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The Urban Lab of Europe !

The MAC project Journal N° 4

Project led by the City of Pozzuoli



**URBAN
POVERTY**



The MAC (Monterusciello Agro City) Project

The **MAC** project seeks to reduce poverty in the Monteruscello neighbourhood, a large public housing district with 20,000 residents with low-income, a high level of unemployment, and characterised by large abandoned spaces. Thirty hectares of the neighbourhood's public green areas will be used in order to spearhead an economic process and development with urban agriculture as a means to combat poverty. The project will have three pillars: implementation of agriculture through innovative permaculture in the housing estate, improvement of the urban environment and encouragement of entrepreneurship and employment. Beyond the formal partnership, the main stakeholders involved will be local food companies benefiting from the agricultural production, the Hotel Management School, the local sports associations as well as the Archaeological Heritage association.

Partnership

- Comune di Pozzuoli
- Università degli Studi di Salerno - University
- Coldiretti Napoli - National Association
- Confagricoltura Napoli - National Association
- Agrocultura - Private Company
- L'iniziativa - Associazione di promozione sociale - NGO
- Fondazione FORMIT - Research Center

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1. Executive Summary

In the [MAC Journal#3](#) the take-off metaphor was used to highlight how the MAC project was moving with a certain speed towards the important implementation phases. In the last six months of the project a significant acceleration of the regenerative processes was expected, but this acceleration was only partial, the project partnership managed to achieve much less than it could have achieved. [The many delays accumulated on the implementation of the projects, obviously, have different reasons, causes and responsibilities, but they are all substantially due to the difficulty in having a stable and coordinated dialogue between the different project partners.](#) This dialogue is failing to consolidate also because the tools necessary to provide it with adequate spaces and contexts are not yet fully implemented. We refer above all to making the Agro Urban Center functioning properly and to continually activate the MAC Urban Council (Consulta Urbana del MAC). The former is still working in a temporary location and do not have a stable agenda of activities the second is just formally existing but not operating. This situation is strengthening the negative effects of this relevant challenge for the regenerative process to be faced by the MAC, that is

- the creation of the condition for a permanent dialogue within the project partnership,
- a second level partnership constituted by proactive stakeholders in Monterusciello and the local community.

This challenge was already reported in [the MAC Journal#1](#) (page 17):

The MAC has the opportunity and the means to set up a comprehensive and reliable participatory planning process. All elements for a successful and sustainable approach to development of project's foreseen activities and projects are at the heart of the partnership that is managing the MAC. The partnership should develop concrete tools and initiative to set up an effective and efficient participatory planning process.

The Municipality of Pozzuoli, as lead partner, is in a critical phase and must strengthen its mediation, facilitation and management actions in the borders of the project partners and of the stakeholders involved in the project at the local scale. This reinforcement is possible if the above-mentioned planning tools are fully implemented, stabilized and endowed with resources, otherwise misunderstandings and implementation delays will be more and more frequent until they seriously endanger the success of this project. Finally, [important design actions, essential for the implementation of regeneration sites, are accumulating postponements that could have undesirable effects for the continuation of the project.](#) Going back to the take-off metaphor, the flight was taken, but it is not a safe and stable flight. In the coming weeks many corrections to the trajectory must be promptly carried out in order to have a safe flight and properly landing into concrete results.

2. The Design Issue: The Landscape Plan and the Agricultural Cultivation Plan

In the [MAC Journal #3](#) (page 16) the action on the green infrastructure in Monterusciello was highlighted, this action will determine much of the MAC's success or failure. On this fundamental transformation, we are talking about 50 hectares (a map with the areas of intervention are reported in the same [Journal](#)) public land to be converted through urban agriculture activities, the capacity of the partnership to think and act in an operational way is for this specific action seriously tested:

There are many challenges for this third structural component (the recovery of the 50 ha through urban agriculture, A/N) of the MAC project, even if at this stage some of them are not yet completely outlined. However, they can be explained by the following points:

- *To complete the design phase for the first plots to transform keeping into account several items, at least establishing the terms of an active dialogue between agricultural partners and university designers.*
- *To taking into account suggestions from local stakeholders (agro urban forum) and directly from the local community.*
- *To find a way in the local administration to facilitate/fast-tracking the many bureaucratic procedures to be accomplished.*
- *To sharply plan even the prioritization*

Many of these recommendations have been often discussed in the last two semesters, but not

efficiently faced in day by day management operations. The complexity of this challenge is now manifesting itself through the following aspects:

- a confrontation, or clash, between the two main planning tools that must support urban transformation, that is the Landscape Plan (LP) and the Agricultural Cultivation Plan (ACP);
- a conflict that is opening up in the project partnership due to the now obvious implementation delays;
- the need to immediately find an operating mode to get out of this *impasse*.

Two planning tools are competing to define the transformation path of a very delicate urban territory, in which the MAC seeks to solve urban poverty issues rooted in the local context for many years now. [The challenge facing this moment the MAC partnership is to proceed as soon as possible to a harmonization of these two instruments and to reconcile the interests of the partners who are responsible for their implementation.](#) More than a clash between planning tools *per se*, the planning issue is to bring together two distinct visions of/for the urban transformation. The former (LP), that pertaining to the landscape plan, seeks to create an overall view focusing on the usability of the public space, but also to propose an organic and aesthetically valid design of the transformation; the latter (ACP), on the other hand, aims to

create an economy through the re-use of agricultural land to revive local employment and create local markets. The two design approaches are both necessary, but the partnership of the MAC must review some negative attitudes shown so far to prevent two good approaches, based on good tools, to end up creating a conflictual rather than purely constructive interaction.

The elements of risk triggered by this situation are mainly dependent on a not adequate day by day management operated by the project's leadership. Even if from the instrumental point of view the right choices were made (e.g the creation of the Agro Urban Center and the Agro Urban Forum/*Consulta Urbana*), *de facto* these management and planning tools did not work till this moment in a proper way. The main reasons behind this fluctuating functioning of these tools relies on following points:

- An effective dialogue within the partnership is only being achieved in this phase of the project, it would have been necessary to work more, from the beginning, on strengthening the interaction between the partners and recalling them more frequently to respect their commitments and roles.
- The fact that the MAC management does not completely succeeded in creating around this project a way to speed up the procedures for the design and implementation of the planned projects. Creating a fast track approval situation is a key-choice in this type of projects.
- Lastly, not to be underestimated, a dialogue on the contents of some fundamental choices that arrived too late. For example, how to link the principles of permaculture to the need to obtain quantities of products capable of reviving the local economy in a reasonable time. How to reconcile accessibility to these

public spaces with the use of the same for productive purposes.

The positive point is that the management is growing, realizing the mistakes made, and is improving its approach in the management of partners, of the activities and in the organization of formal procedures for the opening of the construction sites. It will be essential not to get lost in the next six months.

Finally, an important step, which also comes with difficulty and with a slight delay, has been made: the project of water and paths has been realized. It is one of the elements that make up the landscape plan, but also essential information to better organize the cultivation plan.

