



COMUNE DI GENOVA

Effective strategies and innovative approaches to be included in the local urban plan, to make the city of Genova more attractive to businesses and qualified workers

A Policy Learning Platform peer review

27/28 June 2024

Final Report

1. Brief presentation of the beneficiary and its motivation to host a peer review

Genova is one of the main port cities of the Mediterranean Sea, a “polycentric” city, made up of 19 centers (some of them sizeable), that in the early 1990s experienced a large-scale reconversion of an obsolete port area by reconfiguring port functions and reorienting heavy industry, in part privatized, towards the technology sector.

The polycentric nature of Genova has evolved into a distinctive feature over time. Rather than having a single productive zone, the city hosts multiple productive contexts spread throughout various areas that can be seen as micro-cities, each experimenting with diverse models of economic development.

In recent years, there has been a joint effort to regenerate several of the city's districts, with a primary focus on reconnecting the port with the urban fabric that, for an extended period, existed as separate entities. However, the reintegration of these highly fragmented and diverse economic interests, crucial for fostering a comprehensive and strategic approach to urban development, does not yet seem to have taken place. The challenge, then, is to make the different areas of the city accessible and functional for both local businesses and those outside of Genova.

The objective of the peer review was to exchange good practices and have an open discussion on potentially effective strategies and innovative approaches to be included in the local urban plan, to make the city of Genova more attractive to businesses and qualified workers.

2. Specification of the policy challenge encountered

Despite the diverse array of factors, what has consistently attracted entrepreneurs to the city is its quality of life, marked by a pleasant climate and proximity to the sea, and the presence of a series of services to citizens and businesses. Furthermore, the atmosphere of innovation and the ongoing regeneration initiatives implemented in recent years are also viewed positively.

The Civic Administration has also made efforts to enhance the city's appeal, implementing changes to the PUC (Municipality Urban Plan) to reduce bureaucracy through a process of administrative simplification. Additionally, a policy has been launched to promote urban greening, both through environmental regeneration initiatives and through the reduction of urbanisation costs for individuals and businesses performing works in previously urbanised areas, with the aim of enhancing urban green areas, making them usable and well equipped for citizens.

However, no data are yet available on the impact these initiatives are having on the establishment of new economic activities. Moreover, these measures primarily remain individual actions rather than part of a comprehensive, cross-cutting strategy.



Direzione di Area Sviluppo Economico e Promozione
Tel 010 5572029 - ✉ sviluppoeconomico@comune.genova.it
PEC: sviluppoeconomico.comge@postecert.it





COMUNE DI GENOVA

The main identified and assessed challenges include:

- The lack of long-term strategic planning for significant urban revitalization efforts at the city level;
- The absence of a well-organized and effective transportation network for an effective connectivity to other major cities in Italy and across Europe;
- The effectiveness of collaboration among diverse players is not always guaranteed. What methods could be promoted to foster more active synergies?
- Involving new players in the innovation arena is crucial. Institutional actors, along with incubators and similar entities, could play a pivotal role in facilitating the establishment of partnerships and networks for fostering business development;
- The availability of funding and incentives serves as tangible support for startups initially, but it's also crucial for the consolidation of existing businesses - sometimes businesses complain about the imbalance of funds in favour of start-ups rather than support for existing operators;
- The possibility of contacting investors;
- For companies coming to Genova from elsewhere, it's often challenging to attract and retain employees in the city due to factors such as high living costs, transportation difficulties and challenges in finding affordable rental accommodation;
- External communication efforts primarily target tourists and visitors, but there appears to be a lack of communication aimed at attracting startups and businesses by showcasing the city's advantages for investment.

The peer review was characterized by a multidisciplinary approach, combining urban planning, urban innovation and economic development, being aware that, in a city like Genova which cannot compete with other large cities in terms of space, some other aspects become crucial (e.g. quality of life, services that can be offered to residents, infrastructures, cultural promotion).

The questions that were addressed during the peer review:

- What elements can be attractive to a company? While citizens may prioritize quality of life and pleasant climate, what elements are more attractive for companies to drive economic development?
- If we look for example at Lisbon, qualified as a start-up capital, how did they do it? What strategies have they put in place?

