openDCN has been developed jointly by the **Foundation RCM (FRCM)** and the **Civic Informatics Laboratory (LIC)**
, starting from the experiences and methodologies made through the development and managing of civic telematic environments
(
Milano Community Network
,
PartecipaMi
)
within the
e21
- digital governance in Agenda 21
project
(September 2006/October 2008, Lead Partner Mantova Municipality).

The Foundation RCM was set up in 1996 mainly to sustain, also economically, and manage the Milan Community Network and to promote in civil society the aware use of computer and digital tools finalized to support and enhance citizens active participation in the Information Society. Local government organizations (the Region, the Province, and the Chamber of Commerce) and the University of Milan, where FRCM maintains its operational headquarters, are charter members. Private citizens, schools, NGOs and non-profit associations can subscribe to become participants (simple members) of the foundation. FRCM main goals have been recently formulated as follows:

- To design, manage and sustain online environments finalized to support and enhance citizens active participation through public deliberative processes, mainly at the local and urban level. Specific areas of interests are sustainable development, land management, environment and landscape protection, traffic and mobility, tourism, culture, and health;

- To reduce the digital divide by developing e-skills for an aware digital-citizenship (virtual communities, social networks), in Italy and elsewhere, especially in developing countries;
- To serve as a center of research and technological, cultural and social innovation, in cooperation with other research institutions, first of all the Civic Networking Laboratory (LIC) of

the University of Milan.

The Civic Informatics Laboratory within the Department of Informatics and Communication is active since May 1994 to perform action research on the social implications of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and develop suitable software applications. The LIC promoted the Milan Community Network which has registered since September 1994 more than 20,000 citizens. It also promoted in partnership with the Lombardy Regional Government, the Association for Informatics and Civic Networking of Lombardy (A.I.Re.C.) which groups the Community Networks in the Lombardy Region. More specific projects addressed the needs of schools, non for profit associations, small and medium enterprise. In all these projects the goal is enhancing people active participation in the Information Society.

FRCM and the LIC are based at Milano University - Department of Informatics and Communication (D.I.Co.)