The Urban Development Network

REGGIO EMILIA URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Sevilla
28_29 January 2016
Reggio Emilia Urban Development Strategy within ERDF Emilia Romagna Region Operational Programme 2014-2020 –
Axis 6 « Attractive and participative cities »
**How do you think you can benefit from the workshop?**
A peer review would allow Reggio Emilia City Council to explore further implementation of its urban development strategy, by enhancing a more critical approach thanks to the comparison with other European cities.

**How do you think the other peers can learn from your experience?**
Our experience can be useful to point out the necessity of a strategic planning approach to the topics of
→ 1.urban regeneration, 2.social innovation, 3.sustainable economic development.

**Which specific experiences would you like to share with them?**
The main issues are
**urban regeneration,**
**governance processes,**
**community engagement and participation,**
**social innovation,**
**local economic development.**
Three questions you would like peers to discuss

1. What kind of governance process do you adopt to engage local stakeholders and community?
2. How can we reconcile the settlement of innovative activities related to the fields of cultural industry, social innovation, and creativity with their need for economic feasibility in the medium-long term?
3. How can we ensure that buildings which are recovered thanks to available financial resources do not become empty containers if their appropriate use is not clearly defined?
Demography **171,655 inhabitants.** 20% has more than 65 years and 18% comes from a foreign country. From 2010 to 2014 migration showed a decline in inbound (-789 units) and a significant increase in output (+1,757 units). The aging population is a growing phenomenon.

Density **744 (inhabitants/kmq)**

Economy and productive activity **56,041 businesses** in the province of Reggio Emilia (in 2014). The **tertiary sector is developing; trade, agriculture, constructions and manufacturing** are slowing down.

Social synthesis Social services are turning from a traditional performance model into a model based on a network of private and public entities capable of developing community welfare. **Widespread civic volunteering and active citizenship** (about 26,000 people working on social cohesion among 172,000 residents).

Environmental aspects The city of Reggio Emilia has been investing for years in: protection, promotion and increase of public green areas (the "Green Belt" project); energy innovation (goal: -20% Co2 emissions by 2020); ecologic mobility (bicycle use increased from 15% in 2007 to 18% in 2012); **urban planning and regeneration** (low land take: 65% of the building activity will regard refurbishment and 0.8% new buildings).
Context - Building the evidence base for the strategy

SWOT ANALYSIS REFERRING TO THE GENERAL URBAN CONTEXT

**Strengths and main competitive advantages**
- High standard of living, strong and dynamic business presence, high savings per capita, excellent services, high reputation of the public system, high level of foreigners integration.

**Weaknesses and main current challenges**
- Poor air quality and inadequate monitoring indicators, petty crime, lack of direct resources.

**Opportunities for future development**
- Government strategic planning vision, active stakeholders, widespread presence of associations and volunteers.

**Challenges**
- Too long administrative processes, decrease trend in technology spending for PA.
Experience in ISUDS

2009 – 2013 Northern Area project. A network of 60 institutions, universities, organizations and research centres, companies and private firms were engaged through an institutional governance process on the topic of Officine Reggiane environmental, social and economic regeneration: a huge discarded area was refurbished and turned into a hub for industrial research and technological transfer.

From the Northern Area governance process, based exclusively on a top-down approach, we have learned that a networking process both at an institutional level (top – down approach) and at an informal level (bottom – up approach) is necessary and more efficient rather than an institutional approach only.
Experience in ISUDS

“Quartiere bene comune” project (ongoing). An experimental **bottom up governance approach** which:

**Adopts** a “phenomenological” interpretation of territorial dynamism and needs beyond its traditional administrative division;

**Provides** actions concerning city maintenance and citizens care

**Methodology:** a process of **community engagement** at the neighbourhood level, through neighbourhood - based representation points (participative laboratories) coordinated by the City Council and **co-designed with local associations and citizens** (main issues: social innovation, education, urban security, active citizenship), through citizens labs.

**Output:** drafting of agreements between the Municipality and the community in order to define the problems and the correlated strategies

From the “Quartiere bene comune” project, based exclusively on a **bottom – up approach**, we are learning that a networking process both at an institutional level (top – down approach) and at an informal level (bottom – up approach) would be more efficient to guarantee interventions feasibility rather than an informal approach only.
Vision and objectives

Reggio Emilia Strategic Vision

From “production economy”

enhancement of social innovation, creativity, territory attractiveness

to “knowledge economy”:

Reggio Emilia “Smart specialisation strategy”

Development of Reggio Emilia distinctive competencies (personal services, education, mechatronics, agro-food, energy/environment)

Enhancement of Reggio Emilia “way of life” (sustainability, creativity, entrepreneurship, participation, solidarity)