3. Participants

PEERS	
Ricardo Gonçalves	<i>Municipality of Fundão – Portugal</i>
Kevin Lynch	<i>Southern Assembly – Ireland</i>
Maria Elena Seemann	<i>Alba Iulia Municipality – Romania</i>
Luz Molina	<i>Pro Malaga – Spain</i>
Wolfgang Oehler	<i>Büro für Stadt- und Regionalentwicklung – Germany</i>

INTERREG EUROPE
Ilaria Ramaglioni
Thorsten Kohlisch
Rene Tonnisson
Luc Schmerber



Direzione di Area Sviluppo Economico e Promozione
 Tel 010 5572029 - ✉ sviluppoeconomico@comune.genova.it
 PEC: sviluppoeconomico.comge@postecert.it





COMUNE DI GENOVA

MEMBERS OF THE BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION	
Nives Riggio	<i>Filse Spa</i>
Pietro De Martino	<i>Filse Spa</i>
Silvia Pedemonte	<i>Filse Spa</i>
Edoardo Badino	<i>Filse Spa</i>
Olivia Zaina	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>
Anastasia Francavilla	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>
Cristina Giusso	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>
Stefano Bertocin	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>
Marzia Casazza	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>
Alessandra Tegaldo	<i>Municipality of Genova</i>

STAKEHOLDERS	
Claudio Oliva	<i>Job Centre</i>
Fulvio Puzone	<i>Italian Institute of Technology</i>
Massimiliano Gatti	<i>Italian Institute of Technology</i>
Mario Marchesi	<i>University of Genova</i>
Raffaella Bruzzone	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>
Ornella Caramella	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>
Michela Spagnuolo	<i>RAISE (Robotics and AI for Socio-economic Empowerment) ecosystem</i>

4. Policy recommendations

After the stakeholders' presentations and two on-site visits to Filse incubator and to the Waterfront area, an extensive discussion followed. The Peer Review meeting continued with the recommendations of the peers which are recorded below:

1) Need for a shared framework:

An overall coherent framework is essential: the city boasts plenty of resources (more traditional industry, blue economy supply chain, technological assets, etc). It's now important to give value to the local ecosystem, while jointly developing a binding and framework-setting urban development concept, providing clear guidelines, core goals and development criteria.

2) Coordination of and communication with stakeholders is key

A high level of communication is required both internally (administration, politics) and externally (citizens, stakeholders). Citizen consultation must be taken into account for the formulation of a shared vision for the city. Initiatives and processes of urban regeneration, especially if preparatory to the establishment of new enterprises, require consensus among citizens.

Some innovative approaches could be tested, for example participatory budgeting, community barometer, interactive platforms (apps) to interact with citizens, FabLab where community problems can be discussed.

3) Neighborhood approach

A "Neighborhood approach" is an area-based way of responding to multi-sector needs that is informed by a community based decision-making process reflective of the social, economic and physical features of the delimited area. In this perspective, it is important to involve citizens, existing businesses and local advisors who know the specificities of local businesses.



COMUNE DI GENOVA

4) Impulse projects

High level of impetus/stimulation through special / spectacular projects: the city can introduce this kind of “impulse projects” in order to increase spatial attractiveness and support high quality of surroundings. It is essential to connect different impulse projects in the framework of the master plan for transformation.

5) Startup infrastructure

The city/public authority can promote and upgrade/improve a startup infrastructure, composed by Fablab, Craft Lab, Incubators, test sites / Living Labs (e.g. urban use of AI).

The traditional know-how can be valorized in combination with new technologies (crafts). The temporary use of buildings could be tested to promote entrepreneurial activities.

One Stop Shops must be promoted to assist new businesses.

6) Softlanding Package

Some measures /programmes to facilitate mobility and attract new activities could be put in place, for example:

- One Stop Shop,
- Incentives for the first year (rent or tax reduction),
- Specific housing programmes,
- New / innovative programmes, even across different organisations, to attract new activities (accelerators, ...).

7) Branding («Genuinely Genoa»)

It comes to light a strong necessity to make the city visible through dedicated branding strategy/activity:

- Connected to the shared vision,
- Related to the strengths of the city,
- Needs to stand out in a context of high global competition for talents, businesses, ...

The involvement of local citizens, businesses can play a pivotal role in defining/spreading the message (‘the place sells itself’).

5. Possible calendar of implementation

The image below represents the development of a series of actions over the next three years, on four themes:

1) Main urban regeneration areas

a) WLG - Waterfront: Renzo Piano’s project creates a lively urban area on the sea with a nautical district, an urban park and residential, commercial, recreational and tourist services.

On 8 July 2024, the Sports Arena within the 'Palasport' building was inaugurated; the opening is due next November. The overall redevelopment will be completed by 31 December 2026.

b) Erzelli Science and Technology Park: some of the most prominent high-tech companies on both national and international scale already established here. The new Hospital of the Ponente Genovese and the Polytechnic School of the University of Genova are currently underway: this phase started in 2024 and will be largely implemented by 2027.



