

## Firenze, Italy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Le Murate – Urban Park for Innovation
<b>Beneficiary</b>	Beneficiary of the funding is the Municipality of Florence as direct manager of the project.
<b>Duration of project</b>	2010-2014 (current phase of implementation). The whole redevelopment project was initiated in 1996.
<b>Member State</b>	Italia, Regione Toscana, Firenze
<b>Geographic size</b>	The area measures about 13 000 m <sup>2</sup> . The Municipality of Florence has a population of 373 446. Florence FUA 645 000. Florence Polycentric Metropolitan Area 1 090 000.
<b>Funding</b>	The project in the first phase received funding of about 26 million € from national/local funds for housing. In the current phase: Innovation park: 430 000 € Road link: 260 000 € Total ERDF funding: 690 000 €
<b>Operational Programme</b>	Operational Programme Tuscany - "POR CReO" (Creativity and Innovation) CCI no: 2007IT162PO012 Priority 5: Making full use of local resources, sustainable development of the territory [about 24.5% of total investment]
<b>Managing Authority</b>	Regione Toscana Directorate General for Economic Development Via di Novoli 26 I-50127 Firenze Regional level (NUTS 2)
<b>Cohesion Policy Obj.</b>	Competitiveness
<b>Main reason for Highlighting this case</b>	The approach is in line with art. 8 in addressing area-based integrated regeneration. It is not directed to a typically 'deprived area', as Santa Croce is a valuable neighbourhood experiencing global dynamics such as tourism and gentrification, but the area-based concentration of actions and funds aims to balance exclusionary dynamics with provision of affordable social housing, cultural activities, social services and public space. The case study is interesting also because involves a policy framework developed by the Regione Toscana particularly in line with the EU <i>Urban Acquis</i> , which includes an Integrated Plan for Sustainable Urban Development (PIUSS) designed in the framework of the ERDF Operational Programme. The Le Murate project is one of the main interventions constituting the PIUSS 'City of Knowledge'. The Municipality of Florence is also a partner in the REPAIR URBACT network, in which framework a Local Action Plan for Le Murate was delivered in December 2010. Le Murate has been recognized in the city as an example of a successful urban regeneration of a disused central site merging several functions with an integrated and holistic approach. This is part of the integrated regeneration of a larger district in the same neighbourhood that includes the Faculty of Architecture, the grocery market square, the historic flea market, and the pedestrianisation of the some areas served with electric buses.
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<b>Keywords/Tags</b>	Urban regeneration, social housing, integrated planning, enterprise incubator, public space.

## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Overall objective / goals

The regeneration of Le Murate is a long-term project for the multifunctional recovery of an abandoned historical complex, a former prison closed in 1983. This project is an important challenge for the local administration, because of the size and architectural characteristics of the complex, its strategic position within the historic city walls, and its potential social impact in a city that has less and less space in the historical city centre for social housing. Le Murate is located in the Santa Croce district, a neighbourhood which is undergoing transformation due to the pressure of tourism and global markets, as well as one of the areas which is more resilient to the expulsion of local residents, demonstrating a strong and genuine local identity. This is one of the neighbourhoods in the historical centre of Florence which still maintains a social residential life, in contrast with the general retreat of the population towards new peripheral residential locations. It is also one of the areas of Florence with a higher concentration of cultural facilities, monumental complexes and important libraries. Therefore, the goal of creating a social housing complex in a location which could have been an attractive site for speculation, as happens through the tourist commoditisation of the Florence city centre (i.e. hotels and private luxury housing) represents for the city an innovative experience. The city council allocated more than 26 million € of public resources to redevelop this former prison as social housing. The residential function, although constituting the engine of the intervention, covers only 34% of the surface area. The implementation of the project opens up access to an area historically closed to the public, as it was a monastery before becoming a prison. The monumental complex constituted a closed spot right in the middle of the neighbourhood, with a 160m-long wall running along two parallel streets. The intervention opens up a series of urban passages, new squares and public spaces in the opaque historical fabric, significantly increasing pedestrian connectivity among main public places of the neighbourhood. It addresses the demands of social housing, employment services, cultural provision and social services, responding to a strong integrated approach.

The first phase took place in the period 1997-2010. This phase accomplished:

- Delivery of 73 social dwellings;
- Opening of 2 new urban squares and a new pedestrian way;
- Delivery of public facilities and commercial/handicraft spaces.

This phase was financed by exclusively local means coming from social housing funds, and was implemented efficiently without bottlenecks, setting up a strong collaboration between several city offices and within the City Board.

The second phase for the period 2010-2014 includes participation in the REPAIR URBACT network, which led to the realization of a Local Action Plan for the Le Murate area. The EU-funded action has concentrated on reinforcing the integrative and sustainable approach of the whole project, supporting strategic visioning, together with the direct financing of some key projects. The goal is to complete the transformation of Le Murate creating the conditions for the new urban district to fully function in all its residential, cultural and productive activities together with full viability and integration into the wider urban fabric.

