



Prototyping Innovation Policies with(in) cities

Innovation Area:

Ecodesign – Fashion, Textile & Craft

Rotterdam, Netherlands



How does “prototyping...” work?

This City Case Description is the outcome of a policy prototyping exercise within a city ecosystem. Once the ekip research team has explored a policy area and its connection to cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and innovation, we ask: what would this mean in a local city context?

Together with local stakeholders, we test how a draft policy recommendation might stimulate innovation. Using Portfolio Sensemaking, stakeholders simulate an innovation portfolio, analyse the strengths and gaps of the local support system, and identify what resources are needed to realise the portfolio.

Rotterdam Context & Area of Focus

In 2015-2016 was an important exhibition 'The Temporary Fashion Museum' in Rotterdam. Since then, the fashion- and textile sector is growing, as presented in the research of Mariangela Lavanga. These developments are also visible: the independent designers have their workshops and shops, a big co-working space – De Wasserij – opened in 2019, the schools and universities offering a fashion and textile programme are working more together and since 2022 is the Sustainable Fashion Week more present. So these developments are also connected to the more sustainable approach in fashion and textile.



Picture by Johannes Schwarz



Picture by Ossip van Duivenbode

In Rotterdam we focused in this case on the challenge of complex and fragmented supply chains, and the absence or decline of local manufacturing. On the other hand was also the opportunity for re-industrialisation.

Together we explored a medium-sized factory to house key players, machinery, and infrastructure for the fashion& textile industry. And what kind of policy is needed to support this.



Portfolio sensemaking

Portfolio

A MEDIUM-SIZED FACTORY AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CIRCULAR RE-INDUSTRIALISATION

Main idea/ Scope:

In Rotterdam is the so-called M4H-area: an industrial area, that will become a hybrid area with living, working and some industry. For this case this area is selected to test the mid-factory. This fits in the spatial, cultural, sustainable and economic policies and can drive the development of this area and theme.

In this M4H-area will be a public mid-factory, showcasing and experiencing the transition towards a social, sustainable fashion and textile sector. It is funded by public budget, and co-funded by actors contributing to this transition, similar to cultural initiatives or within innovation programmes (trust based and long term investments).

This place functions together with a lot of small places, direct in neighbourhoods. This place will be the flagship project in the transition and hosts all different stakeholders in the ecosystem. Because ownership is part of the strategy.

Because of its funding the commons and shared initiatives are fundamental.

This place will connect area development with social agenda, with an innovation agenda and contributes to developments in the creative and cultural sector.

“

- *It is not possible to talk about sustainable development without talking about culture and cultural value*

”

Mariangela Lavanga (Erasmus University Rotterdam) quoting David Throsby (Macquarie University Australia)



This place also can leave current conflicting systems behind us. For example the sorting industry is very successful and efficient: only 8 percent is considered as waste. But with conflicting systems such as importing low priced, low quality clothes from China, this will affect the sorting industry. With experimenting and implementing of regulations, we can leave current conflicting systems behind us.

During the discussion about the potential, the change and the impact we clarified the concept of a mid-factory. We came to the conclusion that this will be more a public, cultural, social and creative factory. For example a family friendly place, a place bigger then the professional community, and not only making or producing, but also showing insights, dilemma's, backgrounds, creating awareness, a place for professional research and debate, et cetera.

This place will make an impact on the transition from a growth economy to a wellbeing economy. The idea is that it is driven by the creative, culture and

innovation domain. If it is too ambitious it will accelerate the transition, or perhaps a bit to fast. But if we do nothing the transition will still happen, but there will be no direct profit in Rotterdam.

The short term starts now and will take 5 years. The programme of this mid-factory can also take place during other events and at other places. But to scale up is interesting, because that will concentrate the transition. Also stated that a central place and places in the direct neighbourhoods will be an efficient strategy to attract general audiences.

The longer term is 30 years. The so-called well being economy will be more dominant, focusing on full transparency, natural materials, local production and fashion as culture.

The indicators for change and traction can be found in the transition economy, such as initiatives for sharing visions, experiments in regulation, questioning materialism and emerging purpose-driven businesses.

