

FRAME

Brussels media
community



mediapark.brussels
Boulevard Reyers - 1030 Brussels
50°51'03"N - 4°24'09"E

be media
be.brussels 

FRAME: A SHOWCASE FOR MEDIAPARK.BRUSSELS

The future media center Frame, funded by the Brussels-Capital Region and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), will help to implement the Region's desire to reinforce the media, audiovisual and communication sectors.

It will constitute a new epicentre in Brussels of these fields of activity, bringing an entire creative ecosystem together in a single building: regional television (BX1); a training institute (IHECS Academy); a regional support structure (screen.brussels); a non for profit organisation (Brussels Video Centre), a co-working space and a specialised business centre; shared facilities; and so on.

Frame will thus simultaneously represent a flagship building, a source of attraction, and one of the first new structures and a preview of mediapark.brussels. In short, it will be the showcase for the new Brussels creative district that the Region plans to develop around a park and the future new headquarters of the RTBF and the VRT – a district that will accommodate companies from the media, audiovisual and communication industries as well as housing and local public facilities.

RUDI VERVOORT, MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION



THE SAU-MSI: FRAME'S PROJECT OWNER

This iconic mediapark.brussels building will be built by the Urban Development Corporation



The SAU-MSI will also construct 'LE CHAT cartoon museum', and is coordinating the conversion of the old gendarmerie barracks at Usquare.brussels, steering the development of the Josaphat strategic zone and restoring the historic architecture of the former Uccle-Boitsfort Hippodrome.

The Urban Development Corporation of the Brussels-Capital Region is a public limited company whose majority shareholder is the Region; it has two main missions. First of all, there is the operational implementation of the priority development areas such as mediapark.brussels, Usquare.brussels or Josaphat. Also, the SAU-MSI steers specific projects of special importance for the prestige of Brussels, including the construction of 'LE CHAT cartoon museum'; the restoration of the historic buildings of the former Uccle-Boitsfort Hippodrome; and the steering of the initial phase prior to the conversion of the Citroën-Yser garage into a museum of modern and contemporary art.

Frame media house, which the SAU-MSI will build on land it owns at the corner of Boulevard Reyers and Rue Colonel Bourg, thus lies at the intersection between its two missions.

AN ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

Gilles Delforge, director of the SAU-MSI, explains that: 'Frame will be one of the first new edifices of mediapark.brussels (pp. 6-7 and 16-17) – a flagship building in this new creative Brussels district dedicated to the media. Given the integration of various operators and multiple functions and services within the same building, it will also be a showcase for mediapark.brussels, a kind of "miniature mediapark.brussels".'

The building, with a floor space of some 10,000 m², will contain a multifunctional ecosystem – a microcosm of what mediapark.brussels will ultimately be like. In addition to its four main occupants (BX1 regional television channel, screen.brussels, the IHECS Academy and the Brussels Video Centre: p. 10), it will also host an innovation platform including a co-working space and

a business centre dedicated to the media/ audiovisual sector, a catering outlet open to the public, and shared facilities, including an auditorium that can be used as a theatre or as a projection room.

Incidentally, the name chosen for the building by the SAU-MSI and the four main future occupants, **Frame (Brussels media community)**, refers to the 'framework' provided by the building for the development of a media-oriented ecosystem. It also alludes to the shape and structure of its main façade looking towards Diamant; to the 'window' onto mediapark.brussels that it will be; to the camera frame in visual media; and to the frame in web design.

51 APPLICATIONS

The **Baukunst (Brussels) – Bruther (Paris) consortium of architecture practices** (pp. 11-13) was selected following the call for project designers organised by the SAU-MSI in 2017. Gilles Delforge: 'I'm very pleased by the great interest elicited by the architectural competition: we received 51 high-quality applications submitted by multidisciplinary teams – some from Belgium and others from various European countries – as well as consortia from several countries. This demonstrates the attention that has been attracted by the development of mediapark.brussels.'

The SAU-MSI's director is also delighted by 'the excellent collaboration with the four main future occupants, whose needs we will make every effort to take into account in our role as project manager.'

EUROPEAN FUNDING

The construction budget amounts to **16 million euros excluding VAT, financed by the Brussels-Capital Region and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**. The French Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region has also earmarked nearly 3 million euros for the redeployment of BX1.

