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**Exercises in statutory and participatory planning: the Prato TCP**  
*Alberto Magnaghi*

The drafting of the Territorial (1) Co-ordination Plan (TCP) (2) for the Province of Prato provided the opportunity to experiment in the field the fertile dialogue of ideas proposed by the Italian Territorialist School (3) and the Tuscan model of territorial government. The Italian Territorial School has been working on the concept of local self-sustainable development for over a decade in research and actions on the theme of enhancing the local heritage, participatory democracy, and the 'city of differences'. It has applied this research to urban plans, environmental projects and strategic scenarios. Moreover, the School has also experimented on the theme of establishing the identity of places through their representation (constructing a 'heritage atlas') and the effectiveness of the latter in reorganising the institutional information framework (*Sistema informativo territoriale, Sit*) and the processes of participatory democracy.

The Tuscan model, on the other hand, reflects the special planning culture of the Tuscan Region, which interprets the objective of sustainable development through the enhancement of the multiple identities of its territory. It does so in various ways by promoting the production of wealth through the enhancement of its local heritage resources deposits in the many local systems characterising the region (4). This wealth is not only measured in monetary terms or GDP, but primarily by indicators of well-being, which concern not only labour and income, but also the quality of life, the environment, consumption,

services, collective life, community identity, participation in social life, and so on. The Tuscan Region has also adopted cultural approach which, from the Regional Law 5/95 to a recent new bill for governing the region (5), has encouraged the integration of territorial policies and an increasingly clear-cut distinction between the structural aspects of the Urban Plan (which means treating the essential resources in the region as structural invariants in a "Statute of the territory") and the strategic aspects involved in transforming the territory, pursued by respecting the statutory regulations and the enhancement of essential resources.

As an 'arena' in favour of this experimentation, the Province of Prato (6) was institutionally-speaking in a phase of transition. It was the last Tuscan province to approve the TCP, at the outcome evaluation stage of Law no. 5, and the first to discuss its ongoing plan with the regional offices responsible for drafting the new law. The situation was thus favourable for experimenting new forms of the Plan. I will therefore try to highlight the innovative elements (there are many possible ways of describing the Plan) arising from this convergence and from the experimental background. The innovative features may be summed up in the following aspects.

*The TCP as a tool for developing participation and democracy.* The Plan has set in motion a process of structured social participation with the aim of constructing a shared strategic scenario for the socio-economic and territorial future of the province. This scenario can be pursued by recomposing negotiations of specific interests into the collective interest centred on local

self-sustainable development, aimed at giving future generations a territorial heritage of a greater value, through the construction of 'territorial value added'. In all stages of the plan process participatory institutions were created: e.g. area conferences for local territorial systems, thematic and sectoral meetings, forums, etc.

*The TCP as a tool for strategic planning.* In accordance with the regional guidelines mentioned in the introduction, the TCP set about describing a vision of socio-economic change for the medium and long term. This required the support of an information framework of a statutory nature, as the fundamental act for the longterm development of resources. A strategic planning method was thus adopted and given the following form:

- the drafting of an "atlas" to interpret the state of knowledge by selecting and representing the heritage values on which to base the decisions for the change;
- designing a socio-economic and territorial strategic scenario for the medium to long term, based on enhancing the heritage resources described in the atlas, and integrating, with specific reference to territorial aspects, the socio-economic guidelines of the Province's General Development Plan;
- designing a reference territorial scenario focused on the heritage and environmental values, translated into a vision of the future territorial set-up, supported by integrated pilot projects. The vision was represented through graphic data and not in the form of a directly operational or restrictive regulatory tool, but as a communications reference for the Plan with multiple aims: the construction of a

debate involving various institutions; the drafting of strategic guidelines for the functional territorial systems, local territorial systems, and the integrated projects; the orienting of the technical regulations and actions proposed by the TCP; and, lastly, to inform the assessment criteria.

