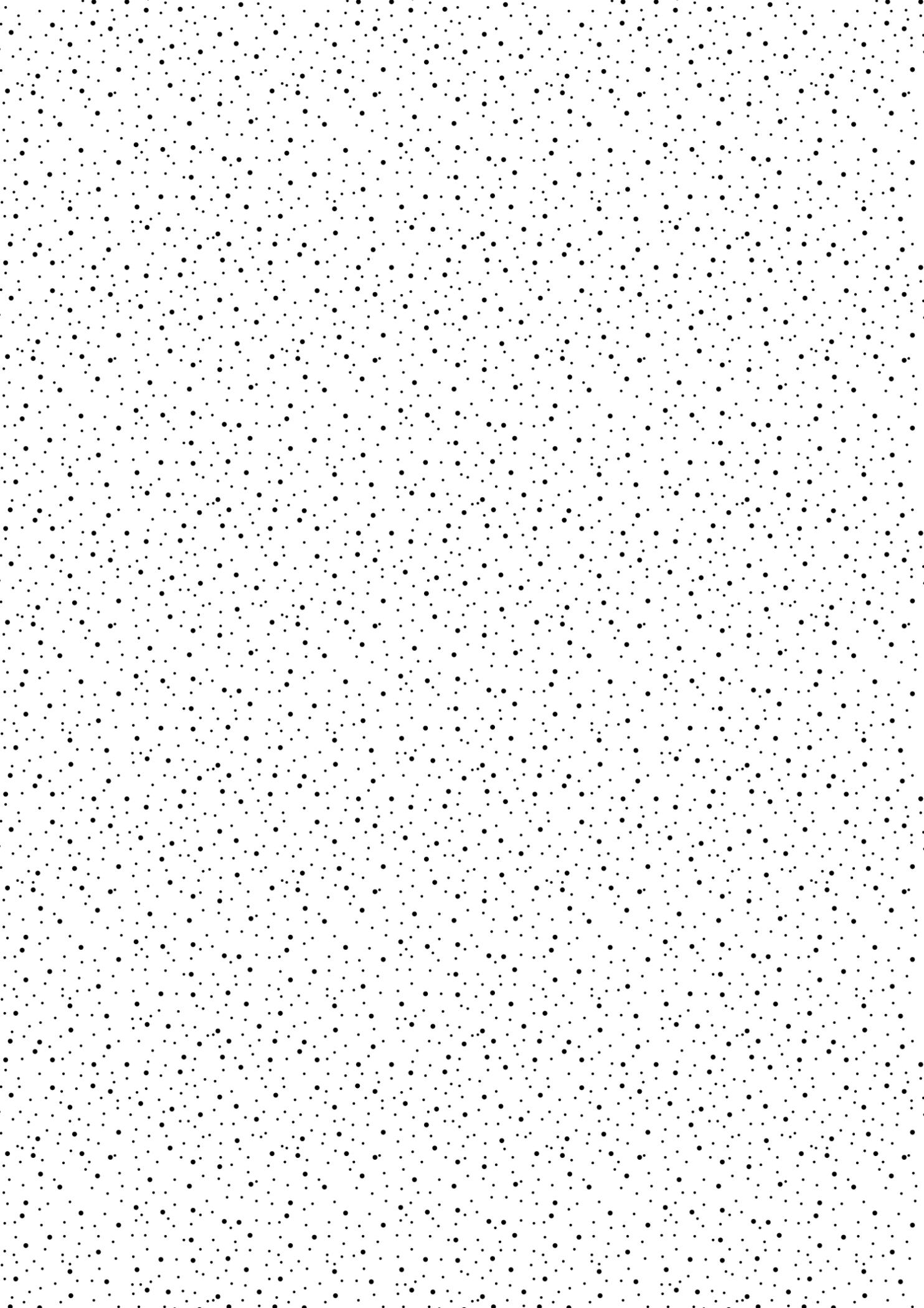


Designing Urban Inclusion

Metrolab Brussels MasterClass I



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(eds)



Metrolab series

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Four challenges of inclusion in Brussels

