



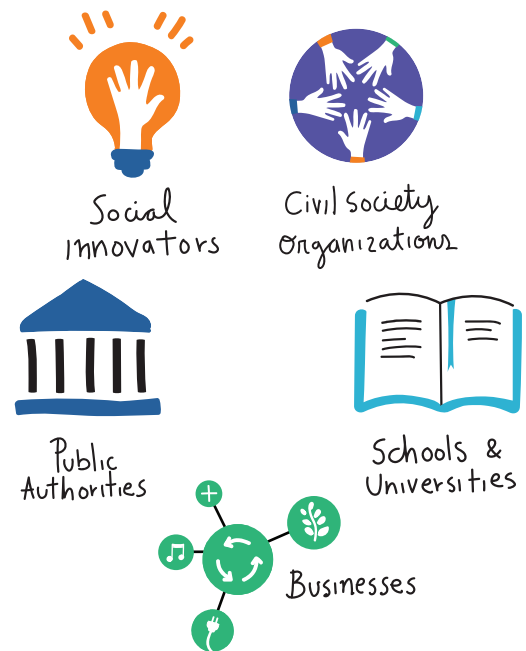
**LAB  
GOV. City**

LABoratory for the  
GOVERNance of the  
city as a commons

# About LabGov

LabGov – the LABoratory for the GOVERNance of the City as a Commons – is an international network of applied research platforms engaged in exploring and developing a methodological approach to co-design policies, and projects which allow the shared and collaborative management of urban commons goods, services, resources and infrastructures towards the governance of the city as a commons.

Co-directed and scientifically overseen by Professors Sheila Foster, Georgetown University, and Christian Iaione, LUISS Guido Carli University of Rome, LabGov runs its research activities under the aegis of these two internationally recognized universities and in partnership with knowledge institutions from all over the world. This scientific alliance and the collaboration with local urban actors in the activation of urban projects provides LabGov with a knowledge-in-action framework for the experimentation of inclusive and polycentric governance models aimed at rethinking the city in a more equitable and democratic way.



## Our vision - Towards the City as a Commons

In recent years, political and academic debates, civic projects, as well as social movements have questioned contemporary urbanization patterns. Cities all over the world are promoting policies to find innovative solutions to the most urgent urban issues, tackled by the international community through urban development guidelines such as the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The foundations of this phenomenon are rooted in the right to the city (Lefebvre 1968), recently re-emerged in the international political scene (Harvey 2012), which could be conceived as a broader theoretical framework of urban justice (Ooman 2016) for the conceptualization of the urban commons.

Combining this background and theory advanced by Nobel Prize Elinor Ostrom (1990; 2009), LabGov's approach tailors the idea of the commons and the related design principles to the urban context, scaling them up to a new governance model for cities. In city co-governance, autonomous and connected interventions of goods, services, and infrastructures management enable the initiative and the participation of all urban actors – social innovators, public authorities, knowledge institutions, NGOs, and businesses – shaping new social, economic, and institutional ecosystems. Ultimately, LabGov research practices and advocates for the transitions from urban commons to a more just and democratic governance of the city as commons.

# History and Evolution

LabGov's activities started in 2011, with the first laboratory in LUISS University of Rome devoted to the study and practice of policies and models for the governance of urban commons. Together with the laboratory set up in the US, LabGov supported in drafting and monitoring the implementation of the Bologna Regulation on the Urban Commons, which laid the foundation of a broader governance methodology called Co-City Protocol, built upon the analysis of several global case studies and the policy making experiences undertaken in the context of the Co-City projects.

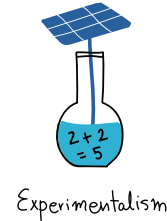
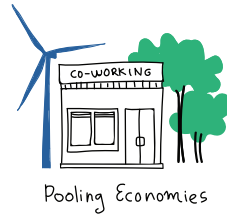
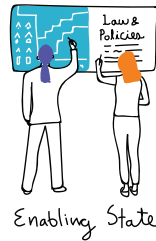
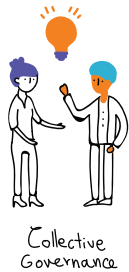
LabGov organized the first international conference on the urban commons (IASC 2015 - The City as a Commons) and has been, for years, stimulating and facilitating the creation of equivalent applied research platforms in universities of different cities of the world becoming part and connection hub of an international network of laboratories including LabGov Georgetown, Amsterdam, San Jose, and São Paulo.



