

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Percorso partecipativo del Piano Aria e Clima (Participatory process of the Air and Climate Plan)		
Name of the city/region: Municipality of Milan		
Country: Italy		
Institution presenting the candidacy: Municipality of Milan		
Start date of the experience: July 2020		
End date of the experience: February 2021		
Type of candidacy	New experience	X
Type of experience	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	X
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	X
	Audience/forum	X
	Citizen jury	X
	E-government/open government	X
Objective of the experience	To empower non-organised citizens	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	X
	To increase citizen’s rights in terms of political participation	X
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem”	X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
Territorial area	All the territory	X



Thematic area	Governance	X
	Transport	X
	Urban management	X
	Health	X
	Environment and/or urban agriculture	X
	Housing	X

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

With the multi-levelled, multi-method approach of the participatory process designed to accompany the introduction of the Air and Climate Plan supporting and guiding Milan in reaching climate neutrality by 2050, the Municipality of Milan intended to improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy. More: we are convinced that only by involving citizens and stakeholders in the drafting and implementation of climate change and environmental policy the challenge of global warming and sustainability will be met. Efforts to involve all concerned parties in such a complex endeavour inevitably foster better participatory practices.

How have you achieved this objective?

The objective of involving citizens and stakeholders in the drafting and implementation of the Air and Climate Plan was achieved recurring to a variety of stakeholders’ engagement and citizens’ awareness raising activities. More than 1,000 stakeholders were mapped via internal selection and a Public Call and involved in:

- 4 Thematic Laboratories which involved 180 stakeholders (organised in working groups) and citizens (via online streaming)
- 9 District Meetings which involved ~2,500 citizens online
- 1 Student Meeting with 30 students’ representatives encouraged to share what they learned during the meeting with their peers
- 1 Citizens’ Table which involved 50 participants, drawn by lot under supervision of the City statistical office, representing different genders, age groups, education level and work activities

These activities, along with other dissemination campaigns and informative events, culminated in an online public consultation in which the very text of the Air and Climate Plan was made available on Milan’s digital participatory platform in a format which allowed public amendments and comments for 45 days.

**To what extent has this objective been achieved?**

Despite the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic which forced us to change the type and extent of some planned activities and negatively impacted the availability of some actors (the level of participation of students was much inferior to what we had envisioned and hoped for), we believe the objective of the process to have been achieved. A series of dissemination activities and multiple and varied sessions of group work involving a variety of stakeholders culminated in an online public consultation in which the very text of the Air and Climate Plan could be amended and commented by citizens and groups. 486 proposals were collected over the course of 45 days: the result of this collective work is transferred to the Milan City Council; each proposal will be publicly addressed.

The efforts to draft the plan and its articulated participatory process promoted beneficial change within the organisation itself: unprecedented levels of collaboration with external parties as well as with internal departments were experienced. The online consultation inaugurated the digital participatory platform of the Municipality of Milan, *Milano Partecipa*, on which other participatory processes are being conducted by a plurality of departments.

Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The most innovative aspect of the participatory process connected to the introduction of Milan’s Air and Climate Plan lies in its multi-levelled, multi-method approach which characterised it from its early design. A rich, varied selection of participatory activities—some of which were never implemented before and required thorough adaptation to the specific context—allowed the engagement of diverse stakeholders and various citizens and city-users. Careful dissemination activities set the ground for the most ambitious goal, that of having a complex technical plan to be discussed and amended by the general public before submitting it to the City Council for the final approval. The whole process can be monitored on *Milano Partecipa*, the digital participatory platform which the Municipality of Milan developed from the open source project *Decidim*, born in 2016 thanks to the Barcelona City Council. All phases, documents, and meetings linked to the plan can be found online on <https://partecipazione.comune.milano.it/processes/piano-aria-clima>.

The plan itself is the result of a complex interchange of local, regional, national, and supranational actors which brought together various individuals, political and technical, who worked together to draft a plan which will support and guide the Municipality of Milan in reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

Throughout this journey we believe to have planted a seed of change whose fruits are already beginning to appear: other participatory processes are being conducted on *Milano Partecipa*, while the Citizens’ Table could become a model for a permanent civic participatory body.

**To what extent is the procedure transferable?**

We believe our experience to be highly transferable as the whole process leading to the drafting of the Air and Climate Plan and the thinking and implementation of its participatory process is documented and modelled. In particular, the process of mapping stakeholders via a selection resulting from interlocutions with various internal and external, political and technical agents, as well as via self-application could apply to several contexts. Other institutions should have a digital participatory platform as a means of monitoring as well as a tool which allows for the collaborative editing of the text of a policy plan.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

The specificities of the economical, technical, organisational, and socio-political context were taken into account very early in the process. The first action carried out in the first half of 2020 was the mapping of stakeholders. An exercise of participation and group work of all departments of the Municipality produced a map of more than 1,000 actors and stakeholders (i.e. recognised / unrecognised associations, informal groups, professional orders and economic subjects) which in various capacities could be affected by the issues and topics addressed in the plan. In addition to this internal selection, a Public Call was opened so that other actors could have a chance to candidate themselves to be taken on board. The call remained open from 7 August 2020 until 30 October 2020.