Marco Ranzato and Louise Carlier

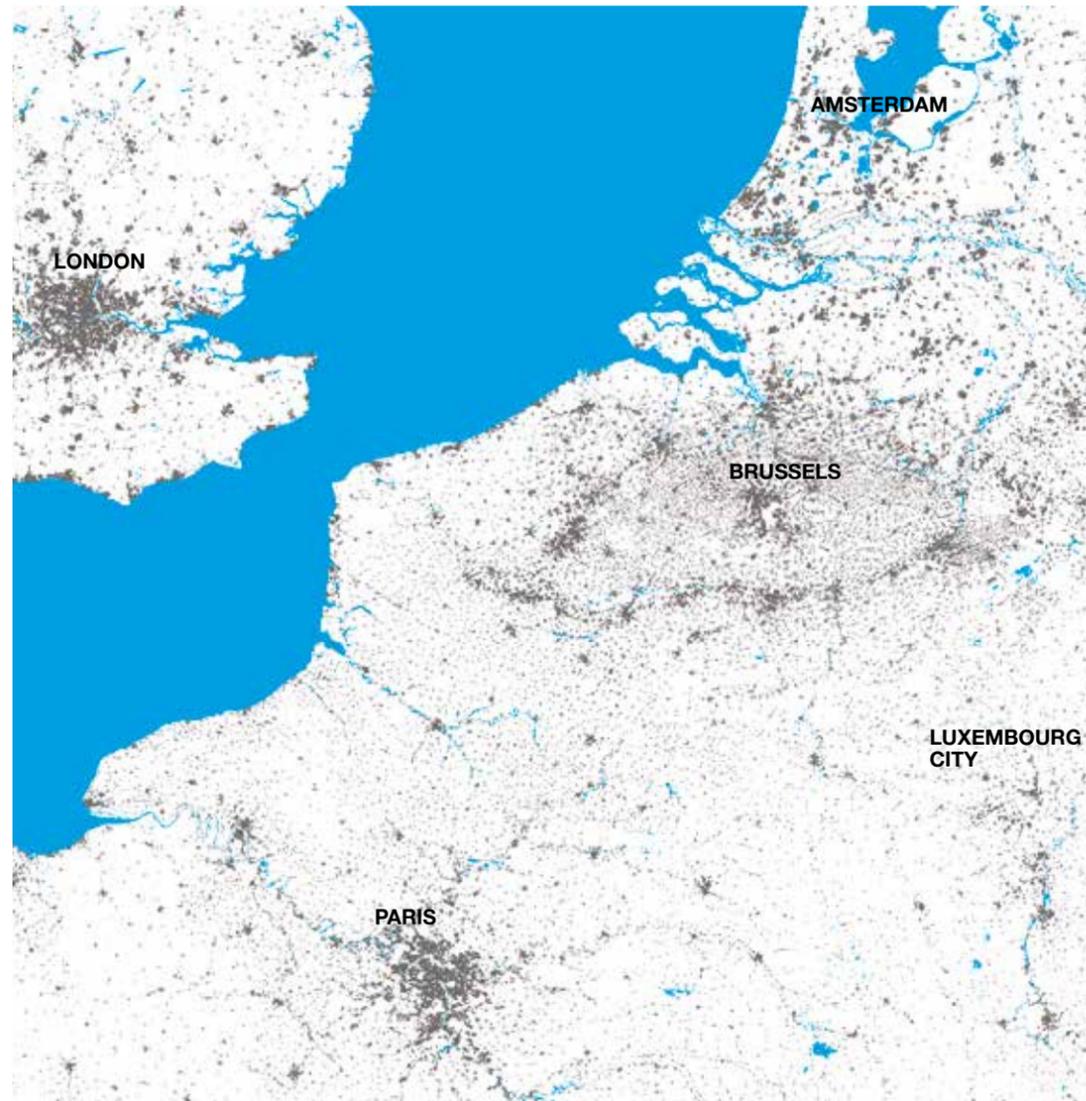


Figure 1. National Geography

- Waterbodies
- Built-up space

Source: Corine Land Cover, Eurostat

The ERDF in the spatial, institutional, and planning geography of Brussels

Brussels is located in the Eurodelta, an urbanised region extending over the wide delta areas of the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt Rivers in the north of Europe. Stretching from the German Rhine-Ruhr region to the Dutch Randstad and the Flemish city region of Antwerp, Bruges/Ghent, Brussels, and Louvain, the Eurodelta historically is a decentralised system of individual cities (Boelens and Taverne 2012) (Figure 1). The region is densely populated, with more than thirty-five million inhabitants, and hosts the headquarters of several global companies and logistics hubs. The Eurodelta extends across multiple countries (Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands), and thus covers a variety of regions, cultures, and languages. The socio-political complexity of the Eurodelta results in variegated forms of urbanisation: from the spread urban character of the Nevelstad — or Nebulous City (see for example Nolf and De Meulder, 2017) — in which Brussels is embedded, to the more polycentric urban patterns of the Randstad, to the fragmented post-industrial urbanisation of the Ruhr.

Located at the crossroads of fundamental mobility routes between Northern European countries and the Mediterranean region, just a few hours from the metropolitan areas of Paris and London, the geographical position of Brussels has been strategic for the city through time. This is particularly

apparent now that Brussels hosts major European political institutions. A marked local institutional fragmentation and cultural diversity is the backdrop to the city's strong international character. Brussels is a relatively small city-region — the Brussels-Capital Region — embedded in the Flanders Region and a few kilometres from the Wallonia region in the south. With its nineteen municipalities and numerous neighbourhoods, the Brussels-Capital Region also features strong internal diversity and institutional fragmentation.¹

Brussels has a metropolitan character. At a closer view, it appears clear that, despite the city's administrative and cultural fragmentation, its development crosses regional borders (Figure 2). Also due to the narrow extension of its territory, the Brussels-Capital Region is urbanised in its entirety. Exceptions are the Sonian Forest to the southeast — extending well beyond the region's borders —, the parks, and the stretch occupied by a strip of infrastructure — the railway and the Brussels-Charleroi Canal in particular — that run southwest to northeast and divide the region into two parts. This flat strip cutting through Brussels' hilly landscape is the largest low-lying area of the region corresponding to the floodplain of the Senne River. Featuring fragmented and variegated urban patterns, it hosts a number of industrial buildings and patches, many of which are already dismantled.

For Brussels, the renovation of the central territory is perceived as one of the main challenges, a condition for the internal

¹ See introduction to this volume, p.11



Source: Brugis, ERDF 2013 Brochure, <http://be.brussels>

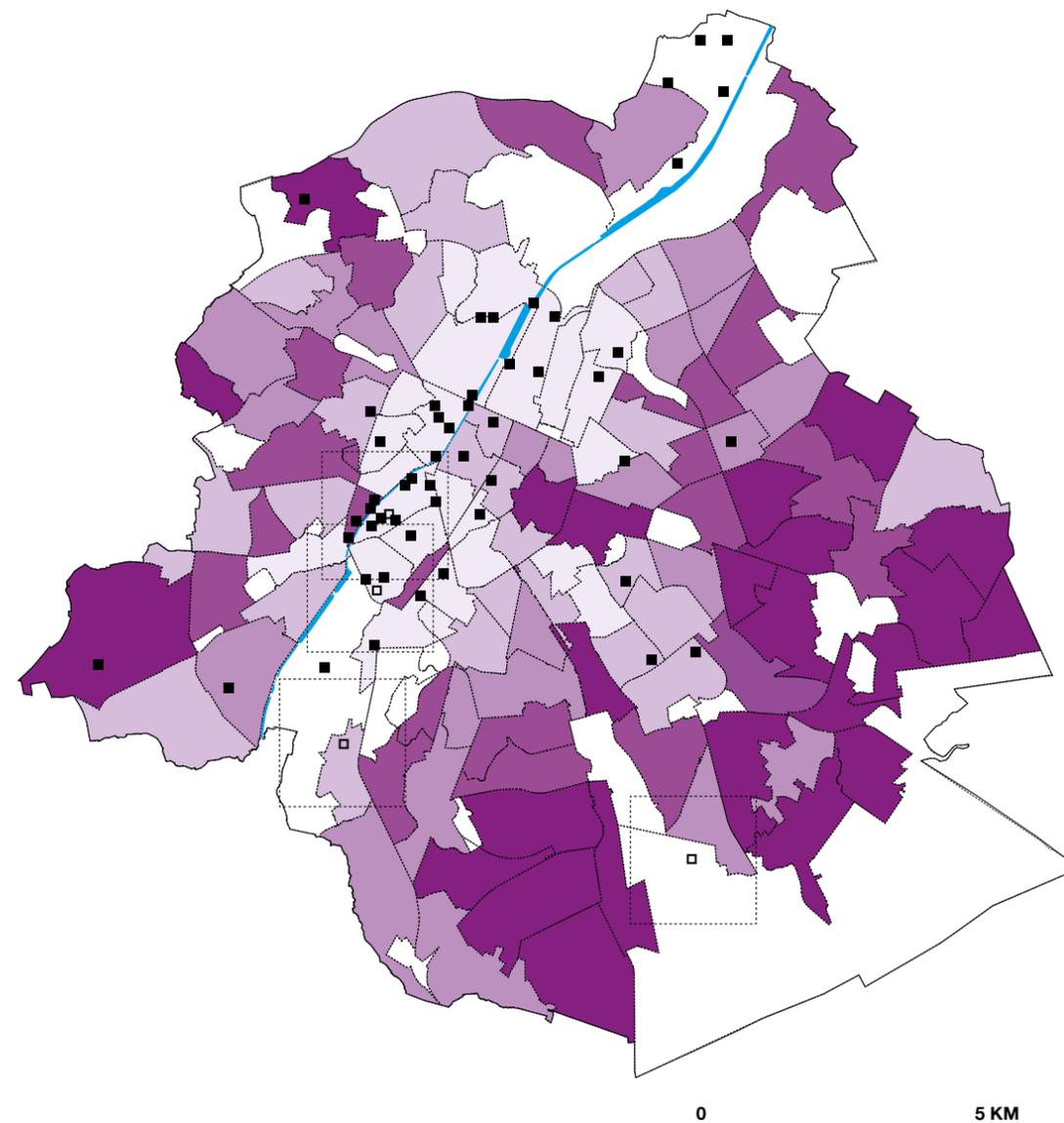


Figure 3. Median income per tax statement (2013)