The case study analysis is focused on this last phase and on how ERDF added value to the process. However, the continuity with, and the relevance of, the first phase of implementation cannot be disregarded, and the intervention will ultimately be analysed as one overall integrated project starting from 1995.

<p><b>Description of activities</b></p>	<p>The project approach is highly intersectoral, linking together the regeneration of physical structures and social housing, support to young entrepreneurial and creative industries, social projects, exhibition spaces, public space improvement and commercial space, and involves different city offices in the management of the activities. The whole project is managed by the city, which coordinates the activities through its technical departments. The current phase sees the inclusion of Le Murate in the “City of Knowledge” Sustainable Integrated Plan for Urban Development (PIUSS), with the contribution of ERDF to the development of integrated actions. Among the projects being implemented or programmed at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spazi Urbani Contemporanei (SUC)</b> is a set of cultural facilities and exhibition spaces, including 8 studios for production and residences, partially in activity, presenting exhibitions and performances. The structure faces one of the two new public squares opened by the project, which is mainly characterized by cultural activities, and especially during the summer becomes an extension of cultural activities (i.e. open-air cinema.) Here the ‘Literary Café’, a privately-managed locale providing a parallel programme of lectures and events has already opened.</li> <li>• <b>Parco Urbano per l’Innovazione</b> (business incubator and service centre for handicrafts and research) is a structure devoted to supporting enterprise start-ups in strategic sectors for Florence’s economy like the cultural and knowledge-based sectors. The furniture and equipment of the structure are financed via ERDF. The project was initially designed in the “City of Knowledge” PIUSS as a service and training centre for craft jewellers, but the new administration decided to redirect the project to more technological and innovative sectors, renaming it the “Urban Park for Innovation”. At the current stage, spaces for start-up enterprises have been assigned through a public call and contracted, and shortly the activities will be officially inaugurated. A service centre is connected to assist and address the enterprises in the incubator as well as other starting enterprises. The service centre includes the activities of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Scuola di Scienze Aziendali</i> (Entrepreneurial Science School)</li> <li>• University of Florence, MICC (Media Integration and Communication Centre)</li> <li>• <i>Fondazione Sistema Toscana</i> (Tuscany System Foundation)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Smart dissidents’ spaces.</b> From prison to freedom: this is the symbolic core of the project for the completion of the recovery of Le Murate, with the realization of a ‘shelter’ for ‘smart dissidents’. Political activists and bloggers of the Web 2.0 generation who have freedom-of-speech troubles in their countries will be given the possibility to develop a journalistic / blogging activity based in Florence. They will find physical and virtual hospitality in the structure providing 24 bed-places and a common service centre. The works are in advanced state with an investment of €1.8 million (Regional Funds).</li> <li>• <b>Pedestrian path.</b> This is a green road link connecting Le Murate with Largo Annigoni, which is a key space in the neighbourhood, a large square recently redeveloped by a PPP including underground parking. The intervention will significantly improve pedestrian mobility. Funded via ERDF</li> <li>• <b>House of the City.</b> The House of the City is to be the final piece of the Le Murate redevelopment, an urban centre dedicated to the housing culture and urban planning of Florence. It is to be located in the last part of the complex, which faces the ring boulevards of Florence, that is the limit to the traffic-limited zone, and includes an</li> </ul>
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	<p>underground car park. A feasibility studio was completed by a private consultancy in 2011, but no firm funding has yet been found.</p> <p>In addition to the publicly-funded activities, Le Murate provides space for a set of related cultural and social activities, both non-profit and commercial. Among them, the municipality invited the Italian branch of the Kennedy Foundation to settle into the complex, and commercial spaces at fair prices have been assigned to activities as restaurants and cafés, a ticket office, organic products, etc.</p>
<b>Recipients</b>	<p>Final recipients of the actions are widely distributed on various levels and scales. Citizens listed for social housing receive quality dwellings in a valuable central area. The neighbourhood at large gains a new set of attractive public spaces and services, and in general the city benefits from the effects of an operation which revives the social life of the centre, counteracts the loss of residents and provides new cultural facilities and employment opportunities. Young entrepreneurs are supported through the provision of low-rent spaces, services and training. Cultural operators are enabled to access new facilities for cultural programmes. Political refugees will benefit from hosting and a structure to support their campaigns. Finally, visitors to the city should be assisted by a new urban centre (House of the City) which provides information about the urban history and development of Florence</p>
<b>Mainstreaming of gender equality and non discrimination</b>	<p>Issues of gender equality have been taken into account in the design and planning of the project, to the extent that they are part of the usual policy framework for public projects. In particular, residential and commercial space has been assigned according to municipal regulations and Tuscan law.</p>
<b>Intended outputs and results</b>	<p>The results foreseen in the final phase are to complete the planned projects, connecting all activities under an integrated management which can ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. The impact expected is in stemming the loss of residents from the city centre and the dislocation of disadvantaged population, and activating a focus for culture and entrepreneurship in the core of a neighbourhood strongly affected by mass tourism.</p>
<b>2. POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>	
<b>National and regional framework for implementing ERDF funded urban development projects</b>	<p>In the POR CRoO – Operational Programme for Regional Competitiveness and Employment (<i>Competitività Regionale e Occupazione</i>) – Tuscany has opted to put research, innovation and sustainable development at the core of its regional development strategy. The nature of the region's industrial fabric, comprising primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), means that the focus must be on reinforcing research and innovation capacity to boost competitiveness. Other features of the Tuscany region are the tremendous wealth of its artistic and cultural heritage and its outstanding natural environment. Mention is also made of efforts to improve telecommunications in the region's rural or outlying areas and of special actions for urban and metropolitan areas. The strategic configuration of the Tuscan OP meets the requirements for employing the ERDF instruments to support urban development and renewal projects. The overall objective underlying the strategy of the OP is divided into six priority axes for actions and twelve operational objectives. It conforms closely with the Community Strategic Guidelines concerning the urban territorial dimension ('The contribution of cities to growth and jobs'). The priority specifically aimed at responding to the urban agenda is Axis V – Exploitation of endogenous resources for sustainable territorial development, specific objective: 'To exploit endogenous resources and to enhance urban and metropolitan systems in order to encourage sustainable development and increase attractiveness and competitiveness in international markets', which</p>

