

## **Agricultural Park Montespertoli - Italy**

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The case study refers to an area of the Tuscany Region in Italy in the Municipality of Montespertoli, located about 20km southwest of Florence. With a population of 13,300 (2013) it accounts for 1.3% of the province of Florence's population. With more than 2000 ha of vineyards, Montespertoli accounts for 11% of county Florence vineyards. Technology, innovation and know-how play an important role in keeping this agriculture competitive and successful while preserving the traditional characteristics of this area. A scenario planning process was jointly conducted by Future iQ and Klink srl in order to ascertain the local population's views of the future of their region, with their views about the implementation of an Agricultural Park in the region included within this larger perspective. The Agricultural Park would be seen as an instrument to guide companies towards crop diversification, increasing the multifunctional role of local agriculture to a spread of agricultural practices with less environmental impact. It would also be an innovative project aimed at creating a network of local farmers.

### **Overview**

The Municipality of Montespertoli wished to share with main local stakeholders, the definition of the future of the area. The role of the Agricultural Park would be instrumental to the future of the region. It would guide companies towards crop diversification, increasing the multifunctional role of local agriculture to a spread of agricultural practices with less environmental impact. It would also facilitate a network of farmers and local food/wine/oil producers, which would only strengthen the region's capacity for production and export. It would bring together the actions of local people to retain the strengths and world-renowned characteristics of this region.

The project was run over a six month period from February to July 2014 and included the following activities:

- Detailed survey work carried out prior to the workshop with participants
- Background research into the region and challenges being experienced
- Design and facilitation of Scenario Planning workshop with local artisans, wine makers, olive oil producers, farmers and agronomists.
- Production of Scenario Planning Report in English and Italian
- Production of videos and interviews with main stakeholders in Italian
- Production of the Action Plan in Italian

The Action Plan, developed via a CLLD (Community-led Local Development) perspective represented a milestone both for the development of private initiatives and for local

investments and shared choices. The Montespertoli community started to work together, using a diversity of approaches as an asset more than a problem.

Many of the initiatives flourished, starting from the creation of a local chain of producers of ancient grains (Associazione Grani Antichi di Montespertoli, <http://graniantichitoscani.com/it/produttori-grani-antichi-toscana>) to the development of an association among farmers and local producers of wine, olive oil, truffles and other local products (Associazione Produttori delle Colline del Chianti, <https://www.facebook.com/Associazione-Produttori-Delle-Colline-Del-Chianti-768778013191380/>).

Among other results, the decision of the Montespertoli Municipality to change local regulations about agricultural production to reduce bureaucracy burdens and to reinforce the use of local products to prepare meals for schools cafeterias.

Many other initiatives are on going also with examples of social inclusion (foreign workers that work on specific project with local farmers).

*“Community driven Parco Agrario di Montespertoli results in a blossoming development of the whole district.”* Paolo Santinello, Klink

### **Key Learnings about Community Development**

The aspects of community development that have been important to the project are:

- a participatory approach
- starting of a shared regional planning project
- creation of a strong connection between groups of stakeholders and local government
- decreasing barriers among community members
- future thinking approaches
- willingness to shape the future
- valorization of local knowledge

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