- ERDF project 2007-2020
- ERDF project case study
- ⋯ perimeter
- < €17.000
- €17.000 – €19.000
- €19.000 – €21.000
- €21.000 – €23.000
- > €23.000
- No data (< 50 hab./km²)
- Bruxelles – Charleroi Canal

Source: Monitoring des Quartiers

balance of the region. Many scholars (for example, Kesteloot, 2013; Vandermotten, 2013) have argued that this regional area reveals the strong regional polarisation of Brussels. The regional plans (see for instance the 'Plan Guide' or the 'Plan Régional de Développement Durable') call this whole central area a 'Zone de Renovation Urbaine' (ZRU). These plans refer to the ZRU as the preferential area where to implement the urban renovation required to ultimately merge the poor north-west and the rich south-east of the region. Although this analysis of the regional territory may seem brief and the Brussels landscape also features fine-grained socio-spatial disparities, statistics confirm a rather polarised distribution of the region's wealth (Figure 3). This polarised status of Brussels has a long history closely linked to the geography of the city: through history, the Senne floodplain has mainly been inhabited by traders and small-scale manufacturers while the upper classes occupied the higher parts of the valleys (de Meulder et al., 2000; Deligne, 2005). The process of industrialisation initiated in the 18th century and the large immigration flows of the second half of the 19th century have consistently reinforced this structure. Today, even Brussels' institutional geography follows this trend: the vast majority of the institutions – be they regional, federal or European – are located in the higher parts in the south-east of the region.

The Brussels ERDF programme for 2014-2020 is designed to provide the region with a number of facilities aiming at the social, environmental, and economic enhancement of the region and of the ZRU in particular (see Figure 4).² Although based on slightly different targets, the former Brussels ERDF programme for 2007-2013 was also intended to operate on the renovation of the central territory of Brussels. The Brussels ERDF programme conceived by the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region and run by the 'Cellule Coordination et Gestion du FEDER

2014-20120', under the direction of the 'Service Public Régional de Bruxelles' (SPRB) of the Brussels-Capital Region, looks at these facilities in order to meet the environmental challenges, improve innovation, bring about social and economic progress, and improve the living environment in general. The framework proposed is organised around four complementary strategic axes: stressing the need for innovation and research (axis one); supporting small and medium enterprises (axis two); developing the circular economy for the rational use of resources (axis three); enhancing the living environment of fragile neighbourhoods (axis four) (Brussels-Capital Region, 2014).³

The task for the Brussels ERDF funds earmarked for the ZRU is confirmed by the 'Plan Guide', one of the region's main planning tools. A large part of the ZRU is currently also covered by this planning tool that the region has recently introduced in order to give coherence to the Canal Zone and favour the urban integration of its economic activities with the residential ones (Brussels-Capital Region, 2015).⁴ The ZRU also works as a reference for the regional incentive schemes that offer greater support to private investments in the area dedicated to the renovation of the building stock. As recalled by the Sustainable Regional Development Plan (PRDD) (Brussels-Capital Region, 2016), the ZRU is also the reference frame of two other main levels of institutional planning: the Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts ('Contrats de Quartier Durable') and the Urban Renovation Contracts ('Contrats de Rénovation Urbaine') (Figure 5). The Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts, whose objectives are urban renewal and the implementation of local socio-economic and cultural activities, operate mainly at the level of the neighbourhood and include specific phases of consultation and local community participation. The Urban Renovation Contracts, recently introduced by the 'Plan

2 The perimeter of the ZRU has recently been updated by the Brussels-Capital Region to take into consideration the quality and age of the buildings, but also other statistical criteria such as revenue distribution. See Brussels-Capital Region, October 2016, 'Ordonnance organique de la revitalisation urbaine'. The ERDF programme for 2014-2020 also looks at poles of regional development.

3 The Brussels ERDF programme for 2014-2020 allocated about €30 million for axis one, €44 million for axes two and three, and €25 million for axis four (Brussels-Capital Region, 2017).

4 In the ERDF programme for 2014-2020, the reference territory has been enlarged to also include the poles of regional development of the PRDD.