The SAU-MSI plans to start work in late 2019. **The building should be finished and ready for its occupants to move in by early 2022.**

MORE INFORMATION: www.sau-msi.brussels



The location of the future media center Frame, next to the huge site of the public radio and TV broadcasters RTBF and VRT.

MEDIAPARK.BRUSSELS: A CREATIVE HUB FOR THE MEDIA

Frame will be a gateway to an open, diverse and vibrant new district of Brussels



Situated between Chaussée de Louvain, Boulevard Reyers and the Liège motorway (E40) in the East of Brussels, the Reyers priority development area brings together several major projects, including the ambitious mediapark.brussels – a diverse, open, vibrant new district focusing on the media and the creative industries. Today, the Reyers priority development area is a patchwork of large urban blocks and major metropolitan facilities (the site of the public TV broadcasters RTBF and VRT, business parks, sports and shopping centres, cemeteries, etc.); the fences that surround these and the road network that serves the area constitute urban barriers.

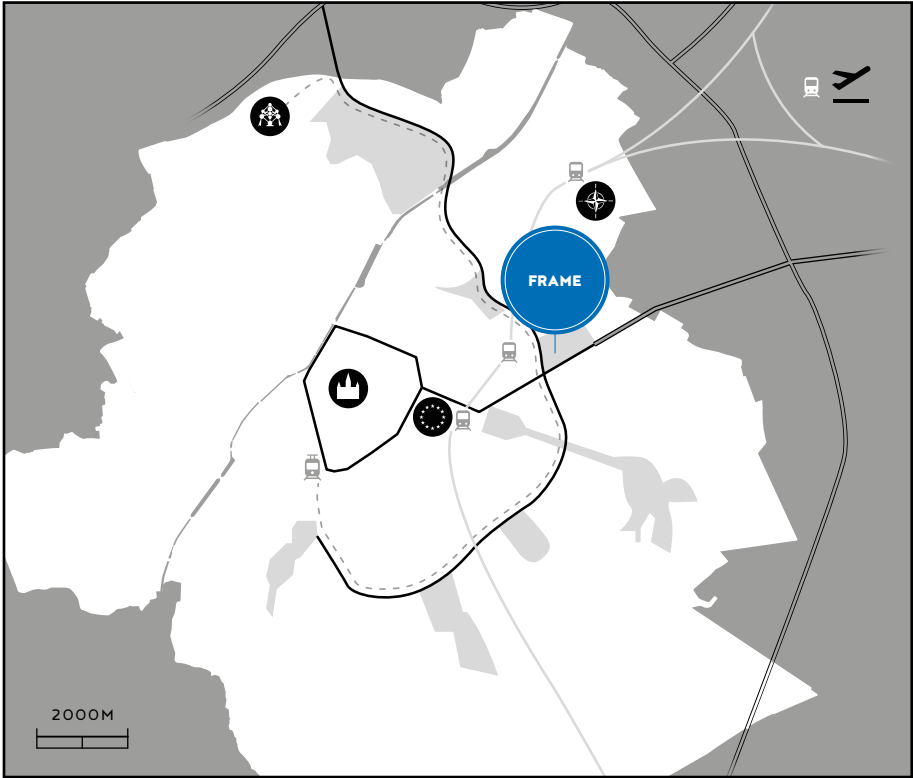
Yet this distinctive 175-hectare area of the city is **ideally located, between the airport and the European Quarter**, at a gateway to the Region, on a major road, a few minutes from a railway station and on a fast tram line that among other things connects the ULB and VUB university sites. Above all, it is already home to **around sixty media companies employing some 5,000 workers** (including 1,100 at RTBF and 2,400 at VRT). As such, it represents a very significant share of the Brussels media sector, which employs a total of around 16,000 people and generates 40% of the net added value produced by this sector in Belgium.

RECONFIGURING A DISTRICT TO REINFORCE AN ECOSYSTEM

To activate the major development potential of this area and reinforce the Brussels media,

audiovisual and communication sectors, the Brussels–Capital Region decided to take advantage of RTBF’s and VRT’s decision to vacate much of the 20-hectare site they currently occupy and redeploy their activities to two new headquarters, to be constructed over the next few years just behind their current shared building.

