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Empoli, a Tuscan city between industry and design

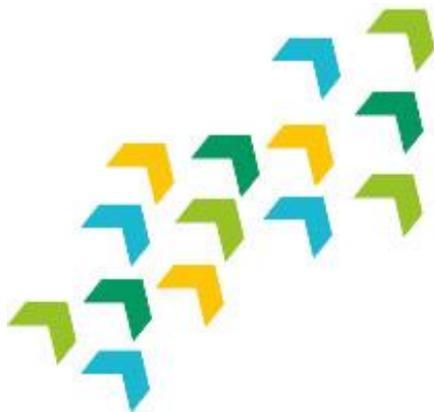


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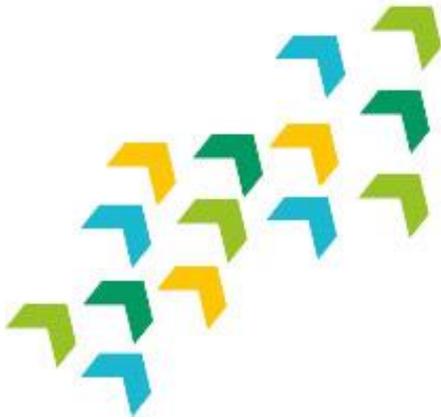


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1. Brief characterization of Empoli and its territory

Empoli is a town and municipality of about 50.000 inhabitants located in the Province of Florence, in the Region of Tuscany, about 30 kilometres southwest of regional capital City of Florence.

Empoli is located in an area called the "Valdarno Inferiore" (Lower Arno river plain) - which roughly corresponds to the area of the "Sistema Locale del Lavoro" (SLL) or "Labor Market Area" (LMA) described in the economic section - which, to the West, leads towards the coast and the cities of Pisa and Livorno and hosts the main infrastructures of the Region: the International Airport of Pisa and the Port of Livorno. Mountains and hills (Montalbano) mark the northern borders with the Province of Prato and Pistoia, while south, the valley of the river Elsa connects the area to the territory of the Province of Siena.

The densely urbanized Arno plain is surrounded, both at north and south, by hilly territories that retain the original characters, largely recognizable in the settlement that still follows the ancient spatial organization. The historical settlements are located in peculiar structurally positions (e.g. the village of Capraia at the confluence of the river Pesa in the Arno river; the ancient centers of Fucecchio, Cerreto Guidi and Vinci, on the hills interposed between the marshes of Fucecchio and the Montalbano mountain). The hilly landscape is, in many cases, characterized by the presence of a "villa" connected to the agricultural activity. Sometimes residual portions with similar functions can be identified close to the banks of the Arno.

The road infrastructure is less efficient on the hilly areas which surround the Arno plain. Nevertheless several economic activities, like agriculture and "agritourism", have developed in this part of the area in connection to the main naturalistic and cultural places, and in a marginal way also connected to the thermalism. The cultivation of the vineyard is the main agricultural activity for which there are forms of transformation that do not always achieve significant balances between production needs and landscape original structures. The hills which surround Empoli have similar characteristics to those of the so-called "Chianti classico": traditional agriculture deriving from the traditional farm structure, with prevalence of vineyards and olive trees, partly terraced. The degradation by abandonment of crops in the fertile Arno plain are often connected to expectation of urbanization.

The area is located in a central position with respect to the most important demographically and economically areas of the Region, and it is characterized by a strong and diverse industrial specialization and an equally strong service connected structure. The city of Empoli and the industrial areas of the territory are crossed by the main road axis, the so called "FI-PI-LI" – which connect Firenze to Pisa and Livorno. The road marks an almost continuous linear settlement system of industrial specialized areas: east of Empoli, in the territory of the town of Montelupo Fiorentino, it is localized an historical cluster of ceramics; entering the plain, between the river and the road the first industrial area include the companies "Colorobbia", which produces colors for the decoration of industrial and artistic tiles, porcelain, ceramics and glass, and "Bitossi ceramiche", which is listed in the Register of "Historical Italian Companies", and produce ceramics with a long tradition of cooperation with important designers. Immediately after, at the beginning of the Empoli territory we find the "Sammontana" food industry, Italian leader in the *gelato* and the frozen-desserts sector, and south of the road the technology pole, which hosts some ICT companies like "Sesa" and "Cabel" and other knowledge intensive companies. Once passed the city of Empoli we find the most important industrial area, "Terrafino", which includes some of the most important

fashion companies and the industry "Zignago vetro" which produces glass for food and beverages, as well as for perfumes and cosmetics: it is important to remark that their production process is strictly connected to the recycling of waste glass. Proceeding to the west, we reach the areas of Santa Croce sull'Arno where is concentrated the world leader cluster in the tannery which provides leather to the fashion industry and applies a sustainable approach to the production process, and then we reach Pontedera where together with other mechanical companies is based the industry "Piaggio", leader in the production of scooters and motorcycles, which also promotes research and technology transfer.

1.1 Brief characterization of the territory of Empoli: Population and Immigration

The 1971 census recorded 44,129 inhabitants in Empoli, with an increase of 19% on the previous census. In the following Censuses there will never be such an increase in the residents. In 1981 the population reached 45,181 (+ 2.4%) and in 1991 recorded for the first time a regression (-3.7%, equal to 43,500 inhabitants). In the following Census (2001) the City recovered some of the population which has been lost during the previous decade reaching 44,100 (+ 1.3%), and more decidedly in 2011: approximately 46,500 (+ 5.5%). A similar trend emerges in the data of the Registry Office of the Comune di Empoli, which counts 48.626 residents at the end of 2018.

Comune di Empoli. Residents in the Census

Census	Population	% of change
1971	44.129	
1981	45.181	2,4
1991	43.522	-3,7
2001	44.094	1,3
2011	46.541	5,5
2018*	48.626	4,5

*The data for this year are those of the Registry Office of the Comune di Empoli

Source: Istat

The natural balance of the population (births minus deaths) of Empoli has always been negative for more than a decade (-242 inhabitants in 2017). On the other hand, the migratory balance has been constantly positive by around 500 units between 2001 and 2010 and by around 300 from 2013 onwards. At the same time, while the demographic balance with foreign countries remains positive (from an average of +465 to one of +373 in the years described), the domestic balance reverses its sign, falling from +36 to -65. Some basic trends of the Empoli demography are common to all of Italy, e.g. the decrease in the average size of the family (from 2.6 to 2.4 people between 2004 and 2018) or the increase in the population over 80 (+ 36% in the same period of time), as part of an aging process slowed down only by the influx of the immigration, and by the recovery of births induced by it.

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Total population and immigrant population in Regione Toscana, Circondario di Empoli and Comune di Empoli, 2018.

	Total population			Total immigrants			% of immigrants
	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Regione Toscana	1.800.741	1.928.900	3.729.641	196.624	220.758	417.382	11,2
Circondario	84.939	89.823	174.762	11.003	11.715	22.718	13,0
Empoli	23.340	25.286	48.626	3.698	3.931	7.629	15,7

Source: Regione Toscana, Open data (<http://open.toscana.it/>)

But it is interesting to analyze the consistency of immigrant communities. Immigrant residents grew from 2.694 to 7.626 between 2004 and 2018, passing from 5.9% to 15.7% of the local population. Up to the first years of the economic crisis of 2008 the increase of foreign residents was sustained (an increase in the share of around 0.9% per year), in the following years the trend slowed down (in the last five years the increase was 0.3%).

The growth of immigrants of Chinese nationality was impressive, and today makes up about 5% of the Empoli total residents (and 34% of the total immigrant residents in 2018), and also of some other nationalities such as Georgians, Nigerians, Senegalese and, until 2013, Romanians. However, there were also many national communities that experienced a sharp drop: first of all the Albanians (decreased by over 130 in five years), but also Filipinos, Ukrainians, Poles and Moroccans. The most attractive period seems to have passed by now (apart from the Chinese case which presents some peculiarities - firstly that of creating employment opportunities in Chinese owned companies within the group), as we also confirm an assessment of the distribution by age. As an effect of family reunification, or the progress of the integration process, the strong gender characterization of some national communities is receding (Peruvians, Senegalese), and that where it remains high (as it is for the Polish, Ukrainian and Georgian, composed largely of women employed in nursing work), coincides with the community in numerical regression. The following table describes the consistence of the immigration at the level of the Comune di Empoli, the Circondario, and the Regione Toscana.

Total immigrant population and most important nationalities by genre at the level of Regione Toscana, Circondario di Empoli and Comune di Empoli, 2018.

	M	F	T	M	F	T	%*
Empoli	3.698	3.931	7.629	48%	52%	100%	16%
Cina	1.365	1.249	2.614	52%	48%	100%	34%
Romania	319	546	865	37%	63%	100%	11%
Albania	423	399	822	51%	49%	100%	11%
Filippine	372	413	785	47%	53%	100%	10%
Georgia	86	280	366	23%	77%	100%	5%
Circondario	11.003	11.715	22.718	48%	52%	100%	13%
Cina	3.586	3.337	6.923	52%	48%	100%	30%
Albania	1.983	1.842	3.825	52%	48%	100%	17%
Romania	1.007	1.777	2.784	36%	64%	100%	12%
Marocco	981	837	1.818	54%	46%	100%	8%
Filippine	469	546	1.015	46%	54%	100%	4%
Toscana	196.624	220.758	417.382	47%	53%	100%	11%

Romania	32.321	52.774	85.095	38%	62%	100%	20%
Albania	32.097	29.969	62.066	52%	48%	100%	15%
Cina	28.467	27.617	56.084	51%	49%	100%	13%
Marocco	14.889	12.256	27.145	55%	45%	100%	7%
Filippine	5.925	7.287	13.212	45%	55%	100%	3%

*The first line of the last column (in bold) shows the share of immigrants at each administrative level considered, the following lines shown the share of the single nationality on the total immigrants for each administrative level considered.