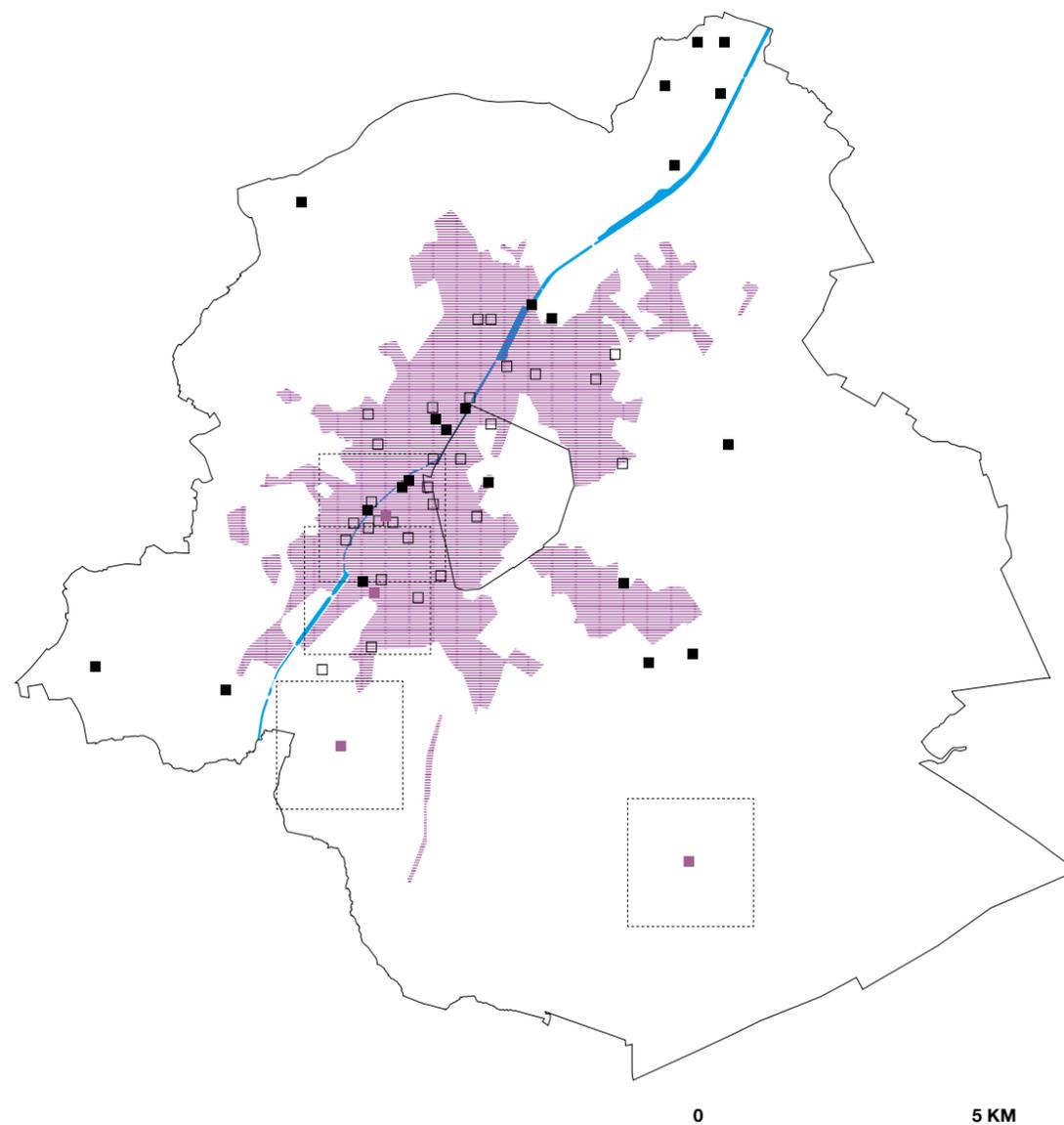


Figure 4. ERDF Projects in the Brussels-Capital Region

- ERDF project 2014-2020
- ERDF project case study
- ⋯ ERDF project case study perimeter
- ERDF project 2007-2013
- ▨ Zone de Rénovation Urbaine (ZRU)
- Brussels-Charleroi Canal
- Historical centre

Source: Brugis, ERDF 2013 Brochure, <http://be.brussels>

Guide', work across different municipalities to build connections among them.⁵

By implementing facilities that work at the supra-local/inter-neighbourhood scale, the ERDF is a key player in the region's urban renovation (MSA and IDEA Consult, 2013).

Four Brussels ERDF cases

In the frame of the MasterClass on *Designing Urban Inclusion*, Metrolab selected four case studies among the forty-six Brussels ERDF projects for 2014-2020. The first project deals with historical Brussels slaughterhouse Abattoirs et Marchés d'Andelecht. The Abattoir is a vast semi-open field with a number of buildings that host market and slaughterhouse activities. It is located in the Cureghem neighbourhood, in the municipality of Anderlecht, near the Brussels-Charleroi Canal and less than one kilometre from the historical centre of Brussels — the 'Pentagon'. Cureghem is an area that historically hosts mainly underprivileged groups and where the average tax revenues are among the lowest in the region.⁶

Not far from the Abattoirs, at the southern end of the Cureghem neighbourhood, is the site of a future integrated facility for healthcare and social assistance run by NGO Médecins du Monde and which is the second ERDF case study. The health facility will be implanted next to the railway line that connects to the Brussels West Station in Anderlecht and separates Cureghem from the industrial area of Biestebroek in the south. For a few decades, the Cureghem neighbourhood has been undergoing a deindustrialisation process and displays a very mixed urban fabric where residential uses are interpenetrated with industrial buildings.

The third ERDF case study is a few kilometres further south. The project relates to the renovation, and transformation into a cultural centre, of the historical buildings of the Abbey of Forest (*Abbaye de Forest*). The Abbey and its gardens are located at the heart of the Saint Denis neighbourhood, in the municipality of Forest, which is socially relatively mixed and features a diversity of

cultural groups. The Abbey stands alongside the main square and the huge platform of the Audi Company, which separates the neighbourhood from the railway that connects Brussels to the South.

Droh!me, the last project selected, is off the strip of infrastructure that separates the region into two parts. It is located in the south — in the more privileged part of the city —, in the municipality of Uccle at the border between the Sonian Forest and the distinctly residential Boondael neighbourhood. The project deals with the conversion of a former horse racetrack into a park for leisure.

These four projects, in the areas of food trade, healthcare, culture, and leisure respectively, all raise specific questions of social inclusion and social justice.⁷ They take place in very different areas, particularly in terms of categories of inhabitants (see Figure 3). The projects selected have different relations with the existing planning layers of the Brussels-Capital Region: Abattoir falls within the area of the Gare de l'Ouest Urban Renovation Contract; Abattoir and Médecins du Monde projects are included in the perimeter of the Plan Canal; the Abattoirs, the Médecins du Monde project, and the Abbey of Forest fall under various Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts. *Droh!me* is part of the poles of Brussels' 'second ring' that, according to the PRDD, are meant to be densified and/or further urbanised (see Figure 5).

The Abattoirs, one of the main Brussels' food market

The Marché des Abattoirs is one of the largest markets in the Brussels-Capital Region. Scattered over a wide area of Brussels, public markets have very different characters: they span from those that sell very economical products — usually located in areas where, on average, the population is less affluent — to markets that sell organic and usually more expensive goods (Figure 6). Oftentimes, public markets are a source of food and other goods at affordable prices, but also a place of socialisation, providing opportunities for

5 The first five Urban Renovation Contracts were launched in 2016, and they all fall within the ZRU.

6 See for instance Sacco (2010).

7 For further explanation of the challenges posed by the selected ERDF projects, see the section on the projects developed during the MasterClass.

