

RECLAIMING THE RIVER

BUCHAREST ● SECTOR 3

design competition

Revitalizing Splaiul Unirii - Mărășești - Timpuri Noi – Mihai Bravu



PRIMĂRIA
SECTORULUI
BUCUREȘTI **3**



ORDINUL
ARHITECȚILOR
DIN ROMÂNIA
BUCUREȘTI

DESIGN COMPETITION

Rehabilitation and revitalization of Splaiul Unirii in Mărășești – Timpuri Noi – Mihai Bravu area



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1. GENERAL DATA

1.1. Contracting Authority and Organizer of the competition

The Contracting Authority of the competition is City Hall of Sector 3 of Bucharest, the owner and administrator of the public spaces that make the object of the investment. The Sector 3 City Hall is the contracting authority (CA) that will become the beneficiary of the contract resulting from this competition.

This competition is part of the broader, ongoing and future concerns of Sector 3 City Hall to improve the quality of the urban space and the lives of the inhabitants.

In this regard, at the request of the Sector 3 City Hall OAR_B (*Order of Architects in Romania – Regional Bucharest Office*), together with the University of Architecture and Urbanism "Ion Mincu" and with the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, organized in 2018 a workshop for the analysis of public spaces throughout the Sector 3. You can find its conclusions, also indicating the areas whose complex problem is good to be addressed through solution architecture competitions [here](#).

The organizer of the competition is the Regional Bucharest Office of the Order of Architects in Romania, (OAR_B), in partnership with the Order of Architects in Romania, a professional organization whose mission is to increase the quality of the architectural-urbanistic product and to appreciate this service towards the society as an act of culture of public interest. In this sense, OAR_B promotes professional policies and practices that value the built heritage and favour the production of a valuable architecture, which are fundamental areas for the quality of life in Bucharest.

1.2. Objectives and opportunities

The pragmatic topics that motivate the launch of an architectural contest along Splaiul Unirii of Dâmbovița, centred on the Timpuri Noi area, fall within the broader theme of the city's transformations that occurred during the 1980s, which resulted in situations that Bucharest has failed to integrate or recover them for a period of 30 years; for many such rupture spaces, the only evolution is the presence of the spontaneous vegetation that has captured them.

If the life of Bucharest was for centuries influenced by the seasonal changes of Dâmbovița, determining a natural and organic relationship, of the city with its river, the current situation, on the contrary, denies Dâmbovița's value as a natural generating and regenerating element, adapting the shape of the river to the modularity of the precast reinforced concrete panels and by solving the inhomogeneity of the form through dams.

Splaiul Unirii in the area between the Passage of Mărășești and the Mihai Bravu Bridge, on the bank of Sector 3, is currently one of the central areas of Bucharest with the most obvious and powerful transformation: new constructions, fulfilling both residential or commercial functions, bring an influx of population into the area that has the capacity to transform the Timpuri Noi neighbourhood into a new urban centre.

In this context, the banks of the Dâmbovița river, which have remained unchanged and

ignored for 30 years, present the potential of creative arrangements capable of reformulating the presence of the river as an environmental space of the city. This potential is not used almost at all throughout the Bucharest course of Dâmbovița, on the contrary, the roadways along it constitute barriers between the watercourse and the city.

The main objective of the competition is to select the best concept of arranging Splaiul Unirii, in the area between the Marasesti bridge and the Mihai Bravu bridge, so as to create a vibrant public space, addressed to the increasing number of users and an attractive context for a quality urban development of the area.

Following this competition, the Sector 3 City Hall will contract the design services of the authors for the purpose of a quality intervention.

1.3. Architectural stake

Bucharest is a city in which the "great interventions" are close to the character and subtle scale of the traditional tissue, organically developed in its great part.

The practice of the last half-century of imposing large-scale interventions on the city - either for doctrinal and autocratic purposes, or for the idea of solving functional needs dictated especially by car traffic and real estate pressure - has led to public perception that only large-scale projects are able to repair the unpleasant aspects or the non-functional situations of Bucharest. Thus, we skip the observation that precisely these major interventions created fractures in the context of the city, isolating and punctually solving the problematic situations, but without seeking an organic weaving of the urban structure. Thus, many abnormal ruptures were created in the city tissue and its use, upon which no interventions have been carried out.

Dâmbovița's embankments are in such a situation; they remained unchanged after the interventions of the 1980s, but also unused for more than 30 years, waiting for a "big project".

The stake of this competition is, on the contrary, to address a major problematic of the city through small interventions, but which manage to restore the organicity of the links in the immediate urban context.

These types of isolated and small interventions, successfully practiced throughout the world, to rethink the city starting from the scale of the neighbourhood, the local situation, the revitalization of the urban fabric through the public space articulated to the immediate context.

In this respect, the invitation to include in the conceptual formulation of the solution and the spaces adjacent to the subject itself (such as those behind the blocks) aims to emphasize the Contracting Authority's desire to improve the quality of urban life by creating links between public space pockets.

The course of Dâmbovița is in the immediate vicinity of the competition site, with the Văcărești Natural Park, a space that, in the 30 years without major anthropic intervention, has become a remarkable example of biodiversity.

As such, competitors are encouraged to reflect on the natural-anthropic relationship that the current form of the river generates, through solutions that balance both elements of history, including recent history, as well as innovative technical solutions from the ecological management perspective of water or introducing the

1.4. Purpose of the competition

The competition brings together the context of Dâmbovița as a natural forming element of Bucharest city, the specific site of the close intervention (*Detail area*) and the general site of the debates and further development (*Study area*). Competitors are invited to think of the solution in such a way that the intervention on the area of detail is argued by the general site development ideas. However, the selected project will, at the same time, have to function autonomously until further development of the study area.

