

Monitoring and evaluation plan of the  
Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Evaluation area:  
**LIFE SATISFACTION APPROACH**

Sub-area: **SOCIAL INNOVATION  
AND ENTREPRENEURIAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CREATIVE AND CULTURAL  
INDUSTRY**

**REPORT**

**THE OPEN DESIGN SCHOOL: A LIVING LAB CATALYST  
FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.  
THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME SUPPLIERS**



## **REPORT**

### **THE OPEN DESIGN SCHOOL: A LIVING LAB CATALYST FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT. THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME SUPPLIERS**

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The report uses the data collected through interviews with the project manager and some suppliers of the Open Design School. We thank them for their availability.

## **Executive summary**

Often considered as a mega event, the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) generates a wide range of potential impacts on the territory that “hosts” it. Frequently studies have focused on economic impacts generated by an ECOC, especially with reference to the augmented incomes produced by increased tourism flows (Langen & Garcia, 2009; Liu, 2014; Markwick, 2018; Srakar & Vecco, 2017).

However, the legacy of this peculiar event for a territory and its communities cannot be described merely in economic terms. In fact, only considering the so-called soft legacies it is possible to fully understand the effects and the opportunities that an ECOC generates for the development of the territory where it is situated. These legacies involve different intangible dimensions that characterize a territory, such as culture, social values, development of competences, inclusion, social innovation dynamics, entrepreneurship, openness and sharing of European values, etc. (Garcia & Cox, 2013; Garcia, Melville, & Cox, 2010; Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Liu, 2014; 2017).

They can concern the entire community or one or more categories of stakeholders involved more or less directly in the ECOC program.

This study, commissioned by the Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, focuses on one of the two pillar projects of Matera 2019, i.e. the Open Design School project, and analyses some of the soft legacies generated by the project, putting attention to a particular category of the stakeholders ‘project: i.e. the suppliers.

Inspired by the principles of 'Open Culture', the ODS is a project formulated and curated by Joseph Grima, with the aim of creating an interdisciplinary experimentation and innovation laboratory, a place for sharing and mutual learning, driven by the need for continuous creative exchange between art, science and technology, for the implementation - first of all, but not only- of Matera 2019.

The Open Design School (ODS) is, indeed, an international lab, at the service of community and creative scene, a “Living Lab”, an innovation space able to generate new social and economic opportunities, to work for the city and with the city in order to self-produce the needed infrastructures and competences for Matera 2019, and to re-establish trust in the citizens ‘creative abilities<sup>1</sup>.

The ODS conceives design as a form of “collaborative cultural practice”, which is essential in community development process. It aims to promote the paradigm of “doing things” among citizens and tries to remove the skepticism on the importance of creative abilities in order to avoid the loss of significant creative and artistic heritage for all productive sectors and the whole society.

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<sup>1</sup> OPEN DESIGN SCHOOL MATERA, *Users Manual* p.3.

Design as a “collaborative cultural practice” was the leitmotiv around which the intense collaborative work for the implementation of Matera 2019 projects, developed. The work involved 13 members of the ODS staff with 64 external experts and 39 professionals highly qualified and expert in different fields

These projects entailed a fruitful dialogue between the local creative scene and various national and European partners, as well as the involvement of the local community, for the conception, prototyping and construction of creative and technological solutions for the Matera 2019 exhibitions.

Among the professionals that have collaborated with ODS to develop Matera 2019 program, there are its suppliers. As above mentioned, the study, on request of Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, as part of the sixth evaluation area of the “Matera 2019 monitoring and evaluation project”, focused on ODS’ suppliers and analysed the following questions: *how did ODS contribute and is contributing to create and improve innovation capacity and business capacity of its suppliers, fostering the creation of a fertile ground from which gathering opportunities in the medium-long term? What impact the collaboration with ODS generated on the suppliers’ business model? And, in general, how ODS – as Living Lab – is contributing to Matera 2019 legacy?*

From a methodological point of view, the analysis has been developed through an exploratory approach, by using a qualitative research based on deep interviews and a wide documentary research.

The interviews were carried out from April to May 2020.