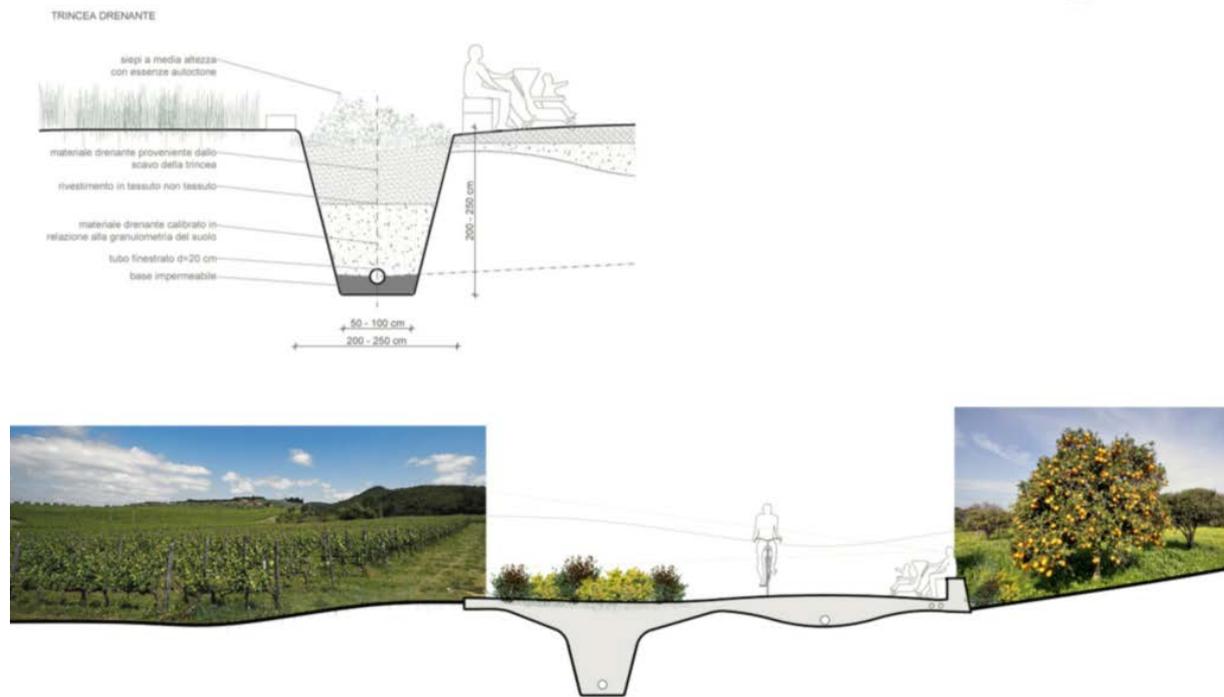


The water system ↔ The path system | diagrammatic plant

Starting from the scientific study of hydro-geomorphology, a decision-making procedure was developed for the better identification of irrigation techniques and their strategic positions with respect to the hydro-geomorphological setting of the urban area. **From an environmental point of view, it was decided to reduce the uncontrolled use of water from deep wells. Following the idea of water-efficient irrigation, in this project it was decided to use sub-surface water components, which derive from a rainy input of soil infiltration process, such as irrigation water.** The project is based on the hydrogeomorphological study of the areas for the definition of the choices in terms of

location, depth and typology of the sub-surface water collection systems, as well as for the design of the irrigation system. In order to design the water system, traditional systems that used and collected the sub-surface waters present in the

territory were also studied and observed. The project crossing paths will be designed along the water system, crossing the cultivated areas and becoming a new public space for the neighbourhood.



The water system ↔ The path system | section / collage

This first concrete achievement should pave the way to the solution of this design issues reported in this chapter and being the first step towards an

agreed roadmap to start the regenerative process in the 50 hectares.

3. Training and Communication: The stabilizing and constructive elements of the MAC

The strength that keeps the MAC Project high is certainly the good work the partners who are in charge of training, communication and event organization are carrying out. **These soft and well-balanced actions are creating cohesion, interest and consensus around the project. It is to be considered that these actions, at the same time, also raise the level of expectations towards the results.** A detachment is taking place between soft actions and structural actions in the MAC Project, if the latter are not able to take the same step, there is the risk of undermining the good work done by these smart and connecting components.

The soft activities of the MAC, that the ones that require to work with people in relation to

- organisation and realization of training courses,
- organisation and management of events (festival, seminars...),
- communication with interested stakeholders at neighbourhood level

are running well. As stated in the previous chapter, the issues are raising with the structural ones, that is those activities that must lead to the opening of the transformation (using the 50 ha of available land for agricultural production) and construction sites (especially launching the key interventions in the central core of Monterusciello, that is the renewal of Piazza De Curtis Square: [see chapter 2 of MAC Journal#3](#))

However, the first cycle of the training courses has been concluded and some actions are ongoing in order to keep the students of this first cycle in contact with what is continuing to be implemented in the project. **The idea is to create a community of qualified people who can slowly begin to play an operational role in the territory and avoid the dispersion of these young, motivated, prepared and willing resources after the closure of the training period.**