In this sense, the competition has an immediate purpose, which is the intervention on the area of detail and a future purpose, which concerns the principles of further development of the area.

2. DÂMBOVIȚA AND THE SITE

From a legal point of view, Dâmbovița, its banks and the adjacent traffic are completely part of the public domain, but their administration is divided into strips belonging to Apele Romane (concrete basin), Bucharest City Hall (1m wide green space and alveoli) and the sector city halls. This administrative segmentation partly motivates the absence of interventions on the river course in the last decades.

The competition is based on the collaboration between the Sector 3 City Hall, the Bucharest City Hall and Apele Romane; In addition, through the wider area of study offered to competitors, it is desired to initiate discussions on the necessary and possible interventions at the city level beyond the administrative boundaries. The ideas thus generated will be able to become suggestions for future solution architecture contests in the area.

The relationship between Bucharest and the Dâmbovița river has been varied and hesitant throughout history. Until the second half of the nineteenth century, when large urban works led to the rehabilitation of the major riverbed and the straightening of the river, its flow variations made the proximity of the city to the river to be cautious. However, if the housing and public functions of the city were developing at a distance, Dâmbovița and its banks were used as recreational spaces upstream of the centre (Piata Unirii), mentioning a series of private property gardens, but open to the public and even a swimming school, while, downstream, the river and its tributaries created the context of developing industries that required the use of water and implicitly its pollution (weaving mills, tanning yards, slaughterhouse).

The rectification of the course of Dâmbovița dates back to the second half of the 19th century, when its major riverbed was drained, and the river was offered a route that was much more focused on the seasonal variations of its minor riverbed. At the same time, most of the ponds and marshes that had been part of the Bucharest landscape were cleared, and the local springs and tributaries of the river were either channelled or used for environmental purposes to form ponds in parks, their flow being channelled further away. The image created with these works was far from the natural form of Dâmbovița, but it

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freed large areas of the city from the unpredictable changes of flow of the river, areas that thus became Cotroceni, Bucur neighbourhoods. The riverbed had a continuous course, with a relatively constant profile throughout its urban length, and the deep and green banks took over the seasonal differences of the flow.

The current configuration of Dâmbovița in Bucharest is due to the large-scale interventions on the city since the 1980s. The 1980s project aimed less at modifying the river's path through the city, except for the Unirii Square area, where the river is hidden by underground pipes and the area immediately downstream, where a larger width of the water mirror is provided; it aimed especially at the systematization of the banks and the riverbed by transforming them from green slopes into a basin of precast concrete elements. Underneath this basin is the separate waste water box.

The technical solution of the precast elements (a finite number of repeated distinct elements), superimposed on the uneven profile of the river, led to the necessity of dividing the water course into segments, linked by level breaks resolved by dams. Thus, a solution related to the political doctrine of those years, promoting constructions with precast concrete series elements, results in the impossibility of traveling on the water of Dâmbovița, any travel being limited by the distance between two successive dams (technical spaces), which strengthens the "artificial" image of the river.

Paradoxically, the 1980s project provided for pontons for boats in various parts of the city, which were not used even shortly after the inauguration.

From 1990 to present there have been few attempts to capitalize on the recreational potential of the river, focusing on the wider area of the water mirror between the Unirii Square and the National Library. Thus, the city does not benefit from the opportunities that a watercourse would bring to a modern metropolis.

2.1. Inclusion in the locality

The Dâmbovița River in its current, rectified form, crosses Bucharest on the North-West - South-East direction. In the central area of the Unirii Square, its course is covered, thus separating its presence in the city into two marked entities and by the different names of the embankments: Splaiul Independenței, west of Unirii Square and Splaiul Unirii, east of the city centre.

The segment that makes the object of this competition, the Splaiul Unirii between the Mărășești bridge and the Mihai Bravu bridge, represents a line about 2 km long, with few inflections, which are delimited, both upstream and downstream, by the major inflections of the trajectory of the river.

The segment is delimited by two major circulations, Mărășești Boulevard and Mihai Bravu Road, and is intersected by a third one, Șincai Boulevard and Nerva Traian Street. The area of this intersection concentrates both the heaviest car traffic and pedestrian traffic, being a node of public transport lines (bus, tram, subway). At the same time, adjacent to the Timpuri Noi Bridge, on both sides of the river, both in the administration of the Sector 3 and in the administration of Sector 4, there are the only larger urban public spaces adjacent to the competition site.

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Splaiul Unirii is also an important road for traffic, with increased traffic at peak hours especially in the area between the Timpuri Noi Bridge and the Mihai Bravu Bridge.



In the immediate vicinity of the site, beyond the Mihai Bravu bridge are the 190 hectares of the Văcărești Natural Park, a space broken from the city through the interventions of the 1980s, but which, in the past, has transformed into a valuable example of urban biodiversity.

From the point of view of urban planning, the *area of detail* is in sub-area V4 - Green spaces for the protection of watercourses.

