

D.T2.5.3 PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING PROPOSAL - ENGLISH SUMMARY -

City of Cuneo

Version 1
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1. Introduction

The City of Cuneo pilot project was forecasted to be completed with the implementation of *D.T2.5.2 - Co-design of a proposal of management and funding scheme for Palazzo Santa Croce in the City of Cuneo*.

The above-mentioned document was provided in Summer 2021, after a participatory process and several internal meetings within the Cuneo Administration and Finpiemonte, beside the meetings with the project partners.

In order to implement the pilot project on time, the City of Cuneo drafted and published in September 2021 a notice for expression of interest meant to start the Public-Private Partnership that the Administration had in mind for the revitalization of the pilot site located in Palazzo Santa Croce.

Specifically, the City of Cuneo was interested in experiencing a Special Public-Private Partnership, as at the article 151, comma 3, of the National Code on Public Procurement (Legislative Decree n. 50/2016), a flexible and innovative form of PPP seldom used in the cultural sector.

Starting from the D.T2.5.2 document and from the results of the worktables conducted with the project stakeholders, the City of Cuneo developed and published a notice for expression of interest meant to solicit private partners to present their project proposals.

In this English summary the content of the notice will be presented.

2. The notice for expression of interest

2.1. The reason behind it

The Special Public-Private Partnership (PSPP) is a not so common procedure applied by the public owners of cultural heritage, for its revitalization. In Italy, only few institutions adopted it but it is growing in importance because of the benefits it seems to bring in the management of cultural sites.

The national legislation does not specify into details the methodology of that procedure, but some common guidelines exist and are spread around the country in order to facilitate in particular local authorities in applying such a scheme.

Generally speaking the PSPP starts after the private initiative of revitalizing a cultural heritage site. In many cases, in fact, the private subject submits its management project proposal to the public owner of the building and the latter accepts or declines the proposal according to the public interest it could meet.

In the case of Cuneo, no private subjects have ever submitted a proposal of management of the pilot site rooms located at the ground floor of Palazzo Santa Croce. Not only, a previous call launched in 2017 for the concession of the site failed to find a manager and the site is empty and seldom used since then.

In order to activate such a management, the City of Cuneo decided to launch a notice for soliciting the interest of potential private subjects in submitting their project proposals, setting some criteria for the evaluation of the proposals according to the public interest for the pilot site management and to the Administration's objectives.

It was then decided to publish such a notice in order to implement the pilot action and see whether some private subjects were interested in such a procedure and in managing the pilot site, at the conditions set by the Administration and through a PPP scheme.



2.2. The content

The above-mentioned notice was written in the form of a call, with some annexes such as a “Technical report”, the layout and the pictures of the pilot site, but basically it underlined the same content as the D.T2.5.2 in terms of objectives, admitted activities and public interest to meet.

Beside the introduction to the project and to the site, the call set some evaluation criteria needed for understanding if the potential submitted project proposals met the indications of the Administration and were complete. The table below offers a view of the evaluation criteria:

	EVALUATION CRITERIA	Max points
1	Quality of the project proposal	50
1.1	Coherence of the project proposal with the City of Cuneo objectives	20
1.2	Adequacy of the cultural proposal with the city and territorial context	10
1.3	Efficacy and sustainability of the forecasted management plan	10
1.4	Innovation of the project proposal and of activities forecasted	5
1.5	Project proposal feasibility and absence of obstructing elements for its realization	5
2	Solidity and detail level of the agreement draft	15
2.1	Coherence of the agreement draft with the revitalization project proposal	10
2.2	Detail level of agreement draft	5
3	Experience in similar services management	10
3.1	Quality of the experience in similar services management within public cultural heritage sites and its correspondence with the goals of the City of Cuneo	5
3.2	Quality of the experience in similar services management in different contexts correspondence with the goals of the City of Cuneo	5
4	Solidity of the Business Plan	10
5	Better economic offer compared to rental fee as indicated in the call	5
6	Adequacy, efficacy and functionality of proposed pilot site refurbishment	10
6.1	Quality of forecasted refurbishment (equipment and furniture)	5
6.2	Coherence of refurbishment with the revitalization proposal and forecasted activities	5
	TOTAL	100

Moreover, the call defined the documentation needed for submitting the proposals, specifically:

- The technical report describing the forecasted activities;
- The technical plan for the pilot site refurbishment;
- A draft of agreement between the private partner and the City of Cuneo;
- The basic Business Plan;



- The site inspection documentation;
- The form for participating to the call.

The call specified that, after the evaluation of the project proposal/s based on the above-outlined criteria, the candidacies could undergo an integration and negotiation phase between the public and private partners in order to make the winning proposal more coherent with the City of Cuneo objectives.

