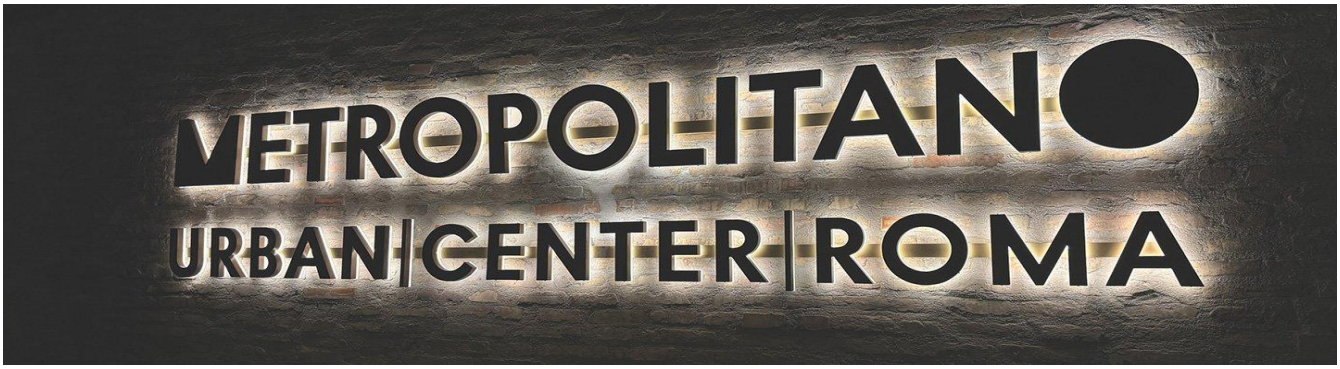
From Space to Governance

A common site visit to METROPOLITANO Urban Center Roma · METREX Autumn Conference 2026 · Concept note

On the morning of **Wednesday 11 November 2026** conference participants are invited to a site visit to **METROPOLITANO Urban Center Roma** (Viale Manzoni 34), from 10:00 to 11:00. The visit opens the conference with a shared experience, before the welcome plenary at Palazzo Valentini.

> ***We are not visiting a project. We are visiting the governance ecosystem that makes projects possible.***

Why the Urban Center



The Urban Center is more than a venue. It is a place where urban and metropolitan transformations can be made visible, discussed and connected. It is where Rome and its metropolitan territory are represented, documented and debated, and where the public can find information on the city and its transformations.

The conference asks *Who governs what falls between our institutions?* The Urban Center is a good place to start answering it:

- **One narrative for the city and the metropolitan territory.** The building belongs to the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital; the Urban Center is run by Risorse per Roma, Roma Capitale's in-house company. The relationship between the two levels is visible in the place itself.
- **Policy instruments that speak to each other.** Mobility, climate, green and nature planning, food policy, strategic planning and urban–rural cooperation can be read as parts of one metropolitan picture.

- **A shared starting point.** Participants see the same place and meet the same people before the Expert and Network Groups, the Metropolitan Labs and the Rome Declaration.

More about the Urban Center: METROPOLITANO Urban Center Roma

The place: a meeting point for metropolitan governance

The Urban Center has no decision-making power of its own. It does not replace Roma Capitale, the Metropolitan City or the Municipi: it puts them in a position to work together. It is a soft infrastructure of metropolitan governance, producing the connections, shared knowledge and trust that cooperation between levels of government needs.

Between 9 January and 26 September 2026 the Urban Center hosted **77 events**, almost ten a month leaving out August. About one in three was promoted by Roma Capitale, its Municipi or the Metropolitan City; more than half came from professional orders, universities, associations, businesses and other bodies. Together they show three roles at once:

Role	What it means in practice
Agora	A public place where urban transformations are made readable and discussed
Hub	A meeting point where institutions, knowledge and professions connect
Laboratory	A setting where some policies are tested and co-designed

A single event produces information; a sequence of meetings on the same issue can produce governance. At least five processes in 2026 were built over several meetings at the Urban Center:

Process	Meetings in 2026	Promoted by	What it shows
Spazi a colori (tactical urbanism)	20 Mar, 28 Apr, 14 Jul	Roma Capitale, Urban Planning Department	A programme followed from the call for proposals to the presentation of results with the Mayor
CArMe (Archaeological and Monumental Centre)	16 Jan, 20 Feb	CArMe Laboratory	A city-wide strategy discussed with the Municipi in the *Fori dei Municipi*
Visione Mistica	23 May, 26 Sep	Roma Capitale, Municipio V, LabSU Sapienza	A living lab, from the first participatory meeting to co-design tables
FOODGaP	5 May, 7 May	Metropolitan City of Rome Capital	An international living lab on food governance, with European partners and local territories
Energy retrofitting	3 Mar, 19 May, 16	Roma Capitale Climate Office, with	Buildings, condominiums and the building code, with the same Climate Office lead

Process	Meetings in 2026	Promoted by	What it shows
	Jun	ENEA and Cittadinanzattiva	across three meetings

People return too. Those who run *Visione Mistica* came back for *Roma Partecipa* in September and, in part, for the CArMe plenaries: a network is consolidating inside the space.



> *The Urban Center is not another level of government. It is a place where different levels of government, knowledge and society can meet, understand each other and work together.*

From a space, to a network, to a process, to a governance tool.

An open question for the conference. The Metropolitan City of Rome Capital has 121 municipalities. Its events at the Urban Center, such as FOODGaP, the Metropolitan Forest Plan and *Roma, metropoli che apprende*, bring to Rome issues shared by the whole territory. This metropolitan role is still growing: it is a potential more than an established result. How can a place in the capital city work for a whole metropolitan area? We would like to discuss this with you during the visit.

Analysis of the 2026 events: Vincenza Di Malta, Department IV, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, based on the event listings on the Urban Center website.

Four floors, four ways of engaging with the city

The Urban Center is organised on four floors. Each has its own purpose, and together they can be read as the four functions of the place: **connect** (Ponte), **co-design** (Cantiere), **discuss** (Piazza) and **share** (A View of the City). More on the Urban Center website.

The building. The Urban Center sits within the complex of the Galileo Galilei technical institute, designed by Marcello Piacentini and completed in 1928. The building is owned by the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital and was fitted out after a 2024 design competition, run with the Special Superintendence of Rome and the Order of Architects of Rome, won by Matrice Architetti. It covers about 1,075 m² indoors over four floors, plus a 450 m² courtyard, and offers around 500 volumes on urban transformation, territory and participation for open consultation.

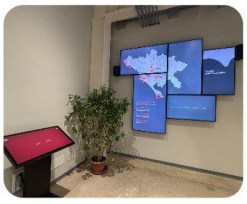
Ponte · ground floor — *Opening up to the city*

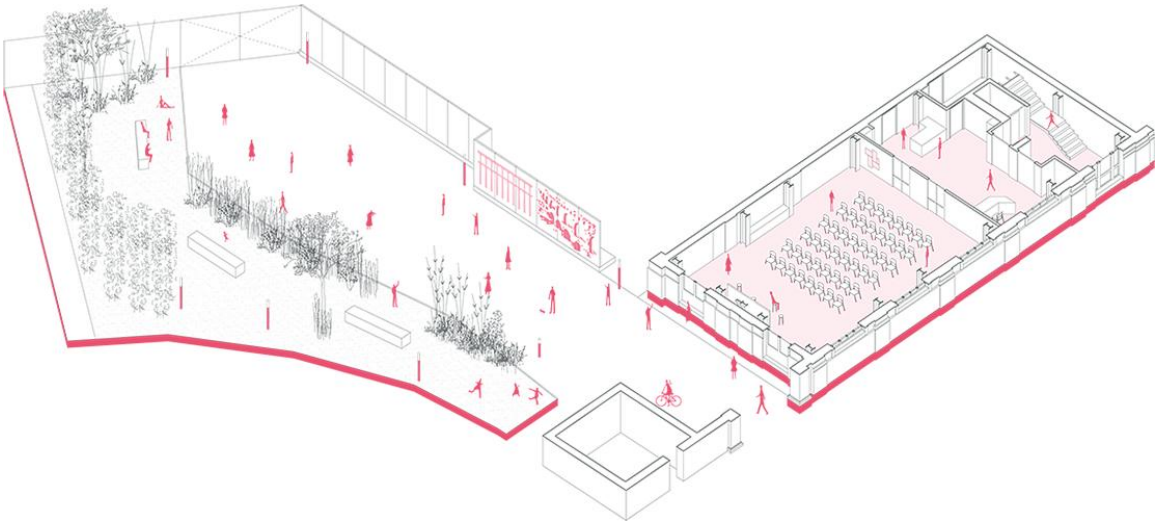
The courtyard is a public space open to everyone, a flexible setting for debates, events, outdoor workshops and performances. The reception, with a small bookshop, leads into a modular multifunctional space for conferences, meetings, screenings and public gatherings. It seats about 80 people and is fully equipped with audio and microphones.