Specifically, the following actions have been realized in the last months:

- On February 2019, the first cycle of all three training courses has been closed with an official presentation of students' project works.
- All 40 students passed the evaluation (either during the training courses and the final on the project work) and they will receive a written declaration certifying the correctness of their results. After that, they will receive the scholarship.
- On 16th February 2019, some female students presented their project works at the "Festival del Mandarino", a local festival on the agri-food sector. They have been then contacted by some business local actors interested in providing support for the development of their business ideas.
- A new premise for the second training cycle has been identified (Ufficio Giardini at

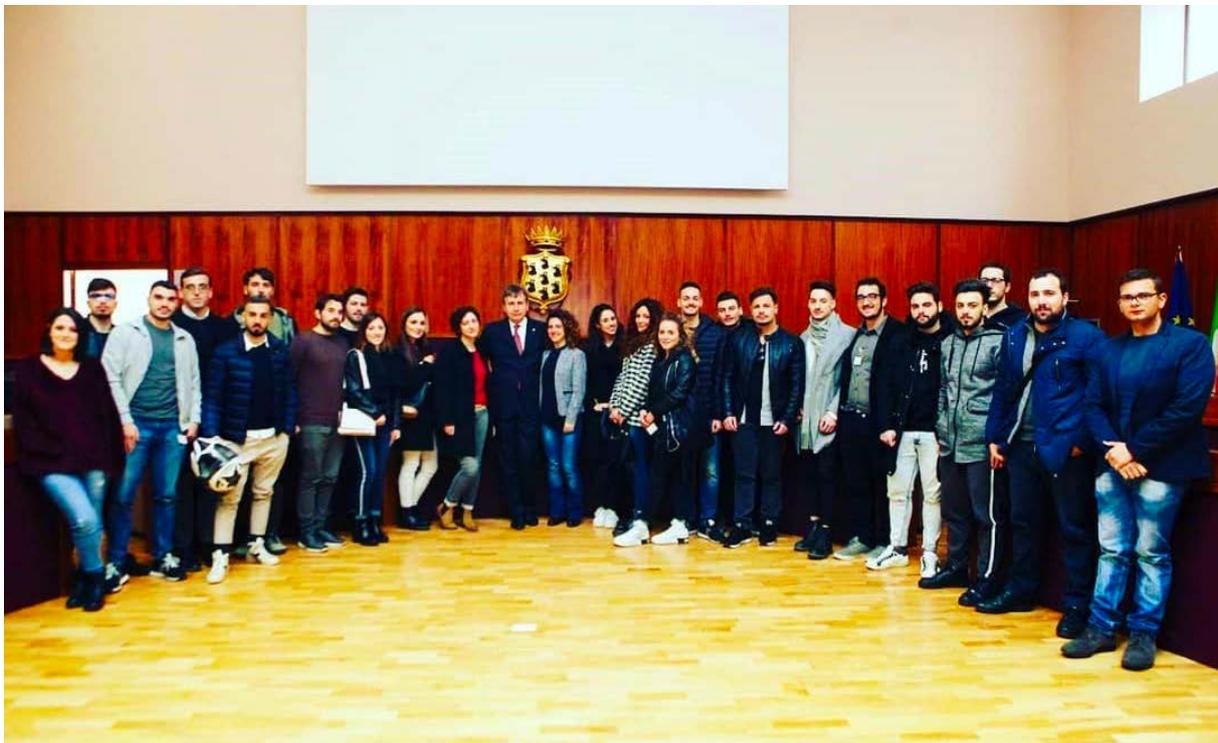
Monterusciello) and the MUA is doing a little rearrangement of the location to host all courses and all students in the best way. A room will be dedicated to the Ethical Production laboratory. Next to the Ufficio Giardini, there will be a didactical cultivation area for the Permaculture course.

- The ranking list of the second call for internships has been published by the MUA and the second cycle of the three training courses has started in the week from 25th to 29th March 2019.
- The time-table for all the three training courses has been prepared and teachers and tutors have been identified.

