



# FINAL MONITORING REPORT

## DESK ANALYSIS AND BASIC INFORMATION

**Project title:** New Centralities in peripheral urban areas. Participative realisation of new public spaces of social and environmental high quality (*it: Nuove centralità urbane in zone periferiche. Realizzazione partecipata di spazi pubblici di alta qualità ambientale e sociale*)  
[https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/progetti/1cm106ppm\\_cdm\\_10/](https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/progetti/1cm106ppm_cdm_10/)

**Report title:** New Centralities in peripheral urban areas, social and environmental impact evaluation (*it: Nuove centralità urbane in zone periferiche, valutazione di impatto sociale e ambientale*)

**Author of the Report:** Monitoring Europe – DEMOSTENE (organisation: DEMOSTENE Centro Studi per la promozione dello sviluppo umano aps)

**Budget:** € 10.000.000

### Description on the project:

The “New Centralities” project is a urban transformation project promoted following the "Pact for Milan" - aimed at financing interventions for economic development, social and territorial cohesion. The monitored project is an operational plan that provides for the participatory construction of 5 public spaces of environmental and social high quality. The Municipality of Milan has identified the following areas to carry out territorial transformation:

via P. L. Monti - via De Angelis, in the sections next to the Church of San Carlo

piazza Dergano with the surrounding areas

via Padova, in the section between via Giacosa and via Cambini

piazza Angilberto II and its surroundings

largo Balestra and the surrounding areas.

These interventions are part of a wide-ranging programmatic approach linked to improving the quality of public space and the livability of neighbourhoods, for an accessible, livable and increasingly attractive city. The planning and realisation of these five interventions has been entrusted by the Municipality of Milan to MM spa.





**Is this project part of a larger plan including other projects? If yes, what is the overall objective of this larger plan?**

The larger plan that includes the project monitored is the “Pact for Milan”, a programmatic agreement between the National Government and the City that provides for interventions for the economic development and social and territorial cohesion of the City of Milan and the metropolitan area.

The program will provide 2.5 billion euros for works that will be carried out in the next few years. The agreement provides for the development of public transport, interventions against hydrogeological instability, the use of former Expo areas, projects for the suburbs and public construction, the improvement of environmental condition, welfare and security.

An allocation of 25 million euro is also foreseen for extraordinary maintenance of roads, buildings and green areas under the responsibility of the metropolitan city.

**Location of the project:** Milano, different areas (see above for the list)

## **PROJECT EVALUATION**

### **Progress of the monitoring project based on the information collected**

The project is extended on five different areas which are progressing differently.

Two sites (piazzale Dergano and piazzale Angilberto II) have been completed.

One (Largo Balestra) is still in a pre-works phase: the current tactical urban planning conceived by the neighbourhood associations will have to be replaced by the definitive works that have not yet started.

The works have just started via Padova, while in the last one (piazzale Monti) the redevelopment activities are blocked.

### **How the project is progressing based on the information you have collected - Result of the project - If the project is finished, what result did it achieve?**

The full project is almost at its conclusion and it is therefore possible to offer some evaluations on its impact.

The expectations raised by the starting presentation of the urban interventions of a few years ago have been only partially met.

It was not possible to obtain the same level of citizen participation for all sites: in some neighbourhoods the citizens felt more involved, in others they experienced the work in a more passive way and / or feeling



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Furthermore, more attention could have been paid to the choice of greenery, better studying the effects of plants on air quality or thinking about possible paths of environmental education (also through information panels, urban gardens, etc.).

On the contrary, the aim of conducting a social requalification is certainly achieved, as the works carried out have returned to the inhabitants spaces previously abandoned or degraded, creating new meeting places to better enjoy the outside life in the neighbourhood.

### **If the project is finished or you have been able to assess some of its results anyway, what is your judgement about the effectiveness of the project?**

Useful but also shows some minor problems

### **Strength of the projects - What did you like about the project monitored?**

At the beginning of the planning of the project, one of the basic objectives was the safety of pedestrians; this goal is certainly achieved.

New plantings, benches, ping pong tables and other games inserted in all the regenerated areas have improved the urban decorum.

The creation of new spaces for socialising is particularly successful in the sites of piazzale Dergano and Largo Balestra.

The road system around Piazza Angilberto II has been modified to reduce traffic in the surrounding residential areas.

### **Weaknesses - What difficulties did you find during the implementation?**

The title of the project underlines the character of "participatory creation of public spaces of high environmental and social quality". This promise was only partially fulfilled.

For all the sites it was noted that the plants were considered more as an element of urban decor than in their ecological value. Specific studies have not been conducted regarding the quality of trees to be planted and their effect on air quality, soil etc.

In addition, specific problems were encountered for different sites. In piazzale Dergano the negative aspect concerns the decrease in parking areas and the uneven pavement. The material used makes it more difficult for the elderly or disabled to walk, not to mention the transport of heavy goods for the owners and other operators in the shops present on the square. On the basis of the grievances of the inhabitants, studies are in progress in the attempt to find a solution.



In piazzale Angilberto II, shopkeepers report a reduction in the influx of their shops due to the new road network and the scarcity of green areas created compared to those planned in the project.