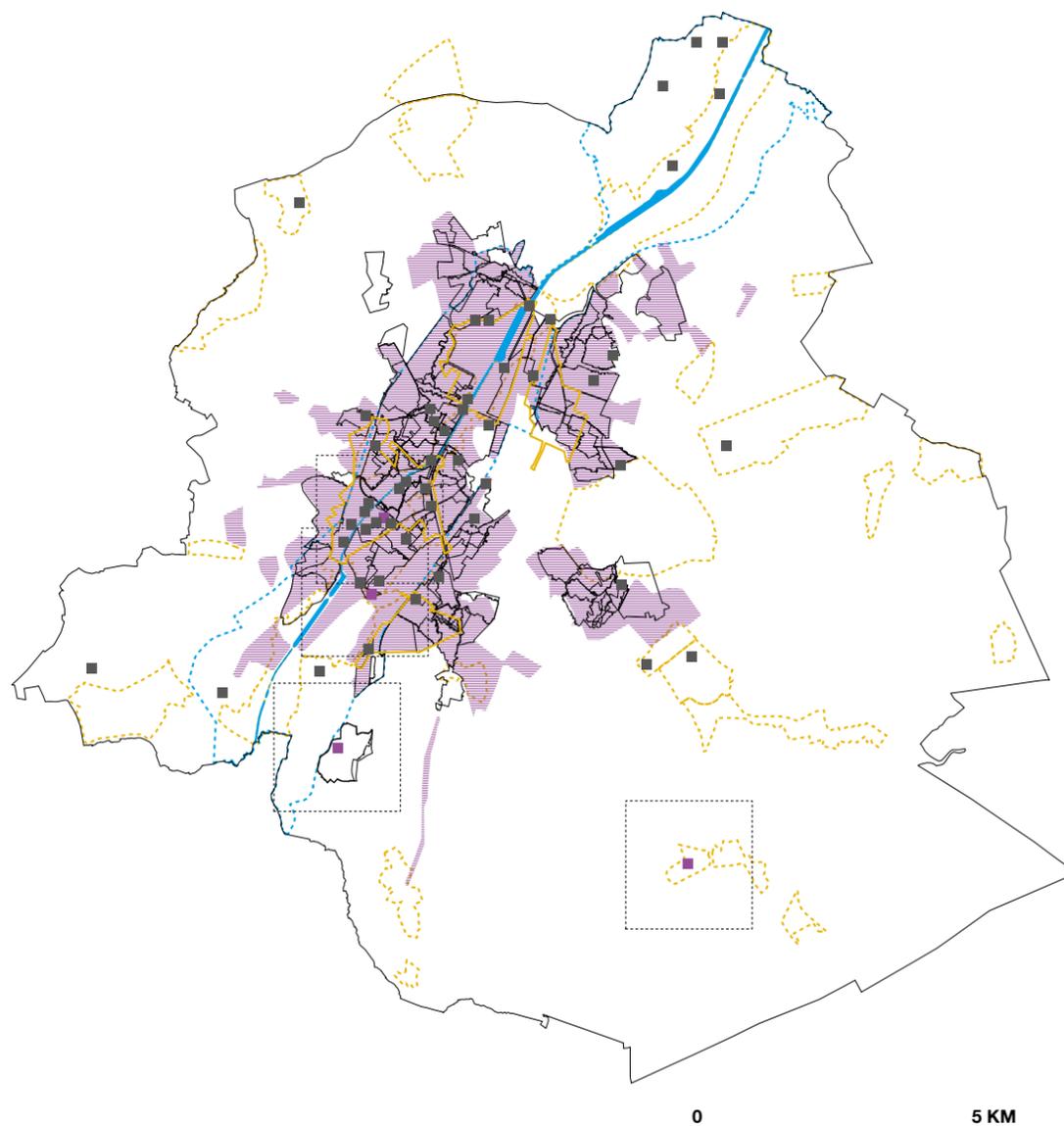


Figure 5. Planning Geography

- ERDF project 2007-2020
- ERDF project case study
- ⋯ ERDF project case study perimeter
- Plan Canal
- ▨ Zone de rénovation urbaine (ZRU)
- Active Neighbourhood Contract (Contrat de Quartier)
- ▣ Urban Renovation Contract (Contrat de Rénovation Urbaine)
- ⋯ Priority areas and areas to be densified – PRDD
- Bruxelles-Charleroi Canal

Source: Brugis, PRDD

intensive use of the public space. Open every week from Friday to Sunday, the 'Marché des Abattoirs' is well known for the variety of its products — meat, fruits, vegetables, but also household products and clothes —, which can be found at a reasonable price. The 'Marché des Abattoirs' extends over the Abattoirs et Marchés d'Anderlecht, a site of approximately 11 ha that is generally underused during the rest of the week. In addition to the market, the Abattoir site hosts a fully equipped slaughterhouse, a new food hall and rooftop farm, and the 'Cureghem Cellars', a place for cultural and festive events. Under the heading 'Abatan 2020' — originally the name of the masterplan for the long-term redevelopment of the site, presented in 2012 — the Abattoir company continues to gradually transform the site into an innovative multi-purpose infrastructure focused on sustainable food production, with the help of EU and regional grant funding.

The Manufacture Abattoir ERDF project consists in implementing a new slaughterhouse and concentrating this activity — currently distributed across various smaller buildings — in an undeveloped part of the Abattoir site. The new buildings will include spaces designed to host small and medium enterprises active in the food industry, as well as other functions (housing, local associations, and an urban farm on the roof of the building). Some of the existing buildings will be torn down and leave place for a large open area in the middle of the site. The project is consistent with long-term masterplan 'Abatan 2020' developed by the Abattoir Corporation in order to maintain an area of economic activity in the heart of Brussels. Intended 'to strengthen entrepreneurship and improve the development of SMEs in promising industries' — axis 2 of the ERDF program 2014-2020 —, Manufacture Abattoir invests in the legibility of the site and promotes social and economic activities that meet the local demand — from both merchants and customers. More generally, Manufacture Abattoir aims at enhancing the overall quality of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The project leader is Abattoir NV-SA, a public limited company founded in 1983 in order to take over the running of the by then antiquated and loss-making slaughterhouse opened in 1890 and located in the working-class neighbourhood of Cureghem. An ongoing

process of restructuring and modernisation began in the 1980s, resulting among other things in the closing of the livestock market. The project's partners are Cultureghem/'Cultivating Urban Space', an association that organises socio-cultural activities for inhabitants, schools, and all those who are interested in the site; BECI — BrusselsEnterprises, Commerce and Industry —, an economic platform that defends the interests of businesses; Forum Abattoir, a focus group and platform dedicated to discussions on the future of the Abattoir site; 'EQUILIBRE'; EUCLIDES, a business centre for community-led development; the CAF (Centre Anderlechtois de Formation), a local centre for socio-professional insertion; the Municipality of Anderlecht; VILLAGE PARTENAIRE — GROUPE ONE, a non-profit that works on training, coaching and supporting business start-ups in sustainable development; the Port of Brussels; BRUFOTEC (BRussels FOod TEChnology); ECEIC; COOKING ('Culinary Coworking'); and APC (Action Prévention Citoyenneté).

Besides the MasterPlan Abatan/ Abattoir 2020 ('Le ventre de Bruxelles/ The stomach of Brussels'), the Manufacture Abattoir ERDF project is linked to several other urban policies such as the Urban Renovation Contracts (CRU) Heyvaert-Poincaré, the Municipal Development Plan (PCD) Anderlecht, the 'Plan Particulier d'Affectation du Sol' (PPAS), and the ZRU. Others deal with areas near the Abattoir site, such as Plan Canal, Masterplan Canal Molenbeek (2010), a local masterplan for the canal area, 'Cellule garages', a task force whose goal is to study and control the used car market in the Heyvaert neighbourhood, and various sustainable neighbourhood contracts (Compas, Petite Senne, Canal-Midi, Lemmens, Chimiste).