- A large **LED wall** (3.6 × 2 m) introduces visitors to the Urban Center and its activities.
- An **artwall mosaic** of screens presents the key features of the Metropolitan City: natural elements, the territorial structure based on the historic consular roads, settlement patterns, mobility infrastructure, land use and functional organisation.
- An **interactive totem** lets users explore projects, territorial information, digital maps and GIS platforms on the metropolitan area.

In the visit: the heart of the morning. The welcome, the mapping cards and the final synthesis take place here.





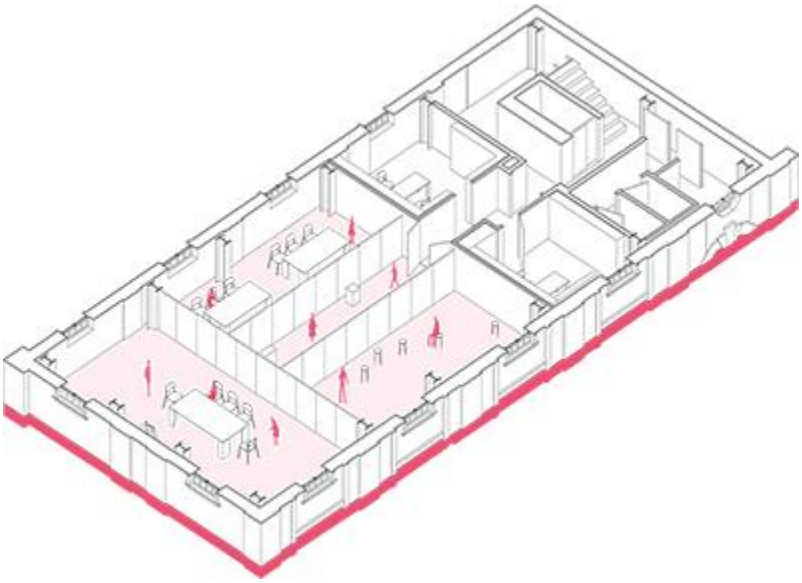
Cantiere · first floor — *A place to work, study and design together*

The operational laboratory of the Urban Center, where design, education and shared work intersect. Besides the staff offices, the floor has a laboratory classroom for educational and creative activities for all ages, a room for meetings and small participation groups, and a study room with 20 workstations.

In the visit: not a stop. The floor is in daily use by students and working groups; participants see it on the way up.





Piazza · second floor — *Immersing yourself in the city's transformations*

An immersive room to learn about the metropolitan city through four themed videos:

- **Major transformations:** squares, streets and new public spaces in a changing city.
- **PNRR:** visions, projects and investments for urban, economic and social regeneration.
- **The Tiber river:** a green and blue infrastructure through Rome.
- **Urban planning for children:** *What is a city?* An illustrated journey through the making of Rome.

In the visit: participants experience the immersive room and its videos as they are.






A View of the City (Finestra) · third floor — *Observing the city and the territory up close*

A 145 m² temporary exhibition space with a flexible, reconfigurable layout, a suspended panel grid, display tables and a 65-inch screen for video storytelling.

In the visit: in November the floor hosts an exhibition on the urban transformations of Rome, which participants can visit.






The route: from the Ponte, through the building and back

The visit starts and ends at the Ponte. After the welcome, participants split into two groups: while one visits the second and third floors, the other maps its meeting places on a card at the Ponte. Then they swap.