In September 2017, the Region purchased the public broadcasters’ site. Around the future new headquarters of the VRT (55,000 m²) and the RTBF (38,000 m²), it will oversee the gradual development of 2,000 to 2,500 future new homes, premises for new companies in the media and communication sectors (30,000 m²), local facilities (shops, a school, a crèche, etc.), an 8-hectare park and so on. Building will take place on **more than 300,000 m² in total**, proceeding in phases, and **the connection to neighbouring districts will be restored** by removing the fences around the public broadcasters’ current site.



The Region’s ambition is to bring a quality of life to the heart of this area, to link the different districts together, to integrate housing, shops, services and leisure provision, and to reinforce the existing economic fabric with an innovative ecosystem centred on the media and the creative industries. In short, it aims to develop a new centre for living,

working and leisure in Brussels. The Urban Development Corporation (SAU-MSI), which is in charge of the operational implementation of mediapark.brussels, is also the owner of land located at one of the corners of this area – on Boulevard Reyers right by the E40 motorway – on which it will construct Frame.

A projected view of what the public broadcasters’ site will eventually become: the future mediapark.brussels.



AN ECOSYSTEM BUILDING FOR AN ECOSYSTEM DISTRICT

Frame and mediapark.brussels are relying on the distinctive dynamic associated with the grouping together of actors in the media, audiovisual and communication industries



A simulation of one of the future studios of the regional television channel BX1, one of the components in the Frame media ecosystem.

Like mediapark.brussels, Frame reflects the ambition of the Brussels-Capital Region to give its media, audiovisual and communication sectors a boost. Both rely on the principle of a specialised economic ecosystem.

This concept is based on the idea that **to create growth and innovation, it is vital to accumulate and transfer knowledge and experience.** Bringing together various actors from a specific economic sector in the same place will give rise a distinctive dynamic, generating added value for each component.

PROJECT-BASED AND AGILE

This approach is all the more relevant in a media sector characterised by a project-based mode of operation. Each project is like a business in its own right, and its success depends on dovetailing together the talents and expertise required to carry it out. Teams are therefore formed and evolve according to the project's nature and life cycle, in a dynamic where agility is at a premium. **Frame aims to apply this agile ecosystem approach within the building,** creating conditions favourable to

the exchange of expertise in collaborative mode. This will be done by means of architecture and facilities (pp. 14-15) that promote new social interactions in order to generate innovative content and concepts.

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Frame's design has taken account of the sociology of the people who work in the industry. They can be categorised into two main profiles, although individuals can combine the two profiles or move from one group

to the other.^(*) First of all, there are the digital nomads or hunter-gatherers: freelancers who operate on an intermittent, temporary, independent basis. They work in agile, mobile mode, often alone, but are looking for infrastructure that encourages a collaborative approach. Their working hours are often lengthy or unconventional, and their projects do not necessarily take shape in the traditional normative frameworks. They include creators of content (e.g. journalists, authors, screenwriters, copywriters), artists (e.g. actors, musicians, directors),

(*) Source: screen.brussels

content transformers (e.g. graphic designers, editors, mixers), technicians (e.g. cameramen, sound engineers, set designers) and future professionals (e.g. students, trainees). Then, there are the sedentary workers: professionals on fixed-term or open-ended contracts who, although they work in a more 'structured' manner, often end up collaborating with the first group. They are often employed in larger structures, a number of which will be occupants or neighbours of Frame: public or private media organisations, communication agencies, digital agencies, production houses, related companies or organisations (such as professional organisations or education or training providers), etc.

FRAME (BRUSSELS MEDIA COMMUNITY)

This collaborative approach within an ecosystem lies behind the full name of the future

building, 'Frame (Brussels media community)', chosen by its owner, the Urban Development Corporation (pp. 4-5) and its four main future occupants: BX1 regional television channel, screen.brussels, the IHECS Academy and the Brussels Video Centre. These four actors alone cover a very broad spectrum of activities in their fields, and they will be joined by an innovation platform dedicated to the sector and consisting of a co-working space and a business centre. **Frame will thus become the first Belgian public/private/academic collaborative platform dedicated to the media, audiovisual and communication industries.**

Given the integration of these different operators and multiple functions and services within the same building, it will also be a kind of 'miniature mediapark.brussels'.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF FRAME



BX1 is the French-speaking public broadcaster serving the Brussels-Capital Region.

The director-general Marc de Haan: 'Moving into this place was an obvious step for BX1, which now sees its building as a blank slate on which it can write, rub out and rewrite new ways to producing media content.' (www.bx1.be)



The Brussels Video Centre is a not for profit organisation (asbl-vzw) in the field of audiovisual and documentary film creation.

