

JOURNAL

PROJECT

To-nite - Community-based urban security

📍 Turin, Italy

TOPIC

Urban security

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Journal 2: Preparing to fly - Tonite project in 2021

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website



2021 was a passing year. Some delays due to covid-19 hampers 2021 from being the crucial year of the success or unsuccess of the project. However important progress has been carried out in the design of the conceptual data model and in the selection of the small-scale project that will revitalise the area along the Dora River.

Executive summary

This report analyses the second year (January 2021 – December 2021) of the Tonite project in Turin, one of the three projects selected under the new UIA domain of security.

Compared to Journal 1, this report will focus on developments in 2021, looking at how the main difficulties presented by Covid have been overcome. Although 2021 was a particularly challenging year the basis for crucial developments in 2022 were well established.

The content of the Journal is based on regular Steering Committee meetings, which were held online with interviews being carried out to clarify some specific aspects. The two core sections discuss project steps taken so far and implementation challenges.

In 2021, the project was unable to enter into the most intense implementation phase mainly due to Covid-19-induced delays. One more year is required in order to see if the project will be successful.

The Project concept

As underlined in Journal 1, Tonite aims to improve the night-time security perception of public spaces in an area of the city of Turin along the Dora River, in particular in the area named Aurora and in the area around the new University Campus. In doing so, the project will contribute to the quality of life and the liveability of this area of the city.

This project is carried out with an inclusive approach, involving local community and stakeholders while fostering social innovation and urban regeneration to promote urban security.

ToNite project includes four main activities:

1. Ethnographic and social research activities in the target areas aimed at understanding the citizens' perception of urban security and engaging local stakeholders.

2. Development of an urban digital platform to analyse existing and newly established data about urban insecurity in the city and provide the public administration with a new tool to support the decisions.
3. Urban regeneration interventions along the Dora river.
4. Development of projects and services capable of generating social impact involving local communities chosen through a tender procedure.

In addition, impact assessment of project actions carried out in the areas of the project and communication with citizens are two cross-cutting actions.

Project update: From the Ethnographic and social research activities to the conceptual data model

The ethnographic and social research has resulted in the identification of nine determinants for the perception of security (identity; education and cultural capital; familiarity with places; resources and uniqueness; social cohesion; condition of places; attendance of places employment; association of networks). These topics form the basis for the theoretical model for the Urban Security Conceptual Data Model, which can be considered one of the main achievements in 2021. Based on data availability, these determinants were reworked and reformulated for the model to avoid overlapping.



This represents one of the key aspects of the model: the work was oriented towards a feasible model based on the current data availability and not solely on the idea of proposing a perfect theoretical model. This also means that the Data model is a living model, that can be adjusted and revised in line with changes in data availability in the future.

Moreover, the model is based on a theoretical model designed for cities with a relatively low crime rate, which seems to perfectly fit with the situation in Turin. In other words, the model is designed based on the assumption that the perception of security is often unrelated to the crime rate, which is well-established in the literature.

As any quantitative model (in particular, if synthesized in one final composite indicator), the model needs to be tested and this will constitute one of the key developments in 2022.

Project update: The conceptual data model as basis for the urban data platform

The urban data platform is a tool available to the Public Administration to support the definition of territorial governance policies, from security to inclusion, from management of public space to urban development. It allows the planning of actions, the monitoring of adopted measures and the evaluation of impacts of the actions taken.

In 2021, efforts were directed towards data gathering and defining how to connect the available data across the city departments to the platform. There are two key features to highlight: 1) the platform does not duplicate data already available but rather builds up a system of connectors to existing databases or to newly implemented databases; and 2) the architecture of the platform renders it usable for other public policies beyond the urban security.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down data gathering, the first version of the platform wasn't able to be completed until September 2021. This delay has made 2022 the crucial year to finalise and test the platform.