Médecins du Monde, an integrated health centre for Brussels

Médecins du Monde is an independent NGO committed to providing care, bearing witness, and supporting social change. The organisation and its projects are founded on strong values such as social justice, empowerment of vulnerable people, independence from any political, financial or religious interests, and commitment, through

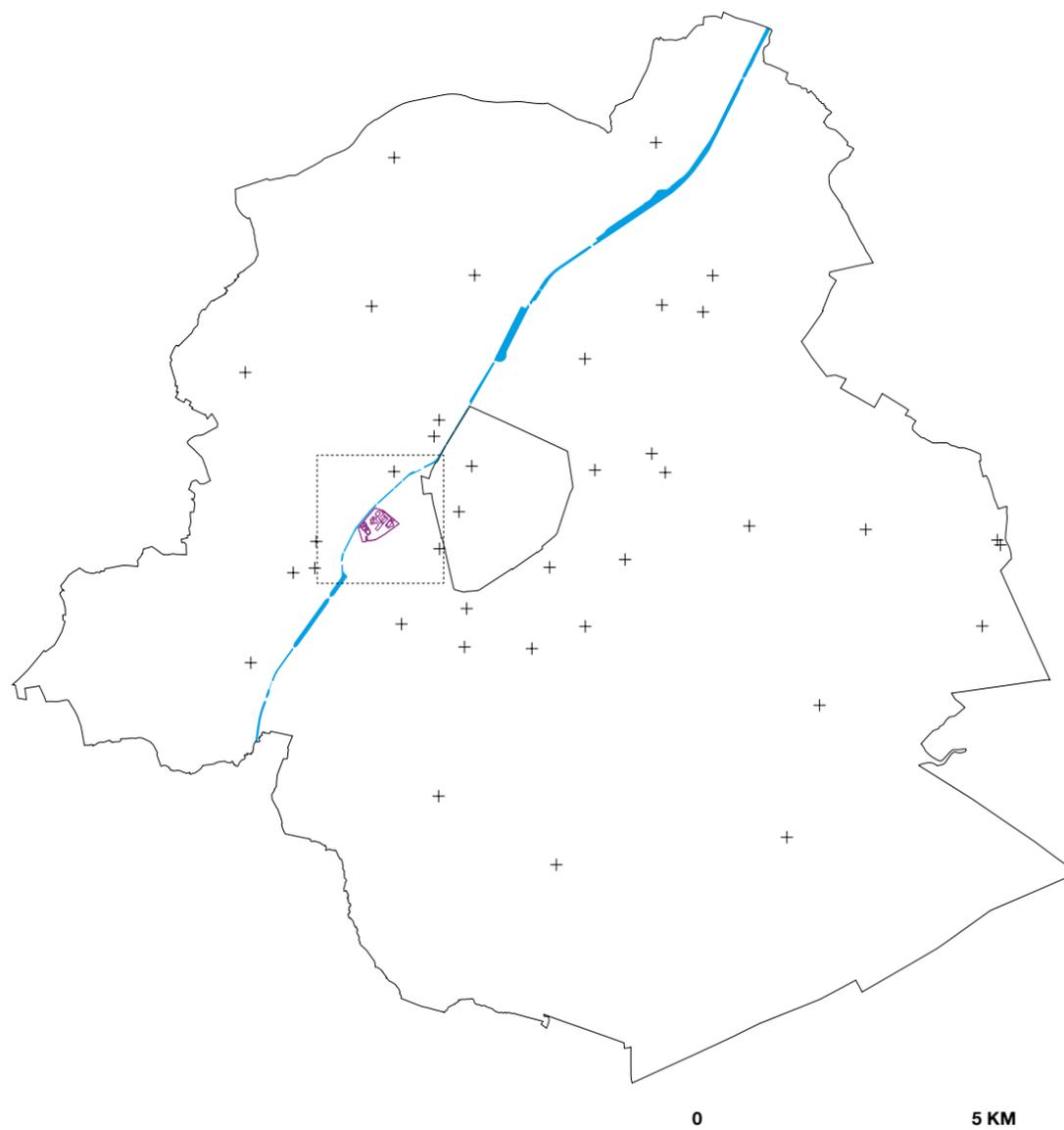


Figure 6. Public Markets

- Abattoir ERDF project
- ⋯ Abattoir ERDF project study perimeter
- + Public market
- Brussels-Charleroi Canal
- Historical centre

Source: Urbis

committed volunteers and employees. The work of Médecins du Monde in Belgium and abroad is focused on people who do not have or no longer have access to healthcare and especially women, persons in emergency situations, refugees and migrants, people who are at increased risk, and isolated people. The vision of Médecins du Monde is a world without obstacles to health, where healthcare is recognised as a fundamental right (Médecins du Monde, 2017).

Médecins du Monde has received the full support of the Brussels ERDF programme for 2014-2020 for the implantation of two integrated centres combining physical and mental health services with social services in a single place. The two new centres are located within the ZRU, respectively in the municipalities of Molenbeek and Anderlecht. The project also includes the implantation of an outreach first-aid health service.

The future Médecins du Monde integrated medical centre for Anderlecht is located in Cureghem, one of Brussels' most underprivileged neighbourhoods. The new centre is part of a wider real estate operation called CityGate, led by City Dev, the regional institution in charge of urban development.⁸ Located near the Brussels-Charleroi Canal and focusing on the area of the Plan Canal, CityGate is planned in three phases. All of them involve tearing down former industrial buildings and/or the remediating contaminated soil, as well as building new apartment buildings as affordable housing for the middle class. The operation also includes the renovation of the public space — in accordance with neighbourhood contract Canal-Midi —, a kindergarten — another Brussels ERDF project for 2014-2020 named Crèche Marchandise —, and other facilities such as the integrated health centre of Médecins du Monde.

The integrated health centre project in Cureghem is led by Médecins du Monde and a non-profit named Solidarimmo — who will own the building —, with the active collaboration of the 'Office National de l'Enfance' (ONE), Antenne Goujons, a municipal sub-office of prevention service, and City Dev. The new centre is intended for people of diverse cultural, social, economic, age, and gender backgrounds, and especial attention will be given to vulnerable people who have difficulty in accessing care, including migrants, children, and adults.

Intended 'to improve the quality of life for deprived neighbourhoods and populations' (axis four, see Brussels-Capital Region, 2014), the new integrated health centre in Cureghem will be one of many health centres present in Brussels, and whose offer is complementary to the service provided by the region's hospitals (Figure 7): health centres such as the 'maison médicales' are targeted towards the neighbourhood and integrate a global vision of health, where community participation plays a key role.⁹

The outreach process is planned to start by 2017, while the installation of Médecins du Monde in the new building is planned by 2020 after a process of participation with local players and citizens in order to identify local requirements.

Abbaye de Forest, a centre for culture in the outskirts of Brussels

The Forest Abbey ERDF project involves the creation of a cultural centre and a green area in an underused abbey located in Forest, in the southern part of Brussels. The new cultural centre will be one of four main cultural poles of the region, all located along the stretch of infrastructural running southwest to northeast and occupied by a strip of railway and the

⁸ The three main targets of City Dev are to make room for businesses, to make housing accessible to everybody, and to house businesses and residences in the same neighbourhood (Citydev.brussels, 2017).

