

CASE STUDY

REPORT

Integrated development in action!

PROJECT

Kosice 2.0

📍 Košice, Slovakia

TOPIC

Culture and cultural heritage

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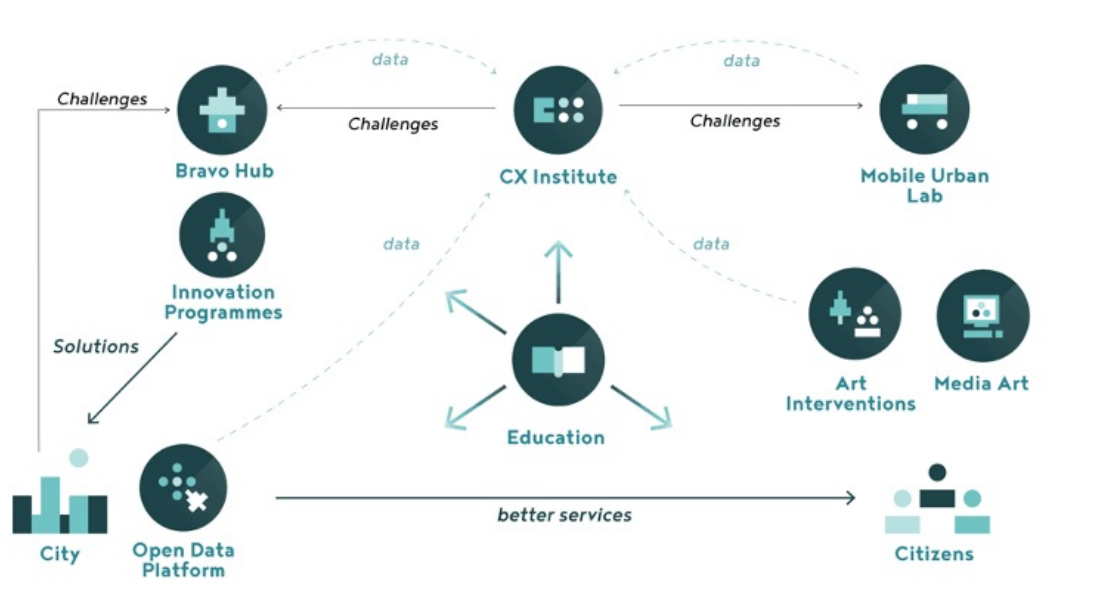
Košice - KOSICE 2.0

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About Košice 2.0

Kosice 2.0 aims at creating the institutional and knowledge infrastructure necessary to develop data-driven policies for the well-being of the city's residents. By creating an analytical research unit (Citizen Experience and Well-being Institute), a series of educational and accelerator programmes and an incubator, the project turns the city of Kosice into a creative ecosystem and an experimental ground for new services for citizens. Building on the legacy of the city's European Capital of Culture season in 2013, Kosice 2.0 is also a model for long-term collaborations with various urban stakeholders.



The ecosystem of Košice 2.0 | © Košice 2.0

Košice 2.0 was chosen as a case study because of its strong cross-sectoral approach to connecting cultural heritage, entrepreneurship and public services. While this is the only Call 5 project selected for this research, due to its mature state and the long-term collaborations it builds on, it offers a variety of learning points. With a series of intermediate institutions (Creative Industry Košice, Citizen Experience and Well-being Institute), it also exemplifies a governance model that brings together public administration capacities with innovation by bodies outside the municipality. Furthermore, with a strong focus on the city's Kulturpark as a new hub for innovative start-ups and new service providers, Košice 2.0 demonstrates a well-defined place-based logic with a strong impact on the neighbourhood at the centre of the project.

Context

Despite the success and legacy of the 2013 European Capital of Culture season, Košice has been lacking a strong cultural-creative ecosystem and structures of civic engagement. Combined with the absence of specialised training opportunities for young professionals and the brain drain towards Western Slovakia as well as Central and Western Europe, this situation has compromised the development possibilities of Slovakia's second city.

Furthermore, the lack of appropriate infrastructure to support innovation within the municipality and paucity of data about different uses of the city has restricted the municipality from developing informed and innovative

policies for the well-being of citizens. As Marcel Gibóda, Košice's Deputy Mayor notes, "people in the administration are only asked to complete their daily tasks and they lack time to think about how to improve things in the future."

