

What is needed to get an initiative off the ground?

INITIATORS

- Background (residents, entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, organisations)
- Passion and determination
- Organisational strength

POLITICAL CONTEXT

- Social context
- Political context
- Current developments

CONNECTING

- Phase of the initiative
- Linking up with other parties
- Communication and inspiration

AN INITIATIVE'S POTENTIAL

- Innovativeness
- Flexibility
- Feasibility
- Long-term potential

SUPPORT BASE

- Connecting with others
- Support base for your initiative
- Linking up with other initiatives
- Possible conflicts of interest

POINTERS FOR YOUR INITIATIVE

DEPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE AND MEANS

- Deployment of human resources
- Deployment of locations
- Possibilities for (co)financing

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

- Legal limitations
- Relevant policies and regulations
- Other possible limitations

YOU MAKE
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CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR OWN CITY/NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Contribution to the quality of life in your own city/district/neighbourhood/street
- Contribution to the quality of life of your fellow residents
- Promoting participation in society

Who must take decisive action concerning what and when?

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INITIATIVE

INITIATORS

An initiative is not possible without people willing to give 'one hundred per cent.' Who feels they own the initiative? The residents? The (social) entrepreneurs? The organisations? Is it one individual? Or several people who have found one another? Where is the determination of these people? How would you access their organisational strength?

SUPPORT BASE

Most initiatives do not just 'appear out of thin air.' Typically, there are contributory factors – a connection with other people or other initiatives. With whom are the initiators in contact? Do these initiators together form a vital, sustainable coalition? Is there support for their initiative? Does the initiative have points in common with other, already existing ones? Whose interests could possibly be infringed upon by the initiative?

MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO ONE'S CITY, NEIGHBOURHOOD, ETC.

Many initiators wish to make a contribution to the place where they live and its residents. This can be at the city, district, neighbourhood or street level. How would your initiative contribute to the quality of life of your fellow urban dwellers? How would it improve the quality of life in your neighbourhood – or improve social participation among residents?

AN INITIATIVE'S POTENTIAL

Initiatives vary as to their potential. What makes an initiative innovative? Has it already proven itself effective elsewhere? How flexible is it? Can it be implemented on a different level of scale – at a different location? Can it, e.g., easily be increased or decreased in scope? To what extent is it dependent on other parties or, e.g., prerequisites of an ecological and/or technical nature? Is it feasible, including in financial terms? Does it have a balanced budget? Does it have potential in the longer term?

MAKING SPACE FOR AN INITIATIVE

CONNECTING

The municipal authorities are ready to help provide your initiative with the space it needs. What form this will take depends on the phase in which the initiative currently is. Is it as yet only an idea? Or is there already a fully elaborated plan? Is the municipality actually the most obvious partner/supporter, or might other parties be better suited for such a role? In such cases, the municipal authorities can take on a connecting function. If what is needed is primarily an inspirational/motivational boost, they can put your initiative in the spotlight, so that it can attract supporters and continue growing.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Not everything that is desirable is also possible. At times, legislation or regulations can limit an initiative's efficacy or potential. Are statutory limitations involved? – or regulations instituted by the municipality itself? Is there a need for room to experiment? – or for a (temporary) suspension of the rules? How complicated is it to get regulations modified? Are there ways to make your initiative possible, but in a different form? Permits, land-use plans, guidelines, monitoring and other formal instruments can also help make things easier.

DEPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE AND MEANS

The municipal authorities are able to offer (material) support in a variety of ways. Would your initiative benefit from an input of ideas or an addition of manpower? Or from the availability of a venue (provided by either the municipality or another party)? Are there practical obstacles which the municipality could remove? And where financial support is needed: does this involve large or small sums? Aside from the municipality, what other parties could contribute? Would this involve a one-time contribution or are additional expenses foreseen further down the road? Is financial insecurity or risk involved?

POLITICAL SUPPORT

An initiative never comes about in a vacuum. Both the zeitgeist and current debate often determine the context in which an initiative comes about and develops. To what extent is the topic of your initiative 'hot'? That can be crucial to the amount of support it will enjoy. The political context is also important. Is a political majority foreseeable? If, for example, your initiative involves sustainability, a 'green' municipal executive could be expected to be more sympathetic to it.

POINTERS FOR YOUR INITIATIVE



Why these pointers?

Utrecht is bursting with initiatives. Everywhere, residents are rolling up their sleeves to make it an even better place: even more beautiful and even more liveable. And the Municipality of Utrecht wants to make room for them – so that every good initiative is given a proper chance to succeed. It starts with the question: what is needed to get an initiative up and running.

This **dialogue poster** is intended as a way of facilitating communication between promoters of initiatives and the municipality. It should be emphasised that it is not a checklist for evaluating initiatives, but rather, a means of presenting the various aspects which can be relevant with regard to them. It provides initiators with useful information for getting their initiative off the ground, helps the municipal authorities discover their improvisational abilities and can be useful in connection with the political discussions and decision-making processes surrounding initiatives.

How can these pointers be used?

We have organised these pointers into two categories, namely, an initiative's characteristics (yellow) and the possibilities for creating space for it (red). In general, there is a high degree of connection between the different pointers.

In **preparing a meeting** with representatives of the municipality, initiators can use these pointers to identify what topics must be covered and clarify the present situation

with respect to them. Thus, the pointers can function as an aid to promoting their initiative. A meeting with a representative of the municipality always begins with the question: "what is (still) needed to promote the initiative? The possibilities for creating space for one's initiative (red) can come in handy in this connection.

During the meeting, these pointers can serve as a guide. It is not always necessary for every aspect to be discussed, but the pointers can help you to decide what the conversation should be about.

After the meeting, these pointers can serve as a basis for further elaborating your initiative, or for determining what further support from the municipality might be needed. They can also be used as the basis of future decision taking with regard to municipal support for the initiative. So that there is clarity as to who must take decisive action concerning what, and when.

Learning while doing

These pointers were developed in dialogue with initiators, civil servants, board members, city councillors and municipal administrators. Now more than ever, when initiatives are springing up like mushrooms, it is essential to remain in dialogue with one another, including with regard to how best to carry on that dialogue – and to find the right examples to present to one another and identify possible obstacles, so that they can be dealt with effectively. So that, together, we can learn, while doing, how to make Utrecht even better, even more beautiful and even more liveable than it already is!

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