⁹ Figure 7 presents a selection of Brussels' main health care facilities: general hospitals and community health centres. 'Medical centers' refers to what are called 'Maisons Médicales' in Belgium (i.e. community health centres). For reasons of readability, specialised hospitals (such as mental health structures or geriatric services) and specialised outpatient practitioners do not appear on the map, nor do general practitioners, independent nurse services, etc.



Figure 7. Health

- Médecins du Monde ERDF project
- ⋯ Médecins du Monde ERDF project study perimeter
- Hospital
- + Medical center
- Brussels-Charleroi Canal
- Historical centre

Source: Fédération des Maisons Médicales (fmm.be),
wijkgezondheidscentrum (vwgc.be),
Sarah Luyten (POD MI, FAMGB, BHAK), Google Maps

Charleroi-Brussels Canal (Figure 8).¹⁰ While the other three existing cultural poles (iMAL, Mima, and Wiels) are located at the transition between areas with strong or average cultural density, the 'Abbaye de Forest' is located in a neighbourhood with low cultural density.

The new cultural centre will include a library, an art academy, a catering service, a youth centre, and a concert hall for citizens. Together with other revitalisation projects related to the 'Contrat de Quartier Abbaye', this project aims to contribute to the neighbourhood's revitalisation on different levels — economic, cultural, social, and environmental. This project is included in axis 4 of the ERDF program, which aims 'to improve the quality of life for deprived neighbourhoods and population'.

Lead by the municipality of Forest, the project is carried out by the Neighbourhood Revitalization Unit, a pluridisciplinary unit launched in 2006 by the municipality of Forest. Its mission is to boost neighbourhood revitalisation and enhance the inhabitants' quality of life through various urban renovation programs (for instance, Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts and Urban Renovation Contract). Over the last years, five Sustainable Neighbourhood Contracts have been put in place, enabling housing units to be built, public spaces to be renovated, socio-economic and cultural actions to be held, and local infrastructures to be developed (nurseries, job centres, youth house, training centre, seniors' centre). Project partners are the Forest Cultural Centre (Brass); the Municipal Academy of Music, Dance and Spoken Arts ('Académie de Musique, Danse et Arts Parlés de Forest'), the Municipal Francophone Library ('Bibliothèque Francophone Communale'); and the Youth Centre of Forest ('Maison des Jeunes de Forest'). The project for the transformation of the Abbaye into a cultural centre is also funded by CQD Abbey, DMS (Direction

Monuments et Sites), and Beliris (federal fund for Brussels)¹¹.

The opening of the cultural centre is scheduled for 2022; various activities are planned on the site before then, and a participatory process is under way to take into account the expectations and needs of the inhabitants, users, and local players.

Droh!me, a Brussels park equipped for leisure

The Droh!me ERDF project consists in the renovation of an old horse racetrack into a leisure park. In Brussels, the main leisure areas are already well distributed, each offering specific opportunities for recreation (Figure 9).¹² In the broader regional context, Droh!me will offer a consistent set of leisure attractions. Located at the edge of the Sonian Forest, the new 'melting park' will bring together five types of activities: relaxation, leisure, nature, sports, and education. The park will feature a playground, a golf course, several sport facilities (e.g. a ice rink), tree climbing equipment, several cafés and restaurants, etc. It will also host temporary events such as theatre plays, shows, and food trucks. According to project leader Droh!me Invest, the project has both environmental and multi-generational ambitions, and a regional reach.

Droh!me Melting Park project is a public/private partnership that also involves the 'Société d'Aménagement Urbain' and Brussels Environnement. The project leader is Droh!me Invest, a public limited company created for the redevelopment of the former racetrack. Droh!me Invest is a subsidiary of VO group, an independent Belgian group specialised in communication and events. The Droh!me team is responsible for the project's management, the architectural and landscape aspects, and the environmental, commercial, and logistical management of the site. Droh!me NV-SA is in charge of the

10 Figure 8 synthesises the main 'creative territories' of the Brussels-Capital Region using data compiled by T. Debroux (2013). Built on point data associated with artistic production (places of residence of different categories of artists) and artistic consumption (places of diffusion of different categories of artistic events) in the late 2000s, the map shows a density of 'creative' places by neighbourhood. Organised into three classes, based on the results of the statistical analysis, the legend distinguishes between high-, medium-, and low-density areas — or white, which does not indicate the absence of creative places.

11 DMS is a public agency whose mission is preserve cultural heritage.

12 Figure 9 does not represent all the playgrounds of the Region but only the main open spaces that host a number of activities and events, which attract a public at the regional scale.