IN ORDER TO

- MAKE INNOVATION A PRIORITY
- FOCUS INVESTMENTS AND CREATE SYNERGIES
- IMPROVE GOVERNANCE PROCESSES
- DEVELOP ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
- RESPOND TO SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES
- CATCH INVESTORS INTEREST
- PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE SPILL OVER
Reggio Emilia as a centre for research and development, technology transfer and high specialization

Reggio Emilia as a nationally relevant centre of manufacturing

Reggio Emilia as a hub for new entrepreneurial activities in the fields of culture industry, social innovation, social services, ICT

**MAIN OBJECTIVES**

**ACTIONS**

*Parco dell’Innovazione project*: regeneration of a huge discarded industrial area (Area Reggiane) in the Northern area of the town and its turning into a hub for industrial research and technology transfer

*Parco Industriale project in Mancasale*, located in the Northern area of the town: the centre of industrial production and manufacturing

*Historic centre: the integrated intervention in the city centre under the ERDF programme*: restoration of S. Pietro previous benedictine monastery
**Why these actions**

Because they regard areas which are **being transformed** (Area Reggiane) or areas with a consolidated vocation but **still to be enhanced** (Mancasale and city centre) and which therefore represent a strategic potential.

**Which actions are a priority and for what reasons?**

All the actions represent a priority for the City Council. They impact on different fields of innovation and therefore are **complementary**.

**What sectors will benefit**

Objective 1: **R&D**;

Objective 2: **industrial technologies**;

Objective 3: **social innovation, culture industry, creativity, ICT**.
“Attractive and participative cities”

- Within the general strategic vision, the initiative regarding Objective 3 is funded by **ERDF Emilia Romagna Regional Operational Programme_ Axis 6 « Attractive and participative cities»**

- The **Emilia Romagna Region Managing Authority** determines the scope of tasks to be undertaken by **Urban Authorities** concerning the management of integrated actions for sustainable urban development, defines the steps of work, the deadlines and provides accurate details on the actions and on financing.

- **Reggio Emilia acts as an Urban Authority.** Each Urban Authority takes note of the Regional addresses and defines its urban development strategy according to them.
Evaluation of the strategy

SWOT Analysis correlated to the urban area in the historic centre where Reggio Emilia is going to intervene under ERDF programme (objective 3)

**Strengths:** Presence of excellence nodes regarding the cultural system; high quality of public spaces; high range of functions and services; concentration of the trading system; reference of identity and memory for the community; availability of spaces to attract new residents.

**Weaknesses:** Presence of some degraded architectural heritage (empty, partially used, rundown buildings); petty crime; perception of urban insecurity; stillness of the real estate market; accessibility and parking.

**Opportunities:** Possibility of enhancing projects concerning town cultural identity; high expectations by the young people as regards areas to be dedicated to social interaction, aggregation and cultural contamination; new interest in the development of cultural industry, digital craftsmanship, creative professions and smart technologies.

**Threats:** More dynamism in the town as a whole and therefore more competitiveness among the city centre and other urban areas; rigidity and complexity of the regulatory framework as concerns the development of national and local infrastructural projects.
The intervention covered by the ERDF programme is integrated because it regards:

**the restoration of an important architectural complex** (SS. Pietro and Prospero benedictine monastery).

**the establishment of the “open laboratory”** in the restored building correlated to social innovation, creativity and community participation.

**the promotional activity** aiming at supporting the initiative development and maximizing the positive impacts on the area.

**partnership among local stakeholders**

**the reuse of the architectural complex, destined for the development of new social services, start-up and new businesses** is an opportunity to turn an engine of economic and social growth on in the old town, beyond its current predominant commercial fruition.
ERDF funded intervention
ERDF funded intervention
ERDF funded intervention
ERDF funded intervention
ERDF funded intervention
Policy coordination and funding scheme

**Objective 1_Parco dell’Innovazione project: funds**

“Piano Nazionale delle Città” national financing programme (12.000.000,00€), regional funds and public-private partnership

**Objective 3_The integrated intervention in the city centre under ERDF programme: funds**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>City Council</th>
<th>Total amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural refurbishment</td>
<td>1.750.000,00€</td>
<td>450.000,00 €</td>
<td>2.200.000,00€</td>
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<td>Open laboratory</td>
<td>1.000.000,00€</td>
<td>250.000,00 €</td>
<td>1.250.000,00€</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotional activity</td>
<td>251.371,60 €</td>
<td>48.628,40 €</td>
<td>300.000,00€</td>
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more than 60 public and private institutional stakeholders involved (industrial innovation, education, environment/energy)

more than 270 people involved (80 associations, 200 citizens/volunteers), 30 projects activated.