2.2. Configuration of Dâmbovița riverbed

As a result of the interventions in the 1980s, the systematization of Dâmbovița was achieved through a uniform project for its entire urban crossing. The water, originating both from the upper course of the Dâmbovița river and from the courses of the Argeș and Ialomița rivers, flows through the concrete channel of the riverbed made of precast

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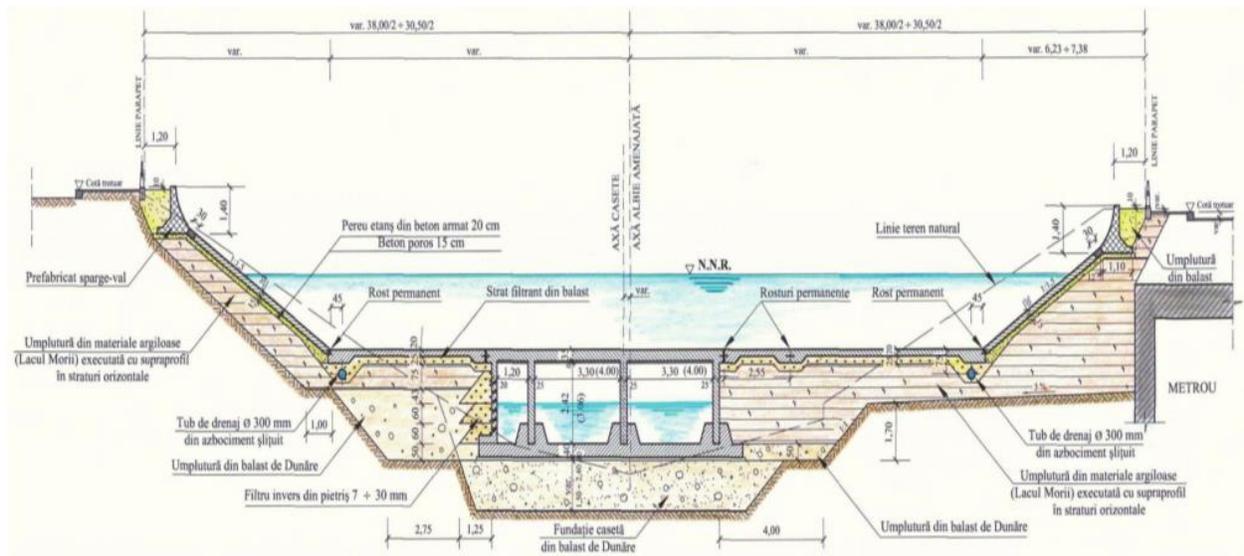
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elements, and underneath is the urban waste water box.

The exception from the uniformity of this image is made by the central area where, once it emerges from under the urban slab under which it is channelled (Unirii Square) and becomes visible again, the river offers the only water mirror of a larger size.

The site of the competition is located in the immediate area downstream of the central area, the profile of Dâmbovița becoming again the generic one, consisting of a basin made of precast elements of reinforced concrete. The characteristic section is described by the attached image.



According to „Râul Dâmbovița în București – Sistemul de apărare împotriva inundațiilor” (Dâmbovița River in Bucharest – Defence system against floods) - Dan Stematu, Dan Teodorescu

Small variations in the length of the competition site appear with respect to the characteristic section of the river. One is the one from the Timpuri Noi bridge area, on the bank adjacent to Sector 4, where the initial project provided for a pleasure boat dock. Also, near the Timpuri Noi bridge, the shore adjacent to Sector 4 comprises a second widening, due to the presence of the subway infrastructure, located adjacent to the river.

The last systematization of the river course regulated its flow by dams. In the study area of the competition there are two such dams: the first in the segment between the Mărășești bridge and the Timpuri Noi bridge, the second between the Timpuri Noi bridge and the Mihai Bravu bridge.

The pedestrian walkways are built above the dams. Together with the car bridges, these bridges are the only 5 crossings over the 2 km distance considered.

The regulation of the water course by dams limits the possibilities of crossing the river course with boats to the segments between them.

2.3. Vegetation

Along Splaiul Dâmboviței we encounter several types of green spaces. On the one hand, there is an alignment plantation made up mostly of ash, plane and linden trees, whose age is relatively small (20-30 years) and whose weight differs from one section to another, and even from one bank to another. Along the sidewalks accompanying the banks there is a permeable green strip with an average width of approximately 1m which is mostly grassy. Sometimes we find groups of shrubs or lianas.

The sidewalks opposite the banks comprise linear alignments of generally young trees, but these are often discontinuous.

However, there are also specimens prior to this systematization that have been preserved, and the linearity of the alignment is often interrupted by the presence of these more mature specimens. In addition, the Sector 3 City Hall has completed alignments by planting some plane trees that have not yet reached maturity.

Further details of the vegetation are found in Annex 4.1, Landscape study

3. COMPETITION BRIEF

The competitors are invited to propose landscaping solutions on a length of about 2 km of the shore administered by the Sector 3 City Hall of Splaiul Unirii. The segment considered, centred on the intersection of Timpuri Noi and delimited by the Mărășești Bridge and the Mihai Bravu Bridge represents the *area of detail* of this competition.

The design competition aims to select the best solution for the rehabilitation and revitalizing of the *area of detail*, for the award of the design contract whose beneficiary is the Contracting Authority of the competition.

Since the limited area of the *area of detail* requires an integrated approach to its settlement with the urban neighbourhoods, the intervention projects must be based on a study resulting in a vision of developing the entire urban area (study area) adjacent to the considered river segment.

The broader visions regarding the study area on which the solution for the *area of detail* will be based will be the subject of debates in the Sector 3 City Hall in collaboration with the other Bucharest administrations in order to develop an intervention strategy for the future.