Source: Regione Toscana, Open data (<http://open.toscana.it/>)

In 2004 the share of foreign residents in the total was 10% in all three younger age groups, with a modest 4% in the 45-59 age group. 14 years later, the highest percentage of foreigners is the 25-44 age group (central for the labor market), where 26% of Empoli residents are reached, while the younger age groups have a lower incidence (foreigners under the age of 15 are 21% of the residents), even if the 'second generations' born in Italy are progressively increasing in number and in its relevance.

While at the regional level the share of the immigrant population on the total residents is 11%, the highest concentration in the Circondario (13%) and in the city of Empoli (16%) reflects the demand for industrial employment¹, which characterizes the area, and also the need for services related to the families and to the elderly population. The composition of the immigrant groups include the Chinese, which is the first group in the area of Empoli - as happens in other industrial districts of the Region - where they represent the 34% of the total immigrants at the level of the Comune and 30% in the Circondario, while at the regional level they are the third group with the share of 13%. The other important groups are European, with the Romanians as the first group in the Region (20%) and Albanian the second (15%); the same nationalities appear also in the Empoli area immediately after the Chinese. The gender division is mostly balanced with the exception of the Georgians in Empoli, which are prevalently female (77%), and partly the Romanians, where the female represent also the majority (over 60% at all levels).

1.2. Brief characterization of the territory of Empoli: the regional industrial policies

The relevance of the City of Empoli as an attractor of labor force, concentration of economic activities and services has been an important asset in order to promote forms of economic and territorial planning which in some cases have been innovative in the frame of the national and European administrative territorial management practice. An important step in this direction has been the approval of a new intermediate level of administration, the "Circondario dell'Empolese Valdelsa" (Regional Law n. 38 - May 29, 1997). The *Circondario* promotes the social and economic development, the protection and the upgrading of the local environmental and territorial resources. The *Circondario* was conceived as an area which included the continuous territory of 11 *Comuni*² (which are also part of the territory of the Province of Firenze), with the city of Empoli as the leader which was also hosting the Assembly of the *Circondario*.

¹ The same trend emerged in the industrial district of Prato, where the share of immigrants reach the 22% of the total population and the Chinese immigrants are more than 24.000.

² Capraia e Limite, Castelfiorentino, Cerreto Guidi, Certaldo, Empoli, Fucecchio, Gambassi Terme, Montaione, Montelupo Fiorentino, Montespertoli, Vinci

Few years later, at the end of 2001, in order to support the activity of the Circondario and to foster the achievement of its objectives, several local public partners and other organizations (associations of workers and entrepreneurs, chamber of commerce, e.g.) promoted the constitution of a development agency: "Agenzia per lo Sviluppo dell'Empolese Valdelsa" (ASEV). ASEV was managing services oriented to increase the efficiency of the local labor market, promote vocation training, innovation and in general the economic development. The area of Empolese Valdelsa includes two Labor market areas (LMAs) or "local labor systems" "Sistemi locali del Lavoro", (SLL) in the Italian economic and administrative frame. The two areas are those of Empoli³ and Castelfiorentino⁴, which have a total population of about 152.000 residents. LMA are areas built on the basis of commuting to work data and are commonly used in several national statistical institution, including the European institution⁵ in order to provide a representation of the economic regional geography. The statistical tool identifies a LMA when the majority of the labour force lives and works within its boundaries⁶.

In this sense the Circondario reflects the characteristics of the two LMA and it represents a functional geographical area which goes beyond the administrative boundaries. It is an economically integrated spatial unit within which residents can find jobs within a reasonable commuting distance or can change their employment without changing their place of residence. This approach was also the result of the regional orientation towards the economic development which was aimed at defining specific economic areas and contributed to the definition of another statistical unit which was adopted in order to plan the regional policies: the Industrial District (ID).

Based on the National Statistics Institution (Istat) definition, the industrial district is a "socio-territorial entity made up of a community of companies and people, as well as territorial relationships and by socio-economic ties. These companies belong mainly to the same sector of economic activity, which defines its main industry, and they are characterized by small and medium size". ID are specific local labor systems (SLL), or LMA, characterized by a high territorial concentration of small and medium-sized enterprises and by an industrial specialization.

The recognition of the ID occurred for the first time with the national law n. 317 of October 5, 1991. Until then, the industrial districts have had no effective institutional identity, but the interaction with the local government had been based on the creation of consortia and local trade associations. The Law no. 317 of 1991 promoted the participation of the regions both in the identification of the ID, and in the activity of support and financing.

The productive specializations that characterize the Tuscan ID are related to the following productive sectors: Textiles and clothing (textile industries, clothing garments; fur preparation and dyeing), Leather, leather and footwear (tanning industries, manufacture of leather products, leather and similar, footwear), Household goods (wood industry and furniture manufacturing; manufacture of non-metallic mineral products), Jewelry, goldsmith's, musical instruments, etc. (jewelry and goldsmiths, manufacture of musical

³ Including Capraia e Limite, Cerreto Guidi, Empoli, Montelupo Fiorentino, Montespertoli, Vinci

⁴ Including Castelfiorentino, Certaldo, Gambassi Terme, Montaione

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/labour-market-areas_en

⁶ According to the Eurostat definition, LMAs are: "economically integrated regions within which residents can find jobs in a reasonable commuting distance, or can change their employment without changing their place of residence. They are designed to allow new analyses of socio-demographic characteristics and to overcome the traditional constraints of regional statistics, as administrative boundaries often result from historical circumstances rather than real world social and economic realities." (Eurostat, 2016. Urban Europe — statistics on cities, towns and suburbs. Page 201).

instruments, sporting goods, games and toys), Mechanical industry (manufacture of machines and mechanical appliances, including installation, assembly, repair and maintenance; manufacture of electric machines and electronic and optical equipment; manufacture and processing of metal products; casting of metals), paper and polygraphic industries (pulp, paper and paper products manufacturing; printing and publishing).

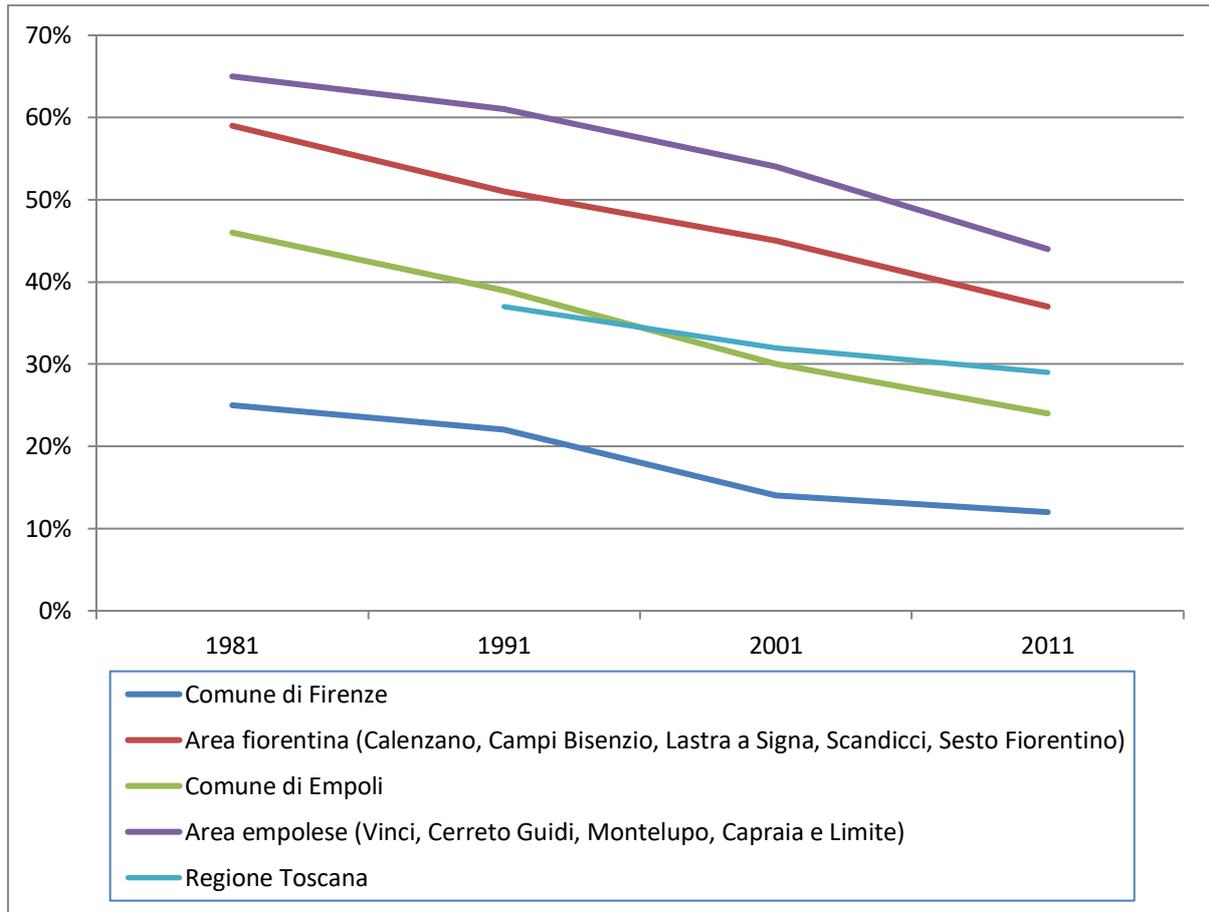
The territory of Empoli, corresponding to that of the LMA, was recognized⁷ - as an ID, as it was the other LMA, which was also part of the *Circondario*, that of Castelfiorentino. The ID of Empoli emerged as a territory specialized in Textile and Clothing Industries, while the one of Castelfiorentino in Leather and footwear. Nevertheless, the area of Empoli has never been a mono-specialized area. The concentration of the SMEs active in the Clothing sector emerge as a first specialization, but the second specialization is Leather and footwear, and the third is the Glass production. The trend of the consistency of the Clothing industry workers in the area of Empoli follows the lines of a curve that rises during the sixties and the seventies of XX century, to stop and reverse the trend during the eighties and nineties, with the result of being now at the same level of employment of thirty years earlier. At the highest point of the parabola, more than half of the manufacturing workers in Empoli was employed in Clothing industry - not counting the informal or household work, mostly done by female home workers.