Its activities include the production and making of audiovisual educational tools and awareness films, the production and running of video workshops, the production of creative documentary films, and the promotion and distribution of this catalogue of productions in Belgium and abroad. Michel Steyaert, director of the Brussels Video Centre: 'The Centre's presence alongside BX1, screen.brussels and the IHECS Academy makes sense given our concern, at the very heart of our activity, with bringing together different approaches and activities, and with exploring the power of the image and its relationship with reality.' (www.cvb.be)



The IHECS Academy is the centre for continuing training and research attached to the Institute for Higher Social Communication Studies.

The managing director of IHECS, Jean-François Raskin: 'This location is ideal because IHECS seeks to be at the forefront of the latest advances in communication and information. Its specific contribution is to offer training centred on the concrete, on the practical, on working realities. And to be responsive to a world of communication that is changing, to technological upheavals that call for greater affirmation of the human factor.' (www.ihecs-academy.be)

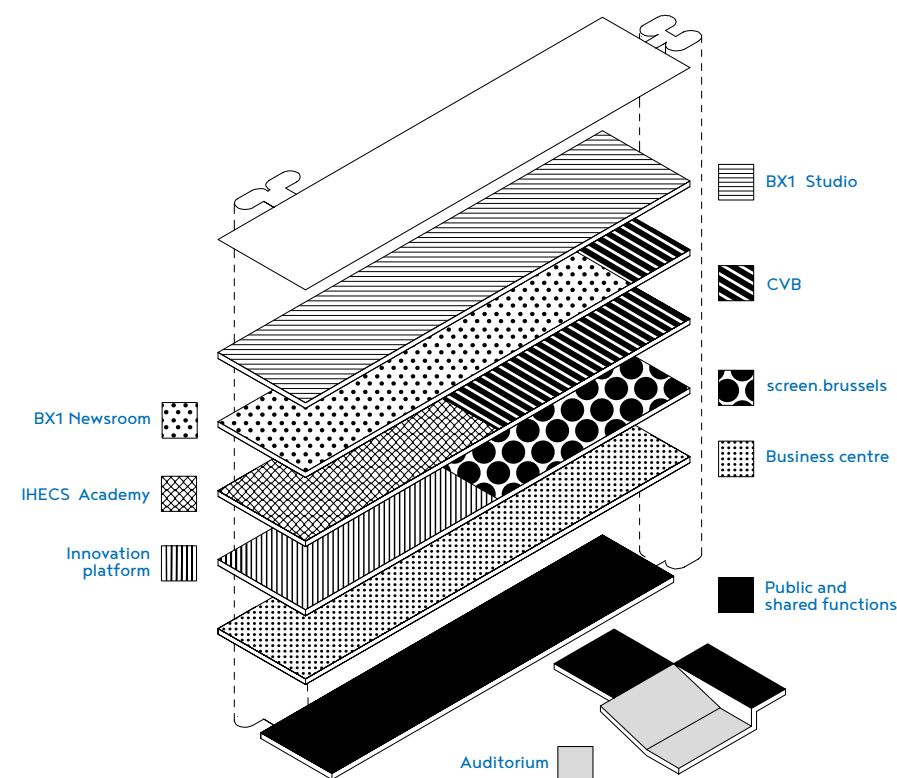


Screen.brussels brings together the regional support services for the audiovisual sector under one brand.

This 'umbrella', which has four units (cluster, fund, business and film commission) is the single point of entry for entrepreneurs in the media industry in the Brussels-Capital Region. The director-general of screen.brussels, Noël Magis: 'By facilitating the project-based mode of operation as much as possible, Frame will make it possible to generate innovative solutions and content inspired by this new way of working together.' (www.screen.brussels)

MAKING INCREASINGLY INTANGIBLE SECTOR TANGIBLE

The competition organised by the SAU-MSI was won by a Belgian-French consortium of the architecture firms Baukunst and Bruther



The call for project designers organised by the Urban Development Corporation in 2017 attracted 51 applications from Belgian and foreign architects and international groupings. A consortium consisting of the firms Baukunst (Brussels) and Bruther (Paris) emerged as the winner of the contract award procedure. **We spoke to the architects Adrien Verschuere (Baukunst), Alexandre Theriot and Stéphanie Bru (Bruther).**

ISN'T THERE SOMETHING PARADOXICAL ABOUT DESIGNING A FLAGSHIP BUILDING THAT WILL BE BOTH THE SHOWCASE OF A MEDIA DISTRICT AND THE SETTING FOR A MEDIA ECOSYSTEM IN ITS OWN RIGHT, WHEN THIS SECTOR IS INCREASINGLY MARKED BY A SHIFT TO MORE INTANGIBLE WAYS OF BOTH PRODUCING AND CONSUMING CONTENT, ASSOCIATED WITH TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS?

