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## The Operative Strategic Plan. Decompression and revitalisation: the OSP as opportunity for sustainable development

*Marichela Sepe*

The Operative Strategic Plan for the decompression of the area of Vesuvius and Somma covers 18 Comunes (Cercola, Pollena Trocchia, Sant'Anastasia, Somma Vesuviana, Ottaviano, San Giuseppe Vesuviano, Terzigno, Boscoreale, Pompei, Torre Annunziata, Boscotrecase, Trecase, Torre del Greco, Portici, Ercolano, S. Giorgio a Cremano, San Sebastiano, Massa di Somma) for a total area of about 240 km<sup>2</sup> with a population which in 2001 totalled some 552,000 inhabitants.

The area of the 18 Comunes has been designated a 'Red Zone' at 'high volcanic risk' by the Department of Civil Protection as part of the National Emergency Plan for the Vesuvian Area.

The risk of volcanic activity coincides with other critical elements that make policies for reducing habitative levels a complex matter: serious problems of hydrogeological vulnerability, an on-going process of soil consumption, widespread deterioration of the historical territory, inadequacy of the infrastructure network, progressive erosion of the suburban agricultural areas, large sectors of the traditional economy in decline, and lastly the lack of a productive farming policy able to exploit the typical products of the Vesuvian area or a policy for tourism and culture which can match up to the area's historical, architectonic and environmental heritage. Thus the construction of a strategy must start from recognition of the peculiar long term features of the

area of Vesuvius and Somma, where the enhancement of the natural resources must always go hand in hand with the retrieval, maintenance and requalification of the territory's historical roots, agricultural traditions and complex systems controlling the water supply, as well as the existing fabric of historical residential and architectonic features.

The complex planning procedure of the OSP involves many institutions, for the area is subject to a range of planning measures which transcend the municipal dimension, including the Plan for the Vesuvius National Park (PPNV), the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR), the Provincial Coordination Territorial Plan (PTCP), the Landscape Territorial Plan for the Vesuvian Municipalities, and the Priority Plans for the hydrogeological status of the North West and Sarno Basin Authorities.

The Regional Law 21/2003 envisaged the drawing up of an Operative Strategic Plan in order to define "the areas and developments to be subjected to programmes of interventions and projects favouring the decompression of habitation density and also the reinforcement and improvement of escape routes, also by means of interventions of urban and construction restructuring, demolition without reconstruction, environmental requalification and repristination, enhancement of historical centres, and reallocation of functions in favour of production, tourism, service sector and public services activities".

The law makes provision for carrying out compensatory interventions in the areas and for those interventions already designated in the current urban planning policies for residential purposes set out above, as long as this does not lead to

additional residential pressure incompatible with the law's goals.

There are no models available for this plan, and it has necessitated a reflection on how the OSP is to be inserted into the planning system and the appropriate method for its elaboration. The salient characteristic of the OSP can be seen in its dual programming and planning vocation, so that its conformatory and programmatic contents are bound to interrelate in synergy, furthering the achievement of the Plan's objectives.

The conformatory contents concern the urban planning type mechanisms of incentives and rewards, evenly distributed throughout the whole of the Red Zone. These contents are designed to create the "conditions of economic feasibility for the interventions, independently from public funding if need be" and require a phase of collaboration among the various bodies responsible for urban and environmental planning policy.

The programmatic contents are designed to identify territorial contexts and interventions able to "produce a knock-on effect by public intervention on its private counterpart", using financial and/or tax incentives.

The Plan's strategic goals can be summarised as follows: ensuring security of the territory; reduction of the habitative pressure by improving the quality of the built fabric and environment; upgrading of the network of escape routes by rationalising the infrastructure system; enhancement of economic and territorial vocations by incentivating local development processes; reinforcement of the ecological networks. Decompression comes to link up with the reappropriation of the territory of Vesuvius and

Somma with its network of historical-archaeological and physical-biological resources, relying on the rediscovery of the structural keys to the historical territory and the enhancement of a mode of compatible agriculture that gives form to the terrain and creates landscapes, a tourism which is not invasive, production activities which are eco-compatible and new cultural poles, able to link up with these resources and use the rail-borne infrastructures which are currently under-used and not integrated. These first goals, as we shall see in detail in the specific contents, will go hand in hand with more general effects, so that risk becomes an opportunity for sustainable development for the Comunes in the Red Zone of the Vesuvius area.