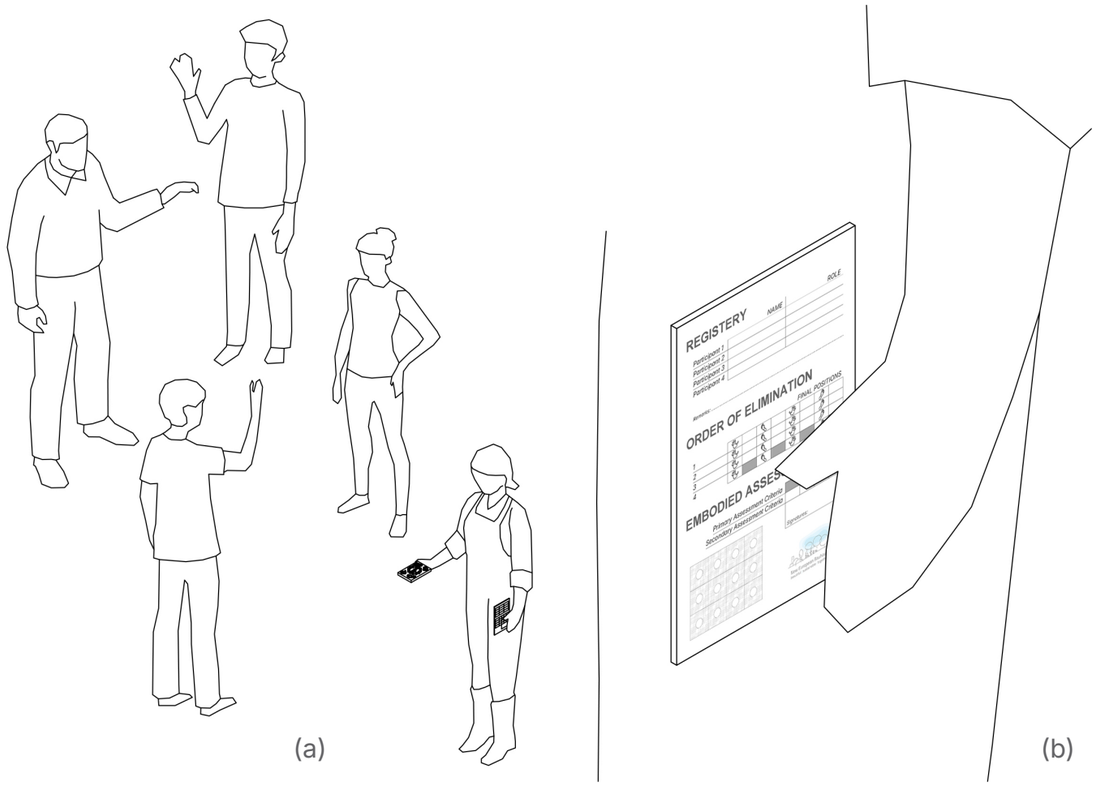


A New European Assessment Tool



Visualizations of participants gathering for the embodied assessment (a), the assessment record form (b) and the assessment criterion terrain set up in the standard configuration (c).

An Innovative Participatory Tool

In search of quality in the built environment, the primary stakeholders come together to assess a particular project. This evaluation is carried out by a minimum of two and a maximum of four individuals. The primary participants involved in this process are the (senior) architect and the project developer. If the project is of a public importance, there is room for an institutional as well as a community representative.

Before the assessment is initiated, each participant briefly introduces themselves and explains their role within the project under assessment. This information must be recorded on *the assessment record form*, and filed, as each participant represents not only themselves but also the interests and constraints of the party they belong to.