	<p>covers about 24.5% of a total public investment of 1 126 652 231 €.</p> <p>This priority will make it possible to implement actions to make full use of the region's local resources both in the urban/metropolitan context and in areas with difficult geographic or natural features (PO147). In the urban and metropolitan areas the actions have to form part of integrated plans for sustainable development (PIUSSs), supported by a strategy for enhancing and generally promoting the area in question. In this context, it is also planned to create social facilities where they prove particularly necessary. The OP quotes the PIUSSs as planning tools specifically designed to respond to the Article 8 guidelines, and states that such plans should be developed through local participative strategies. In Tuscany, proposals for 17 PIUSSs were made to the Regional Managing Authority. 12 were approved for financing in October 2009 and January 2010. The final proposal is to implement 14 PIUSSs with a total of some 250 projects. For the 'Florence City of Knowledge' PIUSS, 25 projects have been selected, mostly proposed by the municipalities but with a few coming from other public bodies such as the university, and from NGOs. Among these is the creation of a centre to support entrepreneurship in art, craft, fashion and design, located in the Le Murate complex.</p>
<p><b>The planning context</b></p>	<p>The Regione Toscana has a progressive and up-to-date legislative and planning framework, which fits well with the ERDF implementation schemes, and according to previous studies, no mismatch has emerged so far in practice. Nevertheless, the complexity of procedures, programming tables and sector-based plans to be considered in the implementation of urban development actions tends to slow down the implementation process and makes it more difficult. Tuscany has adopted the <b>Regional Law of 3 January 2005, no. 1</b> 'Rules for Governing the Territory' (<i>Norme per il Governo del Territorio</i>), defining the principle of subsidiarity among the planning instruments related to different territorial scales: the PIT (Territorial Orientation Plan) at Regional level, the PTC (Territorial Coordination Plan) at Provincial level, and Structural Plans at Municipal level. Municipalities, provinces and regions, in order to adopt planning instruments, must provide an integrated assessment (<i>valutazione integrata</i>), inspired by Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001, taking into account their effects in territorial, environmental, social and economic and human health terms. The law also requires all the administrative levels to guarantee the participation of citizens in every phase of the procedures, a norm restated through the Regional Law 69/2007.</p> <p><b>The Structural Plan</b> (Piano Strutturale) of Florence, recently approved, is the first "zero square metre" master plan of the city, which insists on the reuse of the existing building stock and the optimization of existing projects. The plan recognizes the strategy adopted for the Le Murate project as a sustainable model to be applied to other buildings in the historical centre (interview with the coordinator of the technical and design area, City of Florence). Furthermore, the <b>Strategic Plan</b> "Florence Future City" (<i>Firenze città futura</i>), is a strategic visioning process led by an association directed by the Municipality of Florence and including the main social and economic actors in the metropolitan area. First drawn up in 2003, taking a time horizon of 2010, the strategic plan's objectives are in the process of being updated for 2020. The orientations of the strategic plan have been designed through cooperation among 11 municipalities according to a protocol agreement, together with the province and the main institutional and economic bodies. Banks, universities and unions, as well as the chamber of commerce and industry associations, have been involved in designing the strategic vision for the future metropolitan area of Florence. The City of Knowledge (<i>Città dei Saperi</i>) PIUSS, which includes the Le Murate</p>

