

Commitment to
boosting innovation
in Barcelona



Who we are

01. Under the impetus of Barcelona City Council, the people taking part in the drafting of this commitment have set up the Barcelona **Urban Innovation Platform**.
02. We are a group of people from all sides of the **quadruple helix** —citizens, business, research - academia and Public Administration— and different areas of knowledge. We have become involved in **urban innovation** processes that have configured the city as we know it today and designed the path for building its future.
03. We are working towards reducing the gaps in access to technology; we have become politically involved; we have organised major international congresses; we have a long trajectory in improving educational opportunities; we have founded cutting-edge companies and patented products that can be seen in cities around the world; we have published academic articles in the most consulted magazines, and we have taught and learnt from hundreds of students in public universities. We have designed plans and projects, and written, thought of, theorised about and discussed the reasons for, and functions of, innovation. We coordinate metropolitan agreements and direct innovation centres, among other things. But by working together, we think that we can still do more and better.

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What we recognise

04. We recognise where we have come from and we value Barcelona's trajectory in innovation, which is based on a creative, critical, restless and collective way of dealing with the city's challenges. Without creativity, there is no innovation. Creativity and urban innovation in Barcelona are revealed in specific innovation projects such as the Cerdà Plan and, more recently, the urban transformations linked to the Olympic Games or the 22@, a leading innovation district.
05. Today we are promoting various projects, which have different conceptual focuses but common objectives, seeking to configure tomorrow's Barcelona, responding to its social, environmental and economic challenges. The introduction of the 2030 Agenda or the response to the Covid-19 crisis are just two examples of how we are tackling these challenges from a comprehensive and multi-stakeholder perspective.
06. The climate of uncertainty produced by the pandemic has shown that, in order to resolve large-scale global challenges, it is vital to have collective and local commitment and responsibilities: **actions** have to be **collective, plural and participative**. Now more than ever, innovation has become a necessity and a **kick-starter for transformation and acceleration**, in order to improve the quality of people's lives.

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How we collaborate

07. We have decided to draft this commitment because we believe that it is time to drive innovation further in Barcelona, defining in a consensual way how we understand this, its purpose and who it should serve, giving scale and depth to what works, establishing coordination mechanisms and fostering a culture of **collaboration**, in order to reimagine the city we live in. We became leaders in a spontaneous way, so it follows that in a coordinated way we can go still further.

It is time to give innovation a new boost in Barcelona to tackle the complex challenges facing the city and its metropolitan area.

What we define

08. Innovation in Barcelona is the way to collectively tackle the complex challenges facing the city and its metropolitan area, balancing powers, reducing inequalities and ensuring citizen participation in order to resolve their real needs and foster their well-being.

09. Innovation comes about through **cross-cutting processes and projects**, which require agile governance at a metropolitan level and active, transformative public policies.

10. Processes and projects which, through innovation:

- ▷ Focus on **social inclusion** and the **generation of opportunities**, without leaving anyone behind and acknowledging the role of **science and culture**.
- ▷ Employ **technological humanism**, where technology is at the service of people.
- ▷ Promote **educational and training opportunities**, the **retention and attraction of talent** and encourage a **plural, diverse and sustainable economic fabric**.
- ▷ Contribute to the fight against **climate change** and foster **urban resilience**.
- ▷ Guarantee the **right to the city**.

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Establishing ourselves as a platform

11. For this reason, we are establishing ourselves as a platform for articulating innovation in the city, to structure, coordinate, increase and evaluate the **impact** of urban innovation processes and to promote a change in the Administration's innovative culture.
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12. We aim to be a platform that articulates, maps, shares, fosters experimentation and facilitates administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms to achieve that end, nurturing civic and community collaborative ecosystems. A place to encourage the **participation** of more people in innovative processes.
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13. By means of exchange among its members and the prioritisation, planning and execution of specific cross-cutting projects, this urban innovation platform will aim to foster, support, accelerate, communicate, measure and evaluate innovation in the city, facilitating experimentation and aiming to reduce the barriers that hinder it. This will be a continual, reviewable and open-ended process.

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Our commitment

14. In order to respond collectively to urban challenges we make a commitment to:

- ▷ Collaborate productively and honestly, recognising our **trajectories and differences**, listening to each other and to the city, explaining, learning and evaluating.
- ▷ Open ourselves up to **new visions and perspectives** from an intersectional standpoint, becoming a mirror for the city's innovation dynamics, and to incorporate, in a plural and progressive way, the voices and driving-forces of innovation, now and in the future.
- ▷ Review ourselves, periodically rethinking our structures, priorities and processes, in order to respond to the **needs, demands and aspirations** of the people who live and work in Barcelona and its Metropolitan Area.
- ▷ Identify and prioritise **missions** that require joint, courageous and urgent action as a city.

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In Barcelona, on 21 June 2021, we are presenting a commitment to **transformative and inclusive innovation**, among those of us who promote this every day.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This document is the result of a collective creation process coordinated by BIT Habitat and drafted during the months of May and June 2021, consisting of an exercise in prioritisation, two collaborative design sessions, a dozen in-depth interviews and a joint review process. Therefore, this text is a product of this coordinated effort and it sets out the common vision of all those involved.

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