

# MInD\_PROJECT POSTER

## INTRODUCTION

### - Project Title:

**MInD\_** Milan Innovation District

*From industrial local areas towards innovation districts: implementing, attracting and developing a new territorial structure for new economy and production in Milan region*  
Team 4

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION BY THE PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC TUTOR



*Figure 1 - Adda Valley*

Students enrolled in this academic year at the Alta Scuola Politecnica are currently working on a special project called MIND (From industrial local areas towards innovation districts: implementing, attracting and developing a new territorial structure for new economy and production in Milan region). The project will make students work on the particular structure of the local industrial areas on the territory of the Adda valley in the eastern section of Milan region, proposing a way to change their rigid territorial structure into a more flexible combination of clusters in form of hot spots able to attract the contemporary industrial and manufacturing economy, aiming at creating innovation districts. Students should propose an innovative territorial model, understanding how innovation districts are able to change the territorial and economic organization, to catch the productive attitude of the region and to transform the rigidity of the existing districts, proposing a model able to create new supply chain, new smarter information, less impact on the environment reducing travels, new uses and new relations with the existing urban areas, and new visibility fostering the excellence of the economy and the excellence of the territories.

Students will propose a new territorial and management model for a regional territory able to consider it as a hot spot, combining a smart territorial management model (including distribution of activities, connection with infrastructures, proximity to services, efficient management of waste, goods, sources, connection among local institutions and between different levels' authorities) with a strong, contemporary model of sharing information

(about the attractiveness of the organized territory), finding financial sources (with a new role for co-op banks), opening to international markets through shared logistic platform and feeding employees clusters involving professional education schools. The result should be a strategic integrated plan able to reinvent a production system basing it on vocation, innovation, urbanity and where proximity and connections are everything.

Students should foster their ability in reading a territorial geography, understanding how manufacturing work according to the uses and the vocation a territory should show, learning how institutional territorial management work and above all understanding the degree of connection between industries, local communities, regional and national transport networks, environment and international markets.

### **Team description by skill: role of each member in the team**

The MInD group is composed of six students all coming from the same Master Degree Programme in Architecture. Much of the work has been developed in workgroup sessions and has always been equal and chosen through personal research interests more than specific competences. Together the group went on a fieldtrip to Stockholm and visited the project site.

Through the process of developing the project, work was divided among members of the group. After individual analysis, all members would discuss results and find the relevant conclusions together. Specific tasks also shifted between members to allow for different perspectives and opinions to emerge.

### **ABSTRACT**

MInD is a proposal for the development of a new territorial and management model. Set in the regional territory around Cassano d'Adda, the project builds on the current state of industrial production and its traditional unevolved settlements, organised in rigid and separated clusters, by proposing a new model based on a network of hotspots enhancing innovation through both material and immaterial production.

The brief of the project is derived from a main acknowledgement regarding the way the territory has been developing along with the growth of the industrial settlements in recent years. We are witnessing the shift from an old, traditional way of conceiving the territory to a smarter new one – from seeing the territory as the ensemble of cities and of the reciprocal relations among them, to an innovative way of understanding it as a whole region.

This process is driven by the concept of innovation as an engine to facilitate the transformation of the territory. The circumstances in which innovation has a key-role in the spatial definition of a region are readable in different contexts (as further explained by a

selection of case studies) and therefore give the present work the role of a model—something applicable, replicable and measurable in several, different contexts.

Along with this just mentioned contexts, this project builds on a specific site: the region of the Metropolitan City of Milan, especially its eastern part, and specifically the town of Cassano d'Adda.

With this in mind, a model is proposed based on three different topics (players - attitude - activities), consisting of a toolbox of guidelines useful to test the ability of a site to host innovative transformations. Its application to the Cassano d'Adda regional context evaluates if the guidelines are applicable to a specific context and the extent to which the region is able to generate interactions among the three aforementioned elements. The outcomes of the application of the model show that the region is suitable for this kind of urban transformation.

As the region of Cassano d'Adda shows potential to become part of a new territorial structure we investigated and proposed solutions regarding the three topics of urbanism, energy and society applied to a specific site within the region able to act as a catalyst for future development.