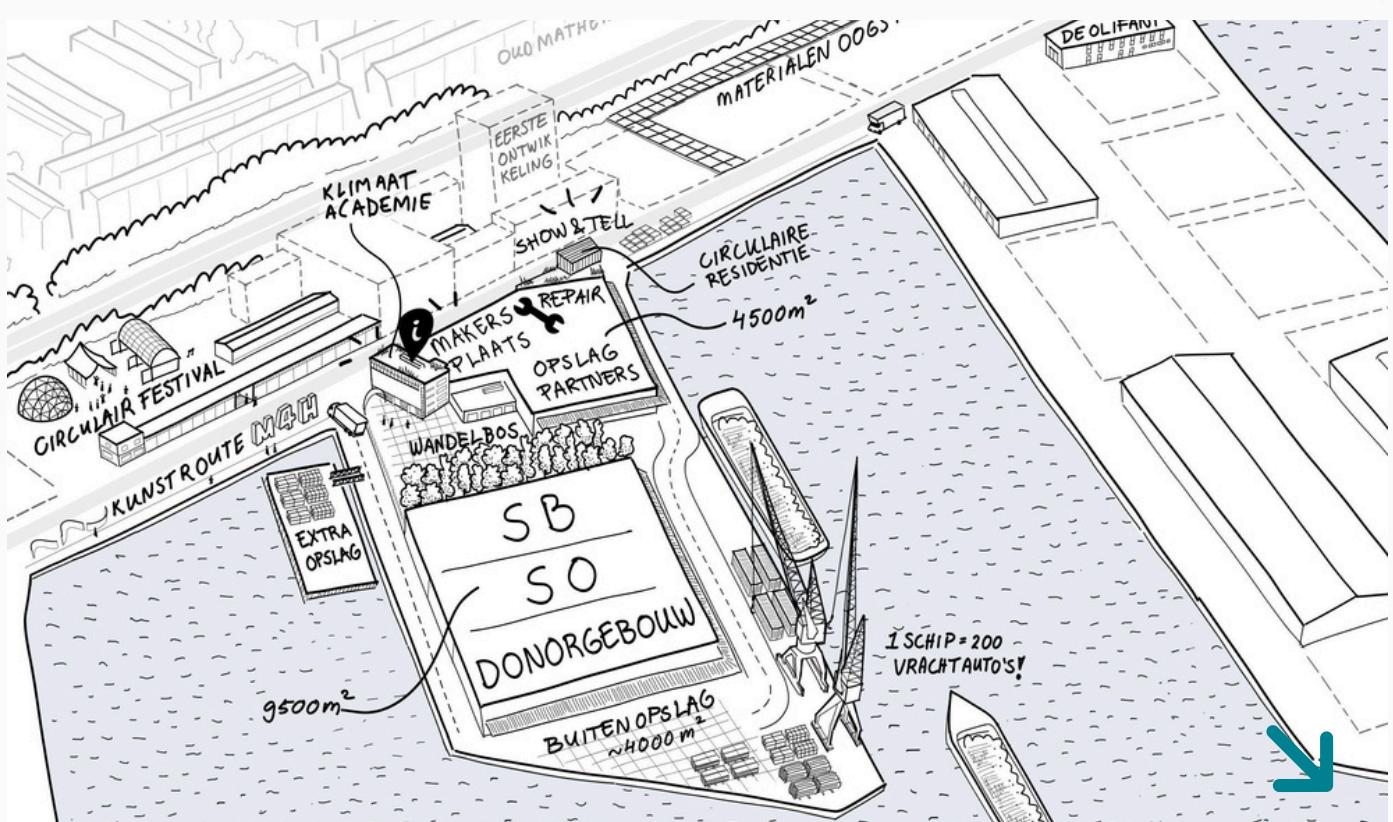


Image by Mae Ling Stuyt

Who was there?

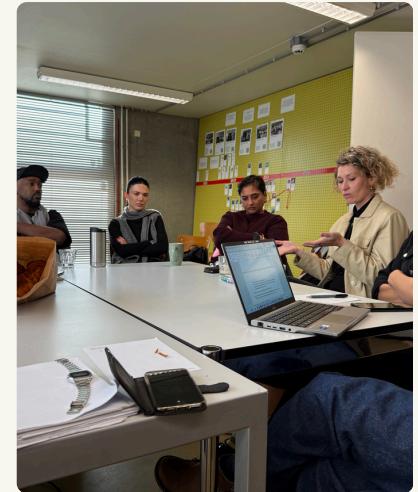
A BROAD MIX OF STAKEHOLDERS CO-CREATED THIS CASE

CCI ORGANISATIONS

Esther Muñoz Grootveld, researcher Fashion in Rotterdam

Malique Mohamud, the Niteshop, Rotterdam

Noortje van den Elzen, Textielmuseum, Tilburg



BUSINESSES

Karin de Jonge,
independent advisor

Marieke Akerboom,
researcher R Hub



ACADEMIA

Lund University: Emma Samsioe

University of Delft: Holly McQuillan, Jeroen van der
Aa, Milou Voorwinden

Erasmus University Rotterdam: Mariangela Lavanga,
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences:
Merunisha Moonilal



CITY OF ROTTERDAM

Martijn van der Mark, Culture
Serife Dikbas, Circular Programme
Sophie Duran, Sustainable
Development
Yvonne Ramdin-Trip, Economy



Analysis

THE LOCAL INNOVATION SUPPORT SYSTEM

The fashion and textile ecosystem is much bigger then Rotterdam. It is better to focus on the ecosystem that drives the innovation. This ecosystem is not planned, so it is still fragmented, the perspective is short term, and resources are limited.

