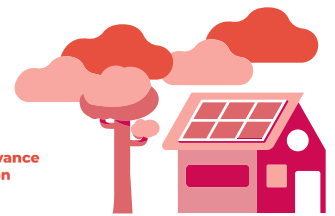


Co-creation in action in the EU Mission “Climate-neutral and Smart Cities” – the Milan pilot



mosaic

Mission-Oriented Swafs to Advance
Innovation through Co-creation



Introduction

This pilot case study aims at supporting public administrations, namely cities, who wish to enable co-creation processes at the territorial level in the realm of the EU Mission “[Climate-neutral and Smart Cities](#)”. The pilot has been implemented within the framework of [MOSAIC](#), an EU H2020 project, committed to study, design and test co-creation as a method to address Mission-related challenges by developing shared solutions.

MOSAIC provides local public authorities and other interested R&I actors with inspiring examples and practical suggestions, emerging from real settings and experimentations, on how to implement Open Innovation through a type of co-creation that engages stakeholders from the quadruple helix in the process.

MOSAIC methodology

The [MOSAIC methodology](#) builds on the experience of several multi-stakeholder engagement practices run in the framework of EU-funded initiatives and beyond. MOSAIC sees co-creation as an open and participatory approach to innovation in which actors from the quadruple helix (researchers, policy makers, industry and civil society) work together to co-produce tangible outcomes, such as technological tools or services. The approach adopted in the project covers all phase of the co-creation journey, from the selection and formulation of the challenge to be addressed in the process, all the way to ensuring that outcomes are strongly anchored to local policies through a genuine commitment from city representatives.

The MOSAIC methodology revolves around the concept of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and emphasizes inclusivity and fairness aspects of the process, by for example providing suggestions on fair rewarding mechanisms for participants taking part in co-creation.

Challenge

Located in the Po Valley, Milan has been facing poor air quality for decades, which has become a sensitive issue for the citizens and a key challenge for the City. For this reason, the Municipality of Milan developed the Air and Climate Plan ([Piano Aria Clima - PAC](#)), which also informs the Milan Climate

City Contract (plan required for all the cities participating in the EU Mission Climate Neutral and Smart Cities). One of the objectives of the PAC is to increase citizens' awareness on environmental issues as a key ingredient to effectively create a sustainable future. Access to data and information on air quality is a prerequisite to openly engage local stakeholders in building a collective response to air pollution.

Starting from this reflection, [Fondazione Giannino Bassetti](#), together with the Direction Green and Environment of the Municipality of Milan, decided to focus the MOSAIC pilot in Milan on the co-design of technological tools to support residents and city users of Milan in making informed decisions related to air quality in the city (e.g., choosing the best days for outdoor sports activities).

In line with this challenge, the Milan pilot of MOSAIC was called [InformAria](#).

Co-innovators

Participants in the co-creation process were selected through an open call, which the Municipality of Milan launched in collaboration with [Fondazione Bassetti](#). The call was published on the platform “Milano Cambia Aria”, the official webpage developed by the city administration to inform citizens about the initiatives run by the Municipality to foster the green transition. 57 candidates applied in order to volunteer as MOSAIC participants, but only 40 were selected to take part in the process (18 for civil society; 8 for research; 11 for industry; 3 for governance). The entire process was designed, coordinated and run by [Fondazione Giannino Bassetti](#) in collaboration with the Green and Environment Unit of the Municipality of Milan and the public agency [AMAT](#) (Agenzia Mobilità Ambiente e Territorio). Other units from the Municipality were involved in the final stages of the process, namely in order to take up the outcomes and increase the impact of MOSAIC.

Process

InformAria was organized in 5 main stages:

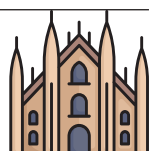
- The **Preparatory** stage, in which [Fondazione Bassetti](#) and the Municipality of Milan defined the challenge at the center of the co-creation process and prepared the following stages,



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including an extensive mapping of potential participants from the different stakeholders' groups, an open call to recruit participants and communication planning.

- The **Gathering**, a 1-day face to face workshop aimed at launching the process and involving the participants around the selected challenge. Three teams formed at the end of the event, each of them working on a specific solution for the challenge. In the the following stages of co-creation (Ideation and Project) each team was coordinated by a professional facilitator from Fondazione Bassetti that also provided groups with supporting tools (e.g., templates, online repository, etc.). Both online and in person meetings were organized.
- The **Ideation**, in which participants explored the challenge and prepared a first draft of the proposed solution, also by interacting with external experts. After the first stage of the evaluation process conducted by Fondazione Bassetti and the Municipality of Milan, two out of three teams accessed the following stages.
- The **Project** stage, aimed at designing the technological solutions into more nuanced details. In this phase, participants worked in teams and had the chance to share their progress with representatives from the Municipality in a plenary session.
- The **delivery** of the final solutions to the Municipality of Milan, which took place in a plenary session, and the **follow-up** from the city representatives, which took place during a final public event.

Impact

The activities run by MOSAIC in Milan impacted the city at different levels.

- Two concrete solutions were designed by InformAria participants: 1) a geolocation web/app aimed at informing citizens and city users about their exposure to air pollutants; and 2) a display/dashboard to share information on air quality to citizens and city users using existing infrastructures (e.g., stops of public transports, public offices, etc.). Both solutions were considered useful by city representatives who committed to seriously take into account their implementation in the following months (Display solution) and years (Web/app solution).
- The MOSAIC experience was positively evaluated by participants from the four helices, including the public administration, building bridges and trust among different stakeholders and

opening the innovation process to societal actors. Virtuous collaborations initiated during the project are expected to grow beyond MOSAIC lifetime.

- The methodology used for InformAria was very successful, and the Municipality of Milan is considering extending co-creation to other local challenges connected to the Mission Cities.

Key lessons learned

- Co-creation works well, and it's very fast! Anchoring the challenge to local policies is a critical factor of success for a sound co-creation process in which the city administration is firmly committed and takes up co-created solutions.
- Not all challenges are suitable for co-creation. For the success of the process: 1) select a challenge that is socially relevant; 2) frame the challenge so that it is inclusive for all quadruple-helix groups of stakeholders; 3) be sure that the question revolves around challenges and not solutions.
- Having a diversity of stakeholders beyond the "usual suspects" is essential to provide a qualitative co-creation process. Extensive mapping of potential participants requires a lot of efforts but strongly enriches the process and ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenge.
- Facilitation is key in order to guarantee a smooth and successful process. Depending on the challenge, there might be different conflicting interests or existing lobbies that need to be carefully managed by professional facilitators.
- Communication before, in between, and after the co-creation activities is fundamental for a transparent process and for building trust between participants and commissioning institutions. Setting up a virtual space and public events to share both the process and the results is as important as the process in itself.
- Providing participants with all relevant information on the challenge is key in order to prepare the ground for solid co-creation. Be sure to leave enough space for a proper inforamatory phase (either at the beginning of the Gathering or organizing a specific session).
- Online meetings can help in keeping everyone onboard, but a few in person meetings are needed, especially when forming the teams and at the core of co-creation process.



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