

MIHAIL VEKLENKO

Urban & Transport Planner · Founder & CEO, Urban Factory

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Languages: Russian (native), English (C1), Croatian (C1)

PROFILE

Urban planner whose work with cities and territories spans more than 25 years: from land, permits and development projects (1999–2013) to urban strategy, transport planning and public space as founder of Urban Factory (since 2013; Rostov-on-Don, then Zagreb from 2020). Urban Factory's work includes a tram network concept that informed the tender documents of a 119 km city tram programme, cycling research that became the basis of a municipal design tender, and a town development strategy prepared with residents and adopted by the town council. Since 2023 leads a housing and settlement programme for displaced families in Armenia. Coordinates municipalities, business, universities and residents. Experience in Croatia, Armenia, Russia and Brazil.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Project coordination:** synchronising departments, consultants and stakeholders around one delivery schedule; workload and dependency planning.
- **Transport planning:** tram and light rail network concepts, cycling infrastructure, rail integration at city and agglomeration scale.
- **Territorial strategy:** socio-economic development strategies, participatory design, public space.
- **Partnership building:** coalitions of government, business, experts and residents; international partnerships between organisations and cities.
- **Events and engagement:** forums, festivals, round tables and international sessions from concept to delivery.

EXPERIENCE

Urban Factory, Zagreb (Rostov-on-Don until 2020) — Founder & CEO 2013 – present
Urban development agency and platform for city projects: strategy, mobility, public space and civic engagement.

- **Zverevo socio-economic development strategy to 2030:** assembled and led the team that prepared the town's new strategy with the active participation of residents through a citizens' "Team of Change"; all five contract stages delivered; adopted by the town council in December 2018.
- **Kolesnikov Boulevard, Zverevo:** participatory design of a 3.1 ha central public space with residents and local businesses, submitted to the federal Small Towns competition (2019).
- **Rostov tram:** tram network concept (new lines, track reconstruction) and a 2014 Tatra T3 fleet renewal proposal; led the 2015 campaign that kept the Stanislavskogo line; the concept informed the tender documents of the 2023 tram concession (RUB 61 bn: 119 km of track, 76 new trams) — less than one first metro line (RUB 75–100 bn).
- **I Bike RnD:** research, stakeholder round tables and a cycling development concept for Rostov-on-Don; used by the transport department for the design tender; the lanes were later built.
- **Great Rostov:** rail concept for the Rostov agglomeration (tram, suburban rail, high-speed rail station); member of the working group for the Rostov-on-Don 2035 and Rostov Region 2030 strategies, author of transport sections (2018).
- **Temernik River Park:** co-founder of ANO "Temernik Park"; strategy and economics of the riverfront, international partnerships, launch of the "First Mile" linear park section (opened 2023).
- **Events:** Urban Festival Rostov 2013–2014 (2,000 visitors, 100+ volunteers; first platform bringing the city's urban initiatives together; a vacant plot turned into a public square); UN-Habitat Urban Thinkers Campus session, Recife 2017; "Small Rivers in Big Cities" forum 2018; curator of Rostov 300 (2020: 8 public discussions, 12 video interviews).
- **International partnerships:** partnership with INCITI / Federal University of Pernambuco (Brazil) and a memorandum between Temernik Park and INCITI; prepared the Rostov-on-Don – Recife twin-city proposal.

TUN Foundation, Yerevan — Founder; urban planner of the housing programme Oct 2024 – present
Initiative since Oct 2023. Land and homes for families displaced from Artsakh: programme model, land and family selection, site due diligence, partnerships. Master plan of a 7.3 ha settlement near Yerevan: 37 homes, kindergarten, community centre, cooperative greenhouses; first phase for 10 families.

Institut IGH d.d., Zagreb — Project Managers Coordinator

Jun 2022 – Sep 2022

Coordinated project managers on road and railway projects. Main project: design of the Škriljevo – Rijeka – Jurdani railway reconstruction and second track (27 km, EUR 300 m; client HŽ Infrastruktura) — five design departments and 10+ specialists synchronised to keep the final design phase on schedule.

South Urban Planning Centre, Rostov-on-Don — Transport Researcher, CRISALIDE project

Nov 2018 – Feb 2019

EU–Russia ERA.NET RUS Plus research grant on a decision-support system for urban management: ontology of the urban transport subsystem; co-organised the international conference “Digitalisation of Urban Planning and Management” (100+ participants).

Innopolis, Republic of Tatarstan — Urban Development Consultant (on site)

Jul 2015 – Aug 2015

Consulted the town administration of a new innovation city on development strategy and residents' mobility.

Moscow Urban Forum — Session Producer

Oct 2013 – Dec 2013; 2017

Produced five forum sessions with international and corporate partners, including a governors' breakfast and a business lunch with the city government. In 2017 co-organised the session “Aqua est vita: the role of the river in the modern megalopolis” and brought its international speakers.

Real estate and development, Rostov-on-Don

1999 – 2013

MOKFORT (Deputy General Director, co-founder) · Regional Union of Realtors (RSR) · SOYUZ-M. Fourteen years on the ground in land and development: search and assembly of sites, land transactions, resettlement, contracts, building permits, design with partners and sales of residential and commercial property. This practical knowledge of how land becomes buildings became the basis for the later work in urban planning.

EDUCATION

- **University of Zagreb, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences** — postgraduate specialist study in Urban Transport (in progress), since 2024. Thesis in preparation: integrating Zagreb's tram and heavy-rail infrastructure into a unified urban rail public transport network.
- **The University of Manchester** (programme delivered with the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences) — Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Studies, 2013 – 2015 (awarded Oct 2015).
- **Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don** — Specialist degree in International Economic Relations, 2002 – 2007.

TEACHING, RESEARCH AND MEDIA

- **Tutor, Don State Technical University, Faculty of Media Communications and Multimedia Technologies** | 2014 – 2015. Year-long project management tutoring; student projects and an online Urban Factory magazine.
- **Researcher, MSSSES “Regional Capitals” study** | 2020. Research on Rostov-on-Don.
- **Media:** speaker at TEDxBolshayaSadovayaStreet, Rostov-on-Don (2018); interviews with Enrique Peñalosa (Moscow, 2013) and Jaime Lerner (Curitiba, 2016); interviews and expert comments in regional and national media; article “What city twinning can do” (Minsk Urban Platform, 2018). Full list: www.urbanfactory.agency.

VOLUNTEERING

- **World Culture Festival, New Delhi** — coordinator for Russian-speaking countries (12 countries, 1,500 participants) | Nov 2015 – Apr 2016
- **Rio 2016 Olympic Games** — volunteer coordination at the Russia Fan House | Aug 2016
- **FIFA World Cup 2018, Rostov-on-Don** — fan services | Jun – Jul 2018
- **The Art of Living Foundation** — certified volunteer instructor, since 2011

OTHER

Driving licence (category B) · Boat skipper licence, category C (Croatia)