But working for more then 10 years on the development of fashion and textile, the development is increasing.

For example the Fabrix-project (funded by EU) shows the increasing number of local keyplayers in Rotterdam. And also designers are not attracted by other cities, but stay more and more in Rotterdam.

The research project 'Fashion in Rotterdam' (2022) by Esther Munoz Grootveld in corporation

with Daphne Geveke is an underlayer to monitor the developments.

And this ecosystem is still developing. For example: last edition of the Dutch Sustainable Fashion Week was a programme organised by 5 education organisations based in Rotterdam.



Recommendations

We have to develop from a growth economy towards a well being economy, with a step in-between: **transition economy**.

1. Money&manpower

In this transition economy we use budget for experimenting, for developing networks and for research. In the well being economy we can use money and manpower for upscaling the experiments, local production and fashion as culture.



Nacor Martina (Niteshop) and Serife Dikbas (Circular Programme) are presenting the research 'Tailor of the Future' at Dutch Design Week to Queen Maxima.

Picture by Max Kneefel

2. Infrastructure&place

Current ecosystems and places are developed in this transition economy. We see formal and informal networks, and also festivals or short-term programmes to accelerate the development. In the well being economy this short term, flexible and agile will become more fundamental and more based. This mid-factory can help with that.

Overall Conclusions

- Make policy for the step towards the well being economy, and facilitate the transition economy, by:
 - Investing in central and decentral infrastructure, places and activities;
 - Investing in experimenting and developing new ideas;
 - See fashion as culture, and with public ownership.
- Make connections between behavioural programmes, cultural and creative programmes and innovation programmes.
- Taxing or forbid the import of 'waste' (non-recyclable clothing) in the EU.

What happened next?

This City Case sparked **new collaborations**. At different levels are new relations made;
-At knowledge level are several research projects (also funded by EU) connected;

Next steps are continuing with this Fashion&Textile-programme in Rotterdam, investing in the ecosystems and supporting events where this ecosystems can meet.





Our methods

THE INNOVATION PORTFOLIO POLICY CANVAS

The Prototyping Workshop Methodology and the Innovation Portfolio Policy Canvas guide local stakeholders to analyse their local ecosystem, make an inventory of actors and resources, identify and create a potential innovation portfolio and analyse their local innovation support system.

THE OPSI MODEL

The OPSI-model (Open Public Sector Innovation OECD) is adapted to analyze the innovation character of the policy area. Participants explore whether the policy involves new legislative measures or is more exploratory in nature, allowing for a deeper understanding of how the policy might influence the local ecosystem.

THE LIEPT MODEL

The Lund Innovation Ecosystem Portfolio Tracking (LIEPT) model is a tool that provides a framework for tracking changes in innovation portfolios in ecosystems where impact and growth happen not in one organisation but in many. This relies on collaborative efforts by many stakeholders.

What is ekip

The ekip partnership funded by the European Commission consists of 5 universities, 4 consultancies, 4 creative and cultural organisations and 4 cities. Together we develop innovation policies for the cultural and creative industries in Europe. We do that in various ways: through research, consultations and interaction with people in the sector at policy labs and focus groups and assessments in city ecosystems.

Want to know more? Want to do it in your city?

Would you like to explore the topic of Ecodesign further? Visit the [Fashion Transition: Eco-Design for Circularity](#) on ekip website, where you'll find relevant policy posters, presentations, videos, and articles.

You can even host your own session in your city! It's an empowering and insightful way to bring together local stakeholders across sectors and disciplines for a focused discussion on a topic of shared importance. The ekip method and approach are open for anyone to use including a Facilitator's Guide and templates available in the ekip Knowledge Bank under [Tools and Methods](#).

Authors of this report:

Martijn van der Mark,
City of Rotterdam, 2025

Disclaimer:

Each City Case Description reflects the views of workshop participants. It is a perspective from one city context, intended to inspire and ignite action



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