The configurations of the study area and the *area of detail* are found in Annex ...

The site of the competition (*area of detail*) is on the administrative boundary between Sector 3 and 4, but various strips along Dâmbovița are administratively classified in several categories, belonging to both the two sector city halls, as well as to the Bucharest City Hall, Apele Romane and Metrorex SA.

The proposed projects should seek to capitalize on the potential that the presence of Dâmbovița brings to the city by: conceptual remodelling of the sidewalks and green spaces adjacent to the river, having the possibility to widen the pedestrian space by making

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consoles over the river basin, highlighting the landscape and ecological value of the river in parallel with proposing new ways to use the river banks, strengthening this axis of the city and the urban and natural spaces it crosses, identifying an appropriate aesthetic of the shoreline arrangements, achieving a better cohesion of this area of the city with Dâmbovița and its two shores over Dâmbovița.

3.1. STUDY AREA**3.1.1. Description of the four sections of the study area**

Section 1 is the first part of the south-eastern half of the Dâmbovița pass through Bucharest, between the Unirii Square and the Marasesti bridge.

Immediately after the underground passage of Unirii Square and re-emergence to the surface, the river was given a space larger than the generic profile of the basin and larger than its profile before the communist remodelling. The widening of the river represents the foreground whose end of perspective is the building of the National Library and the Ministry of Culture, but, in the absence of urban arrangements, their proximity to the bank of Dâmbovița is not used.

The river itself exits the underground area at a height of about 1.5 m below the street, and after a distance of about 10 m it drops for another 1.5 m. The upper elevation area is equipped with an artesian installation with water jets, but which is unused for decades, so it is rather an unpleasant presence. Moreover, it is common for the upper elevation area to dry out, thus an either muddy and equally odorous image, or the image of an infrastructure not very carefully detailed.

After the fall, until the first dam (located downstream of the Ministry of Culture building), due to the almost double profile of the water surface compared to the usual one of the river, a water mirror with a slower flow is formed compared to the rest of the course of



Dâmbovița. The only events that have used the water mirror and managed to create a connection between the river and the city took place in this area (a series of events generated under the [Dâmbovița Smart](#), held over several years).

Section 2 – is delimited by the Marasesti Bridge and the Timpuri Noi Bridge. On its eastern shore Dâmbovița enters a predominantly residential neighbourhood (the only difference is the taller building of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, marking the beginning of the section considered), developed during the same period as the last arrangement of its course (1980s). On the west bank, the process of converting or replacing former industrial premises with functions of offices and services is underway.

The area crossed by the river in this section has had, throughout history, an industrial nature. Particularly on the west bank, along the arms of the river prior to its systematization, industries related to water have developed; Tăbăcarilor Street, for example, preserves both the memory of the river's shape and its industrial use.

Interventions from the communist period, however, brought high density housing on the east bank, while the western bank is only part of the current densification, consisting of a mixture of residential and office functions.

The overlap of the current plans of the city with the historical ones, shows that, on this section, the major course of the river was moved west to its natural riverbed, which explains the altitude difference of about 2 m behind the blocks built on the embankment.

On the eastern side, the 1980s practice of housing constructions consisted of building bar-type block corridors along the main arteries, thus hiding the spaces or remnants of traditional fabric behind them and causing fragmentation and rupture. The rupture between the spaces behind the blocks compared to the street spaces is accentuated by the totally different architectural treatment of the façades facing the street to those facing the secondary traffic, and this difference of treatment contributes to the negative perception of the inhabitants on the spaces between/behind the blocks and, especially, their neglect, which sometimes remain just sad residual spaces.

In the best case, it results in spaces with strictly functional use - car parks or technical buildings - while their treatment is also subordinated to the function, and here asphalt prevails. The green spaces are very small and the plantations are limited to a few trees. Towards the Splai, the facades of the blocks have a different treatment, obtained from the volumes of balconies and loggias, which, regardless of their architectural value, create the image of more neat facades for the public). Furthermore, the public space in front of them benefits from green spaces more carefully arranged, but of small size. According to the custom, these green spaces are closed to access by green fences, doubled by fences of metal mesh.



The road traffic, initially designed with three lanes per direction, is currently used as a single lane, the lateral ones being used for the parking of vehicles, towards the blocks the parking is sometimes half on the road and half on the sidewalk.

Road alignments have been completed in recent years with plantations of plane trees.

The sidewalk towards the river that is little used by pedestrians on its east bank benefits from the shade of trees, both those in the street alignment (dating both from the period of arrangement, and recently completed with plane trees), and those in the green strip from the Dâmbovița basin, where the trees are mostly spontaneously grown and belong to the species *Ailanthus altissima* (tree of heaven, varnish tree).

Towards the river, the sidewalk is bordered by a metal fence that is part of the arrangement of the 1980s, followed by a green space in width of about 1 m, with predominantly spontaneous vegetation occurring on the edge of the reinforced concrete structure of the Dâmbovița basin. The position of this green space beyond the fence, as well as the absence of its arrangement and care, turned it into a usual garbage dump.

Dâmbovița basin presents in the first part of the section a symmetrical segment on the two banks, the symmetry continuing with sidewalks and roadways. However, given the much sunnier western bank, as well as the different management, the spontaneous vegetation here is reduced due to the lack of soil moisture during the summers, but *Ailanthus altissima* persists, and the tree alignment is largely gap-toothed.