*The TCP as a project for the territory.* The 'project' for the future set-up of the territory is the reference for action plans. A territorial project, supported by a scenario, is the long-term objective; the Plan with its various aspects (regulations, integrated projects, assessment tools, etc.) is the means for bringing the horizon of the project design temporally closer. Through the TCP's design and strategic character, the aim is to go beyond the limits of seeing the Plan simply as a restrictive tool or the passive co-ordination of ongoing decisions. Rather, it is to be used to construct a strategic reference framework enabling the Province to actively orient sectoral policies and subordinate plans, promoting subsidiarity and synergies.

**The information framework: the plan's structural and statutory aspects**

In developing the Plan guidelines, an issue was immediately raised: how to recognise the wealth and variety of the resources capable of contributing to the identity of the territory, as tools for designing the future with new sources of lasting wealth and well-being, intrinsic in the integrated enhancement of local resources. To carry out this kind of investigation into identity, the focus had first to be shifted from a functional interpretation (highlighting the internal relations in the east-west metropolitan area) to an interpretation establishing

the special identifying features of settlements in the whole province. *From planning the metropolitan area to the 'province system'*. The TCP came into being and was completed in a metropolitan context, conditioned in the post-war period by deep changes and numerous projects for governance and planning. In the four stages of 'vast-area planning' summing up these processes (7) an initial major theme concerns the fact that planning shifted from an essentially Florence-centred logic, i.e. obeying a vision of the plain of Prato as an area for decentralising Florence, towards a vision of a polycentric metropolitan area, articulated in relatively independent settlement systems.

There continued to be, however, a substantial and exclusive structuring of the plain as the main focus of metropolitan area policies. This model of civilisation contrasted with the long-term historical model, based on a complex system of towns at the entrances to deep valleys and giving onto the agricultural plain (the ancient Pliocene lake). Consequently, the Province of Prato, made its own plain the functional centre for a metropolitan area, based on the textile industry, thus reducing Val di Bisenzio to a number of purely 'functional uses' (decentralised production areas along the river, exploitation of drinking water, and holiday houses) minimising the relationship with Montalbano to necessary links in decentralised production. In this way the hill and mountain systems were treated as a marginal background or decentralised appendices to the industrial areas. Initially, the urbanisation was limited to the edges of the plain which, in the early 1950s, was mainly unbuilt and

clearly showed the perimeters of the historical centres joined up by a few unobtrusive roads. In the second stage, the vast-area planning attempted to rationalise urbanisation which was spreading without taking into account the long-term environmental and settlement rules of the whole plain. The free spaces were thus filled chaotically, very often without respecting the natural predisposition of the territory by establishing suitable activities. In short, the open areas were simply seen as spaces awaiting urbanisation. When this process spread southwards beyond the limit of the motorway to the Prato plain, it paved the way to widespread urban sprawl tending to join up with the urbanised foothill front of Montalbano. In the Structural Schema of the Metropolitan Area (1990), for the first time the environment was considered as a single system, with the aim of integrating urban development and the territorial design of an ecological network. Nonetheless, the planning focus was still on the plain and its powerful east-west axis. Thus the Structural Schema based its own strategic design strictly within the boundaries of the 'Pliocene Lake' and failed to take into account the hill and mountain relations with each local territorial system. In the context of the metropolitan territorial figure, described above in terms of its historical evolution (see the supra-communal planning of the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area), the Prato territorial figure sedimented by this functional model is characterised by a centre-periphery type geographical set-up with a large urbanised area (53% of the plain) (8) creating a

continuum in the industrial urban landscape extending along the narrow valley floor of Val di Bisenzio as far as Vernio and the series of ponds of Ombrone, where the Montalbano foothills begin to rise. This settlement model has greatly contributed to the functional and economic growth of the industrial district. But over time it has created some important critical points for the territory:

