

AMBITION PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. WHAT IS ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY	3
3. THEMATIC AND TRANSVERSAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	5
HIGH-QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
ADAPTIVE REUSE OF BUILDINGS AND MATERIALS	
PUBLIC SPACE, THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND A CLIMATE-ROBUST CITY	
WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR	
STREAMLINING PROJECT PROCEDURES	
4. BMA TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE OBJECTIVES	10
COMPETITIONS	
RESEARCH BY DESIGN	
DESIGN REVIEWS AND PROJECT MEETINGS	
BMA LABEL	
COMMUNICATION	
5. CONCLUSION	16

1. INTRODUCTION

As BMA, I first and foremost want to be a bridge-builder, and it is my ambition to work as constructively as possible with all the different public administrations and bodies while respecting the sovereignty, competences and independence of each. I want to mobilize and make available the expertise and vision of BMA in order to support existing structures, processes and instruments, with respect for the powers of the government and relevant administrations.

My ambition is to work in a transversal and constructive manner with all public and private stakeholders involved in the architectural quality of the city's development, to support them in their activities, and to act as a facilitator in the realization of the many projects currently in the pipeline. I want to mobilize the synergy that exists between BMA and all other institutions to raise the quality of every project as much as possible and to make Brussels as liveable a city as possible – naturally within the objectives defined, on the one hand, in the Brussels Spatial Planning Code (BWRO-CoBAT) and Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and, on the other, within the ambitions of the Regional Policy Statement of February 2026.

In line with this Policy Statement, I intend to focus on four thematic strategic objectives, namely supporting the creation of affordable housing, stimulating the adaptive reuse of buildings and materials with a view to tackling climate and energy challenges, supporting the development of high-quality public spaces within a smart climate policy, and fostering constructive and supportive collaboration with the private sector. There is also one transversal objective: supporting the various actions to streamline the implementation process of projects.

To achieve these objectives, I will make use of the four existing BMA tools: architecture competitions, research by design, BMA Design Review and the BMA Label. These tools are going to be refined and deployed more effectively in line with the above thematic and transversal objectives, with a view to improving the architectural and spatial quality of our capital and making Brussels an even more enjoyable city.

2. WHAT IS ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY ?

BMA's primary mission is to stimulate the architectural quality of the urban projects carried out on the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region.

But what exactly is architectural quality?

Architectural quality is not a checklist you tick off, but neither is it a black box.

In the following six statements, I set out my view of what I believe makes architectural quality – or rather, more broadly, spatial quality – and what it needs to develop.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS CONTEXT

Spatial quality is not an abstract notion; it is inextricably tied to its context. This means that spatial quality is often already present even before a project takes shape: a high-quality urban fabric, an existing building with a solid structure, a piece of nature or a beautiful view. By starting out from what is already there, the qualities of the new project become anchored in the use of the place.

The spatial qualities of the project itself can also only be assessed in relation to the context. This concerns not only the spatial context, but all elements that give meaning to the project, such as functionality, user-friendliness, social interaction, the relation with the public space (active ground-floor spaces, for instance), the meaningfulness of the programme, sustainability, the significance for the neighbourhood and the various users, social relevance and the economy of the available resources.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS VISION

A sharp vision that provides a clear framework for the project's ambitions is essential to ensure the spatial quality of a project. Thanks to this vision, an unambiguous definition of the assignment can be drawn up, laying the foundation for the project. After all, the sharper the assignment, the better the final result.

