

GENEVA

The Zone Industrielle de Charmilles, known as "ZIC," was once a center for industrial activities that manufactured precision physical instruments, textiles, and watchmaking. Today, it has evolved into a hub for small and medium-sized enterprises specializing in both traditional and digital craft production, including wood- and metalworking. Situated in Saint-Jean Charmilles, the ZIC spans 22,000 square meters within a district boasting an impressive 34.7% green space, accommodating a population density of 16,852 people per square kilometer.

In Geneva, the ZIC serves various roles as a local production center, a nexus for local materials, and a hub for repair and reuse. Although not officially designated as a heritage site, community representatives, creative entities, and nearby institutions collaborate to safeguard the historical significance of this former industrial space, currently owned by the Geneva municipality.

City Population size	S	Productive focus	Woodwork, textile, digital technology
Population density	Geneva Saint-Jean Charmilles: 16,852 people/km2	Partners	Fab Lab Onl'Fait, Resources Urbaine Coopérative, Au Fil du Geste Association
Pilot scale	Site	Website	Cartography web



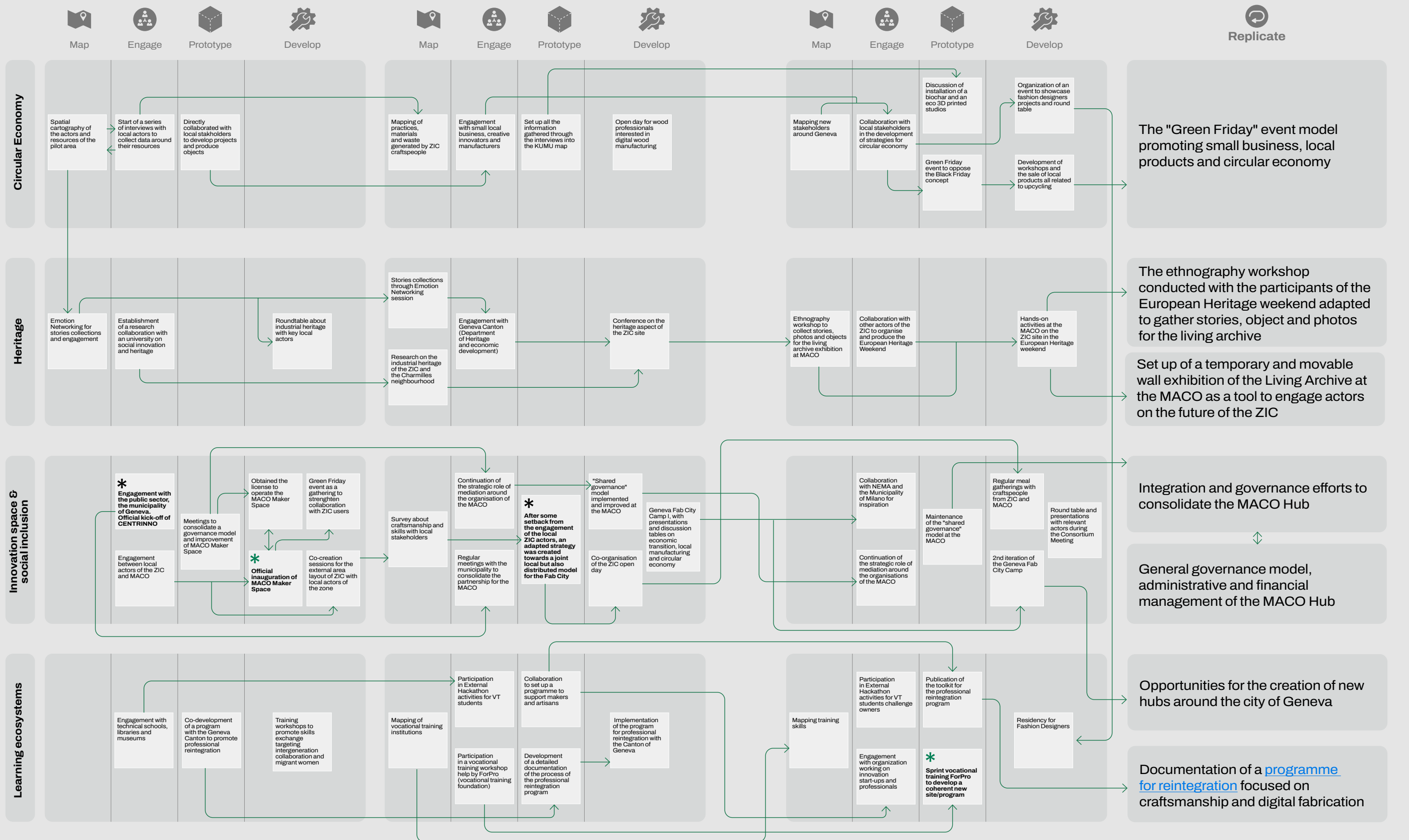
Figure 20. Map of the Geneva pilot area by Metabolic Institute

