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Master Thesis

Toward a Model for Urban Agriculture Centers

An International and a Turin–Tokyo Comparison



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ABSTRACT

Urban agriculture has gained increasing traction in recent decades, yet the more specific notion of the urban agriculture center has not. The term surfaces only occasionally and unsystematically across design, professional practice, and policy, and it has never been consolidated into a shared definition or supported by a transferable model for its composition or its creation. This thesis addresses that gap through comparative case study research, building two original and complementary models for the urban agriculture center. The inquiry is organized around three research questions that move from concept to structure and from structure to origin. The first asks what an urban agriculture center is, and defines it as an urban agriculture initiative that is multifunctional, convergent, and irradiating: one that holds together all the dimensions of urban agriculture, draws actors, knowledge, and practices into exchange, and generates new initiatives beyond its own site. The second asks how a center is composed. Through an international comparison of five cases (Seni Tani, Le Début des Haricots, Canberra City Farm, City Shamba, and Common Good City Farm), read against an analytical framework built on the dimensions of urban agriculture identified by the European Forum on Urban Agriculture, the research derives the composition model: a two-tier structure of fixed features, which set the compositional minimum, and flexible features, which describe the legitimate space of variation around it. The third asks how a center begins. Through an in-depth comparison of Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture in Tokyo, examined along eight initiation dimensions, the research derives the initiation model, which translates the convergences between the two cases into guidelines for the founding stage and reads their divergences, trigger and initiation logic, as the context-dependent variables every founding actor must diagnose. Conceived as transferable and scalable references rather than statistical norms, the two models describe the center as both an object and a process. Together they offer scholars a grounded definition and give designers, planners, and promoters a structured starting point for establishing one.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Research problem

Urban agriculture has gained increasing traction in academic and professional discourse over recent decades. The more specific concept of the urban agriculture center, however, has not: it remains without a recognized definition or an established theoretical framework. Two parallel lines of preliminary research support this claim. One asked whether previous studies had attempted to construct a model for an urban agriculture center through the comparative analysis of international case studies; the other tracked how the terminology "urban agriculture center" and its synonyms had been used across academic and professional production. Together, the two lines clarify what already exists and what is missing.

For the first line, the search combined the keywords "urban," "agriculture" or "farming," and "case studies," "practices," "initiatives," or "projects," and was further restricted to cross-country comparisons. Eleven studies met these criteria (Ajisope, 2023; Akter & Gupta, 2022; Erwin, 2022; Fontanot, 2020; Kirby et al., 2021; Madaleno, 2002; Pölling et al., 2017; Prové et al., 2016; Satterlee, 2015; Torquati et al., 2018; Wiranata, 2025). What emerges from them is consistent. None of the eleven compares specific, named urban agriculture initiatives examined as individual cases. The unit of analysis varies: a city or a small set of cities in several studies (Akter & Gupta, 2022; Erwin, 2022; Fontanot, 2020; Madaleno, 2002; Satterlee, 2015), the national context in others (Ajisope, 2023; Wiranata, 2025), and in the rest an abstract typology of urban agriculture practice (Kirby et al., 2021; Pölling et al., 2017; Prové et al., 2016; Torquati et al., 2018). Where individual projects appear, they appear only as illustrative examples. No study within this literature takes the urban agriculture center as its object, and none derives a replicable model from the comparison.

The second line of inquiry turned to the terminology itself, searching the keywords "urban," "agriculture" or "farming," and "center," "hub," "platform," or "network." The aim was simple: to find out whether the urban agriculture center exists as a recognized object of study, what it looks like in the literature, and whether any model has been proposed. The results sort into four groups, and none of them, on closer inspection, corresponds to the urban agriculture center as this thesis

sets out to define it.

The most frequent results come from academic research, in particular graduate thesis in architecture proposing an urban agriculture center as a site-specific design intervention (Awal, 2023; Imantaka, 2020; Maharjan, 2024; Mossler, 2008; Persson, 2025; Smith, 2010). Each thesis imagines the center as a physical space combining food production, education, research, and community engagement in response to a particular local condition. Two of these works (Awal, 2023; Maharjan, 2024) go further and include case-study comparison, examining local, regional, and international examples; their comparison, however, restricts itself to technical design parameters (structure, materials, lighting, water, renewable energy, farming, and waste management) and serves a design proposal rather than a model. Two further studies move closer to conceptual modeling. O'Hara (2017) proposes the Urban Food Hub as a multifunctional community infrastructure, but builds the model on a single institutional case, the University of the District of Columbia, with no international comparison. Manikas et al. (2019) develops a community-based agro-food hub model through theoretical synthesis and literature review rather than empirical cross-case analysis. Both works name their object the food hub, not the urban agriculture center, and neither draws its model from a systematic international comparison.

The same terminology also appears in real-world practice, in initiatives that self-identify as urban agriculture centers, hubs, platforms, or networks. Among them are municipal facilities (the Kagoshima City Urban Agriculture Center, the Robert J. Anderson Urban Agriculture Center hosting Toledo GROWs), community-based organizations (the Hillview Urban Agriculture Center, the Urban Agriculture Consortium), policy and research-support structures (the Tokyo Urban Farmland Utilization Support Center, the Peri-Urban Agriculture Network), advocacy networks (the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative's Urban Agriculture Network, the Los Angeles Climate Reality Project's Urban Agriculture Network), and online platforms (Urban Agro EU). The label fits, in each case, only partially. None of these initiatives embodies the multifunctional dimension that later chapters identify as constitutive of the urban agriculture center proposed here. Each emphasizes one strand of urban agriculture (food security, community gardening, advocacy, policy, information sharing) without integrating the socio-cultural, environmental, food, health and wellbeing, and economic functions that define a center in the multifunctional sense.

Closely related are the university research centers and academic departments that adopt the same vocabulary: the Center for Urban Agriculture and Gardening Education at the University of the District of Columbia, the QCU Center for Urban Agriculture and Innovation at Quezon City University, and the Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture at Durham College. These are valuable institutions, but their identity is that of an academic unit dedicated to research, teaching, and outreach. They are not centers in the sense of multifunctional urban agriculture spaces that bring together production, education, community engagement, environmental services, and economic activity within a single integrated initiative.

A few sources, finally, have tried to define the term directly. A professional design platform offers a working description of urban agriculture centers as hubs combining food production with educational and ecological functions (*Rethinking The Future*, n.d.). Within food-system scholarship, Horst et al. (2011) and Morley et al. (2008) push the definition of the food hub beyond its conventional role as a supply-chain intermediary, framing it instead as a socially embedded organization that supports community development and alternative food economies. These contributions are useful, but they address the food hub rather than the urban agriculture center, and none builds its definition on the systematic comparison of international cases. Across web-based and academic sources alike, no official or universally accepted definition of the urban agriculture center is in circulation, and the multifunctional integration of the concept has not yet been worked out.

Across the two lines of preliminary research, then, the same picture emerges: the concept recurs but has never been consolidated. The urban agriculture center turns up in design, in practice, and in policy without ever being defined through the systematic international comparison of named case studies. As a design proposal, it remains site-specific; as a conceptual model, it rests on a single case or on theoretical synthesis; in practice, the name covers initiatives that do not embody its multifunctional dimension; and the available definitions address the food hub rather than the center. The present research is positioned at the intersection of these absences, and proposes a model for the urban agriculture center built on the systematic comparison of international case studies.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

The gap identified in the preceding section, namely the absence of a systematic, empirically grounded definition of the urban agriculture center and of a transferable model for its composition and creation, determines the aim of the present research. The aim of this thesis is to construct a model of the urban agriculture center: a conceptual and operational framework that describes what such a center is, how it is composed, and under what conditions it originates. The model is not conceived as a prescriptive template but as a structured and transferable reference that can be adapted to different urban contexts while remaining grounded in the evidence drawn from existing, operating initiatives.

To pursue this aim, the research is organized around three research questions, each of which addresses a distinct and necessary dimension of the problem.

The first research question asks: *What is an urban agriculture center?* As the review of the literature in the preceding section has shown, the term circulates across architectural, professional, and policy discourse without converging on a shared definition. Before a model can be constructed, the concept itself must be clarified. This question is therefore foundational: it precedes and conditions the other two, and it is addressed through the cross-study of existing definitions of urban agriculture combined with the analysis of what distinguishes a center as a convergent spatial and programmatic unit from other forms of urban agriculture organization. The answer to this first question constitutes the conceptual basis on which the rest of the research rests.

The second research question asks: *How is an urban agriculture center model composed?* This question concerns the internal structure of the center, that is, the features, dimensions, and functions that, taken together, define what an urban agriculture center is and does. To answer it, the research conducts an international comparison of five case studies selected according to two complementary criteria: completeness across the dimensions of urban agriculture, which identifies each case as a strong and well-rounded example of the concept under investigation, and maximum variation, whereby each case exhibits a distinct emphasis on one of those dimensions. These cases are examined through an analytical framework built on the dimensions of urban agriculture identified by the European Forum on Urban Agriculture (EFUA)¹ supplemented by

¹ EFUA is a project funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program, aimed at strengthening networking, knowledge exchange, and policy support for urban agriculture across Europe.

features identified directly from the cases themselves. From this comparison, the research derives the composition model for an urban agriculture center: a set of fixed and flexible features. The international scope of the comparison is essential to this aim, as it allows the identification of recurring structural elements across different urban and policy environments, thereby supporting the transferability of the model.

The third research question asks: *How does an urban agriculture center start?* If the second question addresses the center as an existing, operating entity, this third question addresses its genesis, that is, the conditions, actors, decisions, and processes through which a center comes into being. This dimension is explored through an in-depth comparison of two cases: Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture² in Tokyo. These two cases are examined not only through the same analytical framework applied to the international comparison but also through a detailed analysis of their respective urban policy environments and initiation processes. The comparison yields what this thesis terms the initiation model: a structured account of the conditions and sequence through which an urban agriculture center is established, designed to complement the composition model and extend its applicability from description to action.

Taken together, the three research questions define a progressive analytical movement: from concept to structure, and from structure to origin. The two comparative studies, one international and one focused on Turin and Tokyo, are not parallel investigations but complementary instruments, each designed to answer a different dimension of the same overarching aim. The outcome of the research is thus twofold: a composition model, which describes what an urban agriculture center is and how it is organized, and an initiation model, which describes how one begins. Both models are conceived as scalable and transferable, applicable beyond the specific cases from which they are derived. The significance of this aim lies in both what it clarifies and what it makes usable. By defining the urban agriculture center through systematic international comparison, the research gives a contested term a grounded and shared meaning where the literature has so far offered only scattered usage. A practical contribution follows from the operational character of the two models. The composition model states what a center must contain and where its configuration may legitimately vary, which gives designers a structured

² The name "Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture" has not yet been formally defined and remains under development.

reference rather than a fixed template; the initiation model extends this from description to action, setting out the conditions and sequence that an actor seeking to establish a center can follow. This twofold use defines the intended readership as well: a scholarly audience concerned with the conceptual definition of the center, and the designers, planners, and promoters who initiate and shape such centers in practice.

1.3 Methodology

The research questions set out in the preceding section determine the method adopted throughout the thesis. They ask what an urban agriculture center is, how it is composed, and how it begins: questions of definition, structure, and process that concern a contemporary phenomenon observed in its real-life context rather than under controlled conditions. The case study is adopted because it best fits this aim. It is the strategy most suited to "how" and "what" questions about a complex and relatively novel phenomenon over which the investigator has no control, and it draws on the variety of evidence (project documents, records, and direct observation) needed to examine operating initiatives as bounded, real-world entities (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2003). The choice also brings recognized limitations: case study evidence is difficult to structure and exhaust, and its findings cannot be generalized in a statistical sense (Flyvbjerg, 2006). These limitations are countered here by drawing on multiple sources of evidence for each case, so that the findings rest on converging data rather than on a single source (Yin, 2003).

Because the aim is not to describe a single initiative but to derive a transferable model, the research uses a multiple-case design. The logic of such a design is replication, not sampling: each case is treated as a separate study, comparable to a distinct experiment, and the cases are chosen so that they either confirm a pattern across different settings or diverge for predictable reasons (Yin, 2003). The results are therefore not extrapolated to a population of urban agriculture centers in the way a statistical sample would be. Instead, they are directed toward the construction of a model: the cases serve as the empirical base from which recurring features and conditions are identified, and the model that emerges from this process is what can be transferred and applied beyond the specific cases that produced it (Yin, 2003). This form of generalization, from cases to a framework rather than from a sample to a population, is what makes it meaningful to draw transferable conclusions from a small, strategically selected set of initiatives.

The method is applied in two distinct comparative studies, each answering a different research question. The first is an international comparison of five cases, which addresses how a center is composed. The five cases are examined through a single analytical framework, and the comparison records how often each feature recurs across them, separating the features shared by all or most cases from those that appear in only some. From this recurrence the research derives the composition model, expressed as a set of fixed features, recurrent across the cases and therefore structurally constitutive, and flexible features, which vary from one case to another. The second study is an in-depth comparison of two cases, Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, which addresses how a center begins. The same comparative procedure is applied to the conditions, actors, and decisions behind each case; the comparison identifies the points where the two initiation processes converge and translates them into the initiation model.

The selection of the case study is based for what they can reveal rather than for how representative they are, since the value of a case study depends on the strategic choice of cases rather than on their number (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Two criteria govern the five international cases. The first is completeness across the dimensions of urban agriculture, which ensures that each case is a strong and well-rounded instance of the concept under study. The second is maximum variation: the cases differ markedly from one another, each emphasizing a distinct dimension, so that together they capture the range of forms the phenomenon can take (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006). The two in-depth cases are chosen as contrasting instances set in markedly different urban and institutional contexts, one Italian and one Japanese, because these differences make it possible to observe how the conditions of a center's genesis vary from one setting to another. The choice of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture as the Japanese case is not incidental. It rests on an established collaboration between the Politecnico di Torino and the University of Tokyo, which provided both the access and the grounding that the in-depth comparison required. Through the joint project UNI-NUA³ and an associated workshop, the two institutions had already examined the conservation of urban farmland in Nishi-Tokyo City and the design of peri-urban ecodistricts in the Tokyo suburbs (Cassatella & Murayama, 2018), so

³ UNI-NUA, Implementing the United Nations' New Urban Agenda. Universities in Action, was a joint research program developed by Politecnico di Torino and The University of Tokyo. Launched in 2017 with the support of Compagnia di San Paolo, it examined the strategic role of universities in developing complex and resilient territorial policies in line with the United Nations' New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016.

the territory and its planning questions belonged to a shared research line well before the present study. This prior work makes the Nishi-Tokyo Center a substantively grounded rather than an arbitrary selection, and the cooperation opened direct access to primary evidence, including interviews with the project team. The Japanese case is therefore chosen not only for the contrast it offers but for the documentary and institutional foundation on which it could be examined.

In both studies the model is built in the same way. Each case is first understood on its own terms, as a self-contained whole; the comparison across cases then isolates the recurring patterns, and the framework is refined against the evidence until it accounts for the cases consistently (Eisenhardt, 1989). The two models that result, one of composition and one of initiation, are analytic generalizations: structured, transferable references derived from the cases but not confined to them.

A note on scope is needed before the analysis begins. The object of study is the urban agriculture center understood as a multifunctional, convergent, and irradiating initiative, examined through named, operating cases rather than through cities, national contexts, or abstract typologies. From this object two delimitations follow. The composition model is derived from urban initiatives governed on a not-for-profit or social-enterprise basis, which places purely commercial operations outside its scope, and each case examined maintains a documented public presence that makes analysis from primary material possible. Beyond that, the initiation model carries a further boundary: it accounts for the genesis of a center under conditions of public or hybrid-public sponsorship, and does not extend to centers created through entirely private initiative. Neither model claims statistical representativeness. Both are analytic generalizations, offered as transferable references rather than as descriptions of how frequent or typical such centers are.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into five chapters, each of which addresses a distinct and necessary stage of the research. The sequence is cumulative: each chapter builds on the conclusions of the preceding one, moving from conceptual definition to comparative analysis and, finally, to the synthesis of the two models.

The present chapter, Chapter 1, frames the research. It has established the theoretical gap that

motivates the study — the absence of a systematic, empirically grounded definition of the urban agriculture center and of any transferable model for its composition or creation — and has stated the aim and the three research questions that structure the inquiry. The remaining section of this chapter presents the methodology adopted to answer those questions, explaining why a multiple-case study design was chosen and how the two comparative studies relate to one another.

Chapter 2 develops the conceptual foundation on which the later stages of the research rests. It opens by addressing the first and most fundamental research question, the meaning of the term “urban agriculture center” beginning from one level below: what is urban agriculture itself. Because the field is characterized by a plurality of competing definitions, a cross-study of existing definitions is conducted in order to identify the elements that recur across them and to establish the working definition adopted throughout the thesis. The chapter then turns to the urban policy environment in which urban agriculture operates, tracing the development of policy frameworks that have shaped how the practice is institutionalized in cities. Building on this groundwork, the chapter closes by introducing the concept of the urban agriculture center. This final section bridges the conceptual discussion of Chapter 2 with the comparative work of the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3 addresses the second research question on how an urban agriculture center model is composed, through an international comparison of five case studies. The chapter opens by presenting the selection of the five cases and demonstrating how they satisfy the two complementary criteria of completeness and maximum variation. It then introduces the analytical framework used to examine them, built on the dimensions of urban agriculture identified by EFUA and supplemented by features identified directly from the cases. The comparison is then conducted and discussed. From its results, the chapter derives the composition model: a structured account of the fixed and flexible features that define how an urban agriculture center is organized. The international scope of the comparison is essential to this step, as it allows recurring structural elements to be identified across different urban and policy environments, lending the model its transferable character.

Chapter 4 addresses the third research question on how an urban agriculture center starts through an in-depth comparison of two cases: Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture in Tokyo. The chapter applies the same analytical framework used

in Chapter 3 to examine both cases across all dimensions, then deepens the analysis through a comparison of the urban policy frameworks of the two cities and of the initiation processes through which each center came into being. From this dual comparison, the chapter derives the initiation model: a structured account of the conditions, actors, and sequence through which an urban agriculture center is established. The initiation model complements the composition model by extending the framework from description to action, and it is in this chapter that the policy dimension of the research is most fully developed.

Chapter 5 brings the two models together and considers their broader applicability. It summarizes the composition and initiation models jointly, examining how they relate to and reinforce one another. It then assesses the transferability and scalability of the models. The chapter closes by reflecting on the limits of the research and on directions for future work.

1.5 Outputs of the Research

The research questions set out in section 1.2, and the multiple-case methodology adopted to answer them, converge toward two distinct but complementary outputs: a composition model and an initiation model for the urban agriculture center. Each model corresponds to a different dimension of the inquiry and is derived from a different comparative study, yet the two are conceived as parts of a single, unified framework. Together, they constitute the expected results of the present research.

The first expected result is the composition model. This model describes what an urban agriculture center is and how it is internally organized. The distinction between fixed and flexible features is central to the model's architecture. Fixed features are those identified as shared across the five international cases examined in Chapter 3; their recurrence across markedly different settings is what supports treating them as structural. Flexible features are those that appear in only one or two of the five cases; their low recurrence is not treated as evidence of irrelevance but, rather, as an indication of contextual variability. To confirm that they qualify as genuinely flexible rather than idiosyncratic to a single context, each such feature was subjected to a transferability check before being included in the model. The composition model is not a typology that classifies centers into categories, nor a prescriptive template that specifies how a center must be designed.

It is, rather, an analytic generalization: a structured and transferable reference that describes the space of possible configurations while identifying the elements that any center satisfying the definition must exhibit.

The second expected result is the initiation model. This model addresses a different and equally necessary dimension of the urban agriculture center: not what it is when operating, but how it comes into being. The initiation model describes the conditions, actors, decisions, and sequence through which a center is established, derived from the in-depth comparison of two cases (conducted in Chapter 4): Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture in Tokyo. The initiation model translates the convergences between the two case studies into a structured account that complements the composition model and extends the framework from description to action.

Taken together, the two models are designed to satisfy two qualities that the aim of the research requires. The first is transferability: both models are built from empirical evidence drawn from real, operating initiatives examined in their full complexity, and the method through which they are derived — identifying recurring patterns across cases set in different environments — is precisely what allows them to function as references applicable beyond the specific cases from which they emerged. A model is transferable to the extent that its constituent features are recognizable and meaningful in contexts other than those studied; the international scope of the case selection and the deliberate variation among the cases are the methodological conditions that make this claim defensible.

The second quality is scalability: the models are not calibrated to a particular scale of intervention, resource endowment, or institutional configuration. By distinguishing fixed from flexible features, the composition model implicitly acknowledges that centers can take forms of different size, complexity, and emphasis while remaining instances of the same concept. The initiation model, similarly, describes a process in terms of conditions and actors rather than in terms of specific organizations or funding mechanisms, which allows it to be read and applied across contexts with different institutional landscapes.

Rather than proposing a prescriptive design manual or an engineering style replicable procedure, the research aims to develop a conceptual framework for understanding urban agriculture centers. The models are analytic constructs: they organize and make transferable what the

comparative evidence reveals. Their value lies precisely in providing a structured starting point, a reference grounded in operating realities, sufficiently generalizable to travel across contexts, and sufficiently detailed to be of practical use.

CHAPTER 2

FROM URBAN AGRICULTURE TO THE URBAN AGRICULTURE CENTER

2.1 What is Urban Agriculture? A Definitional Issue

People have cultivated food within and around cities since the earliest settlements were formed, driven by the need to secure food supply and territorial autonomy (Dobele & Zvirbule, 2020). Yet "urban agriculture" as an explicit conceptual category entered research and policy discourse only during the 1990s, without a settled meaning (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)⁴ acknowledged as early as 1996 that the field needed a shared definition. Without one, practices could not be quantified, cases could not be compared across cities, and cumulative knowledge could not be built (Dobele & Zvirbule, 2020). Nowadays the problem persists, a review of the literature reveals a plural, competing landscape of definitions that share a common intuition but diverge on almost every specific element.

The first layer of the definitional issue concerns terminology. The scientific literature uses at least four related terms: "urban agriculture," "urban farming," "urban gardening," and "urban horticulture", without consensus on whether they denote distinct categories or simply alternate labels for the same practice (Dobele & Zvirbule, 2020). "Urban agriculture" is by far the most widely used and functions as the field's umbrella concept. "Urban farming" is often treated as a synonym, but in several European contexts it is reserved for profit-oriented activities, while "urban gardening" is correspondingly limited to non-commercial, community-focused production (Dobele & Zvirbule, 2020; Margaras & Michelogiannaki, 2025). Several attempts have been made to bring order to this terminological landscape. Mougeot's systematic review identified the common building blocks across existing definitions and proposed a synthetic framework organizing the concept around six dimensions (location, economic activities, product categories, production systems, areas of practice, and scale), rather than treating any single definition as authoritative (Mougeot, 2000, pp. 6-11). An earlier checklist of elements that any complete definition should address,

⁴ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations working to defeat hunger, achieve food security for all, and ensure access to sufficient, high-quality food for an active and healthy life.

from location and activities to scale and purpose, has been attributed to Quon (1999) and to Smit, Ratta and Nasr (2001), as reported in (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022, p. 10). The European COST Urban Agriculture project⁵ subsequently structured the field around the distinction between urban food gardening and urban farming, developing internal subdivisions within each category (Lohrberg et al., 2015, p. 23). Most recently, the FAO Sourcebook offered two definitions, one concise and one comprehensive, explicitly designed to give practitioners a shared working meaning rather than to resolve the scholarly debate (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022, pp. 10–11). None of these efforts achieved universal adoption. Each represents a genuine contribution, and together they demonstrate that the definitional problem has been recognized repeatedly but not resolved. The term "urban agriculture" continues to appear with meanings that shift depending on author, discipline, and geographic context.

