



CASE STUDY

The new **PERMANENT SHORT-CHAIN FOOD MARKET** in the new regenerated **“Macrolotto Creative District”**

KEY FACTS

- The so-called "Macrolotto 0" area, located just outside the city walls of Prato, was characterized by a multitude of textile companies and workshops in the 60s and 70s.
- With the relocation of textile activities to another area of the city, it lives there now one of the largest Chinese communities in Europe
- Regeneration of a former industrial building for new functions and services
- Promotion of local and healthy agri-food production

DO'S

- Interdisciplinary approach
- Creation of a multidisciplinary working group
- Conduction of preliminary analysis
- Identification of barriers

DONT'S

- To limit to just renovating the building
- Not get discouraged by the bureaucratic barriers

CONTEXT

In Prato, the green and circular transition is a priority among the municipal administration's policies. Since 2016, the Municipality of Prato is the Italian representative in the EU Urban Agenda Partnership on Circular Economy, coordinating the debates on the issues of the re-use of wastewater, the economic incentives for the circular economy and the sustainable re-use of buildings and urban spaces. In 2020, the Municipality launched the so-called strategy "Prato Circular City". Overall, the strengthening of circular economy practices in the textile district, together the aim to reduce land consumption by renovating, regenerating and reusing vacant buildings, are intended as main factors for the sustainable and harmonious development of the city. In this context, a process of urban regeneration of the area called "Macrolotto 0" is being carried out. Among the planned interventions, there is the reconversion of an old disused textile factory into a covered space for the short chain food market. The space also integrates interventions of urban forestation and the promotion of social inclusion activities.

A PERMANENT AND COVERED FOOD MARKET WITH AN URBAN DESIGN: RIGENERATION OF THE FORMER FORTI'S FACTORY BUILDING

Macrolotto 0, in the intentions of the municipal administration of Prato, will become the "Macrolotto Creative District" which aims to create an area with new functions, greener, more technological and more contemporary. The intervention was funded through two projects: "PIU", co-financed by the Tuscany Region, and "Prato Urban Jungle", within the framework of Urban Innovative Action. Located in the heart of Macrolotto 0, the former Forti's factory building has been transformed into a metropolitan market of short chain agri-food products and street food, in a permanent and covered space of 900 m². By means of plants in interior open spaces, the aim is to create the largest air factory in Italy, increasing the environmental and social value of the place. The building has been completely preserved. Thermal and acoustic insulation has been guaranteed through the use of panels made by local secondary raw materials. With its NZEB (high energy efficiency) qualification and by the use of certified environmentally friendly materials for the flooring, the building has been regenerated with the intention to have fully recyclable components at the end of its life. Renovations were completed in December 2020 and from May 2021 it will host the "Terra di Prato" short supply chain farmers' market.



LESSONS LEARNT ON COLLABORATION

- This kind of public interventions represent an element of urban and functional requalification that acts as a best practice to drive and push private interventions
- The fragmentation of ownership in a specific area (i.e. buildings of former factories) can make it difficult to implement larger-scale, integrated regeneration projects.
- To conduct the analysis and classification of the industrial heritage by identification of unused buildings and their property.
- To identify urban planning and building rules based on an effective implementation of interventions.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The intervention in the former Forti's factory represents a best practice of circular reuse of the industrial heritage, by the promotion of urban ecology, social interaction, cultural exchange, creativity, creation of value for the city.

The main challenge was to preserve a building of the industrial heritage by regeneration, giving it a new function according environmental, social and economic principles.

Good environmental practices have been adopted by the use of recovered and recycled materials. On the one hand, for the external walls, use of about 650 m² of insulating panels, made of secondary raw materials derived from the recovery of textile wasted material from the Prato district. On the other hand, for the 1,100 m² large roof were used various insulating elements not derived from the local textile chain but still with a high content of recycled materials.

Moreover, the insulations have been assembled with a "dry" laying system which can be easily disassembled, with the possibility of recovering most of the materials used.

The main difficulties encountered was adapting the building to current regulations (i.e. structural, seismic and sanitary). The topic of the reuse of buildings is debated: preserving and regenerating a historical and/or industrial building is important because it allows us to maintain the memory of a previous productive structure and the tradition of a place, of a city. However, it is essential a strong commitment and vision by the local public administrators. Replicating this type of initiative without the intervention of Municipality could be problematic in terms of cost/benefit and technical aspects.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The intervention to create a permanent and covered food market in Prato wants to be a driver to attract and boost initiatives, including private and rethink specific parts of the city. Together with the market, the "Macrolotto Creative District" also includes the creation of a medialibrary and coworking space and the requalification of an open area into playground, equipped for outdoor sports. With experiences like this, the City of Prato strengthens its commitment to the transition to the circular economy, based on three pillars: innovation, cohesion, regeneration.