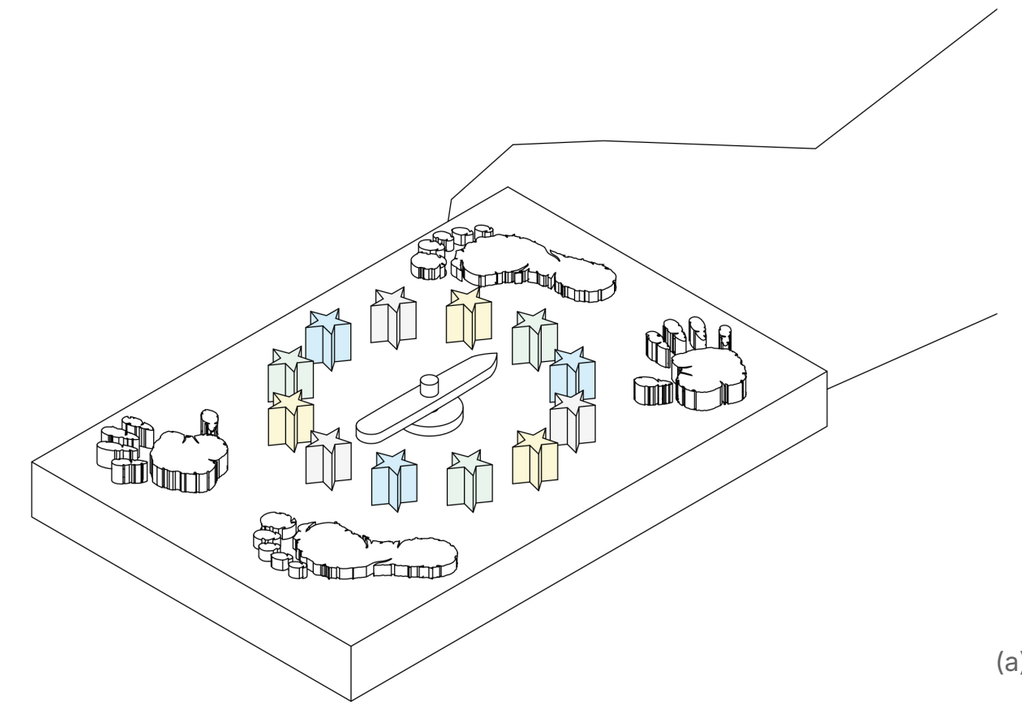
Contrary to traditional assessment processes, often ending up as isolated desk-exercises, the participants gather around what is called *the Assessment Criterion Terrain* (ACT). To set up this participatory assessment environment, the participants work together to arrange *the twelve Assessment Criterion Tiles* on a flat and unobstructed surface. All participants then choose a starting position at one of the edges.

The default configuration of this environment consists of four columns, each containing three circles of the same color. Every color represents a specific criterion and its subcategories. Detailed descriptions of the individual criteria are documented as *a 90-question checklist,* included with the toolkit.

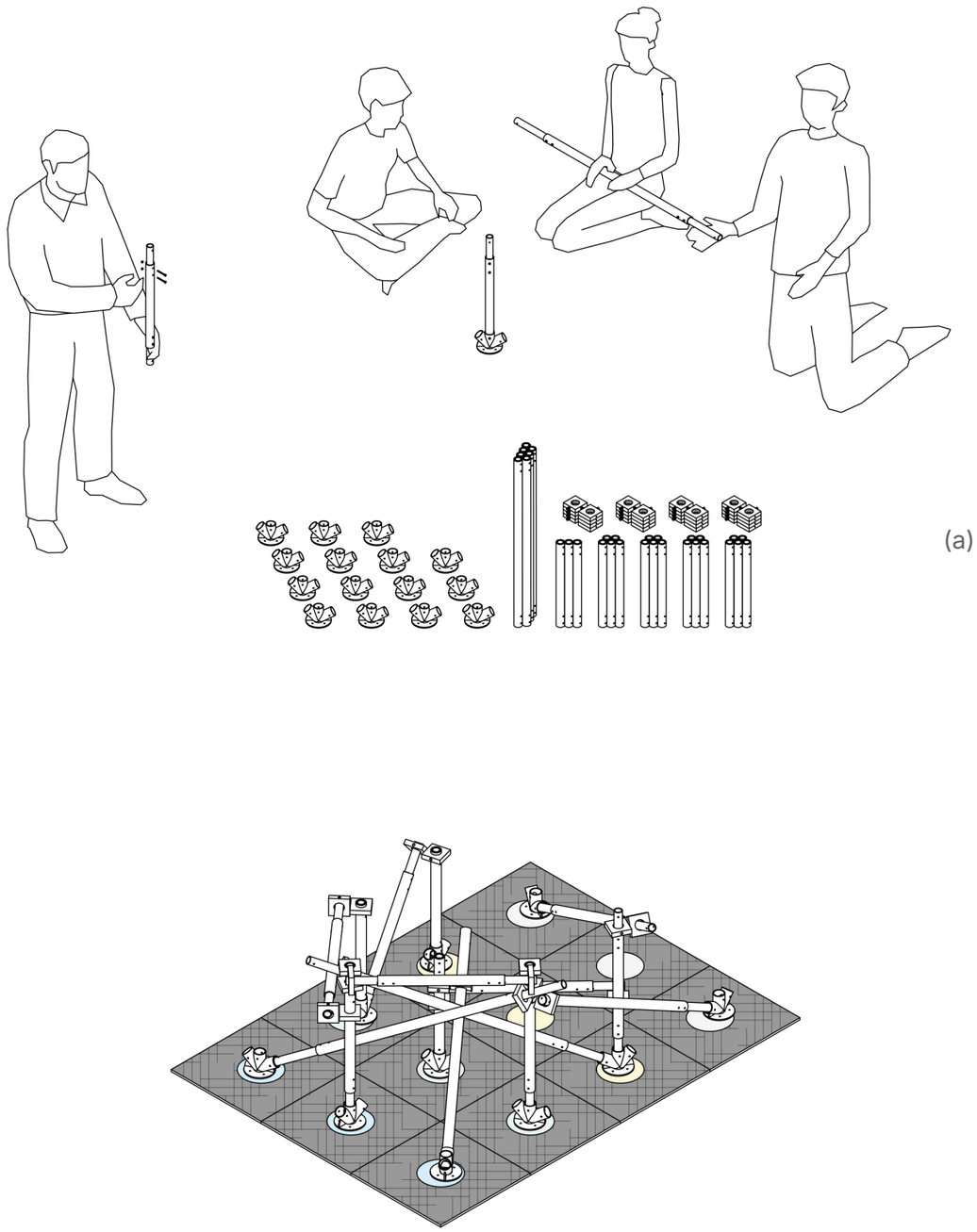
The assessment spinner is used to determine which dimension (column) and which body part (hand or foot) should come into contact with an Assessment Criterion Tile. Everyone moves simultaneously in accordance with the spun outcome. Since placing more than one limb on an assessment criterion tile is not allowed, coordinating moves with others can be beneficial.

