DESIGN
POLICY
LAB

THE DESIGN POLICY LAB

Research and design
applied to policy making

A research lab at

POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO DI DESIGN

Lead Design Policy in

DESIGN
FOR
EUROPE

Co-Funded
by the European
Union

What is The Design Policy Lab?

We are a research lab at the Design Department
of the Politecnico di Milano. We work on 'design + policy'
focusing on researching, implementing, and evaluating
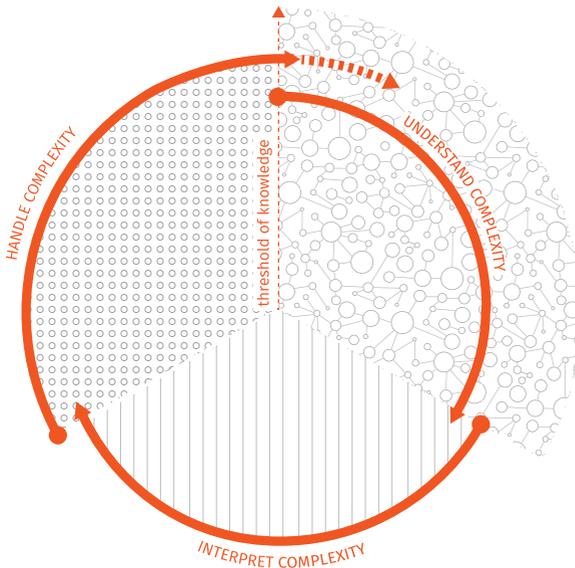policy through design and design through policy.

What it does?

Promotion and Advocacy – to support the international
and local debate about innovating the public sector.
Research and consultancy – to conduct smaller
experiments in applying new governance.
Action research – to support public administrations
in facing current challenges using design methods,
evaluation, and data visualisation.
Education and Training – to help public officials
enlarge their skillset and include design approaches
for policy making.

What does it advocate for?

We are an action–research centre.
We want to transform the practice of policy making
and create more meaning and impact by changing
the way we govern and are governed.
We want to contribute to re-synchronising governments
with society, and to make policy more experimental.

The Design Policy Beacon

A tool to get insightful and shareable knowledge from the complex world of design policies in Europe

As part of Design for Europe, The Design Policy Lab launched an initiative called Design Policy Beacon, an evidence-based online resource that wants to raise awareness on design policy across the EU through data visualisation. The aim is to support the growing community of policy makers who are working to make design a key part of national and regional policies for innovation and growth.
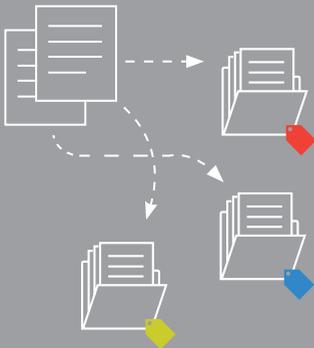In order to achieve this, we faced several inherently complex questions. What to define as design policy? What is worth to be measured? How to translate these data into clear and insightful content?

1. Simplify complexity

To recognize that design policies are often hidden in wider innovation programmes, or depend on smaller/local initiatives, was crucial to understand the landscape of design policies in Europe.
We individuated 548 policy actions in support of design as starting dataset for the Beacon.

2. Build a customized categorization

Investments in design are more difficult to be proven efficient and worthy, because there is no official and shared method of metrics to measure the value of design. Therefore, the Lab established a brand new categorization system based on three main fields of investment (*Human Development, Asset Development and Framework Development*) which are then subdivided in more focused subcategories.
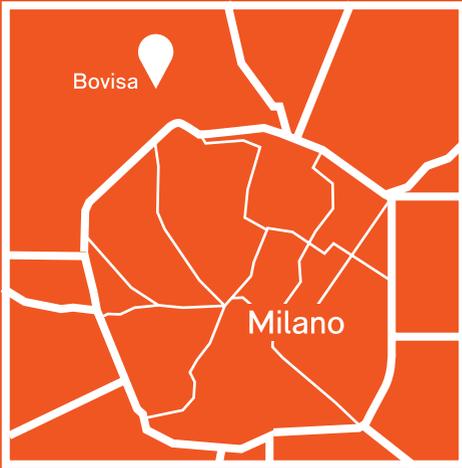We can use these categories to sort every policy action in support of design.

3. Make content accessible

As the content and data were gathered, the final step was to design and build a digital artefact to make the output of the analysis accessible and understandable for policy makers and practitioners in this field.

The Design Policy Beacon is online at:
designpolicy.eu/design-policy-beacon

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