The second, and perhaps more fundamental, layer of the problem concerns spatial boundaries. In his systematic review of existing definitions, Mougeot identified location as the most common element across the literature, specifically referring to food production occurring "in (within) and around" cities, while also highlighting it as the greatest subject of ongoing debate (Mougeot, 2000). This definitional tension is evident: some authors confine the concept strictly to intra-urban land, defined by population density thresholds or municipal boundaries; others extend it to peri-urban zones, the transitional areas between the built city and the rural hinterland; still others argue that treating the urban-rural gradient as a continuum makes any fixed spatial boundary somewhat arbitrary (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022). The status of peri-urban agriculture sharpens this tension further. Some scholars treat urban and peri-urban agriculture as a single entity, often joined under the abbreviation UPA; others maintain that the two are genuinely distinct, differing across spatial, ecological, and socioeconomic characteristics in ways that shape how each contributes to the urban food system (Opitz et al., 2016). On this second view, the position of a plot inside or beyond a city's boundary is an insufficient basis for the distinction, since the degree of professionalism, the scale of output, and the integration of producers into value chains weigh as heavily as location. The disagreement is therefore not only about where the line falls, but about whether a single line can be drawn at all. The result, in practice, is that the same initiative can be

⁵ Urban Agriculture Europe (TD1106) was a COST Action funded by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology, active between 2012 and 2016, that brought together scholars and practitioners across Europe to develop a shared definition, typology, and spatial framework for urban agriculture, including its relation to the Common Agricultural Policy.

classified as urban agriculture by one source and as peri-urban or rural agriculture by another, depending entirely on which spatial criterion is applied. As the FAO Sourcebook notes, extended debates about precise borders between these zones have proved largely unproductive, since most empirical cases present a continuum rather than a sharp divide (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022, p. 12). This observation has not, however, produced agreement on how to handle the ambiguity.

A third dimension of disagreement concerns the activities and outputs the concept should encompass. Some definitions restrict urban agriculture to food production; others include non-food products such as ornamental plants, medicinal herbs, and agroforestry outputs; still others extend the scope to the full chain from production through processing, distribution, and marketing (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022; Mougeot, 2000). Scale of activity, legal status of land use, and degree of commercialization introduce further variables addressed differently depending on the source. Some frameworks organize the field along these very axes rather than by activity: Pearson et al. (2010), for instance, sort urban agriculture by scale, separating micro, and macro production, and by tenure, distinguishing private, corporate, and public ownership. That such different organizing principles coexist, some proceeding by activity and others by scale and ownership, is itself a measure of how far the literature remains from a shared framework. The FAO Sourcebook captures the consequence of this plurality explicitly: urban agriculture, it states, is "best defined locally" (FAO, Rikolto and RUAF, 2022, p. 10). The sentence is, arguably, an acknowledgment that no universal formulation has achieved acceptance.

The definitional issue reflects the genuine breadth and heterogeneity of the practices gathered under a single label, and the disciplinary diversity of those who have studied them. In the context of this thesis, addressing this terminological ambiguity is a necessary preliminary step. For this reason, Chapter 2 does not proceed directly to a definition of the urban agriculture center. Instead, section 2.3 undertakes a cross-study of existing definitions with the aim of identifying the elements that recur across them, to construct, from those recurrences, a working definition rigorous enough to ground the comparative work that follows.

2.2 The Policy Roots of Urban Agriculture

Unlike its rural counterpart, agriculture practiced inside the city does not occupy land set aside for it. It competes with housing, infrastructure, and open space, and it persists only where the rules that govern urban land allow it to. Urban agriculture therefore depends on its policy environment in a way that rural production does not: the practice exists as an urban function to the extent that public action recognizes, permits, and supports it. This dependence is the counterpart of a long exclusion. As modern planning consolidated, it assigned agriculture to the rural domain and set it apart from the city through functional zoning, so that until the early 2000s urban agriculture was treated as a non-urban activity and largely left outside the concerns of urban planning (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025). The evolution of public action towards urban agriculture can be read as a gradual, though uneven, shift from frameworks in which the practice lacks formal standing to frameworks that explicitly recognize and name it. That movement unfolds at several scales at once, from international declarations to national statutes and municipal regulation. For the aim of this study, the chronology brings together initiatives from four contexts: the international, which provides the global frame within which the practice is situated; the Italian and the Japanese, the national settings of the two cases compared in depth in Chapter 4; and the European, included because Italy, as a member state, is strongly shaped by it.

Appendix A-B-C-D provides a comparative overview of the policy instruments concerning the international, European, Italian, and Japanese contexts addressed in this section and in the subsequent chapters of the thesis, specifying their scope, issuing body, and year of adoption.

For most of the twentieth century, agriculture was a rural matter, and the policies that shaped it kept the farm and the city apart. In Europe, the Treaty of Rome of 1957 and the Common Agricultural Policy that followed in 1962 built the entire edifice of agricultural support on a rural basis, with no provision for cultivation inside the urban fabric. The same separation appears elsewhere. The founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945, Japan's postwar farmland reforms of 1945 and 1946, and the Cropland Act of 1952 all treated agriculture as a question of rural land, ownership, and productivity. In none of them does urban agriculture figure. Although agriculture was institutionally recognized within policy frameworks, its recognition was largely confined to the rural domain and did not extend meaningfully into urban policy.

Recognition arrived obliquely, through the environmental and sustainability agenda rather than

through agricultural policy itself. The Stockholm Conference of 1972 and Agenda 21, adopted at Rio in 1992, touched on human settlements and on food production within them only as part of a broader concern with sustainable development. The decisive early moment came in 1987, when the Brundtland Report endorsed officially sanctioned urban agriculture as a legitimate component of urban development, valued for improving the nutrition and incomes of the urban poor. This was the first direct statement of its kind at the international level. From there the references multiply and grow sharper. The World Food Summit of 1996 addressed urban agriculture directly as a matter of food security, and the foundation of RUAF in 1999 created the first international body dedicated specifically to the practice rather than to agriculture at large.

By the 2010s urban agriculture had become a named object of urban and food policy. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact of 2015, the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III in 2016, and the FAO Green Cities Initiative of 2020 each address urban agriculture explicitly and call for its integration into urban planning and governance, treating the city itself as an actor in the food system. The European route, by contrast, has remained largely indirect. Rather than legislating explicitly for urban agriculture, European instruments reach it through adjacent agendas of green infrastructure, biodiversity, and food-system reform, as in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Farm to Fork Strategy of 2020, and the Nature Restoration Regulation of 2024. Part of the reason for this indirection is structural: within the European framework, urban agriculture falls between established policy areas, judged neither agricultural enough to qualify under the first pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy nor rural enough to fit the second pillar's rural development programs, so that its integration across policy domains remains the central unresolved challenge (McEldowney, 2017). The European Economic and Social Committee's 2004 opinion on agriculture in peri-urban areas is notable as one of the few European-level documents to engage directly with the subject.

The national scale shows how unevenly this recognition settles into laws. Japan offers the most consolidated trajectory. From the Productive Green Land Act of 1974, which protected farmland inside city planning, through the Basic Act on the Promotion of Urban Agriculture of 2015 and the law facilitating the leasing of urban farmland in 2018, the country has assembled an explicit legal architecture around the practice; the accompanying Basic Plan of 2016 reframed urban farmland from land awaiting development into land that ought to remain. Italy followed a more fragmented and only partially realized path. Legislative Decree No. 228/2001 introduced

agricultural multifunctionality as an enabling principle for the modernization of the agricultural sector, while Law No. 10/2013 on urban green spaces brought gardens and allotments within the scope of public action. The decisive step, however, has repeatedly stalled. The bills on the containment of soil consumption that would fold urban agriculture into the legal definition of urban regeneration, Bill 2383 of 2016, Bills 86, 164, and 193 of 2018, and Bill 51 of 2022, have all remained bills rather than statutes.

Read across the three levels, the survey tells one story at different speeds. Internationally, urban agriculture moves from absence in mid-century agricultural policy, through indirect acknowledgment within the environmental and sustainability agenda, to explicit endorsement in dedicated urban and food-policy frameworks, while the European level reaches it only through adjacent agendas. The two national cases absorb that endorsement very differently: Japan has turned it into a coherent body of law that treats urban farmland as something to be kept, whereas Italy has named the practice but left its decisive measures at the stage of unapproved bills. Recognition in declarations and statutes is, in any case, only a first condition: for the practice to take hold, it must be absorbed into the instruments of spatial planning. Yet across a wide international sample of cities, urban agriculture is rarely governed by a dedicated tool and is more often lodged within instruments designed for other purposes, such as food or urban greenery (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025). Moreover, where it is addressed at all, recurrent barriers persist, among them the absence of formal legal recognition, conflicts over land and tenure, and the limits set by local zoning (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025). The lesson is that urban agriculture becomes possible as an urban function only where policy admits it, and that this admission has so far been secured very unevenly. The next section addresses this gap through a cross-study comparison of existing definitions, from which a stable working definition can be drawn.

2.3 A Cross-Study of Definitions of Urban Agriculture

As the previous section introduced, urban agriculture is defined in multiple ways with each definition shaped by the purpose and context in which it is formulated; as a result, no single wording has gained general consensus. Rather than elect one authority and discard the rest, this section treats the plurality itself as evidence. A cross-study of recognized definitions is conducted on a simple premise: what recurs across independent and institutionally distinct formulations marks the stable core of the concept, while what surfaces only in some marks its context-dependent variation. The approach follows the intuition, already present in the literature, that an overarching concept can accommodate situational variation without losing its coherence (Mougeot, 2000).

The analysis is based on a set of 12 recognized definitions, selected to capture variation along two axes. The first axis concerns the source of the definitions. The set draws on academic literature (Lohrberg et al., 2015; Mougeot, 2000; Smit et al., 2001), on international organizations, on a national statute and on technical and sectorial bodies, and on political institutions, so that no single kind of issuer governs the outcome. The second axis is geographic context. The definitions span the international frame, the European Union, Italy, and Japan, the last two being the national settings of the in-depth comparison developed in Chapter 4. Two United States federal agencies are included as additional reference points. Each definition was read closely and coded for the presence or absence of 13 recurring thematic dimensions, ranging from the agricultural activity and its urban location to multifunctionality, community, environment, food security, resilience, and economy, as set out in Table 1.

The coding yields a clear hierarchy of recurrence. Three dimensions appear in every definition without exception: the agricultural activity itself, its urban or peri-urban location, and multifunctionality, understood as the capacity to deliver several functions at once beyond the supply of food (Lohrberg et al., 2015). Close behind, three further dimensions are present in almost all formulations: a community or social dimension, an explicit reference to the outcomes the practice generates, and an environmental dimension. Variety in the forms of practices and systems of production, together with an economic dimension, recurs in a majority of cases but not in all. The remaining dimensions are decidedly less frequent. Resource re-use and circularity, resilience, food security, regeneration, and health each surface in only a minority of the definitions, and most often in those issued by international development bodies or shaped by a

specific national concern.

These divergences track the priorities of the contexts that produced them. International and development-oriented sources tend to foreground food security, livelihoods, and the closing of urban resource loops, reflecting the early framing of urban agriculture around provisioning, poverty alleviation, and the use of urban resources (Mougeot, 2000; Smit et al., 1996). The Japanese definitions are distinctive in binding urban agriculture to disaster prevention and to the formation of landscape, an emphasis that reflects a policy tradition valuing farmland as open space and civic infrastructure (都市農業振興基本法 [Basic Act on Promotion of Urban Agriculture], 2015). European sources stress the social, educational, and recreational returns of the practice and, more recently, its contribution to circularity (Margaras & Michelogiannaki, 2025; Piorr et al., 2018), while the Italian national framing situates urban agriculture at the intersection of environmental, economic, and social change, and frames it as part of a broader agenda for urban green regeneration (Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, 2018).

Read together, the set of 12 definitions does not call for another definition. The existing formulations are already numerous, detailed, and contextually rich; adding one more would compound the very fragmentation that the cross-study set out to navigate. What the comparison yields instead is something more precise and more useful for the purposes of this research: the conceptual essence of urban agriculture, that is, the irreducible core that holds across every source, every institutional type, and every geographic context examined.

That core consists of three elements present in all 12 definitions without exception. Urban agriculture is, first, an agricultural activity, encompassing cultivation, processing, and distribution. Second, it is urban: it takes place in or around the city, in direct relationship with the urban system. Third, and most importantly, urban agriculture is multifunctional: it delivers several functions simultaneously, extending well beyond the supply of food, as also discussed by Lohrberg et al. (2015). Everything else emerged from the cross-study, whether community engagement, food security, resilience, or economic return, is real and significant, but it surfaces selectively, shaped by the priorities of specific contexts. These additional dimensions are expressions of multifunctionality rather than independent properties of the concept itself.

The result the cross-study will be used in this thesis, not to produce a definition, but a conceptual

SOURCE)	TYPE OF SOURCE				QUOTED DEFINITION	EXTRACTED KEYWORDS
	Legislative institutions	Academic literature	International organizations	Technical and sectorial institutions		
Smit et al. (1996), <i>Urban Agriculture: Food, Jobs and Sustainable Cities</i>		✓			Urban agriculture is an industry that produces, processes, and markets food , fuel, and other outputs , largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city, or metropolis, on many types of privately and publicly held land and water bodies found throughout intra-urban and peri-urban areas. Typically urban agriculture applies intensive production methods , frequently using and reusing natural resources and urban wastes, to yield a diverse array of land-, water-, and air-based fauna and flora, contributing to the food security, health, livelihood, and environment of the individual, household, and community .	Food, other outputs, types of land, city, intensive production methods, re-use of natural resources, food security, health, environment, community
Mougeot (2000), <i>Urban Agriculture: Definition, presence, Potentials and Risks</i>		✓			Urban agriculture is located within (intra- urban) or on the fringe (peri-urban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, and grows or raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re-)uses largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplies human and material resources, products and services largely to that urban area.	Urban, diversity, food, non-food, re-use of resources, supplies products and services.
Lohrberg et al. (2015), <i>Urban Agriculture Europe</i>		✓			Urban Agriculture spans all actors, communities, activities , places, and economies that focus on biological production in a spatial context, which—according to local standards—is categorized as “ urban ”. Urban Agriculture takes place in intra and periurban areas, and one of its key characteristics is that it is more deeply integrated in the urban system compared to other agriculture. Urban Agriculture is structurally embedded in the urban fabric; it is integrated into the social and cultural life, the economics , and the metabolism of the city.’	Spans actors/activities/ places, spans economies, biological production, urban, integrated in social life, integrated in the economy
Japan (2015), <i>Urban Agriculture Promotion Basic Act</i>	✓				“Urban agriculture” refers to agriculture conducted in urban areas and their surrounding areas. Philosophy of the act (extract): The promotion of urban agriculture is a continuation of the efforts of those who engage in it and other related parties. Through its production activities, urban agriculture not only provides urban residents with fresh, locally produced agricultural products , but also fulfills a variety of other functions beyond supplying agricultural products, such as disaster prevention in cities, the formation of beautiful landscapes, the conservation of land and the environment, providing a place for urban residents to become familiar with farm work and learn about agriculture, providing a place for interaction between urban farmers and urban residents, and among urban residents themselves, and fostering urban residents’s understanding of agriculture.	Agriculture, agricultural products, urban, other functions, disaster prevention, landscape creation, environment conservation, place to work and learn, place for interaction.
Comitato per lo sviluppo del verde pubblico (2018), <i>Strategia nazionale del verde urbano</i>			✓		L’espressione agricoltura urbana (AU) ha negli ultimi anni riscontrato un notevole utilizzo, sia in ambito accademico tanto quanto in quello sociale e politico-gestionale, configurando un tipo di agricoltura che, letteralmente, viene svolta dentro la città o in stretta prossimità ad essa. Tale successo è dovuto a una serie di cause che sarebbe riduttivo cercare di elencare, ma che trovano origine nelle trasformazioni di carattere ambientale, economico e sociale che hanno riguardato negli ultimi decenni i rapporti fra rapporti fra agricoltura, cibo e città.	Agriculture, city, environmental, economic, social
European Commission (2023), <i>AgriResearch: Urban Agriculture</i>			✓		Urban Agriculture (UA) is the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in and around urban areas. Urban Agriculture is an emerging discipline and a fast-growing trend. It does not compete but help conventional agriculture with the many challenges and crisis the world is facing climate-change, water scarcity, soil degradation, seasonality, food supply chain during pandemic, fossil inputs costs etc. It has to become a complementary way to strengthen food systems in a near future. Urban Agriculture comes in many forms and types (controlled and uncontrolled environment) and multifunctional outcomes . Research and innovation in urban agriculture targets supply chain, circularity , assessment of environmental and social aspects.	Food, urban, helps with many challenges, many forms and types, multifunctional outcomes, circularity
Margaras (2025), <i>Urban Agriculture: State of Play</i>			✓		Urban agriculture is the practice of producing , processing and distributing food within cities and built-up periurban areas. A growing phenomenon worldwide in recent decades, it encompasses a wide range of food production activities, but also includes urban greening and delivers social, educational and recreational benefits. Despite growing interest and the rise of projects and networks across cities, urban agriculture remains largely confined to local or regional levels, with limited coverage in EU policies or funding programmes.	Food, cities, wide range of activities, greening benefits, social benefits, educational benefits, recreational benefits.
RUAF, <i>How We Work</i> [webpage]		✓			Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) or urban and peri-urban agriculture and forestry (UPAF) is defined as the growing of trees, food and other agricultural products (herbs, pot plants, fuel, fodder) and raising of livestock (and fisheries) within the built-up area or on the fringe of cities . UPAF includes production systems such as horticulture, livestock, (agro-) forestry and aquaculture and input supply, processing and marketing activities. The most striking feature of urban agriculture is not its urban location but rather the fact that it is an integral part of the urban socio-economic and ecological system (Mougeot, 2000). It uses urban resources (land, labour and urban organic wastes), grows produce for urban citizens, is strongly influenced by urban conditions (urban policies and regulations, high competition for land, urban markets, prices, etc.) and impacts the urban system (having effects on urban food security and poverty , as well as on ecology and health).	Food, agriculture, cities, variety of production systems, socio-economic system, ecological system, impacts the urban system, food security, poverty, ecology, health.
FAO, <i>Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture</i> [webpage]		✓			Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) can be defined as practices that yield food and other outputs through agricultural production and related processes (transformation, distribution, marketing, recycling...), taking place on land and other spaces within cities and surrounding regions. It involves urban and peri-urban actors, communities , methods, places, policies, institutions, systems, ecologies and economies , largely using and regenerating local resources to meet changing needs of local populations while serving multiple goals and functions. UPA offers a fundamental strategy for building the resilience of a city’s food supply.	Food, other outputs, agricultural production, recycling, cities, community, multiple goals and functions, regenerating local resources, resilience strategy.
USDA, <i>Urban Agriculture</i> [webpage]			✓		Urban agriculture includes the cultivation , processing, and distribution of agricultural products (food or non-food) in urban and suburban areas. Urban farming can provide environmental, economic, and social benefits to the surrounding communities.	Food, non-food, urban, environmental benefits, economic benefits, social benefits, community.
EPA, <i>Urban Agriculture</i> [webpage]		✓			Urban Agriculture is part of a local food system where food is produced within an urban area and marketed to consumers within that area. Urban farming can also include animal husbandry (e.g., breeding and raising livestock), beekeeping, aquaculture (e.g., fish farming), aquaponics (e.g., integrating fish farming and agriculture), and non-food products such as producing seeds, cultivating seedlings, and growing flowers. Urban farms can also contribute to the revitalization of abandoned or underutilized urban land, social and economic benefits to urban communities, and beneficial impacts on the urban landscape .”	Food, urban, different types of practices, non-food, revitalization, social, economic, landscape.
MAFF, <i>Urban Agriculture Office</i> [webpage]			✓		Urban agriculture is defined as “agriculture conducted in urban areas and their surrounding areas” (Article 2 of the Basic Act on the Promotion of Urban Agriculture). It plays a diverse role , taking advantage of its proximity to consumption areas to supply fresh agricultural products , provide places for agricultural experiences, secure open spaces in preparation for disasters , and provide green spaces that offer peace and tranquility. In this way, urban agriculture is agriculture that is close to the lives of urban residents and closely related to their daily lives.	Agriculture, urban, diverse role, agricultural products, agricultural experiences, secure open spaces, preparation disasters, green spaces.
TERMINOLOGICAL RECURRENCE ACROSS THE REVIEWED DEFINITIONS:						

Table 1: Cross-study of Urban Agriculture Definitions (the full bibliographic details of the sources are provided in the bibliography, p.95-98), part 1.

anchor: urban agriculture is not only agricultural activity in the city, and it is inherently multifunctional (Figure 1). That conclusion is sufficient for what follows. The next section takes this essence and asks what kind of spatial and programmatic entity is capable of gathering it, structuring it, and making it operate as a coherent whole within the urban fabric.

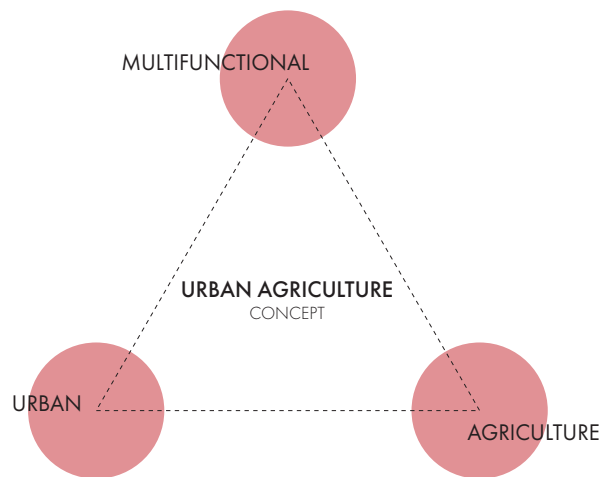


Figure 1: Urban Agriculture Conceptual Scheme derived from the results of the cross-study of definitions

2.4 The Urban Agriculture Center as Pivot: Multifunctionality, Convergence and Irradiation

The two preceding sections have established what urban agriculture is and the policy ground on which it takes its roots. The cross-study of definitions isolated three features common to every examined definition: agriculture, the urban setting, and multifunctionality. That third feature proved to be the most consequential: urban agriculture is not defined by production alone but by its capacity to hold together, within a single practice, all the dimensions of the concept, identified by EFUA as: social, environmental, food, economic, and health and well-being (Figure 2). So central is the multifunctional character of urban agriculture that definitions consistently foreground it, treating the benefits associated with the practice not as by products, but as defining features of the concept itself.

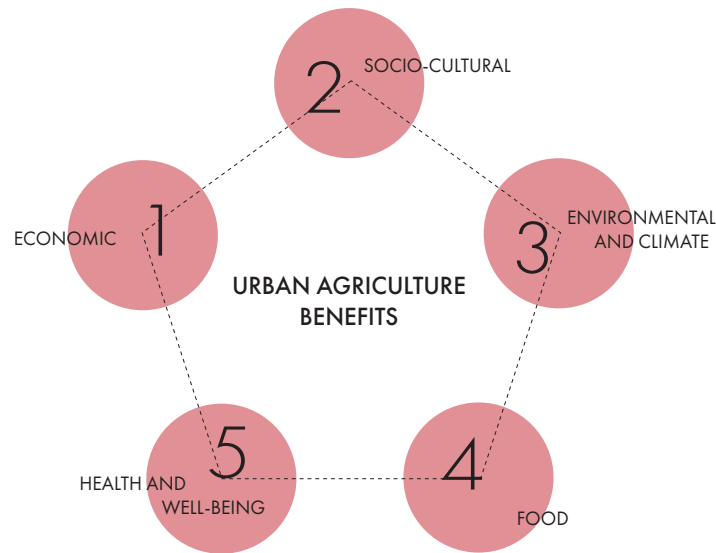


Figure 2: Five Urban Agriculture Dimensions identified by EFUA

The multifunctional reading of urban agriculture established above is corroborated across institutional scales rather than confined to any single policy tradition. At the European level, the EFUA framework formalizes this reading through its five-dimension classification of benefits (Cassatella & Gottero, 2022). At the national level, the Japanese Fundamental Law on Urban Agriculture Promotion (都市農業振興基本法 [Basic Act on Promotion of Urban Agriculture], 2015) identifies a comparable set of public functions performed by urban agriculture within the city, extending well beyond food production (農業・農村の有する多面的機能: 農林水産省 [The Multifaceted Functions of Agriculture and Rural Areas], n.d.). At the global level, the United Nations International Resource Panel, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), frames urban agriculture's contribution around four strategic axes, better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, organized in turn around the Sustainable Development Goals (International Resource Panel, 2021). That a European research consortium, a national ministry, and a United Nations agency converge independently on the same structural premise, urban agriculture's value lies in the simultaneous provision of multiple benefits rather than in any single function, is what lends the multifunctionality criterion its definitional weight in the present research.

With this groundwork in place, the question that gives the chapter its title can finally be posed. If urban agriculture is now defined, what is an urban agriculture center?