Košice 2.0 addresses these challenges by building a "new culture of collaboration towards innovation to increase well-being," as explained by Michal Hladký, director of CIKE. This requires a new narrative for cultural heritage connecting the cultural and creative industries with digital technologies and the public administration; a creative ecosystem enabling individuals (local government, citizens, NGOs, and businesses) to cooperate; an innovation platform to bring new methodologies into the daily work of the public administration; as well as new organisations to support public officers in making informed decisions.

Košice's overall goal is the well-being of its residents, a better quality of life supported by evidence and a more inclusive and in-depth public conversation about how Košice would develop: "It's all about how well people can live in your city, how well they feel. And what the city can do for it by connecting services, and providing services based on innovation, understanding (data) and communication," underlines Hladký.

This article explores how the project Košice 2.0 has been pursuing its objectives in light of the key principles of Integrated Territorial Development.

Description

Never change a winning team

The composition of the Košice 2.0 consortium reflects the legacy of the city's 2013 European Capital of Culture. The partnership involves many stakeholders that have been working with the municipality since the ECoC. At the core of the partnership stands the Košice Municipality, with genuine cooperation between departments of IT infrastructure and City Planning, as well as European projects and future development.

The daily operations of Košice 2.0 are managed and led by two city-owned spin-off organisations, both of which played a major role in the design and implementation of the ECoC project: Creative Industry Košice (CIKE), an NGO that created the main strategy for the development of cultural and creative industry in Košice, and K13 – Košice Cultural Centres, an organisation that manages and administers a network of cultural centres.

These intermediate bodies are connected to the municipality through formal and informal operative links and communication channels but they also benefit from relative independence of decision-making. This "hybrid position" is crucial for their effectiveness as well as for their role in the governance of Košice 2.0. "We have a mandate to work with people within the municipality, otherwise nobody would listen to us inside. But when you're only inside an administration, you're more restricted and don't have the space to think differently," explains Hladký.

Besides these intermediate organisations at the core of the management of Košice 2.0, each partner and entity shares a common culture and vision and supports the project's coordination. The partnership covers the collaboration of the local administration with the civic, private and knowledge sectors. Besides IT (ANTIK Telecom, ASBIS) and consultancy companies (Civitta) and a platform bringing together IT organisations (Košice IT Valley), the Technical University of Košice (TUKE) also acts as a bridge with the start-up ecosystem, supporting the promotion of entrepreneurial culture within society and a cultural change on the academic level. In addition to these technology-related organisations, Košice 2.0 is also supported by the NGO Východné pobrezie (East Coast), which specialises in participatory processes and interventions related to well-being and the storytelling of urban transformation.

To support the continuity of the partnership and strengthen the trust and cooperation between partners, Košice 2.0 has built on the awareness, gained from the ECoC 2013 experience, that it is necessary to involve partners from different fields both in the design phase of the project proposal (as consortium partners) and in the implementation phase (as project stakeholders). Furthermore, in the governance of the project, various feedback loops are designed to collect partners' inputs to support adjustments in the project's implementation.

From education to participation and cross-pollination

During and following Košice's year as European Capital of Culture in 2013, city officials and their local partners recognised the transformative potential of European projects. This experience led Košice's key stakeholders to think about how to develop further their endeavour to bring together culture, creative industries and public services in a participatory way. In the context of Košice 2.0, it meant using innovation in culture and the creative

industries to cross-pollinate other fields with particular attention paid to public policies and processes.

Participation in Košice 2.0 was based on education and capacity building. Through this optic, culture, creative industries and cultural heritage were conceived as key assets for urban transformation. The logic of experimentation, innovation and communication at the core of these fields can support innovation in public-private cooperation and the daily work of the public administration. To help public officers renew their working methods within the municipality and engage with other stakeholders of Košice, a series of educational activities were designed within Košice 2.0.

