

The Foundation for Urban Innovation: an “open and widespread Lab” focused on Urban innovation

FIU is an analysis, communication, elaboration and co-production Lab, focused on urban transformations. Our goals develop along four main thematic pillars which, in turn, highlight the route towards which the City of Bologna is directed in the next future to become a more welcoming and sustainable City, to strengthen the local urban welfare, and to boost the urban and digital democracy. We are committed to address social, environmental and technological challenges within the urban organisms.

To this end, we act as a "collective brain" and a hub of urban transformations, a catalyst for ideas and activities, as well as a place where citizens, public institutions, associations, social movements and all the representatives of the economic, social and cultural world can meet, discuss and interact pro-actively.

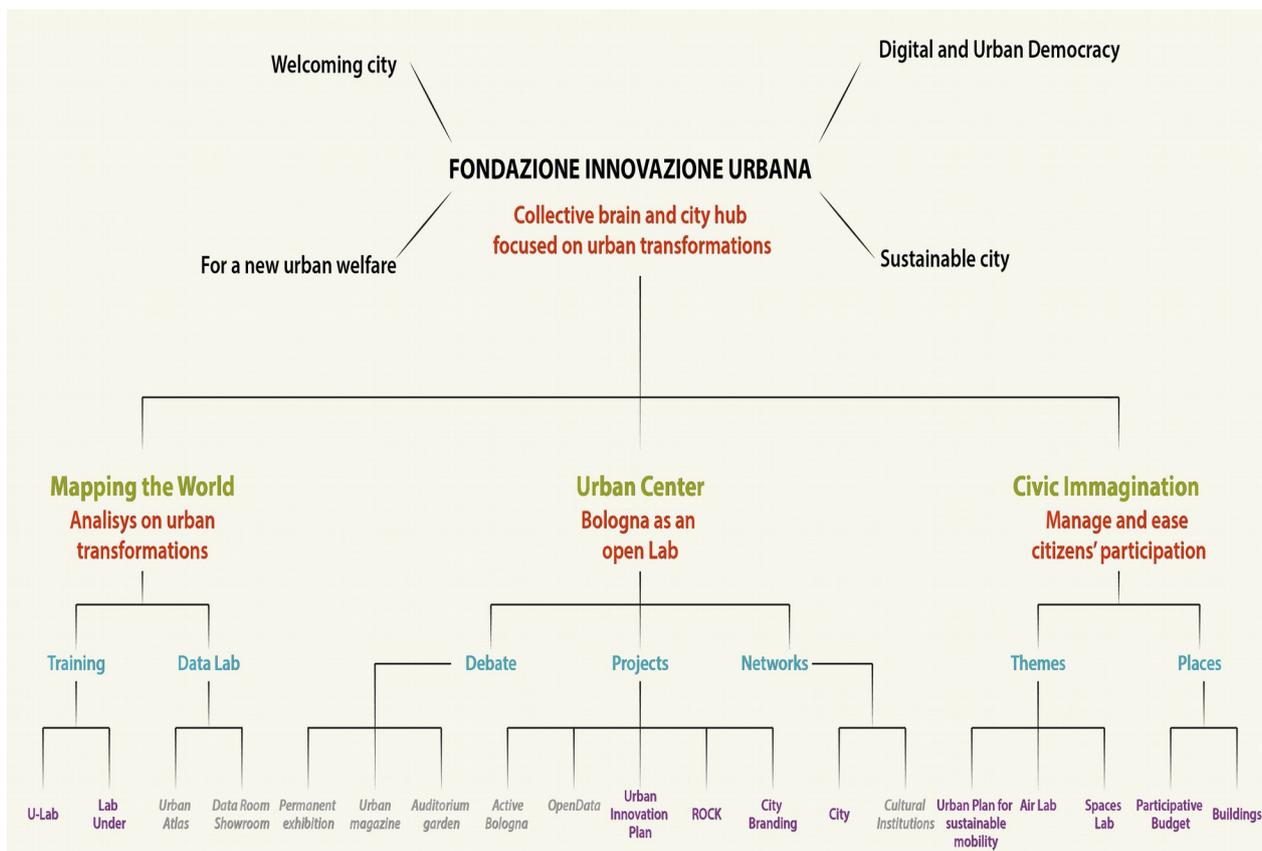


fondazione innovazione urbana

In considering the wide range of themes and actions undertaken, its strong territorial roots and its equally persistent international presence, the Foundation could also be described as an “open and widespread lab” holding a systematic users' co-creation approach to transform the city into a more livable and resilient organism. It integrates research and innovation processes in real-life communities and settings by opening up the co-design and co-creation phases to the different and critical stakeholders of this city.