The question therefore requires a twofold clarification: first, how the established concept of urban agriculture is understood in this thesis, a point already settled by the cross-study of definitions in Section 2.3; and second, what conceptual and operational meaning is introduced by the term center.

A center is, in the most basic sense, a middle point: the core of an object, area, or group, and the focal point of an activity or interest. In geometry it is the fixed point from which every point on a boundary lies at an equal distance, the point that holds a balanced position relative to all the others. From an etymological perspective, *center* derives from the Latin *centrum*, itself rooted in the Greek *kéntron*: the fixed point of a compass around which a circle is drawn (Oxford University Press, n.d.). A center, then, is not merely something that sits in the middle, it is the point around which other things are organized. Carried from the geometric to the qualitative sense, the center of a field becomes the pivot around which that field is structured, the point toward which things converge and from which they radiate.

It is in this sense that the present research adopts the term *center*: not merely as a synonym for site or project, but as a term reserved for the most complete expression of the concept. Bringing together the recurrent elements of urban agriculture with the additional meaning introduced by *center*, this thesis therefore defines an urban agriculture center as:

An urban agriculture initiative that fully expresses its multifunctionality across the social, environmental, food, economic, and health and well-being dimensions, and that operates as a central node where actors, knowledge, practices, and expertise converge and are exchanged, and from which new initiatives, projects, and forms of urban agriculture radiate beyond the site itself (Figure 3).

The definition rests on three properties, each answering a different question about what such a center is.

Multifunctionality concerns what a center contains. A center is not specialized in a single function. It holds together, within one initiative, all the dimensions of urban agriculture, and for an initiative to qualify as a center none of them may remain latent or incidental. Each must be actively present and expressed. Multifunctionality is thus the most demanding of the three properties, since it sets a threshold that an ordinary single-purpose project does not necessarily

meet.

Convergence concerns what a center draws together and how it brings these elements into relation. If multifunctionality describes a state, convergence describes an action: the center draws actors, knowledge, practices, and expertise into a shared space where they meet and are exchanged. It works as connective tissue, turning the mere co-presence of the five dimensions into reciprocal interaction across the boundaries that ordinarily keep them apart. Co-presence on its own is not enough. The dimensions have to be brought into contact.

Irradiation concerns what that interaction produces. The work of a center does not stay within its own perimeter. The exchange it generates gives rise to new initiatives, projects, and forms of urban agriculture that take shape beyond the site, extending the center's reach into the surrounding territory and into the wider field of urban agriculture. In this respect a center is not an endpoint but a point of origin.

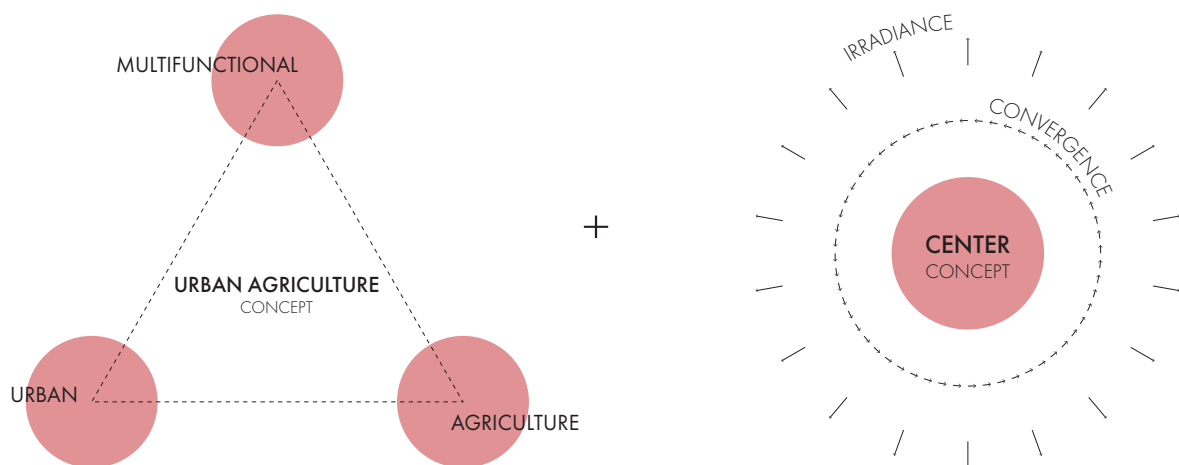


Figure 3: Urban Agriculture Center Conceptual Scheme

Taken together, the three properties give the urban agriculture center a precise conceptual profile: an initiative that contains the full range of urban agriculture through its multifunctionality, attract and connects through convergence, and projects the result outward through irradiation. This deliberately demanding profile is not merely descriptive; it establishes the analytical basis on which the following chapters are structured. Multifunctionality, in particular, supplies the criterion of completeness that governs the selection of the five international cases and the framework

through which they are compared, so that the comparison can test real initiatives against the concept rather than against an abstract ideal. The definition proposed here therefore closes the conceptual arc of the chapter and opens the comparative work of the next: it states what an urban agriculture center is, and it leaves to the case studies the task of revealing, through comparison, which features of that definition recur across strong and varied instances of urban agriculture practice and can therefore be identified as structurally constitutive of the urban agriculture center model.

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTING THE MODEL: AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

3.1 Selecting the Five Case Studies

Five operating initiatives form the empirical base of the international comparison: Seni Tani in Bandung, Le Début des Haricots in Brussels, Canberra City Farm in Canberra, City Shamba in Nairobi, Common Good City Farm in Washington (Figure 5). Their selection was not a matter of representativeness. Following the logic introduced in the methodology, the cases were chosen for what they can reveal about the composition of an urban agriculture center rather than for how typical they are of any wider population (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Two criteria governed the choice (Figure 4), and this section sets out how the five cases satisfy them. The first is completeness, expressed here as the multifunctionality of each case; the second is maximum variation, expressed as the dimension-specific focus that distinguishes the cases from one another (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006). The screening that produced the final set was recorded in a structured selection Table, whose checks are described below. For layout purposes, the table has been divided into three sections to fit the A4 page format (Table 2, Table 2.1 and Table 2.2).

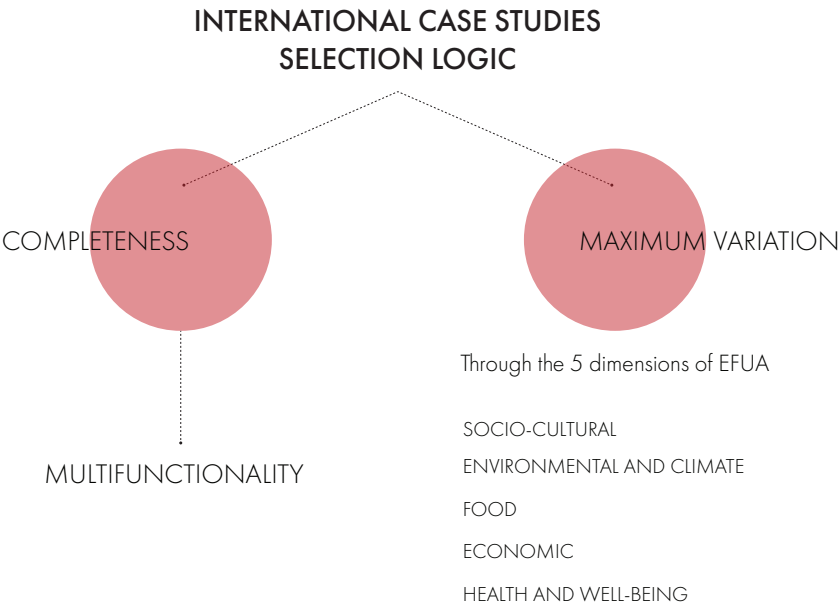


Figure 4: Criteria for the Selection of International Case Studies



Seni Tani, Bandung



Le Début des Haricots, Brussels



Canberra City Farm, Canberra



City Shamba, Nairobi



Common Good City Farm, Washington

Figure 5: Representative pictures of the selected International Case Studies (all images were retrieved from the official websites of the selected case studies, as referenced in the bibliography).

Multifunctionality was the first quality to be verified (Table 2). Each candidate was tested against a multifunctional profile check, which required demonstrable activity across all five dimensions of urban agriculture: socio-cultural, environmental and climate, food, health and well-being, and economic. These are the same dimensions that organize the analytical framework that will be introduced in the next section. Two further checks then operated as gates, applied in sequence.

A comparability check confirmed that every retained case occupies an urban location and operates under a not-for-profit or social-enterprise governance model, which excludes purely commercial operations and keeps the cases structurally comparable (Table 2.1).

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	MULTIFUNCTIONAL PROFILE CHECK				
	SOCIO-CULTURAL	ENVIRONMENT	FOOD	ECONOMIC	HEALTH AND WELLBEING
SENI TANI	- Young farmers and breeders training - Gardening class - Activating a sustainable food system webinar - Farm to table webinar - CSA members mindful cooking and eating	- Regenerative agriculture - Self-composting from organic household waste - Why is Bandung facing a waste crisis webinar	The case study revitalizes idle urban land into productive food gardens. Its CSA model is based on young farmers cultivating land, harvesting weekly, and distributing vegetables to members.	- Community supported agriculture (CSA) business model creation	- Community gardening - Community talks
LE DÉBUTES HARICOTS	- Practical gardening training course - Garden discovery workshops for children - Gardening workshops for adults and family - Cultivation of aromatic course - Thematic research & publication development - Annual transhumance event - Thematic seminars - Art of herbal tea workshop	- Community gardens hub: supports the creation of community gardens in Brussels - Presence of a High Biological Value Green Zone in the Urban Farm	The case study supports agricultural production through vegetable growing, herbs and flowers, with produce sold directly in the field, especially through Saturday on-site sales.	- Promotion of local agri-food products through direct sale - Pre-creation workshops to drafting an agricultural project - Field corners: thematic visits to agricultural projects to exchange ideas with other professionals	- Volunteer program - Cooking activities - Seasonal festivals
CANBERRA CITY FARM	- Monthly guest speaker events - Garden based food program for children - Vegetable pest protection workshop - Cooking classes - Allotment education program - Thematic podcasts - Birthday case study celebration - Regenerative study group (exploring regenerative cultures)	- Regular plant clinics activities: exploring pest and disease organic methods - Regenerative study group: exploring regenerative agriculture - Understanding your garden soil: soil health improvement - Planting day: extending the micro-forest - Introduction to composting	The case study presents cultivate propagation areas, produce seedlings for communal gardens and sale, and transform farm-grown fruit and vegetables into preserves.	- Promotion of local agri-food products through direct sale	- Volunteer program - Monthly cooking event
CITY SHAMBA	- Establishment of information hubs - Sustainable farming and nutrition education - Gardening events for schools	- Agroecological and regenerative agriculture practices	The case study transforms under-used urban and institutional spaces into productive gardens. Its model supports households, hospitals, schools and communities with fresh food, while also providing agricultural inputs such as organic fertilizers, seedlings and vertical gardens.	- Set up of specialized gardens for households and institutions such as hospitals & schools - Collaboration with local partners to design food security strategies	- Gardening activities for hospital patients - Women empowerment gardening activities
COMMON GOOD CITY FARM	- Gardening courses - Food preservation courses - Herbalism courses - Sustainable cooking courses - Youth program - Partnership with Howard University - Thematic parties - Night events	- Regenerative agriculture mini-course - Compost cooperative program - Biological orchard care course	The case study operates a productive urban farm where food growing is directly linked to community food access. The farm distributes its produce through CSA weekly bags, farm market channels and community-oriented food programs.	- Young entrepreneurship program - Youth employment program - Community supported agriculture (CSA) program - Farm markets	- Volunteer program - Cooking community activities - Creative workshops

Table 2: Multifunctional profile check designed to evaluate the completeness of each case study across the five EFUA dimensions.

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	COMPARABILITY CRITERIA CHECK		ANALYTICAL FEASIBILITY CHECK
	URBAN LOCATION	NON PROFIT/SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT	WEBSITE PRESENCE
SENI TANI	Bandung, Indonesia	Social enterprise	https://senitani.org/
	Located in a consolidated residential neighborhood in northern Bandung, with relatively moderate urban density		
LE DÉBUT DES HARICOTS	Brussels, Belgium	Non-profit organization	https://www.haricots.org/
	Located in a relatively green, low-to-medium-density residential district in northern Brussels		
CANBERRA CITY FARM	Canberra, Australia	Non-profit organization	https://ccfarm.org.au/pages/
	Located in a low-density industrial and mixed-use precinct in Fyshwick, on the eastern side of Canberra		
CITY SHAMBA	Nairobi, Kenya	Social enterprise	https://cityshamba.org/
	Located in a high-density urban residential area in Nairobi's East-lands, low-income and mixed-use neighborhood		
COMMON GOOD CITY FARM	Washington, USA	Non-profit organization	https://www.commongoodcityfarm.org/
	Located in a dense historic inner-city residential neighborhood of Washington		

Table 2.1: Comparability and analytical feasibility check, designed to evaluate whether each case study provides sufficiently and comparable information for the purpose of comparative analysis.

An analytical feasibility check confirmed that each case maintains a documented public presence, in practice an active institutional website, so that it could be examined from accessible primary material (Table 2.2). Any candidate failing one of these checks was set aside. The five retained cases cleared all three. Each operates across the full set of dimensions rather than specializing in a single function, and it is this breadth that makes everyone a strong, well-rounded instance of the concept under study.

After the profile check, each case was assessed for its orientation: its stated concept and mission were read against the five dimensions, and the dimension that most clearly organizes its activity was identified and recorded as the case's classification (Table 4). The assessment is interpretive, resting on the documentary self-descriptions of each initiative, but the dominant orientation emerges clearly enough in every case for the classification to hold. This step generates the variation that the selection process was designed to capture. The five cases occupy five distinct positions. Seni Tani on the economic dimension, Le Début des Haricots, leads on the socio-cultural dimension; Canberra City Farm on the environmental and climate dimension; City Shamba on food and Common Good City Farm on health and well-being. The set therefore spans the full range of the framework without redundancy, which is precisely the condition that maximum variation requires. Taken together, the two qualities give the selection its analytical force. Because each case is multifunctional, it is complete enough to show how the dimensions of an urban agriculture center combine within a single operating whole. Moreover, because each case carries a different dominant orientation, the five together cover the spectrum of forms the

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT		ORIENTATION CLASSIFICATION
	CONCEPT OF THE CASE STUDY	MISSION OF THE CASE STUDY	
SENI TANI	Seni Tani is a social enterprise in the field of urban agriculture that focuses on utilizing idle land to become productive and educational food gardens, campaigning for a sustainable local food system through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Tani Sauyunan, and educating about regenerative gardening.	1. Develop a sustainable, community-based local food system 2. Maximize urban space for food production 3. Develop regenerative farming practices in urban settings 4. Promoting alternative models of food systems	ECONOMIC
LE DÉBUTDES HARICOTS	Le Débutdes Haricots is a non-profit organization that contributes to a fair and resilient agri-food system through the development of urban peasant agriculture and sustainable food. The four areas of action compromise redefining the rules and political advocacy, support for professional activities, support for citizen initiatives, raising awareness (among citizens, professionals and politicians).	1. Promote social and ecological justice in Brussels 2. Advocate for food sovereignty 3. Promote agroecological practices 4. Support collective action	SOCIO-CULTURAL
CANBERRA CITY FARM	Canberra City Farm is a place to learn in ways that are kind to the earth, to each other and to the next generation. We embrace principles, methods and ethics of regenerative agriculture focusing on practices that improve soil health, increase biodiversity and care for our community.	1. Inspire Canberrans to reconnect with nature 2. Create a greener, more sustainable future 3. Provide a place to learn and collaborate 4. Take action through regenerative agriculture and sustainable living practices	ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE
CITY SHAMBA	City Shamba is a disruptive initiative aiming to present urban areas as part of the solution to the problems of hunger and malnutrition empowering urban communities to produce food. It establishes agroecological resource and information hubs with diverse technologies and value chains, where women, youth groups, schools, and small-scale farmers can access on-farm experiential learning.	1. Position urban agriculture as a response to hunger and malnutrition 2. Educate urban communities 3. Enable communities to adopt and practice urban agriculture 4. Empower through training, skills development	FOOD
COMMON GOOD CITY FARM	Common Good City Farm is a place where community members can source fresh food, see sustainable urban agriculture in action, and gain exposure to concepts and skills to lead healthy lives. It actively engages with all members of the diverse community and create opportunities for connections at the farm, while emphasizing intensive vegetable production and modeling best practices in sustainable urban agriculture.	1. Nurture a sustainable community space 2. Promote food justice 3. Provide food and sustainable agriculture education 4. Grow, learn, cook, and share fresh food collectively	HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Table 2.2: Orientation assessment of the International Case Studies considered for selection, examining each case's concept and mission in order to identify its prevailing thematic orientation.

phenomenon takes, so that any feature recurring across all of them cannot be dismissed as an artifact of one particular orientation. The geographic spread of the cases across five continents reinforces this reach and supports the transferable character that the composition model aims for. With the set defined and its two governing qualities demonstrated, the comparison can turn to the analytical framework through which the cases are examined.

3.2 Building the Analytical Framework

The five cases selected in the preceding section cannot be compared until they are read through the same lens. A reliable comparison requires a consistent analytical procedure, especially when the cases are heterogeneous. This subchapter therefore presents the framework through which the five cases are examined feature by feature, establishing the common basis for the comparison developed in Section 3.3. The framework is built on the dimensions of urban agriculture identified by EFUA and is supplemented by features drawn directly from the cases themselves (Table 4).

The five dimensions have been adopted for two reasons: they derive from a systematic literature review and from consultation across the EFUA partnership (which gives them an established

disciplinary standing); and they translate the multifunctionality of urban agriculture into a finite set of comparable headings (which is precisely what a cross-case reading requires). The choice to decompose the practice into such headings is itself consistent with a longer tradition of isolating the constituent dimensions, or building blocks, through which urban agriculture can be described and distinguished (Mougeot, 2000). This way of organizing the field is not only peculiar to EFUA. Faced with the multifunctionality of urban agriculture, the literature has repeatedly responded by breaking the practice into a finite set of dimensions. Zeunert, for instance, frames urban agriculture through six dimensions, spatial, economic, social, environmental, practical, and intellectual, on the grounds that the phenomenon resists any single, clear-cut category (Zeunert, 2018). The dimensional sets proposed across the literature do not coincide, yet several headings recur, and the social, economic, and environmental dimensions are common to that account and to the EFUA classification. The five EFUA dimensions adopted here have moreover been carried into recent empirical work: Gottero operationalizes the same headings, culture and society, environment and climate, food, health and well-being, and economy, into a set of indicators for measuring the benefits of urban and peri-urban agriculture (Gottero, 2025). That one classification can anchor both a qualitative comparison and a quantitative measurement framework reinforces the analytical traction of these dimensions and confirms that the choice made here rests on more than a single source.

EFUA supplies the dimensions, but not all of what the cases reveal. The five dimensions describe what urban agriculture does; they do not, on their own, situate an urban agriculture initiative within its city, its tenure, or its policy environment. The framework therefore takes a two-tier form (Figure 6). The first tier is a case-study profile that records the contextual coordinates of each center across four descriptive dimensions: identity, spatial dimension, governance, and policy context (Table 3). These features fix what a case is and where it sits before its performance is assessed, and they are derived in part from the cases and in part from the descriptive variables long used to characterize urban agriculture initiatives, such as location, land use, and the actors involved in initiation (Mougeot, 2000). The second tier is the urban agriculture dimensional analysis, organized strictly by the five EFUA dimensions, which records what each center actually produces, hosts, and sustains (Table 4).

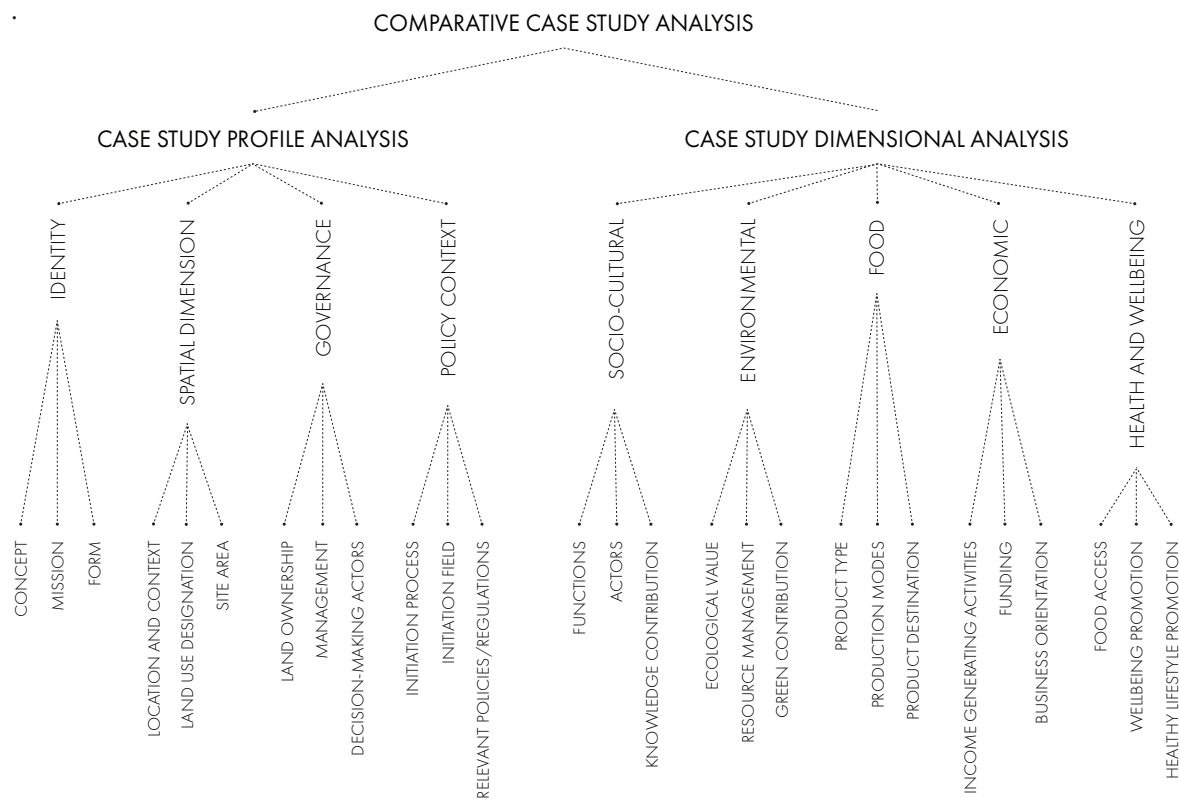


Figure 6: Comparative Case Study Two-Tier Structure Analysis.

Within the dimensional analysis, each of the five dimensions is broken down by a single, consistent logic. A dimension is divided into categories, a category into aspects of comparison (Figure 7), and each aspect is operationalized as an analytical question to be answered for every case. The socio-cultural dimension, for instance, opens into the categories of functions, actors, and knowledge contribution, and the actors category resolves into a detailed range of target-users, from members and the broader community to marginalized groups and aspiring growers. This is where the case-derived features enter the framework. EFUA provides the dimensional headings, while the fine-grained aspects, the specific production modes, product destinations, funding sources, or user groups, are supplied by the cases, which expose distinctions that a benefit taxonomy alone would not anticipate. Casting each aspect as a question is a deliberate methodological choice: it converts an open dimension into a determinate item that can be answered uniformly, and it keeps the reading consistent across cases that differ widely in form and scale.