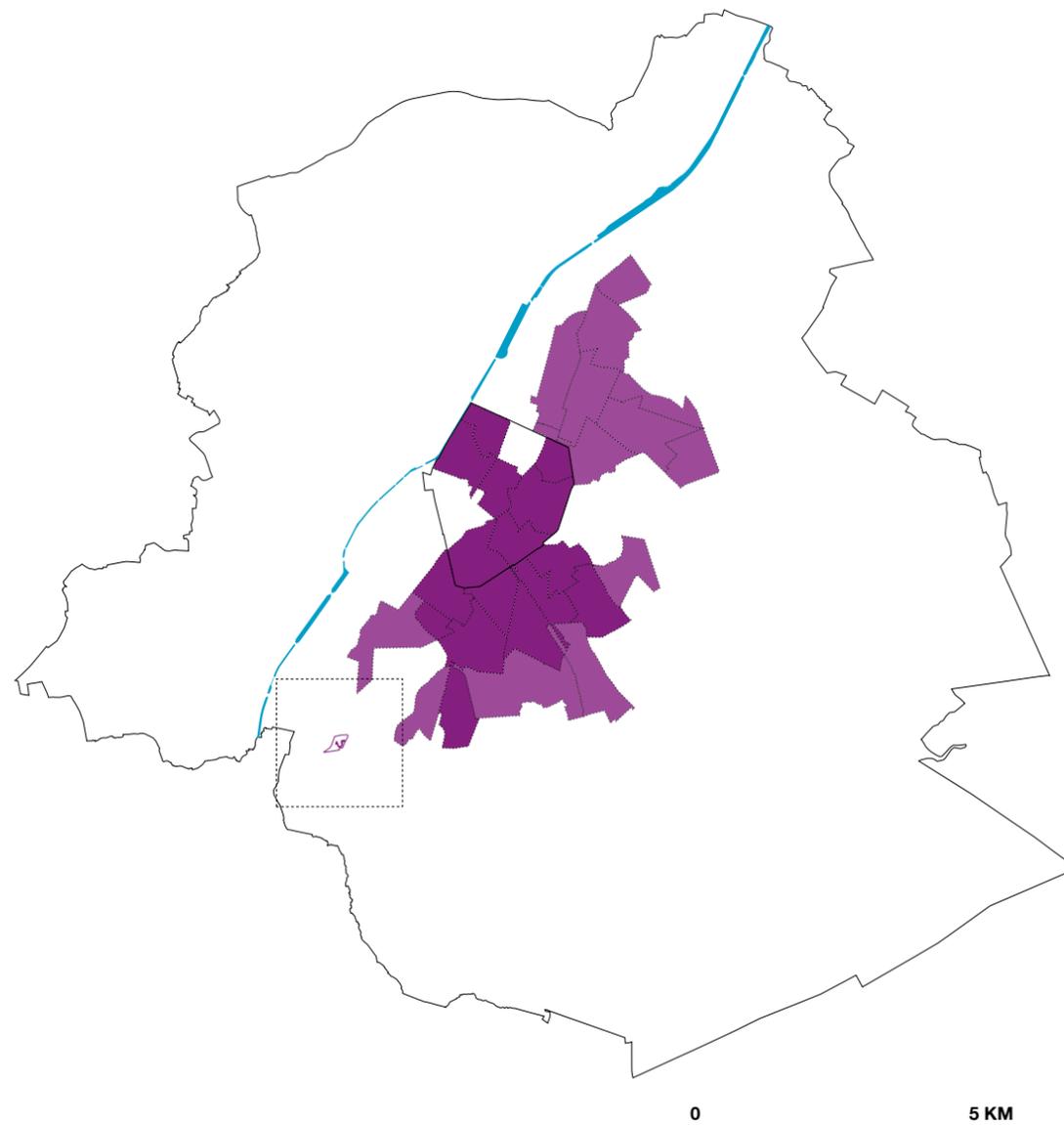


Figure 8. Cultural Poles Density

- Abbaye de Forest ERDF project
- Abbaye de Forest ERDF project study perimeter
- Brussels-Charleroi Canal
- Strong cultural density
- Mean cultural density
- Weak cultural density

Source: Debroux, T. (2012). Des artistes en ville. Géographie rétrospective des plasticiens à Bruxelles (1833-2008). (Unpublished PHD thesis). Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles.

development of the project, as well as of the site's activation, the events, and the development of sports activities. The project's stakeholders are the Brussels-Capital Region with the Brussels Urban Development and Brussels Environment departments, the 'Société d'Aménagement Urbain', the 'Commission Royale des Monuments et Sites'¹³, the municipality of Uccle, the private company VO Group and two firms involved in the architectural and landscape design of the project.

The new leisure park is officially targeted to meet axis 3 of the Brussels ERDF programme for 2014-2020, i.e. to support the development of a more circular regional economy through the rational use of resources. Droh!me Melting Park project is also related to other urban policies and plans for Brussels: from the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (PRDD) to the Interregional Management Plan for the Sonian Forest (Plan de gestion interrégional de la Forêt de Soignes), and from Natura 2000 to the Green and Blue Grid (Maillage Vert et Bleu) and to the Play Grid (Maillage Jeux) of Brussels Environment.

The new park will be developed gradually. Various activities are already organised on the site (sports, nature, culture, education, leisure), and will continue to be scheduled until the end of the renovation process.

¹³ The 'Commission Royale des Monuments et Sites' is a body of experts responsible to give notes about heritage prevention and repair works of classified buildings.

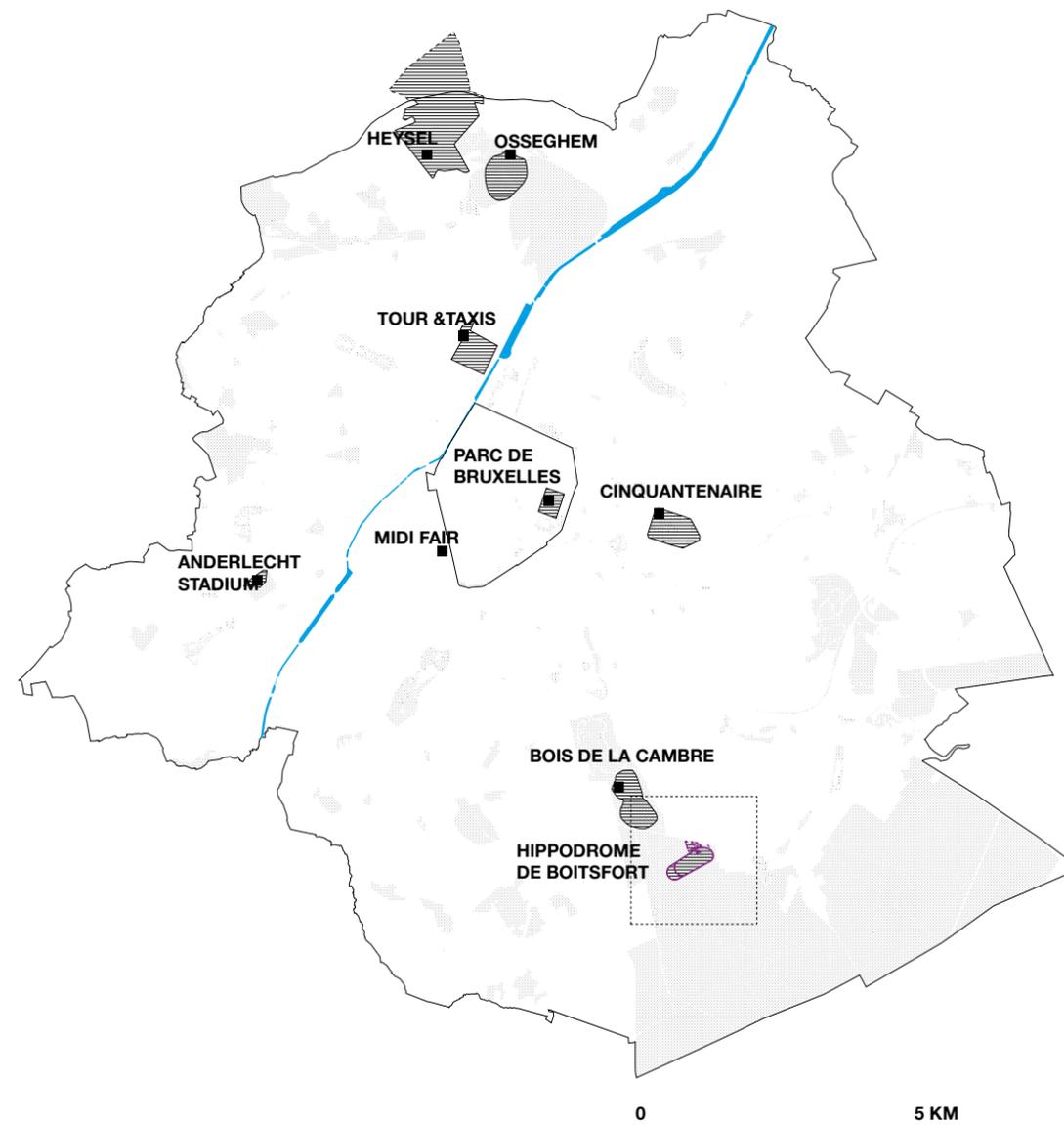


Figure 9. Leisure

- Drohme! ERDF project
- ERDF project perimeter
- Major exterior leisure area
- Brussels-Charleroi Canal
- Main leisure area
- Green area
- Historical centre

Source: Urbis

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