AV: Yes, you're right: this project seeks to

interpret, with the architectural means at our disposal, the presence of image and information in the inexorable process of media acceleration and interaction. Engaged as it is in a transition to intangible materials, the media environment has a paradoxical need to affirm and manifest its presence in the city. The project has been designed around this paradox of making tangible in the urban space the presence of content that is set to disappear.

Our proposal approaches this question through the differing temporal modes of city and architecture: on the one hand, the relative permanence of the urban form, and on the other, the versatility of our ways of inhabiting it. These considerations will result in a strong contribution that affirms its visibility while constituting an exchange platform that is flexible in nature and suitable for use over time by the widest community possible of users.

YES, FRAME HAS TO ALLOW FOR THE CO-EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL QUITE DIFFERENT OCCUPANTS, WITH THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS, AS WELL AS FOR THE VERY RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIA, AUDIOVISUAL AND COMMUNICATION SECTORS.

AV: The project has been designed to be open to needs which cannot currently be foreseen, but which we can already imagine will be multiple and hybrid. Consisting of a

succession of modular floors, largely open to the outside and freed from any structural constraint, it allows for a range of possible layouts which can be reorganised as required. This type of design, combined with the positioning of circulation routes and technical services on the periphery, is highly efficient.

AT and SB: The building will be a kind of symbol of a versatile and ever-changing sector, ensuring its own long-term relevance by offering great flexibility. We had to imagine a



confluence point where ideas, dreams, investors and visitors can gather; to create a place for multiple purposes and interdisciplinary exchanges; and to conceptualise it as a place of expression, growth and freedom. In an urban environment undergoing rapid revival, Frame will set up a subtle dialogue with its site to become an architectural figure that symbolises a creative district.

HOW WILL FRAME FIT INTO THE AREA, AT THE MEETING-POINT BETWEEN A LARGE URBAN BOULEVARD, THE SITE OF PUBLIC RADIO AND TV BROADCASTERS RTBF AND VRT, THE FUTURE MEDIAPARK.BRUSSELS AND A MAJOR ROUTE INTO THE CITY?

AV: The project takes advantage of its rather heterogeneous urban environment to present a somewhat different image in the different directions it faces – as seen from Boulevard Reyers, the motorway or Rue Colonel Bourg. To the south, the square in front of the building proclaims one of the main pedestrian accesses to the future mediapark.brussels, especially from the Diamant metro station. On this side, the development and architectural treatment of the façade will declare the presence of a new district across the city and, more distantly, from one of the main routes into Brussels, the E40 motorway.

IS THIS COLLABORATION ON THE DESIGN OF FRAME BETWEEN YOUR TWO FIRMS A FIRST?

AT and SB: No, it follows on from major joint projects such as the new life sciences building on the UNIL-EPFL campus in Lausanne, Switzerland, or the construction of a student residence on the Saclay campus in France. With strong common values and obvious complementarity, our Franco-Belgian collaboration is enriched by its international nature. And for us, using a two-country approach to designing and constructing this building automatically reinforces its European character.



A MODULAR AND ADAPTABLE “TOOL”

Frame will offer state-of-the-art facilities and various shared spaces

Designed as a preview on the scale of a single building of the diverse ecosystem of mediapark.brussels, Frame will be a modular and adaptable “tool”. In keeping up with the times, it will offer various facilities and shared spaces to a range of different occupants. Its ambition is no less than to become a new Brussels epicentre of creativity in the media, audiovisual and communication sectors.