SOCIO-CULTURAL	ACTIVITIES EVENTS PROMOTERS MANAGERS TARGET USERS RESEARCH DISSEMINATION CROP DIVERSIFICATION HABITAT CREATION POLLINATOR SUPPORT NATIVE SPECIES PROMOTION SOIL WATER ENERGY WASTE PRODUCTIVE GREEN AREA ORCHARD AREA PARK/GARDEN AREA URBAN FORESTRY VEGETABLES FRUITS FLOWERS AND PLANTS VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS IN-GROUND CULTIVATION RAISED BED CULTIVATION GREENHOUSE VERTICAL FARMING MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY LOCAL BUSINESSES SCHOOLS/OTHER INSTITUTIONS EVENT PARTICIPANTS COURSES EVENTS PRODUCT SALE MEMBERSHIP SPACE RENTAL VISITS AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT EXTERNAL SERVICES PUBLIC FOUNDATION GRANTS INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS CORPORATE GRANTS STRATEGY MANAGEMENT DISTRIBUTION PAID ACCESS FREE ACCESS SELF-LABOUR EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT THERAPEUTIC REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTORATION FREE ACCESS TO EVENTS HEALTHY DIET PROMOTION ACTIVE LIVING	FUNCTIONS ACTORS KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION ECOLOGICAL VALUE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GREEN CONTRIBUTION PRODUCT TYPE PRODUCTION MODES PRODUCT DESTINATION INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FUNDING BUSINESS ORIENTATION FOOD ACCESS WELLBEING PROMOTION HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION
ENVIRONMENTAL		
FOOD		
ECONOMIC		
WELL-BEING		

Together, the two tiers constitute the grid that the next section sets to work. Each case is run through the same profile and the same dimensional questions, and the answers are arrayed side by side so that recurrence becomes legible. It is this recurrence, rather than any single case, that the comparison reads: aspects shared across all or most cases point toward the fixed features of the composition model, while those present in only some point toward its flexible features, a distinction developed in section 3.4. The framework represents the structured ground on which the result is built.

Table 3: Case Study Profile Analysis Question Framework, outlining the technical and contextual dimensions used to identify, locate, and describe each case study according to its basic profile.

CASE STUDY URBAN AGRICULTURE DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS QUESTION FRAMEWORK				
DIMENSION		ASPECT OF COMPARISON	QUESTION TO BE ANALYZED	
SOCIO-CULTURAL	FUNCTIONS	Activities	Do the activities implemented within the case study?	
		Events	Do the events implemented within the case study?	
	ACTORS	Promoters	Who are the promoters of the case study?	
		Managers	Who are the managers of the case study?	
		Target users	Members/subscribers	Are the target users formally affiliated with the initiative as members or subscribers?
			Broader community	Does the initiative target all members of the broader and diverse neighborhood community?
			Professional farmers	Does the initiative target professional farmers?
			Other professionals	Does the initiative target or involve professionals from related fields, such as educators, food professionals, social workers, or community development actors?
			Food-access beneficiaries	Does the initiative target users experiencing food-access needs or food insecurity?
			Marginalized groups	Does the initiative target vulnerable or marginalized groups through social inclusion, support and training?
			Wellbeing beneficiaries	Does the initiative target users with psychological or physical restoration needs through nature-based activities, contact with green spaces, relaxation, or therapeutic practices?
			Volunteers	Does the initiative involve volunteers as a target user group?
			Young people	Does the initiative target young people, including children, students, or youth groups?
			Paying consumers	Does the initiative target paying consumers through the sale of products, services, events, or activities?
Institutional users	Does the initiative target educational and institutional users through visits, workshops, programs, or dedicated activities?			
Related businesses	Does the initiative target or involve related businesses, such as local food enterprises, cafés, restaurants, markets, or agricultural suppliers?			
Future growers	Does the initiative target aspiring urban growers?			
Interested public	Does the initiative target a public interested in urban agriculture through events or knowledge-sharing initiatives?			
KNOWLEDGE	Research	Does the case study contribute to knowledge production through research, experimentation, production of articles or publications, and which fields of research are addressed?		
CONTRIBUTION	Dissemination	Does the case study contribute to knowledge dissemination through awareness-raising activities such as talks, podcasts and webinars, and which thematic fields are addressed?		
ENVIRONMENTAL	BIODIVERSITY	Crop diversification	Does the case study promote crop diversity through the cultivation of different plant species?	
		Habitat creation	Does the case study contribute to habitat creation for urban biodiversity through diversified vegetation or habitat-supporting elements?	
		Pollinator support	Does the case study support pollinators through flowering plants, pollinator-friendly habitats or beehives?	
		Native species promotion	Does the case study incorporate native plant species into its planting strategy?	
	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Soil	Soil health improvement	Does the case study adopt or envision soil management strategies related to soil health improvement?
			Chemical input reduction	Does the case study adopt or envision soil management strategies related to sustainable pest management or reduced chemical inputs?
		Water	Rainwater harvesting	Does the case study adopt or envision water management strategies related to rainwater collection?
			Water efficiency	Does the case study adopt or envision water-efficient systems to limit water waste and reduce overall water consumption?
			Alternative water sourcing	Does the case study adopt or envisage alternative water-sourcing strategies, such as treated greywater or nearby surface water bodies?
			Energy	Energy-efficient system
		Low energy cultivation		Does the case study adopt or envision energy management strategies related to low energy cultivation techniques?
		Waste	Recycling/waste reduction	Does the case study adopt or envision waste management strategies related to waste reduction, material reuse or waste sorting and responsible disposal?
			Organic waste valorization	Does the case study adopt or envision waste management strategies related to organic waste valorization?
		GREEN CONTRIBUTION	Conservation	Does the case study contribute to the conservation of existing green spaces, and through which specific form of green area?
	Conversion		Does the case study contribute to the conversion of non-green or underused spaces into green areas, and what type of green area is created?	
	FOOD DIMENSION	PRODUCT TYPE	Vegetables	Does the case study produce vegetables?
			Fruits	Does the case study produce fruits?
			Flowers and plants	Does the case study produce flowers, ornamental plants, or other non-food plants?
Seedlings			Does the case study produce seedlings for internal use, distribution, or sale?	
Value added products			Does the case study produce goods derived from the processing of agricultural products?	
PRODUCTION MODES		In-ground cultivation	Does the case study adopt in-ground cultivation?	
		Raised bed cultivation	Does the case study adopt raised bed cultivation?	
		Greenhouse	Does the case study adopt greenhouse cultivation?	
Vertical farming		Vertical farming	Does the case study adopt vertical farming cultivation?	
		PRODUCT DESTINATION	Members/subscribers	Are the products allocated to members through subscription-based distribution models?
			Surrounding community	Are the products allocated to the broader community through sale?
Local businesses			Are the products allocated to local businesses, such as restaurants, cafés, shops, or markets?	
Schools/other institutions			Are the products allocated to schools or other institutions?	
ECONOMIC		INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES	Event participants	Are the products used or distributed to participants during events?
			Courses	Does the case study generate income through courses, workshops or educational programs?
		Events	Does the case study generate income through events?	
		Product sale	Does the case study generate income through the sale of products directly cultivated or produced by the initiative?	
		Membership	Does the case study generate income through membership fees?	
	Space rental	Does the case study generate income by renting its spaces private events?		
	Visits	Does the case study generate income through paid visits, guided tours, or educational visits?		
	Agricultural equipment	Does the case study generate income through the sale of agricultural equipment?		
	External services	Does the case study generate income through service provision, including garden creation, garden maintenance or consultancy?		
	FUNDING	Public	Does the case study receive public financial or in-kind support, including land provision, land-fee reductions, or government grants?	
		Foundation grants	Does the case study receive funding from foundations?	
		Corporate grants	Does the case study receive funding or sponsorship from private companies?	
		Individual donations	Does the case study receive financial support through individual donations?	
	BUSINESS MODEL	Strategy	Which business model strategies are adopted by the case study?	
		Distribution	Which commercial distribution channels are adopted by the case study?	
Management		What type of actors are responsible for managing the initiative?		
HEALTH/WEELLBEING	FOOD ACCESS	Self-labor	Is access to healthy food provided through self-production opportunities?	
		Free access	Is healthy food provided free of charge to vulnerable groups?	
		Paid access	Is access to healthy food provided through purchase?	
	WELLBEING	Employment support	Does the initiative provide employment support through work-integration opportunities?	
		Therapeutic rehabilitation	Does the initiative provide rehabilitation-oriented activities through nature-based or agricultural practices?	
		Psychological restoration	Does the initiative support relaxation, stress reduction, or psychological restoration through contact with nature?	
		Free access to events	Does the initiative promote social connection and a sense of belonging through free access to community-oriented events?	
	HEALTHY LIFESTYLE	Healthy diet promotion	Does the initiative promote healthy diets through nutrition education or awareness-raising activities?	
		Active living	Does the initiative promote active living through gardening, farming, outdoor work, or other physical activities?	

Table 4: Urban Agriculture Dimensional Analysis Question Framework, structured around the five EFUA dimensions and supplemented by case-derived comparative criteria, used to examine the composition of each case study.

3.3 The Comparison at Work

The framework set out in the previous section becomes operative only when it is applied to the five cases simultaneously. Read as a single matrix, the comparison records, feature by feature, which cases share a given element and which do not, so that the recurrence of each feature across markedly different settings can be observed directly. The two tables presents the complete comparative chart: the two tiers of the framework, the case study profile (Table 5) and the dimensional analysis organized around the five EFUA dimensions, run along one axis, and the five cases along the other (Table 6, Table 6.1). The discussion that follows reads the chart in two directions, first across the cases to establish what they hold in common, then case by case to establish where each one diverges.

A first pattern is the presence of a core of twelve features that recurs in every case despite the geographic and institutional distance separating Bandung, Brussels, Canberra, Nairobi, and Washington. In the socio-cultural dimension, all five centers offer agricultural training, support social cohesion and recreation, and direct their programs toward young people and future growers as a consistent target. In the environmental dimension, all practice crop diversification and chemical input reduction. Production, across all cases, is vegetable-based and conducted through in-ground cultivation. On the governance side, each center is run by a functionally differentiated management team, a structural choice that distinguishes the urban agriculture center from informally organized initiatives. Each center draws on government grants as a funding source, and each offers free access to at least part of its events and activities. Psychological restoration completes the shared core, present in all five cases as a wellbeing outcome of participation. This core does not belong to one dimension; it is distributed across all five, which suggests that the cases converge less on a single function than on multifunctionality as such. The reading is consistent with the EFUA account, in which urban agriculture of every type delivers benefits spanning the socio-cultural, environmental, food, health and well-being, and economic dimensions rather than only one (Cassatella, 2023; Gottero, 2023).

The case study profile tier shows a convergence of a different kind. Each center operates on public or mixed public land, each is structured as a non-profit organization or a social enterprise, and each draws on government grants. These shared conditions of land tenure, legal form, and public support are not features of urban agriculture as an activity, but they describe the

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	IDENTITY		SPATIAL DIMENSION					GOVERNANCE			INITIATION PROCESS	POLICY CONTEXT						
	CONCEPT	MISSION	FORM			LOCATION & CONTEXT	LAND USE DESIGNATION	SITE AREA	LAND OWNERSHIP	BUSINESS ORIENTATION		DECISION MAKING ACTORS	INITIATION FIELD					
			Community garden	Urban farm	Educational center								Hub	Food security	Sustainability	Urban regeneration	Agriculture	Farmland conservation
SENI TANI	Seni Tani is a social enterprise in the field of urban agriculture that focuses on utilizing idle land to become productive and educational food gardens, campaigning for a sustainable local food system through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Tani Sayunan, and educating about regenerative gardening.	1. Develop a sustainable, community-based local food system 2. Maximize urban space for food production 3. Develop regenerative farming practices 4. Promoting alternative models of food systems			Bandung, Indonesia Located in a consolidated residential neighborhood in northern Bandung, with relatively moderate urban density	"Code zone R: residential zone"	1700 m ²	Mixed Private Public	Social enterprise	Operational team (10 members), Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Tani Sayunan members	1. Grassroots movement Born from a deep concern about the growing disconnect between urban people, nature, and the sources of their food. 2. Activation of an idle plot 3. Development of a local food system model (CSA)						1. Mayor of Bandung Decree No. 520/Kep. 795-DisPerTapa of 2012 (Regulating goods-based grants to community groups in the field of agriculture and food security) 2. Buruan SAE (urban farming program promoted by Bandung City)	
LE DÉBUTDES HARICOTS	Le Débudes Haricots is a non-profit organization that contributes to a fair and resilient agri-food system through the development of urban peasant agriculture and sustainable food. The four areas of action comprise redefining the rules and political advocacy, support for professional activities, support for citizen initiatives, raising awareness (among citizens, professionals and politicians).	1. Promote social and ecological justice in Brussels 2. Advocate for food sovereignty 3. Promote agroecological practices 4. Support collective action.			Brussels, Belgium Located in a relatively green, low-to-medium-density residential district in northern Brussels	"Cultivated unbuilt land"	15000 m ²	Private	Non-profit	12 Operational (hematic) Circles operating through self-management	1. Informal think tank "Seeds of Utopias" Small network of committed individuals interested in ecological agriculture and local food systems. 2. Provision of Land by La Ferme Nos Plifs on Rue Bruyn (NPO) 3. Grant application						1. Agenda Iris 21 (2007) 2. The Government Agreement (2009-2014) 3. Good Food Strategy by Brussels Capital Region (2016-2020)	
CANBERRA CITY FARM	Canberra City Farm is a place to learn in ways that are kind to the earth, to each other and to the next generation. We embrace principles, methods and ethics of regenerative agriculture focusing on practices that improve soil health, increase biodiversity and care for our community.	1. Inspire Canberrans to reconnect with nature 2. Create a greener, more sustainable future 3. Provide a place to learn and collaborate 4. Take action through regenerative agriculture			Canberra, Australia Located in a low-density industrial and mixed-use precinct in Fyshwick, on the eastern side of Canberra	"River corridor"	20000 m ²	Public land	Non-profit	Members and committee of the Canberra City Farm association, Australian Capital Territory	1. Community-led initiative composed of 70 people With the objective of becoming a hub for the community to learn and share their knowledge and experience of sustainable living. 2. ACT Government 3. ACT Government License for site use						1. ACT Planning Strategy (2012) 2. ACT Community Grants program (2015) 3. Canberra Region Local Food Strategy (2024–2029)	
CITY SHAMBA	City Shamba is a disruptive initiative aiming to present urban areas as part of the solution to the problems of hunger and malnutrition, empowering urban communities to produce food. It establishes agroecological resource and information hubs with diverse technologies and value chains, where women, youth groups, schools, and small-scale farmers can access on-farm experiential learning.	1. Position urban agriculture as a response to hunger and malnutrition 2. Educate urban communities 3. Enable communities to adopt and practice urban agriculture 4. Empower through training, skills development			Nairobi, Kenya Located in a high-density urban residential area in Nairobi's East-lands, low-income and mixed-use neighborhood	"Open space"	3223 m ²	Public land	Social enterprise	City Shamba Team (diverse collective of 8 members composed of: agronomists, tech innovators, and community leaders)	1. Disrupted founder-led initiative Response to the global food system disruptions 2. Set up of a model farm at Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital 3. Launch of large-scale capacity development programs With the aim to teach urban residents how to grow food						1. Nairobi City County Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture, Livestock And Fisheries Policy (2015)	
COMMON GOOD CITY FARM	Common Good City Farm is a place where community members can source fresh food, see sustainable urban agriculture in action, and gain exposure to concepts and skills to lead healthy lives. It actively engages with all members of the diverse community, while emphasizing intensive vegetable production and modeling best practices in sustainable urban agriculture.	1. Nurture a sustainable community space 2. Promote food justice 3. Provide food and sustainable agriculture education 4. Grow, learn, cook, and share fresh food collectively			Washington, USA Located in a dense historic inner-city residential neighborhood of Washington	"Other resource production" (Land use code 089)	2023 m ²	Public land	Non-profit	Board of directors, Staff, Strategic Planning Committee, Consulting Project Team	1. Origin from pre-existing initiatives "Shaw EcoVillage SEV"; sustainability-oriented initiative "Bread for the City"; food-access and social-support initiative 2. Public participatory design process						1. Food Production and Urban Gardens Program Act of 1986 2. The CapitalSpace Initiative of 2006 (partnership effort among: National Capital Planning Commission, National Park Service, and Columbia Government)	

Table 5: Profile Analysis of the international Case Study Comparison.

Table 6: Urban Agriculture Dimensional Analysis of the International Case Studies Comparison, part 1.

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES	SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION										ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
	FUNCTIONS				ACTORS				KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION				ECOLOGICAL VALUE				RESOURCE MANAGEMENT				GREEN CONTRIBUTION																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
	TYPES				MANAGERS	PROMOTERS	TARGET USERS										Crop diversification	Habitat creation	Pollinator support	Disaster prevention	Native planting	Soil health improvement	Chemical input reduction	Rainwater harvesting	Water efficiency	Alternative water sourcing	Energy-efficient systems	Low energy cultivation	Renewable energy production	Recycling/waste reduction	Organic waste valorization	INTERVENTION TYPE	Production green area	Orchard area	Park/garden area	Rooftop garden	Urban forestry																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
	Agri-cultural training	Soil & compost management	Herb-olism & medicinal plants cultivation	Food preparation & preservation			Youth-focused	Volunteer	External project development support	Sustainable creative practices	Social cohesion & recreation																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
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Table 6: Urban Agriculture Dimensional Analysis of the International Case Studies Comparison, part 2.[illegible]

institutional ground on which all five cases stand, and they bear on the scope within which the model can later claim to hold.

Around the multifunctional core sits a further layer of twenty-two features shared by four of the five cases. In the socio-cultural dimension, these include food preparation and preservation activities, volunteer engagement formats, the broader community as a target user group, and knowledge contribution oriented toward both sustainable agriculture and food security. The environmental cluster adds soil health improvement, water efficiency, and organic waste valorization, together with seedling production as a near-universal product type. On the food dimension, grown produce circulates primarily on-site and reaches the surrounding community as its main destination. The economic layer is the most articulated at this level: four cases share foundation grants alongside government grants, organize distribution on-site, operate through partnerships, sustain themselves partly through member support, and offer paid access to at least some services. Employment support and healthy-diet promotion complete the picture on the wellbeing side. Recurrence here is nearly universal: the single absence falls on a different case from one feature to the next, which confirms that these features express a structural pattern comparable in weight to those present in all five cases.

While the chart highlights common patterns across the cases, a case by case reading brings their differences into focus, making visible the variation that informed the selection strategy. City Shamba leans toward technology-intensive food production, the only case to combine aquaponics with vertical farming, and presents itself as an educational center serving schools and institutions. Canberra City Farm carries the environmental emphasis furthest, with native planting, on-site renewable energy production, and a user base extending to professional farmers. Le Début des Haricots is the most economically and politically articulated of the five, reaching into corporate funding, equipment-based income, apprenticeship, and explicit work on policy development. Common Good City Farm concentrates on health and social inclusion, addressing marginalized groups and promoting active living, whereas Seni Tani organizes itself around a community-supported-agriculture model built on membership and pre-order. This differentiation is consistent with Cassatella's (2023) finding that different forms of urban agriculture are associated with distinct benefit profiles, as food gardens, professional farms, and technology-oriented operations each tend to foreground different clusters of benefits.

These two readings describe a gradient rather than a binary. The recurrence pattern extends across the full range of values, from features present in all five cases to features found in only one. Since the intermediate categories are also densely populated, recurrence should be read as a gradient rather than as a binary distinction between shared and isolated features. At this stage the comparison does not yet decide where along that gradient a feature becomes structurally constitutive; it establishes the distribution on which that decision will rest. It is precisely this distribution, and the line it draws between broadly shared and contextually specific features, that the following section translates into the fixed and flexible features of the composition model.

3.4 The Anatomy of a Center: Fixed and Flexible Features of the Composition Model

The comparison conducted in the preceding subchapter yields a total of 111 features distributed across all five EFUA dimensions and a total of 22 features composing the profile case study analysis. The comparison has shown that some recur across all or nearly all five cases, regardless of the geographic, institutional, or programmatic differences that distinguish the international case studies (Table 7 and Table 7.1). Others appear in only a handful of cases, reflecting choices that are clearly meaningful within particular contexts and consequently cannot claim the same cross-case consistency. This distributional pattern is what drives the two-tier architecture of the composition model: a tier of fixed features, which define the structural minimum of any urban agriculture center, and a tier of flexible features, which describe the space of legitimate variation within that structure.

The composition model was developed through a multi-step process. In the first step, the findings of the comparative analysis were classified according to their frequency of occurrence across the five cases, generating five groups from features present in all cases (5/5) to features identified in only one case (1/5). These groups were subsequently reorganized into three intermediate categories and then consolidated into two final categories: fixed features and flexible features.

The intermediate classification followed a majority logic. Features recurring in 5/5 and 4/5 cases were grouped together as majority patterns (Table 9); features recurring in 2/5 and 1/5 cases were grouped together as minority patterns (Table 8); and features recurring in 3/5

Table 7: Feature Recurrence Across the International Case Study Comparison, part 1.

[illegible]

Table 7: Feature Recurrence Across the International Case Study Comparison, part 2.

[illegible]

cases were treated as intermediate cases requiring closer evaluation before being assigned to either the fixed or flexible category. Fixed features were defined through a two-part criterion. First, they include features recurring in at least 4/5 cases, provided that they also passed the transferability check. Second, they include features from the medium-recurrence group (3/5) that were promoted to the fixed category after an additional relevance assessment (Table 10).

DIMENSION	PARAMETER		LOW RECURRENCE FEATURES (1/5 & 2/5)	TRANSFERABILITY CHECK	FEATURE EVALUTATION
SOCIO-CULTURAL	FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES	Soil & compost management	✓	Flexible feature
			Herbalism & medicinal plants cultivation	✓	Flexible feature
			Sustainable creative practices	✓	Flexible feature
			Social cohesion & recreation	✓	Flexible feature
		EVENTS	Soil & compost management	✓	Flexible feature
			Herbalism & medicinal plants cultivation	✓	Flexible feature
	Sustainable creative practices		✓	Flexible feature	
	ACTORS	TARGET USERS	Wellbeing beneficiaries	✓	Flexible feature
			Related businesses	✓	Flexible feature
			Professional farmers	✓	Flexible feature
			Other professionals	✓	Flexible feature
			Marginalized groups	✓	Flexible feature
	KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION	RESEARCH	Health	✓	Flexible feature
			Policies implementation	✓	Flexible feature
ENVIRONMENTAL	ECOLOGICAL VALUE		Disaster prevention	✓	Flexible feature
			Native planting	✓	Flexible feature
	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	ENERGY	Renewable energy production	✓	Flexible feature
		WASTE	Recycling/waste reduction	✓	Flexible feature
	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY	Orchard area	✓	Flexible feature
			Park/garden area	✓	Flexible feature
Urban forestry			✓	Flexible feature	
FOOD	PRODUCTION MODES		Raised-bed cultivation	✓	Flexible feature
			Greenhouse	✓	Flexible feature
			Aquaponics	✓	Flexible feature
			Vertical farming	✓	Flexible feature
	PRODUCT DESTINATION		Local businesses	✓	Flexible feature
			Schools/other institutions	✓	Flexible feature
ECONOMIC	INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES	PRODUCT SALE	Flower/plants sale	✓	Flexible feature
			Fertilizer sale	✓	Flexible feature
			Local businesses partnerships	✓	Flexible feature
			Space rental	✓	Flexible feature
			Agricultural equipment	✓	Flexible feature
			External services	✓	Flexible feature
	FUNDING		Corporate grants	*	Flexible feature*
	BUSINESS MODEL	STRATEGY	Membership-based	✓	Flexible feature
			Local businesses integration	✓	Flexible feature
		DISTRIBUTION	Online shop	✓	Flexible feature
			MANAGEMENT	Employees	✓
		Apprentice		✓	Flexible feature
		Volunteer-supported		✓	Flexible feature
	HEALTH & WELLBEING	FOOD ACCESS		Self labour	✓
		Free access	✓	Flexible feature	
LIFE STYLE		Active living	✓	Flexible feature	

Table 8: Low-Recurrence Features from the International Case Study Comparison (the asterisk next to “public funding” indicates that it is recommended but not mandatory, as funding availability depends on external institutional, political, and economic conditions).