Being well-informed in advance about the content of the criteria and the subcategories works to a person's advantage. As each participant is free to determine which subsection they believe is most relevant within a given dimension. This knowledge also proves useful when all assessment criterion tiles are occupied during a position change. In this case a participant can invoke the first article of *the occupancy rule* and is free to choose any assessment criterion tile from one of the adjacent core value columns. In the event that a position change must be performed and one is already positioned on an assessment criterion tile that meets the positional requirements, it is permitted to remain stationary. In this case the second article of the occupancy rule is invoked. Yet another strategy to hinder physical performance, essentially obstructing the assessment of a criterion. As a result, participants actively consider the trade-off between assessment criteria and a feasible body posture. The shorter the time it takes to decide, the smaller the chance that the body will collapse in a certain position (which can be serve as a strategy). In case of doubt, it is permitted to consult the checklist. However, this must be done entirely independently while maintaining the current position (except for one hand used to perform the consultation).

A participant is excluded from the assessment process from the moment that: any part of the body (with exception of the hands and feet) touches the assessment criterion terrain, if they are unable to reach a specified dimension without losing balance or if they voluntarily withdraw from the assessment process. The final positions, the assessment criterion tiles occupied by a participant's body parts before the moment of failure, are documented for each person on the evaluation form. The embodied assessment ends when there is only one participant left, the last person to maintain their position.



Visualizations of the assessment spinner (a) and the participants in action during the embodied assessment (b).



(a)

(b)

Visualizations of participants handling the body abstraction elements (left to right: BPCs, EBSs and SBNs) (a) and the assessment criterion terrain with a body abstraction configuration as trace of the embodied assessment (b).