A clear vision put forward by government, a vision that transcends standards and regulations, lends real power to the policy as a whole. If this vision is shared by the various stakeholders involved in the project (public authorities, administrative bodies, clients, designers), the quality of the project will be maintained throughout the process. It is therefore essential to give this vision room to breathe, to communicate around it effectively and to translate it into tangible ambitions and design questions.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS PROCEDURE

Spatial quality requires high-quality working conditions for the administration, the client and the designer alike. That is why it is essential to follow the correct procedure to ensure these conditions are met and to achieve a high-quality project. Good tools for the selection, evaluation and supervision of a design are highly important, but it is not just a question of the right tendering procedure, but rather of the entire process from start to finish. This begins with the first lines of the strategic plan or regulatory framework and continues until the project is completed. Having the right people around the table at the right moments, sharing a vision, making firm decisions, providing sufficient time for consultation and implementation, ensuring transparency and clear communication as well as an accessible market and fair remuneration are all indispensable to ensure that everyone can work on a high-quality joint project under the right conditions.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS COLLABORATION

In Brussels, policymakers are spread across a great many different bodies and there are countless public and private stakeholders. The only way to successfully deliver a high-quality project is through collaboration across all levels and on all fronts. Throughout the project cycle, platforms, procedures and opportunities are needed where people can meet, where administrations, policymakers and both public and private clients are supported in selecting the right designer and where partners committed to high-quality urban development can connect. By also involving citizens in the process, the project ultimately becomes important to every individual. Thanks to its independent position, BMA can support and guide this collaboration transversally, across all the various bodies involved.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS DIALOGUE

Architectural quality is the result of constructive dialogue within an open discussion. It is essential to engage in dialogue with experts, policymakers, the administration, developers, users and citizens. Trust between stakeholders, public authorities and private developers is essential, as is a safe space or context where discussion can take place openly, and where design and vision can be followed up. The tool par excellence for this is the project meeting, which, if conducted properly, is crucial for both the spatial quality and planning-permit process of a project. The real dialogue begins right from the start, however, in the preparatory phase and continues until the end of the process. This dialogue must always be transparent, well-argued and honest, thereby forming the basis for the public support of the project.

SPATIAL QUALITY IS SOCIAL CARE

High-quality projects contribute to a better built environment for the city, its citizens and administrators. Spatial quality gives shape to the society that BMA serves as a civil servant. That is why BMA's vision must always be socially driven and respond to the region's pressing needs, so that the resulting projects serve the public interest. As such, every collaboration with BMA carries a seal of quality where architecture and urban planning act as a lever for a better urban society.

To materialize and reinforce this vision of spatial quality, we want to highlight four societal themes that play a key role in the quality of life in Brussels and for its residents. We also want to put forward one issue directly linked to the government agreement and which is a key factor in the development of each project: the duration of the process.

3.1. MAKING QUALITY HOUSING AFFORDABLE

For years, Brussels has faced long waiting lists for social housing, and the private rental market is among the country's most expensive. As mentioned in the Regional Policy Statement, there is indeed affordable housing available on the private market, but it is of poor quality. We need to increase the offer of decent and affordable housing for all Brussels residents.

The various social housing organizations (Public Property Companies, etc.) face a range of challenges while their financial resources continue to dwindle. Many buildings are in a state of serious disrepair and require to be urgently renovated and updated to meet energy-efficiency standards.

Whether public or private, the market as it currently stands does not provide enough affordable housing. We therefore need to put forward alternatives.

BMA AS A TRANSVERSAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BMA's transversal role enables it to examine different practices, compare them and draw lessons that can benefit other stakeholders to optimize project development processes.

As an independent actor, BMA has a long history of collaboration with various public housing operators – Brussels Housing Corporation (BGHM-SLRB) and Public Property Companies, Citydev, Urban Development Corporation (MSI-SAU), Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB), Housing Fund, local authorities, municipalities, Public Social Welfare Centres (OCMW-CPAS), etc. – as well as with the private sector.

BMA will continue to fulfil this traditional support role, which is one of the cornerstones of its mission. The scope of these projects includes the renovation of existing housing, the conversion of offices into dwellings, and the construction of new housing.

BMA ACTS AS A FACILITATOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

The cost of housing depends heavily on land prices. Developing an alternative system that neutralizes the property market's impact contributes to the provision of affordable housing in the long term.