1.3. Brief characterization of the territory of Empoli: the industrial specializations

It is at the level of the rest of the ID more than in the territory of the municipality of Empoli that Clothing industry stands out as the specialization of the local economic activity - while the employees of the major urban center are engaged in more diversified activities than in the rest of the ID territory. In fact, to understand the dynamics of Empoli economy it is necessary to abandon the orientation of reading the data focusing the attention on the 'dominant sector' and recognize the plurality of the local industrial specialization: if during the sixties the industries of Clothing and Glass was employing the same number of employees, at the 2011 census the Glass production was reduced in terms of employee, as in the case of the Wood and Furniture sector, while the Food sector reached the level of employment of the Clothing industry.

Decline of the Manufacturing employment between 1981-2011 through the Census data. Share of Manufacturing employment on the Total employee. Comune di Empoli, Comune di Firenze, Area fiorentina, Area empolese, Regione Toscana

⁷ The list of the IDs identified in Tuscany was attached to the deliberation n. 69 of February 21, 2000 of the Regional Council.



Source: Istat

Despite the fact that the Region of Tuscany, and in particular some parts of its territory, are still characterized by the relevance of the industrial production compared to the national and European average, the inter-census comparisons (see the previous table and graph) shows the progressive trend towards the downsizing of the employment in manufacturing industry – particularly evident in the Area of Empolese (which in the table corresponds to a part of the territory of the *Circondario* only) and in the *Comune* di Empoli, but also in the Area Fiorentina (the more industrial *Comuni* in the outskirts of the City of Firenze). At the same time the level of employment in Trade, but mainly in the Services, increase significantly mainly in the Cities of Firenze and Empoli.

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Composition of the employment in the Census of 1981-2011. Comune di Empoli, Comune di Firenze, Area fiorentina, Area empolese

	1981			1991			2001			2011		
	Industry	Trade	Services									
Comune di Firenze	25%	25%	26%	22%	31%	17%	14%	30%	29%	12%	31%	31%
Area fiorentina (Calenzano, Campi Bisenzio, Lastra a Signa, Scandicci, Sesto Fiorentino)	59%	20%	9%	51%	25%	7%	45%	24%	14%	37%	27%	16%
Comune di Empoli	46%	21%	18%	39%	27%	14%	30%	26%	22%	24%	30%	24%
Area empolese (Vinci, Cerreto Guidi, Montelupo, Capraia e Limite)	65%	13%	10%	61%	19%	6%	54%	20%	8%	44%	24%	11%
Regione Toscana				37%	21%	9%	32%	26%	22%	29%	25%	23%

Source: Istat

This description is in continuity with the elements that still today mark the 'manufacturing system' of Empoli, which remains one of the most important ID of Clothing industry in the region, an important asset of the Tuscan 'fashion industrial system'.

These are some observations⁸ on the structural change that started in the economy manufacturing in the area. During the eighties the process has intensified, leading to the collapse of employees in the sector of clothing and marking the beginning of the descending parabola in terms of employment. The so-called «on schedule» or fast fashion ("pronto moda") production. The core of production which is manufactured with seasonal programming through a long series of industrial processes, was gradually relocated, leaving on site the most artisanal processes only, short series, restocking, samples. The production companies on behalf of stylists were thus multiplying and important fashion companies, sometimes adding their own brand to these high-end licenses on the production lines.

Focus on the export of the Clothing Industry of the ID of Empoli in 2018 and first quarter of 2019

The year 2019 marks a new trend in the export of the products of the clothing industry of the district of Empoli: foreign sales reach a value of 447 million, an increase of 38.6% compared to the first quarter of 2018 (total export of the Clothing Industry of the ID of Empoli in 2018 has been 1.336,2 millions of Euro). In particular, exports to Switzerland have more than doubled, confirming it as the first destination market with an incidence on the total that goes from 16% to 38% [the role of this logistic pole market (Switzerland) is crucial for the luxury sector; these flows of products are related to the operations of the financial groups (which owns some of the most important brand in these sector) which are characterized by a strong diversification of products that include not only leather goods and footwear, but also clothing]. In the European market, sales to France (+2.6 million; + 8%), the United Kingdom (+3.4 million; + 13%) are strengthening, while exports to Spain remain stable. In Asian markets there was a decrease towards Hong Kong (-2 million; -7%), more than offset by exports to Japan (+1 million; + 7%), China (+3.5 million; + 32%) and Republic of Korea (+2.7 million; + 27%).

(Source: "Monitor regionale dei Distretti industriali")

<https://group.intesasanpaolo.com/it/research/Categoria/-distretti/2019/distretti-industriale/pubblicazioni-monitor-dei-distretti-regionali>

It was in the nineties that the first companies with foreign owners appeared, in particular of Chinese nationality. The increase in these companies, mostly artisanal and small, was dizzying; in a few years they exceeded the number of Italian companies in the clothing sector: in 2006 they made up 59.5% of the total. This presence would have allowed to keep part of the production within the district, perpetuating the ten-year tradition of local subcontractors, who survived thanks to the low labor costs. The importance of rapidity for the clothing sector, which makes use of just-in-time production and the handling of small quantities, has certainly favored that trend, which has intertwined with the development of networks of subcontractors outside the area, in Italy or abroad (especially in Eastern Europe and Asia), by the major companies interested in large volumes of planned production.

In any case, the contraction of employees in the historical glass and clothing sectors seems to have highlighted what remains the characteristic feature of local economic history:

⁸ Part of the information and descriptive analysis on the Empoli recent industrial history came from the following two essays: Stefano Gallo, "Dall'impresa diffusa alla deindustrializzazione" (From the decentralized model of company to de-industrialisation); Franco Bortolotti, "Crescita urbana e nuove funzioni economico-territoriali" (urban growth and new economic and territorial functions). The essays are included in: "Empoli, nove secoli di storia" (Empoli, nine centuries of History), vol. II "Età contemporanea", a cura di (edited by), Giuliano Pinto, Gaetano Greco e Simonetta Soldani, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2019.

diversity. This is the case of the food industry, reported as one of the most interesting sectors for the economic development of the area as early as the late seventies, when the company "Sammontana" became a joint stock company or other growing companies like "INPA" based in Vinci; and the same can be said of the large scale distribution sector, in which the presence of "UniCoop Firenze"⁹ (which was established in Empoli) stands out, of IT companies such as "SeSa spa" (founded in 1973), of manufacturing companies with a high technological rate such as "Ceam", which manufactures machinery for electronics and temperature sensors for industry, "Antonini srl", which manufactures production machines for hollow glass, or "Cama", which specializes in refrigeration systems and the group "Zignago vetro", which is one of the leader in the production of glass bottles mainly for wine and olive oil.

⁹ Unicoop Firenze was established in 1973 from the merger between Unicoop Empoli and Toscooop (formerly Casa del Popolo di Sesto Fiorentino), both in turn born from a long series of incorporations of small single-sided cooperatives. Turiddo Campaini, former director of Unicoop Empoli and still honorary president of the cooperative, was elected as president. Unicoop Firenze is one of the seven consumer cooperatives which constitute Coop - the most important Italian group of large-scale distribution considering its turnover.

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Territory designation ¹⁰	Area (Sq Km)	POPULATION (%)							UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)				
		Total* ('000)	M	F	-15Y	15-24	25-65	+65	Total	M	F	15-24y	Over 24y
Tuscany Region (NUT II)	22.987	3.729.641	1.803.203	1.933.765	462.874	328.224	2.035.583	902.960	6,7	5,9	7,7	23,6	NA
Provincia di Firenze (NUT III)	3.514	1.011.349	485.167	526.182	127.369	91.384	548.734	243.862	6,2	4,6	7,9	19,1	NA
SLL Empoli	340.3	109.938	53.270	56.668	14.526	10.525	59.131	25.756	6,8	NA	NA	NA	NA
Comune di Empoli (Project Territory)	62	48.795	23.421	25.374	6.208	4.728	26.636	11.223	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

*Data at 1st January 2019

Territory designation ¹¹	Total		Employed population					
			Primary ¹		Secondary ²		Tertiary ³	
	Active population ⁴ (‘000)	GDP	n. (%)	GDP	n. (%)	GDP	n. (%)	GDP
Tuscany Region (NUT II)	2.363.807	117,75 Billions	49.748 (3,1%)	NA	420.037 (26,2%)	NA	1.132.431 (70,7%)	NA
Provincia di Firenze (NUT III)	640.118	NA	7.395 (1,6%)	NA	116.964 (25,6%)	NA	331.097 (72,7%)	NA
SLL Empoli	49.545 ⁵	2,7 billions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Comune di Empoli (Project Territory)	31.364	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

¹Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (Primary)²Industry (Secondary)³Services including Public Administration, Transports, Tourism, etc (Tertiary)⁴Active Population = population between 15-65 years old

GDP = GDP / capita in % of EU average

⁵ Stima sulle forze di lavoro Istat 2018¹⁰ Name of Urban centre; rural centres or municipalities, FUA = Functional Urban Areas, etc¹¹ Name of Urban centre; rural centres or municipalities, FUA = Functional Urban Areas, etc

2. Brief characterization of the policy instrument addressed and other existing policy / strategic instruments

2.1 Description and main general characteristics of the Instrument

Policies addressed and territorial context (Policy Instruments)

The definition and implementation of the strategies of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is entrusted mainly to Regional Operational Programmes (ROP), according to the specific characteristics of each region and, in any case, within a common framework established in the "Partnership Agreement with Italy", approved by the European Commission on 29 October 2014.