## LabGov Italy – LUISS

LabGov Italy is based in the International Center on Democracy and Democratization (ICEDD) of LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome, led by Professor Leonardo Morlino and directed by Professor Giovanni Orsina. Directed by Professor Christian Iaione, the lab is conceived as an in-house urban clinic and place of policy making experimentation connecting international scholars, practitioners, and experts in the context of several local projects run across Italian regions. It also offers to young students and professionals academic opportunities and soft-skill training activities related to the co-governance of the urban commons.

# The Co-City Protocol



The Co-City Protocol, first codified in the Bologna Regulation for the Care and Regeneration of the Urban Commons and tested later on in other Italian cities in a multi-year research project known as Co-Cities, is the result of the field experimentations along with the theoretical and empirical observation on 200+ global case studies and in-depth investigations in more than 100 cities from different geopolitical contexts.

This constantly evolving protocol, to be adapted to local conditions, is a methodology aimed at serving as guidance for urban policy makers, researchers, and communities willing to be involved in co-governance experiences around the world.

The Co-City Protocol identifies the conditions, processes and mechanisms required for transitioning from single interventions on the commons to transition from urban commons intervention to the co-governance of the city as a commons.

The protocol, based on the quintuple helix approach, it is composed of five design principles, the co-city cycle, and tools.

The **five design principles** are the necessary conditions that, at different level, allow the transition from urban commons projects to co-governance. They are: collective governance, enabling state, social and economic pooling, experimentalism, and tech justice.

The **Co-governance** is the shift from the traditional public, public/private governance to a collective governance scheme that, including that includes the community in different way and degrees, resulting in a shared, collaborative, and polycentric model.

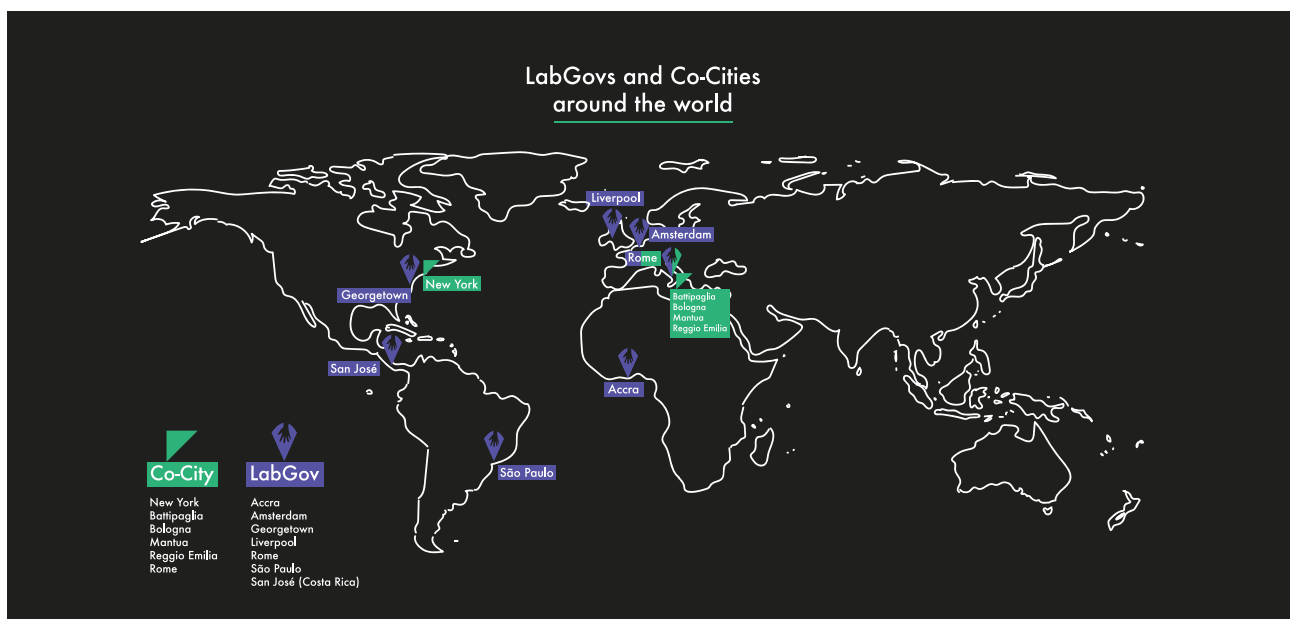
The significant innovation behind the co-governance shift to a multi-stakeholder approach is the pooling and cooperation between five possible actors: social innovators, civil society organizations, knowledge institutions, public authorities, and businesses (**the quintuple helix**).

