# culture 21
## UCLG Committee

**GOOD PRACTICE 2022**
**LJUBLJANA**
CENTER ROG
CREATIVE HUB

**5th edition**
UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21
INTERNATIONAL AWARD

# CENTER ROG CREATIVE HUB – THE REVITALISATION OF A FORMER FACTORY



**AGENDA 2030** - SDGs

**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**CULTURE 21 ACTIONS -** COMMITMENTS

2. **HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY**
5. **CULTURE AND ECONOMY**
7. **CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACE**
9. **GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE**

# ECONOMIC, BOTTOM–UP, GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, CITIZENSHIP, REGENERATION, INNOVATION, CONSERVATION, HERITAGE, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

# 1. Ljubljana and culture

Center Rog is located in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, a medium city with 280,000 inhabitants. The former Rog factory is the most important piece of 20th century industrial heritage in the city. Thanks both to the way it is being restored and to the plans for its future use, the building will serve as a public production space on 8.500 square meters for applied arts, crafts, design and architecture with emphasis on sustainable development.

The location of Center Rog has tremendous potential. Perfectly placed in the heart of a new cultural and creative district, it will link the also newly renovated Cukrarna contemporary art gallery with the museum quarter and the Metelkova community cultural complex. This imposing and iconic building, almost 126 metres long, is situated in the city centre of Ljubljana, easily accessible on foot or by bike. With a riverbank and pedestrian area on one side and a multi-purpose public park with an edible garden on more than 8000 square metres on the other side, it will be one of the most attractive parts of Ljubljana attracting local residents, visitors and tourists.

**THE FORMER ROG FACTORY WILL SERVE AS A PUBLIC PRODUCTION SPACE ON 8.500 SQUARE METERS FOR APPLIED ARTS, CRAFTS, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE WITH EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

# 2. Project goals and implementation

## 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

Based on the findings of the testing period the new Center Rog - a public non-profit organisation, was established in 2021 and is co-funded by the City of Ljubljana. The building of the old factory, currently under re-construction until early 2023, will provide space for collaboration between cultural, educational and scientific institutions, businesses, non-governmental organisations and the general public, both from Slovenia and abroad. It will have a flexible organisational structure allowing participative management practices by the users.

## 2.2. Project development

The manner in which the Center Rog has been developed provides a great example of highly community-based, participatory planning of a major public investment. The vision, mission and future programmes have been elaborated in close partnership with users and stakeholders since 2012 through the RogLab pilot project, that won the EUROCITIES Innovation Award in 2018.

The City of Ljubljana has started the revitalization project in 2007 with a small group of experts which produced the first Centre Rog concept – a basis for the architectural plans completed in 2008. The economic crises demanded a thorough revision of those plans, therefore a research and development team was outsourced by the City of Ljubljana in 2010 for reviewing the revitalization project. The team opened the plans to a wider public discussion which in its first four years involved over 300 stakeholders, including the temporary users of the premises, creative professionals, educational and cultural organizations, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, international cultural

professionals and neighbours. The research-validated all the key aspects of the 2007 Center Rog development project but differed from stakeholders' experiences in some important aspects. This sparked a lively and fruitful discussion, with nearly 100 participants suggesting valuable improvements to the plans. The research showed that the City of Ljubljana should develop a new organizational model, bringing together a range of creative industry sectors in a shared fabrication space, where they could exchange knowledge and ideas.

In 2012 a small pilot project called RogLab was built in order to test and prototype the results of the research. RogLab was a maker space in a 28 square meters container with computer-controlled manufacturing technology and technical support services. The research and development team has extensively analyzed the attitudes and behaviors of RogLab users and stakeholders and has used them continuously to directly inform the latest plans proposed for the building.

In 2021, the City of Ljubljana established Center Rog, an amazing municipal public production space, facilitating collaboration between the local community, cultural, educational and scientific institutions, NGO's and businesses. In terms of its content, the Center Rog will be devoted to the support of socially useful projects, while always adhering to the principles of environmental protection, circular economy and social justice. Committed to the circular use of space and with a strong cross-sectoral and international focus, while also pursuing sustainable development, Center Rog will not only cater to those who directly use it but will also have a positive impact on the life of the community.

**THROUGH THE ROGLAB PILOT PROJECT, THE VISION, MISSION AND FUTURE PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN ELABORATED IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS SINCE 2012.**

# 3. Impacts

## 3.1. Direct impacts

Center Rog has already demonstrated its commitment to the citizens of Ljubljana through the pilot project RogLab, a 30m$^2$ container built in 2012. Its participatory development process left several important impacts on the city of Ljubljana: it increased transparency, empowered women and children, provided better access to digital fabrication technologies, and raised awareness about the importance of sustainable production, inclusive society and environmental justice.