- the building saturation of the valley floor from Prato to Vernio created through: the gradual joining up of the historical mill system (of considerable building and urban quality for the river) with a *continuum* of mainly prefab low-quality industrial building and adjacent residential areas; the blocking of the river front for long stretches for any views or uses with considerable traffic congestion in the state road along the valley floor. The landscape image of the valley has thus been disfigured by the industrial periphery dominating and marginalising the hill landscape up to certain altitude;
- the partial degradation of the hill and mountain system due to many rural towns and buildings being abandoned, spontaneous reforestation and the degradation of cultivated woods (especially chestnut woods), dry terracing, agricultural areas and rural-woodland roads;
- the construction of a continuous built-up area to the north and south of the plain, separating the settlement system of the plain from the hill and mountain systems from the ecological, functional and landscape points of view;
- the construction in the plain of a metropolitan peripheral landscape, characterised by: growing urban sprawl; low-quality settlements; de-contextualisation (in terms

of building types and layout) of the urban blocks when industrial buildings are replaced; the joining up of historical villages once part of the polycentric longer-term urban model with little consideration for the urban burden and environmental impact on the territory;

- the degradation of the historical system of canals with the gradual covering over of the system of ponds, and their inclusion in the sewage system; the tendency for urbanisation to spread rapidly to the south, transforming the farm landscape in residual areas awaiting urbanisation; the relatively well-conserved historical hill landscape of Montalbano, but with recent episodes of decontextualised urbanisation and the industrial transformation of farmland to meet the requirements of a growth in the wine industry.

*Towards re-equilibrium.* These critical territorial and environmental elements reveal how in its various stages metropolitan planning has assumed a mainly functional approach, simply treating the territory as a technical support for new east-west infrastructures at the service of the powerful centres in the plain and their productive systems. Consequently it has failed to take into account, or has only done so too late and ineffectively, the negative effects of settlement development on territorial and environmental quality. Moreover, this kind of planning approach has also failed to take into account the vertical nature of the relations between the valleys giving onto the plain which are based on a substratum of environmental systems, especially hydrogeological and geomorphological systems, and on the long-term settlement processes. These processes had

established complementary relations between the hills, plain and Apennine foothills. The initial theme for the plan was thus a 90-degree rotation of the visual cone previously used to interpret the territory in order to highlight the north-south geography describing the depth of the provincial territory, going beyond the monocultural simplification of the Province of Prato as a median section of the metropolitan area. Stressing this new image, this 'counter-geography', as a general structural invariant and founding element of the new statute of the territory was the first task of the TCP. The new image, centred on the north-south axis, is more appropriate in representing the complexity and depth of the provincial identity, tracing a territorial figure (a "valley section", according to Patrick Geddes' historic image) joining up the inter-provincial nodes of Montepiano di Vernio to the north, and the Barco Reale of Montalbano to the south, through a rich variety of settlement environments, production cultures, and tourist, landscape, environmental and production itineraries. In this new image the city of Prato is repositioned (along the lines of its ancient mercatale) as the centre of gravity and crossroads of two systems: it is thus a node in the metropolitan area and the core of the provincial 'urban region'. This twofold function gives it a central role in promoting higher production quality and a new geographical dimension to dwelling in the territory.

*The Heritage Atlas.* This geographical re-interpretation has meant that in the information framework there is a greater weight given to the relations between the local territorial systems (the Val di Bisenzio, the plain, and

Montalbano) and their heritage of resources. Thus in the analysis, the weight in terms of the heritage of the two peripheral systems (Val di Bisenzio and Montalbano) re-balances the relations with the central system (the urbanised plain). The resultant complex analytical information framework was summarised in a Heritage Atlas, which selects and represents the elements required deemed to be territorial values from the thematic maps and analytical data making up the information framework, i.e. it represents the potential resources to be used in the future development model. This interpretative stage of building the information framework defines the statute of the territory through its structural invariants. It thus creates a meta-planning stage in the strategic scenario, since it selects and highlights the heritage elements in the representation and makes them concrete.

Here is a summary of the heritage resources included by the TCP as the basis for the scenario:

- Environmental heritage. It has already partly been recognised in the existing protected areas. This heritage is configured as a thoroughgoing 'bioregion' which embraces various elements: the complex hydrographical basins structuring the historical settlements from the production, energy and functional point of views; the mountain and hill systems with considerable biological and landscape diversity; vast woodland areas with beech and chestnut woods; hilltop pastures, fertile hill farmlands, terraced fields producing high-quality crops (mainly vines and olives); an agricultural plain historically irrigated and made fertile by a complex network of canals and channels (with millponds).