To get more about the courses content, please refer to [MAC Journal #3](#) (page 11).

Major events have been performed in the last period, among these it is worth remembering:

- *“Il festival del mandarino”*: The “Campi Flegrei Mandarin Festival”, in synergy with local associations. During [the event](#) held at the headquarters of the Civil Protection of Pozzuoli, the Agricultural Plan was presented by the partners, the basis of the green regeneration project for the Monterusciello district.
- A delegation from the Municipality of Pozzuoli participated in the XII edition of Energymed at the Mostra d’Oltremare in Napoli. The exhibition conference on renewable sources and energy efficiency in the Mediterranean. A participation that has seen as a central theme the idea [of Monterusciello as an embryo of smart city](#), starting from the investment of urban green regeneration of MAC Monterusciello Agro City and the energy efficiency actions on residential housing.
- The launch of [the second cycle of training courses](#).



Participants in the second cycle of courses together with the councillor for urban policies of Pozzuoli

4. Remapping the challenges

At the beginning of summer 2019, the MAC will complete two years of activity. it's time to proceed to a first review of the challenges, to try to understand where it has improved and where instead the project can still give more. The exercise of mapping the challenges has been

firstly done in the first semester of the project, results are published in the [MAC Journal#1](#) (page 21). Here below the same table used in 2017 is reported, but a second, current, level of interpretation is added for evidencing progress, or lack of progress/or even regression

TABLE 1: MAPPING MAC AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED UIA CHALLENGES

Challenge	(Risk) Level	Observations
1. Leadership for implementation (2017)	Low	The Municipality of Pozzuoli is in a good position to provide a strong leadership for the MAC Project. The city of Pozzuoli recently reconfirmed the mayor that promoted the MAC initiative. The Mayor confirmed the planning commissioner that launched the idea of the MAC initiative. There is a frame of continuity in respect of technical and political decision making: who proposed the project has currently both consensus and instruments to implement it. There is an issue still ongoing to make visible in Monterusciello a place where residents and stakeholders can directly get in contact with the staff managing day by day the project.
1. Leadership for implementation (2019)	Medium	Some delays in launching the realization of some projects and key activities of the project depend on the fact that the lead partner has not yet well developed the tools and capabilities to effectively and efficiently exercise the necessary leadership to manage such a complex regeneration process. It is important at this point in the project to make decisions to strengthen the leadership of the Municipality in dialogue with the project partners, and of the project partnership in comparison with the local community. The issue is not political but mostly organizational.
2.Public procurement (2017)	Medium	The technical offices of the Municipality are well equipped to manage correctly and consistently the design of conventional public procurement. In this initial phase, it is to test the administrative system against the specific innovative requirements linked to the UIA initiative. To overcome the challenge to design effective and innovation-driving public procurement, it is necessary to strengthen the dialogue between the leadership and the two levels of partnership (core and extended). The leading partnership should aim towards a process of co-designing/ identifying the procurement key elements together with local stakeholders in order to better addressing the problems to face. Finally, another open question is whether the consortium will have readily at their disposal the budget for the procurements, as financial concerns can delay the issuing of the procurements.