However, it was also specified in the call that the participation with project proposals would not guarantee the continuation of the procedure in case the City of Cuneo would not receive any interesting and coherent ones. The call was basically meant to solicit the private organization in thinking about a possible renovation and revitalization plan of the pilot site.

The site inspection was set as mandatory for any interested candidate because the City of Cuneo thought that the visit to the pilot site would have helped any potential candidate in better understanding the location, context and conditions of the place.

2.3. The management details

Even though the Special Public-Private Partnership requires a high level of flexibility and a continuous exchange between the public and private partners in order to find the best management, the City of Cuneo decided to set some management details any project proposals should comply with and that could not be negotiated during the working tables forecasted within the whole procedure.

Specifically, the management details set were the following:

- No public contribution for the management of the pilot site is forecasted;
- The duration of the PPP is set at maximum 20 years, but the candidates could suggest a shorter period;
- The City of Cuneo requires a rental fee of 550,00€ / month, discounted of 30% for the first three years of the partnership due to the Covid-19 situation;
- The day-to-day management activities of the pilot site (cleaning, opening and closing, electricity and heating) are completely in the private partner's charge;
- The refurbishment, consisting in small renovation works and furniture and equipment arrangement, is completely in the private partner's charge, both economically and physically speaking;
- An agreed number of days per year the pilot site should be available for free for the City of Cuneo events.

Any other management details should be defined in the agreement arranged and undersigned by the two parties.

2.4. The content of the technical report attached to the call

The call has a Technical report as annex, meant to specify any other information regarding the future management objectives, the categories of activities admitted and the main management criteria that should be respected within the project proposal.

The Technical report recalls the same points as outlined in the *D.T2.5.2 - Co-design of a proposal of management and funding scheme for Palazzo Santa Croce in the City of Cuneo*, and specifically:

- The context of the pilot site
- The main goals of the call and of the potential future PSPP agreement

- The main management principles any candidacy should comply with
- The categories of admitted activities.

Attached to the call, the City of Cuneo provided also a layout of the pilot site and some pictures, shown below, and the form for participating to the call.