To achieve this goal have been identified three main pillars within which the multiple activities of the Foundation are declined:

- **URBAN CENTER:** activities for information and promotion of the territory and urban culture;
- **MAPPING THE PRESENT:** analysis and documentation of urban transformations, with a focus on open data;
- **CIVIC IMAGINATION OFFICE:** activation of participatory and co-production paths (as District Labs and Participatory Budget).



In order to involve the wider number of actors, through the District Labs process, it physically goes within the territory to concretely investigate challenges, necessities and willing of citizens. One of its main goals is to enhance public participation and to transform the relationship between the Municipality and citizens by experimenting with new forms of collaboration and research, with particular reference to urban regeneration, urban planning, economy, technological innovation, sustainability and resilience themes.

The Foundation is involved in the definition of municipal policies, programs, and development plans. In order to engage citizens and gather data to improve the quality of the policy-cycle, the Foundation implements different activities, as territorial front-offices, workshops, focus groups, interviews, meetings and territorial activities co-created with the communities. Moreover, the Foundation uses different participatory and co-design tools as community mapping, planning for real, web-based engagement, Open Space Technology, assemblies.



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The Foundation engages the Administration in the implementation of shared decisions and actively operates in order to innovate administrative practices and tools to respond to territorial needs. In this frame, citizens are not only passive actors to inform but vectors of information, change promoters, and actors able to study, propose, test and apply new answers to the challenges of the cities. This dual role towards institutions and citizenship is what characterises the work of FIU. In the effort to keep the dialogue on the city constantly updated, the Foundation uses a complex communication system: on the one hand it organizes territorial communication, trying to simplify technical and bureaucratic languages and include as much citizens as possible in the public sphere; on the other hand it regularly organizes local, national and international events, empowering a virtuous communication mechanism which has been enforced since the last five years thanks to a wide range of physical and theoretical instruments.

The use of online tools and technologies in a broader sense is a great part of the Foundation method, and they are largely used to boost the engagement of citizens and communities of stakeholders.

The Foundation is strongly committed and motivated by the need to go towards the achievement of a Just Transition both for us, as a workers at the Foundation, and the City of Bologna, thus including citizens and city users.

For us, it means to embrace a social, environmental and economical process that produce plans, politics, and investments looking towards a sustainable future where urban organisms and communities are flourishing and resilient.

Administrative details and Organisation chart

The Foundation for Urban Innovation (FIU) is a not-for-profit private law entity founded by the City of Bologna and the University of Bologna. It represents the new legal framework of the former Urban Center Bologna Committee.

Despite being co-founded by both the Municipality of Bologna and the University of Bologna, the Foundation is supported by some of the main local stakeholders of the City and two Bank Foundations. Its work is supported by a budget that could be splitted in the financial support coming from the Municipality, University and the main partners, and international fundings, mainly National and European calls.

The Governing board is composed by:

- **President;**
- **Director;**
- **Administrative Council:** 4 Consultants nominated by the Municipality and the University of Bologna;
- **Scientific Committee:** 5 experts who support the Foundation in defining the main research pillars and guidelines, and assist our work as a mirror of the changes occurring within the city, and our role as a research organism investigating the modern urban challenges;
- **Review Committee:** 2 members.

We are a multidisciplinary and territorial organised staff made up of more than 25 professionals and experts on the following themes: sociology, economics, climate change and sustainability, international politics, communication, graphics, anthropologists, architects, EU projects, international relations, cultural projects and innovation.