This rich and varied set of environmental structures offer the possibility, if the structures are treated as a system, of planning sustainable re-balancing actions for the settlements to reduce the critical points, improve the quality and optimise the use of resources (water, waste, food, and energy cycles, with excursionist and farm tourism, etc.). The map of the environmental heritage represents these resources in summary form.

- Territorial heritage. The territorial heritage has been sedimented through the long history of civilisations from the Etruscan culture (now increasingly important after the archaeological finds in the Gonfienti site on the slopes of Mount Calvana, a city of eight hectares), to the Medieval and Renaissance cultures and the industrial civilisation (rich in historical buildings). A variety of types of settlement environment, morphological types and territorial 'figures' have thus come down to us. They include: the polycentric urban system of Prato and Montemurlo, the system of villages in the agricultural plain; the towns in upper Val di Bisenzio and the large natural environments; the rural settlement and residential system in the mid-valley; the settlement system in the river landscape of the valley floor; the monumental system of the Medici Villas; and the historical farmlands of Montalbano framed by the woodland backbone of the Barco Reale. Special weight in the analysis was given to the landscape values of the settlement environment, by elaborating a method to integrate the various environmental, morpho-typological, urban and identifying factors in 32 landscape units. The role of the landscape in the plan was stressed, also because of the regulatory value that

the TCP will have in the new law for administering the region (9). The map of the territorial heritage summarises these elements, graphically highlighting their specific identifying features. The heritage, if joined up in a system and enhanced, may constitute a new functional image (as regards dwelling, tourist facilities and diversifying production) of the whole province.

- Anthropoc heritage. The anthropic heritage is full of potential on the basis of numerous factors: the co-operative, entrepreneurial and tourist culture of the textile district, innovative spirit, and excellence in agro-food production in the hills; the powerful identity-giving socio-economic and cultural components of the towns in the plain and in the communities of Val di Bisenzio and Montalbano; and the rich associational fabric of social projects. This third section of the atlas highlights the heritage values of the socio-economic milieu in social planning, i.e. the possible endogenous actors in the strategic scenario which, unlike the other two sections, cannot be represented on the map, and require other descriptive techniques and cataloguing. The resultant Synoptic description of social planning resources is made up of three main parts: a description of the milieu in order to define the socio-economic heritage; a summary of ongoing social planning in the territory; files on social projects outlining each project, the resources mobilised, the possible networks of actors required to implement the project, the state of progress and prospects for further development.

These heritage elements in the local *milieu*, if involved in a 'pact for development' can be endogenous driving forces in the project for the

future founded on enhancing the environmental and territorial resources described in the first two chapters of the atlas.

### The Draft Plan

#### *The socio-economic and territorial strategic scenario.*

The second step taken by the TCP was to construct a strategic scenario. In addition to mitigating the environmental and territorial critical points identified in the information framework, the strategic scenario primarily aims at the integrated development of the highlighted environmental, territorial and anthropic resources by recomposing them in a single 'project for the territory' as a model of local self-sustainable development (10).

*Future scenarios for the textile district.* In putting forward strategic ideas for the TCP's possible role for the development of the textile district, we referred to the scenarios suggested in the Province's General Development Plan (11). The three suggested scenarios reflect the tendency to see a "mature industrial district subject to growing challenges on international markets" and assume that the "plurality of means is an important characteristic of the situation to be interpreted". Here is an outline of the three scenarios:

- the first maintains the leading role of the textile district in the Prato production system, but with greater specialisation in top-quality productions in the fashion world with specific brands and a clear differentiation in products;
- the second suggests "a reduction in the textile industry and strengthening of the complementary industries". In this scenario there is an external decentralisation of textile production, a "concentration

in large lots" of companies refining and packaging the finished product, and the development of planning and marketing activities. A great deal of importance in this case is given to the production of advanced services (research, training, experimentation, etc.) and automation and software;