On the west bank, the roadway, also provided with three lanes per direction, is less covered by parked cars; instead parking is done on the sidewalk of the embankment, which is unused by pedestrians. The front built on this side, discontinuous, is made up of new office buildings (provided with basement parking spaces), alternating with old industrial premises, now also mainly functioning as offices and ensuring the parking space inside their enclosures, which leads to much lower pressure at street level compared to the eastern residential bank.

In the southern third of the section, the course of the river is systematized by a dam, doubled with a pedestrian walkway. Near the Timpuri Noi Bridge, on the west bank (belonging to Sector 4), the 1980s development project provided a pier, also made of

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concrete. The weak functional activation so far in this area (mainly residential in the area of Sector 3 and offices and services functions but with a low density of useful space in Sector 4) make the pier unused for decades and the walkway is little used.

The river has a turning of several degrees to the east just before the dam, gaining a predominantly west-east orientation, a direction that is kept without turning until it reaches the Mihai Bravu bridge, so that the pedestrian walkway becomes end of perspective.

Section 3 is considered between the Timpuri Noi Bridge and the Mihai Bravu Bridge.

It crosses a part of the city that was, until recently, an area with peripheral characteristics, where the presence of the river was rather indifferent to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The area was dominated on the north-east bank by the presence of Timpuri Noi (formerly Lemaitre) factories, followed by an area presenting a mixture of industrial spaces and housing sometimes at precarious standards. Moreover, on the southwestern shore (in Sector 4), a series of industrial precincts operated, which separated and continue to separate Splaiul Unirii from Tineretului neighbourhood.

The collapse of these industries, together with the changing political-economic situation, but also the location of the area only one kilometre from the city centre, attracted large real estate investments, both for the construction of houses and for office spaces that present on both sides of Dâmbovița, but especially the one belonging to the Sector 3, which has radically transformed the character of the places.



Opposite to the new real estate developments on the site of Timpuri Noi factories (Sector 3), the Titu Maiorescu University operates in Sector 4, and the former premises of the Cotton Industry are gradually, but consistently, transformed into a *hub* of creative industries.

The intersection of the Timpuri Noi area is a car traffic node and a node of the public transport, where several bus lines, trams and the subway stations of the same name meet. In both the Sector 3 and 4, in the vicinity of the intersection there are small squares arranged, the one in Sector 4 being the one that is mainly used, due to the above-mentioned transport node.

Given the functionality of the built fund and the number of users, the section is currently

dominated by office buildings with commercial spaces and restaurants on the ground floor and mezzanine, developed by the Vastint group (currently only half of the project is used), which leads to an intense pedestrian use of the Timpuri Noi bridge.

The banks of Dâmbovița have the same profile as the one found in Section 2, except for a widening on the bank in Sector 4, adjacent to the Timpuri Noi bridge over a length of about 100 m, due to the infrastructure of the subway and the narrowing in the dam area doubled by the pedestrian walkway next to the Intrarea Scorțeni (in the Sector 3) and of the Abatorului Boulevard (in Sector 4).

The roadway of the embankments is also designed with three lanes per direction, of which two are currently used, the first lane being used primarily as a parking lot. However, the pressure for parking places is still lower than in Section 1, so cars parked on the sidewalk along the river are less common. On the other hand, car traffic is significantly higher in both directions than in Section 2.

The vegetation along the Splai is a combination of alignment planting from various periods (including prior to the systematization of the 1980s), which makes the alignments present themselves in a non-linear or non-ordered form, and there is no unity with the regard to the species and age of specimens with spontaneous vegetation. On the ground floor of the new office buildings (Timpuri Noi Plaza), but also in the adjacent public space, large pots were arranged, planted especially with ornamental grasses.

Section 4 comprises only a small portion of Dâmbovița downstream of Mihai Bravu Bridge, whose presence in the study area is motivated by the strong vicinity of the Văcărești Natural Park, which cannot be neglected when thinking the arrangement of the embankments. Historic Bucharest was limited to the east by the road now called Mihai Bravu Road. With the inter-war and post-war growth of the city, this artery becomes part of the central ring of movement of the city. However, the growth of Bucharest outside the central ring has been uneven and if, in some parts, the neighbourhoods outside the ring have a coherent and strongly urban character, along Dâmbovița, the area east of Mihai Bravu Road is a periphery, despite its proximity to the city centre (Unirii Square).

The communist project planned to build a large accumulation lake (similar to the one in the western part of the city, at Morii Lake) in the immediate vicinity of Mihai Bravu Bridge, on the south side of the river. Following the demolition of the entire neighbourhood that existed there (including the Văcărești monastery, a remarkable historical monument) and the construction of the concrete wall of the desired lake and the concrete basin of Dâmbovița, the area was isolated by the river both from a hydrological point of view, as well as visually or functionally. As the lake project was never completed and the springs in the hardened perimeter led to the formation of lakes, the demolished area was seized by nature, and the 30 years of spontaneous development created a valuable ecosystem, recognized by its inclusion among natural parks: [Văcărești Natural Park](#).

The participants in the competition are invited to consider and draw the connections that could be created with it over the central ring of traffic and to consider Dâmbovița as a future ecological corridor, promoting biodiversity, in relation to Văcărești Natural Park.

3.1.2. APPROACH AND CONTENT REGARDING THE STUDY AREA – OVERVIEW

However, considering the interest for a unitary/coherent development of the city, responding to the needs of citizens to enjoy the public space and, in addition, wishing to promote a balanced, modern, ecological model, addressed to contemporary ideas and debates, the competition proposes a broader area for analysis, to generate solutions or debates for future approaches in a wider area, exceeding administrative constraints.