In Largo Balestra the common feeling of the inhabitants is that the Municipality has abdicated its role, leaving the neighbourhood associations with the responsibility of maintaining the decorum and functionality of the common space. The final works should have already started in November 2021 but to date there is no feedback or information on a new timing.

### **Which are the causes of the ineffectiveness of the project you monitored?**

Implementation showed problems of a technical nature

Intervention useful but not sufficient to meet the needs ("more is needed", eg. More investments in the same project or in similar projects)

Intervention itself useful but other complementary interventions are needed

### **Risks - What problems may the project face in the future?**

Due to the rise in material costs and the slowdown in production (for the Covid-19 pandemic), it is possible that the Piazzale Monti construction site (not yet started) will be sacrificed to allow the fulfilment of the works on the other four sites.

### **Your suggestions - Ideas to improve the projects and solutions to the problems you have found**

In the future, for similar projects, it will be necessary to conduct a more scientific environmental assessment, with the use of agronomists and other professionals capable of assessing the ecological impact of the public spaces designed and the plants to be introduced.

With the aim of simplifying the facilities' access to the most fragile people, it will be important to conduct a more careful evaluation of the impact of materials and street furniture on the mobility of elderly people and people with disabilities.

### **Your synthetic assessment**

Ongoing with some problem





## INVESTIGATION METHODS

### Desk analysis

- Web research
- Visit to the project locations, documented by pictures and videos
- Interview with people responsible for the project's planning
- Interview with the users and/or final beneficiaries of the intervention
- Interview with other types of people
- Interviews with people responsible for the project's implementation

**Who did you interview? What is the role of these people in the project? E.g. Mayor, government employee, informed citizen, journalist**

Dottoressa *Spazia D'Onofrio*, MM spa project manager;  
Councillor *Gaia Romano* (Civic and General Services);  
director *Dario Moneta* (Authority for Management and Monitoring of Projects);  
mr *Matteo Massenzio* (Informatic Systems & Digital Agenda - data management - open data unity).

Other Stakeholders (inhabitants, shopkeepers, neighbourhood associations).

### Transcription of the two main questions to the interviewees - please specify which interviewees

- 1) Have any studies been conducted (such as the effects on air quality) in deciding which trees and greenery to plant in the areas to be redeveloped?
- 2) How were the citizens involved in the planning and implementation of the project's actions?

### Transcription of the main two answers to the questions above

*First answer to question 1)*

Spazia D'Onofrio (MM spa), literal (but translated) quote from the interview: "Depending on the space and soil we have, trees of different sizes are chosen and in this case [piazza Angilberto] we have placed 'fourth-sized' plants which, in their largest development, will have a crown of maximum width of 6 metres. The choice is conditioned by the roots of the plants, by the service utilities (electricity, gas, communication network) and by the possibility of irrigation. Specifically in Piazza Angilberto, for example, no technical equipment was used, but it was based on hypotheses related to the experience and wishes of the inhabitants".

The engineer D'Onofrio then specified that MM spa does not currently have agronomists on its staff, but that over the years they have followed some refresher courses on the theme of different trees / effects



on pollution and that our questions on the subject stimulate them. to reflect on the importance of integrating this aspect in future projects.

*Second answer to question 1)*

Among the members of the Metropolitan City met, the answer to the first question was mainly given by director Dario Moneta (Authority for the Management and Monitoring of Plans), who underlined how the project at its birth aimed above all at the creation of new pedestrian areas having not foreseen specific studies regarding the type of trees. The goal that was wanted to be achieved with plants and flower beds was mainly the reduction of the temperature to the ground in some of the hottest squares of the city and the urban decorum granted by islands of greenery and benches to the inhabitants.

*Answer to question 2)*

Councillor Gaia Romano and director Dario Moneta explained to us how the active collaboration of citizens was encouraged in the design phase through public assemblies in the municipalities to define the final project before the pandemic. Unfortunately, the pause due to Covid-19 has partly cooled relations between inhabitants and the project keepers. Regarding the possibility of public participation in the care of greenery, it was excluded on the basis of previous experiences that showed how difficult coordination and ongoing commitment in this regard could be.

## **RESULT AND IMPACT**

### ***The new connections you have generated***

**How did you disseminate or are you disseminating the results of your civic monitoring?**

Twitter

Facebook

Team Blog / Website

**Did the media talk about your monitoring?**

Not

**Have you had contact with the Administrations (e.g. the mayor or regional managers) to present or discuss the results of your monitoring with them?**

Yes

**Have the Public Administrations responded to your requests or to the problems you have raised?**

At least one of them made us concrete promises

They put our suggestions into practice and the project is now "unblocked" or more effective

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**Describe your case. Which material facts or events lead you to believe that your civic monitoring had (or did not have) an impact on the organisations that manage or implement the project you monitored?**

The data on the OpenCoesione website have been updated thanks to our solicitation.

Spazia D'Onofrio (MM spa) has agreed with us on the need to better evaluate the type of green to plant with reference to the effects on air quality that the different plants may have.

In the meeting with the managers of the Metropolitan City we highlighted the difficulty we had in reading and extract information from the open data municipal site. A difficulty related not to the money invested, but to their specific use within the different projects. The person responsible for publishing the data stated that the problem posed was real and promised to find a solution by creating a page where the expenses would be distinct and viewable by project and purpose.