- the third scenario suggests a "prevalence of the tertiary sector" and "forms of urban development". The third scenario thus presupposes a considerable decline in the textile industry with the survival of some globalized leaders, phenomena of decentralisation from Florence, or the creation in the Prato area of a node in the metropolitan system for commercial, cultural, service and farm-tourist activities. It is thought, however, the situation most likely to emerge (depending on a host factors, many external and therefore not controllable) will contain to varying degrees elements from all three scenarios. From this point of view the change in the Prato manufacturing system will be accompanied in any case by an important growth in the innovative services sector, which in Prato and the rest of Tuscany is already greater than the manufacturing sector in terms of value added. According to the General Development Plan, at present the value added created by the district system is achieved in the three scenarios to varying degrees by the enhancement of the following elements:

- the decontextualisation of support strategies for the textile industry with a focus on ongoing diversification within the sector;
- the development of service activities for people and businesses;
- a focus on production activities associated with crafts and commerce;
- the development of farm

activities and farm holiday facilities to create jobs and for environmental purposes, with the "weak areas of the provincial territory" being treated as "deposits of resources";

- the development of diversification and enhancement policies for the territorial, environmental and landscape heritage and for local society;
- the development of typical products and environmental and wine-food tourism.

#### *The strategic guidelines for production in the territory.*

For the textile sector, in addition to the influence of the strictly manufacturing component in Prato as regards the three scenarios outlined, qualitative-type factors will play an increasingly important role. This will be even more pronounced, given the market trends in which the promotion of products and therefore communications exploits the close links between fashion, innovation, culture, and the historical and architectural heritage in what is known as 'Fashion Valley'. This means shifting from marketing actions aimed at enhancing the real-estate value of settlements to actions to promote an integrated image of production and the quality of territorial, environmental and local society values. Moreover, the university, research and services for people and business will play a key role in consequent action plans promoting the urban presence of these activities. The built-in value in products is increasingly associated not only with their innovative content but also the value added derived from environmentally and socially low-impact production processes and the fact of belonging to an area also well known for its quality of living and overall image. The production diversification are other

important factors such as the new synergetic and complementary links between production and territory interpreting in a new way the relations between production and the urban system and rural territory. The central theme of the TCP project is equipping the territory with infrastructures in order to organise new production chains to be integrated in the textile district (first and foremost the agriculture-environment-tourism-culture chain) and a consequent greater complexity in the province's production system. To move in this direction, the TCP elaborates the indications in the General Development Plan identifying sectors for production diversification which can "contribute to developing positive interdependence and encouraging territorial embedding for new economic activities ... in the three geographical areas identified by the TCP". Here we can mention, for example, as regards the economy of the district:

- non-food agriculture, which can be practised in the plain (in the integrated project for the Agricultural Park), capable of supplying textile fibres and oils with a lower environmental impact;
- high-quality craft products integrating the supply of the textile sector with activities and products which, for example, in the furniture chain, can create important market niches and in general can enhance the image of a district where know-how is the fundamental characteristic of the manufacturing tradition;
- the supply of the rural territory with high landscape and environmental values, suitable for business tourism and producing high-quality wine and food;
- the reinvestment of capital from manufacturing activities in initiatives

associated with the promotion of the agriculture-environment-tourism-culture chain, combining manufacturing activities with caring for a part of the territory (this aspect, already relatively widespread in Prato, can contribute to reproducing the re-sources of the territorial heritage and producing public goods). The reference territorial scenario. To the background of these social and economic guidelines, the territorial scenario interprets and implements the objective of improving territorial and environmental quality and diversifying production through linkage to the enhancement of the territorial heritage, as described in the atlas. The scenario highlights the new image-perception of the vast-area planning, foreshadowing the future production set-up and the new relations between the plain, hills and mountains. It encourages the extension of the concept of citizenship to the whole territory, materially making perceptible the environmental, productive, cultural and landscape complexity of the Prato 'urban region'. From this point of view, the scenario describes a new geography, a new territorial figure made up of nodes and networks, new territorial hierarchies, and new vistas and connections. The nodes and networks are seen as 'signifying' the emergence of value and new use modalities integrated into the whole territory. The territorial scenario was designed in two versions: the first more concise scenario was used as a communications tool in the first round of area conferences to reach general agreement on objectives. The second is a specific description of the scenario with the proposed integrated projects,

discussed in the second round of area conferences. The territorial scenario is based on the following strategies:

- enhancing and diversifying the textile district by increasing environmental quality through the identification of industrial areas that can be ecologically equipped (12) and by raising the efficiency of territorial relations, and especially, logistics, the transport of people and goods, and the urban redevelopment for new production and tertiary functions;
- increasing the complexity of the economic system by going from one to three districts (i.e. in addition to the fashion-textile district, a rural district with a tourist and environmental uses in Val di Bisenzio and an agro-food district with cultural-tourist uses in Montalbano), as a possible solution to the crisis in the textile sector and its uncertain future, and thus also enhancing in an integrated way the territorial resources not yet used but identified in the heritage atlas as the potential source of lasting wealth: in this case the resources in the 'open areas' of the province (around 75% of the overall area) and their potential economic uses;
- the enhancement of the environmental heritage and landscape, the historical settlement systems, and material cultural goods for this purpose.

To make this scenario feasible, the provincial territory has been operationally divided into three local territorial systems (LTSS). These systems respond to the strategy of representing the different territorial identities so they can be treated in the Plan (both in urban-planning and legal terms) by highlighting their specific nature and their various roles in the provincial system. This makes it possible to design

multipolar network systems in which the peripheral areas acquire a central functional importance in the provincial system. In the Val di Bisenzio-Monteferrato local territorial system, the general objective is to go beyond the model of dependence (on the decentralised textile industry in the valley floor with consequent depopulation of the mountains and Prato holiday homes in the hill areas) towards a new civilisation based on rural repopulation and environmental and tourist uses. The enhancement of the endogenous resources is pursued for this purpose by promoting synergy between the redevelopment of the typical high-quality forest and farm productions and the environmental landscape quality and vice-versa; it reinforces the use and accessibility of the polycentric settlement system of villages and minor historical towns joining up the valley floor to the hills and mountains. The overall planning guidelines are flanked by the following integrated projects:

- the Val di Bisenzio "sustainable agriculture" integrated project. Through a programmatic agreement signed by the Province, Communal administrations, 19 communities, and Chamber of commerce, this project brings together farm businesses, universities and various associations to promote the productive, environmental, agricultural and tourist development of the rural territory of the mid-valley area (13).
- the Val di Bisenzio River Park. This project plans to give the river system in the valley floor, now degraded, complex roles involved in recovering industrial archaeology, improving roads along the river banks and urban waterfronts, and environmental, landscape and recreational uses (14).

The project integrates hydraulic, urban, agricultural, environmental and infrastructure actions;

- the Montepiano inter-provincial tourist node. This crossroads between the routes from Mugello and the Pistoia and Bolognese slopes of the Apennines and the Val di Bisenzio make it possible to design a complex system for multisectoral actions for various purposes, rural, environmental and excursionist tourism, the marketing of products from the upper valley, cultural services and conference facilities, tourism for young people and recreation facilities.

In the local territorial system of the plain, the Plan designs the urban redevelopment, basing it on enhancing the polycentric historical system of villages, redeveloping the ecologically equipped production areas, reorganising transport and especially the logistics system for production activities, and the inclusion of the open spaces in the integrated project for a farm park and water system. The central issue is a freeze on land consumption and the redevelopment of open spaces to raise the overall environmental quality of the city of Prato. The integrated projects for this transformation are:

- the agricultural park project. Centred around the historical Medici buildings at Tavola, the project aims to encourage the transformation of some marginal areas into multipurpose agricultural areas (with high agricultural, productive, environmental and landscape value added) through: new infrastructures for the water system (the recovery of the millponds and purified water); integrated local farm chains (chains for bread, forage for animal rearing on Mount Calvana, natural textile

fibres, collective market gardens, etc.); the redevelopment of the artificial lakes and wetlands; the recovery of the historic rural buildings; the creation of a green belt and corridors for ecological networks; and paths for recreational uses.

- the Fashion Valley Macrolot 0 integrated project. This project is for the redevelopment of the factory city adjacent to the historical city and aims at introducing new functions into the district (innovative productions, services and marketing) and advanced tertiary activities (research, training, communications and "fashion roads"); the residential plans take into account the multicultural composition of the district and the city.
- the Gonfienti archaeological park integrated project. Archaeological finds are the basis for creating a park as an innovative cultural centre, destined to make Prato a driving force in tourist circuits including the Etruscan archaeological sites of Montalbano, recreational itineraries joining up the heritage of the Mediaeval, Medici, and Modern periods (industrial archaeology).