For this reason, BMA supports housing cooperatives, which represent a genuine new path for creating affordable housing in Brussels. These cooperatives make up a particularly timely alternative that addresses several challenges. They provide sustainable affordable housing through a hybrid formula and boost residents' purchasing power. They also help to retain workers in the city, expand the stock of affordable housing, etc.

BMA has a facilitating role that it must be able to embed more firmly within the Brussels political landscape. Our aim is to continue to support pilot projects and to develop the tools necessary for this purpose.

3.2. ADAPTIVE REUSE OF BUILDINGS AND MATERIALS

To address environmental, climate and energy challenges, BMA proposes to focus on the adaptive reuse of buildings and materials. Just as certain building materials, once considered waste, are now recognized as resources, many buildings deemed obsolete or of no architectural value are being reassessed. In recent years, the Brussels-Capital Region has developed expertise based both on experience gained from innovative projects led by pioneering actors and on developments in the regulatory, strategic and operational framework for conversion and reuse. The discussions held as part of the revision of the Regional Urban Planning Regulations (RUPR), the territorial visions developed for the Northern and European Quarters, and the various operational mechanisms such as the task forces for offices or temporary occupation (Perspective) have helped to underpin these dynamics. Finally, conversion and reuse also raise questions about the evolution of architectural practice and identity.

Converting buildings and reusing materials must become standard structural practices in architectural and urban development in Brussels. To support this paradigm shift, it is necessary to systematically incorporate these principles into projects, competitions, tools and procedures.

ACTING ON GOVERNANCE

Adaptive reuse must become the norm, while demolition must be the exception and be justified. Set out in the RUPR guidelines, this principle should be fully integrated in order to systematize this approach.

Another key lever is to streamline administrative procedures, particularly when applying for planning permission. BMA therefore supports the administration that introduce greater flexibility into the regulatory framework, particularly within BWRO-CoBAT, to allow for greater suppleness in projects incorporating reused materials, the availability and characteristics of which are not always fully known when applying for a planning permit.

DEPLOYING BMA TOOLS

Thanks to its position at the intersection of projects, stakeholders and decision-making processes, BMA can deploy its tools to support the integration of conversion and circularity principles.

Working on the programme helps to ensure a better correspondence between the built environment and urban needs — housing, amenities or mixed-use functions — while supporting a mix of functions and the activation of ground-floor spaces. Furthermore, consideration of mixed-use programmes is best approached at the level of a portfolio of buildings or a neighbourhood, where it often appears more relevant than at the level of an individual building.

Design competitions also serve as a lever to stimulate the integration of circular principles into projects. They can stimulate the use of salvaged materials as well as design approaches that promote the adaptability of buildings over time, for instance through construction systems conceived as layers and demountable structures that facilitate future transformations.

Finally, BMA can play a role in disseminating and structuring the knowledge drawn from projects. Thanks to its transversal understanding of operations — through competitions, project meetings and the Design Reviews it issues — BMA could contribute to the development of tools to better identify and highlight available resources.

3.3. PUBLIC SPACE, THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND A CLIMATE-ROBUST CITY

Climate change is having a major impact on city centres, and Brussels is no exception. In this regard, the quality of the public space plays a fundamental role in mitigating the effects of climate change. While the urgency of developing better-suited public spaces is now widely acknowledged, the implementation of projects is, however, somewhat slow. This slow pace is difficult to reconcile with the urgency of the climate crisis and regularly compromises the spatial quality of projects.

In the Brussels-Capital Region, various stakeholders are already working to transform the public space. Several of them have developed tools that seek either to spread a vision or streamline certain procedures. These include, for example, manuals (such as the Manuel Espaces Publics – Public Spaces Manual), central procurement schemes (Public Spaces Framework Agreement, Traffic-Calmed Networks Framework Agreement, Cycleway Framework Agreement), and memoranda (from Brussels Environment). However, these tools often remain little known to the stakeholders for whom they are intended, particularly clients and designers.