DIMENSION	PARAMETER		HIGH RECURRENCE FEATURES (5/5 & 4/5)	TRANSFERABILITY CHECK	FEATURE EVALUATION
SOCIO-CULTURAL	FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES	Agricultural training	✓	Fixed feature
			Food preparation & conservation	✓	Fixed feature
			Volunteer	✓	Fixed feature
		EVENTS	Social cohesion and recreational events	✓	Fixed feature
			Agricultural training	✓	Fixed feature
			Food preparation & conservation	✓	Fixed feature
	ACTORS	MANAGERS	Functionally differentiated management team	✓	Fixed feature
			Community engagement dimension present in the management	✓	Fixed feature
			Young people	✓	Fixed feature
		TARGET USERS	Future growers	✓	Fixed feature
			Broader community	✓	Fixed feature
			KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION	RESEARCH	Sustainable agriculture
	DISSEMINATION	Sustainable agriculture		✓	Fixed feature
Food security		✓		Fixed feature	
ENVIRONMENTAL	ECOLOGICAL VALUE			Crop diversification	✓
	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	SOIL	Chemical input reduction	✓	Fixed feature
			Soil health improvement	✓	Fixed feature
		WATER	Water efficiency	✓	Fixed feature
		WASTE	Organic waste valorization	✓	Fixed feature
FOOD	PRODUCT TYPE		Vegetables	✓	Fixed feature
	PRODUCTION MODES		Seedling	✓	Fede feature
	PRODUCTION MODES		In-ground cultivation	✓	Fede feature
	PRODUCT DESTINATION		Surrounding community	✓	Fixed feature
ECONOMIC	INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES	PRODUCT SALE	Grown produce	✓	Fixed feature
	FUNDING	PUBLIC	Government grants	*	Fixed feature*
			Foundation grants	*	Fixed feature*
	BUSINESS MODEL	STRATEGY	Partnership based	✓	Fixed feature
		DISTRIBUTION	On-site	✓	Fixed feature
		MANAGEMENT	Member-supported	✓	Fixed feature
HEALTH & WELLBEING	FOOD ACCESS		Paid access	✓	Fixed feature
	WELLBEING	Psychological restoration	✓	Fixed feature	
		Free access to events	✓	Fixed feature	
		Employment support	✓	Fixed feature	
	LIFE STYLE	Healthy diet promotion		✓	Fixed feature

Table 9: High-Recurrence Features from International Case Study Comparison (the asterisk next to “public funding” indicates that it is recommended but not mandatory, as funding availability depends on external institutional, political, and economic conditions).

Among the seven features promoted from the medium-recurrence group to the fixed tier, each was reassessed in relation to the definition of an urban agriculture center developed in Chapter 2. External project development support was elevated because of the irradiation role of the center: the capacity to incubate and support initiatives beyond its own boundaries is what distinguishes a center from a standalone urban farm, so outward project support cannot remain optional. Income diversification was promoted on similar grounds, since the multifunctional character of the center makes a diversified revenue base structurally necessary to pursue financial sustainability.

The promotion of volunteers as a target-user group followed a different but equally direct logic: given that volunteering was already identified as a fixed activity of the center, the presence of volunteers among its users was considered a necessary consequence rather than an independent choice.

DIMENSION	PARAMETER		MEDIUM RECURRENCE FEATURE (3/5)	TRANSFERABILITY CHECK	PROMOTION EVALUATION	RELEVANCE RATIONALE	OUTPUT	
SOCIO-CULTURAL	FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES	External project development support	✓	✓	Core function of an Urban Agriculture Center: the model is expected to act as a hub that incubates and supports initiatives beyond its own site (irradiation role), so outward project support is constitutive rather than optional.	Fixed feature	
			Youth-focused	✓	Context-adaptable	A youth focus activity/event reflects a chosen target audience, not a universal requirement of the typology.	Flexible feature	
		EVENTS	Youth-focused	✓		Flexible feature		
	ACTORS	MANAGERS	Founder-led promoters who carry the project idea	✓	Context-adaptable	Reflects the centre's origin and governance history rather than a structural requirement of the model.	Flexible feature	
		TARGET USERS	Volunteers	✓	✓	Volunteering is already a fixed activity of the model; the volunteer user group is therefore structurally entailed by that fixed feature and cannot be left optional.	Fixed feature	
			Members/subscribers	✓	Context-adaptable	Target users that depend on the individual centre's operating model rather than being constitutive of the typology.	Flexible feature	
			Food-access beneficiaries	✓			Flexible feature	
			Paying consumers	✓			Flexible feature	
			Institutional users	✓			Flexible feature	
		Interested public	✓	Flexible feature				
	KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION	RESEARCH	Environmental awareness	✓	Min. req. met	Theme already carried by the model through dissemination; as a dedicated research line it is an optional extension, not a core requirement.	Flexible feature	
			Food security	✓			Flexible feature	
		DISSEMINATION	Environmental awareness	✓	✓	Core dissemination theme: urban agriculture is introduced into the city primarily for its environmental sustainability, which makes disseminating environmental awareness intrinsic to the centre's purpose.	Fixed feature	
ENVIRONMENTAL	ECOLOGICAL VALUE		Habitat creation	✓	Min. req. met	Ecological co-benefit that enriches the model but is not required to meet the minimum ecological requirement, which is already secured by the fixed feature "crop diversification"	Flexible feature	
			Pollinator support	✓		Flexible feature		
	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	ENERGY	Low energy cultivation	✓	✓	Minimum condition for the model to address its energy-management dimension.	Fixed feature	
	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY	Productive green area	✓	✓	Minimum condition for the model to deliver its green-contribution dimension.	Fixed feature	
FOOD	PRODUCT TYPE		Fruits	✓	Min. req. met	Optional additional output: the product-type objective is already met by the model's fixed produce, so this is interchangeable with other product types rather than constitutive.	Flexible feature	
			Flowers/plants	✓			Flexible feature	
			Value added products	✓			Flexible feature	
	PRODUCT DESTINATION		Members/subscribers	✓	Min. req. met	Optional recipient group: the destination objective is already met by the fixed "surrounding community."	Flexible feature	
			Event participants	✓			Flexible feature	
Courses/programs			✓	Flexible feature				
ECONOMIC	INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES	PRODUCT SALE	Events	✓	Min. req. met	Optional revenue streams: the model's income base is already secured by its fixed income feature "grow produce sale".	Flexible feature	
			Seeds	✓			Flexible feature	
			Value added products	✓			Flexible feature	
			Membership	✓			Flexible feature	
			Group visits/field trips	✓			Flexible feature	
	FUNDING		Individual donations	✓	Context-adaptable	Optional funding source the center may pursue.	Flexible feature*	
	BUSINESS MODEL	STRATEGY	Income diversification	✓	✓	Core business strategy: the center's multifunctional nature generates several revenue streams, so diversified income is constitutive of a viable model rather than one option among others.	Fixed feature	
			Public-support dependency	✓	Context-adaptable	Depends on the local funding and support ecosystem, and is therefore context-specific rather than constitutive.	Flexible feature	
			Community support	✓			Flexible feature	
			Markets	✓	Min. req. met	Optional distribution channel: the distribution objective is already met by the model's fixed on-site channel.	Flexible feature	
		Pre-order system	✓	Flexible feature				
DISTRIBUTION		Events	✓	✓	Distribution through events links the food dimension to the center's socio-cultural mission, sharing produce within communal and recreational settings; this cross-dimensional role makes it core rather than a logistical option.	Fixed feature		

Table 10: Intermediate-Recurrence Features from International Case Study Comparison (the asterisk next to "public funding" indicates that it is recommended but not mandatory, as funding availability depends on external institutional, political, and economic conditions).

Other promotions were grounded in the center's relationship to its core mission. Environmental awareness as a dissemination theme was elevated because of the close relationship between urban agriculture and sustainability objectives: disseminating environmental awareness was

regarded as a necessary field of dissemination rather than a secondary one. The same rationale was applied to low energy cultivation and productive green area, which were considered the minimum conditions to cover, respectively, the energy dimension of resource management and the green contribution dimension. Lastly, events as a distribution channel were promoted because this feature links the food and socio-cultural dimensions, using recreational activities as opportunities to share the center's produce, encourage healthy eating, and foster public involvement. The fixed tier comprises 41 features in total. Taken across the five dimensions, the fixed features sketch a coherent and demanding profile

In the **socio-cultural dimension**, a center must offer agricultural training, food preparation, and volunteering as core activities, host agricultural training, food preparation, and social and recreational events, and maintain a functionally differentiated management team with a community engagement component. Its target users must include, at minimum, young people, future growers, and the broader community. Knowledge contribution is also fixed: the center is expected to conduct research on sustainable agriculture and to disseminate themes of sustainable agriculture, food security, and environmental awareness.

The **environmental dimension** requires crop diversification, active resource management across soil, water, waste, and energy (secured at a minimum by low-energy cultivation practices), and a green contribution realized through at least one productive green area.

In the **food dimension**, the structural minimum encompasses vegetable and seedling production through in-ground cultivation, distributed to the surrounding community as the primary required channel.

The **economic dimension** is the most articulated. As income-generating activities, the sale of grown produce is fixed; as business model strategies, the center must adopt a partnership-based approach and pursue income diversification. Beyond strategy, the model also specifies required elements of management and distribution: a member-supported management type, to achieve and promote inclusion, and distribution both on-site and through events, which connects produce sharing to the center's socio-cultural life. Two features in this dimension carry a specific qualification. Government grants and foundation grants appear in the fixed tier marked with an asterisk, because funding features across both tiers are treated as strategic orientations rather than operational requirements. The model does not prescribe that any given center will have

secured these sources; it proposes that actively pursuing them is structurally expected as part of a sustainable funding strategy.

Finally, in the health and **well-being dimension**, a center must provide paid access to produce (to allow access to fresh and local food), free access to some events, active employment support, psychological restoration opportunities, and promote healthy diet.

Flexible features behave differently. They are optional in the sense that they do not all need to be present in every center. Rather, each center may select and combine them differently according to its context, mission, and resources. The flexible tier comprises 71 features, derived from two sources: features with low recurrence (appearing in two or fewer cases) that passed the transferability check, and features with medium recurrence (three of five) that were not judged as definitionally required. A youth-focused program, for instance, reflects a deliberate target-audience choice that several centers make; it is not a structural requirement of the typology. Similarly, the variety of cultivation technologies available in the flexible tier (raised-bed cultivation, greenhouse production, aquaponics, vertical farming) represents the range of productive configurations that real centers have adopted, none of which is individually necessary. The flexible dimension also includes the great majority of income-generating activities and business model variants, from memberships to space rental to online distribution, because the revenue mix of a center is shaped by local economic conditions and institutional relationships.

Considered together, the two tiers, constitute the composition model for an urban agriculture center, presented in its complete form in the table that follows (Table 11). Table 11 functions as the operational synthesis of the chapter and as a reference for initiatives that seek to establish an urban agriculture center: read vertically, it maps each of the five dimensions onto its constituent parameters; read horizontally, it separates what a center must exhibit from what it may adopt.

The model is not a checklist, in the sense that it does not require every real center to display all features with the same degree of development, nor does it treat flexible features as merely decorative. Rather, it defines a minimum compositional threshold. A center that satisfies the definition introduced in Chapter 2, namely a multifunctional, convergent, and irradiating urban agriculture initiative, should at least meet the fixed features identified by the model, while the flexible features may vary according to context, resources, institutional conditions, and local objectives. In this sense, the distinction between fixed and flexible features makes the model both

precise and scalable: a modest center operating on limited public land can still satisfy the fixed tier, while a larger and better resourced initiative may extend further into the flexible tier without ceasing to belong to the same conceptual category. The initiation question, namely how such a center comes into being, is addressed in Chapter 4.

URBAN AGRICULTURE CENTER | COMPOSITION MODEL

		SOCIO-CULTURAL		ENVIRONMENTAL	
FLEXIBLE	FIXED	FUNCTIONS			
		ACTIVITIES	FUNCTIONS		
YOUTH-FOCUSED SOIL & COMPOST MANAGEMENT HERBALISM & MEDICINAL PLANTS CULTIVATION SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE PRACTICES SOCIAL COHESION & RECREATION	AGRICULTURAL TRAINING FOOD PREPARATION & CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER EXTERNAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT	EVENTS	MANAGERS		
YOUTH-FOCUSED SOIL & COMPOST MANAGEMENT HERBALISM & MEDICINAL PLANTS CULTIVATION SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE PRACTICES	SOCIAL COHESION AND RECREATIONAL EVENTS AGRICULTURAL TRAINING FOOD PREPARATION & CONSERVATION	ACTORS	TARGET USERS		
FOUNDER-LED PROMOTERS WHO CARRY THE PROJECT IDEA MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS FOOD-ACCESS BENEFICIARIES PAYING CONSUMERS INSTITUTIONAL USERS INTERESTED PUBLIC WELLBEING BENEFICIARIES RELATED BUSINESSES PROFESSIONAL FARMERS OTHER PROFESSIONALS MARGINALIZED GROUPS	FUNCTIONALLY DIFFERENTIATED MANAGEMENT TEAM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIMENSION PRESENT IN THE MANAGEMENT	KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION	RESEARCH		
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS FOOD SECURITY HEALTH POLICIES IMPLEMENTATION	SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOOD SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS	ECOLOGICAL VALUE	DISSEMINATION		
HABITAT CREATION POLLINATOR SUPPORT DISASTER PREVENTION NATIVE PLANTING	CROP DIVERSIFICATION	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	WASTE		
RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION	CHEMICAL INPUT REDUCTION SOIL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY		
RECYCLING/WASTE REDUCTION	LOW ENERGY CULTIVATION WATER EFFICIENCY	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY		
ORCHARD AREA PARK/GARDEN AREA URBAN FORESTRY	ORGANIC WASTE VALORISATION	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY		
ORCHARD AREA PARK/GARDEN AREA URBAN FORESTRY	PRODUCTIVE GREEN AREA	GREEN CONTRIBUTION	GREEN TYPOLOGY		

Table 11: Fixed and Flexible Features of the Composition Model for Urban Agriculture Centers, part 1.

FOOD		ECONOMIC		WELLBEING
FLEXIBLE	FIXED			
FRUITS FLOWERS/PLANTS VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS	VEGETABLES SEEDLING			PRODUCT TYPE
RAISED-BED CULTIVATION GREENHOUSE AQUAPONICS VERTICAL FARMING	IN-GROUND CULTIVATION			PRODUCTION MODES
LOCAL BUSINESSES SCHOOLS/OTHER INSTITUTIONS MEMBERS/SUBSCRIBERS EVENT PARTICIPANTS	SURROUNDING COMMUNITY			PRODUCT DESTINATION
COURSES/PROGRAMS EVENTS SEEDS VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS FLOWER/PLANTS SALE FERTILIZER SALE MEMBERSHIP GROUP VISITS/FIELD TRIPS LOCAL BUSINESSES PARTNERSHIPS SPACE RENTAL AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT EXTERNAL SERVICES	GROWN PRODUCE			INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS CORPORATE GRANTS	GOVERNMENT GRANTS FOUNDATION GRANTS			FUNDING
PUBLIC-SUPPORT DEPENDENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT MEMBERSHIP-BASED LOCAL BUSINESSES INTEGRATION	PARTNERSHIP BASED INCOME DIVERSIFICATION		STRATEGY	
MARKETS PRE-ORDER SYSTEM ONLINE SHOP	ON-SITE EVENTS		DISTRIBUTION	IBUSINESS MODEL
EMPLOYEES APPRENTICE VOLUNTEER-SUPPORTED	MEMBER-SUPPORTED		MANAGEMENT	
SELF LABOUR FREE ACCESS	PAID ACCESS			FOOD ACCESS
	PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTORATION FREE ACCESS TO EVENTS EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT			WELLBEING PROMOTION
ACTIVE LIVING	HEALTHY DIET PROMOTION			HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION

Table 11: Fixed and Flexible Features of the Composition Model for Urban Agriculture Centers, part 2.

CHAPTER 4

TWO PATHS TO CREATION: A TURIN–TOKYO COMPARISON

4.1 Orti Generali and Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture: Comparing Two Urban Agriculture Experiences

The final stage of the research narrows from five cases to two, and it does so on different evidential ground. The two in-depth cases, Orti Generali in Turin and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture in Tokyo, were chosen not only for the contrast between their Italian and Japanese settings but also because each could be studied at first hand rather than through documentary sources alone. This difference matters. It is what allows Chapter 4 to move past description and toward the question of how a center begins.

The Turin–Tokyo pairing, as already stated in Chapter 1, grew out of a research collaboration between the Politecnico di Torino and the University of Tokyo, a connection that made sustained fieldwork in Japan possible. A three-month research period in Tokyo allowed the Nishi-Tokyo Center to be visited on site, observed in operation, and discussed with the actors involved in it, among them its metropolitan and academic partners (Nishi-Tokyo project team, personal communication, May 22, 2026). Orti Generali was examined through comparable direct access, with repeated site visits and an interview with one of its founder and manager (M. Baldo, personal communication, February 2, 2026).

This first-hand evidence sets the two in-depth cases apart from the five international ones, which were reconstructed largely from secondary material, and it is what sustains the fuller analysis that follows: the shared framework here, the policy environments of the two cities in Section 4.2, and the initiation processes in Section 4.3. Before that deeper reading, though, the two cases are placed on the same footing as the earlier five. They are read through the same comparison grid applied in Chapter 3, so that the in-depth analysis rests on a description built to identical criteria. The two centers are introduced visually before the comparison proper: a photographic plate conveys the character of each site, while a set of satellite and location maps situates them within their urban fabric.



Figure 8: Satellite view of Orti Generali (image captured from Google Earth).

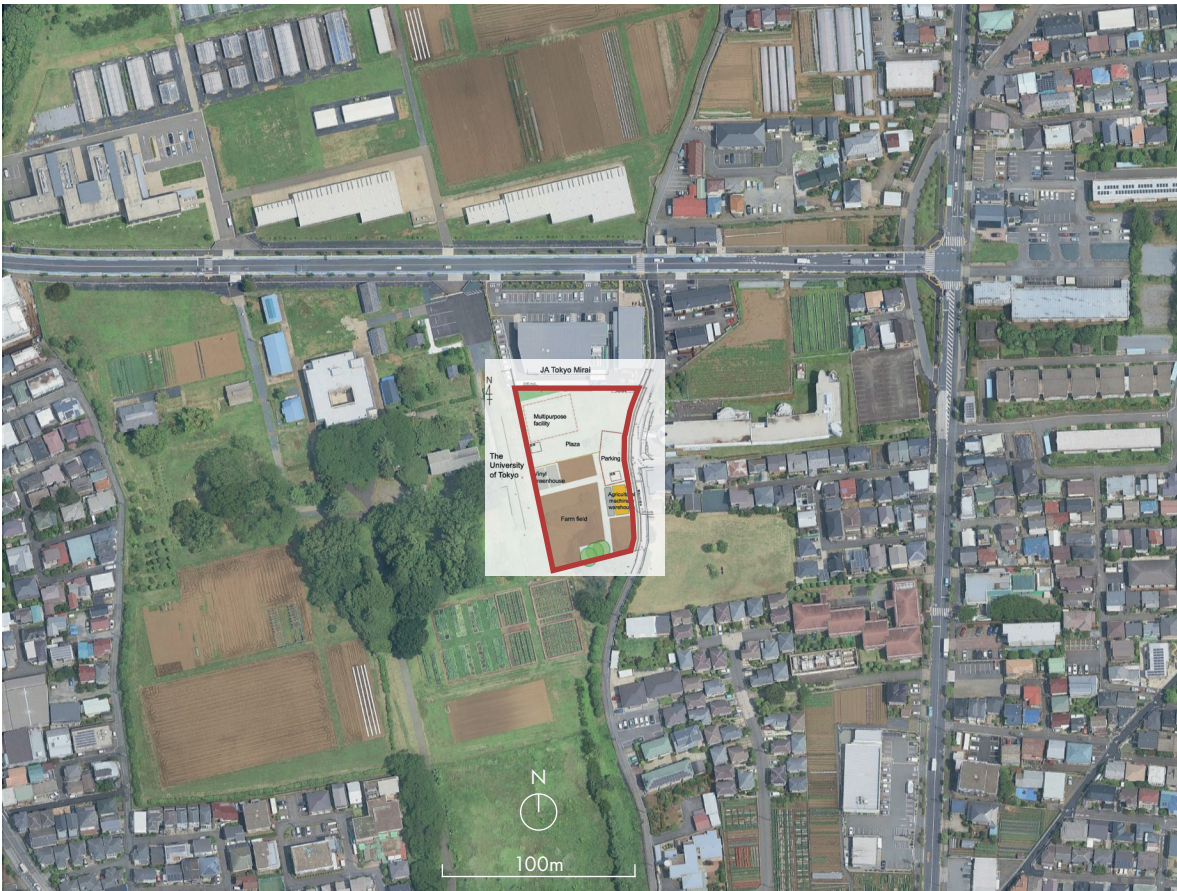


Figure 9: Satellite view of Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture (image captured from Google Earth).



Figure 10: Representative images of Orti Generali. Orti Generali, as visible from the images, is actively engaged in social responsibility initiatives, with the kiosk serving as the central element of the project. The events organized at this facility are mainly designed to attract the neighborhood, with the goal of creating environments that foster well-being and promote a more balanced and sustainable lifestyle (images retrieved from Orti Generali website).



Figure 11: Representative images of Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture. The Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Centre for Urban Agriculture, as shown in the images, is currently under construction. Currently in its Phase 1, the focus is to preparing the land for future cultivation. During the April meeting, a key issue emerged: the soil is not of suitable quality for growing crops and requires additional treatments (author's pictures).

Before the analysis turns to how an urban agriculture center comes into being, the two in-depth cases need to be described on common ground. This section applies to Orti Generali and to the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture the same analytical framework used for the five international cases in Chapter 3, reading each case across the Case Study Profile and the five dimensions of urban agriculture. This comparison serves a descriptive rather than generative function. Unlike the five cases used to develop the composition model, Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center are not used to produce a new recurrence count. They are instead read side by side, so that their similarities and differences become clear before the initiation analysis that follows. The full comparison is summarized in the Table 10.

At the level of the case study profile analysis (Table 12), the two cases share a public foundation and diverge in form and scale. Both stand on publicly owned land, and both are run by an organized intermediary rather than directly by the public administration: Orti Generali operates as a social enterprise, while the Nishi-Tokyo Center is managed by a non-profit organization NPO Birth⁶. Each case is embedded in a structured policy context that explicitly names the practice and grants it legal standing. In both cases, this context is not defined by a single act, but by a sequence of municipal and metropolitan instruments accumulated over more than a decade, a process of policy layering to which Section 4.2 returns. Their self-definition, however, differs. Orti Generali presents itself as an urban farm and a model of urban regeneration and social inclusion, occupying 55,096 m² of former industrial and informally cultivated land in southern Turin. The Nishi-Tokyo Center defines itself as a hub for learning, connection, and practice, on a far smaller site of 4,300 m² in a suburban residential zone of Nishi-Tokyo City. The promoters further reflect this contrast: two individuals in the Turin case, a metropolitan government in the Tokyo one. So does the field in which each was initiated, urban regeneration and community development for Orti Generali, farmland conservation and the securing of agricultural personnel for the Nishi-Tokyo Center.

The dimensional reading confirms that the two cases share a substantial common basis, while differing in the extent and emphasis with which the five dimensions are articulated. On the points the framework treats as core, the two cases largely coincide. Within the socio-cultural dimension,

⁶ NPO birth is a Japanese non-profit organization established in 1997 with the aim of conserving nature in urban and local areas. Drawing on over two decades of experience in ecology and community building, the organization promotes the value of parks in cities and works across sectors to connect people with one another and with nature.

