

INTERREG IVC - Project "Hybrid Parks"

Partner 12: Regione Emilia-Romagna

Regional Department involved in the project:
General Directorate for Programs and Agreements,
European Relations, and International Cooperation
(Urban planning, Landscape and Sustainable
Territorial Development Office).

Situation Report, April 2012



1. Introduction to Emilia-Romagna region

Emilia-Romagna is located in the north of Italy and hosts about 4,405,000 inhabitants. It includes two historical regions: "Emilia", which encompasses the provinces of Piacenza, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna and Ferrara; and "Romagna" which includes the remaining provinces of Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena and Rimini. However, there is a territorial reorganization on the way, which could change the current territorial planning of the Region.



Emilia-Romagna is one of the richest regions in Italy due either to its agricultural, tourism and productive propensity and to the several small and medium-sized enterprises widespread throughout the territory. It is well-known in the world for the distribution of some of its most important products, such as the parmigiano-reggiano, Parma ham, Ferrari and Ducati. Because of the global economic crisis, Emilia-Romagna's GDP has decreased by about 5%, in line with the national average. However, this Italian Region plays a leading role in external trade and in the production of manufactured goods.



1.1 Emilia-Romagna's actions and activities for the environment and landscape development

Emilia-Romagna Region is very active in the development of activities which aim at enhancing and qualifying regional landscape and environment. Through the Piano Territoriale Paesistico (Territorial Landscape Plan) of Emilia-Romagna, approved in 1993, the Region has been focusing on improving and developing the regional territory and landscape while protecting both the cultural identity and the integrity of the territory itself. Therefore, every landscape should be improved and transform according to the natural, historical and cultural area in which it belongs, in order not to destroy our communities' territorial values. Emilia-Romagna is now planning a new and updated Piano Territoriale Paesistico.

Urban planning, Landscape and Sustainable Territorial Development Office took part in 3 projects: LOTO – Landscape Opportunities for Territorial Organization (2003-05); PAYS.DOC – Good Practices for Landscape (2005-07); PAYS.MED.URBAN – High quality of landscape as a key of sustainability and competitiveness of Mediterranean urban areas (2009-11).

2. Emilia-Romagna's participation in "Hybrid Parks"

Our participation in and contribution to this project focuses on SOCIAL VEGETABLE GARDENS, as elements of local territory and landscape.





Social vegetable gardens can represent an ecological and environmental turning point, characterized by strong social, cultural and pedagogical features. In fact, urban social vegetable gardens represent both a social development tool for inclusive politics and also an element of environmental or urban renewal to enhance quality of life and improve the landscape of the territory.

2.1 Social vegetable gardens: state-of-the-art in Emilia-Romagna

Social vegetable gardens are widely spread in Emilia-Romagna Region: 14.000 gardens out of 18.000 are located in our territory, mostly in our outskirts. In our country, the majority of them are located in public areas for social scopes.

Social vegetable gardens were created for elderly or retired people for specific social needs, to reduce their exclusion from social life and, therefore, to promote social inclusion.





Considering all the social vegetable gardens, there is evidence that they have transformed positively urban areas. They have had a great impact on territory and on landscape, either by regenerating the environment of both urban and peri-urban spaces and by regaining abandoned areas. For instance, thanks to social vegetable gardens, it has been possible to enlarge green areas, to regenerate the ground and also to link the city with the outskirts.

However, social vegetable gardens are characterized by some negative features which should be improved. First of all, the access of social vegetable gardens is difficult, as they are usually fenced. Secondly, they still represent a weak typology of land use in opposition to the expansion pressure of the construction industry. Last but not least, social vegetable gardens lack of aesthetic quality.



2.2 Social vegetable gardens: developing objectives inside and outside the Region

We aim at including cultivated areas (social vegetable gardens) within the category of parks and gardens. The same recognition and dignity, which parks and gardens have, can be given to social vegetable gardens by both the creation of green corridors and the improvement of public accessibility. For instance, cycle lanes and paths can represent a solution either to the problem of access entry and of the lack of aesthetic quality that characterized social vegetable gardens. Therefore, it is necessary to plan a new style and design in terms of landscape and accessibility.



Furthermore, we focus on raising awareness and consensus on the cultural and environmental values of vegetable gardens, in order to reduce speculation on these areas.

In addition, we would like to extend the use of social vegetable gardens also to other social groups. For instance, either elderly, young people or kids can take advantages of social vegetable gardens.



It is also necessary to set programs for public and private management within the requalification and improvement of social vegetable gardens.

Social vegetable gardens are globally widespread. Therefore, it is worth creating a network of vegetable gardens in order to boost activities to change positively the peri-urban and urban landscape.

2.3 Projects related to social vegetable gardens

The project “La Città degli Orti” (The City of Vegetable Gardens) has been realized in the provinces of Ferrara and Piacenza, thanks to the contribution of Emilia-Romagna Region. It started in 2009 and is still on the way.

Green abandoned areas have been given to interested citizens who were willing to cultivate those areas. The next phase of the project is the creation of fair collaborations between producers and consumers.

Regaining green abandoned areas and promoting sustainable practices of territorial management were the principal objectives of the project “La Città degli Orti”.

The results of that project will be published on the websites of the Municipality of Ferrara (<http://www.comune.ferrara.it/>) and Piacenza (<http://www.comune.piacenza.it/>) and also on the website of the “Parco Regionale del Delta del Po Emilia-Romagna” (Regional Park of the river Po in Emilia-Romagna) (<http://www.parcodeltapo.it/er/index.html>).



The organizations that work in the field of parks, gardens and vegetable gardens are especially public organizations, such as Regions and Municipalities. For instance, the Regional System INFEA (<http://ambiente.regione.emilia-romagna.it/infeas/>) is a national service which aims at communicating about and educating for sustainable territorial development. It involves several public and private actors in order to promote collaborations and the qualification of activities about sustainability.

Furthermore, there are several national associations and Social Centers that work together with public organizations in the Italian territory. For example, ANCeSCAO (<http://www.ancescao.it/>) is a National Association Social Centers, Committees for Elderly and Vegetable Gardens. Moreover, a Social Center in Bologna, called XM24, has planned a project "Crepe Urbane" which focuses on reconquering green public areas for social scopes also through social vegetable gardens (<http://crepeurbane.noblogs.org/>).

3. Useful links

Information about the project "la Città degli Orti" in Piacenza
<http://ortiurbanipiacenza.wordpress.com/> : this site gathers

Emilia-Romagna Region about the projects, plans and activities about landscape
www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/paesaggi/ : it is the site of

European project PAYS.MED.URBAN (High quality of landscape as a key of sustainability and competitiveness of Mediterranean urban areas)
www.paysmed.net/pays-urban/ : the web page of the

Project PAYS.DOC (Good Practices for Landscape)
www.paysmed.net/pays-doc/ : the web page of the European

More information about the Hybrid Parks and INTERREG IVC
www.hybridparks.eu