In addition to the media ecosystem (pp. 8–9) and the four main occupants (p. 10), Frame’s design has also taken a number of other factors into account: recent developments in

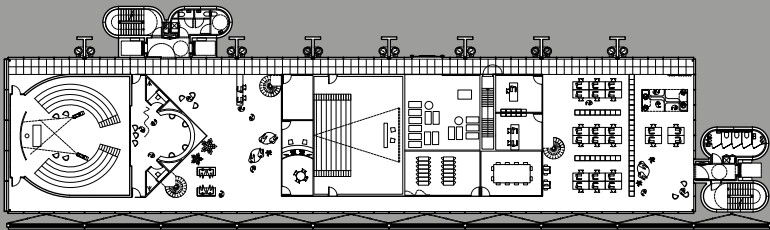
the organisation of workspaces, especially shared workspaces; the sociology of media, audiovisual and communication workers and the project mode of operation that they often use (pp. 8–9); the ongoing shifts in this sector, linked to both technological advances and changes in the way content is consumed; and the desire of the academic world to follow these trends as closely as possible.

Frame will therefore feature modular and adaptable layouts and shared facilities, creating favourable conditions for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in collaborative mode.

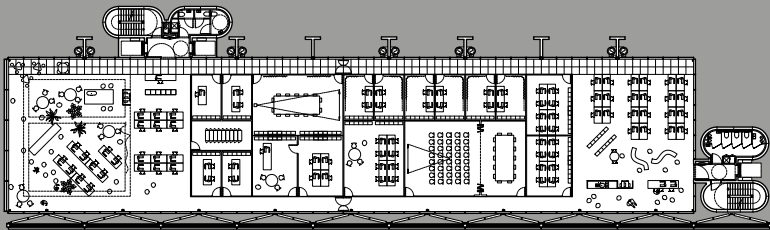
IN PARTICULAR, IT WILL OFFER OCCUPANTS THE FOLLOWING:

- **a co-working space and a business centre** dedicated to the media, audiovisual and communication industry;
- **a huge catering outlet open to the public on the ground floor**, which will encourage contact and discussion between the occupants and visitors (floor 0);
- **a training centre** with a wide-ranging programme in the media field, including tailor-made training in French, Dutch and English;
- **shared meeting rooms** of different sizes to optimise office space while promoting exchanges between occupants;
- **a large auditorium** available for various types of meetings, events, gatherings, screenings and so on, including for external parties (floor -1);
- **a demonstration and experience room** where installations can be set up to test new equipment;
- **hyperflexible open-plan spaces** 15 metres large, without columns, with flexible technical infrastructure to maximise adaptability to the different needs of a media or audiovisual business and facilitate the integration of different types of projects;
- **a transmission control room – a technical data centre** through which all signals exchanged with the outside will pass and where the information necessary for the site’s activities will be stored;
- **state-of-the-art technical installations**, with exemplary energy performance.

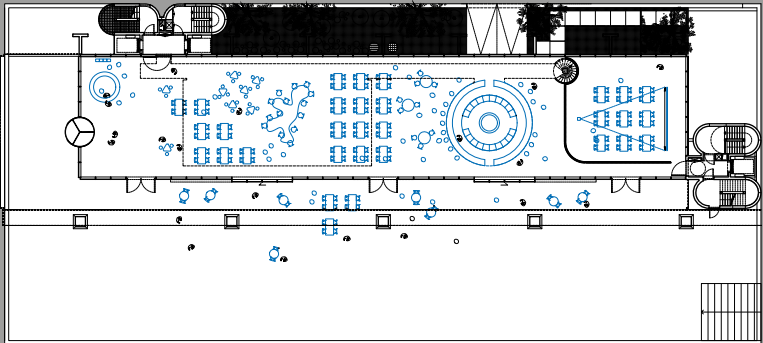
FLOOR 5



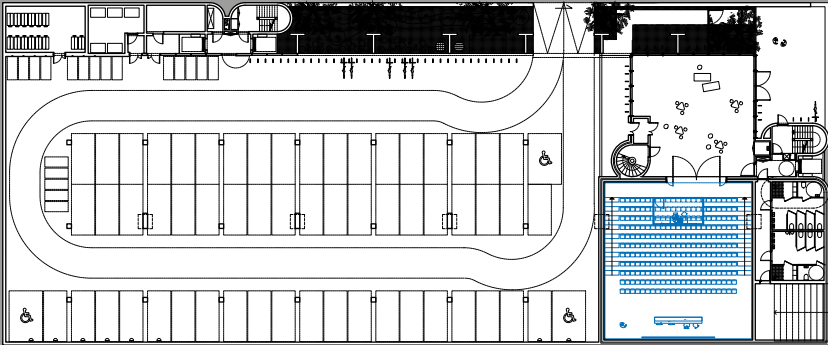
FLOOR 2



FLOOR 0



FLOOR -1



DEVELOPMENT SEASONS 2019 TO 2030 AT MEDIAPARK.BRUSSELS

Frame and the new RTBF and VRT headquarters will be the first episodes in the development of the site over the next decade



The first three buildings to go up at mediapark.brussels in the next few years will be Frame and the future new headquarters of the two public broadcasters: the French-language RTBF and the Dutch-language VRT.

