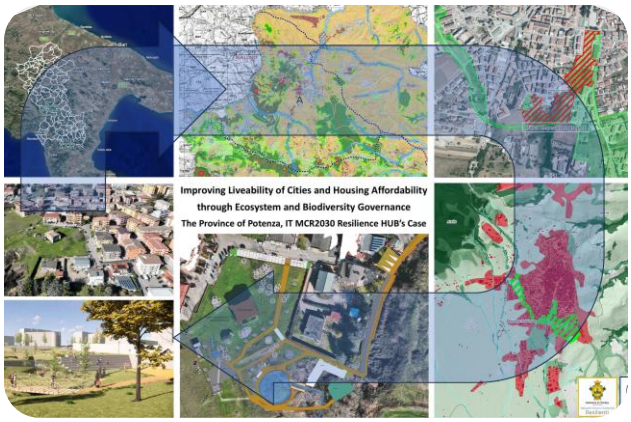
Improving Liveability Through Ecosystem and Biodiversity Governance in the Province of Potenza

Submitted By: Province of Potenza



Organization Profile

Organization Name: Province of Potenza

Organization Type: Subnational government

Website: https://www.provincia.potenza.it

Practice Details

Country(ies): Italy

City(ies): Potenza

Start Year: 2013 **Ongoing:** Yes **End Year:** N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:

- Housing & Climate Adaptation
- Housing, Land & Spatial Planning
- Housing Policy, Legislation & Governance
- Technology & Digital Solutions in Housing

Relevant SDGs:



UN-HABITAT

Problem & Context

The Province of Potenza, as MCR2030 Resilience Hub, addresses the challenge of improving liveability across 100 municipalities marked by mountainous landscapes, historic towns, demographic decline, and high exposure to risks (earthquakes, floods, wildfires, landslides, heatwaves). These conditions threaten ecosystems, biodiversity, and community wellbeing. A major issue is policy fragmentation: urban planning, environmental protection, risk reduction, and social inclusion often evolve separately, limiting integrated action. Gaps include poor alignment between municipal plans and regional/national climate strategies, weak inter-municipal cooperation, and scarce use of ecosystem-based solutions. The lack of systematic approaches to embed biodiversity governance in planning hampers resilience. This context demands coordinated, multi-level strategies turning risks into opportunities for sustainable territorial transformation.

Solution Developed

The Province of Potenza promoted housing practices as part of its integrated resilience strategy to counter depopulation, climate risks, and the vulnerability of historic settlements. Concretely, interventions focused on retrofitting and seismic upgrading of traditional housing, improving energy efficiency with renewable systems, and embedding nature-based solutions (green roofs, rainwater harvesting) to reduce climate impacts. Target beneficiaries have been residents of historic centers, low-income and elderly households, and small communities at risk of social and physical isolation. The objectives were to enhance safety, reduce energy poverty, preserve cultural heritage, and improve liveability, while fostering local economies and attracting new residents or sustainable tourism. Innovative aspects include the integration of resilience into heritage conservation, the use of energy communities to share clean energy, and an institutional model of inter-municipal cooperation coordinating 100 municipalities. The approach combines technological upgrades, social inclusion, and governance innovation, making housing a driver for climate resilience and territorial regeneration.

Implementation

The housing solution in the Province of Potenza combines technical, social, and institutional actions. Key actions included: knowledge tools for seismic retrofitting and energy-efficient renovation of historic housing; integration of renewable energy and nature-based solutions; establishment of energy communities to fight energy poverty; regeneration of public spaces to enhance social cohesion. Capacity-building programs and awareness campaigns complemented physical interventions.

Actors involved: the Province of Potenza coordinates planning and governance across 100 municipalities; municipalities identify local needs and projects; regional/national authorities provide regulatory and financial frameworks; NGOs and community groups support citizen

engagement; universities and research centers contribute technical expertise; private sector actors (construction, energy companies) deliver solutions. Community participation is encouraged through co-design and local workshops.