In particular, the interviews involved the ODS project manager, dr Rita Orlando, and some professionals and suppliers – suggested by the Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation and the ODS project manager– that collaborated with the Lab in developing some projects.

It is important to underline that the results described in the report refer exclusively to the analysis of the interviews conducted in the period indicated above.

Furthermore, the limited number of the analysed cases does not allow to extend the results of the study to the all suppliers involved in Matera 2019.

The interview with the project manager was aimed to capture her perspective with reference to:

- mission, structural dimension and managerial dimension of ODS;
- ODS stakeholders’ engagement;
- the amount of projects/activities produced by ODS, in response to users’ and stakeholders’ needs for Matera 2019;
- ODS users’ exploitation of the experiences matured with the Living Lab, in their own contexts of action;

- the role of ODS as a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship at community level.

The interview with the ODS project manager and the documentary analysis, confirm that ODS is an important legacy of Matera 2019, to be further strengthened, as well as it is an outstanding Lab, unique at European level, with its strengths and weaknesses, but also opportunities and threats, as reported in Figure 1.

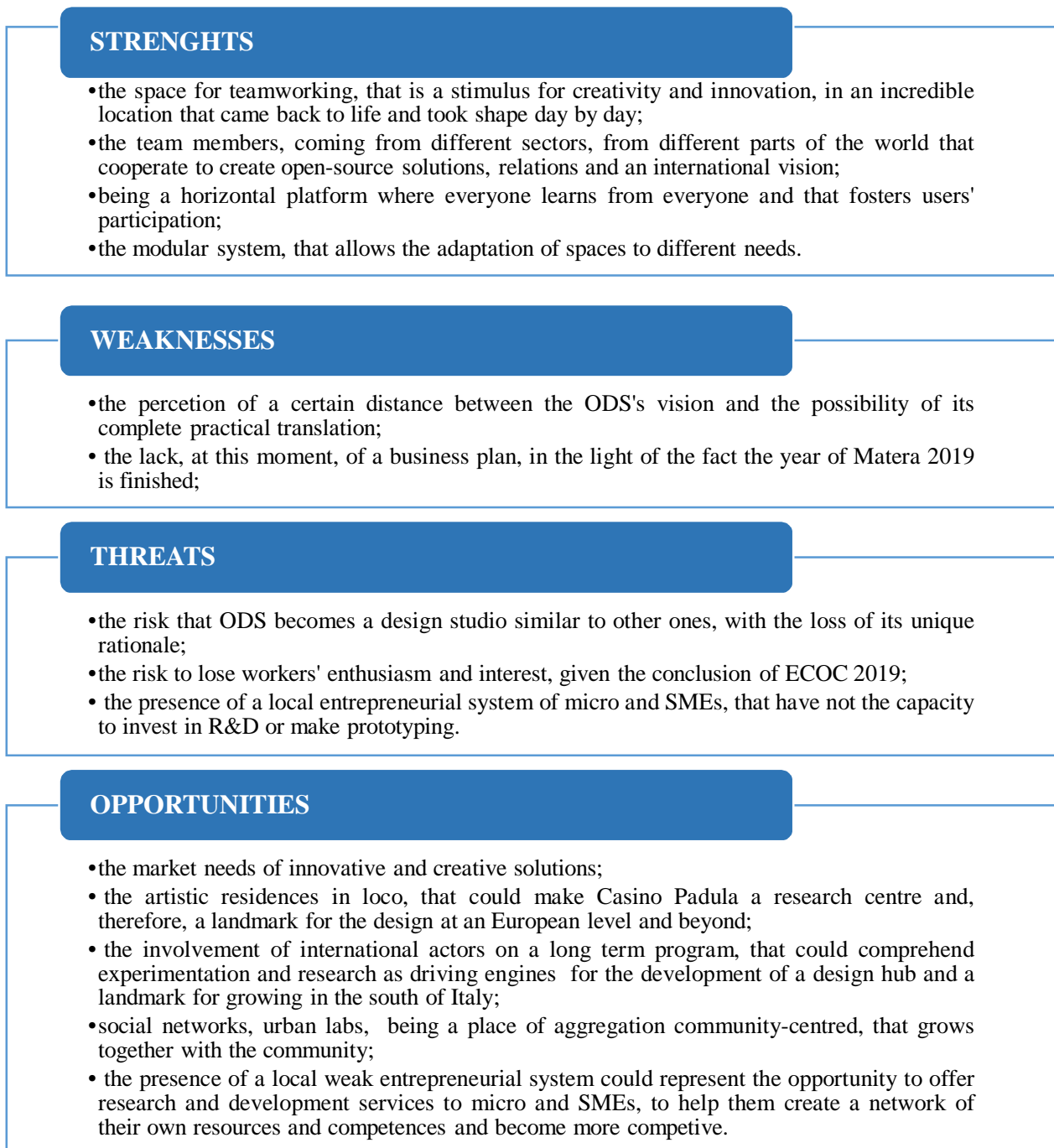


Figure 1. Swot Analysis

According to the ODS project manager, the main effects of the collaboration with ODS on its suppliers and professionals have regarded some changes of their mindset and a greater openness to innovation.

Certainly, according to the manager, working with ODS had an immediate impact more on some individuals/ organizations than others. For example, one of the woodworkers who worked with ODS, has decided to immediately put into practice the learnt lessons and now he is making his own experimentations. Others have learnt how to use some equipment in different manners or to approach the work in different way.

More generally, according to the project manager, the Lab was able to give some fresh stimuli, also to citizens. The project of mapping all the locations (400 places mapped in 10,000 sq km of regional territory) that could be potentially used for the events during the ECOC, involved a large number of Matera citizens, of all age groups, who felt personally involved in the process of understanding and selections of what would become the scenarios of the ECOC events.

A citizens' involvement that has constantly characterized many of the activities developed by the Living Lab. These activities were numerous and produced multiple solutions to answer to users' and stakeholders' needs for Matera 2019. Among these, 122 projects including 76 installations and 38 research projects, 41 cities visited and 432 places mapped, 16 networking actions in 7 different countries, 27 open talks, 23 open reviews, 28 community workshops and 9 public events.

According to the project manager, ODS was able to maximize the benefits of the ECOC program, by strengthening international and cultural networks, promoting professional exchanges and improving the community' life quality. Nowadays local actors can benefit from an increase of opportunities of training, growth and networking.