Workshops for public servants, mixing older and younger colleagues, introduced new methodologies such as design thinking in the context of the municipality's work, enabling officers – and not only the leadership – to support a cultural change within the administration. "If municipal officers understand what it means to use a design thinking or co-creation method in developing projects, this could help us in the future to implement projects in a more efficient and creative way," confirms Michal Hladký. Besides new methodologies, empowering public servants is also a matter of the organisation of working time: as Deputy Mayor Marcel Gibóda suggests, "we need to create enough time for workers to actually have the capacity to think about these topics and to be able to attend different activities."

Participation also includes knowledge institutions and civil society organisations: through a series of workshops within the framework of the Cooperation Council, a "new culture of public discussion" is being constructed, bringing about tangible change in how people approach the public debate about policy issues. The creation of Košice's master plan, for instance, was accompanied by "multidisciplinary and multi-layered groups of people from academia, public companies but also NGOs. This never happened at such a scale before," underlines Michal Hladký.

Similarly, individual citizens also have an important role in the design of new services: they are invited to give their feedback about the services they use through structured interviews. "We want to create a platform where citizens can be first adopters or first testers of new services," explains Hladký.

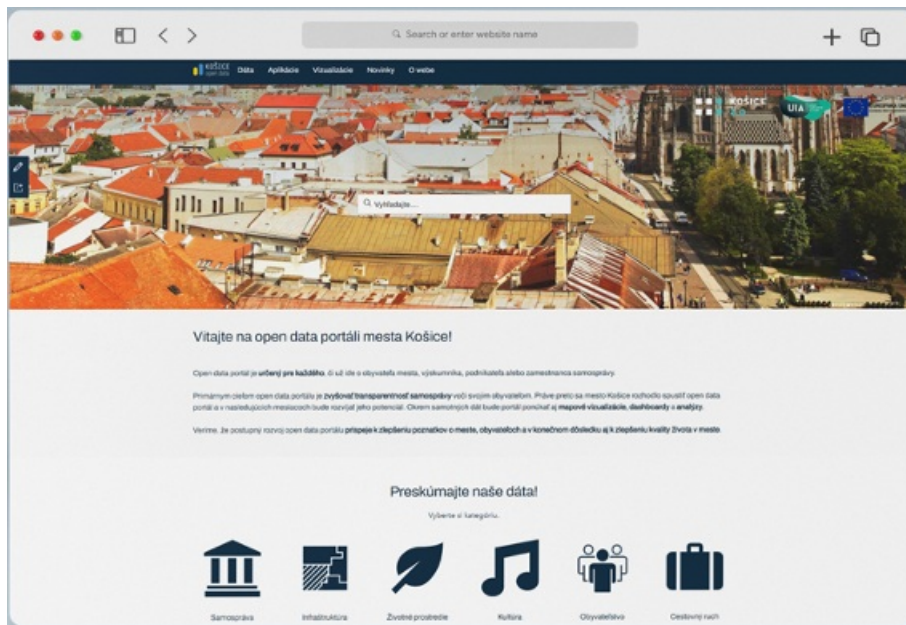
Finally, education programmes play an important role in building the knowledge and skills necessary for informed participation and decision-making. With research training at the Faculty of Economics and data visualisation courses at the Faculty of Arts, the Technical University plays an important role in building a vivid ecosystem, in Košice, by providing a "pipeline of people with expertise to fill public services or research organisations," describes Michal Hladký.

New organisations for evidence-based, data-driven policies

Joining forces within an UIA project, and working towards [citizens' wellbeing](#), Košice 2.0 partners had the desire to innovate by answering a set of research questions selected to guide their work: How could well-being be addressed? How could an ecosystem be built that improves the quality of life in the city? Asking the right questions is crucial in problem-solving. Following this approach, Košice 2.0 partners understood that they were facing a lack of data and a clear understanding of wellbeing in their city and that they needed a special research body.

The research centre [Citizen Experience and Wellbeing Institute](#) (CXI) was established as part of Creative Industry Košice and represents one of the primary outcomes of the Košice 2.0 project. Acting as an intermediate body between the municipality and other stakeholders, the Institute collects, updates, and uses data while conducting applied research in cooperation with universities, research labs, and non-profit organisations through an [Open Data Portal](#). Following a data-driven approach, CXI informs and supports the city in different policy areas, such as environmental protection, public space and mobility. The data necessary for this endeavour is collected through various sources: while the project partner ANTİK provides data from smart homes, surveys on cable TV as well as mobility sharing services and electric vehicle recharging stations.