2.Public procurement (2019)	Medium	<p>The Municipality is very well prepared in dealing with all technicalities related to the design and management of a public procurement. The technical staff responsible for the procurement is aware of challenges and activities of the MAC. Delays in running procurements is depending on key information not yet delivered by other project partners, the reason is in this not fully explicated capability in leading and coordinating some critical partners (read cell above related to leadership)</p>
3.Integrated cross-departmental working (2017)	Medium	<p>One of the roles of the AGRO-URBAN POINT (AUP), the specific coordination and management office of the MAC, is to harmonize and make synergy among the different sectoral competences working at the municipal scale. Moreover, this office, as a „shop-window” of the MAC, has to design and coordinate even the governance schemes related to vertical subsidiarity issues. The realization of this proper “planning processor” of the MAC is still in the process of setting up. The AUP will make the actions of the local administration transparent within the neighborhood. Moreover, a Job-Desk, operated by the AUP, will have to inform and involve stakeholders about new job opportunities generated by the MAC, training activities, scholarships and awards. The AUP is currently under construction.</p>
3.Integrated cross-departmental working (2019)	Low	<p>It is evident that there is a coordination among different departments within the Municipality of this urban regeneration process, a lot of work has been done by the Municipality in this respect. The expected AUP (currently renamed Agro Urban Center) is already working, but it should be further promoted, better organized and provided with adequate resources. An ongoing issue is related more to the vertical governance than to the horizontal one: it is necessary to involve more supraordinate institutions (especially the Region), but the Municipality is very active in this sense as well.</p>
4.Adopting a participative approach (2017)	High	<p>The dialogue between the public administration and Monterusciello’s residents needs to be improved. A lot of work has to be put into the reconstruction of mutual trust. The strong and impacting psychological, socio-cultural and economic effects of the displacement have created a chasm between citizens and representatives of public authorities. The MAC has the opportunity and the means to set up a comprehensive and reliable participatory planning process. All elements for a successful and sustainable approach to development of project’s foreseen activities and projects are at the heart of the partnership that is managing the MAC. The partnership should develop concrete tools and initiative to set up an effective and efficient participatory planning process.</p>
4.Adopting a participative approach (2019)	Low	<p>In this respect both the Municipality and the project partnership are working well. The MAC is not a phenomenon restricted to partnership and institutions but is actively involving the local community, in this sense a significant impact was created through good communication actions, punctual and precise organization of events, but also by training courses that are managed to hit the target, that is the young people of Monterusciello looking for building up their professional future.</p>

5. Monitoring and evaluation (2017)	High	<p>A proper process of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is not yet running. The partnership is currently managing and implementing all necessary actions to comprehensively start the implementation of the activities. It is not yet clear how, in view of the above participatory pathway, the activities are going to be monitored: the approach and the M&E should be strictly related. It is quite logic to use for the purpose a participatory-based methodology in order to consider local people’s perspectives and priorities, with the intent of operating sustainable and open choices; to identify problems and trouble-shooting problems already during the implementation phases; To provide and co-create knowledge and skills to empower people against urban poverty sources. To assess, on an ongoing basis and together with target groups and local stakeholders, the evolution of the project, in order to be able to make necessary course-corrections.</p>
5. Monitoring and evaluation (2019)	Medium	<p>This should be a classic function developed within the Agro Urban Center, but a proper constant monitoring and evaluation of what has been done or what is happening is not done in a structured way. In this moment there is a lot of attention put by both the lead partner and the project partnership to understand the mistakes done in order to learn by doing and avoid them for incoming steps, but this is not enough. It is important to underline that the ability to look with constructive self-criticism at the implementation paths is present in the project and it is developing more and more, not all partners have reached the same degree of maturity.</p>
6. Financial Sustainability (2017)	High	<p>In the current phase, the main idea beyond for a “MAC business model” is to create a cooperative system where the quality agricultural production is able to support a short supply chain that meets the local food market, and aiming at producing, at the same time, materials for ecological design construction. A proper Cooperative should constitute even an ongoing training school in direct connection with the production processes. Principally, the financial sustainability of the envisaged projects, especially in the post UIA financing phase is still to be properly set up. It is to be built the relations with potential public financier (Region, Central level, Metropolitan Area) and potential private investors. Discussion on PPP (Public Private Partnership) and PPPP (Public Private People Partnership) are at initial stage.</p>
6. Financial Sustainability (2019)	Medium	<p>Many business models have been addressed and the discussion is very rich and argued on possible business plan models, or through which legal forms the regeneration process can continue to be kept alive (above all to continue to profitably manage the land recovered and placed in production). This aspect of the project is rich in content and arguments, the problem is that for now they are still very theoretical discussions, because in fact only one of the many plots to be recovered has been put into production.</p>