## 3.2. Assessment

The R&D team has been collecting a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data about Center Rog project and test RogLab programmes every year since 2010. Center Rog team holds regular meetings with programme partners and conducts surveys with the users to identify new programme challenges and users' needs. This data is used by Center Rog management to improve the services. Furthermore, the R&D team has been regularly collecting qualitative data with research activities, stakeholders' meetings and focus groups. This data is used by the City of Ljubljana to measure public response to Center Rog development plans, and Center Rog management to evaluate and inform diverse strands of development and implementation process.

**THE CENTER ROG WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE SUPPORT OF SOCIALLY USEFUL PROJECTS, WHILE ALWAYS ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.**
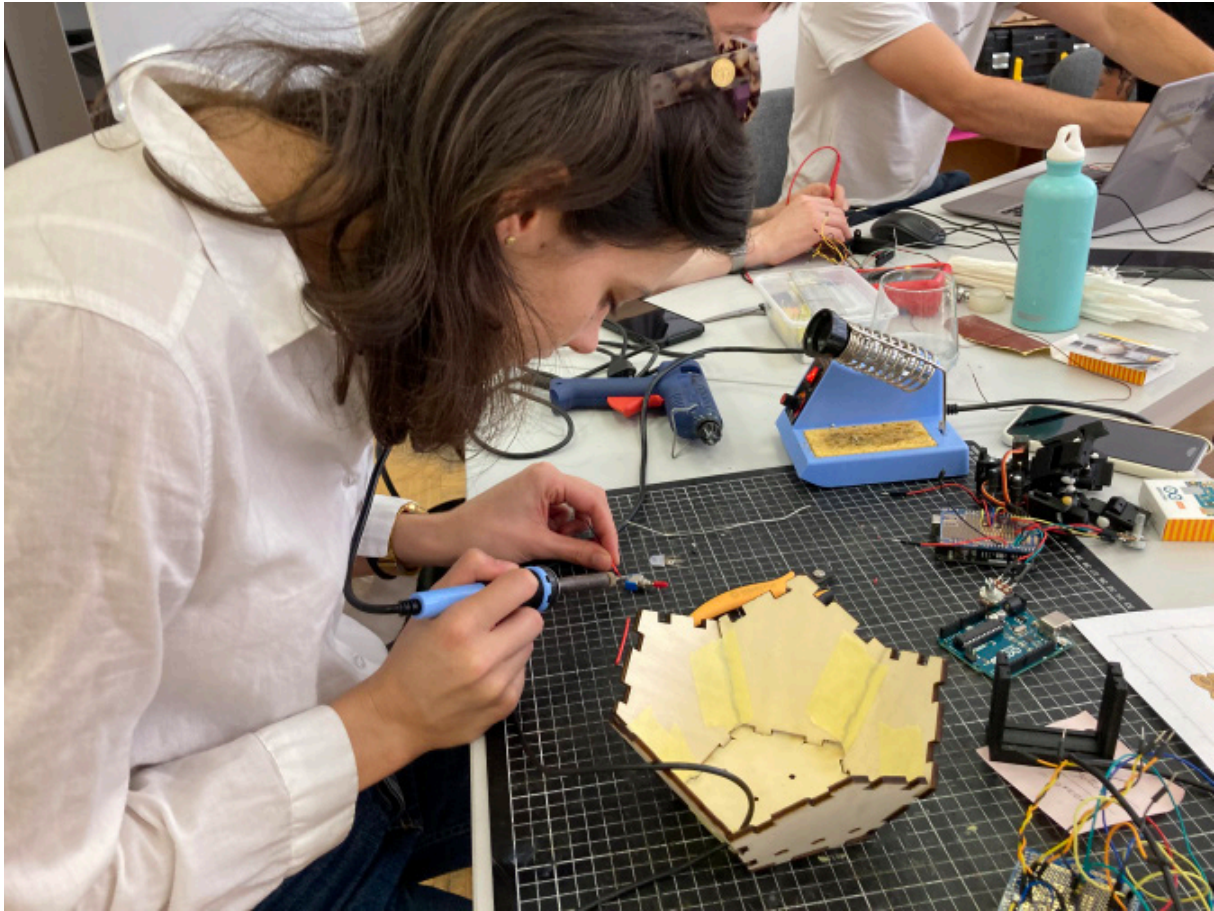
### 3.3. Key factors

Live prototyping in RogLab pilot project was an important element in establishing new collaborative relationships between multiple stakeholders enabling them to explore alternatives, to articulate different viewpoints and to reach consensus.

Given the rapid societal changes of the 21st century, the Center Rog project was designed to be evolutionary in its essence. Innovation has been sustained by a flexible management model on the basis of public-private-civil partnership requiring constant dialogue.

### 3.4. Continuity

The City took over the obligation for long-term funding of its new public institution under the umbrella of the City's cultural institutions, which is ensured through Center Rog's constitutional documents and later legal documents. In this way, a long term sustainable and continuous scheme in terms of organisation, finance and programme planning with the broader community is ensured.

# 4. Further information

Ljubljana was a candidate for the fifth "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" International Award (February – June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September 2022, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Renata Zamida, Director General, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Contact: Renata.zamida (at) center-rog.si
Website: www.ljubljana.si/en