Moreover, the collaboration with ODS reduced in its users the skepticism in their own creative abilities, e.g. according to the manager the professionals/citizens involved in ODS projects became more familiar with "doing things".

Moreover, ODS inspired an "Open innovation" and ideas sharing attitude in all its users. This, in turn, in a wider prospect, has contributed (and it is contributing) to the development of local ecosystem's innovation capacities.

The project manager's opinions and evaluations were enriched and corroborated by the results obtained from the interviews with some key suppliers and professionals that worked with the Living Lab for implementing Matera 2019 program. The interviews addressed the following issues:

1. an evaluation of the collaboration with ODS, with reference to its strengths, weaknesses, unsatisfied expectations and ODS's potential development;
2. the perception of the Matera 2019 impact and legacy;

3. the impact generated on their own business model by the collaboration with ODS;
4. the acquisition or improvement of entrepreneurial attitude and innovation propensities thanks to the collaboration with ODS.

About the first dimension of analysis the interviewees highlighted some strengths, weaknesses, unsatisfied expectations, and their views of the ODS potential development as specified in Table 1.

Collaboration's strengths	Collaboration's weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– know-how and knowledge exchange with a skilled team;</li> <li>– the equipped space of the living lab;</li> <li>– learning new and innovative work techniques;</li> <li>– strengthening/ improvement of some dimensions of own organization's business model as well as of own entrepreneurial and innovation propensity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provisional nature of many of the built structures;</li> <li>– the perception of a certain gap between two "different worlds" that have cooperated: the academic one and the entrepreneurial one. Anyway, this gap was generally filled by continuous dialogue and reciprocal understanding.</li> </ul>
ODS potentials, according to the suppliers	Unsatisfied expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a research and development lab;</li> <li>– a lab that provides its talent, know-how and technologies to the enterprises;</li> <li>– a school of digital craftsmanship;</li> <li>– an organization similar to a fab lab;</li> <li>– a permanent resource for the city or the region where to develop activities and project phases even with the use of new digital technologies;</li> <li>– a lab helpful in shaping a mindset open to share ideas and directed towards innovative scenarios, that prototypes tangible implementations, stimulates research and training and helps change organization's routine, habits and practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a greater dialogue with the different actors of the local economic productive system and the development of a greater collaboration with and among the enterprises.</li> </ul>

