

A Framework for Defining Innovation Districts: A Case Study of 22@ Barcelona

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Abstract : Innovation districts are being implemented as urban regeneration strategies in cities as diverse as Barcelona (Spain), Boston (Massachusetts), Chattanooga (Tennessee), Detroit (Michigan), Medellín (Colombia), and Montréal (Canada). Little, however, is known about the concept. This paper aims to provide a framework to define innovation districts. The research methodology is based on a qualitative approach using 22@ Barcelona as a case study. 22@ Barcelona was the first innovation district ever created and has been a model for the innovation districts of Medellín (Colombia) and Boston (Massachusetts) among others. Innovation districts based on the 22@ Barcelona's model can be defined as top-down urban innovation ecosystems designed around four multilayered and multidimensional models of innovation: urban planning, productive, collaborative, and creative, all coordinated under strong leadership, with the ultimate objectives to accelerate the innovation process and competitiveness of a locality. Innovation districts aim to respond to a new economic paradigm in which economic production flows back to cities.

Keywords : innovation ecosystem, governance, technology park, urban planning, urban policy, urban regeneration

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