

Trento: Building on past achievements

Although Trento covers a relatively small area of c. 20,000 km², with a total population of about 0.5 million inhabitants, its performance in innovation is remarkable. With 2.19% of its GDP invested in R&D, the city is for example well above the European average. Recently, Trento has even been ranked as the “world best practice” in the implementation of the concept of smart cities, beating cities such as Such outstanding track records would certainly not have been possible without the many reforms and programmes developed and implemented in Trento over the years. Clearly much work remains to be done. Yet, Trento’s leaders early efforts to trigger the digital transformation of their territory has certainly given the city a head start.

Contrarily to the situation in many other Italian cities, Trento’s leaders had already started a strategic planning path in 2000. Since then, they have continuously refined their vision of what “they want their city to become”. Starting from what has already been put in place and from what elements are relevant for making a city smart and digital, they have

developed a vision that entails three key dimensions:

1. the issue of achieving environmental and social sustainability;
2. the ambition of transforming itself in an “immaterial factory”;
3. the challenge of developing and promoting its territory and cultural heritage.



© Isaac74/Shutterstock.com

Key initiatives

TasLab

TasLab is a cooperation cluster, which aims at creating an advanced innovation infrastructure capable of responding to present and future user needs, not only from an ICT perspective but also from a cultural and social point of view. The plan is to reduce the digital divide, and at the same time experiment new ICT solutions with citizens all over the Trentino territory.

The main activities of Taslab include:

- The development of a user-centric environment where innovation is the way of being, thinking and evolving of the citizens in Trentino
- The creation of an environment where the full innovation cycle, from basic research to market products, gets naturally instantiated
- The conclusion of partnerships with other territories in Europe and in the world, built on top of the existing national and international cooperation and partnerships of the actors in Trentino
- The launch of awareness campaigns on sustainability issues in the Trentino region.

An institutional autonomy facilitating local access to finance

An element that plays as a driver in the pursuit of Trento digital strategy is the presence of an easy access to financial incentives mainly due to the institutional autonomy granted to the Autonomous Province of Trento after the Second World. On the contrary to most of the cities in Italy, Trento takes the most

important political and economic decisions at local level, rather than referring to the central Government.

For instance, the Italian Unified Business Law (n. 6/1999) provides to the Autonomous Province of Trento a specific package of funding opportunities to attract business and investors to the region. Businesses investing in innovative R&D projects can benefit from grants ranging from 20% to 80% of the capital invested, with a maximum of 3 million euro per project.

Thanks to this investor- and business-friendly environment, economic decisions are made rapidly. Moreover, the financial resources and wealth produced remain within the Trentino region and are managed by the provincial government. The website, Investintrentino.it presents and promotes internationally the many opportunities for investors and partners.

Open move

OpenMove is a smart mobility solution in Trento ideated by a local start-up, Lucian Srl, for optimizing public means of transport services.

The major step that brought to the development of OpenMove implied the decision by the Trentino Alto Adige region to make mobility data open to the citizenship. Through Open Move App, citizens are given the possibility to purchase ski lifts, parking, bus, and train tickets both for urban and extra-urban routes; the validation is possible on-board by shooting the Q-R code.

TechPeaks

TechPeaks is a programme consisting of six months free housing, food and an office in Trento, to individuals or teams with “deep technical or design” expertise. At the end of the 6 months after being coached and mentored by highly qualified entrepreneurs and investors, participants submit three to five analyses of their innovative ideas in areas such as data collection and analysis, health and wellbeing or financial technology.



A Telecom research and innovation laboratory

Telecom Italia, decided to set one of its R&I labs, Jol Skil, in Trento as a result of partnerships and agreements with Trento university. Jol skil lab focuses on developing technologies for the automatic analysis of huge amounts of data. One of the major initiatives taking place is the CitySensing Project, which aims to automatically process anonymized data flows from the Telecom Italia network and from external sources (big data) in order to identify evidence and trends in urban areas regarding the mobility of people, tourist distribution in cities of art, participation at events, etc.