Start and finish at the Ponte; a guided walk-through upstairs

Welcome and mapping on the ground floor · Piazza and A View of the City upstairs

3rd floor	**A View of the City (Finestra)** — Exhibition on the urban transformations of Rome	Guided walk-through
2nd floor	**Piazza** — Immersive room: videos on the city and its territory	Guided walk-through
1st floor	**Cantiere** — Seen on the way up: rooms in daily use by students and working groups	Not a stop · in daily use
Ground floor	**Ponte** — Welcome by the hosts (20 min), then the group waiting here fills in the mapping cards Closing: synthesis of the mapping, with both groups back	**Welcome, mapping, synthesis**

Two groups alternate: one upstairs, one at the Ponte; then they swap

The route · from the Ponte, through the building and back

1. Opening at the Ponte — *Who needs to be connected?*

- **Welcome by the hosts** from the Metropolitan City and the Urban Center: what the Urban Center is, who uses it and how.
- **One process told by the Urban Center**, for example *Spazi a colori* or FOODGaP, to show how a sequence of meetings can move from discussion to co-design.

2. Two rounds: upstairs and at the Ponte

- **Piazza (2nd floor):** the immersive room and one of its videos on the city and its territory.
- **A View of the City (3rd floor):** the exhibition on the urban transformations of Rome.
- **At the Ponte, meanwhile:** the other group fills in a short mapping card. The main question is *Do you have a physical place in your metropolitan area where institutions, experts and citizens can meet around the same urban or metropolitan question?* Each participant also says what happens

there and whether they would like to join a European network of urban centres, then pins the card to the board in the matching column: “Yes, we have one” or “Not yet”.

3. Closing at the Ponte — *What about you?*

When both groups are back at the Ponte, the facilitator presents a short synthesis of the mapping: how many participants have such a place, what kinds of places they are and what happens there. Together, the cards give a first “map” of comparable places in Europe and a first step towards a European network of urban centres.

The results are shared with the Expert and Network Group rapporteurs that afternoon. The visit ends with the walk to Palazzo Valentini, where the speed networking takes the same thread further: *What is the hardest boundary you have to govern across?*

Running order

The visit is one of two morning options on Day 1: at the same time the Nordic Baltic Network meets at Palazzo Valentini. Late arrivals can register at Palazzo Valentini.

Time	Where	What
09:30–10:00	Ponte	Registration
10:00–10:20	Ponte	Welcome by the Metropolitan City, the Urban Center’s Scientific Committee and the Urban Center staff
10:20–10:55	Upper floors and Ponte	Two rounds of about 15 minutes: one group visits Piazza and A View of the City, the other fills in the mapping cards at the Ponte; then they swap
10:55–11:00	Ponte	Synthesis of the mapping
11:00–11:30	On foot	Walking tour through the city centre to Palazzo Valentini; welcome plenary and speed networking from 11:30

Who leads the visit

The visit is led by two voices: the institution that owns the building and the team that runs the Urban Center. Its conduct reflects the metropolitan and city levels that meet in the place.

Voice	Who	What they tell
Institutional hosts	The Director of the Department for Strategic Planning and Territorial Governance, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital	Why the Urban Center exists and which institutional problem it addresses
Curator	The President of the Urban Center's Scientific Committee and a member of the Urban Center staff (Risorse per Roma,	How the space turns this mission into programmes, events, networks and processes, with

Voice	Who	What they tell
	the Roma Capitale company that runs the center)	one process built over several meetings as an example

A facilitator from the Metropolitan City supports the mapping at the Ponte and presents the synthesis.

How the visit feeds the conference outputs

Conference output	What the visit contributes
Rome Declaration	The *What about you?* mapping results go to the Expert and Network Group rapporteurs that same afternoon
Peer recommendations to CmRC	A first-hand view of how Rome and its metropolitan territory are represented and discussed, the day before the Metropolitan Labs
Anniversary record	The closing answers, which can feed the Futures Wall
A European map of comparable places	The cards list the places where institutions, experts and citizens meet in other metropolitan areas: a first step towards a European network of urban centres, starting from the participants who leave their contact

Practical information

- **Address:** METROPOLITANO Urban Center Roma, Viale Manzoni 34, Rome (website, contacts)
- **Getting there:** Metro Line A, Manzoni station; buses 3, 5, 8, 14, 51, 105, 360, 590, 649
- **Opening:** the venue opens at 09:00; registration from 09:30
- **Capacity:** the Ponte, the largest room, holds up to 80 people; after the welcome, participants split into two groups
- **Afterwards:** a walk of about 30 minutes to Palazzo Valentini, Via Quattro Novembre 119a