	project, matches the objectives of Axis 8 ‘Network of knowledge and know-how (practices)’ in particular.
<b>3. IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b>3.1. PROJECT DESIGN AND PLANNING</b>	<p>The initial trigger for the project came from the dramatic need for social housing in the city, and took advantage of the availability of one of the many historical publicly-owned buildings in the centre which were presenting the administration with the challenge of finding new uses. Before the conversion started, during a previous administration in 1986, an international competition had been held for the redevelopment of the whole area around the ex-monastery. Later, another competition was held addressing the regeneration of the single Le Murate block, which drew in established names in Italian architecture. The call was not backed up by solid implementation possibilities, and the winning project was pursued no further. The conditions became favourable in 1995, under Mayor Primicerio, who strongly supported actions for the residential reuse of the historical centre. One interviewee called him ‘the real demiurge of the operation’. The opportunity came from a large amount of money which was diverted from the GESCAL administration<sup>1</sup> to the city’s ERP (Office for Public Housing). This fund was destined for a programme of social housing based on the conversion of public structures in the historical centre worth about 100 billion lire (c. 50m€). Among these structures, the most challenging and substantive was Le Murate, to which was allocated 52 billion Italian lire, about 26 million €. A first concept for the redevelopment was provided by the architect Renzo Piano, who introduced the idea of a “city in the city”, suggesting the coexistence of multiple functions. The ERP had in 1995 the opportunity to design and implement a long-term project foreseeing the integration of multi-sectoral actions, solidly grafted onto the provision of social housing. Since the approval in 1998 under Mayor Dominici of a <i>preliminary unitary project</i>, the project has gradually delivered blocks of housing for inhabitants listed by the social affairs office, two new squares, a shopping arcade opening up a new connection between the two main roads skirting the block, public spaces and facilities.</p> <p>In the second phase, starting from 2010, the project envisages being included in the ‘City of Knowledge’ Integrated Plan for Sustainable Urban Development (PIUSS) funded by the ERDF, which is developing a set of projects to develop the productive, cultural and commercial activities of the area. With a mix of ERDF and local funds, a set of actions of physical regeneration and cultural and employment facilities management is included in the Local Action Plan drafted by the REPAIR project. The state of implementation of the projects is in general far advanced, with the exception of the outstanding project of the House of the City. For this ambitious project for an urban centre a feasibility and benchmark study has been carried out and design options have been studied through workshops with graduate students of the University of Florence (the university is located close by in part of the ex-monastery) as part of the URBACT Local Action Plan, but no funding has been agreed.</p> <p>The project’s initial phase responded to ERP assessments of social housing needs in Florence and to the constant debate on the conversion of public building stock in Florence. The current phase of the project is generally consistent with the main strategic and planning documents for Florence and its metropolitan area.</p>

<sup>1</sup> a highly controversial fund for workers’ housing which despite being cancelled in 1973 continued to accumulate contributions from employed workers until the 1990s.

The MA issued a call for submissions (*manifestazione di interesse*) for Sustainable Integrated Development Plans, together with detailed eligibility requirements. In particular, Regional Deliberation No. 239/2008 defined the selection criteria with the aim of ensuring that the evaluation process was highly selective. The criteria include:

- Laying strong emphasis on the **principle of concentration**: territorial concentration (cities with more than 20 000 inhabitants or combinations of cities are accepted), physical and functional concentration of measures (the project areas have to be adjacent to one another), financial concentration (the threshold for the total investment of a PIUSS has been set at the relatively high level of 20 million € and the ceiling at 50 million €), thematic concentration on the priority issues identified in the OP;
- Introducing **consistency criteria**, not so much in terms of formal compliance (except as regards compliance with the operational objectives of the OP and the prescriptions of the urban Master Plans, which obviously determine the admissibility of the PIUSS), but rather in terms of the capacity to contribute proactively to the priorities of regional programming and local planning;
- Paying close attention to **quality criteria**, in other words measuring the ability of PIUSSs to capture the potential of the urban environment, to create poles capable of providing strategic urban services and functions (and raising the competitiveness of the area over a wide range), to produce structuring effects, to improve standards of living and social inclusion, and to achieve the objective of balanced and sustainable local development. The quality of PIUSSs is directly correlated to their degree of integration. The selection criteria make it possible to reward explicitly the integration of operations – both between operations within the PIUSS and between other operations and projects carried out or under way in the area concerned – thereby maximising the value added of the integrated approach;
- Ensuring that the **concertation processes** and the **consultation of local communities** affected by the plans are effective and of high quality;
- Maximising the **technical feasibility** of PIUSSs and their individual operations, measured in terms of the maturity of their planning and the appropriateness of their time-cost schedules;
- Optimising the **use of public financial resources** under the OP and stimulating **local co-financing** and the **investment of private capital**. (JPS 10).

In December 2009 the Managing Authority produced the 'Final evaluation report of the formation and design process of the PIUSS'. The evaluation of the process of the elaboration of the plans was in general positive, with particular regard to the capacity of the plans to create effective partnerships and with the match with the normative framework. The authority is delegated to municipalities to develop the communication and consultation process needed for the elaboration of the PIUSS, as well as the technical management and monitoring of the implementation of the plan.