Vision

To enhance connectivity and act as a broker between the MACO and the productive activities of the pilot area ZIC (Zone Industrielle de Charmilles), as well as within a broader city-wide network of craftsmen, leveraging circular economy principles to reinforce a short local supply chain in Geneva for a more sustainable crafts ecosystem. This vision also encompasses the integration of the maker culture into the educational and vocational systems, promoting a synergistic blend of formal and informal learning ecosystem.



Figure 21. Geneva Pilot Key Performance Indicators



SPRINT 1: M8-M14

Building the community and making the MACO visible and integrated to the Pilot Area - the ZIC - and the neighborhood

SPRINT 2: M19-M25

Communicating and disseminating CENTRINNO to promote awareness and mindset shift related to circular economy

SPRINT 3: M30-M36

Reinforcing the relations with the local ZIC actors and the neighborhood and boosting collaborations for the distributed Fab City Hub model

Legend for acronyms

MACO = Manufacture Collaborative
 ZIC = Zone Industrielle de Charmilles
 VT = Vocational Training GVA = Geneva

* Trigger moment for policy recommendation
 * Tool development and application

The "Green Friday" event model promoting small business, local products and circular economy

The ethnography workshop conducted with the participants of the European Heritage weekend adapted to gather stories, object and photos for the living archive

Set up of a temporary and movable wall exhibition of the Living Archive at the MACO as a tool to engage actors on the future of the ZIC

Integration and governance efforts to consolidate the MACO Hub

General governance model, administrative and financial management of the MACO Hub

Opportunities for the creation of new hubs around the city of Geneva

Documentation of a [programme for reintegration](#) focused on craftsmanship and digital fabrication

CO-CREATING A HUB

My hub is your hub. A co-creation process with the Municipality led by the Geneva pilot team to keep an old industrial site up and running!



Photo by Geneva pilot

Offline
Setting

Craftspeoples, local
manufacturers,
policy makers

Target

Method
Format

What is it about?

Co-creating a Hub refers to the co-creation of La MACO (MANufacture COLlaborative), which is a collective of several associations with a shared goal of revitalising a former industrial area owned by the local Municipality.

The co-creation strategy implemented by La MACO consists of a series of actions and workshops aimed at designing the vision and governance of the local Fab City Hub (FCHs), as well as the spaces and functions of the building, with targeted audiences aligned to the objectives of different stakeholders. This approach involves working closely with the Municipality and relevant stakeholders in the industrial area, primarily craftspeople.

Story behind

Geneva Pilot worked closely with craftspeople to gain their trust and with the Municipality, the owner of the entire zone who played a crucial role in developing the Geneva FCHs, in line with its strategic plan for climate and circular economy.

Key steps

- Definition of the organising team, including facilitators
- Identification of the location
- Agreement on the type of community and target
- Follow up and share online communication
- Selection of the facilitation tools
- Identification of key speakers and the role of facilitators
- Alignment on the final programme among partners
- Space set up and logistic
- Analysis and sharing main outputs via email

Recommendations for future applications

- Promote transparency in the discussions and negotiations about the future of the hub
- Encourage communication about decisions made to prevent conflicts
- Keep building trust after the session for a solid partnership between the Municipality and the local stakeholders
- Create networks of local actors
- Develop awareness, acquire skills, and design a governance model
- Use the results to co-design the hub space, in alignment with the city development plans, if it is owned by the Municipality

DIGITAL CRAFTSMANSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME

Digital tools for skill acquisition and industry adaptability



Photo by Geneva pilot

Offline
Setting

Unemployed people,
craftspeoples and makers

VT programme
Format

What is it about?