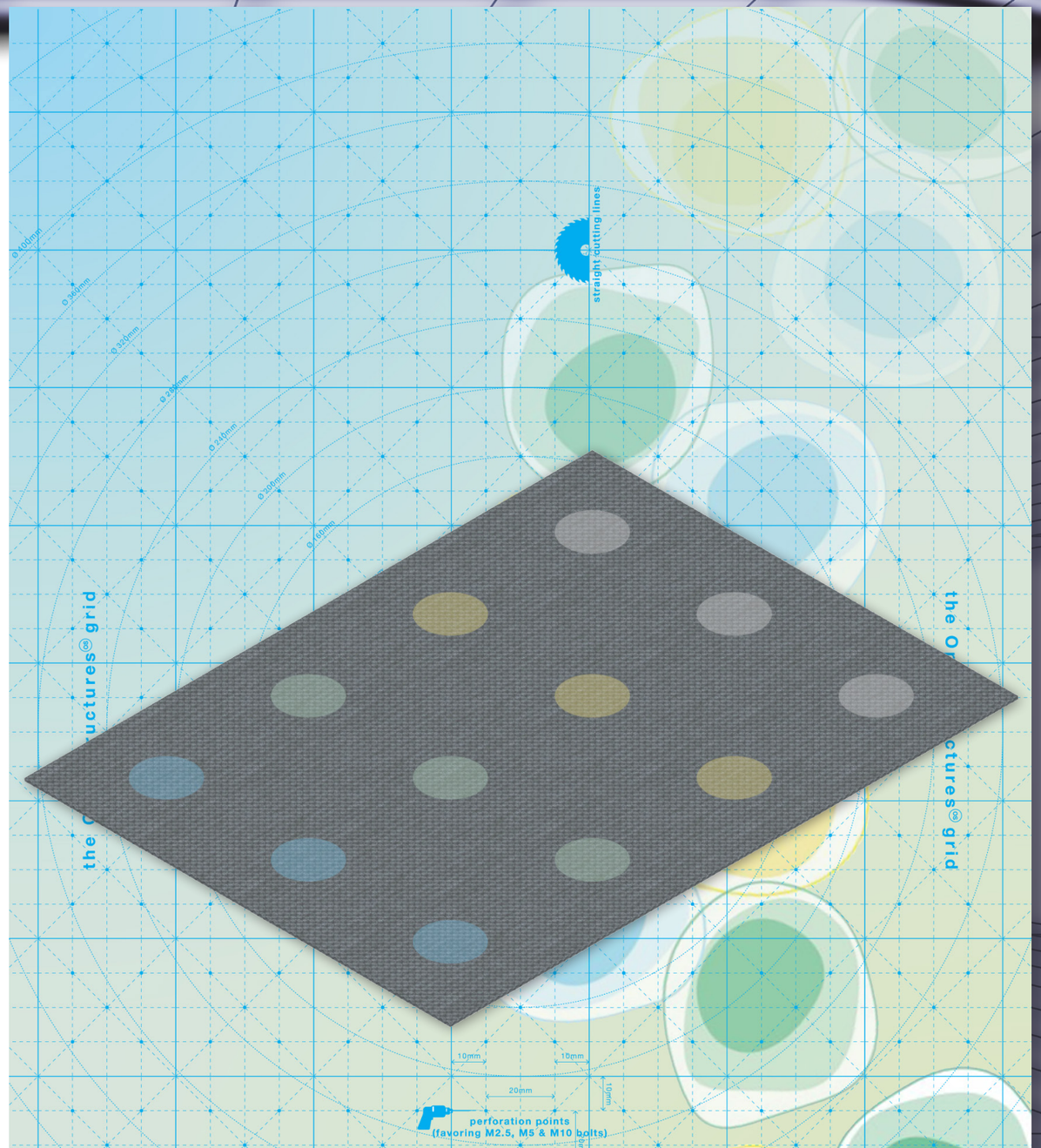
The outcome of this process is *the NEB assessment profile* for the project. This profile consists of a unique combination of questions, from the checklist, which must be formally evaluated. The assessment profile is classified according to *Primary and Secondary Assessment Criteria*.

The final positions of the last person standing form the primary profile, with a score weighting that accounts for two-thirds of the total. The remaining participants consult together to determine the secondary profile, which accounts for one-third of the total score. The time for this consultation is limited and continues until the last person standing is able to reconstruct their final position using *the body abstraction elements*. In addition to determining the four subcriteria of the secondary profile, the remaining participants must also start reconstructing their final stances.

The NEB Interactive Instrument includes four sets of body abstraction components. One set per participant consisting of seven *Extendable Body Segments* (five short ones and two long ones), four *Body Position Connectors* (one for each limb) and eight *Spatial Body Nodes* (including threaded rods). The initial stage involves placing BPCs on each assessment criterion tile that is included in a participant's final position. Once this task is completed, the EBSs and SBNs can be used to connect a rough approximation of the body parts corresponding to the participant's posture in the final position. It is important to note that in addition to ongoing negotiations, a degree of participation is also required in this part of the process. If two or more players end on the same assessment criterion tile as a final position, hybrid abstractions may be created. Under this scenario it is permitted to integrate *the body abstraction* into the assessment criterion terrain by using any of the other BPC entries. The number of EBSs per BPC represents the amount of participants attaching importance to the same subcriteria.