The project was guaranteed by a consistent initial allotment of funds for the physical regeneration of the area. The risks considered in this phase were the ordinary ones connected with contracting private building enterprises, and dealt with the usual procedure of attribution for public works. A second risk considered was that of creating an 'empty box', that is failing to engender activities and programmes able to bring life to the redeveloped district. Since the beginning, the need to stimulate mixed

	<p>uses was taken into account, including revenue-earning commercial activities – for instance the revenue from the rent of commercial space is put into a specific fund for the administration of the housing stock in Le Murate. So far the project has achieved good results in starting up social and economic activities. However whether the overall management is able to ensure the sustainability of the action is still an open question.</p>
	<p>The Le Murate project has since the beginning played the role of a pilot project for the regeneration of the substantial amount of unused public building stock in the historical centre of Florence, identifying procedures and practices which might be transferable to other areas. Its success is widely recognised, and its model has been taken into account in the philosophy of the new Structural Plan. However, the project also has very peculiar characteristics e.g. the fact that the physical structure was originally designed to be a prison, which obviously constrained the design and led to very specific solutions which are of limited transferability (apart from the work within the REPAIR network dedicated to the specific issue of redeveloping military buildings for new uses). This also limited the research for innovative energy efficiency measures. It is also acknowledged that the conditions for its implementation are fairly exceptional and hardly reproducible, especially given the current crisis. In this sense, the general opinion among the interviewees is that the operational capacity to reproduce the model depends on involving private actors and capital in broad partnerships, and on the concession of public buildings to private enterprises tied to an agreed level of provision of public services.</p>
	<p>Most of the Le Murate project has been carried out without European funding. The ERDF is supporting the second phase, and is of strategic importance in lending continuity and in enhancing the sustainability and effective integration of the actions. ERDF funds have mainly been applied to two aspects: first, according to the main objectives of the operational programme, focusing on innovation and employment and on the planning vision developed by the 'City of Knowledge' PIUSS, and funding the creation of a pole for entrepreneurship, research and innovation. Secondly, through networking experiences such as the URBACT REPAIR project, the ERDF is reinforcing the planning capacity and the integration of actions and thereby promoting a more holistic view for the project. Today, the correct use of EU support appears of great importance in guaranteeing the future sustainability of the project.</p>
	<p>The project has not received funding from other European sources, i.e. ESF.</p>
<p><b>3.2. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM</b></p>	<p>Throughout the first phase, the management was strictly coordinated by Firenze City Office of Social Housing (ERP), including the architectural design and technical aspects of the functional conversion of the historical building. These tasks were carried out in close relation with the Municipal Office for Fine Arts and the <i>Soprintendenza</i> (regional board of the ministry of cultural heritage and environmental conservation). Since the beginning ERP has provided continuity to the implementation process. The key figure in the management is Roberto Melosi, who was at that time director of the ERP and has followed as project manager the whole first phase, in collaboration with a dedicated team of technicians and architects. All the participants were in any case civil servants employed in the municipality offices, who, in the opinion of one of the interviewees, were unusually lucky, given the normal conditions of public administration, to be employed in projects commensurate with their skills and competences. Melosi, together with Mario Pittalis and Giuseppina Fantozzi, architects at the ERP, and Marco Toccafondi, a technician in the same office, has been at the core of the management of the project for 15 years. In the second phase, the implementation of the project</p>

	<p>benefits from a certain continuity with the previous direction through the Local Action Group created as part of the URBACT REPAIR network, where Melosi himself and the team of ERP had a prime role.</p> <p>Casa SpA is the public company owned by the municipality which since the first housing units were completed has managed the social housing stock and commercial space in Le Murate. It has set up a specific fund for the maintenance of the facilities, into which the rent revenues from commercial spaces are paid.</p> <p>In the current phase, new actors found a role in the management of the project. First, the Technical Coordination Office took over from ERP as the organisation directly managing the physical regeneration, although ERP keeps an operational role of support in the design and implementation. The coordinator of the technical and design area become the main responsible figure as manager of the area. Second, the Direction for Economic Development manages activities such as the Urban Park for Innovation; meanwhile the City Office for Culture manages public facilities and cultural activity. From 2009 until recently, a central role in programming has been played by the Councillor for Culture, who provided strong inputs for the orientation of the activities, e.g. strongly supporting the concept of the Urban Park for Innovation and the Smart Dissidents spaces. Recently, the resignation of the political representative from that role in the City Board leaves the management of the activity in the hands of the director of the City Office for Culture, but a tailored management structure is perceived as necessity.</p> <p>ERP employed a team of almost 20 people, who, although not working exclusively on this project, have followed Le Murate as their main occupation throughout its development.</p> <p>A steering committee has been set up at the level of the PIUSS, involving several negotiating groups with the municipalities involved and other relevant players on the ground. For the Le Murate project, the REPAIR Local Action Group has functioned as a steering committee for the management of the current phase of implementation, integrating the ERDF actions with the other actions under way. The LSG was composed of 16 members; the majority politically or technically qualified municipality representatives and representatives of the Fine Arts Trusts and Casa SpA.</p> <p>Monitoring was organized according to the regulations for public works carried out by local administrations. At municipal level a Managing Plan System (PEG) has been adopted, to which the different offices are supposed to respond, on an annual basis.</p> <p>An explicit target qualification was not set from the beginning. The generic objective of delivering 100 dwellings assumed at the beginning will almost be accomplished with the last set of 24 residential units still to be implemented. A main indicator of effectiveness has been the cost per square metre of social housing. The conversion of the historical building, which brought the additional challenge of adapting the old prison architecture to current housing standards, has been realized at a reasonable cost of about 1 100 €/m<sup>2</sup>. This is a particularly important indicator, as the regional law fixes the maximum cost for public housing costs at 2 000 €/m<sup>2</sup>. This shows the implicit transferability of such a model of social housing through the regeneration of historical buildings in terms of cost competitiveness.</p> <p>No particular obstacles emerged during the implementation process.</p>
<p><b>3.3 GOVERNANCE: PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND</b></p>	<p>As a matter of fact, this project does not involve a particularly well-developed partnership in terms of governance, as it is strongly controlled by the City of Florence. Nevertheless, the multi-sectoral nature of the</p>