*Figure 2 - Site visit to the former linen factory, Cassano d'Adda*





*Figure 3 - An industrial heritage, Cassano d'Adda*





*Figure 4 – Adda River, Cassano d'Adda*

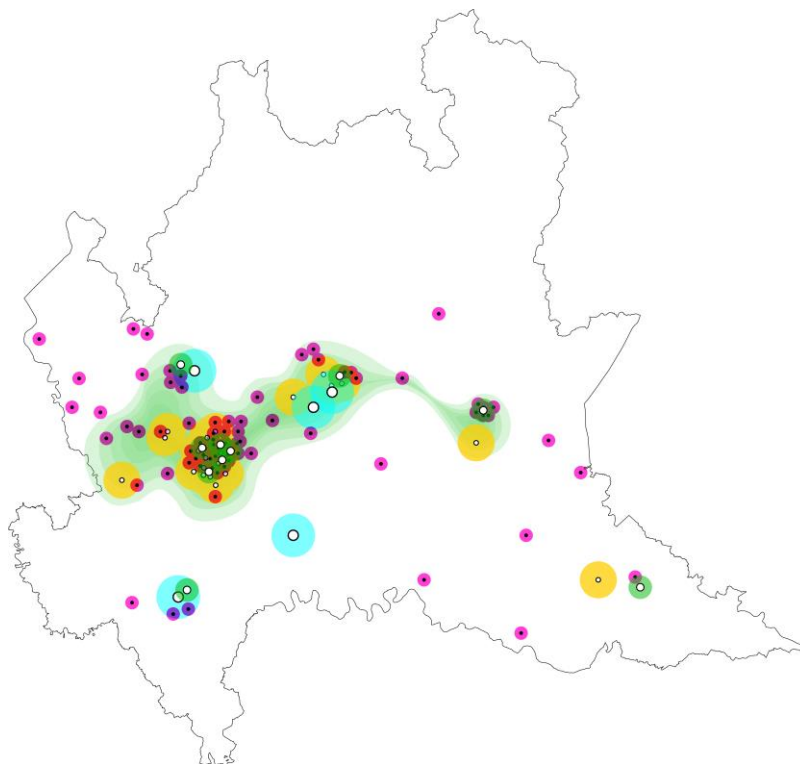
## **SUBPROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM**

In order to understand the attitude of the place, a territorial analysis has been conducted at a regional scale. Traditionally, Lombardy Region can be defined as a polycentric metropolis with Milan as the main urban core and the smaller centres as its polarities. The results of the mapping about the activities and the vocation of the area show that the area is characterised by industries developed along the infrastructural lines. These industries are still separated, small and barely connected within the region, part of a rigid and fragmented system in which Cassano d'Adda occupies a central position. Paradoxically, these industries are better inserted in an international network where they are known for the excellence of their production. The geography of production, conducted in order to deeply understand the vocation of the city and the typologies of activities, reveals that the composition of production companies.



*Figure 5 – Traditional way to interpret the territory: main urban cores and smaller centres as polarities*



*Figure 6 – How innovation shapes the regional territory of Lombardy*



*Figure 7 – Agricultural tradition and production vocation*



*Figure 8 – Industrial areas are still separated, small, and part of a rigid and fragmented system*



This process has been crucial in order to develop a proper stakeholder analysis. In particular, a communication plan, consisting of four parts (exploring, setting, acting, valuing) has been developed. The first parts, that concerns the initial issues of the stakeholder analysis, are divided in listing the players potentially involved in the process and preparing a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Then, interlocutor's power of influence and attitude analysis have been applied in order to understand the target, the needs and influence of the different actors relevant to the project.

## **EXPLORING THE OPPORTUNITIES**

The concept of innovation and the theory behind innovation district models were analysed. Thereafter a selection of successful innovation districts such as Boston Seaport District, Viikki District in Finland and Brainport in the Netherlands were studied in detail to explore the state of the art. Moreover, a field trip to Stockholm County Council and the Stockholm Royal Seaport has been organized. With the lessons learnt from these researches, three major fields were identified:

Urbanism: a vision in the short, medium and long term period along economic, physical and social dimensions, can become the key to shift the focus of the project from the cities scale to the regional scale creating new synergies outside the boundaries of the city.

