach is based on the idea that the IBA Büro enters ongoing processes of projects – projects that were launched prior to the IBA mission – to let them enter the IBA process. Two scenarios are possible :

- (1) *Transfer of projects*: a process of encouraging the local application of an existing approach, method, project, by adapting it to a specific context and issues. In this case, the IBA Büro relies on a repository projects or practices that have proven their

worth on other territories, and proposes them to local actors who encounter a similar problem or need.

(2) *Production of framework documents*: the IBA Büro can produce "framework documents" or "reference documents" based on the problems previously diagnosed in the Alzette Belval territory. These reference documents can be directed at any public or private entity wishing to set up a project that respects the IBA criteria. These documents can explain in a precise manner the IBA ambitions for each category of project.

The IBA **call** is an attempt to search for new and innovative projects for the territory of Alzette-Belval. Projects that are as much as possible in line with the considerations mentioned throughout this memorandum. At this moment, three trajectories seem possible to arrive at these projects :

(1) *Increasing the ambition of projects*: the IBA Büro can help to "increase" the initial ambition of a given project (cross-border extension of the territorial scope), ambitions, partners, etc.

(2) *Launching a call for manifestations of interest (AMI - Appel à Manifestation d'Intérêt)* to identify actors wishing to engage in operational implementation on a specific theme, or even on a piece of land that does not yet have a specific destination, an AMI can be launched. The developers thus benefit from engineering assistance for the start-up phase.

(3) *Launching a call for projects*: the call for projects is a flexible procedure for putting operators in competition on the basis of a document setting out the objectives to be achieved. The initiative, content and implementation of the project are up to the project developer. The call for projects can be used to select projects for public aid (subsidy, available land, etc.). Here, the IBA Büro can either initiate a call for projects or accompany a partner in the implementation of this call for projects.

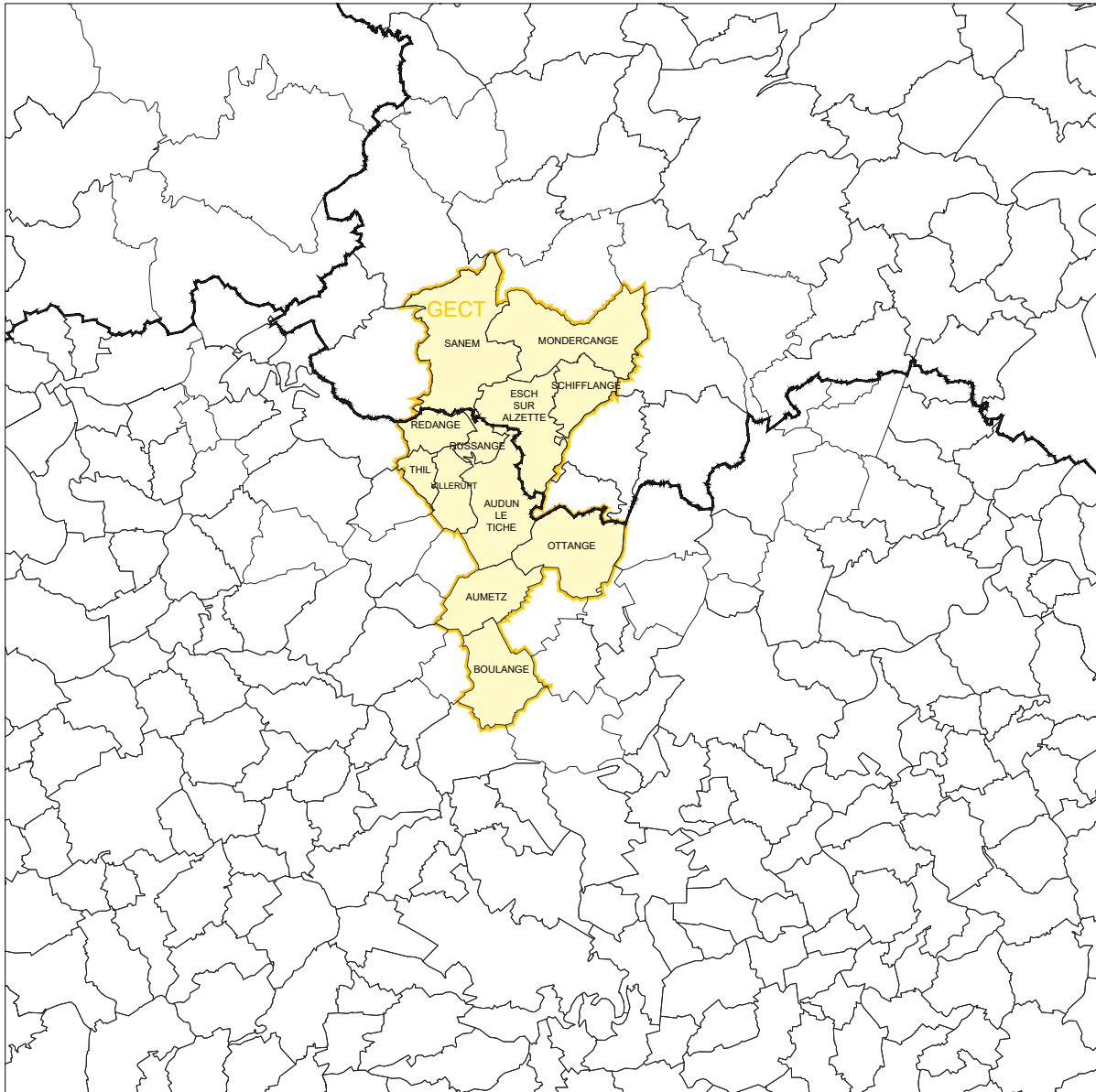
Supporting projects : IBA guidance and consultation