<p><b>EMPOWERMENT</b></p>	<p>project required the cooperation of several administrative units and public institutions, which have worked cooperatively during the first phase. The leadership was anyway provided by the public housing office (ERP). Until now, an essential factor of efficiency has been represented by the personal attitude of the architects of ERP, and in particular that of architect Mario Pittalis. He has a strong leadership role being a constant presence in the area and a reference person for everyone including the inhabitants and the managers of commercial activities, providing everyday problem solving, at least for the technical logistic aspects.</p> <p>Regarding the second phase, the director of the office for culture is aware of the fact that a broader coordination of actors settled in the area and a move towards effective partnership would be necessary in order to best manage the activities. The cultural programming of SUC has been directed personally and with success by the Councillor for Culture, until his recent resignations. The mayor has taken direct control of the delegation for culture, but in practice it is managed by the Director of the Cultural Office, which clearly shows the need for a structure or a figure with specific competencies in the integrated management of the area. There is the intention to open a front office of the Office for Culture in the Le Murate complex, providing information and orientation about programmes, facilities and support available and structures for the cultural sector at city level. Nevertheless, a coordination body for the activities at large, including foundations and institutions participating in the Innovation park activities and other organizations settled in the area does not exist at the moment.</p>
	<p>Recipients were selected through public calls issued by the municipality and the list for access to public housing. The project did not undertake relevant participative activity, however it has always been accepted and enjoys an unusual level of support in the neighbourhood and across all the political spheres of Florence, in an urban development context that is used to frequent controversy and strong criticism.</p>
	<p>The municipality has been the direct manager of the project in all its phases. Regional authorities supported the project, in particular during the second phase with the involvement in the City of Knowledge PIUSS. The project received more or less constant support from all the three city administrations in charge during the implementation period. While the project was designed and strongly supported during the Primicerio administration, it was not discussed during the following administration of Mayor Dominici, which implemented the whole first phase from 1998 to 2009. The election of Mayor Matteo Renzi introduced some changes and innovations, which acknowledged the orientations of the newest strategic visions for the City of Knowledge. The Councillor for Housing coordinated the URBACT Local Action Group, supporting the integrated planning of the area. The Councillor for Culture personally assumed the direction and programming of cultural and social activity, and the City Board steered the activity more definitely towards innovation and creativity. The original project of the incubator for employment was transformed, after consultation with the Managing Authority, from the initial idea of a centre for handcraft and jewellery to the current Urban Park for Innovation.</p>
	<p>Various figures led the project during its relatively long history. Political figures as Mayors Primicerio and Renzi appear to have a leading role in specific moments, but in general it is the municipality as a governing apparatus which is the entity leading and steering the process. The internal coordination of its offices has definitely been able to deliver a high-quality project, although the transferability of the approach <i>in toto</i> is unlikely, in the opinion of the managers.</p> <p>It is hard to say that there were aspects of innovative partnership in the project. If the results of the project in the context of Florence can be</p>

undoubtedly evaluated as innovative, partnership and governance show a relatively traditional logic. The interviewees generally recognise the need to innovate in the model of intervention, and to involve multiple actors and private capital, in order to enable the transfer of the approach to other cases. *In this sense the collaboration with URBACT with the creation of the local support group represents a first step towards the involvement of local stakeholders in the design phase of the project.*

**4. INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS AND NOVEL APPROACHES**

**4.1 INNOVATION**

There is wide recognition among the interviewees that the Le Murate project in general brings strong innovation into the urban development approach in Florence. The project is highly innovative in its general philosophy, in particular in such a peculiar context as the valuable historical centre of Florence and all the issues deriving from the coexistence of a great heritage with mass tourism and the pressure of a globalized market economy. It has achieved much as an experiment in countering the loss of residential and social life from the historical city, and demonstrates the sustainability of an integrated model coupling social housing and services for the general public with innovative sectors. It appears less innovative, in some ways even traditional, in the process of design and implementation.