Furthermore, the development of the public space involves a wide range of stakeholders and issues. Each operates within a specific field of expertise and often remains confined to their own specialism. BMA's transversal role therefore enables it to look at quality in the broad sense by intertwining different themes. For BMA, this multi-thematic approach is a key lever for raising the quality of projects.

Finally, although public-space projects are intended for citizens, they are still too often designed behind closed doors. This results in projects that don't always meet the needs of neighbourhoods and their users, and which therefore get little support.

In collaboration with and in support of local authorities, Brussels Mobility, Brussels Environment, Beliris, Urban and Perspective, BMA is pursuing three main objectives for the public space: generalize, accelerate and promote quality.

The first ambition is to make the redevelopment of public spaces a widespread practice. Thanks to its independent position, BMA has developed a transversal working method that fosters connections between stakeholders. This position should be leveraged to raise awareness of existing tools and to promote them, and to bring together the stakeholders involved in the development of open spaces.

The second, and most urgent, objective is to accelerate the development of the public space. To achieve this, BMA can act through its 'competitions' tool by encouraging the use of faster procedures, and through its experience with temporary occupation, which has also been identified as a means of accelerating progress.

All of this must be achieved without compromising on quality, the third objective. To support quality, BMA wishes to continue holding project meetings for public spaces, which enable projects to develop qualitatively.

3.4. WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private clients today are among the most important stakeholders of the property market in Brussels. At the same time, public clients have increasingly limited budgetary resources to carry out the urban regeneration projects that the region needs. To boost investment in the

construction sector in Brussels, BMA wishes to further develop its collaboration with private clients, both through the use of its tools and procedures and by supporting high spatial quality in projects carried out in Brussels.

In recent years, BMA has pursued several successful collaborations with private developers, a trend that has been strengthening: by 2024, private projects already accounted for 20 per cent of the competitions supported by BMA; by 2025, this share had reached 25 per cent. This development points to both the private sector's growing interest in BMA's support and tools and the potential for collaboration that can be strengthened further.

The aim is twofold: on the one hand, to make the private sector a more structural partner in producing spatial quality in Brussels; and on the other, to develop the BMA tools so that they are better suited to the operational realities of these stakeholders.

This collaboration is not aimed solely at supporting individual projects prior to the planning permit application, but also at fostering a shared culture of spatial quality, the collective interest and urban responsibility. In this context, BMA can act as a facilitator in this regard, a guarantor of spatial quality and an interface between private ambitions and public objectives, in collaboration with the sector's professional networks such as Upsi, Embuild and Les Femmes de l'Immobilier, as well as developers, investors and institutional owners.

3.5. STREAMLINING PROJECT PROCEDURES

The Regional Policy Statement is clear: the government is committed to halving the time taken to issue planning permits, which is an urgent and necessary objective. However, beyond the permits themselves, it should be noted that the entire project process, from the initial plans right through to the granting of the permit, is slowed down by numerous factors: the many stakeholders involved in the process, the uncertainties and potential for interpretation within the legal frameworks, the lack of coordination between bodies and sometimes even within the same administration, ill-considered changes of course, etc. This complexity affects not only private projects but also public project promoters.

The Brussels government has also recognized this problem and has committed, in its Regional Policy Statement, to harmonizing procedures and reducing red tape. As part of its role to promote spatial quality, BMA wishes to support the government in this endeavour. Indeed, a loss of time often also means a loss of quality. All too often, the original ambitions are abandoned, complications lead to making lazy choices, or inconsistencies between opinions result in a 'lowest common denominator', a weak consensus. Streamlining procedures must therefore not only aim to shorten procedures, but also to improve the clarity and consistency of the entire project process.