The proposed projects must aim to capitalize on the potential that the presence of Dâmbovița brings to the city by: conceptual remodelling of sidewalks and green spaces adjacent to the river, having the possibility of widening the pedestrian space by creating consoles over the river basin, highlighting the landscape and the ecological value of the river, proposing new ways to use the banks, strengthening the relationship between this axis of the city and the urban and natural spaces it crosses, identifying an appropriate aesthetics of the arrangements of the banks, achieving a better cohesion of this area of the city with Dâmbovița and its two banks.



Overlay of the shape of the river before regularization (1880) over the 1989 plan

3.2. AREA OF DETAIL – Area intended for architectural & landscape intervention in the near future

The area of detail is strictly limited to the bank that is under the management of Sector 3 of Bucharest City in the Sections 2 and 3 described above, according to the drawing in Annex 6.2.

3.2.1. APPROACH AND CONTENT REGARDING THE AREA OF DETAIL

Despite the narrow profile of the area of detail, its length and the different character of the urban areas crossed can offer both multiple responses to the urban situations encountered and variation along the bank.

The projects have to be developed in detail - design of urban furniture, materials, textures, colours, etc., without consistent interventions on the infrastructure, the conformation of the Dâmbovița basin and the urban networks.

In parallel with the strategy of approaching the area of study proposed by each competing project, the competitors are invited to argue the concept of the intervention, ensuring an economically viable approach. Modular solutions can be designed, resonating with the way the riverbed is built, and also projects that are based on points of interest in which the intervention is focused.

Competitors are invited to rethink the percentage allocation of the green space to the mineral one, in parallel with the positioning with respect to the elements that delimit it (road and river basin), as well as with the proposal of types of spaces for pedestrian and/or bicycle use along the river, suitable for the urban neighbourhoods travelled.

It is allowed to place new structures, both in height and in on a console with the existing profile of the shore in order to widen the pedestrian or sail areas, to introduce new spaces and planting types, play of lights or water, etc.

On the whole, the dominant vegetation on the studied site is made up of young alignments of ash and plane trees, with grass at the base and a turf strip about 1m along the dams. Occasionally, groups of shrubs (*Forsythia x intermeda*) and lianas (*Hedera helix*) grow in these green spaces. We encounter along the river different species of birds, some typical of wetlands, others depending on the vegetation on the shore. However, tree management plans do not always take into account the needs of birds - annual crown pruning no longer provide protection or food. In the long term, these interventions on crown and trunk architecture to which small water absorption surfaces and small planting distances are added to new specimens affect tree health and make them vulnerable in the event of a storm.

It is also recommended to consider a vegetation management plan that takes into account the principles of pruning according to each species, in the long term, so as to avoid excessive cutting. Besides the important aesthetic properties that the vegetation can have in the cold season, the natural habitus of the trees is important for the local fauna, both in the cold season and in the hot season. It is recommended to integrate the local fauna in relation to the vegetation for the opportunity of a coherent and functional ecological corridor.

3.2.2. RESTRICTIONS AND PERMISSIBILITIES

According to the Zonal Urban Plan (PUZ) of Sector 3, the rehabilitation and modernization interventions within the public space will be carried out only on the basis of complex specialized projects in order to improve the urban image. The development of spaces for pedestrian and bicycle trips is considered a priority. Consequently, one should not consider the modification of the roadway by competition proposals on the intervention area, but in the elaboration of the concepts on the study area, it is encouraged to propose a vision regarding the car parks.

The public green spaces shall be accessible indefinitely. The urban furniture shall be integrated coherently in the urban image of the public spaces in the city. All utility networks, including electrical networks, will be introduced underground. For the purpose of animating the space, the location of kiosks or public feeding functions of very small size can be provided.

Interventions that would change the concrete basin of Dâmbovița are not allowed, but metal consoles supported on it, above the maximum water level, can be built to make steps or platforms, but avoiding the vertical loading on the upper edge of the precast slabs. No additional constructions, arrangements with consoles or pontoons over the river are allowed, on a distance of 100 meters both upstream and downstream of each dam.

Dâmbovița's flow varies between 5 m³/s in dry seasons and 30 m³/s in heavy rainy seasons, so any proposals for pontoons or floating objects will have to consider a good anchoring thereof and a management of their fixing.

The projects shall not aim at altering the profiles of the traffic lanes, even if suggestions regarding reformulations of their local solutions, introduction of pedestrian crossings or speed limiters, as well as the rearrangement of parking spaces could be ideas that will be included in the agenda of future debates.

However, the participants are urged to rethink the roadway-sidewalls-bank relations so that they are best adapted to the specificity of the pedestrian traffic in different areas of the site considered, variations in the pedestrian functional profile of the embankment are welcome. At the same time, well-justified suggestions for making new pedestrian crossings over the riverbed may be considered - they will not be the subject of the current arrangement but will be the basis for discussions on future interventions.

3.2.3. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Given the expectations towards this competition, respectively the selection on a quality basis of the most promising solution for the urban development of the area in relation to the river, both in the short and long term, the competitors are invited to elaborate their proposals in these terms:

1. to propose an overall vision, sustainable and harmonious from all points of view, which will provide a perspective of the development of the whole area in the long term. The proposed concept will contribute to the definition of the area and to the specific treatment of the passage of Dâmbovița through this neighbourhood, aiming at personalizing its space in this urban area, without ignoring the general context of Bucharest, but introducing the necessary nuances and differences of each district in the uniformity achieved through the project of the 1980s.