The Italian Partnership Agreement has formulated precise indications for setting the programming period 2014-2020 in relation to the **Urban Agenda**, including:

- to seek territorial integration through a thematic, targeted and circumscribed approach, based on real and practical common objectives, avoiding the temptation to construct all-inclusive and, therefore, generalist territorial plans;
- to take into account, as early as the programming phase, the feasibility of actions, in order to identify and resolve any implementing problems as early as possible;
- to strengthen the capacity of local government bodies, assigning them operational roles for the synthesis of bottom-up requests for territorial economic development;
- to support actively the integration between physical elements and intangible aspects of the territorial action, recognising the central importance of improving the supply of public services to citizens, including by means of soliciting ordinary policies.

The Partnership Agreement has identified, moreover, three drivers for urban development, i.e. three mutually complementary priority areas of intervention in which to converge the development policies promoted with the structural funds:

1. redesign and modernisation of urban services for residents and users of the city (network infrastructure and public services; sustainable mobility; energy efficiency and renewable sources);
2. social inclusion practices and planning for the more vulnerable segments of the population and for disadvantaged areas and neighbourhoods (support for social policies by strengthening those already existing; fighting poverty and malaise);
3. strengthening the capacity of the city to boost the valuable local segments of global production chains (advanced services for industrial and agricultural enterprises; social, creative and public service enterprises; focus on research and innovation).

Regione Toscana (Region of Tuscany), in accordance with the principles, strategies and objectives outlined by the European Commission and by the Partnership Agreement, including in the light of the experiences of the two previous programming periods, has included a specific axis in its ERDF operational programme for the period 2014-2020 dedicated to Sustainable Urban Development, Axis VI Urban Development.

The centrality of the role assigned to the models of urban networks in the European policy is consistent with the structural interpretation of the regional territory and of its landscapes contained in the pivotal instruments of territorial governance in Tuscany, Regional Law No. 65/2014 and the Regional Territorial Plan (PIT/PPR), which recognize the polycentric nature

of the Tuscan residential and urban system as a heritage value to be treated as a structural invariant.

The document “**Guidelines for interventions in urban areas. Urban Innovation Projects (PIUs)** of the ROP ERDF 2014-2020 for Tuscany”, approved by the Regional Executive Committee with **Deliberation No. 57 of 26 January 2015**, traces the programme references for the implementation of the urban axis. In particular, the axis “has the objective of pursuing sustainable urban development through an integrated and multi-sectoral approach that enhances the strengths of the city, in terms of opportunities for growth and development, and acts on its weaknesses to overcome critical issues hindering economic and social development”.

The development drivers of the Partnership Agreement are outlined in the strategy of the Urban Axis of Tuscany in the following main objectives for urban areas:

- promote social inclusion and innovation, reducing demographicbased inequalities;
- promote the regional settlement structure and redevelop existing urban fabrics through urban regeneration, giving central importance to the construction of the “public city”, in which social, tertiary and service functions, functions for culture and leisure, infrastructures and public spaces are integrated with residence and confer an urban identity even to outlying districts;
- promote strategies for low carbon emissions in urban areas through energy saving and energy efficiency measures, the use of energy from renewable sources, the introduction of new, highperformance technologies and materials and the implementation of measures to increase collective urban and multi-modal sustainable mobility.

The Regional Guidelines for interventions in urban areas outline the following characteristics of an Urban Innovation Project (PIU):

- a coordinated and systemic set of operations of tangible and intangible infrastructural nature, whose implementation is intended to achieve the urban development objectives in terms of smart quality (smart city, smart community and smart grid), with a view to social, economic and environmental sustainability;
- it is based on a systemic, multidisciplinary and participatory approach;
- it is implemented through a participatory implementing design process and is an instrument of local development and multidimensional urban regeneration (physical, social, economic, environmental);
- it consists of actions of recovery, regeneration, re-organisation and enhancement of the existing public building heritage, intended also to improve relations with the surrounding urban fabrics or re-composition of urban fringes.

The strategy outlined promotes actions concentrated within defined urban spaces, which can guarantee good service accessibility, a smart organisation of resources, urban solutions compatible with the parameters of existing planning, favoring actions that best promote social inclusion and the improvement the quality of the environment, as well as the implementation of projects geared to the creation of employment.

The budget allocated to promote urban development actions is about €46 million, the equivalent to 6% of the total budget of the ROP ERDF 2014-2020. The actions included in the strategy are the following.

For Thematic Objective 9 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination:

- Action 9.3.1. Socio-educational services - Support for construction or renovation of infrastructures for early childhood education and care.

- Action 9.3.5. Social-health care services - Support for construction or renovation of infrastructures to enhance the provision of facilities for elderly people and people with limitations in autonomy, such as sheltered housing, day-care centres, independent living facilities, thus promoting innovative ways of users' involvement in unconventional processes and lifestyles (e.g. co-housing).
- Action 9.6.6. Buildings' recovery and destination to public purposes - Support for the regeneration of urban areas by the recovery of unused or no longer fit-for-purpose existing building heritage through the acquisition of equipment and services for social and collective participation activities, enhance the enjoyment of the cultural heritage, in particular for what concerns cultural venues. To this aim, support is also foreseen for investments in new start-ups, youth entrepreneurship and job creation, in liaison with the Regional Initiatives *Giovani Sì* and *Startup*. This Action consists of three sub-Actions:
 - sub-Action a.1 Social facilities;
 - sub-Action a.2 Sports facilities;
 - sub-Action a.3 Social and collective participation facilities (cultural and performing arts Institutes and venues).

For Thematic Objective 4 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors:

- Action 4.1.1. Eco-efficiency in buildings - Support for interventions aiming at eco-efficiency and reduction of primary energy consumption in public buildings, such as for the renovation - according the principles of eco-sustainable building construction - of individual or blocks of public buildings, as part of the design of eco-districts; installation of smart grids for remote control, setting, management, monitoring and optimization of energy consumption.
- Action 4.1.3. Smart street lighting networks - Support for interventions aiming at enhancing energy efficiency of the public lighting system, both through the replacement of light sources with energy-saving systems or installation of automatic power regulation systems.
- Action 4.6.1. Sustainable mobility - Support for the construction of infrastructures and transport interchanges aimed at increasing collective mobility and an eco-compatible goods' delivery transport system, through interventions intending to promote a larger use of public transport and / or alternative forms of transport to private vehicles, integrated management of restricted-traffic areas, street furniture and low-energy road signs, construction of car parks and slow mobility lanes.

The selection of the eligible urban area

The selection of the urban areas eligible for the financial support was designed as a two-step process. (i) The first one was based on the analysis and classification of the regional Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) and was conducted by the Regional Institute of Economic Programming (IRPET); (ii) the second step was a competitive selection between the local urban strategies ("Progetti di Innovazione Urbana", PIU, or Urban Innovation Project) submitted by the municipalities belonging to the FUAs which was selected in the first round.

In the Italian statistical and administrative planning literature the FUAs correspond to the areas of the daily commuting for work or the Local Labour Systems; these areas must exceed the demographic threshold of 50 thousand inhabitants for the total area, and 15 thousand inhabitants for the central municipality (nucleus of the commuter movement).

The pre-selection phase

The first step of the selection comprised the analyses of the social quality and territorial cohesion of the FUAs, with particular attention to social exclusion and environmental issues. This was done through the construction of a social index aimed at scoring the socioeconomic

and environmental deprivation. The index took into consideration a plurality of aspects of the socio-economic situation including several indicators:

- Elderly population (as the ratio between the population with the age of 65 years and over, with the population aged between 0 and 14);
- Share of the population aged between 0 and 3 years;
- Share of immigrants (from countries with high migratory pressure);
- Share of families which are included in the social housing;
- Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-24;
- Share of the population enrolled in a secondary school which obtained a negative outcome.

As for the environmental criticality the process of selection considered the data related to the PM10 and/or NO2 limit (traffic and heating emissions) according to the Regional regulations (DGR No. 1025 of December 6, 2010 "Zoning and classification of the regional territory in accordance with of the L.R. 9/2010 and Legislative Decree 155/2010 and identification of the regional detection network of the air quality"). The FUAs that displayed a value on the index of socio-economic distress higher than the regional average and overcome the PM10 and/or NO2 limits was selected as target areas of the urban strategy on a regional scale.

Moreover, in order to further concentrate the interventions, the Municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants which are included in the selected FUAs were excluded from the policy scheme, so as the peripheral and outermost municipalities, the internal areas and the municipalities included in the area of intervention of the Rural Development Program 2014-20, the FUA of Florence which was eligible for the interventions of the National Operative Program "Metro" aimed at intervening in the national metropolitan areas. The process of selection of the 21 regional FUAs identified the 14 FUAs listed in the following table. [The 14 FUAs selected included 42 municipalities](#) (see the following table and the two maps).