The aim is not to create new rules, but to organize existing procedures in a more efficient and consistent manner. It is not simply a matter of reducing the time it takes to obtain a planning permit from the authorities. Time and quality are also lost prior to the submission of the planning application. But it is just as important to take the time, right from the early stages of the project, to define the appropriate framework, align expectations and ambitions with reality, and use the appropriate procedures. In this way, we can deal in an efficient and intelligent manner with the available resources and in doing so help keep projects within budget,

Ambition Plan**Lisa De Visscher**- Bouwmeester maître architecte BMA

2025- 2030

because a high-quality project is one where the budget remains balanced throughout the process.

By improving collaboration, structuring decision-making processes more clearly and using the right tools at the right time, it is possible to save time without compromising on quality. The aim is to move from a linear process to one that is better coordinated.

4. BMA TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE OBJECTIVES

To better deliver projects within the framework of the above themes, BMA's four existing tools – competitions, research by design, Design Review and BMA Label – will be retained, but evaluated, optimized and deployed to serve these themes. Communication across the board, which is crucial to BMA operations, is added as a fifth tool.

Clearly, BMA is not seeking to increase the number of tools available and is ready to play an active role in reviewing the tools as part of the BWRO-CoBAT reform.

As stated in the mission's terms of reference, BMA will publish an activity report annually. For this first mandate, the tools and overall functioning of BMA will be assessed.

4.1. COMPETITIONS

Competitions are BMA's most important tool. They put architectural, urban planning and public-space projects out to tender in an open manner, thereby raising the quality of the designs. This tool ensures that both public and private clients are guided in setting up the best possible competition procedure.

With more than 15 years' experience and about 50 competitions per year, this system is widely recognized by stakeholders in the sector and has helped to improve the quality and stimulate innovation in projects across the region.

At the same time, we are now seeing a certain loss of momentum due to budgetary pressures, procedure-related work road, fierce competition among architects, limited remuneration and, at times, lengthy processes.

In this context, maintaining the quality of procedures while taking operational realities into account has become a major challenge.

BMA wishes to consolidate competitions as an important tool by maintaining the quality of the projects that emerge from this process, while making the tool more agile and flexible to better adapt it to the realities of the sector.

BMA wishes to continue its role as a guarantor of an open and high-quality competition, emphasizing that there is no single model for competitions, but rather a range of different procedures that must be adapted to the nature of the projects, their complexity and the resources available. In addition to public procurement, we are implementing Design and Build procedures with standard specifications and developing more flexible and dynamic formats for private stakeholders. The aim is to gradually break down the barriers between the approaches to public and private competitions: by allowing for greater flexibility and innovation in public procedures while guiding private clients towards even smoother and more experimental tendering processes while ensuring fair remuneration for design firms.

By organizing competition meetings before the launch of the (private) competition and in consultation with the relevant authorities, we ensure that the tender specifications comply with the regulatory framework.

Competitions are also the ideal tool for supporting the construction of high-quality, affordable housing, exploring innovative approaches to the renovation of existing social housing, encouraging the conversion of buildings and elaborating adapted public spaces.

Public (BGHM-SLRB, Citydev, municipalities, etc.) and private clients are essential partners in

adapting procedures to the realities of projects and enhancing the quality of programmes. Perspective is a key partner in relation to task forces (facilities, schools, etc.), office occupancy monitoring, temporary occupancy, and public participation.

Various architectural and urban planning firms should also be involved in this discussion, as well as associations such as BVS-UPSI, Embuild, G30 and the Order of Architects.

Through this broad dialogue and an institutional self-assessment process, BMA wishes to develop its competition procedures so that they continue to serve as a key driver of architectural and urban quality in Brussels.