IN DEPTH CASE STUDIES	IDENTITY			SPATIAL DIMENSION			GOVERNANCE		POLICY CONTEXT										
	CONCEPT	MISSION	FORM			LOCATION AND CONTEXT	LAND USE DESIGNATION	SITE AREA	LAND OWNERSHIP	MANAGEMENT TYPE	DECISION-MAKING ACTORS	INITIATION PROCESS	INITIATION FIELD						
			Community garden	Urban farm	Educational center								Hub	Food security	Sustainability	Urban regeneration	Agriculture	Public health	Farmland conservation
ORTI GENERALI	Orti Generali is a model of urban regeneration, social inclusion, experimentation, and knowledge-sharing. The project is genuinely open to the entire community welcoming gardeners with limited financial means, who can take part by contributing their time, as well as vulnerable people who can find a pathway to social and professional reintegration. Beyond cultivation, Orti Generali places social interaction at its core. The Chiosco becomes the heart of community life, a space for encounter, learning, and exchange. At the same time, the project operates as an open-air laboratory, where urban agriculture is tested as an innovation that is at once spatial and social.	1. Reclaim and valorize urban green areas as accessible, productive, and shared common goods, open to the whole community. 2. Practice urban agriculture in its many forms, from plots to cultivate autonomously, to gardens grown collectively, to a farm that produces, teaches, and experiments. 3. Build a social enterprise model for the transformation and management of Turin's unused agricultural land. 4. Foster models of circular economy, environmental responsibility, and work inclusion, opening pathways to social and professional reintegration.				Turin	"Parchi urbani e fluviali": park area	55096 m²	Public	Social enterprise	Board of directors of Orti Generali SRL	1. Participatory design process Of a former industrial area marked by abandonment and widespread informal gardens							1) Miroarti project (2010-2012) Project involving social research and community engagement to support urban and environmental transformation of the agricultural as along the Sangone in the Mirafiori Sud district of Turin
														2) TOCC Torino Città da Coltivare project (2012) Project through which the municipal administration has promoted the development of agriculture in the urban area					
NISHI-TOKYO INNOVATION CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE	The Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center of Urban Agriculture is conceived as a hub where city residents grow food, meet one another, and shape the future of the city. The initiative aims to balance innovation in Tokyo agriculture with an agriculture-inclusive lifestyle for its residents, opening farming to diverse participants. The center will cyclically develop three core functions: a place for learning, a place for connection, and a place for practice. The projects envisions a future in which participants born from these circles of connection will eventually become active across Tokyo, adopting a green, agriculture-based way of living that creates new value for the city.	1. Develop diverse participants by creating mechanisms for citizens, part-time farmers, companies, and researchers to engage with agriculture 2. Build community through learning and exchange in real agricultural spaces, cultivating co-creation spaces where diverse stakeholders connect and tackle local challenges 3. Responding to the decline of farmland and the shortage of successors 4. Build a "green agriculture living city development" model that expands the possibilities of urban agriculture				Tokyo	"First Class Residential zone"	4300 m²	Public	Non-profit organization	NPO Birth, Tokyo Metropolitan governments, project partners (University of Tokyo)	1. Tokyo Metropolitan Government project Promote innovation in Tokyo agriculture, cultivate new farmers and develop hubs that encourage participation in agriculture by diverse stakeholders						1) Special Subcommittee on Productive Green Land was established within the City Planning Council of Nishi-Tokyo (2017)	
														2) Nishi-Tokyo City Internal Project Team for the Conservation of Urban Farmland (2019)					
																			4) Nishi-Tokyo City Urban Planning Master Plan (2024) Positions urban farmland as part of the city's future urban structure
																			5) Tokyo Metropolitan Government "Diverse Agricultural Actors Development Support Project" (2024)

Table 12: Profile Analysis of the In-Depth Case Study Comparison Orti-Nishi.

both deliver agricultural training, rely on volunteers, and host social and recreational events, and each draws in the broader community and future growers among its users. Each contributes knowledge through research and dissemination centered on urban and sustainable agriculture and on environmental awareness. In environmental terms, both contribute ecologically through crop diversification and native planting, and both manage resources through soil-health improvement and on-site renewable energy production, although their water and waste strategies differ and are taken up among the divergences. Their green contribution rests on shared ground as well: each conserves green space and counts both productive green area and park or garden area among its typologies, with Orti Generali additionally converting new ground to productive use. Both grow vegetables, fruits, plants, and value-added products through in-ground cultivation and greenhouses, without recourse to the soil-less or vertical techniques the framework also records, and both direct produce to event participants. Economically, both depend on public support, government grants in particular, and neither sustains itself on sales alone, although Orti Generali sets economic sustainability as a goal. Their common income-generating activities are course and program fees, the sale of value-added products, and fees from organized group visits. In business orientation the two share a strategy of public-support dependency, distribution through markets and events, and a workforce that includes employees. In the wellbeing dimension, finally, both provide paid access to fresh food, employment support, psychological restoration, free access to selected events, and the promotion of active living.

The differences lie in how far each case extends beyond this shared base, and they are wide enough to give the two centers distinct profiles. Two structural conditions account for most of the divergence: the site available to each, and the mission each pursues. Orti Generali works a site more than ten times the one of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, and it frames itself as an urban farm and a model of urban regeneration and social inclusion. The Nishi-Tokyo Center frames itself as a hub for learning, connection, and practice, built to answer the decline of farmland and the shortage of agricultural successors. These starting points, a large regeneration-oriented farm on one side and a compact conservation-oriented hub on the other, carry through almost every dimension of the comparison.

The governance and policy context register the contrast first. Orti Generali is steered by a single private-law body, the board of Orti Generali SRL, whereas the Nishi-Tokyo Center is governed jointly by a non-profit organization, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and a university

partner, a composition that places public and academic actors inside the decision-making core. The fields in which the two were initiated diverge accordingly: urban regeneration, agriculture, and community development for Orti Generali, against farmland conservation and the securing of agricultural personnel for the Nishi-Tokyo Center. Even the way each came to occupy its site differs in kind, a participatory design process followed by a municipal land concession in Turin, a metropolitan project followed by public calls for partners and operators in Tokyo. These are the differences that Sections 4.2 and 4.3 examine in depth; here it is enough to note that they are already legible at the level of the profile.

Within the **socio-cultural dimension** the two centers diverge in both activity and audience. Orti Generali offers a markedly wider range of functions: beyond the agricultural training and volunteering it shares with the Nishi-Tokyo Center, it adds herbalism and medicinal-plant cultivation, food preparation and preservation, youth-focused activities, sustainable creative practices, and social cohesion and recreation. The Nishi-Tokyo Center develops one function that Orti Generali does not, external project development support, a direct expression of its role as a hub that incubates initiatives beyond its own perimeter. Orti Generali pursues a different kind of outward reach: rather than supporting external projects, it sets out to be a replicable model of urban regeneration for comparable sites in Turin. The intended users follow the same logic. Orti Generali addresses a socially broad public that includes marginalized groups, food-access beneficiaries, wellbeing beneficiaries, young people, paying consumers, and subscribing members. By contrast, the Nishi-Tokyo Center approaches the renewal of the agricultural sector by expanding the category of future farmers beyond traditional professional farmers, incorporating citizen farmers, business farmers, and other newcomers. Its knowledge contribution is concentrated on urban and sustainable agriculture, where Orti Generali extends the same research and dissemination effort to environmental awareness and to an explicit social dimension (Table 13).

The **environmental dimension** shows a similar asymmetry of breadth. Both centers diversify crops and use native planting, but Orti Generali also pursues habitat creation and pollinator support, and it adds urban forestry to the productive and park typologies the two share. Their resource strategies differ in detail rather than in degree: Orti Generali couples soil-health improvement with chemical-input reduction, manages water through efficiency measures, and cuts waste through recycling, whereas the Nishi-Tokyo Center harvests rainwater and valorizes

organic waste. Renewable energy is produced on site in both (Table 13).

In the **food dimension** the cases grow the same products through the same in-ground and greenhouse methods, so the only meaningful difference concerns destination: Orti Generali's produce reaches the surrounding community as well as event participants, while the Nishi-Tokyo Center's is directed to event participants alone (Table 13).

The **economic dimension** is where Orti Generali's greater autonomy becomes clearest. It diversifies income across courses, events, produce sales, and membership, distributes on site in addition to markets and events, draws funding from land-fee reductions, government grants, corporate grants, and individual donations, and runs on a workforce of employees, apprentices, and volunteers. The Nishi-Tokyo Center earns through courses, value-added products, space rental, group visits, and merchandise, yet it relies on government grants as its single recorded funding source and operates with employees alone. Both depend on public support; only Orti Generali pairs that reliance with a deliberately diversified, membership-based economic model (Table 13).

The **wellbeing dimension** closes the pattern. Orti Generali opens access to food through self-labor, free, and paid channels, supports employment and psychological restoration, and adds therapeutic rehabilitation and the promotion of a healthy diet. The Nishi-Tokyo Center provides paid access, employment support, and psychological restoration, but not the therapeutic or dietary provisions, once more consistent with a center conceived as an instrument of agricultural innovation and farmland conservation rather than of social welfare (Table 13).

Read together, the two cases describe one shared type realized at two very different intensities: a publicly grounded, multifunctional urban agriculture initiative that takes different forms in the two cases: broad in scope and oriented towards urban regeneration in Turin, and more compact, centered on farmland conservation and the securing of farming personnel in Tokyo. The convergences are most secure precisely where the composition model locates the fixed features of a center, which is what justifies treating both initiatives as full instances of the concept. The differences between the case studies can be instead understood in relation to their underlying concept, primary aim, and initiation process: the policy environment that authorized it, the actors who set it in motion, and the sequence through which it took shape. These are the threads the next two sections pursue, first by comparing the urban policy frameworks of Turin and Tokyo (Section

Table 13: Urban Agriculture Dimensional Analysis of the In-Depth Case Study Comparison Orti-Nishi, part 1.

[illegible]

Table 13: Urban Agriculture Dimensional Analysis of the In-Depth Case Study Comparison Orti-Nishi, part 2.

[illegible]

4.2), then by reconstructing and comparing the two initiation processes (Section 4.3).

4.2 Turin and Tokyo: Two Policy Frameworks

Both Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture come into being inside dense, multi-level policy environments, where international declarations, European or national legislation, and municipal instruments overlap.

Appendix E-F provides a comparative overview of the policy instruments concerning the Italian and Japanese contexts addressed in this section and in the subsequent chapters of the thesis, specifying their scope, issuing body, and year of adoption. This should be read alongside Appendix A-B-C-D, previously introduced as a broader comparative overview of the international, European, Italian, and Japanese policy frameworks.

For both cities the international and European layer is broadly enabling rather than decisive: instruments such as the Brundtland Report, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy acknowledge urban agriculture and encourage it, yet they set direction without governing how urban agriculture should be established. The two contexts differ primarily in the institutional level at which the key enabling instruments are located. This distinction provides the basis for the comparison of initiation processes that follows.

In Tokyo the decisive layer is national. A coherent legal architecture, built up over decades, treats farmland inside the city as a planning category in its own right. The City Planning Act of 1968 divides municipal territory into urbanization promotion and urbanization control areas, and the Productive Green Land Act of 1974, revised in 1991, ties the conservation of urban farmland to long-term cultivation and tax relief (Yokohari et al., 2020). Yokohari et al. (2020) read this layered system as the institutional form of a "grey" landscape, an intentional mixture of urban and rural land uses that Western dichotomous planning would dismiss as disorder. That reading has since become the mainstream one. Japanese planners once saw scattered urban farmland as a failure of modern planning; they now treat it as a deliberate asset. Murayama (2025) follows this shift through the agri-residential mixed-use neighborhoods of cities such as Nishi-Tokyo, where cultivated plots sit among low-rise housing in a fine-grained pattern with few parallels outside Asia. The decisive legislative turn, though, is recent. The Basic Act on the

Promotion of Urban Agriculture of 2015 and the Basic Plan that followed in 2016 reframe urban farmland as land that ought to remain in the city rather than land awaiting conversion, and the 2018 leasing law makes it easier for non-owners to cultivate it (都市農業について:農林水産省 [Situation Surrounding Urban Agriculture May 2026], 2026). How far this conservation logic reaches became clear when the first designations completed their 30-year term. Dating from 1992⁷, they expired in 2022, and the system was renewed rather than relaxed.

A new Specified Productive Green Zone⁸ designation extends the same tax relief, the deferral of inheritance tax and the reduction of property tax, for a further 10 years in exchange for continued cultivation, and can be renewed every 10 years thereafter (都市緑地法等の一部を改正する法律 [Act Partially Amending the Urban Green Space Act and Other Acts], 2017). Owners who decline it lose the designation and the relief that comes with it (都市農業について:農林水産省 [Situation Surrounding Urban Agriculture May 2026], 2026). In Nishi-Tokyo City about 90% of farmland owners chose to continue under the renewed designation (Murayama, 2025).

Nishi-Tokyo City has approached urban agriculture as a matter of continuous planning rather than isolated initiative. A succession of agricultural promotion plans, the first in 2004 and a second in 2014, has kept the municipal line steady, tying farmland conservation to viable farm management, a widening base of agricultural actors, short local supply chains, and regular exchange between farmers and residents (Nishi-Tokyo City, 2004; Nishi-Tokyo City, 2014). Alongside them, the 2013 Implementation Plan for Community Planning (西東京市都市と農業が共生するまちづくり事業実施計画) where city and agriculture coexist where City and Agriculture Coexist turned the principle of coexistence into area-based measures: local sale of produce, experiential learning on working farmland, and walking routes through cultivated

⁷ Introduced in 1992, Productive Green Zones (PGZs) are designated as an overlay to basic land use zoning, granting urban farmland owners tax benefits such as the postponement of inheritance tax and a reduction in property tax, conditional on the continuation of farming activity; once farming ceases, the designation is released. PGZs were originally effective for thirty years, after which landowners had to choose between continuing to farm in exchange for a ten-year extension of the tax benefit or paying higher taxes in exchange for release from the farming obligation (Murayama, 2025).

⁸ The so-called "2022 problem" refers to the moment when many Productive Green Zones designated in 1992 reached the thirty-year threshold, becoming eligible for purchase requests. In response, Japanese municipalities relied on the Specified Productive Green Zone system, introduced through the 2017 amendment to the Productive Green Land Act, which allowed municipalities, with landowners' consent, to extend the period before purchase requests by ten years while maintaining preferential tax treatment and agricultural land-use restrictions. In Nishi-Tokyo, this mechanism served as a key instrument to prevent the sudden release of productive green lands for non-agricultural urban uses (都市緑地法等の一部を改正する法律 [Act Partially Amending the Urban Green Space Act and Other Acts], 2017).

land (Nishi-Tokyo City, 2022). The decisive move, though, came through urban planning. A 2017 reform of the City Planning Council ordinance let the Council advise the mayor and convene specialist subcommittees. The “生産緑地に関する専門部会” translated as “Special Subcommittee on Productive Green Land” soon took up the conservation of urban farmland; forming in 2019 a cross-departmental project team “都市農地の保全等検討庁内プロジェクトチーム” translated as “Nishi-Tokyo City Internal Project Team for the Conservation of Urban Farmland (Nishi-Tokyo City, 2022). From there the process widened with the creation of value-creation workshops in 2021 that gathered municipal officers, the agricultural cooperative (JA), farmers, citizens, and University of Tokyo researchers (Murayama, 2025). Two instruments of 2024 then drew the threads together, as a third promotion plan renewed municipal policy after the national reforms of 2015-2017 and the revised Urban Planning Master Plan folded farmland and greenery into a compact-city framework built on a Location Optimization Plan (Nishi-Tokyo City, 2024). Read as a whole, the trajectory moves from sectoral agricultural promotion toward farmland conservation embedded in spatial planning, carried forward by an ever-wider circle of actors.

Turin presents almost the opposite construction. At the national level Italy has no dedicated urban agriculture law. Its relevant instruments are enabling and indirect: a 2001 decree introduces agricultural multifunctionality, a 2013 law promotes urban green spaces, and a series of soil-consumption bills that would have written urban agriculture into the legal definition of urban regeneration were repeatedly proposed but never adopted. Into this permissive yet thin national frame, Turin builds its policy environment from the municipal level upward, almost project by project. A first regulation for community gardens dates to 1986; the 1995 master plan turns many surviving cultivated areas into park land; and the 2006 greenery regulation, the 2007 Cascine nei Parchi reuse program, the 2012 Torino Città da Coltivare project, and the 2013 municipal regulation 363 progressively give urban gardening a formal administrative footing. This last regulation is currently under revision, in consultation with the district councils and with ORME⁹, the second-level body that brings together the city's urban-gardening associations, with municipal approval expected in 2026; the revised text will govern the district-managed

⁹ ORME ETS – Orti Metropolitan (a registered third-sector entity, *Ente del Terzo Settore*) is a Turin-based network of organizations and stakeholders active in urban agriculture, established to connect, promote, and support experiences of horticulture, beekeeping, and urban green space care in the Turin metropolitan area, with social, environmental, educational, and inclusion-oriented aims.

allotments rather than gardens held under concession, and it draws explicitly on the associative models that the city has come to see as working, in some respects, better than its own directly managed plots. Alongside these regulatory steps runs a layer of commitments and partnerships: the signature of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in 2015, the Atlante del Cibo platform from 2017, and the 2021 Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan, which folds urban gardens into the city's green system. European funding has been a recurring engine, with successive living lab projects¹⁰, ProGReg¹¹, FUSILLI¹², and ClimaGEN¹³, concentrated in the Mirafiori¹⁴ district around Parco Piemonte¹⁵, the site of Orti Generali itself. The Turin framework is thus bottom-up and accretive: it assembles a coherent environment for urban agriculture out of municipal regulations, food-policy commitments, and externally funded experiments, in the absence of a national instrument that would name the practice and protect its land. Gottero et al. (2023) read this same metropolitan setting through a landscape-planning lens, arguing that peri-urban agricultural areas are defined and regulated mainly through territorial and planning instruments rather than through any agricultural law.

Read against the wider comparative record, Turin's construction is less an exception than a clear instance of a general pattern. In a study of 44 cities and city regions selected for their urban agriculture practices, most were found to have no policy instrument dedicated to urban

¹⁰ A living lab can be understood as a user-centered, open-innovation approach in which research and experimentation are embedded within real-life community settings, involving citizens, public authorities, businesses, and academic institutions as active co-creators rather than passive subjects. In the context of urban agriculture, living labs typically function as experimental spaces where new practices, technologies, or governance models are tested, adapted, and refined through iterative collaboration with local stakeholders.

¹¹ ProGReg aim was to use nature-based solutions (NBS) as tools for the inclusive urban regeneration of post-industrial areas. In Turin, as in Dortmund, Zagreb and Ningbo, the project worked through Living Labs, where green infrastructure and nature-based solutions were developed, tested and implemented directly in real urban contexts.

¹² FUSILLI is a European Horizon 2020 project aimed at supporting the transition toward sustainable urban, peri-urban and rural food systems through Urban Living Labs. The project connects 12 European cities, including Turin, to develop and test innovative urban food policies and actions across the food value chain: production and processing, distribution and logistics, consumption, food waste and governance.

¹³ ClimaGEN is a project that brings together nine European cities, including Turin, to improve climate resilience and support the transition toward low-carbon, cohesive and climate-neutral cities and regions. The project uses a social innovation approach, involving municipalities, civil society, businesses, cultural and academic institutions, and local stakeholders to transform vulnerable urban neighborhoods into regenerated, resilient and climate-neutral public spaces. In Turin, the main demonstration area is the post-industrial neighborhood of Mirafiori, especially the Living Lab around Parco Piemonte and the Sangone stream (site of Orti Generali).

¹⁴ Mirafiori is a large district in the south-western periphery of Turin, divided into Mirafiori Nord and Mirafiori Sud. Originally developed in the 1960s as a working-class neighborhood to house employees of the historic Fiat plant, it is today a predominantly residential and quiet area, with property costs lower than those of the city center.

¹⁵ Parco Piemonte is a green area of approximately 131,000 square meters located in the Mirafiori Sud district, in the southern periphery of Turin. It extends along the banks of the Sangone stream.

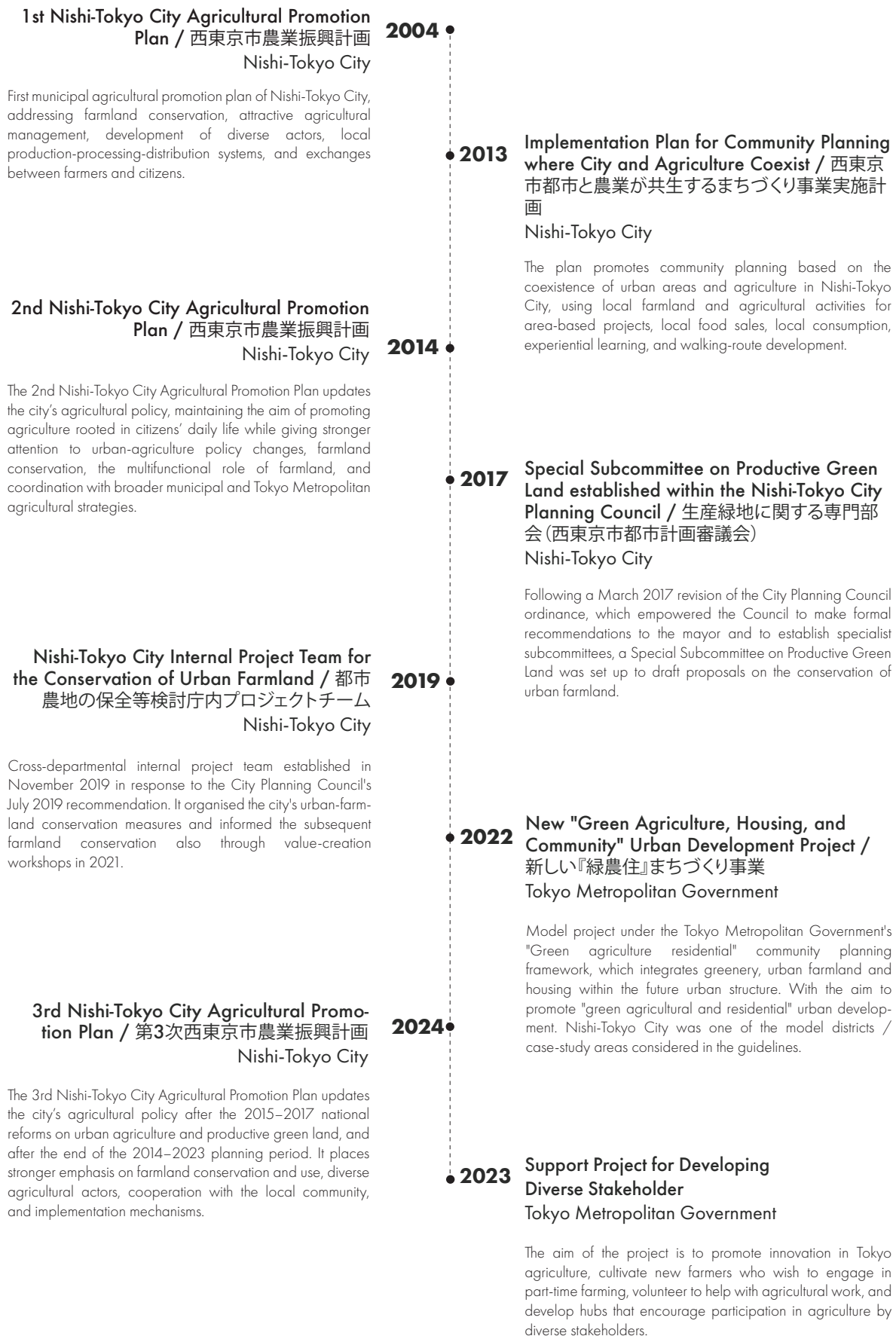


Figure 12: Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center Enabling Policy Framework Scheme.



Figure 13: Orti Generali Enabling Policy Framework Scheme.

agriculture, which enters public action instead as a component of tools framed for other aims, chiefly food and urban greenery (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025, p. 691). Turin follows precisely this route. Urban agriculture surfaces in the municipal regulations for the management of urban gardens that are widespread across Italian cities, Turin among them (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025, p. 696); the same plan that anchors the city's green system appears in their account as a greening strategy carrying explicit goals for urban gardens and urban farms (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025, p. 693). This indirect and distributed mode of integration reflects the barriers that the same study identifies as recurrent: the lack of an official and legal recognition of urban agriculture, conflicts and uncertainties over land tenure and accessibility, and the limits imposed by local regulations and zoning codes (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025, pp. 698, 700). The authors further argue that, in conformance planning systems such as the Italian one, where masterplanning holds strong regulatory force, strategic plans coordinated with spatial planning organize the actors, funding streams, and spatial targets of urban agriculture more coherently than a single dedicated zone could (Cassatella & Gottero, 2025 p. 700). Turin's accretive framework, assembled from regulations, food-policy commitments, and a strategic green-infrastructure plan rather than from a dedicated law or zone, can be read as an empirical expression of that argument.

The two frameworks diverge, then, in their logic and their center of gravity. One descends from a national legal architecture that municipalities apply; the other is assembled upward, from municipal and European instruments, within a national frame that stays largely silent on urban agriculture. Beneath this divergence, however, lies a shared condition. In both cities the initiative rests on public support, and a public actor, the municipality in Turin and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in Tokyo, is decisive in facilitating access to land. However, the nature of that access differs significantly. In Tokyo, the initiative is developed directly on publicly owned land made available by the metropolitan government, whereas in Turin the municipality supports access through a public concession that allows the project to use the site at conditions substantially below market value, while still requiring the payment of a concession fee. It is this common reliance on public agency, combined with contrasting approaches to land access and distinct policy logics, that makes a comparison of the two initiation processes meaningful, and it is to that comparison that the next section turns.