The 14 FUAs selected as eligible to the ROP Fesr of Tuscany

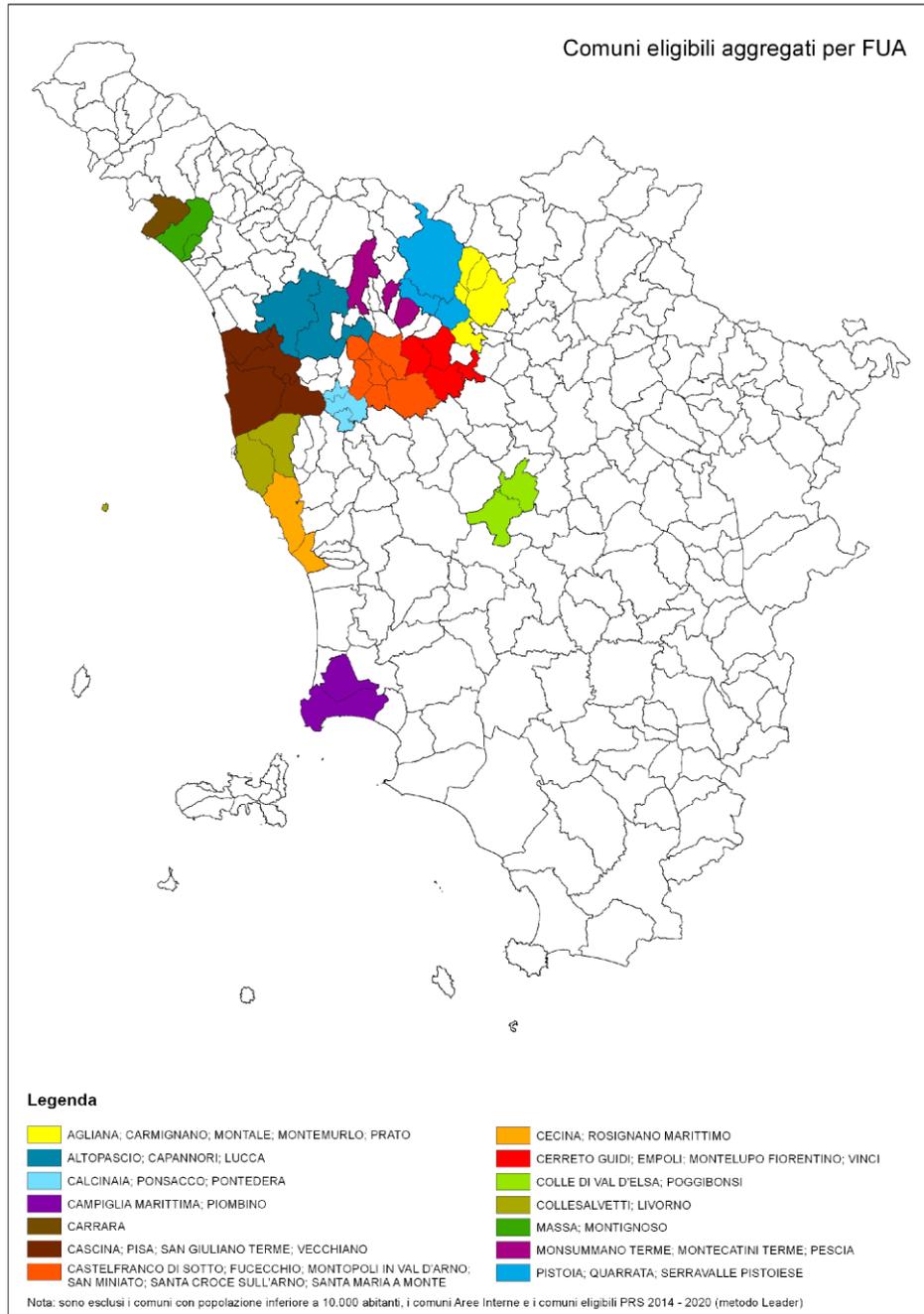
	FUA	Popolazione 2011	Municipalities included in the FUA (>10.000 inhabitants)	Social Index (Toscana =100)	Exceeding the threshold PM10 and/or NO2
1	Poggibonsi	69.916	2	117%	Si
2	Montecatini-Terme	120.498	3	115%	Si
3	Santa Croce sull'Arno	101.349	6	112%	Si
4	Prato	273.390	5	109%	Si
5	Piombino	57.804	2	104%	Si
6	Massa	79.082	2	104%	Si
7	Cecina	73.237	2	103%	Si
8	Carrara	64.689	1	102%	Si
9	Pisa	179.569	4	103%	Si
10	Empoli	105.156	4	105%	Si
11	Pistoia	129.197	3	102%	Si
12	Livorno	178.946	2	102%	Si
13	Pontedera	116.558	3	103%	Si
14	Lucca	163.873	3	101%	Si
		1.713.264	42		

The competitive selection process

The 42 Municipal Authorities belonging to selected FUAs were invited to submit their project ideas (PIU) in a Masterplan through an expression of interest (Decree n.3197 of July 10, 2015). For each operation included the Municipalities had to provide a feasibility study and a document which described the participative process with stakeholders, local authorities and organized citizenship.

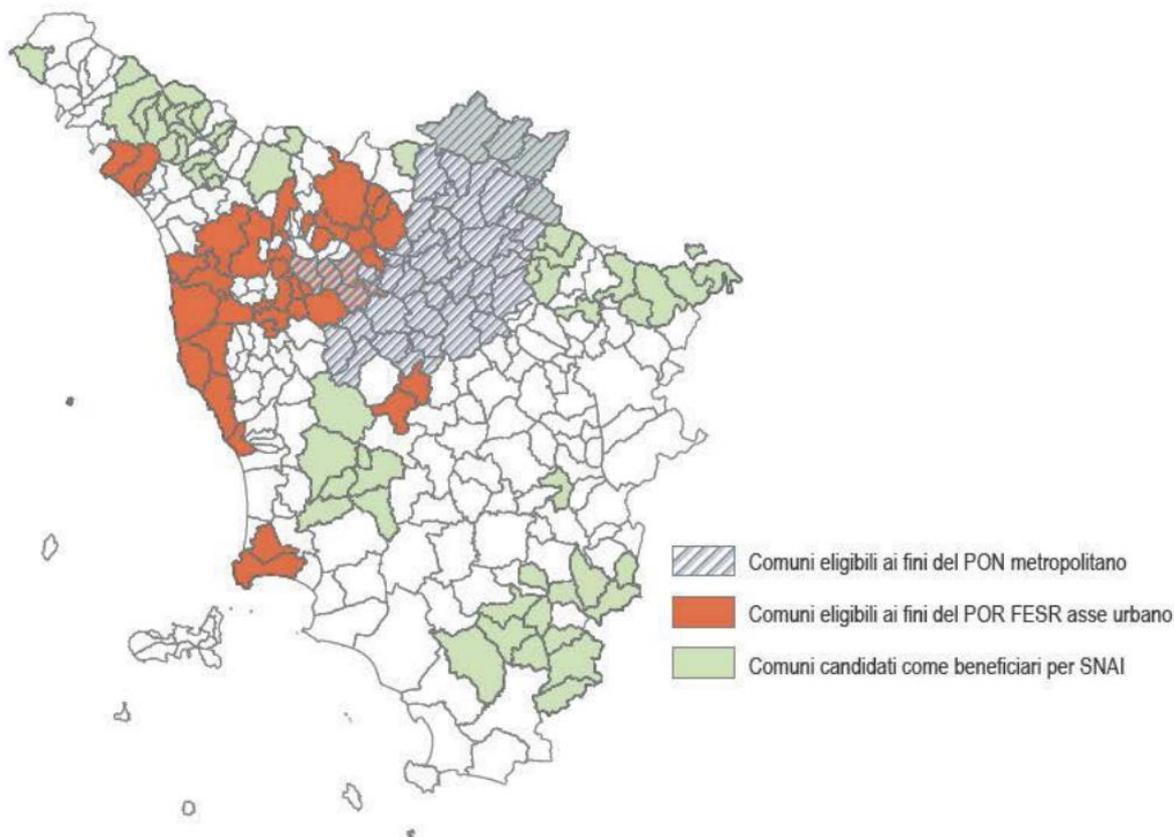
In the call for expressions of interest for the presentation of Urban Innovation Projects (PIU) 32 eligible Municipal Authorities responded with 21 strategic project proposals for actions in urban areas, some drafted by multiple associated entities, for a total of 223 infrastructure operations.

Map of the municipalities and FUAS eligible for the ROP Fesr of the Region of Tuscany 2014-20



Map of the municipalities and FUAs eligible for the ROP Fesr (red), NOP Metro (oblique lines), and to the National Strategy for the Inland Areas (green)

LE AREE ELIGIBILI AI FINI DEL PON-METRO, DEL POR-FESR ASSE URBANO E DELLA SNAI (STRATEGIA NAZIONALE AREE INTERNE)



Fonte: elaborazioni su dati Istat 2011

Source: C. Agnoletti, S. Iommi, P. Lattarulo, "Rapporto sul territorio. Configurazioni urbane e territori negli spazi europei", IRPET, Firenze 2015
(http://www.irpet.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/578_Rapp_terr_2014_0715-legg.pdf)

The applications were assessed on the basis of criteria of eligibility and merit approved by the ROP ERDF Monitoring Committee and transposed by Regional Executive Committee in the previous Deliberation Council Resolution No. 492 of 7 April 2015, by an Evaluation Committee (CTV) specially constituted and made up of the Coordinator of Urban Axis VI, the Action and Sub-action Managers, the Managing Authority of the ROP ERDF and other internal regional authority bodies responsible for environmental matters and strategic planning. The process of implementation of the PIUs and their operations was designed according to the stages described in the following table.