4.2. DESIGN REVIEWS AND PROJECT MEETINGS

As the only BMA tool to have been incorporated into BWRO-CoBAT since 2019, the Design Reviews are an essential part of BMA activities. Their very existence encourages project developers to meet with BMA during project meetings prior to submitting an application. Furthermore, they assist Urban in its analysis of the spatial and architectural qualities of projects. Currently, the Design Review applies only to building projects, but the government decided in 2024 to extend it to public space exceeding 5,000 m² (although this decision has yet to take effect). According to BWRO-CoBAT, BMA has 60 days to issue its Design Review (with the exception of fast-lane projects and the design reviews issued by bodies); however, BMA is committed to issuing them within 30 days.

To arrive at a well-founded Design Review that takes into account the expertise of other partners, BMA attends project meetings organized by Urban for projects exceeding 5,000 m². Since they were introduced, these project meetings have grown to be an essential tool for consultation prior to a planning application. For BMA, they represent a key opportunity for discussion and debate. They allow for the arguments of the project promoters and various public stakeholders to be heard. They reduce back-and-forth exchanges, indecision and fruitless discussions, thereby streamlining the project's progress. For public authorities and private stakeholders, the dialogue made possible by these tools helps to improve the quality of projects. In this regard, it is clear that they should be strengthened and supported; however, as mentioned in the Policy Statement, their format could still be improved.

The BMA Design Review is non-binding. It does not endorse a project with a 'yes' or 'no', but rather highlights the project's strengths and points out its weaknesses, putting forward arguments that inform the analysis of the proposals. As such, it helps to stimulate and raise the standard of the architectural debate in Brussels; greater visibility should be given to BMA Design Reviews, for example during public consultations.

Project meetings are in the first place a forum for debate and discussion that should be encouraged. However, they must also provide clear information to the applicant. As mentioned in the Regional Policy Statement, an efficient meeting procedure and a comprehensive report with clear conclusions are essential. BMA fully supports this objective and proposes to act as a facilitator in this process, serving both Urban and public and private clients. For this reason, BMA will participate in the consultation committees for projects arising from BMA procedures.

In most cases, BMA is involved in competitions for the redevelopment of the region's major public spaces. This makes sense, as public spaces contribute just as much as buildings to the

spatial quality of the region. Nevertheless, these projects take time, and there is a risk that quality may be compromised during the process. To reduce this risk and maintain a high level of ambition even after the competition, BMA must remain involved in project meetings for large-scale public spaces. For this reason, we propose to extend the BMA Design Review to public spaces.

To further improve how project meetings are run, Urban will, of course, be a key partner. However, these improvements must be the result of a collective discussion involving the other public stakeholders in the project meeting, such as Brussels Environment, Brussels Mobility and the municipalities wishing to take part. It will also be important to hear what certain applicants have to say, whether private or public bodies such as Citydev, BGHM-SLRB or Beliris.

4.3. RESEARCH BY DESIGN

The 'research by design' tool is more than ten years old. It was created in the context of the operational implementation of the Canal Plan and the establishment of a dedicated Canal team comprising representatives from regional and municipal authorities. After ten years, the overall assessment is positive: research by design has established itself as a recognized methodology, both within the Brussels institutional landscape and in project culture. It fuels debates and enhances the spatial quality of projects prior to the submission of planning applications.

At the same time, the landscape has changed. Design firms are increasingly being called upon to carry out design research. This is a positive development and one that can help to redefine the role of BMA. In this, BMA is not seeking to replace design firms.

Reactive design research must be maintained and strengthened as a service to clients, on a par with design competitions, while developing closer links between these two tools.

URBAN LAB : A PLATFORM FOR PROACTIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING DESIGN RESEARCH

We propose setting up an Urban Lab as a platform for structural collaboration between Urban and Perspective, aimed at proactive and forward-looking design research at the level of the Brussels-Capital Region. The Urban Lab meets regularly, defines its themes based on the political agenda, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Urban Planning, and produces spatial visions designed to support the decision-making process. Possible research themes include: the future of postmodern heritage, the conversion of vacant office buildings into mixed-use developments, the repurposing and potential densification of strategic sites in the second ring of Brussels, etc.