Frame will be built by 2022 on a currently vacant plot belonging to the SAU-MSI at one of the corners of this development area, to which it will become a gateway on Boulevard Reyers next to the Diamant pre-metro station.

The vast, carefully choreographed operation for the redevelopment of the 19-hectare RTBF and VRT site, which is currently under-utilized, is itself contingent on the redeployment of these two media operators to their new premises. The SAU-MSI is in charge of the operational coordination of this ambitious reconfiguration of the site purchased by the Brussels-Capital Region at the end of 2017.

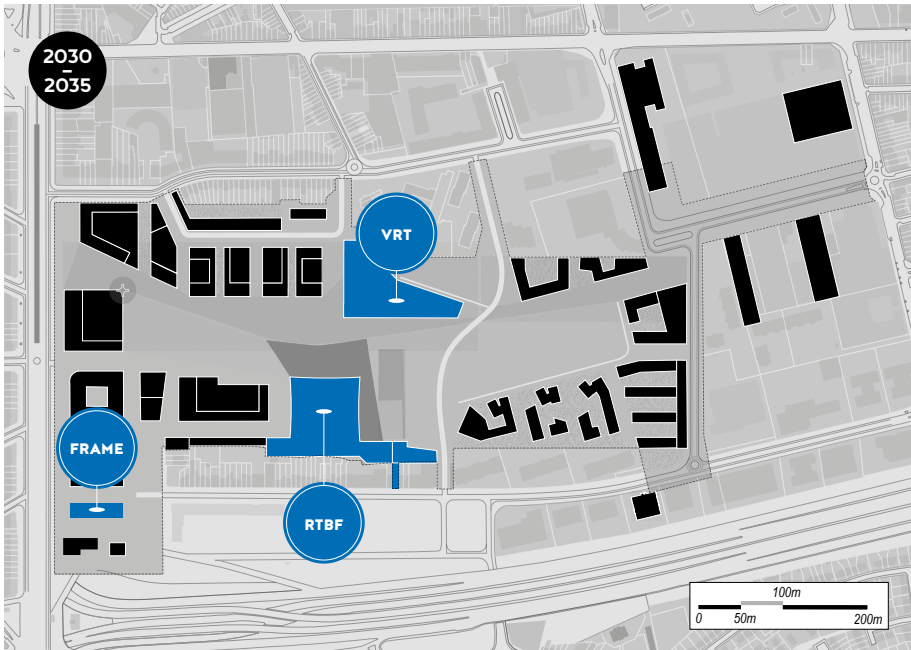
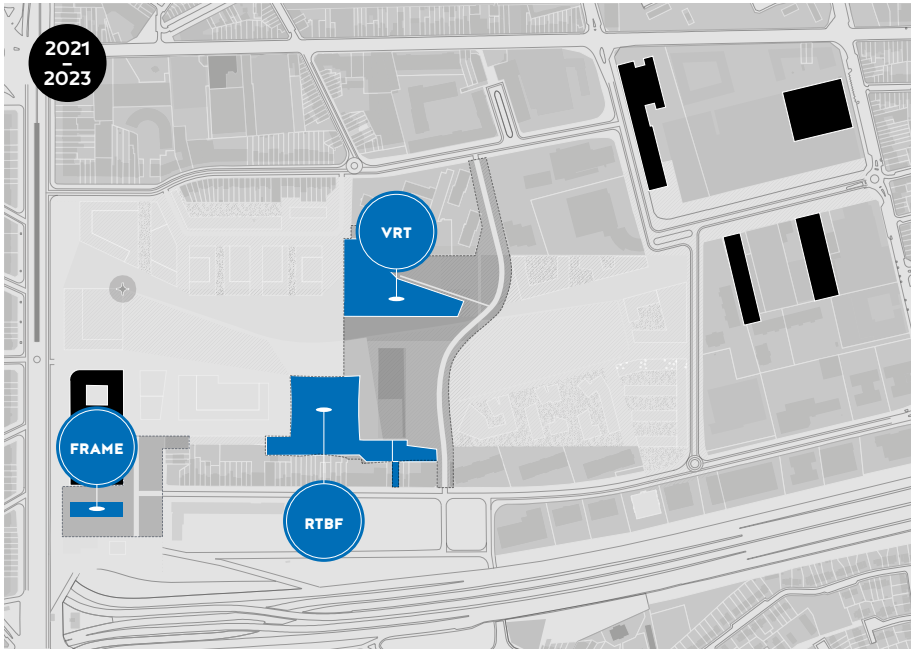
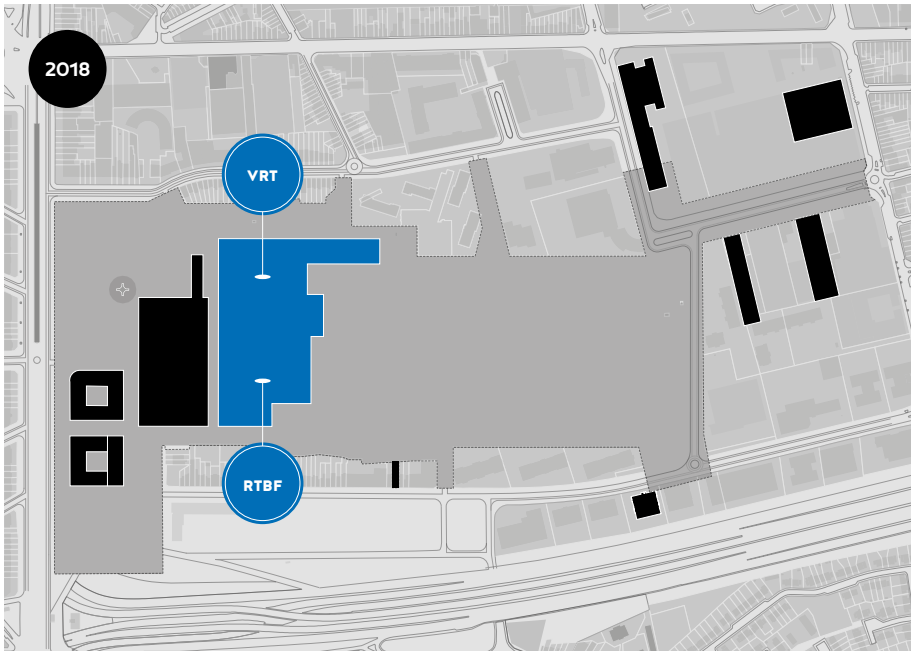
Stage one: the construction, by 2023, of the **separate new buildings of the RTBF and VRT**, to the rear of their current shared location, and the development of a **broad central esplanade** between them.