To diversify its data sources, the Citizen Experience and Well-being Institute also launched the Mobile Urban Laboratory, a research unit whose role is to map public space, specifically the brownfields in the city. The Laboratory explores and effectively communicates the needs of citizens to a broader public. Operating as a mobile unit that collects and shares data, it has already suggested the idea of designing more green areas in Košice since the amount of [green space per capita is on the decline](#)



Open Data Portal. Image ©Kosice

A place-based ecosystem

Besides a mobile research unit and a network of partner organisations across the city, the creative ecosystem in Košice is also organised around a neighbourhood with the right infrastructure to support this ecosystem. As the most tangible manifestation of the creative industry in the city, Košice 2.0 builds on the infrastructure that was developed for the 2013 European Capital of Culture season.

As part of this legacy, the former barracks turned into Kasárne Kulturpark, a complex of 11 buildings hosting a great diversity of events, exhibitions and a library, which have been established as the centre of the city's cultural and creative ecosystem. Choosing Kulturpark as a starting point for Košice 2.0 is a statement about continuity: by connecting the remnants of the old industry with the new information and operational technologies as well as the creative industries allows the city to create a consistent narrative about its evolution.

The most important heritage asset for Košice 2.0 is a building located in the Kasárne Kulturpark, the [Bravo Hub](#) managed by K13. Originally conceived as an incubator for creative businesses, the building could initially be used only for non-commercial purposes, due to funding conditions related to the European Capital of Culture's regulatory framework. After a period of five years partners could make a different use of the building since it has everything that is needed to create a vibrant community of creatives and innovators: an impressive outside space and a co-working space, a conference centre, and even a science club.



Bravo Building. Image ©Kosice

Nature of integration

The work of Košice 2.0 corresponds to integrated territorial development at various levels. Participation and co-creation in the project is assured by a series of activities and programmes. Košice 2.0 uses its Mobile Urban Laboratory and the CXI to engage citizens in participation and co-creation processes. Within these spaces of work and collaboration, citizens are able to act and influence processes that affect their daily lives.

Besides its rootedness in a specific urban area that acts as the centre of Košice's creative ecosystem, the work of CXI, its data-driven approach to developing urban policies is also connected to a broader place-based logic. With its focus on urban strategies at various scales, it aims to foster endogenous urban transformation and reduce socioeconomic inequalities.

At the same time, the variety of research areas and partners joining forces in the CX Institute is directly connected with the project's strong multi-sectoral approach: by coordinating all areas of urban policy (in particular the environmental, social and economic dimensions) and linking participation, data collection, data visualisation, public space design and policymaking allows the consortium to take into account the interdependencies between different sectors.

Finally, Košice 2.0 aims for good urban governance by promoting vertical and horizontal multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation. This approach is clearly visible in the development of the educational program where professionals with new skills are born and public servants are empowered to participate in a more informed discussion about the city's future. These processes also increase the cooperation and trust between the urban authority and citizens.

Takeaways

- Capitalising on previous project experiences to bring partners together towards a shared goal in a long-term process: In the case of Kosice, the work done for the ECoC project set the basis for the promotion of new cultural initiatives like the Bravo Hub and a renewed public-private relationship.
- Positioning institutional change at the heart of the project: considered in terms of long-term impact, the choice, among others, to have a dedicated learning program for civil servants represents a necessary step to build that needed change in terms of trust in public administration and citizens engagement.
- Developing an innovative enabling ecosystem: A socio-technological system to empower various actors has been set up by Kosice through the development of physical (Bravo Hub), digital (Open Data Portal) and educational (Innovation Programs) spaces. This collaborative environment between the municipality, civil society, and private partners, allows for more horizontal (multi-sectoral) cooperation and co-governance (multi-level) processes during implementation.
- Intermediate bodies: Organisations that are connected to the municipality but operate in relative independence from them can act as interfaces between municipal departments and other urban stakeholders, thus helping cross-sectoral cooperation.

Further reading and selected key resources

- [Project website](#)
- [Open Data Portal](#)
- [Project news on the Open Data Portal](#)
- [Project Journal 1](#)
- [Project news City of happy inhabitants](#)

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