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The 'Extramet' project and the case study of Campania

Simonetta Volpe

Extramet is a project co-funded by the European commission, within the interreg program III B Medocce. It has the aim of experimenting an innovative method for enhancing the spaces that act as buffers between the 'city' and the 'countryside'.

The joint work of the partners proposes to trigger a series of innovative, correct development actions according to which rural and metropolitan spaces are no longer seen as opposed but as a unique process of transformation and territorial growth.

The resulting concrete actions will surely yield a set of planning actions, that will enable medium/short term production and activation of integrated approach tools combining a clear picture of the issues and problems, planning skills and economic-financial planning abilities (Fesr, Feoga, Fse, national, regional and local public and private resources), as well as the ability and will to activate concerted decision making processes (State, Regions, Provinces, Municipalities, Bodies...) with local participation.

A classic s.w.o.t. analysis has oriented both the transnational planning actions and local projects:

Strong points

- The emergence of valuable environmental, cultural and historical-architectural features present in the suburbs, rural bordering zones, interstitial spaces;
- The presence of cultural identities to be salvaged and the widespread need felt by local communities to restore a central role to marginal areas, by means of innovative and pilot projects or cooperative actions;
- The presence of strongly

differentiated metropolitan areas and small and medium-sized urban systems;

- The spread of successful experiences of economic and cultural animation over the territory.

Weak points

- Insufficient competitiveness of the system of allocation of space and poor earnings in the agricultural areas;
- Competition among the different areas and lack of targeted economic policies;
- Fragmentation of the territory, population drift and ageing;
- Loss of cultural identity and lack of professional skills;
- Hydrogeological imbalance phenomena and abandonment of the areas. Drawing up local projects and the consequent exchange of experiences will make it possible to define and set in motion a shared, agreed management model of the metro-rural space and above all to create networks of institutional subjects and local actors.

They may then collaborate to analyze issues of territorial development and promote rigorous research into territorial planning and reclaiming metro-rural spaces.

In this perspective, therefore, and awaiting the revisions of the Pac and Sdec, work is ongoing to draw to the attention of the European union these problems related to the status of metro-rural spaces, with the aim of achieving their recognition as areas worthy of targeted planning actions.

The local project of the Campania Region has individuated a territorial ambit where experimentation will be carried out, being a particularly critical area and hence where an adequate solution giving rise to reclaiming and added value processes is especially urgent. This ambit,

recognized to pose the greatest problems, is the Naples Municipality, and in particular the agricultural spaces falling within the perimeter of the Hills of Naples Regional Park, established by Lr n. 17 of 07/10/2003.

In the wider context of the provincial rural system, these areas are strongly representative of the different, complementary values linked to 'rurality', as well as of the important role they have always had and still have in building the landscape and preserving the original morphological features.

On these bases, the local project partnership is, therefore, univocally established: the Park, as the Body that by its very nature pursues these aims, and the Naples Municipality that, with the approval of the 'Variant for salvage' and the 'Variant for the west zone', has attributed a strategic role to the preservation of agricultural activities in the city.

A priority aim of the project is to individuate 'correct' models of use of the rural territory. Such a definition is taken to mean a model that takes into account two fundamental elements:

- setting up innovative development programs in which rural and metropolitan spaces are not seen as opposed but as mutually involved in an integrated process of transformation and growth;
- focusing attention on residual rural areas in the metropolitan ambit, attributed a strategic role in environmental reclaiming and urban planning of the city, and especially of the suburbs. This is achieved by recapturing the different, complementary values expressed by rural spaces in strongly urbanized coastal areas, i.e. the values linked to their ecological and ethical-cultural dimensions. Thus, the local project, thanks to an articulated

system of actions, provides the opportunity to solve three essential difficulties:

- the problems inherent to public-private management of these areas;
- maintenance of 'correct' use of the residual rural space through agricultural practices and mores;
- the problems of use and access to national and European funding channels by small landowners and farm managers.

The actions currently underway include:

- a feasibility study: this document aims to build an economic-legal proposal for self-supporting agriculture in the metropolitan context. It contains a proposal for modification of regional law n. 41/84 to introduce a special category for cultivated areas in the urban ambit, and institute a macro-economic analysis of the advantages of urban agriculture, also studying a 'financial pathway' for use by metropolitan agricultural operators and, finally, guidelines or a user manual for sustainable use of rural spaces.

- participatory planning: in an area of the hills of Naples park, identified as a morphological unit, a pilot participatory project has been set up aiming to spread information about the ongoing initiatives and involve citizens, private operators, associations of categories, Ngos, etc., in the strategies drawn up by the three administrations, as a means of reaching a shared, concerted planning campaign at the various levels among private and public partners.

- internet site for education and information: a web site will be designed and activated, dealing with the issues of urban agriculture. It may be managed by the 'Casa della città' (Home of the city), a centre for documentation and initiatives run by the Urban planning service of Naples municipality. The site aims to contribute to activating a

network of informed,
knowledgeable subjects.
- a territorial marketing
program: aims to forge
relationships between the
city and countryside,
highlighting the problems
inherent to these areas and
sensitizing the citizenship to
the complex role they have
for the community.
These actions, of an
experimental nature in the
hills of Naples regional park,
can be extended to rural
urban areas in other cities
in Campania and promote
common reflection on a
wider scale, through the
transnational network.