The **co-city cycle** represents the process dimensions of co-governance experimentations and is composed of six phases: cheap talking, mapping, practicing, prototyping, testing and modelling.

The implementation of the protocol is supported by different operative **tools** to be adapted to the needs and peculiarities of local contexts and communities and can be grouped into five main categories: institutional, legal, financial, digital, and learning tools.

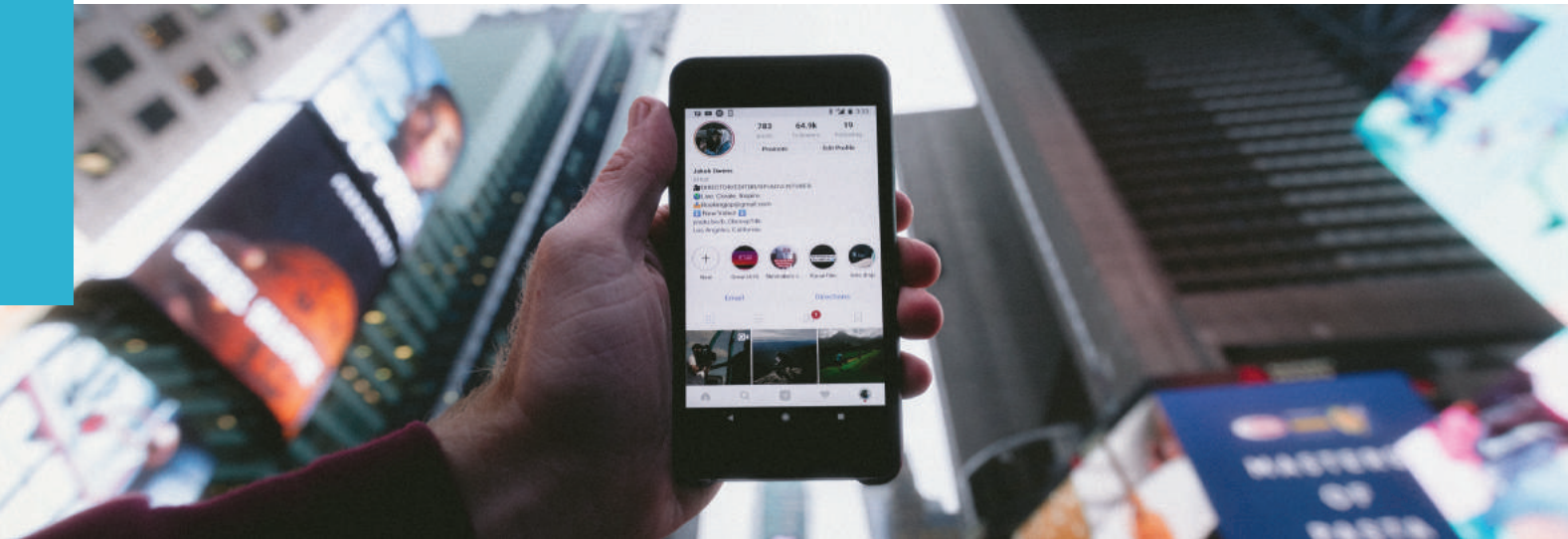
## The Co-City Project

In the Co-City project, LabGov cooperates with various urban actors and stakeholders to create new institutions and shared protocols of collaborative and polycentric governance with the aim of enhancing social innovation in the urban welfare, stimulating collaborative economies as a driver of local development, and promoting inclusive urban regeneration of abandoned or degraded areas.



The first LabGov project was carried out in Bologna and laid the foundation of the Co-City protocol, followed by other Italian cities including Battipaglia, Mantua, Reggio Emilia, and Rome, whose municipalities pioneered in developing Co-City projects focused on the experimentation of territorial pacts of collaboration for a commons-driven social and economic growth. Other Co-Cities were then activated in European and North American cities like New York, US and Amsterdam, Netherlands and are being set up in cities of the Global South like San Jose, Costa Rica, Mexico City, Mexico, and Accra, Ghana.

In recent years, LabGov have been collaborating with United Nations Agencies like UN-Habitat; EU projects and networks Urbact and UIA Initiative; international foundations like The Rockefeller Foundation and the P2P Foundation, academic centers and associations like DESIS Network, Fordham Urban Law, and The International Association for the Study of the Commons IASC Center; media agencies and hubs like Eutropian, Heptagon, and Shareable; national institutions, mayors municipalities, and the National Association of Italian Municipalities – ANCI.



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