**4.2. KEY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND PROBLEM-SOLVING PRACTICES**

A first element of innovation happened at programming level, designating for social housing such an important investment in a sensitive urban plot in a valuable area of the centre, and using it as the driving element of an integrated multifunctional project. Elements of innovation are reported at the level of heritage preservation, in the collaboration with the *Belle Arti* (city fine art office) and *Soprintendenza dei Beni Architettonici* (Regional board of the ministry of cultural heritage and environmental conservation), imagining a restoration approach which has been at once strictly careful of the monumental value of the historical buildings but open to a radical reconversion of the physical structure to serve contemporary uses. In the process no particular divergence of procedure has been reported by the interviewees of both the offices. As the Officer for the Fine Arts reported, the architects have been able to propose a level of preservation of the original architectural characteristics that was even higher than that required by the preservation officers. It is also very important to acknowledge the high-level achievements of the architectural design of a project that has been completely developed by young architects employed in the technical office of the city. The challenge of creating lively high-quality public space and housing in a structure strongly constrained by the morphological characteristics of an old prison has been solved brilliantly by an industrious team working away from the glare of publicity. In contrast to the spectacular practice of competitions and invitations to star architects which has marked the recent season of urban development in Florence, and which has produced highly debatable flagship projects, if not obvious failures, here we can enjoy a fine-tuned innovative design which respects tradition and interprets the social milieu soundly.

While for the case of Le Murate no specific participative processes have been initiated, the neighbourhood of Sant’Ambrogio where the complex lies has been the object of a consultation with the citizens with regards to its current transformations. The neighbourhood is undergoing a process of reorganization including the regeneration of the former prison complexes of Santa Verdiana and le Murate and the building of the local newspaper La Nazione, the redevelopment of Largo Annigoni (which will be soon connected with le Murate by ERDF funded intervention) and relocation of the traditional flea market after the foreseen displacement from Piazza dei Ciompi,. The Municipal authorities launched a participatory lab with local citizens, which took place for more than a year

	<p>in the newly renewed spaces of le Murate. The primary scope was the design of Piazza Ghiberti but actually the lab discussed the future redevelopment of the whole district in which Le Murate project was assuming a pivotal role. Open conflicts and different views regarding the regeneration of the district have become visible through this participatory lab, however citizens contributions did not really impact the actual process of the regeneration, nor did contribute to the design of the project of Le Murate. It remains an open question how, why and under which condition public participation should take place. In 2010 the new Mayor promoted the <i>100 Luoghi</i> (100 Places) campaign, organising in one day one hundred public assemblies in different structures and building sites, presenting to the population and discussing new projects and debated developments in Florence. One of them was Le Murate. Although more a promotional than a real participative action, it marks a renewed attitude of the new administration towards a wider involvement of the population in urban governance.</p>
	<p>The URBACT REPAIR network provided an important platform of exchange for the project, which among other participant cities has been adopted as a reference project. (See also the Corradino prison case study in Malta.)</p>
	<p>Considering that there have not been relevant obstacles in the project implementation, a major factor of uncertainty was the identification of an appropriate strategic use for the public facilities, in defining its role as a cultural pole. The initial visions for the project envisaged the creation of a historical museum dedicated to the Resistance. The progressive adoption of an integrated multifunctional approach led to the idea of the centre for handicraft, which eventually ended with the actual incubator for enterprises in the knowledge economy, and the diversification through many cultural and social projects. This was also reflected in the need to re-adapt the architectural project to a new spatial organisation for the Innovation Park. This design variation was also reflected in the general design of the public space, as the passage connecting the two squares was imagined during this phase, which resulted ultimately in an improvement of the project. In general the project management showed a good capacity to adapt to the progressive redefinition of strategic objectives according to new inputs coming from visioning at city and regional level.</p>
<p><b>4.3. THEMATIC FOCUS</b></p>	<p>Implementation of sustainable integrated urban development operations under Article 8 of the 2007-2013 ERDF Regulation</p> <p>The project is a successful example of area-based regeneration action employing the tools of integrated sustainable development. It fulfils the wider objectives of article 8, although only complying partially with its guidelines. The project is also relevant to theme 3, regulatory provisions in the field of housing in favour of marginalized groups, being a good example of how social housing interventions can constitute a solid framework for integrated multi-sectoral programmes aimed at regenerating neighbourhoods. Finally, theme 6, cooperation and networking, has a crosscutting relevance, given the contribution of Le Murate to the URBACT programme.</p>
<p><b>5. FUNDING</b></p>	
	<p>About 700 000 € came from ERDF funding, out of a total investment over 40 million € for the whole implementation, of which about 14m € was provided for in the previous period. No particular mismatch appeared with local and national funding. A detailed account of the project finance is difficult: the different actions gathered under the Le Murate regeneration intervention come from different sources and are at different stages, with some projects already implemented, some partially funded and others still</p>