Project update: Urban regeneration along the Dora River

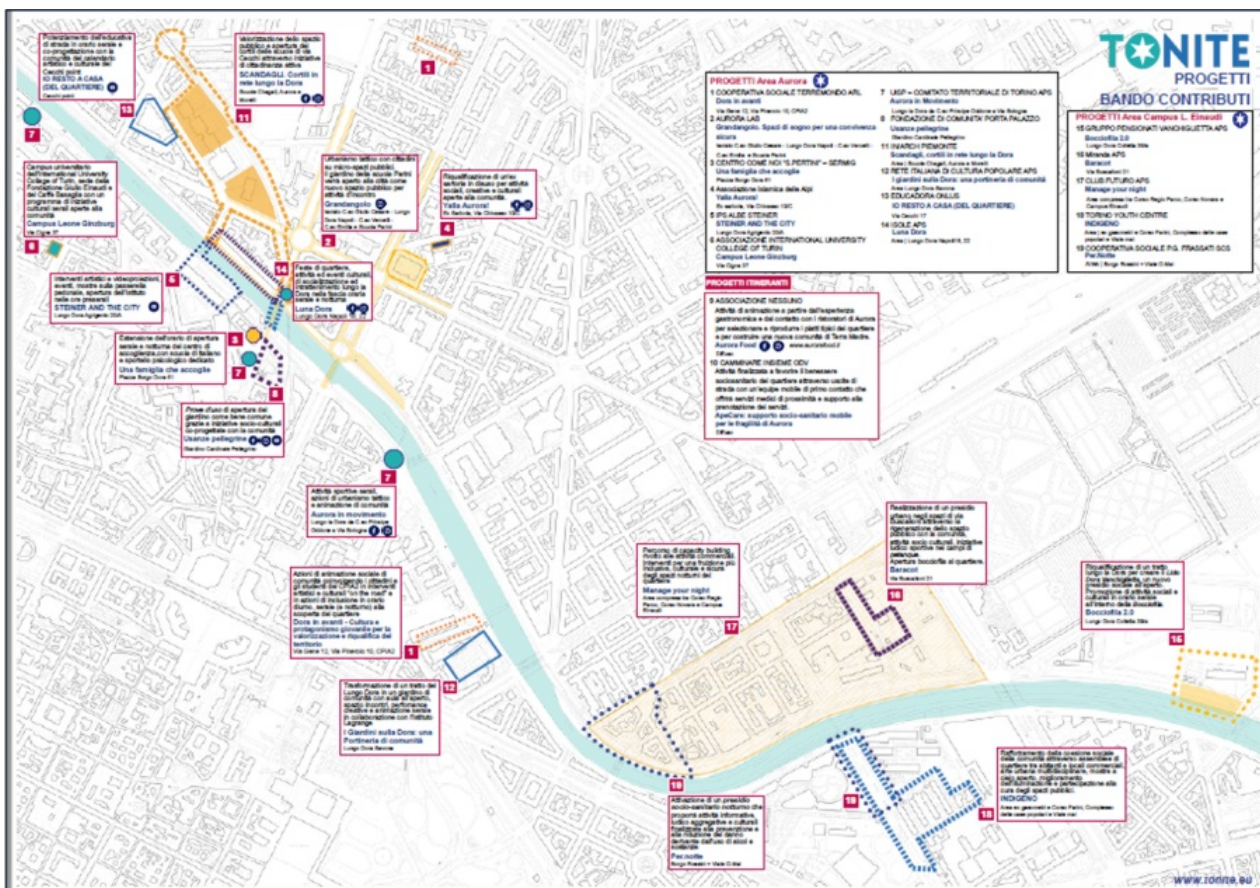
The third activity is the urban regeneration of public spaces along the Dora River. The first intervention is on the area next to the University Campus. The intervention suffered substantial delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The municipality launched the tender three times, before finding a bidder and signing a contract with a company in December 2021 (see [web article](#) for details). This urban intervention will be realised in 2022. The other interventions, smaller than this one, should not encounter the same issues and they would be carried regularly between 2022 and 2023.



Project update: Development of projects and services capable of generating social impact

On 1 February 2021 the call for contributions was launched and 19 projects were selected by September, after a minor delay due to Covid-19 (see [web article](#) for details).

Although the call has received many applications, it undoubtedly failed to stimulate the participation of for-profit enterprises and, above all, of those weaved into the local commercial fabric. This shortcoming entails a significant constraint, both in relation to the aims of the call and to the more general objectives of ToNite. In addition, most of the project seems to approach urban security in an excessively deterministic way following a cause/effect relationship.



In September the acceleration programme, which aims to support the projects in developing management skills, started and it will last until October 2022. Most of the selected projects started their activities in [November - December 2021](#). Therefore, in order to understand the impact of the acceleration programme and the project, we will need to wait until the next Journal.

Covid-19 challenge

This specific challenge has strongly impacted the timetable of the urban regeneration intervention and, to a lesser extent the call for contribution. The Covid-19 pandemic could also be one factor that has discouraged commercial players from participating in the call for contribution. Overall, it seems that the delays were unavoidable and related to macro- conditions and the legal constraints of the public procurement rules.