Table 1. Strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration with ODS, unsatisfied expectations and ODS potential

The analysis of the second dimension, about an overall perception of the Matera 2019 impact and its legacy, highlighted quite positive opinions concerning the perceived impact that Matera 2019 had on interviewees' business and, more in general, on enterprises operating in their same sector.

The perception of the Matera image after ECOC 2019, was fairly homogeneous among the interviewees. They argued that Matera, at the end of 2019, has mainly acquired the image of a new tourist and event destination.

About the legacy, the interviewees stated Matera 2019 legacy is:

- a greater sense of pride and responsibilities for being "Matera citizen";
- having greater project and planning abilities;
- a renovated "feel like to do something" from creative and cultural organizations side;
- a greater citizens' propensity to participate to the city's cultural life.

The third dimension of analysis concerned the set of changes occurred in the interviewees' business model as result of the collaboration with ODS. The analysis captured not only the economic and organizational changes, but also the changes of the organizations' human, relational and structural capital, included the changes in people mindset, organisational reputation and image.

About the economic impact, the interviewees stated that Matera 2019 basically has produced new business opportunities at local level.

Regarding the impact on organizational resources, the interviewees stated that they did not change their spaces and infrastructures against Matera 2019. However most of them, inspired by the experience with ODS, affirmed that they want to invest in an experimentation lab or a space for innovation.

The interviews have also highlighted some improvements and changes in the interviewees' ability to do business and innovate. A supplier, inspired from some products and projects carried out with ODS, has enlarged its offer; another interviewee perceived an improvement of his ability to design wooden products and structures and he is continuing to invest on this matter; another professional underlined the support that the Living Lab could give in his field, i.e. scenography installations.

Most of the interviewees acknowledged that, thanks to the ODS experience, they have improved their ability to acquire information about their customers' requests and needs as well as the ways of establishing relations, communicating and interacting with their users.

Additionally, from the interviews it is emerged that the collaboration with ODS helped the suppliers establish new relationships. The collaboration with the Living Lab was an opportunity for the interviewees to create relationships and expand their network and to get in touch with other actors involved in the planning and implementation of Matera 2019 program. Moreover, from the interviews, positive opinions regarding the improvement of the interviewees' reputation and recognition at the local level emerged.

The interviews have also highlighted that thanks to the collaboration with ODS, the suppliers and professionals have improved, albeit with different intensity, their skills in management of complex projects, project monitoring and evaluation, and communication, as well as their entrepreneurial attitudes and propensity to innovate.

As above mentioned, the limited number of interviewed suppliers does not allow to extend the results of the study to the entire group of suppliers and professionals who collaborated with the ODS for the implementation of Matera 2019.



However, it does not appear unreasonable to argue that the ODS project has prepared a fertile soil where to sow stimuli, in order to collect the benefits of Matera 2019 even in the medium - long term. The results of the study confirm that today the ODS represents a strategic legacy of Matera 2019, an international Living Lab at the service of the community and the creative scene, capable of inspiring innovative and economic solutions for local development, and of nourishing creative, innovative and entrepreneurial skills in our region.

In particular, ODS with its know-how, talented people and technologies, can be a unique opportunity to give impetus to the future of local businesses. It offers to organizations the chance to acquire new attitudes and greater openness to sharing ideas and innovative scenarios, to prototype concrete applications and stimulate research and training.

Therefore, the definition of a continuous dialogue of ODS with the local economic system through the design and implementation of new projects, represents a key action in order to enrich skills, attitudes and relational capital of local enterprises and community in general.

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