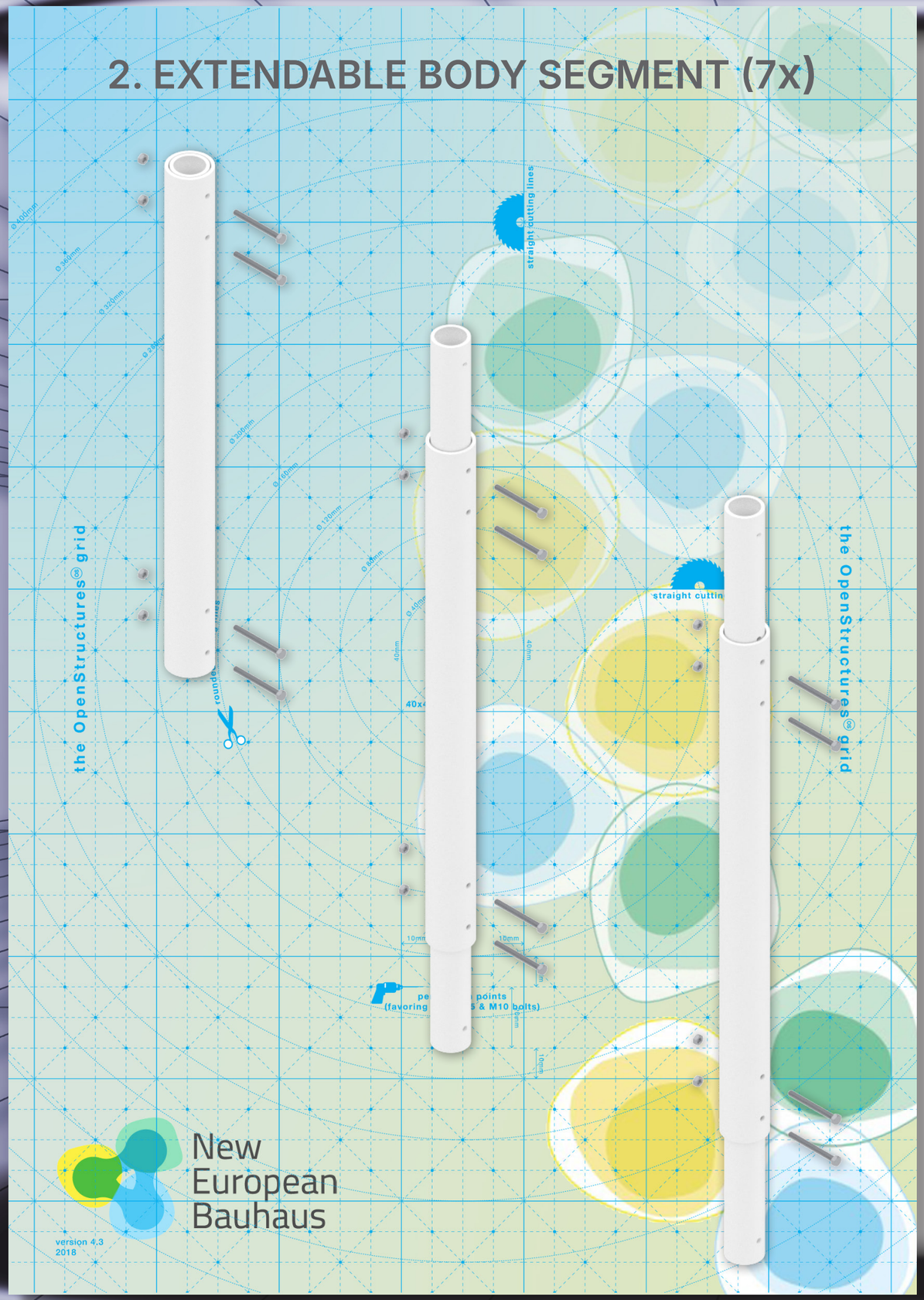
The unaltered assessment criterion terrain is required to be incorporated at a later stage in the project. The decisions made throughout the participatory process are thus traces in the environment of the project under assessment.

