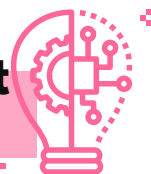




Francesca Vezzani, © Comune Reggio Emilia

# Open Hub in the Ancient San Peters' Cloisters



Cultural heritage supporting social innovation and urban digital transformation



Participatory Governance



Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings



Quality of interventions on cultural heritage



(IT)

**REGGIO EMILIA**

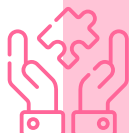


172,371



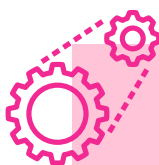
## Challenge

Reggio Emilia is one of the largest cities in the industrial Emilia-Romagna region. In the last 20 years, the city has been confronted with industrial decline and the challenging transition from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge and innovation economy. This has particularly affected the historic city centre, increasingly abandoned by residents and businesses. This led to rising unemployment, social exclusion and the risk of losing its distinctive local identity.



## Solution

The municipality restored the former Benedictine monastery of Saints Peter and Prospero (also known as Cloisters of San Pietro), a historical complex in the city centre, integrating quality architectural renovation and adaptive re-use to host an urban 'Open Lab', a hub for social, cultural and business projects. The hub gathers the local authority, citizens, businesses and researchers for cultural experimentation, social innovation, young entrepreneurship, wellbeing, digital transformation and collaborative economy through participatory and bottom-up approaches, contributing to urban regeneration.



## How ?

- 1 In March 2019, the municipality initiated the restoration of the Benedictine complex of Saint Peter and Prospero. The municipality worked with architects and the Regional Office for Cultural Heritage Protection.
- 2 In parallel, the municipality started a participatory process with local stakeholders to co-design the mission and activities of the Open Lab to be established in the renovated buildings, including citizens, cultural associations, artists and creators, social innovators, industrial research networks, organisations that promote technology transfer, incubators, local universities and research centres.
- 3 The co-design process resulted in the definition of the strategic guidelines for the Open Lab management model and functions. Following a public tender, the municipality collaborated with the local Consortium of social cooperatives to manage the Open Lab.
- 4 The Cloisters and the Open Lab opened to the public to host cultural events, educational programmes and training in creative and digital skills, and co-working spaces for prototyping of goods and services.

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## Budget/Financing

€ 3,950,000

- 80% was funded by the Emilia Romagna region through the European Regional Development Fund's Regional (ERDF) Operational Programme (Axis 6 'Attractive and Participatory Cities')
- Renovation and functional recovery of the building: €2,700,000 (€1,750,000 from ERDF; €950,000 from the municipality of Reggio Emilia)
- Open Laboratory: €1,250,000 (80% ERDF; 20% municipality of Reggio Emilia)

## Management



- The Department of Competitiveness and Innovation of the municipality led the implementation process. Considering the cross-sectorial nature of the project, the deputy mayors and the heads of other municipal departments were closely associated with the projects through an executive committee (cultural services, communication, digital transformation and technological innovation; culture, territorial marketing and tourism).
- The Consortium of Social Cooperatives ('Consorzio Cooperative Sociali Quarantacinque'), an association of local cooperatives working in the social, education and cultural sectors, is playing a crucial role as managing body of the Open Lab.
- Cultural associations and institutions were represented in a scientific committee providing technical advice to the municipality (local theatres Palazzo Magnani Foundation, Aterballetto Dance Foundation, Peri Musical Institute).
- The Emilia-Romagna Region, in particular the Regional Department of Architectural Heritage and Landscapes, offered crucial administrative and financial support.



## Transferability

- Do not be afraid of new technologies to protect, restore and enhance cultural heritage.
- Encourage the re-use of cultural heritage as a means of giving the city/region a distinctive character and improving its attractiveness.
- Make sure to use an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to decision making based on co-creation and co-design processes.



## Impact

- Improved citizens' engagement in adaptive reuse of local cultural heritage.
- Reinforced dialogue and multi-stakeholder collaboration through co-creation and bottom-up processes.
- Creation of new models of participatory governance for cultural heritage.
- Improved cross-collaboration between cultural heritage and other sectors such as cultural and creative industries and ICT.
- Creation of employment opportunities in the historic city centre fostering social inclusion.
- Increased offer of educational and cultural opportunities for local communities.



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## Links

For more info in Italian: <https://bit.ly/3iK9hKi>  
 Video of the renovation: <https://bit.ly/3gxBS3y>



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