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Innovative Tools for Inclusive and Evidence-Based City Development

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Introduction

What are Urban Planning Laboratories (UPLs)?

Experimental, interdisciplinary environments to co-create urban solutions

Why are they important?

Support evidence-based planning

Foster innovation, participation, and testing before implementation

Objectives of UPLs

- Enhance urban governance and spatial planning
- Bridge gaps between research, policy, and practice
- Test policies or projects in a controlled environment
- Empower communities through participatory methods)

Key Features

- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Data-driven and tech-enabled tools (GIS, digital twins, urban simulations)
- Real-world experimentation (e.g., tactical urbanism, living labs)
- Co-creation with citizens and stakeholders

Actors Involved

- Local governments and planning departments
- Universities and research institutions
- NGOs and civil society organizations
- Startups and tech firms
- Citizens and community groups

Methods and Tools

- Participatory mapping and design workshops
- Urban simulations and scenario modeling
- Digital platforms and dashboards
- Pilot projects and prototyping
- Policy labs and urban foresight

Benefits of Urban Planning Labs

- Accelerate innovation in urban policy
- Improve transparency and public trust
- Reduce risks of large-scale implementation
- Enable tailored, place-based solutions
- Foster interdepartmental and cross-sectoral collaboration

Challenges

- Scaling from pilot to policy
- Funding and institutional support
- Ensuring meaningful participation
- Data access and integration
- Sustaining momentum beyond initial projects

Case Studies

- 1. Urban Lab Medellín (Colombia):
 - Integrated innovation in transport and housing
- 2. Vienna's Aspern Smart City Lab (Austria):
 - Testing smart mobility and energy solutions
- 3. Urban Lab Brussels (Belgium):
 - Collaborative spatial development planning
- 4. Polish Urban Labs (Gdynia, Rzeszów):
 - Citizen engagement and local policy innovation

How to Set Up a UPL

- Identify key urban challenges
- Build partnerships with local actors
- Secure funding and institutional support
- Design participatory methodologies
- Monitor, evaluate, and scale up successful pilots

Future of Urban Planning Labs

- Integration with digital twins and AI
- Climate resilience and green transitions
- Cross-border urban labs and networks
- Data governance and ethics in urban experiments

Conclusion

- Urban Planning Labs are powerful tools for innovation
- Promote collaborative, inclusive, and adaptive cities
- Opportunity to reshape how we plan and build our urban futures

Thank you for your attention!