Energy: it is important to consider sustainability as a driving force for its development. The use of high technology tools and materials and smart solutions concerning the energetic aspects should have a huge relevance to the project.

Society: it is clear the importance of building a network of relations and investments that involve the community and the interested stakeholders into the process. The network of relations should be enhanced by the special configuration of the site, gathering economic clusters, leading local and regional institutions and companies.

The MInD project takes the key lessons learnt from these models and will adapt it through an application in the Italian context.

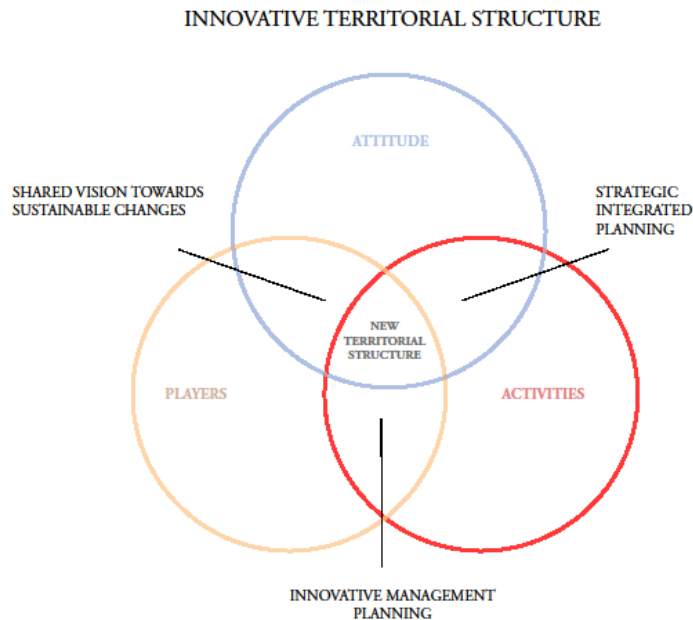


*Figure 9 – Visit to Stockholm County Council*



*Figure 10 – Stockholm Royal Seaport*

## GENERATING A SOLUTION



*Figure 11 – Framework to test the potential for a new territorial structure*

For the proposed model, we defined three main topics, attitude, players and activities, that formed the basis for the development of our model. Its structure is made of consequential steps. Firstly, we defined general guidelines, related to the three main topics, that we took from literature and the case studies previously described. After that, we applied these general guidelines to the specific territory. Then we analysed the application and placed them into the diagram: the position the applied guidelines have shows how many topics overlap in the specific case. The third step is measuring the degree of innovation and interaction: the more the applied guidelines tend towards the centre, the more the region is able to host a new territorial structure.

In the case of the Adda Valley, the results show a satisfactory outcome, because the tested area has a high potential to host innovation due to the presence of the necessary players, activities and the strong attitude of the region as well as the possibility for cooperation among them.

As it has been determined that the region has the capacity to host a new territorial structure, the development of an innovation district is proposed for the Linificio site that will act as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation within the region.

The site specific strategy follows the key perspectives of an innovation district model as developed from our research and case study analysis (energy, urbanism and society). We



therefore propose: innovation from the local construction industry and technology companies should be applied to the new urban development and the reuse of former industrial buildings of the site, acting as a testing ground for new sustainable, light, green and energy saving building techniques. In this way, the Linificio will act as a showcase of the innovative attitude and character of the region. A focus on innovative energy production must be promoted where the Adda River plays a central role. In this way, the area can attract key investments and promote a sustainable lifestyle through its status as a self-sufficient district in terms of clean energy production and the subsequent economic advantages. Lastly we believe that a leading company needs to be attracted to the site to use its influence to act as a catalyst for collaboration among smaller existing companies. This can be achieved by promoting the competitive advantage in energy production and innovation in the built environment found on the site.

As the initial steps have been completed through this project, we would like to apply this knowledge to bring actors together. We therefore propose an event to act as a platform to present our findings of the potential of the region to the stakeholders we identified. Once the relevant actors have been brought together, a vision needs to be created with input from all stakeholders to develop a shared strategy for future development and collaboration.

## **MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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## **TAGS**

urban transformation, new territorial structure, regional development, innovation districts