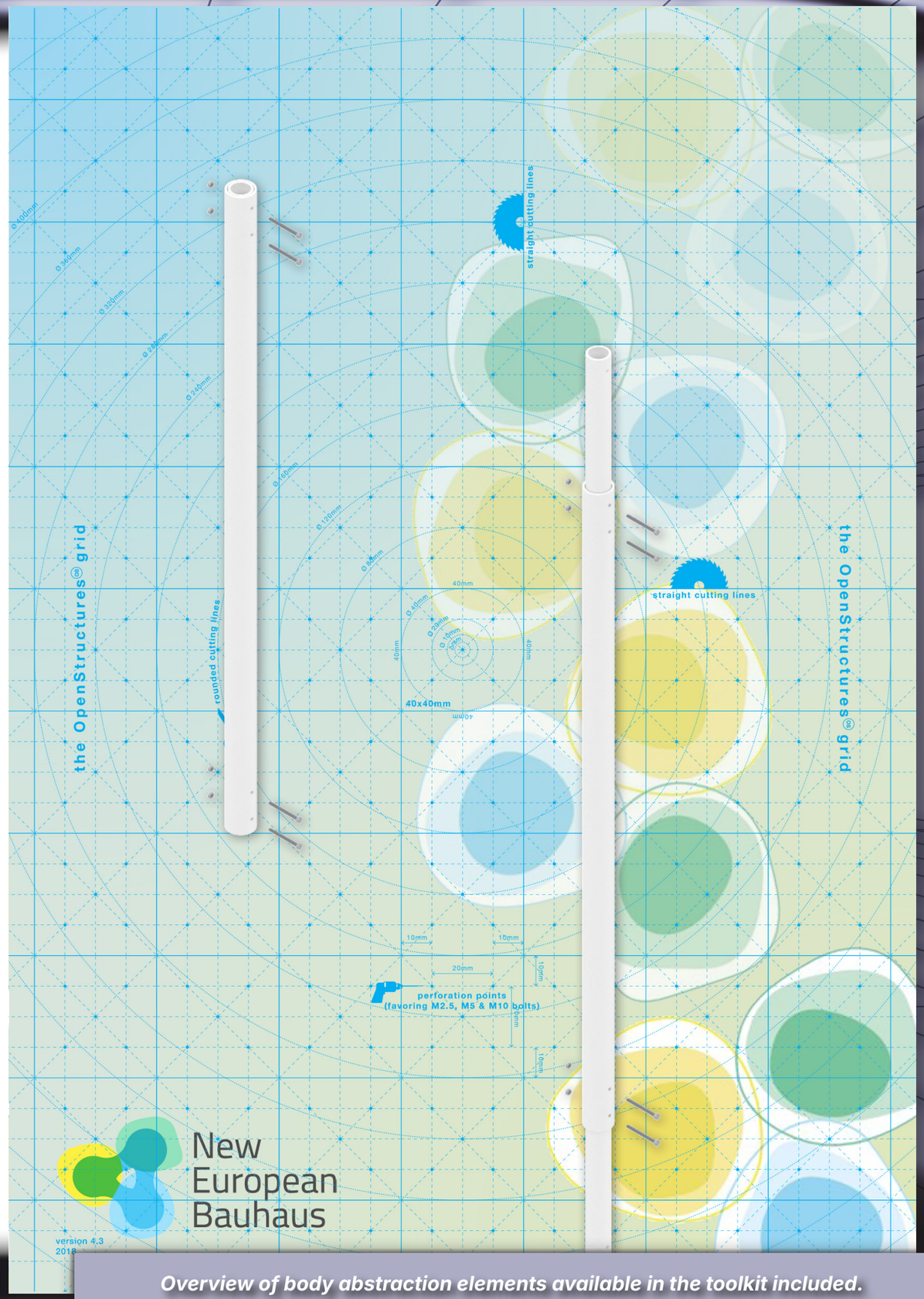




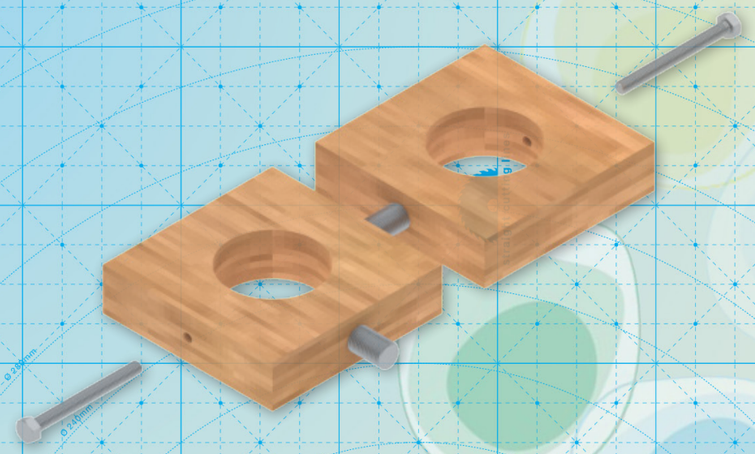
Overview of body abstraction elements available in the toolkit included. Integrating the NEB framework into the Openstructures design methodology.

2. EXTENDABLE BODY SEGMENT (7x)





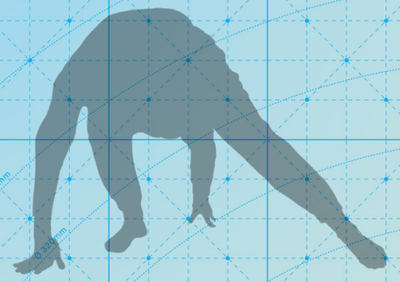