The study area is delimited according to the plan 6.1, *Area layout plan*.

Competitors are invited to express their vision / ideas for the future of Splaiul Unirii in relation to the city through a well-argued concept, which can be the basis of future debates and architectural contests.

2. After analysing the intervention area in its entire length, to propose the places that will become, after the arrangement, points of zonal interest, thus articulating the spaces along Dâmbovița with those of the neighbouring urban tissue.

3. to detail this concept in order to implement an intervention / development project in the near future on the lands that are in the administration of the Sector 3 City Hall, respectively the east-northeast bank of the river and the sidewalk adjacent to it. For the strips of land in the administration of the Bucharest City Hall and of Apele Romane, permission and collaboration were requested and obtained in order to carry out a unitary intervention.

To demonstrate coherence and the ability to put the overall concept into practice, competitors are invited to propose solutions for applying the concept principles at the scale of specific interventions. These intervention projects will make the object of a design services contract during the period following the competition.

Following this **design contract**, the necessary regulatory phases (PUZ – Zonal Urban Plan, PUD – Detail Urban Plan, etc.) as well as those of the actual design (SF, DTAC, PT) will be completed, in order to finalize them through an execution project (PE) and with the actual implementation (see Annex 2 – Rules).

The functions, layout and character that the competitors will propose for these areas depend on the general vision of each one. Depending on the solution, the competitors will present details regarding the characteristic atmosphere, the equipment of smaller or larger size provided, urban furniture, pavements, etc.

In addition, the arrangement of the banks in coherence with the functional arrangement and the proposed ambiance for these areas, will be the subject of specific cross-section

proposals.

It is expected that the proposed solutions modify the functional and physical profile of the embankment (*Splai*) as much as it is arguable and sustainable.

Competitors are invited to consider the following principles when approaching the topic:

- To formulate the types of connections between the neighbourhoods adjacent to Dâmbovița and this, anticipating the urban developments that are beginning to develop and, at the same time, giving them a framework and a direction of growth that will contribute to the urban atmosphere of the whole city.

This requirement aims to formulate in the extended study area an intervention concept along the river, a concept that will be the basis for future solution contests. It is recommended to think both banks of Dâmbovița, to approach the concept beyond the first row of buildings, to propose and argue for new urban connections or to strengthen the existing ones.

- To seek the integration of the public space created along the Splai in the network public spaces and/or landscapes of the city, or to propose such networks using also the unused areas still urban to their true potential.

In this regard, links with other objectives (landscapes and/or of another nature) will have to be found, as well as solutions for opening physical, visual, ecological or symbolic colours between the river and these or each other through the river as a mediator.

- To promote the diversity and the mix of the arrangements and uses, respecting the river ecosystem and looking for compatibility between functions.

Depending on the solution, it is possible to propose landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle rides, endowments with outdoor furniture, endowments for small cultural events (stands, walkways, etc.)

- To take into account the need of the urban community to benefit from flexible spaces that accommodate the specific temporary function.

- To consider that the banks of the river are a continuous public space throughout its entire course.

- To seek maximum accessibility for all categories of inhabitants.

- To encourage the use of public space in the vicinity of the water throughout the day and in all four seasons.

- It responds to the expectations of a public space created in today's Bucharest, taking into account the natural development ambitions of a European city.

- To express the care for the current preservation and maintenance of both the natural elements as well as of the built and technical ones, for the economy of the exploitation of the built spaces and of the subsequent maintenance of all the public spaces.

This requirement is expressed by parameters such as: optimal use of all existing natural and artificial resources, good choice of materials, technical solutions and equipment (robust, durable, easy to maintain and replace), easy access to technical installations.

- The proposed materials and technical solutions must be sustainable and in accordance with the location, the space, the specificity of the urban arrangements on the perimeter of the Sector 3 of Bucharest City, the function and the current technological moment.

- The participants will have to propose design solutions that are as sustainable and future oriented as possible, which will ensure the cost effectiveness and the maximum architectural quality, with a balanced consumption of energy and resources.
- For the solutions with immediate applicability, as well as for the future ones, the dynamics of the urban body, the possibilities of transformation of the areas adjacent to the site, the mutual influences between them and the arrangements proposed by the project, taking them into account as areas of emergence.

The proposed solutions must also be sustainable in this regard; they must demonstrate the ability to adapt and remodel in the medium and long term, the fact that the chosen solution will unseal the Splaiul Dâmboviței, transforming itself from an area of inelasticity, as it was built following the communist project, in an area that is sensitive to the cases in which the development vectors of the city will change over time.

NOTE. *The standards to be observed are those provided by the European legislation and integrated into the Romanian one. They are not listed in the topic, their knowledge and respect being the responsibility of the competitors.*

Recommendation for setting up the team of participants

In view of the complexity of the competition and the future responsibility, it is recommended that multi-disciplinary teams should be composed in the elaboration of the solutions, in order to be able to generate complex urban development proposals, which should not be limited only to the aestheticization or re-functionalization of the river, but to demonstrate that the proposed solution can transform the metropolitan area through this intervention.

4. REQUIRED PARTS

4.1 Drawn parts

The projects will be submitted on 4 sheets, 841x1189 mm (A0) format, made of white paper, on a horizontal orientation (*landscape*), unglued on any rigid media.

