

CASE STUDY

Boscoincittà



Boscoincittà

"We were the first to plan an Italian urban forest at a time in which green infrastructure was a novel concept"

Silvio Anderloni,
Director of Centro Forestazione Urbana - Italia Nostra



PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Website	www.boscoincitta.it
Social channels	f @boscoincittacfu y CFU Italia Nostra
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Country	Italy
Main sector	Public-private
Uforest thematic discipline	Urban landscape planning
Stage of development	Implementation



By transferring know-how talent to the green sector.



By promoting socially-inclusive, 24-hour access to a vast, green-and-blue urban park, and by safeguarding cultural heritage.



By salvaging derelict areas, blocking land consumption, and efficiently using cultural resources.



By increasing canopy cover, and by fostering beekeeping.





START-UP

Built in 1974, Boscoincittà is a public park in Western Milan that transformed semi-derelict areas into a lush green-and-blue lung for the city. Promoted by **Italia Nostra**, an association that protects cultural and environmental heritage, **Boscoincittà was the first planned urban forest in Italy**, a revolutionary idea at the time.

BOSCOINCITTÀ'S GOAL:

To create and maintain a 120-hectare green-and-blue forest as an urban park.



INITIATIVE MODEL

MAIN ACTIVITIES:

What does Boscoincittà do?

It offers eco-and-social-oriented resources, such as:

- Woods, meadows, streams, wetlands, urban forests, ponds, irrigation channels, an orchard and a water garden.
- An apiary and citizen vegetable gardens.
- Signaled running, walking and discovery trails.
- Sports and fitness activities (e.g. walking groups, yoga, etc.).
- Horticulture workshops and environmental education activities.
- Volunteer activities for young and old people, schools, socially-disadvantaged groups, individuals or collectives (e.g., cleaning, planting, monitoring, seed collection, emergency watering, etc.).
- A green-themed library (e.g. environmental education, landscape, parks, gardens, urban planning, historical local photographs, etc.).
- Picnic and party areas.
- Conference room for meeting between the Centro Forestazione Urbana - CFU (Centre for Urban Forestation) and organised groups, as well as for children activities and seminars for students and professionals.
- Playgrounds.
- 24-beds guesthouse accommodation for scouts and school groups.
- Parking areas for special groups (e.g., citizens with disabilities and/or reduced mobility, pensioners, etc.).
- Volunteer security guards to protect the park, which is open 24 hours a day.

BENEFICIARIES:

Who benefits from Boscoincittà's activities?

- 1. 5 million residents** who can enjoy naturally and culturally diverse green areas for leisure, sports, volunteer work, internships, or for shelter from the urban heat island effect.
- 2. Socially disadvantaged groups** who can find rehabilitation opportunities and professional training.
- 3. Children and teenagers** who learn about the environment during or outside school hours, and are engaged in taking care of the park.
- 4. Private companies** who engage their staff in volunteering activities.
- 5. Foreign visitors** who enjoy the park as a tourist attraction and a climate shelter from the urban heat island effect.
- 6. South-Western Milanese farmers** who benefit from increased insect biodiversity.
- 7. University researchers** who conduct experiments and studies.
- 8. The green workforce** who develops knowledge and competence in urban forest design and management.

PROMOTION:

What is Boscoincittà's promotion strategy?

Boscoincittà's communication strategy and channels:

- Online newsletter.
- Social media.
- Media (local newspaper).
- Boscoincittà website.
- Word-of-mouth.

GOVERNANCE:

How does Boscoincittà implement its activities?

The project is led by the association CFU-Italia Nostra as follows:

- **In-house staff:**
 - Management and administration.
 - Logistics and maintenance.
 - Agroforestry, urban gardens and technical expertise.
 - Activities, services and volunteering.
- **External staff:** engineers, geologists, botanists, zoologists, architects, and accountants.

Finally, the Milan City Council is the land owner of the park and gives CFU-Italia Nostra a land use license.

FINANCES:

What are Boscoincittà's main resources?

To cover management, maintenance and activities costs there is mixed funding:

- **Public funding** (75%) from the Municipality of Milan.
- **Private funding** (25%) from fundraising activities, donations, grants, and fees (e.g., accommodation, conference rooms, party areas, etc.).

POLICY AND STANDARDS LEADING THE INITIATIVE:

Boscoincittà is included in the 'Piani di Cintura Urbana (PCU)' number 1, one of the 5 urban belt plans that ensure environmental protection and redesign derelict areas.



UNIQUENESS

What makes Boscoincittà a one-of-a-kind project?

- Its **multidisciplinary approach** to plan and manage forests as urban parks.
- It makes Western Milan the greenest part of the city.
- Managing the site through an NGO, which has contribution costs two or three times lower than if it were done through a Municipal contract.
- It takes care and makes use of 'Cascina San Romano,' a 15th Century farmhouse, the only building in the park.
- The apiary has become a reference for urban apiculture.
- It was **revolutionary for the seventies:**
 - It was the first planned urban forest in Italy.
 - It introduced the concept of green infrastructure for plains and cities.
 - The citizen participatory model as a goal, not just a means, marked the path for Italian environmental associations.
 - It contributed to the process of changing the negative, Christian-based perceptions about forests (i.e., frightening, home of spirits and demons, wolf-territory), and building acceptance towards them.



By **2025**, Boscoincittà aims at further connecting other green areas of Milan: Monte Stella, Cascina Linterno, San Siro racetrack, and Piazza d'Armi. It also seeks to create temporary accommodation for individuals inside the ancient farmhouse Cascina San Romano.

What does Boscoincittà need to be successful?

- Increased budget to expand the team.
- Municipal fixed financial resources.
- Citizen support and volunteering.

What are today's main challenges?

- Preventing illicit uses of the woods (e.g., prostitution and drug use).
- Handling pressure from the construction industry and developers.
- Integrating the historical agricultural landscape in new afforestation projects.



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