Overview of body abstraction elements available in the toolkit included. Integrating the NEB framework into the Openstructures design methodology.

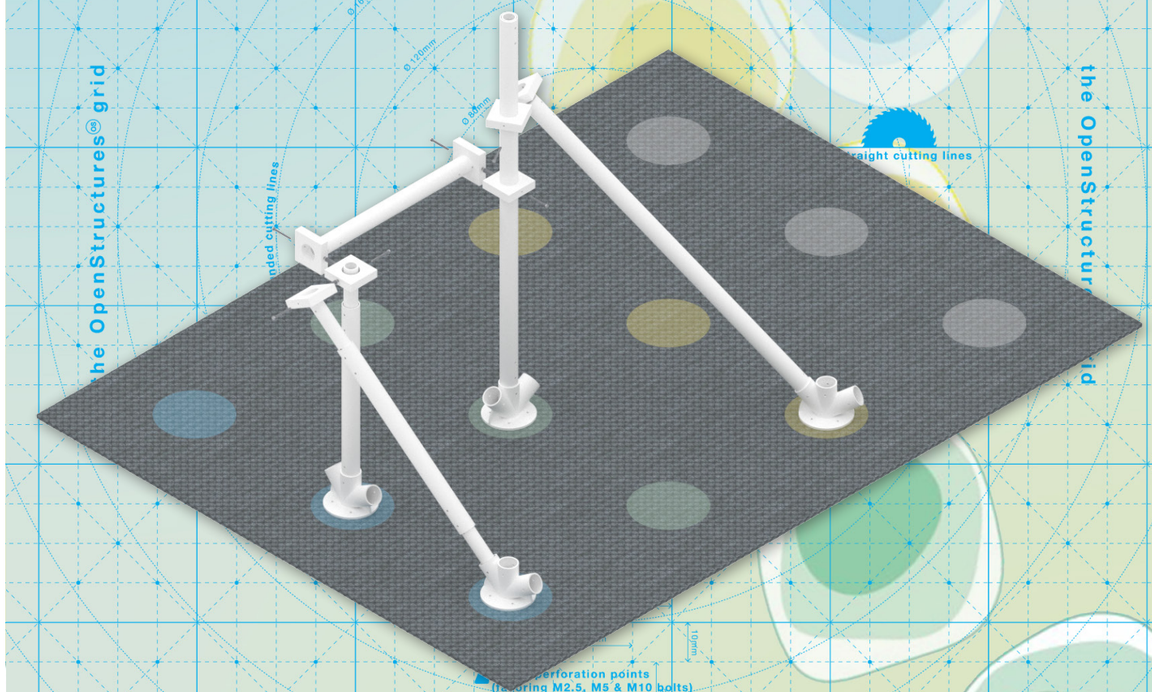


3. SPATIAL BODY NODE (8x)



4. BODY POSITION CONNECTOR (4x)





Overview of body abstraction elements available in the toolkit included. Integrating the NEB framework into the Openstructures design methodology.