2.5. Layout and pictures

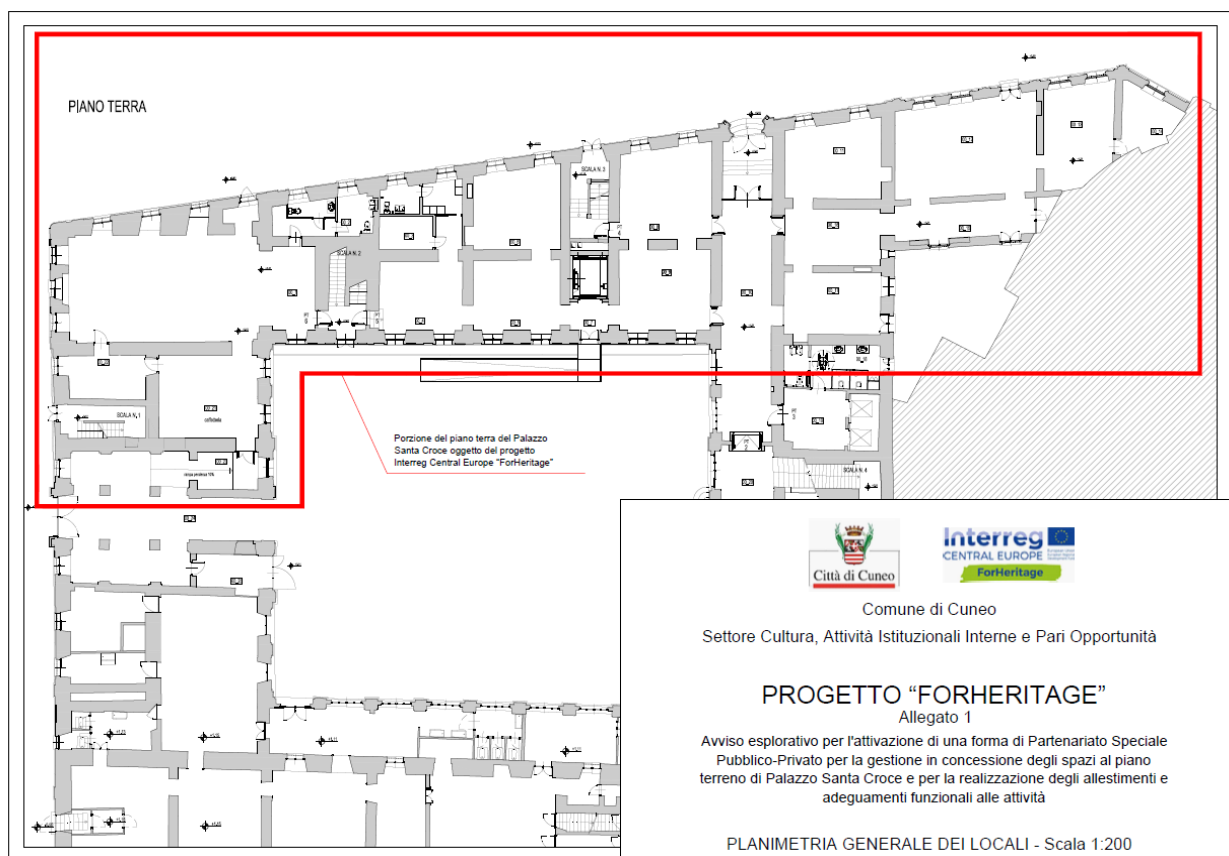


Figure 1: Layout of the pilot site



Figure 2: The main room



Figure 3: Some rooms



Figure 4: Some rooms

3. The outcomes of the notice

The call was published for 60 days during which interested private subjects could ask for clarifications about the procedure and were asked to have a mandatory visit of the pilot site, necessary, in the City of Cuneo's opinion, for better understanding the context.

During the 60 days of publication, the City of Cuneo received one clarification request from a cultural local association and one request of pilot site visit from another regional foundation.

The clarification request mainly focussed on the requisites of the private subjects needed for both participating with an expression of interest and for the potential following PPP for the management of the pilot site. The request was licit because the documentation required for the candidacy to the call was quite complex and any private subjects had to be sure it could participate before preparing the many documents needed.

After the clarification request and its reply, the local cultural association did not send a pilot site visit request, which somehow indicated that it was not interested in submitting a project proposal.

However, a pilot site visit was reserved from a regional foundation, called Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori, an organization that deals with the promotion of books and reading and that is active within the Piedmont region (more information available in the following chapter).

In the same days, the City of Cuneo decided to prolong the deadline of the call of two more weeks.

3.1. The candidacy of the Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori

Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori is a foundation based in Torino that deals with the promotion of books and reading and that organizes events and books presentations. It also supports the organization of some



festivals, the most important one being the Salone Internazionale del Libro in Turin (one of the main literacy festivals in Italy). The Fondazione is active on the Piedmont region territory with three branches, one located in Turin, one in Novara, located in the north-eastern part of Piedmont, and one in Rivoli, the latter more focused on music.

The Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori, by submitting its project proposal, meant to potentially expand the network of its branches in the southern part of Piedmont where Cuneo represents the administrative center.

The proposed activity is strictly related to the Fondazione's mission: promoting reading and books, organizing activities for schools and families and managing the pilot site in a way that makes it a cultural hub open and inclusive for young people. The Fondazione, beside the above-mentioned activities, proposed also some commercial side activities such as a small coffee corner and the renting of some of the rooms available.

The candidacy was analysed by a Commission that valued, based on the criteria set in the call, the adequacy of the proposal against the goals and objectives set by the Administration for the management of the pilot site.

3.2. The follow-up of the call

After the evaluation by the Commission, being both the call and the expression of interest not bidding for any of the parties, the City of Cuneo took some time to value the candidacy compared to the goals of the Administration.

Some internal meetings are taking place during the first weeks of 2022 and meetings with the Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori will be organized afterwards in order to find an agreement on some aspects and decide on the next steps.

If both parties will decide for the PPP continuation, the procedure requires a 30 days publication of the final version of the project proposal. If no other private subject submits its proposal based on the one submitted by the Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori, the procedure can continue with this latter partner.

The following step requires the setting up of some worktables between the City of Cuneo and the private partner, with the aim to draft the agreement between the two parties, define the commitments and, once the worktables have provided the decisions needed for the agreement, this one can be signed and the management of the pilot site can start.

4. Conclusions

The call for expressions of interest proved to be a good tool for soliciting private cultural subjects on the management of the Italian pilot site. The City of Cuneo was aware of the difficulties within the management of the site and therefore with the application to the call, therefore the candidacy of the Fondazione Circolo dei Lettori was welcomed.

The PPP the City of Cuneo is interested in, might serve as a test for an innovative approach in the management of a particular pilot site, which will prove whether a collaboration between the public and private partners can solve some of the problems encountered during the revitalization of a cultural heritage site. Sitting at the same table, finding agreements for the achievement of common results in the public interest and providing diverse competences could be the perfect mix for the successful implementation of the Italian pilot project and the optimal revitalization of the precious cultural heritage of Cuneo.