4.3 Comparing the Initiation Processes

The analysis of the two urban policy frameworks conducted in section 4.2 has established the institutional ground on which each center took shape. What remains is the initiation process itself: the conditions, actors, and decisions through which each center came into being. Since the composition framework developed in Chapter 3 addresses the structure and functions of an operating urban agriculture center, it could not be applied directly to the analysis of initiation. A dedicated framework, composed of eight dimensions, was therefore developed to examine the conditions, actors, and steps through which the two centers came into being (Figure 15).

The primary evidence filling the framework was drawn from three interviews:

1. Management representative of Orti Generali: Matteo Baldo, co-funder of Orti Generali)
2. Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, NPO birth and The University of Tokyo
3. Municipality of Turin: Laura Ribotta from the Office of Ecological Transition and European Funds of the City of Turin

Read alongside the documentary record of each case. Each dimension is presented in the below Table 14 together with its comparative reading.

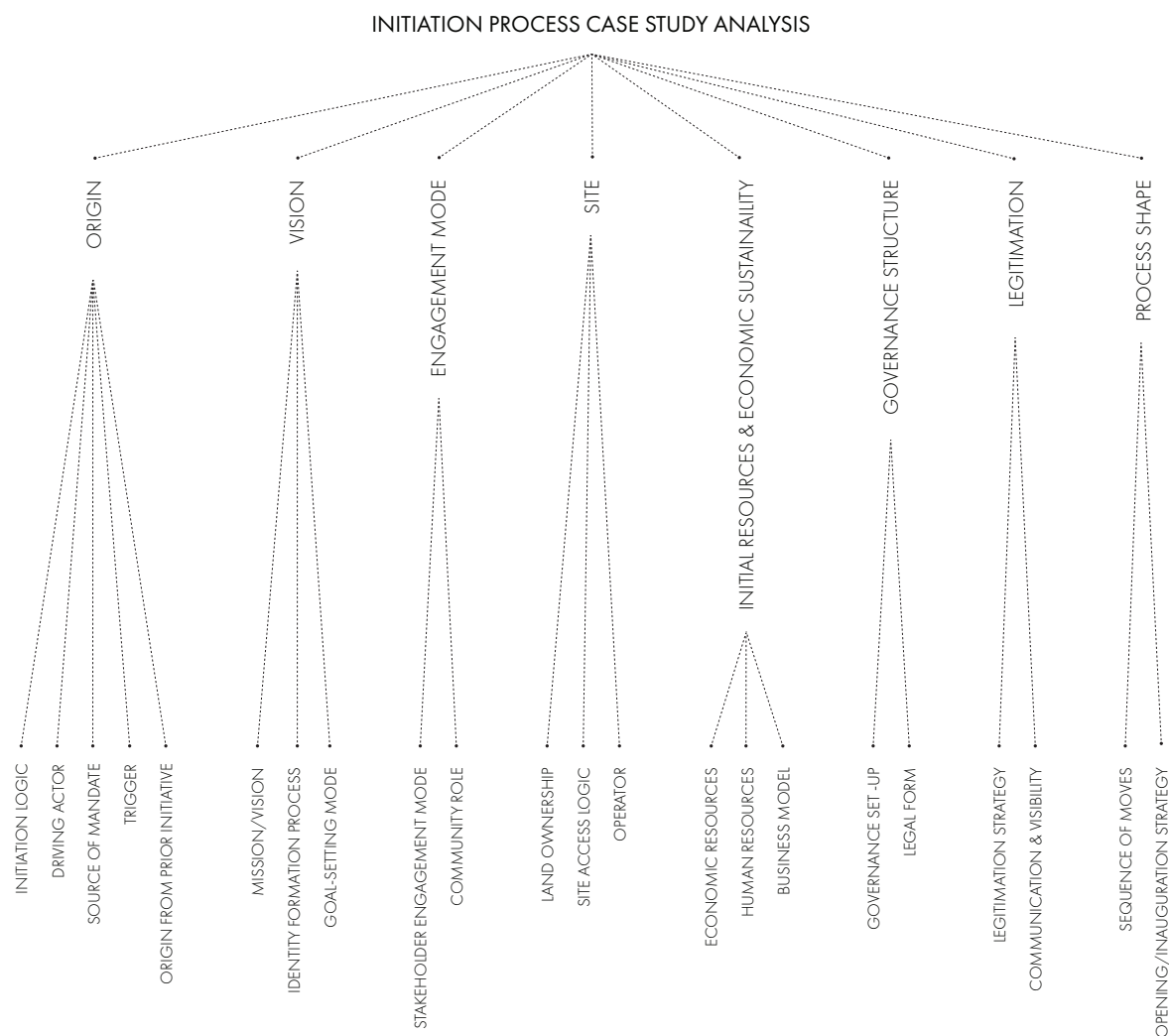


Figure 14: Initiation Process Comparison Structure.

The **Origin dimension** captures the fundamental conditions from which a center departs: the logic that drives the start-up, the actor that sets the process in motion, the source of that actor's mandate, the trigger that opened the process at that specific moment and place, and whether the center grew from an earlier initiative or was created from scratch. No comparison of initiations can begin without first locating what put each process in motion. Here the two cases diverge sharply. Orti Generali emerges from below: its roots lie in the project MiraOrti, a community-based participatory process launched in Mirafiori Sud in 2010, driven by an autonomous non-profit organization whose mandate derives from civic rather than institutional authority. The Nishi-Tokyo Center starts from above, set in motion by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government through a dedicated public program; the operating entity is selected to carry out a frame already predefined by the government. The trigger equally differs. For Orti Generali it is spatial and

local: a residual agricultural area along the Sangone river, abandoned and degraded (M. Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026; L. Ribotta, personal communication, 12 June 2026). For the Nishi-Tokyo Center it is structural and sectoral: a sustained decline in farmers and cultivated land, an ageing farming population without successors, and a parallel rise in urban resident's interest in food and hands-on agriculture (Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, personal communication, 22 May 2026). One center answers a problem of place; the other answers a problem of the sector.

The **Vision dimension** asks what purpose is declared at the outset, how that purpose takes shape, and whether objectives are fixed or negotiated. At Orti Generali the declared aim is to build a replicable social-enterprise model for the transformation and management of residual urban agricultural areas, with the identity partly co-constructed through fieldwork and participatory design. The strategic goals were stated from the beginning, while operational rules adapted through use (Matteo Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026). The Nishi-Tokyo Center is conceived as a hub where people learn through agriculture, connect, and cultivate the future of the city; the policy frame is predefined by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, though activities such as the Open Lab¹⁶ are still being refined through stakeholder interviews and co-creation (Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, personal communication, 22 May 2026). Both cases, then, fix their strategic goals in advance while leaving operational details to be negotiated. The identity-formation process differs partly co-constructed with the community at Orti Generali, partly co-constructed with a curated group of selected stakeholders at the Nishi-Tokyo Center.

The **Engagement mode** dimension examines how stakeholders are brought in and what role the wider community plays. Access to Orti Generali plots is filtered through an application process and requires alignment with the project's ecological and social rules; yet the wider site is open to schools, volunteers, associations, and the neighborhood (Matteo Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026). The community functions as an active co-producer, having helped clean and transform the site from the outset. The Nishi-Tokyo Center engages stakeholders

¹⁶ The Open Lab is envisioned as a space for discussion, co-creation, and project formation within the first phase of the program. It is not conceived as a merely open or promotional event, but rather as a setting in which different actors—farmers, companies, researchers, students, NPOs, local groups, and citizens interested in urban agriculture—come together to share problems, themes of interest, and operational ideas, with the aim of translating them into project proposals for the center's subsequent phase. Its name has not yet been finalized; in the latest version of the project materials, it is provisionally referred to as 東京緑農住ラボ / Tokyo Urban Agriculture Lab.

through targeted individual interviews with advanced farmers, urban-planning actors, and related businesses; the Open Lab is invitation-based rather than open to the public. Urban residents are positioned as potential future participants, to be reached through later programs rather than as founding co-authors.

The **Site dimension** addresses the physical and legal conditions of the land. Both centers operate on publicly owned land, though the route of access differs. Orti Generali obtained its site through a municipal concession following a competitive selection process that began in 2014 and delivered the keys only in 2018, after years of legal challenges (M. Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026; L. Ribotta, personal communication, 12 June 2026). The Nishi-Tokyo Center's site is provided directly by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to the selected operating entity, NPO birth. While Orti Generali evolved over time, from Cooperativa Biloba¹⁷ to Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla¹⁸ to the current Orti Generali SRL, the Nishi-Tokyo Center's legal structure was fixed from the outset.

The **Initial resources and economic sustainability** dimension covers how each center was funded to begin and how it intends to sustain itself. Orti Generali was supported initially through a MIUR Smart Cities grant¹⁹, European project funds (including ProGReg, FUSILLI, and ClimaGEN), and contributions from the Compagnia di San Paolo, with volunteers supplying the founding labor for site remediation (M. Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026; L. Ribotta, personal communication, 12 June 2026). The business model is diversified across plot contributions²⁰, the kiosk, educational activities, and services, though the center is not yet fully economically self-sufficient. The Nishi-Tokyo Center is structured around cooperative-agreement funds from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government program, supplemented by participation

¹⁷ Biloba Social Cooperative is a Turin-based organization historically active in urban and social agriculture, notably through the MiraOrti project, which focused on the regeneration of allotment gardens and green spaces in the Mirafiori Sud district.

¹⁸ Associazione Clorofilla was a Turin-based Third Sector organization active in the fields of urban agriculture, social inclusion, and environmental regeneration, and represented the organizational antecedent of Orti Generali S.r.l.

¹⁹ The MIUR "Smart Cities and Communities" call was a €655.5 million initiative launched in 2012 by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, aimed at developing smarter and more innovative cities across Italy through the funding of research projects, social inclusion initiatives, and advanced technologies for the territory.

²⁰ At Orti Generali, garden plots are small cultivated units assigned to individuals, families or groups for food self-production, ornamental cultivation, and community-based urban agriculture. Access is regulated through an application process and requires adherence to shared rules, including organic cultivation, care of the existing vegetation, and participation in the project's ecological and social principles. The plots are maintained through an annual contribution, with differentiated rates and solidarity-based arrangements for people who cannot fully cover the fee.

fees, usage fees, event and venue fees, vending-machine revenues, and potential corporate partnerships; the sale of harvested produce is not permitted, and the model remains publicly supported and program-based (Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, personal communication, 22 May 2026).

The **Governance and structure dimension** concerns how decision-making is arranged at the founding stage. At Orti Generali the promoter team guided the process, maintaining an ongoing institutional dialogue with the City for concessions, permissions, and funding; the legal form evolved organically across the project's lifespan. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center decision-making is centralized around the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the project partners, and the operating entity, coordinated through tripartite meetings and a steering committee. The governance is appointed and structured from the outset, with multi-actor consultation rather than open co-design.

The **Legitimation dimension** captures how each center earns recognition. Orti Generali pursued institutional legitimacy through the municipal concession, policy alignment, and public and European funding, alongside grassroots legitimacy built through long-term territorial work with gardeners, schools, and local associations (M. Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026; L. Ribotta, personal communication, 12 June 2026). The Nishi-Tokyo Center's legitimacy flows primarily from Tokyo Metropolitan Government endorsement, complemented by expert and network recognition through its advisory relationships with the University of Tokyo, agricultural organizations, and urban-agriculture networks. Both cases also treat communication as a deliberate activity: Orti Generali established a website and social-media presence from early on; the Nishi-Tokyo Center has planned a coordinated visual-identity and public relation strategy from the start.

The **Process shape dimension** is the most explicitly temporal dimension: it reconstructs the qualitative order in which vision, actors, land, and resources came together, and how the move to public use was staged. The two sequences look quite different. Orti Generali followed a trajectory from community-based territorial animation, through a policy opportunity and municipal regulation, to a social-enterprise proposal, public concession, funding, site remediation, and a phased public opening beginning with the garden plots in 2019 (M. Baldo, personal communication, 2 February 2026; L. Ribotta, personal communication, 12 June 2026).

DIMENSION	PARAMETER OF COMPARISON	DESCRIPTION
ORIGIN	INITIATION LOGIC	The fundamental direction driving the start-up (ex: top-down, bottom-up, or hybrid)
	DRIVING ACTOR	Who sets the process in motion (ex: institution, founder, collective, or community group)
	SOURCE OF MANDATE	Where the driving actor's authority to act comes from (ex: institutional remit vs civic/community mandate)
	TRIGGER	The precipitating problem or opportunity that opened the process at that specific moment and place
	ORIGIN FROM PRIOR INITIATIVE	Whether the centre grew out of earlier initiatives or networks, or was created from scratch
VISION	MISSION/VISION	The core purpose declared at the outset
	IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESS	How the intentional identity is formed (ex: pre-defined by the promoter vs co-constructed with participants)
	GOAL-SETTING MODE	Whether objectives are fixed in advance or emerge and are negotiated during the process
ENGAGEMENT MODE	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODE	How stakeholders are involved and selected (ex: curated, invited and screened vs open and self-selecting)
	COMMUNITY ROLE	What part the wider community plays (ex: co-author and co-designer vs audience and beneficiary)
SITE	LAND OWNERSHIP	Who owns the land and under what tenure at the start (ex: public, private or mixed; concession, lease, and so on)
	SITE ACCESS LOGIC	How access to the site was obtained (ex: institutional allocation vs negotiated or regenerated public space)
	OPERATOR	Who manages the initiative
INITIAL RESOURCES & ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	ECONOMIC RESOURCES	Financial inputs needed to start and their source (ex: grants, public funds, fee reductions, self-financing, in-kind support)
	HUMAN RESOURCES	Hands-on human effort needed to get going and who supplies it (ex: volunteer manpower vs paid staff)
	BUSINESS MODEL	How the centre is intended to sustain itself financially over time
GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE	GOVERNANCE SET-UP	How decision-making is arranged at the founding stage
	LEGAL FORM	Whether the legal and organizational form was set at the outset or took shape gradually as the practice grew
LEGITIMATION	LEGITIMATION STRATEGY	How the centre earns acceptance and recognition (ex: institutional endorsement vs relational, grassroots legitimacy)
	COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY	How the initiative makes itself visible (ex: strategic, curated communication vs organic word-of-mouth)
PROCESS SHAPE	SEQUENCE OF MOVES	The qualitative order in which vision, actors, land and resources came together
	OPENING/INAUGURATION STRATEGY	How the move to a public opening is staged and who it is aimed at (ex: curated, invitation-based event vs an organic opening)

Table 14: Initiation Process Comparison: Orti Generali and Nishi-Tokyo, part 1.

ORTI GENERALI		NISHI-TOKYO INNOVATION CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE	
The process starts from MiraOrti, a community-based participatory process launched in 2010 in Mirafiori Sud.	Bottom-up	Started from the launch of Tokyo Metropolitan Government's "Support Project for Developing Diverse Stakeholders" .	Top-down
Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla, successor of Biloba Social Cooperative and predecessor of Orti Generali.	Non-profit organization founded by Stefano Olivari and Matteo Baldo	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)
Biloba Social Cooperative launched Miraorti project.	Privately founded autonomous social enterprise	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)
Presence of a residual agricultural area along the Sangone in the Parco Piemonte, marked by abandonment, informal or illegal uses, waste and degraded conditions.	Urban regeneration	Long-term decline in farmers and cultivated land, shrinking urban agricultural spaces, ageing farmers, lack of successors, and increasing urban residents' interest in food, environment and hands-on local agricultural experiences.	Securing and training agricultural workers
MiraOrti project.	Presence of prior initiative	No prior initiative present. The selected operating entity has enough experience in urban green-space management	Origin from scratch
The declared aim is to build a model of social enterprise for the transformation and management of residual urban agricultural areas in Turin.	Build social enterprise model for urban transformation	To create a hub where people living in the city learn through agriculture, connect with one another, and cultivate the future of the city.	Green agriculture living city development model
The social-enterprise model and ecological-social vision were defined by the promoters , but the project identity was also shaped through fieldwork, citizen requests, participatory design, existing gardeners' practices and local needs.	Pre-defined, partly co-constructed with the community	The policy frame is already defined by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government : the centre is conceived as a base facility for diverse actors, innovation, and community development around the integration of greenery, agriculture, and residential life. However, some core activities, such as the Open Lab, are still being refined through stakeholder interviews and co-creation processes.	Pre-defined, partly co-constructed with selected stakeholders
The original project already stated clear aims : urban agriculture services, social agriculture, education, technological experimentation and replicability. However, rules, plot formats, activities and governance practices adapted through use and experience.	Strategic goals fixed in advance, operational goals evolved through interaction with the users	The overall goals are predefined: fostering diverse actors, building networks, developing projects, preparing Phase 2. But Phase 1 uses interviews and Open Lab to extract themes , form project ideas, and define later training/support programmes.	Strategic goals fixed in advance, operational goals negotiated with selected stakeholders
Access to plots is filtered through applications and alignment with the project's ecological and social rules; however, the wider site is open to schools, volunteers, associations, fragile users, families, local residents and visitors.	Open and self-selecting	Through targeted individual interviews to advanced farmers, related businesses and urban-planning/community actors. The Open Lab is not planned as an open public call: invitations are sent to interviewees and related actors, especially potential project leaders and people willing to examine concrete initiatives.	Invitation-based
Local people and former informal gardeners helped clean and transform the site , and the project aims to involve users through gardening, volunteering, events, educational activities and collective work.	Active co-producer	Community involvement is not fully open, it is mediated through interviews. Urban residents are treated as "potential" diverse actors who deepen their understanding through future programmes.	Potential future participant
Municipality of Turin	Public	Tokyo Metropolitan Government	Public
Municipal concession	Concessionary price	Site access provided by Tokyo Metropolitan Government	Public-owned space managed by a selected operating entity
Social enterprise	Orti Generali SRL	Non-profit organization	NPO Birth
MIUR (Smart Cities and Communities and Social Innovation), Municipality of Turin	Yes	Tokyo Metropolitan Government	Yes
Call for volunteers to participate in the requalification of Parco Piemonte. Substantial hands-on work from volunteers and former informal gardeners, especially for cleaning and making the area usable.	Volunteer-based	Field management is organized by the operator and includes contracted technical works where needed; volunteers appear more as future participants/supporters than as the founding labour base.	Paid/appointed operational-based
Orti Generali is intended to sustain itself through several revenue streams: contributions from garden plots, the kiosk, educational activities, adult training courses, sale of seedlings and small services. However, the documents make clear that the centre is not yet fully economically self-sufficient: it still relies on public/private grants and continuous fundraising.	Diversified social-enterprise model	The centre is financially structured around cooperative agreement funds from the public programme, complemented by participation fees, usage fees, course-related fees, group-visit fees, space rental, vendor booth fees, vending-machine revenues, merchandise product sales, sponsorships and corporate partnerships. The centre is not framed as a self-sustaining commercial farm (the sale of harvested produce is not permitted).	Publicly supported, programme-based model
The promoter team guided the process, while the City remained relevant for concession, permissions, funding channels and technical-political dialogue.	Founder-led and facilitated, with institutional dialogue	Decision-making is structured around TMG , project partners and the operating entity. Presence of a steering/operation committee, three-party meetings, and the operator consulting and coordinating with TMG and project partners.	Appointed and centralized, with multi-actor consultation.
From NPO Coefficiente Clorofilla to Orti Generali SRL	Evolving	The operating body is defined as NPO Birth, a specified nonprofit corporation.	Fixed at the outset
Orti Generali gained institutional legitimacy through municipal concession, public-policy alignment and public/european funding; it gained grassroots legitimacy through long-term territorial work, collaboration with gardeners, schools, associations and local users.	Institutional legitimacy and grassroots/community legitimacy	The project gains formal legitimacy through TMG promotion. It also seeks relational legitimacy by involving the University of Tokyo, advisors, agricultural organizations, farmers and urban-agriculture networks.	Primarily institutional endorsement, complemented by expert/network legitimacy.
Website, social media, public calls for garden allocation, courses, volunteering, public presentation and institutional visibility from the very early stages	Strategic	The plan proposed by NPO Birth includes preparation of an official website, SNS operation, logo/key visual production with TMG and partners, and visual communication using photos/videos.	Strategic
1 Research-action and territorial animation , 2 policy opportunity and municipal regulation, 3 social-enterprise proposal, 4 public concession, 5 funding and site remediation, 6 phased public opening, 7 consolidation of activities	From community-based initiative to municipal concession and public use	1 Policy vision public facility/programme design operator selection/agreement, 2 Tripartite meetings, 3 First phase field use and network building, 4 Open Lab/project formation, 5 Second Phase full opening and programme implementation	From TMG-led public programme and operator selection to curated stakeholder involvement to public use
The first public activation was the opening and assignment of the garden plots in 2019, aimed at local gardeners. Public-facing services, such as the kiosk, educational activities and events, were added later, progressively widening access from gardeners to families, schools, visitors and the wider neighbourhood.	Staged (because of the conditions of the site) and later organic	The opening is phased: partial field use for preparatory use of the farm field begins before the full opening. Before that, the programme plans Open Lab sessions, field Open Days, SNS/PR (social media and public relations/communication activities), and later an opening event. The audience is selected and broadened gradually : first core actors, then wider users.	Staged and curated

Table 14: Initiation Process Comparison: Orti Generali and Nishi-Tokyo, part 2.

The Nishi-Tokyo Center follows a top-down arc: policy vision, program and facility design, operator selection, tripartite coordination, field use and network building (planned in Phase 1 of the NPO Birth project proposal), Open Lab and project formation, and a full opening planned for 2027 (Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, personal communication, 22 May 2026). In both cases access widened gradually, from a first core of users outward to a broader public, though the starting point of that widening differs: a gardening community in Turin, a curated set of invited stakeholders in Tokyo.

With the eight dimensions read across the two cases, the comparison is complete. What the comparison reveals, and what it does not, is the work of the next section.

4.4 The Genesis of a Center: Toward the Initiation Model

The comparison conducted in section 4.3 produces two types of findings. The first type comprises the elements that recur across both cases: conditions and decisions that Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture share despite their very different institutional settings and operational cultures (Table 15). The second type comprises the elements that diverge: points at which each case made a distinct, apparently consequential choice that shaped the rest of its initiation pathway (Table 16).

CONVERGENCES	ORTI GENERALI	NISHI-TOKYO INNOVATION CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE	RESULTS	GUIDELINES
LAND OWNERSHIP	Public	Public	Public land as substrate	Preferably ensure public land is available as a starting point.
SOURCE OF MANDATE	Biloba Social Cooperative	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)	Clear driving actor with a mandate	An initiator with an explicit mandate is needed.
DRIVING ACTOR	Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)		
OPERATOR	Orti Generali SRL	NPO Birth	Operator distinct from landowner	Possibly separate ownership and management (dedicated operator).
IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESS	Pre-defined, partly co-constructed with the community	Pre-defined, partly co-constructed with selected stakeholders	Promoter-defined, partly co-constructed identity	Clear identity defined by the promoter + mechanisms for co-construction.
GOAL-SETTING MODE	Strategic goals fixed in advance, operational goals evolved through interaction with the users	Strategic goals fixed in advance, operational goals negotiated with selected stakeholders	Fixed strategic goals / emergent operational goals	Lock in the strategic level; keep the operational level adaptive.
ECONOMIC RESOURCES	MIUR, Municipality of Turin	TMG (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)	Public funding at initiation	Public funding is a fundamental driver for initiatives.
LEGITIMATION STRATEGY	Institutional legitimacy and grassroots/ community legitimacy	Primarily institutional endorsement, complemented by expert/network legitimacy	Dual legitimation	Pursue more than one type of legitimacy.
COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY	Strategic (website, social media, public presentation)	Strategic (website, social media, public presentation)	Strategic communication from the outset	Invest in strategic communication from the start
OPENING/ INAUGURATION STRATEGY	Staged (because of the conditions of the site) and later organic	Staged and curated	Staged opening	Open in phases

Table 15: Convergences from the Initiation Process Comparison: Orti Generali and Nishi-Tokyo.