Implementation challenges

Leadership

The leadership of the city of Turin has collaboratively involved the delivery partners in taking responsibility. The cooperation seems to have proceeded quite well, and management has shown high competence in organisation and planning. The planning of the Steering Committee well in advance has guaranteed the constant participation of all the partners.

The election in 2021 and the new municipal government didn't have any impact on the project, which shows how Tonite objectives have found a cross-party agreement.

The delays have prevented us from assessing if and how the city of Turin will be able to scale the Tonite model to the local, national and international level.

Public procurement

Public procurement is a crucial issue in the project and one of the main reasons for the delays. The [tender for projects and services](#) put in place innovative solutions to disseminate the tender (public meeting both in presence and online) and to provide administrative and content support for potential participants (one to one support meetings). The one-to-one accompanying actions did not raise any issue in terms of transparency and fairness in the case of this call for contributions, but it raises some concerns in the case of a public tender procedure for the purchase of goods or services or with co-design procedures. Therefore, it seems to be an interesting experimentation but of limited application.

The first [urban regeneration tender](#) experienced substantial delays due to economic situation caused by Covid-19 pandemic (in particular due to the rise of prices of raw materials). This highlights the limits of the public tender legislation, which is not designed to respond to unexpected events and issue calls for adaptive mechanisms.

Cross-department working

The project is led by the UE funds and Innovation Department of the city of Turin. However, the success of the project requires the active involvement of many departments. Established in September 2020, the inter-departmental working group met for its first meeting in February 2021. These meetings established promising practices to overcome the division of competences into silos. In light of the elections that changed the government of the city, it would be highly relevant to see if this practice will continue in 2022. Further, the contribution to the urban data platform shows a willingness for closer cooperation among departments. But 2022 will be the revealing year.

Participative approach for co-implementation

The active involvement of local stakeholders, citizens, informal groups, and non-profit organisations is a cross-cutting and distinguished feature of the TOnite project. Delivering activities of the 19 selected projects will be the crucial test-bed of the participatory approach. Many of the projects started their activities between November and December 2021 and 2022 will prove to be pivotal in determining if TOnite was successful in improving a participatory governance of urban security.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are perceived as major challenges in the project. In 2021 the definition of M&E model was completed with the Public administration performance assessment framework: five decision processes were chosen to measure the impact of TOnite and in particular of the urban data platform. No other significant improvements could be assessed due to the delays in starting the activities: the pilot monitoring started in September 2021 and will last until the end of TOnite.

Quite surprisingly the call for contribution didn't ask participants to design their own small-scale M&E model in line with the M&E model of the UIA project. Only later on, in the acceleration programme was the M&E of the small-scale projects redesigned according to the TOnite framework. By more carefully considering the relevance of the M&E next time, implementation could proceed differently, for example, refrain from asking the applicants to design their own M&E programme.

Communication with target beneficiaries and users

Despite delays, communication activities in 2021 kept the project alive. A TOnite brochure was completed in June 2021 and social media campaigns during 2021 reached a wider audience. An online event among all the UIA urban security projects was held in April 2021 and several representatives of TOnite participated in the EFUS conference in September. In the future, TOnite and the 19 projects could synergise their communication activities.

Upscaling

Due to The Covid 19 pandemic, the activities for scaling up and transferring the ToNite approach have been carried out online. The delays in the realisation of the main activities make difficult so far to understand the impact of these activities.

Challenges table level of risk

Challenge


Observation

Leadership
Challenge level




The project is well-run. The change in the political party running the city didn't have any impact on the project, somehow showing how TOnite objectives found a cross-party agreement.

Public procurement

Challenge level 


Huge delays due to Covid-19 confirmed that public procurement is a risky area.

Cross-department working

Challenge level 


Steps have been done to overcome the division of competencies into silos. However, results are yet to come.

Participative approach for co-implementation

Challenge level 


Projects have been selected. The selection shows some shortcomings but many projects seem very promising.

Monitoring and evaluation

Challenge level 


The M&E model has been set up. Next year will show if it is successful.

Communication with target beneficiaries and users

Challenge level 

Communication activities are ongoing through several media. Synergy with projects communication could be expected in the future.

Upscaling

Challenge level 

No specific results in 2021. Next year will be the crucial one.

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