

Demo site 6: Mercado de Verónicas, Spain

In Murcia, a Mediterranean city with a rich agricultural tradition and a growing commitment to sustainability, the historic Mercado de Verónicas is being reimagined as a living laboratory for accessibility, innovation, and cultural heritage. Built in the early 20th century, this modernist market hall stands on the banks of the Segura River and has long been a central place for food, commerce, and community life. Today, it is at the heart of an ambitious vision to transform traditional marketplaces into inclusive, future-oriented public spaces.



From historic market to accessibility lab

The transformation of the Mercado de Verónicas is linked to Murcia's broader strategy of urban regeneration and climate neutrality. Supported by national and EU funds the market is undergoing a phased renovation: first focusing on structural and energy efficiency upgrades, followed by the reactivation of its interior spaces. This pilot project demonstrates how heritage buildings can be adapted to modern standards of accessibility, energy performance, and social use while retaining their architectural identity.



Inside the revitalised market, new functions will complement its traditional role as a food hub. Spaces are being designed for cultural events, gastronomy workshops, and community activities, alongside improved facilities for local vendors. The pilot will also integrate advanced monitoring technologies to test how digital twins and IoT sensors can enhance user experience, optimise building performance, and ensure that accessibility is understood in its widest sense: from physical mobility to cognitive orientation and social inclusion.



Linking heritage, river, and community

The market's riverside location makes it a symbolic and strategic site. Its transformation is closely connected to the city's long-term programme for reactivating the riverbanks with green infrastructure, public spaces, and cultural activities. In addition, the pilot is aligned with the major urban regeneration process that is reshaping the southern districts of Murcia. The Mercado de Verónicas will therefore not only improve the building itself but also reinforce its role as a civic landmark that links the old town with the river, while connecting to the broader strategies that shape the city's future.



A pilot site for AccessS

Within the AccessS project, the Mercado de Verónicas will serve as a real-world demonstrator to validate integrated solutions that combine accessibility, inclusiveness, and sustainability in the rehabilitation of public buildings. The renovation of the market, aims to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions by introducing energy-efficient design measures, improved insulation, and smart energy management systems.



The project will evaluate how people navigate, perceive, and interact with the space, addressing usability, safety, and comfort, actively involving local communities, market users, and associations in the evaluation process. Considering user-centred design roadmaps and assessment frameworks, the demonstrator will contribute to the definition of a standardized European approach to accessible public buildings and sustainable urban regeneration.

The participatory dimension of the pilot is especially important: workshops and surveys have already been carried out with both vendors and visitors, gathering input on mobility, inclusion, and user needs. Moreover, a Permanent Accessibility Board has been established as a result of this project, ensuring long-term dialogue and collaboration between the municipality, associations, and citizens. Together, they work as a collaborative governance structure that guarantees accessibility and inclusion remain central in the market's transformation and future management.