Special attention to the context of Milan guided the composition of the Citizens’ Table whose 50 members (the number was supposed to be higher but had to be reduced due to Covid restrictions) were drawn by lot under guidance of the City statistical office, so that they could represent—albeit partially—different genders, age groups, education level and work activities present in the city.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

Can such a complex plan and rich participatory process not be participatory in nature? The drafting of the Air and Climate Plan and the design and implementation of its participatory process were participatory by design from the start. First, the Air and Climate Plan is a direct response to European Commission Infringement Procedures No. 2014_2147 and No. 2015_2043, as well as to a series of commitments which the Municipality of Milan voluntarily took within the context of C40, Eurocities, and the Covenant of Mayors. It was drafted taking into account Italy's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, as well as the more limited Regional Energy, Environment, and Climate Plan. The plan also derives from the project *Milan - Deep demonstration of Healthy, Clean Cities* financed by the EIT Climate - KIC program which supported the development of an innovative stakeholder engagement strategy, a project which saw the Municipality of Milan work together with Poliedra and Politecnico di Milano. Such a background ensured the plan would be aligned and compliant with the best international standards. Indeed, in December 2020 C40 confirmed that Milan's Air and Climate Plan is compatible with the C40 Climate Action Planning Framework and the Paris Agreement.

**What has been the level of co-responsibility?**

Climate change is a global threat that can only be tackled through a concerted global response. To be successful this collective action must force all actors and stakeholders, from sovereign states and local administrations to multinationals and citizens, to overcome their divergent interests in order to cooperate and act united. Co-responsibility is deep-rooted in our approach, from its design to its implementation: it guided the thinking of the plan which brought together different external and internal actors, political and technical; it was the key ingredient of its execution. More than 1,000 stakeholders were mapped via internal selection and a Public Call. Efforts were made to involve marginalised groups and individuals. Stakeholders and citizens responded to a questionnaire, worked together in thematic laboratories, attended district meetings. A Citizens' Table, modelled after citizens' assemblies, was formed by drawing 50 citizens representing different genders, age groups, levels of education and work activities. All these actions paved the way for an online public consultation which allowed citizens and city-users, individuals and organised or unorganised groups, to submit amendments and comments to the very text of the plan: their inputs will be publicly addressed and transferred to the Milan City Council.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

The main tool with which citizens and interested parties can monitor the participatory process of the Air and Climate Plan is *Milano Partecipa*, the digital participatory platform of the Municipality of Milan. All phases, documents, and meetings linked to the plan can be found online on <https://partecipazione.comune.milano.it/processes/piano-aria-clima>. There one can read the participatory agreement which outlines the phases of the process and clearly states the rules which govern participatory actions and find the official documents from which such rules originate. All meetings were recorded, and the videos can be accessed via the platform.

A combination of tools is used for evaluation. Satisfaction surveys were administered to participants of meetings; key people were interviewed at specific points as the participatory process rolled out; KPIs were collected, analysed, and compared to other participatory practices organised by the Municipality or to the numbers of accesses usually generated by its online contents; single reports for each event were drafted and made available in full and simplified form. A general, detailed, report overarching the whole participatory process is currently being drafted, together with an evaluation report which will be used internally.

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the participatory process and inevitably on the evaluation methods that were originally planned, too. The shift towards online-only events forced us to review and rethink some of the parameters that we used to assess performances. Preliminary findings suggest that participation and engagement were nevertheless satisfactory.

**Summary of the experience**

The Air and Climate Plan (PAC - *Piano Aria e Clima*) is a framework document, a “plan of plans”, which aims at supporting and guiding the Municipality of Milan in reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

Climate change policy must include public participation, as recommended by several major policy documents on climate change. Article 6 of the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change calls for parties to promote and facilitate “public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses” (UNFCCC, 1992, p. 17). Indeed, the ambitious systemic approach to the challenge of climate emergency contained in the PAC requires the involvement of “challenge owners” (public administrators, companies, universities, NGOs...) as well as the education and engagement of the wider citizens’ community. In order to promote the transition towards new, more sustainable, and less carbon-intensive lifestyles, it is key that local communities do understand and activate leverage points able to produce social innovation and promote behavioural change.

The PAC inaugurated the digital participatory platform of the Municipality of Milan, *Milano Partecipa*, developed from the open source project *Decidim*, born in 2016 thanks to the Barcelona City Council. That of the PAC was the very first participatory project to be hosted on *Milano Partecipa* and has made extended use of the features offered by the digital platform. All its phases, documents and meetings can be found on <https://partecipazione.comune.milano.it/processes/piano-aria-clima>. A participatory agreement outlining the phases of the process and its rules ensures that all participants are informed about the details of the procedures and the outcome of their contributions.

Phase 1 (July-October 2020)

- Launch of an online multiple-choice questionnaire to assess the level of awareness on climate change and sustainability issues: more than 7,500 people respond; results are presented publicly
- Stakeholder mapping through internal selection and via a Public Call

Phase 2 (October 2020-February 2021)

- 4 Thematic Laboratories which involve 180 stakeholders organised in working groups and citizens via online streaming
- 9 District Meetings which involve ~2,500 citizens online
- Citizens’ Table involving 50 participants, drawn by lot under supervision of the City statistical office, representing different genders, age groups, education level and work activities (originally the number was supposed to be higher, but had to be reduced due to Covid restrictions)
- Online public consultation on *Milano Partecipa*: in 45 days citizens and city users submit 486 amendments and several comments to the text of the plan

Phase 3 (February-May 2021)

- Citizens’ inputs are publicly addressed and transferred to the City Council for adoption

Phase 4 (2021-2030)

- PAC is enacted, monitored, and reviewed by a permanent civic participatory body