In the Montalbano local territorial system, the Plan develops the high quality of the historic landscape and promotes widespread tourist facilities (rural tourism and farm holidays) as part of an excellent agro-food district (wine-growing sector) with a high cultural value (conference facilities at the Villa of Artimino, archaeology) and excursion tourism (Barco Reale). The integrated projects interpreting these guidelines are: the widespread tourist accommodation integrated project aimed at improving the accommodation supply by developing the rural and urban building heritage to meet the growing demand for cultural, conference and

farm-holiday tourism; the inter-provincial Medici Barco project aimed at increasing the value of the woodland hill of Montalbano (the roads on the hill are of Etruscan origin) by joining up Vinci, the Empoli area, Val di Bisenzio and Pistoia for ecological, recreational and excursionist purposes with suitable facilities and access.

The territorial projects are further divided into four functional systems treating the relevant themes to link up the three LTSs in the 'province system'. The four systems are:

- the environment functional system defining the ecological functions for each part of the territory (starting from the protected areas) and the relations required to optimise the provincial ecological network, joining up the various parts in the mountain, hill, foothills and plain systems through ecological belts;
- the functional transport system defining the functions for the various infrastructures (roads, motorways, junctions, railways, stations, paths, excursionist itineraries, cycling tracks, etc.) to optimise traffic flows in the large communication systems and equip the local territorial systems with the necessary infrastructures for their development;
- the functional system for the integrated use of the cultural and environmental heritage. The system promotes the territorial relations to integrate the various production and use modalities of the environmental, cultural, historic-archaeological, tourist and agro-food heritage;
- the fashion and textile functional system is an integrated approach to the various production settlements in order to optimise the environmental, settlement and logistic

quality of the district in the context of its production and social evolution.

### **The Plan process**

To pursue these guidelines the Plan is operationally structured as an integrated multisectoral tool. To this end, the Province has set up an interdepartment committee and an intersectoral committee to suggest guidelines and coordinate the TCP through the Province's own sectoral actions and plans. Structured participation tools have been created to ensure all stages are socially shared in constructing the information framework, planning and management of the plan. For this purpose area conferences were created for the three local territorial systems, as well as thematic workshops, forums, interviews, and a web-site. They all attracted a wide participation from public and private actors in every stage of the plan, namely:

- the first awareness-raising stage for local actors in the context described by the information framework to reconstruct a socially shared vision of the territory (heritage atlas, statutory features);
- a proposals stage aimed at shaping a different vision of the territory (strategic scenario) as the outcome of interactive planning. In this direction the participating process aimed to involve not only institutional actors (communal administrations, professional associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc) but also social actors under-represented in decisions concerning territorial transformation (non-profit firms, tertiary sector, socially-owned companies, environmental and social associations, citizens' committees, fair trade networks, etc) thus making visible socially produced local projects in

the construction and management of the plan process;

- a specification stage establishing the elements by responding to the demands of local society and the actors in designing and managing integrated projects; the Synoptic description of social planning resources (institutional and others) was useful in implementing this strategic scenario according to its general guidelines and enhancing integrated projects with specific projects as well as implementing co-operation networks between various actors making them feasible.

The integrated projects contribute to building an active planning method and not merely the creation of planning constraints. They practically implement the plan by identifying for each project the actors, funds, institutional actions, agreements and pacts, making it possible to check its feasibility (in economic, institutional, financial and management terms). In this way the TCP sets out to pursue experimentation in accordance with the regional guidelines which increasingly see the involvement of integrated projects at local level as the future of planning forms. Lastly, as part of the process some specific meetings with the individual communal administration were organised and involved the mayors, heads of department, technical offices and communal urban planners. The benefits from the introduction of this process concern:

- effective sharing of the information framework and future scenarios in mobilising various actors at the stage of managing and implementing the plan;
- the description of feasibility conditions for the technical, economic, social

and institutional aspects of individual projects in the plan and especially the involvement of leading players in the integrated pilot projects, already the subject of a census and part of the participatory process; - the consolidation of the effectiveness and relevance of the regulatory apparatus following the preliminary sharing and checking of the apparatus with the relevant institutions (departments of the Province and Communal administrations); - lastly, strengthening the proactive role of local society and reinforcing its capacity for decision making, self government and reproduction. This strengthening of the role of local society through participatory democracy means that the Province and the communal administrations are required to introduce stable experimental forms and institutions for the participatory process in the subsequent stages of managing and implementing the Plan.

#### Notes

1. Translator's note: faced with the impossibility of satisfactorily translating the Italian word *territorio*, we have introduced the neologism 'territory' (and 'territorial', etc.). Used not only in the strictly military or geographical sense, *territorio* usually means the local (administrative) area and is a handy term in Italian for various concepts (land, ground, local administrative area, region, humanised landscape, environment, etc.). It takes on a specific meaning, however, in its use by the Italian Territorialist School: the complex local material, cultural, historical and relational world people live in.

2. Approved in December 2003, the Prato TCP was drafted by Alberto Magnaghi

(appointed planner); Michela Brachi, David Fanfani, Anna Marson, Roberto Vezzosi (planning group); Luca Gentili (SIT planner); and the consultants Pier Paolo Binazzi (geology), Città Futura SCRL (agronomy), Andrea De Bernardi (infrastructures), Mauro Giusti (participation), Daniela Poli (territorialisation), Sergio Malcevski (ecological network).

3. The Territorialist School consists of the co-ordination of various Italian university workshops dedicated to the themes of local self-sustainable development (with MPI, MIUR and CNR research funds). In addition to individual publications, the progress of the research has been documented by a number of collective works that I have edited: *Il territorio dell'abitare*, Angeli, Milan, 1990; *Per una trasformazione ecologica degli insediamenti*, Angeli, Milan, 1992; *Il territorio degli abitanti*, Dunod, Milan, 1988; *Rappresentare i luoghi: metodi e tecniche*, Alinea, Florence, 2001; *La rappresentazione identitaria del territorio: atlanti, codici, figure, paradigmi per il progetto locale*, Alinea, Florence, 2004.

4. The Tuscan Regional Development Plan 2001-2005.

5. Bill for Regional Law no. 346, *Regulations for governing the territory* (May 2004), still before the Regional Council.

6. President: Daniele Mannocci; head of the TCP and protected areas: Nadia Baronti; PA co-ordinator: Daniele Mazzotta.

7. 1951: The Florence inter-communal planning scheme; 1964: The Florence inter-communal plan; 1978: The Florence inter-communal plan; 1990: The structural scheme for the Florence-Prato-Pistoia metropolitan area; 2001: The Prato TCP in the

context of regional policies for the metropolitan area.

8. A comparison of regional figures reveals that the Province of Prato has a greater built land use than the other provinces: 7.4% of total area is urbanised (3.1% for the Province of Florence); 3.6% of land is used for industrial purposes (1% for the Province of Florence); 11% of artificial areas out of the total province (Florence 4.8%; Pistoia 5.8%).

9. In the new bill for the regional law the TCP's value as a Landscape Plan, established by R.L. 5/95, is strengthened by the adoption of the contents of art. 143 on landscape planning (from the *Code for the Heritage and the Landscape Decree* 41/2004), in the statutory part of the plans.

10. On the concept of local self-sustainable development see A. Magnaghi, *Il progetto locale*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin, 2000.

11. The Province of Prato adopted a General Development Plan (2002) for the socio-economic and institutional prospects of the province, drafted by the Consorzio Universitario Pratese (PIN).

12. These are areas for which indicators and standards are established for environmental, building, urban and landscape aspects.

13. The BIAS project, already implemented while the plan was being drafted, was further developed through the creation of a local development agency and with the launch of an Integrated Local Development Project by the Tuscan Region.

14. The first concrete steps in the project are the recovery at Vernio of the ex Meucci area, the riverfront and a cycling track in the Prato river park.