The process of implementation of the PIUs and their operations

Implementation Stage	Projects development
First level of projecting (Expression of interest)	Economic and operational feasibility study
Co-design stage (between the regional structure and the urban authorities)	Preliminary Projects and Management plan for each operation
Partnership agreement (between the regional structure and the urban authorities)	Final development of each of the single Project
Implementation of each operation through public evidence	<i>Idem</i>

After assessing the eligibility of the PIU proposals submitted and the operations involved, which ended with the Executive Directorial Decree No. 1762 of 7 April 2016, the project action strategies were evaluated (co-design stage between), taking into account the following aspects:

- Consistency with the Urban Axis strategy and integration with the cross-cutting strategies of Tuscany ROP ERDF and ROP ESF for the 2014-2020 programming period, consistency with the context of the existing planning instrumentation and with the objectives and strategies of the sectoral plans and programs related to the implemented Actions/Sub-actions;
- Effectiveness of the PIU and design quality of the actions, with particular reference to the capacity of the PIU to reduce socioeconomic malaise, including through improved levels of employment. On this aspect, the Evaluation Committee benefited from the support of IRPET in assessing the economic and employment dimension of the proposals. The effectiveness and the quality of the projects were also evaluated in reference to: quality of services, accessibility of spaces and overcoming factors of discrimination; the capacity to respond to critical environmental issues by acting on the quality of the landscape and the urban context; the capacity to create new urban centres and to contribute to the restoration of abandoned or rundown areas located in outlying or and/or marginal areas; the operational and financial sustainability of the actions; use of eco-friendly building solutions.
- Structure of the participative forms for the engagement of local residents and stakeholders in the project and concertation activities implemented;
- Reliability Capacity of the applicant with regard to past experience and performance in the implementation of actions and in the certification of expenditure, linked to European policies and in particular to the structural funds of previous programming periods, as expressly established by Reg. (EU) No. 1303/2013, as well as in the implementation of plans, programs and projects of regeneration and urban development.

Additional rewards were allocated for: positioning the PIU within projects of urban regeneration pursuant to Regional Law 65/2014; integration with public housing projects; advancement of the design level of operations; proportion of co-funding provided by the applicant authority exceeding the 20% required by the notice.

The findings of the evaluation by the CTV were approved with Directorial Executive Decree No. 4718 of 21 June 2016. Subsequently, with Regional Council Resolution Executive Committee Deliberation No. 655 of 5 July 2016, the [top eight projects](#) in the rankings were admitted to the stage of co-design between Regional and Municipal Authority, with the respective assigned ROP contribution budget contribution, and are listed below:

- “Più Prato” - Municipality of Prato

- “4 (i) Passi nel Futuro” - Municipality of Pisa
- “ALLENAMENTE... Una città per tutti” - Municipality of Cecina
- “HOPE, Home of People and Equality” - Municipality of Empoli
- “PIU Altavaldelsa: Città+Città = Creatività inclusiva e sostenibile” -
- Municipalities of Poggibonsi and Colle Val d’Elsa
- “Ri-generare il Ceppo” - Municipality of Pistoia (*withdrawn*)
- “Quartieri_social Sant’Anna” - Municipality of Lucca
- “PIU WAYS” - Municipalities of Rosignano Marittimo

In July 2017, after the modification amendment of the ROP ERDF that increased the maximum number of co-financeable Urban Axis projects from eight to nine, [a ninth PIU was added](#):

- “M+M Progetto di Innovazione Urbana Montemurlo PIU Montale” - Municipalities of Montemurlo and Montale Municipal Authorities

In April 2019, having acknowledged the failure to meet the requirements for implementing the “Ri-generare il Ceppo” PIU by Pistoia, with the consequent non-allocation of funding, the Regional Executive Committee Council, with Resolution No. 453 of 1 April 2019, allocated the resources available on the Urban Axis for [co-financing the tenth PIU](#) in the ranking, admitting it to the co-design stage:

- “Capannori Città: una Comunità, 40 paesi. CAPA-CITY” - Municipality of Capannori Municipal Authority.

With admission to the [co-design stage](#), the applicant municipal authorities were required to perform for the respective projects not just the tasks of the beneficiaries of funding, responsible for the implementation of the interventions, but also the role of Urban Authorities, i.e. entities in charge of the PIU integrated urban strategy.

Therefore, for each successful project, the proprietor responsible Municipal Authorities identified, were required to identify, according to with their own procedures, the entities within the municipal context responsible for performing the role of Urban Authority; to these entities, in line with the provisions of Art.7 of Reg. (EU) No. 1301/2013, the managing authority of the ROP ERDF formally delegated, by the subscription of the appropriate agreements, the tasks related to the selection of operations. With the delegation of such tasks, each Urban Authority was appointed as Intermediate Body (OIB), in accordance with Art. 7 of Reg. (EU) No. 1301/2013 and Art.123 (6) Reg. (EU) No. 1303/2013., becoming part of the Monitoring Committee for the program.

In the PIU co-design process, which leads to the signing of a [Partnership Agreements](#) for the implementation of the projects, were analysed in a negotiation between Regional and Municipal Authorities. This step included a technical discussions between Urban Authorities, Action Managers and Urban Axis Coordinators, which considered the different aspects related to the eligibility of operations, the correct application of the selection criteria and the rules dictated by the ROP.

The Decrees of the Regional Executive Committee Council (No. 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63 of 15 May 2017 and No. 105 of 13 June 2018) approved the [Partnership Agreements](#) between the Regione Toscana and the Municipalities of Prato, Lucca, Rosignano Marittimo, Pisa, Cecina, Empoli, Poggibonsi and Colle Val d’Elsa, Montemurlo and Montale, for the implementation of the respective Urban Innovation Projects. *It is expected that the Programme Agreement for the implementation of the Capannori PIU will be signed in the first months of 2020.*

3. Good Practice

3.1. PIU “HOPE, Home of People and Equality” - Municipality of Empoli

The action area involves a part of the old town centre of Empoli, by means of the recovery and the redevelopment of a very significant public property of historic value, located in an area that is strategic both at urban and level and further afield for the union of the municipalities of the wider Empolese Val d’Elsa “Circondario”. The area currently displays widespread urban decay, due to the partially abandoned buildings and socio-economic problems due to the divestment of numerous economic activities, the increase in youth unemployment and at the same time, the progressive ageing of the resident population and the growing presence of immigrants from outside the EU.

The PIU helps to redevelop Empoli’s old town centre, with the objective of promoting new urban centres within which to converge a plurality of complementary functions devoted to different areas, to be adopted as opportunities for developing the territory. The specific objectives of the project are:

- reducing social hardship in the field of social-health services through the restoration of buildings and areas to be allocated to social functions;
- creating an integrated system of services to support innovation and the socio-economic development of the territory, including in synergy with the University and the laboratory for Nanotechnology Laboratory/Grint Consortium already present in the accessible part of the San Giuseppe Complex, structure at the heart of the PIU regeneration;
- creating the functional and smart connection of the open public spaces related to the areas of action;
- promoting, via the new structures and new services, forms of social aggregation rarely seen, in order to improve the integration of the most marginalized and vulnerable categories of Empoli society.

One of the peculiarities of the Empoli Urban Innovation Project is that it responds to an extremely complex issue, namely the revitalisation of an important area of the old town centre of a town of nearly 50,000 inhabitants, through integrated and intersectorial actions that are the result of participatory and specific analysis of the territorial data collected.

This led to a regeneration strategy aimed at strengthening the role of Empoli’s old town centre as place of identity, a hub of services - on a local and metropolitan scale - and attraction for citizens, thanks to the redevelopment of public buildings and the reorganisation of open urban spaces, such as squares, parks, renovated courtyards and new pedestrian areas.

The Empoli PIU is made up of a number of operations of different nature; matching with the welfare dimensions in urban areas in fact highlights the clear transversal nature of the actions implemented, with particular involvement of environmental dimension, which is linked to many operations. The innovative connotation of the project stems from the objective of promoting, within an established and non-peripheral urban context, new centres by means of strengthening the supply of innovative social services such as the solidarity-based condominium, the smart library, the urban centre and by means of improving the energy efficiency of public buildings. The Empoli PIU also features a certain degree of financial sustainability of the actions, which in many cases are associated with revenue greater than operating costs (Coworking Spaces, Urban Centre, Health Care House and

Solidarity-based Condominium), as well as significant employment opportunities, both during works and in operation.

The description of the single operations is in the following pages.

St. Giuseppe Complex (ex - Nurses' Boarding School)

PIU Operation	ROP Action	Total cost of the Operation	Eligible Cost	ROP Contribution
Urban Center and social inclusion (S07)	9.6.6 (a1)	€ 1.027.377,00	€ 983.323,50	€ 778.792,00
Smart Library (S10b)	9.6.6 (a3)	€ 500.056,00	€ 483.208,00	€ 209.615,07
Eco-efficiency of the ex-Nurses' Boarding School (S11c)	4.1.1	€ 349.327,00	€ 334.138,93	€ 140.093,00

The building named "ex-Convitto Infermieri" is located at the south-eastern corner of the historical centre of Empoli, enclosed in the plot formed by via Giovanni del Papa to the north, via Ridolfi with piazza del Popolo to the west, via Paladini to the east and via Cavour to the south, for an area of about 1330 square metres. It is an integral part of the macro system of the San Giuseppe Complex and is currently abandoned for years, being in a very poor state of conservation.

The building is on four floors connected by two stairwells, and is composed of three buildings developed in adherence and directly connected to the San Giuseppe's Complex. The most valuable historical element is represented by the Torre dei Righi, a corner tower of the city walls of the '300. The overall image of the original brick body has been altered over time by improper interventions with incoherent additions and superficial additions. The Tower represents one of the most important historical testimonies of the city developed in continuity with the traces of the Medici bastion.



