



# IBI'S SOLUTION STORY: MOVING FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION PLAN

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<b>Subject</b>	The story of how Ibi has started to use building 'director plans' as a solution to the challenge of moving from strategy to action plan.
<b>Network</b>	Creative Spirits, Implementation Network
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Strategies are great. However, by themselves they will never be implemented. And, without implementation, results will never be achieved. Therefore, every strategy needs an action plan of some kind, a document that outlines in detail, action by action, how a strategy will be implemented. Michael Barber, the man responsible for delivering Tony Blair's ambitious reform agenda, describes this as moving from a 30,000 feet perspective to a 3 feet perspective. Doing this involves transforming the strategy's vague goals into specific objectives, designing discrete actions that will help deliver the desired results, assigning responsibilities, and setting deadlines. If a strategy is a glossy essay, an action plan should be a messy working document, complete with scribbles and coffee stains. What follows is the story of how the Spanish city of Ibi solved this challenge as part of the Creative Spirits network.

Let's start with the context. Surrounded by a dramatic landscape and 37 km inland from the popular coastal destination Alicante, Ibi has a population of 24,000 and a significant industrial base, with 3 million m<sup>2</sup> of industrial area located on the edge of the old city. This unusual situation is made most striking when the city is viewed from the sky, revealing that half of its area is made up of white and grey industrial units.



Ibi from above

Traditionally an agricultural town known for ice production and, latterly, ice cream production, Ibi made its name in the 20th century as a major manufacturer of toys. Its population exploded as workers were bused in to work in its flourishing factories. In fact, such was the reputation of Ibi and the surrounding conurbations, the area soon became known as 'Toy Valley'.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the forces of globalisation forced the city's entrepreneurs to diversify from toy manufacturing to a vast array of related manufacturing industries. Today, the city's factories and businesses produce products and services in sectors such as: aerospace, food, chemical, automotive, cosmetics, metallurgy, furniture, etc. Thus, the city's industries continue to thrive.

However, whereas the old toy factories were in the city centre and contributed to a lively atmosphere, Ibi's present-day manufacturers are strictly segregated from the rest of the city, leaving the centre strangely devoid of activity. Naturally, this is mostly a good thing, few people want to wake up in the morning and look out over an industrial estate, but it also leaves the problem of what to do with the now-abandoned factories and commercial areas that remain, often in prime locations. In addition to this regenerative challenge, Ibi is faced with a demographic challenge. Like many other small cities, Ibi has struggled to retain and attract younger people, attracted as they are to the opportunities and possibilities of big cities such as Alicante.

As part of its response to these two challenges, the city's Integrated and Sustainable Urban Development Strategy 2014-2022 lays out how Ibi will transform its city centre into a creative hub that will attract young people, CCI entrepreneurs, and tourists.

It is in this context that Ibi has been working to overcome the challenge of moving from strategy to action plan. Through the city's participation in Creative Spirits, the municipality was guided through the process of reaching the 3 feet perspective by producing an implementation plan. This process, coupled with visits to other cities in

the network and meetings with the Lead Expert Hen Gerritse, inspired the city to change its approach to the challenge. Previously, Ibi had been sceptical of 'planification' — too much time spent planning and not enough time spent doing — but other cities in the network demonstrated how the planning could help with the doing. The catalyst for this was when Deputy Mayor Maria José Herrero visited Kaunas for a Creative Spirits meeting in December 2017 and she saw with her own eyes how the city was doing things.

So, how did Ibi respond? How did it solve the challenge? A key part of the city's aforementioned urban development strategy is the restoration and rehabilitation of old industrial buildings in the city centre. One of these buildings is an old paper mill, the Molí de Paper. Despite the fact that the restoration of the mill had been part of the city's strategy for some time, nothing

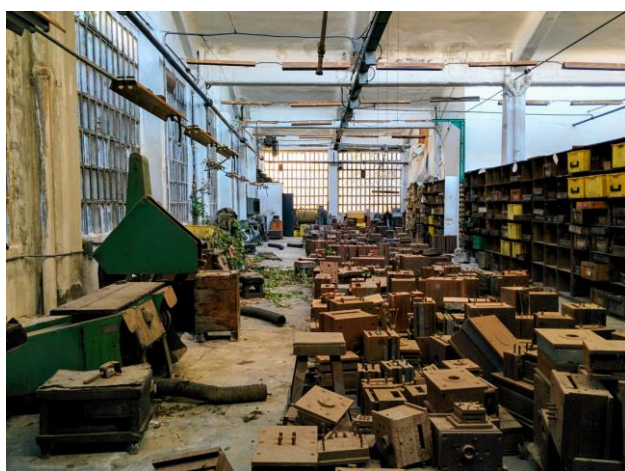


Architectural plans for the renovated Molí de Paper

had happened. A change of approach was needed. However, the municipality's staff were already stretched to capacity. Therefore, in early 2018, the city commissioned a private company to produce a 'director plan' for the building. Delivered in August 2018, this 300-page document included an analysis of the building's geographical and historical context, a report on its state of repair, an archaeological study, a legal study, and environmental study. With these components as a basis, it proposed a plan for repurposing the building as a local heritage centre. Finally, it drew all this together with an action plan for the work that needed to take place.

The result? The council approved the project and the municipality used the director plan as a basis for a

funding application to the ERDF 2014-2020 Comunidad Valenciana Operational Programme. This application was successful and the project received a grant of almost 500,000 euros, making up for nearly half of its 1 million euro budget. The contract for the physical works was awarded at the beginning of this year and the whole process is expected to be completed by November 2019. By this point, the city will be able to say that, in fewer than two years, it has gone from strategy, to action plan, to implementation and, in the process, its approach to implementation has evolved significantly. Such is the success of this improved workflow, Ibi has already committed to following the same process as it looks to refurbish its next target building, an historic toy factory.



The next building that will receive the director plan treatment, the old Payà toy factory