The processes is going to be structured both through a top-down governance and a bottom-up approach.

All the governance processes are supported by the City Council which plays a leading role in coordination and networking.
Objective 1
the Parco dell’Innovazione is already partially used thanks to the Tecnopolio (2012). Ongoing, to be concluded by 2018.

Objective 2
4 labs activated in 2015. 10 more labs to be activated by 2016.

Objective 3 (ERDF programme)
architectural project phase: to be concluded by April 2016; tender for works execution (April – July 2016); works execution (July 2016 – March 2017); top down + bottom up governance process (January-September 2016); tender for managing entity (September 2016 – January 2017); opening of the open laboratory (March 2017).
Timeframe and Monitoring

→ indicators to measure the success of the strategy

**Objective 1:** Number of start up, number of enterprises and R&D projects, number of prototypes, number of international connections

**Objective 2:** Number of activated projects. Number of citizens and associations engaged.

**Objective 3 (ERDF programme):** Number of start up and enterprises, number of socially and technologically innovative projects, number of beneficiary subjects, number of prototypes, number of international connections
**As concerns the intervention under ERDF programme, both institutional and informal stakeholders are going to be fundamental in order to: 
- **define the most coherent operational fields** of the open laboratory, according to the real territorial needs and economic development assets; 
- **test and validate the results** achieved through the open laboratory.

**The City Council** together with the **managing entity of the open laboratory** is responsible for the implementation of the strategy.
The city council has been stimulating for years informal networks, based on community participation and volunteer engagement on public interest issues.

The city council has also been encouraging civic volunteering and active citizenship, with the project “I Reggiani per Esempio” by financing (1 million of euro) spontaneous initiatives of common interest coming from the community (in Reggio Emilia there are about 26,000 people working on social cohesion among 172,000 residents).

The project has been developed into “European for example” as a good practice for other European countries (Turkey, Romany, Spain).
Question 1/What kind of governance process do you adopt to engage local stakeholders and community?

Why?
This question is particularly relevant because we haven’t found a completely successful methodology yet and we are looking forward to exploring possible more effective implementations of our governance approaches.

What has been done?
we have adopted both a top-down approach through institutional stakeholders engagement (Northern Area Project) and a bottom-up approach through community engagement (“Quartiere, bene comune” project). We are now going to explore a possible combination of the two different approaches (top-down and bottom-up) in the context of the historic centre where we are going to intervene under the ERDF programme.

What worked?
In the top-down governance approach, a well structured and strongly institutionalized process was activated, that led to a clear identification of reciprocal roles and financial commitments. In the bottom-up approach a continuous interaction between the City Council and the Community leads to a precise identification of local needs and stimulates the citizens to have a more active say in public decisions.

What did not work?
In the top-down governance approach the choices were made institutionally without listening to the neighbourhood community point of view and effective needs; in the bottom-up governance approach there is generally not a wide engagement of economically relevant investors and most of the topics are petty and quite of low interest for the city as a whole.
Question 2: How can we conciliate the settlement of innovative activities related to the fields of cultural industry, social innovation, creativity with their need of economic feasibility in the medium-long term?

**Why?**
This question is particularly relevant because we find it a complex challenge to guarantee social feasibility in the medium-long term to those activities which might be strategic for urban social and cultural development but are not always capable of attracting huge capitals.

**What has been done?**
In the Northern Area Project, the Tecnopolo was individuated as a strategic hub for research and development. In the intervention under the ERDF programme, the S. Pietro architectural complex is going to be turned into a hub for start up and innovative activities in the fields of creativity, ICT, social innovation.

**What worked?**
The Tecnopolo represents an important reference at a regional scale for technological transfer.

**What did not work?**
The companies interest in settling in the Tecnopolo was much lower than expectations.
### Question 3

**How can we ensure that buildings which are recovered thanks to available financial resources do not become empty containers if their appropriate use is not clearly defined?**

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<th>Why?</th>
<th>What has been done?</th>
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<td>This question is relevant because in Italy we quite often happen to have an excess of “containers” if compared to the “contents” and we often intervene on historical heritage which might be successfully refurbished but yet remains an empty “showcase” with no relevant use.</td>
<td>Many important historical buildings in Reggio Emilia have been refurbished to host cultural activities, expositions, artistic performances and promotional events. The S. Pietro benedictine complex is among them, though it is used during spring/summer season only.</td>
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<th>What worked?</th>
<th>What did not work?</th>
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<td>The restored buildings are strategic attractive poles at a large scale.</td>
<td>The restored building are actively frequented during specific periods but in some cases they might remain with no relevant use for most of the year.</td>
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