The recovery of the building is aimed at static consolidation and historical enhancement of the building, with the aim of creating a multidisciplinary creative center, open to the city, where new activities can live in close synergy with the existing ones. The planned functions will in fact be strongly integrated with the rest of the city and with the open space system, through new public connections that will make the whole complex a dynamic and permeable place, open to the citizens.

Objectives and aims of the operation

Specifically, on the ground floor, first floor and in a portion of the second floor the **Urban Center** will be built, with spaces for collective participation and social inclusion, on the third and remaining portion of the second floor the Smart Library, an extension of the Municipal Library.

The Urban Center will function as a junction between the pedestrian area of the city center, Piazza del Popolo and Via Paladini, access point to the San Giuseppe complex, a new urban centrality rich in services dedicated to culture and sociality. The project foresees the recovery of the spaces overlooking Via Ridolfi, destined to be Info Points for mobility and multipurpose rooms for meetings dedicated in particular to the future transformations of the city.



The spaces will be connected with the creation of an exhibition path for temporary exhibitions that will connect Piazza del Popolo with Via Paladini. On the second floor will be set up Smart Labs, rooms to be assigned to young people and businesses in the area to develop innovative projects for the city.

Another objective of the Urban Center is to respond to the growing demand for spaces for animation activities and collective participation. The civic wealth of Empoli is well expressed by the number of associations operating in the territory in every sector, from social, cultural and leisure time, so the aim is not only to provide a space for the many associations that are not based today, but to create collaborations and invest in places that become real incubators of ideas.

The **Smart Library** aims to strengthen the cultural and social offer for a greater number of users, to respond to the growing need for culture, lifelong learning and leisure.

The growth in the number of users of the Library, with 192704 accesses registered in 2015, and the demand for innovative services aimed at satisfying a young public (media library, online media library, gaming, coaching), makes it necessary to identify spaces, which have been located on the third and fourth floor of the former nurses' boarding school complex.

The **Eco-efficiency of the ex- Nurses' Boarding School** was conceived according to the principles of sustainable building. In particular, the actions aim to: develop a system for the collection and storage of rainwater from the groundwater of the building; create an efficient heating, cooling and hot water supply system; install systems of natural ventilation; provide sound insulation from noises inside and outside of the building and improve the thermal insulation.

Spaces for community activity in the San Giuseppe complex

PIU Operation	ROP Action	Total cost of the Operation	Eligible Cost	ROP Contribution
Spaces for collective activities: coworking, cafeteria, courtyards and public connections (S03)	9.6.6 (a1)	€ 2.515.763,00	€ 2.410.052,70	€ 1.276.812,81

The architectural complex has maintained its health function, for which it was founded in 1765, until 2008, when the new hospital of the city of Empoli, located outside the historical centre, was inaugurated.

The building is in good conservation conditions: it has been subjected to repeated maintenance work and in fact has maintained continuity of use over time. The first nucleus of the hospital was built by incorporating the 16th century wall bastion and its pertinences. The conformation of the building is evidently inspired by that of the existing fortifications, has a "U" shape and develops around a courtyard closed on three sides and open to the south. The wings destined to the infirmaries were joined by a central body in which the entrance from the current Via Paladini and a portico overlooking the inner courtyard were located, connected by three symmetrical rooms. The external relevance had a circular plan icebox.

The first expansion towards the current Via Giovanni da Empoli dates back to 1838: the two different building phases are clearly recognizable both inside and outside and are denounced by the change of planimetric height. Between 800 and 900 further interventions led to the overcoming of the U-shaped scheme with the building of a linear body, placed on the ancient Medici embankment, along Via Roma.



The complex of San Giuseppe is divided into 3 distinct homogeneous blocks, identifiable by different construction, building and architectural characteristics:

- block of the Ospedale Vecchio: 4 floors, 1,200 square meters of covered surface, 4,300 square meters of gross surface of which 3,200 square meters currently used;
- east block, in turn divided into two distinct portions for building characteristics:
 - the building along Via Roma: 3 floors, 1,300 sqm of covered surface, 2,700 sqm of gross surface of which 1,000 sqm currently used;
 - Buildings along via Paladini (ex chaplain's house and extension): 3 floors, 450 sqm of covered surface, 900 sqm of gross surface, currently in a state of abandonment;
- the third block, the former Nurses' Boarding School, is included in the Urban Innovation Project and is developed in another specific recovery project.



The action envisages the creation of spaces in the San Giuseppe complex for workshop and coworking activities, the construction of a cafeteria and dining spaces in support of existing functions and those foreseen with the building renovation plan, and the redevelopment of the open spaces and interior areas by providing a network of connections, courtyards, horizontal and vertical walkways that ensure the permeability and integration of the complex with the rest of the town, making the services offered in the buildings of the complex more accessible.

Objectives and aims of the operation

The recovery of the buildings, characterized by interventions aimed at static consolidation and historical enhancement, aims to create a multidisciplinary creative center where new activities can live in close synergy with existing ones; all functions will be strongly integrated with the rest of the city and with the system of open spaces through new public connections that will make the entire complex a dynamic and permeable place, capable of amplifying the effects of regeneration of individual interventions to the entire portion of the historic center concerned.

The complex will be recovered to accommodate mainly public functions, reorganize the routes and the internal common spaces, emphasizing the historical layout and connecting the activities with the rest of the city. It will thus be possible to link the new services to a real 'common platform' consisting of the 'System of Courts and Public Connections' directly connected to the continuous system of public open spaces.

Inside the San Giuseppe buildings are currently hosting the Degree Courses in Urban Planning of the University of Florence, the Laboratory of Nanotechnologies (GRINT) and the Centre for Musical Activities (CAM); the renovation project foresees the creation of spaces for municipal offices and for the offices of the Union of Municipalities, for new public activities and urban centralities (focused and designed for different territorial scales) connected to the rest of the historical centre through an articulated network of internal routes and public spaces. The urban centralities have been identified as:

- Functions for the neighbourhood:
 - spaces for associations.
- Functions for the city and the district:
 - Municipal and Union of Municipalities offices;
 - educational museums and cultural spaces;
 - social inclusion centres.
- Functions for the metropolitan area:
 - co-working spaces;
 - universities.

The new functions include on the ground floor, in the west wing of the block of the Old Hospital, the construction of a Cafeteria and Refreshment Area, whose general objective is to carry out an activity to support the existing and forecast functions in the area, with particular reference to the University, municipal and Union offices. At the same time, a 'permeable' activity will enhance and connect the two main open spaces of the complex (the Central Well Courtyard and the Garden in Via Ridolfi), integral parts of the Courtyard and Public Connection System. On the first floor, also on the west wing of the Old Hospital, there will be Coworking Classrooms and Workshops for the City, able to create a place of exchange and creativity dedicated to work activities.

Complex of Piazza XXIV Luglio (ex-Sert)

PIU Operation	ROP Action	Total cost of the Operation	Eligible Cost	ROP Contribution
House of Health and condominium solidarity (S01)	9.3.5	€ 2.622.583,00	€ 2.515.052,72	€ 2.007.130,00
Eco-efficiency of the XXIV July complex (S12a)	4.1.1	€ 252.320,00	€ 242.000,00	€ 140.049,00

The architectural complex is located in the historic center of the city and is inserted between the consolidated fabric of Via dei Neri and a succession of open spaces overlooked by the ancient city walls. The area of intervention presents critical urban, social and environmental issues related to the presence of phenomena of physical degradation of public space and growing distress linked to a strong perception of insecurity. The problems have to be contextualized with respect to the emerging phenomena, considering that about a quarter of the population is over 65 years of age, including 27% residing in the central parts of the city (Registered Office 2014) where the presence of foreigners is also very high (21.4% compared to the municipal average of 3.9%). ISTAT confirms an increase in the incidence of aging people alone from 15.3% to 21% (1991-2011). The trend must also be evaluated in relation to the increase in the incidence of families in potential distress from 3.6% (2001) to 4.1% (2011) compared to 3.7% in Tuscany. As far as foreign residents are concerned, ISTAT confirms a growing incidence from 5% to 108% (1991-2011).



Currently the building is in a state of abandonment with obvious injuries to the structural parts and collapses that do not allow it to be used. The ownership of the building is municipal and until May 2013 it housed health functions. The building assumed the current

configuration after World War II and consists of a single body with two small courtyards and the main facade, facing Piazza XXIV Luglio, with styles inspired by the building of the twenties. The building has two entrances on the ground floor with an internal distribution system developed on two separate staircases and an elevator shaft.

The creation of the Health Care House and Solidarity-based Condominium is an integrated action, designed to ensure that the more vulnerable residents of the condominium can access social and health support services found on the ground floor of the building.

The Health Care House will offer the residents of the old town centre a comprehensive social and health support service, with particular regard for the elderly, young people and immigrants. The Solidarity-based Condominium, instead, will increase the allocation of accommodation reserved both for established vulnerable categories (lone elderly and disabled) and those at risk of temporary vulnerability (young couples, women victims of violence, single mothers and fathers, large families).

The operation envisages improving systems energy efficiency by installing new heat pump systems to create an efficient system for cooling, heating and producing hot water. The objective is to obtain NZEB certification, still rare in Italy because it concerns a renovated building of public property.

Objectives and aims of the operation

The recovery of the building, characterized by interventions aimed at the static consolidation and historical valorization of the building, has the objective of improving the functional endowment of the Historic Centre by grafting together with other existing services and design on a common platform consisting of a continuous system of public open spaces.

Specifically, on the ground floor, it is planned to build the Casa della Salute and on the other two levels of the Condominio Solidale. These functions are foreseen in synergy with each other: the users of the condominium will have access to social and health care services, those with chronic diseases will have access to the ground floor of the structure.