Direzione di Area Sviluppo Economico e Promozione
Tel 010 5572029 - ✉ sviluppoeconomico@comune.genova.it
PEC: sviluppoeconomico.comge@postecert.it





2) Call for Innovation

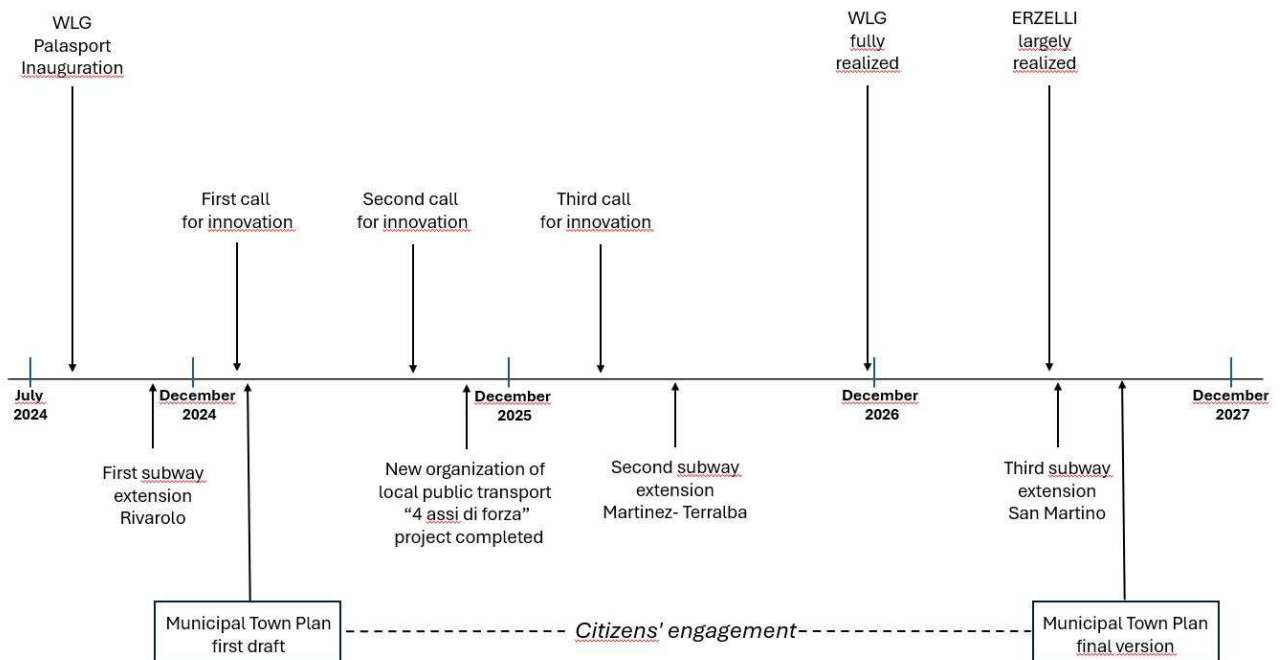
Some measures related to the recommended “Softlanding Package” are already planned: for example, in the schedule below, we have included three different Calls for proposals (funds from European Structural and Investment Funds, already available), that will be opened in the next months.

3) Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan - local public transport

The PUMS (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) aims to meet the majority of mobility needs through local public transport, the strengthening of which includes the realisation of the “4 assi di forza” project by 2025. In short, this involves the upgrading of four main public transport axes in Genoa (from west to east and along the two main valleys Polcevera and Bisagno), as well as the extension by 2024 of the metro to Rivarolo, in 2026 Martinez/Terralba and later to San Martino.

4) Municipal Town Plan (PUC)

The guidelines for the construction of the Municipal Town Plan (PUC) will therefore be prepared by 2024; the first draft of the Plan will be issued in 2025, meanwhile the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and the citizen engagement will begin.



6. Conclusions

At the moment, in Genoa there are several ongoing projects that we can view as “impulse projects”: their results and impact will be seen and measured in the medium/long term. That’s why both the Municipality of Genoa and Filse hope to receive further updates from the Policy Learning Platform in case new best practices should arise at European level.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to express the city’s gratitude to the team of peers and the staff from Interreg for their time and precious contributions.



COMUNE DI GENOVA

Genova, 08.08.2024



Direzione di Area Sviluppo Economico e Promozione
Tel 010 5572029 - ✉ sviluppoeconomico@comune.genova.it
PEC: sviluppoeconomico.comge@postecert.it





COMUNE DI GENOVA



Direzione di Area Sviluppo Economico e Promozione
Tel 010 5572029 - ✉ sviluppoeconomico@comune.genova.it
PEC: sviluppoeconomico.comge@postecert.it