Professional training for adults in digital craftsmanship is a valuable initiative aimed at equipping craftspeople with the skills needed to thrive in today's digital-centric job market.

This tool is designed to bridge the skills gap, enhance employability and contribute to the green and digital transition at the European level. In 4 to 6 months full-time participants learn a range of practical digital skills for woodworking, tailoring and electronics, including 2D and 3D modelling software and machine operation. The training is hands-on, with a focus on real-world projects, problem-solving, and creative thinking.

Story behind

Unemployed individuals in the Geneva region can access this program to acquire valuable skills that make them more competitive in the job market. In addition to the effort led by the local pilot, the programme development was possible thanks to the Regional Office for Unemployment which funds relevant programmes to facilitate professional reinsertion.

Key steps

- Researching and developing a needs assessment
- Engaging stakeholders
- Crafting a proposal for the training programs
- Securing funding and resources
- Planning the implementation and launch
- Monitoring progress, collecting data, and providing regular updates to the government
- Customising the offer of training programs adapting to evolving workforce needs

Recommendations for future applications

- Explore digital tools to enhance the quality and creativity of local manufacturing, while also saving costs, improving efficiency, and promoting sustainability
- Promoting training of artisans in digital tools can contribute to a higher resilience in adapt to changes in their industry and foster employability
- Explore a diverse representation of stakeholders, including artisans, vocational schools, technologists, to promote a dynamic environment
- Collaborate with the responsible Municipal Unemployed People Office to test new paths
- Ensure that traditional craftspeople feel included by adapting the language and ways of working, as they may be resistant to adopting new technologies and methods

RESHAPING GENEVA'S INDUSTRIAL SPACES FOR PROMOTING LOCAL MANUFACTURING AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Circular Economy

Heritage

Vocational Training

Innovation Spaces

Social Inclusion

Related key concepts

Heritage value and innovation

Policy-making mindsets

Contingency and macro trends

Spatial Planning and Urban Development Frameworks

Regulation

Funding

Knowledge and Capacities

Areas of influence

Recommendations

- Building up expertise for cooperation development and adaptive reuse in ephemeral or abandoned old buildings
- Encouraging partnerships between urban planners, policymakers, designers, and researchers to integrate the adaptive reuse of such spaces into local development plans
- Engaging with local policy environments through shared events, cooperation with urban planning designers and researchers
- Implementing strategies promoting dialogue and shared decision-making among stakeholders involved in repurposing projects by ensuring equitable participation and consensus-building.
- Strengthening programs for reskilling and attracting people towards local and circular production, encouraging the development of curriculum tailored to the needs of evolving industries.
- Offering incentives to attract individuals toward reintegration programs, emphasizing the value of local production and circular economy principles

Practical case

The Collaborative Manufacture (MACO) within the Charmilles Industrial Zone (ZIC) was created during the timeframe of CENTRINNO's project. The CENTRINNO Geneva team acting as a liaison between makers, artisans, policymakers, social associations, and vocational training centers, supported the transformation of an abandoned industrial building into a hub for learning, experimentation, and a gateway to meaningful employment opportunities. The activities encompassed open workshops, programs for professional reintegration and dialogues with vocational training schools and public actors. It also built upon the existence of previous public private collaborations and innovative cooperative model, reclaiming and managing temporary abandoned spaces for creative and artistic activities.

The journey encountered challenges as MACO partners faced resistance within the local artisanal ecosystem and neighborhood. By cultivating collaborations, fostering dialogue, and emphasizing proximity, the pilot project succeeded in highlighting the shared value of preserving local manufacturing and learnt how to deepen its connection to the community. For instance, during the Geneva Fab City Camps 1 and 2, the local initiative engaged in dialogues to align visions and situate projects within a global policy framework, showcasing a forward-thinking local strategy for sustainable development. This commitment to sustainability was exemplified through Agenda 21, the Sustainable City Agency in Geneva from which MACO initiative has emerged. After four years of planning, the collaboration underscored the commitment to innovative solutions and community engagement in advancing sustainability goals while creating connections with the Canton of Geneva in the development of policy plans for regenerative futures.