Furthermore, strategic sites such as Audi, Solvay and prisons may be the subject of an Urban Lab.

As this Urban Lab consists of people already employed in the administration, it does not require additional budgetary resources.

PROJECTLINES: A SYSTEMATIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE SALE AND DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE SITES

Projectlines are being strengthened and institutionalized as a standard procedure in any significant transfer or development of public heritage and in major private sales within the Brussels-Capital Region (as in the case of Cityforward). To this end, BMA works with the owners and relevant authorities, and regularly issues a call for sellers. This tool clarifies the framework in terms of programme, density, urban integration, public facilities and architectural ambition even before the sale is launched. This creates better starting conditions for the development of projects by private clients.

EXTERNAL EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

BMA is strengthening its team through targeted collaborations with external experts, among others in the areas of programming, budgetary support and sustainability. Existing research – such as studies on vacant office buildings – is actively highlighted and shared with observatories and regional partners via the Urban Lab.

We work together with the Territorial Strategy department at Perspective, the Urban Planning division at Urban, the relevant municipalities, civil society and external experts.

4.4. BMA LABEL

The BMA Label aims to identify and support unsolicited proposals arising from citizen initiatives, research or practice. Launched in 2022, it provides support for ideas that are still at an early stage but have the potential to open up new perspectives for spatial quality in Brussels. The scheme has been a great success and has made it possible to gauge the questions and concerns raised by citizens, architects, researchers and activists, and to position this tool as a truly bottom-up initiative.

To date, BMA has supported three Labels per year, selected on the basis of different themes while allowing considerable freedom in the formats used to present the results. This approach has led to a range of results: public events, book launches, manifestos, exhibitions, walking tours and calls for project proposals. The level of support provided by BMA has also varied, ranging from networking and public visibility to monitoring deadlines and helping to secure additional funding.

While this approach has helped to diversify initiatives, it now reveals certain limitations: the Labels are often isolated, their collective impact is limited, and results are little used in the practice of BMA.

BMA wishes to develop this tool into a BMA Label 2.0 in order to enhance its usefulness for BMA operations while retaining the bottom-up approach that sets it apart. Today, the methodology can be adapted to develop a system specific to BMA, capable of producing content more closely aligned with BMA thinking and practice. The challenge is to remain open to emerging initiatives while strengthening the links between this research and the spatial issues that BMA faces in its day-to-day operations.

BMA wishes to continue holding an annual call for applications for three Labels while introducing a common theme for each edition that ties in with our strategic objectives so as to enhance the coherence and impact of the research and encourage dialogue between Label

holders and the BMA team.

The aim is therefore to move away from the often isolated and linear development of Labels towards a more collective dynamic, structured and enriched by opportunities for exchange and networking.

The launch of a new edition of the BMA Label 2.0 could serve as a unifying moment, combining the presentation of the three Labels from the previous edition with the launch of the new edition. This event would offer both increased visibility and a clearer framework for the presentation of the Labels. It would also provide an opportunity to bring together initiators, encourage networking and create the conditions for synergies between initiatives.

Finally, the development of 'residency' periods within the BMA team during the process would help to strengthen exchanges between the three Label holders from the same edition and enable them to further advance their ideas together. These residencies would also strengthen collaboration with the BMA team, ensuring that the research carried out is closely aligned with BMA objectives and can provide concrete input in practice.

4.5. COMMUNICATION

BMA does not exercise direct regulatory authority over urban projects. BMA relies on soft power, influence that rests on quality, the relevance of BMA recommendations and dialogue with all those who shape the city.

As such, BMA's credibility depends heavily on the clarity of its operations and the dissemination of its methods and results. Communication therefore plays an essential and transversal role: it helps to raise the profile of the objectives, tools and projects supported by BMA.