7. Communicating with target beneficiaries (2017)	Medium	<p>As the AUP is not yet properly functioning, the communication with target groups (unemployed residents looking for a job, young people in search of opportunities and capacities, local business owners/retailers, local farmers, professionals and researchers, entrepreneurs, local associations and schools) is not yet efficiently coordinated. On the other side, there is a clear statement to create a second level partnership that it is going to actively include even the target groups in an enlarged and participatory approach to the design of the foreseen activities and projects. This is going to be difficult to set up properly during the lifetime of the project if the process of open communication and the creation of the „two-way bridge” between the project and the target groups will be delayed.</p>
7. Communicating with target beneficiaries (2019)	Medium	<p>Despite the tools necessary to improve the dialogue with the target beneficiaries (The Consulta Urbana, the Agro Urban Center), as evidence many times in this report, are not yet fully operational, there has been a good communication towards the target beneficiaries, this is due above all to the good job done by the partners responsible for communication and training activities.</p>
8. Upscaling (2017)	Medium	<p>The topic faced by the MAC has a relevant potential of being replicated or expanded. As stated above, the communication activities and the projects are moving their first steps as the links and discussions with overlaid governance tiers. Regeneration activities based on UA (Urban Agriculture) are increasingly getting attention on an urban scale. It is too early to identify the set of characteristics of this challenge in the present phase of the MAC. A lot will be depending on capability to develop an inclusive planning process at local scale based on an effective and easy to manage methodology.</p>
8. Upscaling (2019)	Low	<p>There is a lot of interest in the planning process started with the MAC, and a lot of expectations, not only locally, but also nationally. The idea of the MAC attracts a lot of interest even on a European scale, in this sense the partnership is presenting its results well in international seminars and conferences. The credibility of the proposed regenerative process will depend very much on the ability to implement what was promised in the proposal phase, the elements to achieve a good result and have a good degree of upscaling are still present in the MAC.</p>

The following radar diagram reports synthetically the evolution of challenges, in terms of risk levels evolution:



5. Conclusions and takeaways

The MAC project is experiencing a very central phase. It is time to concretize

1. the ambitions of the Pozzuoli administration,
2. the design and planning paths of the partners
3. and the proposals that they have been able to generate through interaction with the local community.

In the last six months the project has experienced the so-called performance anxiety. After having recovered the initial delay, having built structures and procedures, albeit with different operating and management limits, when starting with the realizations the gears did not rotate perfectly and without frictions.

The frictions came out of all those planning, administrative, and relational situations that were not perfectly addressed and resolved, for various reasons, but above all because the management operated by the lead partner did not always have the same strength in conducting the partnership and quickly solving the usual conflicts raising in such multifaceted projects. This weakness has led to different responses and levels of commitment on the part of project partners, as is usually the case in this type of project. The different response capacity of the partners, and consequently the different efforts made in achieving the activities, has triggered imbalances and delays that now risk compromising the success of the MAC project.

Objectively, the problems that the management must face are complex, first the difficult task of matching the timing of the EU projects with the one of the bureaucratic pathways underlying the

phases of design, approval and site opening which characterize the Italian procedures. A relevant question of the MAC project is linked to the critical point that many construction and transformation sites have to be formally opened and managed, each of them is a different public procedure.

The MAC project partnership must currently make a considerable effort in order to

- remain consistent and find the right ways to synergistically collaborate,
- increase its ability to cooperate effectively in carrying out the critical activities for the opening of construction and transformation sites,
- continue with even greater effort to make the local community of Monterusciello involved and informed.

Main takeaway is that nothing is compromised until now, but the current phase of implementation of the MAC project does not allow serious errors. If this project will continue to accumulate delays due to a lack of synergy between the project partners,

- then the project will come out strongly underdeveloped compared to the expected results.
- This will cause a considerable disappointment in the community of Monterusciello and will expand the already difficult relationship between this part of the city and the public administration.
- This disappointment would make the urban regeneration actions of an already compromised territory even more difficult.

Finally, in the next MAC Journal, the expectations are those of showing the launch of the building/ construction and transformation sites and report

about the capability of the partnership to be coherent, in the implementation phase, with the expectations created in the design one.

SOCIAL-MAC

WEBSITE:

<http://www.macpozzuoli.eu>

SOCIAL NETWORKS:

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 MAC Pozzuoli

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

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