The aim of the Casa della Salute is to offer residents of the historic centre, and in particular the "weaker categories" (the elderly, the disabled, immigrants, single parents with children, minors), an integrated, accessible and efficient socio-sanitary assistance service. In addition, the intervention aims to revitalize the urban context of Piazza XXIV Luglio currently one of the most problematic in the city due to the growing phenomena of urban and social degradation that characterize this part of the city as indicated in the participatory path of 2010.

The main objective of the Condominio Solidale is to increase the provision of housing to meet established vulnerable groups, especially the elderly, and those at risk of new forms of fragility and poverty even temporary: young couples, women victims of violence, mothers with children and separated fathers, families.

System of Open Spaces

PIU Operation	ROP Action	Total cost of the Operation	Eligible Cost	ROP Contribution
System of open spaces	9.6.6 (a1)	862.507,00	825.522,77	249.307,00

The public space project represents the pivotal element of the urban regeneration path outlined in the PIU of Empoli, with a dual purpose: on the one hand, the redevelopment and mending of the open spaces on the edge of the historic centre, in continuity with the system of streets and squares already recovered and with particular attention to the enhancement of historical-monumental elements that are not very visible today (including first and foremost the system of walls, with the ramparts and the Torre dei Righi) or in conditions of urban degradation (Piazza del Popolo and the gardens at the back of the Augustinian complex); on the other hand, the creation of a safe urban environment - in an area now perceived as unsafe - with interventions designed to ensure maximum accessibility and usability for all categories of users.



The actions involve the entire belt in which are included the three architectural complexes around which the PIU proposal was built, which thus assumes the role of a connecting and integrating element between the same complexes, the rest of the historical centre and the urban portion developed to the south of the latter in the direction of the railway.

Objectives and aims of the operation

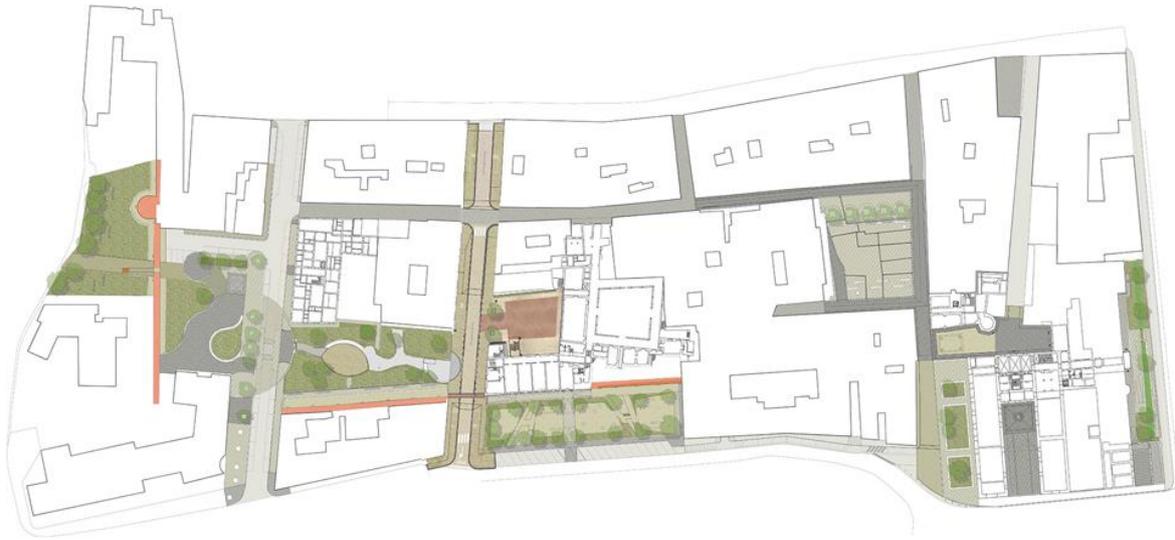
The overall intervention concerns the implementation of the city's open spaces in order to ensure an inclusive, barrier-free and accessible urban layout for all categories of users, with particular reference to the elderly, the disabled and children. The reorganization of the public space enhances the historical emergencies of the city through a continuous path along the city walls that links the various recovery actions and addresses the specific problems. Within the Urban Innovation Project the intervention is identified as "Operation S09 - Open Space System".

The project focuses on four strategic areas:

- recovery of the garden of Largo della Resistenza (1,500 square meters), starting from the redefinition of the school buildings, the strengthening of the relationship with the stretch of historic walls and the necessary removal of some architectural barriers;
- redevelopment of the area in front of the main entrance to the Library in Via Cavour (1,300 sqm) and recovery of a courtyard of the Augustinian complex (500 sqm), currently used as a parking lot, as a new public space for the city. The interventions are in synergy with the recovery of the ancient walls, with the enhancement of activities complementary to the educational and recreational spaces of the structure and with the redevelopment of an open space in front of the Misericordia (which will be realized in a second phase of the work);
- redevelopment of via Leonardo Da Vinci (1,100 square meters) and via Cavour (500 square meters) with the aim of transforming two driveways into two urban areas with a strong pedestrian value, which promote a barrier-free interconnection with neighboring public spaces;
- recovery of Piazza del Popolo (1,000 square meters), the streets that flank it, including Via Ridolfi (650 square meters) and re-paving of Via dei Neri (350 square meters) with an intervention respectful of the historical memory of the place (former Jewish ghetto demolished) and with the pedestrianized urban center.

To these areas is added the recovery of Piazza XXIV Luglio (1,500 square meters) and the west section of the historic walls, an intervention already carried out that has started the redevelopment of this area of Empoli.

The project aims to redevelop the urban landscape of the area by fully enhancing the existing architectural complexes and their reference context, from Via Roma to Piazza XXIV Luglio, participating in the overall improvement of the environmental quality of the city and integrating with other strategic tools currently being implemented (such as the Bici Plan), promoting cycling and walking and contributing to the reduction of polluting emissions.



The improvement of outdoor spaces is strongly linked to an overall social revitalization of public spaces and of the buildings subject to intervention, thus limiting phenomena of degradation and progressive abandonment. The project develops an architectural and landscape language consistent with the historical context of reference, highlighting the historical and architectural emergencies of the area with particular reference to the traces of the ancient city walls. They represent in fact the guiding element in the redefinition of the open space system, giving a continuous readability to the intervention. The signs of the past are underlined by the public lighting system developed in synergy with the design of the public space.



The design of the open spaces has been conceived following principles of sustainability and criteria of rationalization of the urban metabolism. The interventions are in close synergy with the actions related to the building heritage and are aimed at:

- increase the availability of public space in the PIU area;
- develop a continuous system of public areas through safe pedestrian connections;
- increase the availability of green areas;

The interventions pursue the following performance objectives:

- to ensure greater soil permeability of the reclaimed urban surface;
- reduce the effects of the heat island by increasing the ratio between green areas, paved areas and shaded areas in summer;

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- use materials that respect the historical context and at the same time reduce the surface temperature with the aim of mitigating the heat island;
- increase the levels of biodiversity by creating a "green infrastructure" such that surfaces and natural elements are interconnected;
- using materials from renewable and locally produced sources.

4. Other relevant information

4.1 Planning and existing regional and local strategies

The Regione Toscana has defined its strategy for urban development in a specific Urban Axis of the ROP ERDF, which is implemented through Urban Innovation Projects (PIUs). We can identify 3 main crucial levers for the effectiveness of political action.

- The first is the integration of policies, in coherence with the strategy outlined by the pivotal instruments of territorial governance in Tuscany, that is to say Regional Law No. 65/2014 and the Regional Landscape Plan. Thanks to the resources and to the opportunities offered by European funds, the Urban Axis has effectively implemented this approach. In nine urban areas of Tuscany, targeted and circumscribed strategies are underway, consisting of interconnected actions to determine the lasting improvement of social, economic, safety and environmental conditions of urban areas; that is to say, to increase the wellbeing and quality of life of the people who live there. By means of this integrated approach, political action has proven to be most effective, with regard to the needs of the territories, and has guaranteed the links between investment programming and territorial action planning.
- The second lever is the continuous dialogue between Regional and Municipal Authorities in the selection and definition of the PIUs, within the framework of a shared approach in line with the European principles, aimed at strengthening multilevel action on a local scale.
- Finally, the territorial focus of the actions has had the imagined impact. In accordance with the principles, strategies and objectives outlined by the European Commission and by the Partnership Agreement, actions were funded in circumscribed and defined urban contexts, with urban solutions compatible with the parameters of existing planning and aimed at guaranteeing the good accessibility of services and smart organization of resources; as well as giving priority to actions that promote a high level of social and environmental protection and quality.

One of the novelties of the present programming period, within the framework of sustainable urban development, is the recognition of a more meaningful role for cities, to which is entrusted the role of Urban Authority, i.e. the entity responsible for programming and managing the urban development strategy at local level.

Local authorities are better able to identify the specific needs of their citizens, as well as to define effective responses. The involvement of the local people in decisions and sharing common goals become increasingly indispensable factors in the decisions that the authorities take for urban areas. This is why the Urban Authorities, i.e. Municipal Authorities, have been entrusted with the responsibility of defining the strategy to be implemented and choosing the actions to be taken. This approach has helped to ensure a high quality of strategies proposed, giving rise to integrated urban development projects that respond to specific contexts of action; and it has also allowed to experiment an innovative “co-design” method of collaboration between Regional and Municipal Authorities. In the process of implementing the PIUs, local authorities, as beneficiary entities, have played a delicate and complex role, finding themselves faced with a very challenging path that requires the application of multiple areas of expertise in order to meet the requirements of European programming.



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