They will include the following parts:

Sheet no. 1: Highlighting the overall vision.

An integral general plan with the explanation of the conceptual elements and all the predicted relations to be established between the studied area, close neighbourhoods and the city in general.

This will include:

- The *study area* plan, according to the support plan in annex 6.1, scale 1: 2000.

The plan can be rotated, with the graphic indication of the geographical north.

- sketches, diagrams, perspectives

- explanatory text (the drafting language, according to Annex 2.1 - Competition Rules, is English). The text will not exceed 2 A4 pages integrated in the 4 sheets.

Sheets no. 2 and no. 3 highlight the proposals for the *area of intervention* (according to the support plan in Annex 6.2.) following their justification from an urban, aesthetic, and ecological point of view.

The sheets will contain:

- The plan of the *area of intervention*, scale 1:500. The area of intervention can be divided into 3 or 4 segments at the choice of competitors. It is recommended to keep the geographical north at the top of the page.
- The developed area of the intervention (as if viewed from the opposite side of the river), scale 1: 500. It can also be divided into segments at the choice of competitors.
- Perspectives, diagrams, sections to argue the chosen solution (principle) for the *area of intervention* in relation to the concept of the *study area*.
- Minimum one overall aerial perspective.
- Arguing the choice of places where the intervention proposal is focused. Their marking in the plan and in the developed area.

Sheet no. 4: detailing the *area of intervention*.

The sheet will contain:

- Detailing of two areas when choosing the competitors, plan and sections, scale 1:50.
- Schemes of the public lighting proposed for the two areas, scale 1:100
- Illustration of the concept of planting and the aesthetic value of the vegetation in the four seasons for the detailed areas.
- Detailed perspectives – at the choice of competitors.

NOTE.

- *all the drawn pieces can be represented by any 2d and 3d graphic means.*
- *the explanatory text (as clear and succinct as possible) to support the concept, must be integrated in the 4 sheets.*

4.2 Written parts – the financial proposal

Each project will include a **financial proposal** - according to the model in Annex 2. The values will be expressed in Lei (using the NBR exchange rate from the launching date on SEAP).

Financial proposal – Cost estimate of the design services will be part of the negotiation basis for the conclusion of the design services contract with the winner of the competition.

The financial proposal must not exceed the value of the maximum estimated ceiling, according to the “Estimation of investment and design costs” - Annex 2.

5. AWARD CRITERIA

The maximum score is 100 points

A. MEETING THE FUNCTIONAL-URBANISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL NEEDS - 50% of the final evaluation (maximum 50 points)

The compliance with the minimum requirements required by the competition brief is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 50.

It is calculated by the arithmetic mean of the points awarded by the jury for the following aspects:

A1 – Meeting the functional criteria in relation to the city - maximum 20 points

Functional-urbanistic logic and argumentation of the general concept for the *study area*.

The following will be taken into account:

- connection with the city - maximum 10 points
- The proposed interventions and functions - maximum 10 points

A2 – Meeting the functional criteria in the detailing of the solution - maximum 10 points

The functional-urbanistic logic and the argumentation of the concept for the *area of detail*.

The following will be taken into account:

- the proposed spatial solutions - maximum 5 points
- detailed solutions - maximum 5 points

A3 – Acknowledgement of the competitor's ability to implement the proposed project through the quality and the clarity of the ideas exposed in the proposal - maximum 5 points**A4 – Ecological criterion - maximum 5 points**

The diversity of the proposed green spaces and their ability to provide a biotope for various species of plants, insects and birds.

A5 – A6 Financial criterion - maximum 10 points

Fitting in the investment ceiling indicated in the competition documentation.

The rationality and sustainability of the functional spatial solution in relation to the estimated price.

Calculation algorithm for point A

$$A = A1 + A2 + A3 + A4 + A5 + A6 = 20 + 10 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 5 = \text{maximum 50 points}$$

B. ADDED ARCHITECTURAL-ARTISTIC VALUE OF THE PROPOSED INTERVENTION – 50% of the final evaluation (maximum 50 points)

The architectural-artistic value of the proposed solution is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 50.

It is calculated by the arithmetic mean of the points awarded by the jury for the following

aspects:

B1. The character of the area and the general atmosphere of the intervention-

maximum 20 points

The overall quality of the intervention, the proposed ambiance, the specific design solutions that highlight the particularities of the Splai Unirii will be highlighted. Solutions that avoid over-design and intervene with discretion will be appreciated to highlight existing strengths.

B2. Architectural criterion – maximum 10 points

The integration of the project, the way it is related to the neighbouring built fund and the way in which the existing constructive resolutions are emphasized will be pointed out.

B3. Architectural-landscape criterion– maximum 20 points

Competitors should point out the way of relating to the existing plant fund and the way in which the specific positioning of the site analysed from an ecological point of view is capitalized in the project. The concepts of planting and exploitation must also be pointed out.

Calculation algorithm for point B

B = B1+ B2 + B3 = maximum 50 points

Calculation algorithm for final evaluation (maximum 100 points)

A + B = 50 + 50 = maximum 100

The competition brief was approved on
Contracting Authority:

City Hall of Sector 3 of Bucharest City

Mayor,

Robert Negoită

(signature and stamp)

Prepared by the organizer:

Order of Architects in Romania, Bucharest Office
In partnership with the Order of Architects in Romania

Arch. Raluca Vişinescu