Timeline: planning and stakeholder mapping (2013–ongoing); pilot design and funding mobilization (2015–ongoing); implementation and NbS projects (2021–ongoing); scaling-up and integration into Resilience HUB activities (2022–ongoing).

Resources and partnerships: EU cohesion and recovery funds, national/regional programs. Partnerships with civil society, academic institutions, private operators ensure technical delivery. International collaboration through MCR2030 reinforced learning and innovation.

Enablers & Obstacles

Key enablers included strong political commitment from the Province of Potenza as MCR2030 Resilience Hub, fostering alignment with EU and national strategies; active community engagement through workshops; adoption of knowledge tools for seismic retrofitting, energy efficiency and NbS; supportive regulatory frameworks. Availability of EU and national funds and territorial risk data also drove implementation. Inter-municipal coordination helped overcome policy fragmentation across 100 municipalities.

Obstacles included bureaucratic delays in fund access and capacity gaps in small towns. These were addressed by creating a provincial coordination unit and partnering with universities for technical support. Some resistance to altering traditional housing was reduced via awareness campaigns linking heritage with safety. COVID-19 disruptions were managed through digital tools.

Results & Impact

The action is delivering both visible and less tangible results. Qualitatively, it is contributing improve safety and comfort of housing while protecting cultural characters. Energy retrofits, renewable solutions and now also energy communities are easing the burden of high bills, particularly for low-income households and the elderly, who are progressivley less exposed to energy poverty and unsafe living conditions. For marginalized groups in remote villages, these improvements are translating into greater dignity and inclusion, as safe, efficient housing is directly linked to wellbeing and health.

The practice is also fostering community cohesion, as residents are engaged in decision-making and see heritage conservation paired with innovation. By regenerating public spaces with nature-based solutions, municipalities are creating new gathering places that are strengthening social ties.

In the broader perspective, these planning actions are helping to revitalize depopulated towns, making them more attractive for sustainable tourism and potential new residents, while

supporting a local green economy through skilled jobs. Environmentally, the integration of NbS improves biodiversity, reduces climate-related risks and reinforces a vision of harmony between people and landscapes. In the long term, the initiative aims at strengthening a culture of resilience, proving that protecting heritage can go hand in hand with creating sustainable futures.

Replication & Scale Up

Due to the strong interest of the international community, the methodological approach of the practice is going to be replicated in other countries and regions through the Province of Potenza's MCR2030 Resilience HUB promotional and supportive activities. This goal lies on one of Resilience HUB's main commitments, namely improving transnational cooperation and partnerships by transferring best practices and methodological assistance to other interested regions/cities.

Scaling up requires embedding the practice into regional (ongoing activity) and national resilience strategies, ensuring long-term funding through EU, national, and green finance instruments. Expanding energy communities and NbS across more municipalities would multiply benefits. Strengthening technical support for small towns, promoting community-led co-design and sharing lessons through Resilience Hub networks can foster replication. Linking housing upgrades to tourism, cultural heritage, and circular economy initiatives will broaden impact and sustain local ownership.

Policy Uptake

This housing practice has been fully adopted into formal policy frameworks and legislation, and is being implemented at scale with institutional support.

The practice has been embedded in provincial resilience strategies, aligned with Italian legislation, and supported by EU actions (such as EU Mission Adaptation, cohesion funds, etc). The Province of Potenza coordinates implementation across 100 municipalities, ensuring integration into local development and civil protection plans. Institutional backing from regional authorities (work in progress), national programs and EU frameworks guarantees continuity, while inter-municipal cooperation enables the practice to be scaled and sustained at territorial level.

Lessons & Takeaways

In hindsight, I would prioritize inclusive design and community engagement more systematically, ensuring that residents' voices shape decisions from the start. I'd integrate sustainable materials and energy-efficient solutions earlier and adopt flexible layouts to accommodate changing household needs. Additionally, I'd strengthen partnerships with local

organizations to enhance social cohesion and resilience, while continuously evaluating outcomes to inform iterative improvements in housing quality and accessibility.