Once a project has entered the IBA framework, the project and its promoters need to be supported over the long term through appropriate and local assistance and expertise. This support is mainly provided by setting up a dialogue between the various relevant actors and by explaining the IBA criteria in order to integrate them as good as possible into each project. This support is provided in various ways and meets several objectives:

- a. Assuring IBA ambition: supporting project leaders to ensure the initial level of ambition and compliance with IBA criteria throughout the duration of the project.
- b. Doing things better together: helping project developers to make their own projects consistent with those of other actors (local authorities; planners; public entities) in order to ensure constant dialogue and "doing things better together".
- c. Facilitating the resolution of obstacles: problems may arise for project promoters in the course of their work, the IBA Büro can help create opportunities to find innovative solutions to barriers of a technical, legal or administrative kind.
- d. Supporting project developers in seeking and obtaining subsidies and funds.

Facilitating a debate platform: IBA Forum

In addition to the missions centred around concrete projects, IBA traditionally aims to develop local architectural and urban planning culture in its area of action. This mission takes concrete form through the exhibition and promotion of IBA projects, but also through the animation of a regular platform for debate offering reflections that complement the traditional bodies (Steering Committee and Technical Committee). In this case of IBA Alzette-Belval+ we prefer to speak of the IBA Forum. This platform does not only involve the inhabitants, but also various the stakeholders of this territory (scientists, professionals, elected representatives, etc.). The aim of this IBA Forum is (1) to anchor the IBA in the territory ; (2) to provide amenities that facilitate the co-existence of the different societies that inhabit this cross-border territory around Alzette-Belval; (3) to add further legitimacy to the IBA processes and projects ; (4) to create new networks and facilitate future cooperation.



Map of municipalities of the GECT AB. © uni.lu / CRIT.

7. BEYOND THE MEMORANDUM

Apart from the content-driven elements that are presented here, a number of practical issues are at stake in order to start up and realize an IBA. They have evolved from our exchange with the Scientific Committee in September 2021, after reading a first version of the Memorandum. The list indicates *points of attention* that require further attention and follow-up when moving to an operational phase, be it a full IBA or another preliminary test phase. As the members of the Scientific Committee remarked in the meeting of September, it is all about '**Creating IBA conditions**': 'any IBA process should first of all create favourable conditions under which creative and experimental solutions of high quality may flourish. If this happens, good projects will follow automatically.'

Move from content to process, and back

The memorandum presents a solid scientific reasoning for an innovative approach to IBA. It is of crucial importance to think about how the arguments and the message of the current draft can be communicated to a wider audience in an adapted version of the memorandum, once all parties agree on the exact content and framework of the future IBA. Therefore, the entire IBA operation is in need of a narrative, that ties the content of this memorandum to a strong thematical storyline that can easily be communicated to various audiences. The search for an attractive title, as a tool to frame the entire operation, is crucial and should be part of further discussion among those who chose to carry about IBA. The title should refer to solidarity under the transborder conditions of the region and hint at the success of this future IBA.

Empower to support

IBA is a process of empowerment of those people and organisations who have normally much less or even no power in the process of spatial development. The answer to the question who to empower and how is still open at the moment when this prefiguration mission comes to an end. The issue is related to the question who are the 'power people' — persons or institutions — who support this prefiguration mission and its transition into a full IBA. Experiences abroad learn us that large scale urban projects, as well as many of the previous IBA's, only came to fruition when they received strong political support and when they were led by strong personalities (IBA directors) who supervised the content and the way this content was translated into projects.

Build a critical mass

A good IBA requires a sort of 'critical mass' in quality and in the number of projects. Compared to previous IBA projects, the territory of this mission (the twelve municipalities of GECT AB and possibly some satellites outside this territory) is rather limited in scale. So in order to be remarked by an international scene of experts, architects and urban planners, and in order to be significant, high ambitions are needed as the opportunities to realize projects with a certain level of quality will be limited.

Consolidate and improve the conditions

The prefiguration mission created an important momentum to work across the border on a common and shared project. In this process it became clear that expectations, traditions and tools in terms of spatial planning and architecture on both sides of the border differ significantly. The exchanges between members of the technical committee and the steering committee, as well as the *Atelier des Territoires* that took place on the transborder territory, formed important precedents for future projects. Any further territorial project in this transborder region, be it IBA or any other planning process, could benefit from the continuation of this dynamic from the prefiguration mission.

Highlight the surplus of IBA among the rest

IBA is not the *deus ex machina*. It is being unfold in a territory where other planning processes and projects are being realized (Luxembourg in Transition, IBA GR, the OIN, projects for revitalisation of city centres and re-use of former industrial sites, ongoing or scheduled projects for housing and urban development on the two sides of the border, ...) and it is inevitable that these processes will interact. However, a future organisation should not consider the IBA a tool for mobilizing the surplus of other projects. IBA itself should be the surplus instead, with a strong focus on the governance of the transborder spatial issues in this region. The 'surplus value' of IBA must be clear and thus explain why somebody (investor, real estate development, social housing company, ...) should participate in this process.