BMA's communication strategy pursues several complementary objectives:

- **Ensuring transparency regarding BMA activities and procedures**, particularly with regard to competitions and project support processes.
- **Strengthening architectural culture beyond the profession** in order to facilitate a broader dialogue on urban transformation.
- **Showcasing the projects supported by BMA** by documenting the entire process: from the launch of the competition to completion so as to provide a better insight into the processes leading to spatial quality.
- **Clarifying BMA's missions** by making their tangible impact on the city and on public policy more visible.

This ambition must, however, be pursued within a context of limited resources. The challenge is therefore to consolidate existing tools and prioritize lightweight, flexible and accessible formats.

BMA's communication strategy is based on several complementary approaches.

BMA AS A SOURCE OF TRANSPARENT INFORMATION

The website, newsletters and social media are the main channels for communicating about BMA operations: calls for candidates, competition results, publications and events. The systematic publication of factsheets contributes to this transparency by clearly documenting competition procedures and the selected projects. As such, we intend to highlight the entire journey of a project – from competition through to completion – by documenting every stage of BMA involvement.

BMA AS A TOOL FOR SHARING KNOWLEDGE

BMA continues to produce and share tools for public clients and government bodies: methodological guides, recommendations and thematic publications. The small volume *10 BMA Points for a Good Competition* is the first in a series of short publications dedicated to BMA tools. These publications are available online and, where possible, in small print runs.

BMA AS A CATALYST FOR DEBATE AND INNOVATION

Participation in debates, conferences and publications in trade journals and the general press helps to highlight certain key issues, including beyond the Brussels context. In this regard, our collaborations with the Belgian journals *A+* and *Ruimte* remain particularly important. They constitute a platform to disseminate ideas arising from Brussels and to contribute to the architectural and urban debate in Belgium and beyond.

BMA AS AN OPEN PLATFORM

BMA also wishes to strengthen the accessible and open nature of its operations, among others through project visits, public presentations and collaborations with cultural partners. The aim is to raise awareness of the day-to-day reality of BMA work and to demonstrate in concrete terms how its interventions are translated in the city.

5. CONCLUSION

Over the next five years (2025 – 2030), the new BMA mandate will build on previous mandates while drawing on the Regional Policy Statement as regards the strategic objectives and refining existing tools to achieve these objectives.

For this mandate, I wish to focus on four thematic strategic objectives: supporting the creation of affordable housing; encouraging the adaptive reuse of buildings and materials to address climate and energy challenges; supporting the creation of high-quality public spaces as part of a smart climate policy; and fostering constructive collaboration with the private sector. A transversal objective is also essential: strengthening the various initiatives aimed at facilitating and streamlining the project delivery process.

To achieve these objectives, the four existing BMA tools will be complemented with the communication tool. These tools – competitions, research by design, BMA Design Review and BMA Label – will be developed further, refined and put to better use in line with the needs of the thematic and transversal objectives. The aim is to improve the architectural and spatial quality of our capital and make Brussels an even more liveable city.

In practice, this translates into a series of actions (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Supporting the administrations in streamlining project processes and thus contribute to budget control and, consequently, ensure the quality of projects
- Work on standard specifications for Design and Build procedures
- Develop new competition procedures to improve this tool for collaboration with private clients
- Support clients and design firms to ensure competitions run smoothly for all parties
- Assist Urban in streamlining and facilitating project processes (project meetings, etc.)
- Propose making the BMA Design Review mandatory for public spaces exceeding 5,000 m², in line with existing building regulations
- Participate in consultation committees for projects arising from BMA procedures
- Create an Urban Lab (in collaboration with Urban and Perspective) to optimize research by design
- Further expand and develop the Projectlines tool to provide a clearer framework for the sale of buildings and plots
- Adapt the BMA Label formula to the reality of our strategic objectives
- Assist and support BGHM-SLRB and Citydev in facilitating the production of affordable housing and the renovation of existing housing, including open spaces on their sites
- Bring together the various stakeholders involved in the sector to streamline processes while maintaining a focus on architectural quality.