Stage two: the development of a **second gateway to mediapark.brussels** towards the Place Meiser end of Boulevard Reyers in around 2023-2024.

Stage three: from 2024, the **demolition of the huge buildings currently shared by RTBF and VRT**, this will free up the centre of the future mediapark.brussels, thus allowing **the progressive development of the central public spaces** which will ultimately extend right across the RTBF-VRT esplanade, along the whole length of the site, including an **8-hectare space planted with trees**.

Stage four: in **several phases**, the progressive re-urbanisation, between 2024 and 2030-35, of the land where the transition will be made between the site and the surrounding urban fabric with the introduction of businesses, facilities, shops, housing and so on.

MORE INFORMATION:
www.mediapark.brussels



COLOPHON

CONCEPT
SAU-MSI.BRUSSELS
-
TEXT
SAU-MSI.BRUSSELS
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TRANSLATION
BLABLABLA
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DESIGN AND LAYOUT
SIGN

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PAGES 2-3 BAUKUNST & BRUTHER /
ARTEFACTORYLAB
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(REPORTERS), MS-A & ASYMÉTRIE
AND SAU-MSI.BRUSSELS(P.SA.)
PAGE 5 SAU-MSI.BRUSSELS
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PAGE 6 AG. F. LECLERCQ
PAGE 7 SAU-MSI.BRUSSELS/SIGN
AND AG. F. LECLERCQ
PAGES 8-9 BAUKUNST & BRUTHER /
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