	<p>looking for resources.</p> <p>Small enterprises are in the start-up phase and it is not possible to quantify data regarding private sector leverage. The Restaurant and the Literary Café managers reported good commercial revenues after the start-up.</p> <p>The rent income from commercial and residential spaces is managed by Casa spa, which pays it into a specific fund for Le Murate, aimed at the self- sustainable maintenance of the area. This fund is a peculiarity of the project, because in the ordinary practice Casa SpA manages all the social housing stock of Florence with a single account.</p>
<b>6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>6.1. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	ERDF funds have been used to provide equipment to the Urban Park for Innovation. The municipality and the managing organizations are supposed to provide for the future continuation of its activities.
<b>6.2. TRANSFERABILITY</b>	<p>The project did not start in previous ERDF funding phases.</p> <p>The Municipality of Florence participated in the Raphael 98 programme REPRISE (Regeneration of Old Prisons) with the Le Murate project, a pilot networking operation that anticipated the REPAIR URBACT experience.</p> <p>The new administration, which inherited the project two years ago, has adopted its philosophy as a model for possible further intervention in the historical centre, where several huge disused buildings and complexes could be redeveloped according to the principles applied here: mixed functions, openness to the public, strong attention to social aspects. On the other hand, the economic sustainability of the project is highly dependent on the exceptional funding opportunity, which calls for a more consistent involvement of other resources to replicate the model. A more innovative and consistent use of EU funding would be an important factor in improving the model.</p>
<b>6.3 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS</b>	<p>According to the interviewees no major problems have been encountered in the implementation process except for the difficulties related to the bureaucratic management of big projects realized through public tenders such as possible delays in the realization, cost management with private building companies etc.</p> <p>A main technical issue has been the re-adaptation of the premises into the new features required by the creation of the Urban Park for Innovation, but the management team has been able to consider this as an opportunity to improve the final solution for the area. A still unsolved issue is the identification of funding sources for completing the last part of the intervention, namely the House of the City, requiring a significant investment that in the actual financial conditions does not appear as an easy task. Finally, an open question to be addressed is how to form a structure able to manage the ordinary activity and programming for the area in the future.</p> <p>Another level of issues regards the integration of this project in the regeneration of the district, and the real participation of citizens to the decision making process. The public workshop, created for the design of Piazza Ghiberti and the relocation of the flea market demonstrated that still the use of participatory practices by the municipal administration is a marginal practice, used more for promotional purposes and consensus building than for enhancing an effective deliberative capacity of the local society.</p>
<b>6.4 PROJECT OUTPUTS &amp; RESULTS</b>	The first tangible result of the project has been to create a high-standard social housing complex by redeveloping a challenging historical building.

	<p>73 apartments have already been delivered to tenants selected from the list of those deserving social support for housing, at affordable rent prices. A new population of more than 200 inhabitants has settled in the area. The cost of refurbishment has been kept at a reasonable level, demonstrating that this type of redevelopment of historical buildings is suitable for social housing. Therefore, also the results of countering the loss of residential life from the centre appears to have been achieved, if not in statistically significant terms, at least in identifying successful practices and reversing general trends. Opening up a closed urban fabric with new squares, public space and pedestrian access is definitely a successful achievement. The prison complex constituted a huge black spot in the neighbourhood, dividing the lively area of the Sant’Ambrogio market from the monumental complex of Santa Croce. The project delivered a new pedestrian access system including a shopping arcade and two squares which, apart from significantly improving mobility in the area, have been successfully adopted by citizens as an attractive place for socialising, and are quickly acquiring a lively public life. The project improves the social life of the city by creating a new cultural focus, which integrates the provision of facilities in the neighbourhood with flexible connecting spaces. Finally it is creating opportunities for employment, research, and new technologies in a strategic urban spot, also reinforcing the possibility of strategic cooperation with the neighbouring universities and other R&amp;D organizations in the city.</p>
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<b>7. CONCLUSIONS: KEY SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>	
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	<p>On the long term the main factors influencing the success of the project have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ The presence of a coherent vision of a multi functional urban district planned in and integrated and holistic view. Since the clear objective of policies enhancing the recovery of the centre as a residential core of the city manifested by the Primicerio Administration, and the project ideas provided by arch. Renzo Piano, the project has clearly pursued the integration of a consistent social housing project with the implementation of a multi functional cultural container, effectively responding to what is a growing demand for social spaces in the city.</li> <li>_ The continuity of management and the competence and commitment of the team, which has been in the condition to create a lifelong relationship with the project, resulted in the capacity to solve coherently and successfully the design issues. This demonstrates that the involvement of local actors in long term projects is a key factor of success. However, there are several ways to obtain such commitment. In the case of the Murate, no typically participative approach has been applied: nevertheless the formation of a team of civil servants involved with continuity into the project implementation has well responded to the necessity to interpret local needs and knowledge. A main success factor of such a project is in a team able to install good human relationships together with a long term relationship with the adopted territory, what Roberto Melosi has defined ‘a lifelong relationship’ with the Murate Project.</li> </ul> <p>Undoubtedly a success factor has been the existence of a consistent public funding providing the solid base for the implementation of the physical regeneration. On the other hand, the integrative approach designing the multifunctional use of the area seems to prove successful at least in terms of social sustainability of the project.</p>
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<b>8. FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	
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