DIVERGENCES	ORTI GENERALI	NISHI-TOKYO INNOVATION CENTER FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE	RESULTS
TRIGGER	Urban regeneration	Securing and training agricultural workers	Spatial- regenerative vs sectoral -agricultural driver
INITIATION LOGIC	Bottom-up	Top-down	Founding choice that conditions the whole pathway
MISSION/VISION	Build social enterprise model for urban transformation	Green agriculture living city development model	Place- transformation vs city- development orientation
ORIGIN FROM PRIOR INITIATIVE	Presence of prior initiative	Origin from scratch	Building on an existing network vs starting new from scratch
SITE ACCESS LOGIC	Concessionary price	Public-owned space managed by a selected operating entity	Concession (negotiated use-right) vs operator selection (delegated management).
GOVERNANCE SET-UP	Founder-led and facilitated, with institutional dialogue	Appointed and centralized, with multi-actor consultation.	Distributed founder-led vs centralized appointed
LEGAL FORM	Evolving	Fixed at the outset	Fluid/ evolving vs fixed at the outset
BUSINESS MODEL	Diversified social-enterprise model	Publicly supported, programme-based model	Aims toward financial self-sufficiency vs designed for ongoing public support .
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODE	Open and self-selecting	Invitation-based	Open access vs curated selection
COMMUNITY ROLE	Active co-producer	Potential future participant	Community as co-author vs as future audience
HUMAN RESOURCE	Volunteer-based	Paid/appointed operational-based	Volunteer vs paid control contribution
SEQUENCE OF MOVES	From community-based initiative to municipal concession and public use	From TMG-led public programme and operator selection to curated stakeholder involvement to public use	Animation -first vs policy -first

Table 16: Divergences from the Initiation Process Comparison: Orti Generali and Nishi-Tokyo.

This distinction is not incidental to the model. It is, precisely, the distinction between what the initiation model prescribes and what it leaves open.

The convergences form the fixed core of the model, and it is from them that the actionable guidelines are derived.

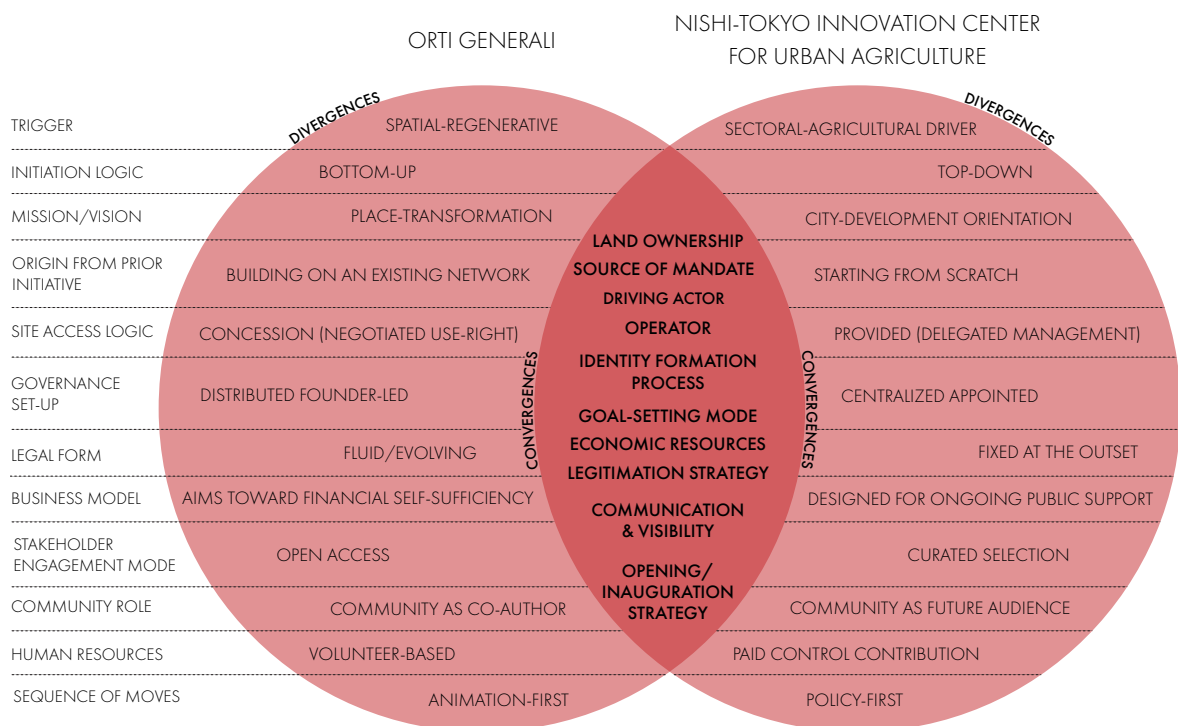


Figure 15: Convergences and Divergences Scheme Orti-Nishi.

Land ownership: both centers operate on publicly owned land: Parco Piemonte in Turin, held by the Municipality, and the site of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center, provided by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. In neither case did the initiating actor need to acquire or negotiate the purchase of land; public ownership was the enabling condition from which the entire process departed. The model treats this as a strongly suggested prerequisite: not a variable to be optimized, but a structural condition to be secured before any other decision is made.

Driving actor: in both cases, a clearly identifiable actor held an explicit mandate to set the process in motion. At Orti Generali, this role was played first by Biloba Social Cooperative and later by Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla, both carrying a civic mandate rooted in the pre-existing MiraOrti community network. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the driving actor is the Tokyo Metropolitan Government itself, whose mandate derives from a formal public program. The institutional origin of the mandate differs sharply between the two cases, yet the structural fact is the same: before the process begins, someone must be in a position to start it, and that position must rest on a recognized form of authority.

Operator: in both cases, the entity responsible for day-to-day management is legally distinct from the entity that owns the land. At Orti Generali, the operator is Orti Generali SRL, a social enterprise separate from the Municipality of Turin, which holds the concession. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the operator is NPO birth, selected by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to manage the facility on its behalf. This separation between ownership and management is not incidental: it defines a governance structure in which the public actor retains ultimate authority over the asset while delegating operational responsibility to a dedicated entity with the capacity and flexibility to run it.

Identity formation process: in both cases, the center's identity was defined by the promoter before the process was opened to broader participation, yet neither center treated that identity as fixed and final. At Orti Generali, the mission and character of the project were shaped through participatory fieldwork and co-design with the local community from the earliest stages. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the identity is being refined through a structured process of stakeholder interviews and co-creation sessions with a curated group of advanced farmers, urban-planning actors, and related organizations. The pattern is consistent: a promoter-defined identity provides the foundation, while mechanisms for co-construction ensure that the center's character is tested

and calibrated against the needs and expectations of those it intends to serve.

Goal-setting mode: both centers fixed their strategic goals in advance and left their operational goals open to adaptation. At Orti Generali, the overarching aim of building a replicable social-enterprise model for urban agricultural transformation was established from the outset, while the rules governing plot use, community access, and service provision evolved through interaction with users over time. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the policy frame and the center's core mission were defined by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government before the operator was selected, while the specific activities, including the Open Lab format and the outreach program, are still being negotiated with stakeholders. Locking the strategic level while keeping the operational level adaptive appears, across both cases, to be a deliberate and functional choice rather than an accident of circumstance.

Economic resources: public funding is the primary resource at the initiation stage in both cases. Orti Generali drew on a MIUR Smart Cities grant, municipal contributions, and European project funds including ProGReg, FUSILLI, and ClimaGEN. The Nishi-Tokyo Center is structured around cooperative-agreement funds from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government program. The sources differ in scale and instrument, but the underlying condition is the same: neither center could have started without public investment as its financial foundation. The model proposes that securing public funding is a condition for initiating the process, not a task to be addressed once the center is already under way.

Legitimation strategy: neither center relied on a single source of legitimacy. Orti Generali pursued institutional recognition through the municipal concession and public funding, alongside grassroots legitimacy built through years of territorial work with gardeners, schools, and local associations. The Nishi-Tokyo Center's primary legitimacy flows from Tokyo Metropolitan Government endorsement, complemented by expert and network recognition through its relationships with the University of Tokyo, agricultural organizations, and urban-agriculture networks. The combination differs between the two cases, but the logic is shared: institutional endorsement alone is not sufficient, and a second, distinct form of recognition must be actively pursued from the start.

Communication and visibility: both centers treated communication as a strategic activity from the outset rather than something to be organized once operations were running. Orti Generali

established a website and social-media presence in the early phases of the project, using public visibility as a tool for community building and institutional credibility. The Nishi-Tokyo Center planned a coordinated visual identity and communication strategy before its public opening. In both cases, being visible was understood as a condition for legitimacy, not a consequence of it.

Opening and inauguration strategy: both centers opened in stages rather than presenting a finished product to the public all at once. At Orti Generali, the phased approach was partly imposed by the conditions of the site, which required remediation before full use was possible, and partly organic, with different areas and activities becoming accessible at different moments. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the staging is deliberate and programmatic, with Phase 1 field use and network building preceding the Open Lab and the full public opening planned for 2027. In both cases, the early phases of activity functioned as a period of calibration: a time to observe which communities and stakeholders engaged, to understand their needs, and to adjust the center's program accordingly before it reached its full public form.

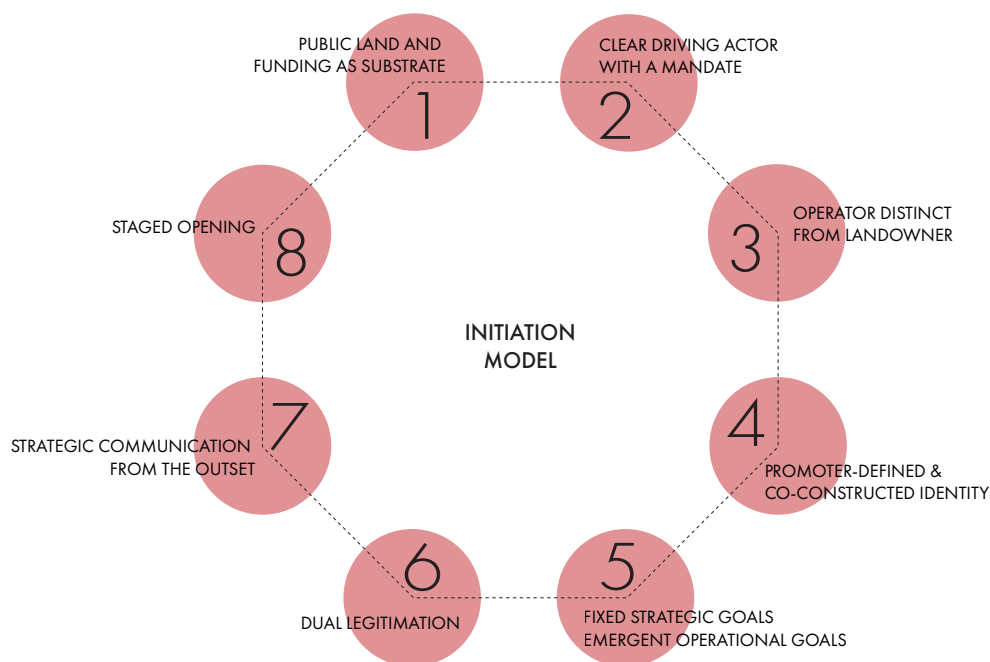


Figure 16: Initiation Model for Urban Agriculture Centers.

Taken together, these guidelines constitute the fixed core of the initiation model, visualized in the following Figure 16 as a circular framework in which each element reinforces the others. Land ownership and economic resources, identified as two separate convergences in the comparison (Table 13), are consolidated in Figure 16 into a single guideline on the grounds that both function

as substrate conditions: the material and financial preconditions without which the initiation process cannot begin. The divergences, for their part, cluster under two macro-categories, each with a distinct internal structure, and each remaining context-based rather than prescriptive (Figure 17).

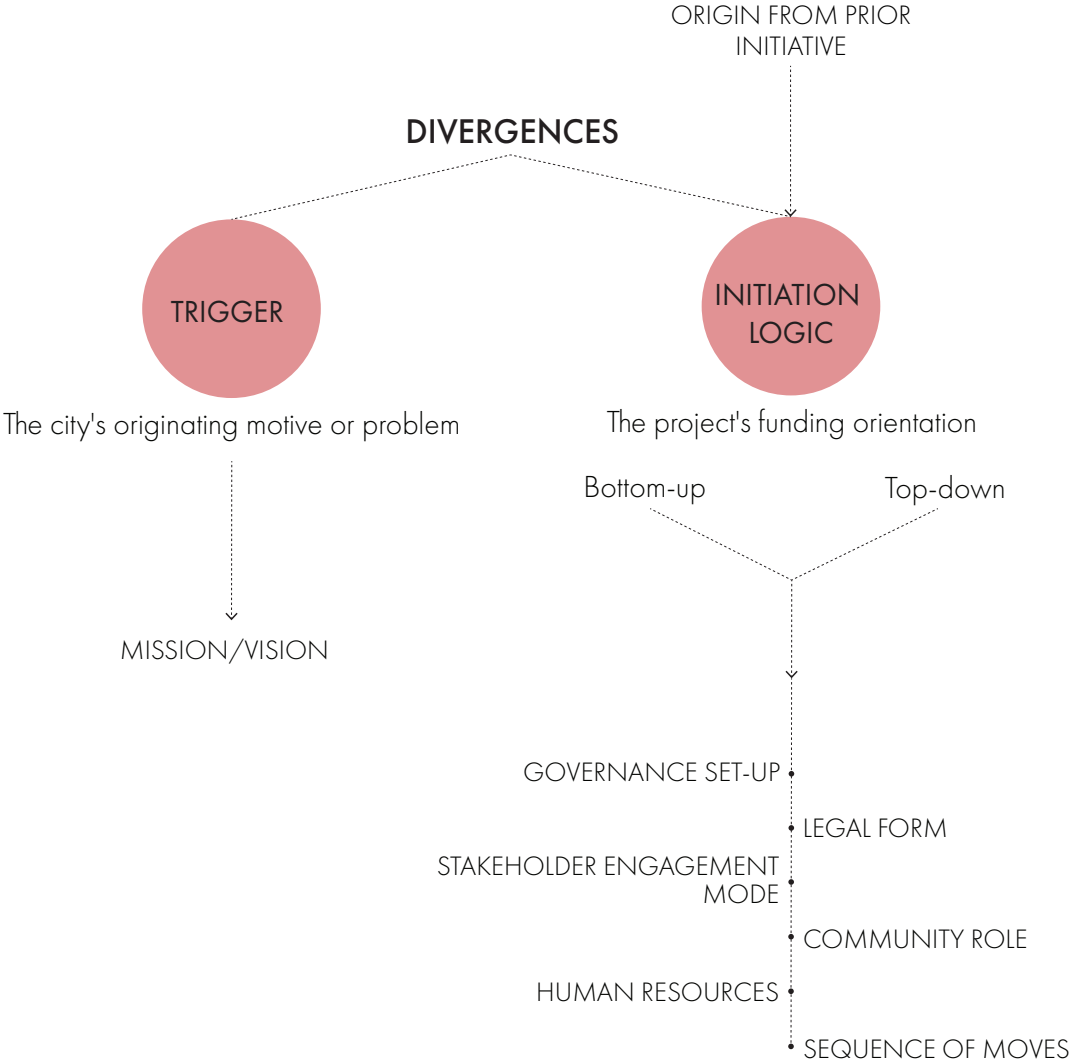


Figure 17: Trigger and Initiation Logic: The two Divergences Macro-Categories

The first and dominant one is the initiation logic: the founding orientation that determines how the center originates and from what type of momentum. This choice, however, is not made in isolation. Whether or not a prior initiative exists is therefore not a secondary detail, but an upstream condition that shapes the possible logic through which the center can be initiated. Orti Generali could follow a bottom-up path in part because a pre-existing community network,

rooted in the MiraOrti experience, was already present and active; the Nishi-Tokyo Center, starting from scratch within a government program, could only follow a top-down arc. Once the initiation logic is set, it propagates downstream through eight dependent elements:

Site access logic: at Orti Generali, the site was obtained through a concessionary arrangement, a negotiated use-right won through a competitive selection process that took several years to conclude. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the site was provided directly by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to the selected operator, delegating management rather than transferring use-rights.

Governance setup: founder-led and facilitated at Orti Generali, with ongoing institutional dialogue with the Municipality. Appointed and centralized at the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center, coordinated through tripartite meetings and a steering committee.

Legal form: evolving at Orti Generali, which moved through several organizational configurations before settling on its current structure. Fixed from the outset at the Nishi-Tokyo Center.

Business model: diversified and oriented toward progressive financial self-sufficiency at Orti Generali, where revenue streams include plot contributions, educational activities, and services. Publicly supported and program-based at the Nishi-Tokyo Center, where the sale of harvested produce is not permitted and the model remains anchored to government funding.

Stakeholder engagement mode: open and self-selecting in Turin, where anyone aligned with the project's principles could join. Invitation-based and curated in Tokyo, where participation was filtered through a structured selection process.

Community role: an active co-producer at Orti Generali, having helped clean and transform the site from the outset. A potential future participant at the Nishi-Tokyo Center, to be reached through later programs rather than as a founding partner.

Human resources: volunteer-based in Turin, where the founding labor for site remediation was supplied by volunteers. Paid and appointed in Tokyo, where operational roles were defined and staffed from the start.

Sequence of moves: animation-first in Turin, where community action preceded institutional formalization. Policy-first in Tokyo, where the government frame preceded everything else.

The second macro-category is the trigger: the external problem or urban condition that makes an initiative necessary at a specific moment and place. Unlike the initiation logic, the trigger is not chosen; it is given by the city's context. For Orti Generali the trigger is spatial and regenerative, a residual agricultural area in need of transformation and a local community already organized around it. For the Nishi-Tokyo Center it is sectoral, a sustained decline in farmers and cultivated land that the city can no longer defer, combined with a rising interest among urban residents in food production and hands-on agriculture. The trigger does not determine how a center starts, but it does determine why, and it is the primary force shaping the mission and vision of the initiative.

The parameter of comparison named as "mission" occupies a particular position in the structure of divergences: it acts as a hinge between the two macro-categories, emerging from the trigger while also being inflected by the initiation logic. At Orti Generali, the mission to build a replicable social-enterprise model for urban agricultural transformation reflects both the regenerative trigger and the bottom-up logic through which the project took shape. At the Nishi-Tokyo Center, the mission to develop a living model for green agriculture in the city reflects both the sectoral trigger and the top-down frame within which the center was conceived. Two centers can share a common type of momentum and still develop quite different missions if the problems they are responding to differ.

Trigger and initiation logic, then, operate like the flexible features of the composition model: they do not vary arbitrarily, but vary in ways that are legible and motivated by context. The initiation model that emerges from this comparison is, therefore, structured in two layers. The first is a set of eight context-independent guidelines, derived from the convergences between two cases set in markedly different urban and institutional environments: their recurrence across such different settings is precisely what supports treating them as structural. The second layer is a pair of context-dependent variables, trigger and initiation logic, that any initiating actor must diagnose before the guidelines can be applied. Together, the two layers constitute a transferable reference for the genesis of an urban agriculture center under conditions of public or hybrid-public sponsorship.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Bringing Together the Composition and Initiation Models

This thesis set out to address a gap. Although the term urban agriculture center circulates across design, practice, and policy, no study had defined it through systematic international comparison, and no transferable model existed for its composition or its creation. The research answered this through three questions. The first, what an urban agriculture center is, was settled in Chapter 2: a center is an urban agriculture initiative that is multifunctional, holding together all the dimensions of urban agriculture; convergent, drawing actors, knowledge, and practices into exchange; and irradiating, generating new initiatives beyond its own site. On that foundation, the next two questions each produced a model. Chapter 3 asked how a center is composed and built the composition model; Chapter 4 asked how one starts and built the initiation model. This chapter reads the two models together, because only in combination do they describe the center as both an object and a process, and then asks whether they hold beyond the cases that produced them.

The composition model, developed in Chapter 3 from the international comparison of five case studies, answers the second question. Read through the analytical framework built on the EFUA dimensions of urban agriculture, the five cases yielded a large body of recurring and non-recurring features, and it is the pattern of recurrence that gave the model its two-tier shape. Fixed features define the structural minimum: the activities, actors, knowledge contribution, environmental practices, food production, economic arrangements, and well-being provisions that any initiative must display to qualify as an urban agriculture center in the sense established in Chapter 2, namely a multifunctional, convergent, and irradiating one. Flexible features describe the space of legitimate variation around that minimum, the configurations a center may adopt according to context, mission, and resources without ceasing to belong to the type. The model is not a checklist, but a threshold and a margin: it states what a center must contain and where it may differ. In this sense it represents the anatomy of an urban agriculture center .

The initiation model , developed in Chapter 4 from the in-depth comparison of Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, answers the third question. The comparison was organized along eight dimensions, ranging from the origin and vision of each

center to its governance, legitimation strategy, and process shape, and it yields two types of findings. The first are the convergences: eight conditions shared by both cases despite their markedly different urban and institutional settings. From these convergences the model derives eight guidelines for the founding stage: building on publicly owned land; securing public funding as the primary initial resource; identifying an initiator with an explicit mandate, kept distinct from the landowner; defining an identity that is promoter-led yet co-constructed with the community; fixing strategic goals while leaving operational ones open to adaptation; pursuing more than one form of legitimacy at once; establishing a communication strategy before opening; and opening in phases. The second type of finding are the divergences, grouped into two macro-categories. The first is the trigger: the external condition that makes an initiative necessary at a specific moment and place. The trigger is not chosen by the initiating actor; it is given by the city's context, and it is the primary force shaping the mission and vision of the center. The second is the initiation logic: the founding orientation, bottom-up or top-down, that determines how the process originates and from what momentum. Once set, the initiation logic propagates downstream and conditions stakeholder engagement, governance setup, legal form, and the overall sequence of moves. Together, trigger and initiation logic are the two variables every initiating actor must diagnose before the fixed guidelines can be applied.

Set together, the two models share an architecture even while describing different things. Each pairs a fixed, context-independent layer with a bounded, context-dependent one. The fixed features of the composition model and the eight guidelines of the initiation model play the same structural role, marking what cannot be left to circumstance. The flexible features and the two macro-categories of divergence, trigger and initiation logic, play the other, marking what must answer to circumstance. The variation is not arbitrary: flexible features and divergent dimensions shift in response to identifiable conditions, whether the funding environment, the governance culture, or the urban problem the center is responding to, and that is precisely what makes them readable and transferable. This symmetry follows from a single underlying logic, in which what recurs across deliberately different cases is treated as structural and what varies is treated as situated. The two models therefore lock together into one reference instead of standing beside each other as separate findings. The initiation model governs how a center is brought into existence; the composition model governs what that center, once running, must be. One describes becoming, the other being.

5.2 A Model for Other Cities? Transferability and Scalability of the Models

The aim set out at the start of the thesis described both models as transferable and scalable (section 1.5). This section returns to it and asks a further question: under what conditions do the composition model and the initiation model hold beyond the cases that produced them, and where must the claim be bounded?

Transferability derives first from the way in which the two models were built. Neither emerges from a representative sample, and neither is meant to be extrapolated to a population of urban agriculture centers in a statistical sense. Each model functions as a structured reference that practitioners or researchers in other cities can use to evaluate their own context, identify points of correspondence, and make the necessary contextual adaptations (Yin, 2003). What makes that template defensible is the design behind it. The composition model draws on five international cases selected for maximum variation, each leading on a different dimension and set in a different urban and policy environment (Flyvbjerg, 2006); a feature that recurs across such varied settings is unlikely to be context specific, and its recurrence therefore supports its interpretation as structural. Their spread across five continents widens that reach further. The initiation model follows the same reasoning on a smaller base. Its fixed core consists of the convergences between two cases chosen for their contrast, Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, so that what they share despite their differences can be read as transferable rather than merely local.

This internal logic is corroborated from outside the present research. In a comparative study of 15 initiatives from Europe and beyond, Stoeva et al. (2025) found that the governance models underpinning urban and peri-urban agriculture are place-sensitive but not place-determined: their shape is driven by institutional access, community culture, and leadership far more than by geographic location, which is why effective models can travel across contexts as long as they are adapted to the setting they enter. Their analysis distinguishes three stages in the life of an initiative: initiation, implementation, and maintenance. This tripartite structure provides a useful temporal reference for the present framework, although the models developed in this thesis operate at different analytical levels. The initiation model focuses on the processes through which an urban agriculture center is established, while the composition model identifies the components, functions, and relationships that constitute an urban agriculture center. In this sense, the argument

advanced by Stoeva et al. (2025) reinforces the way transferability is understood here: not as the direct replication of a model across contexts, but as the capacity of its core features to remain recognizable and analytically useful while being adapted to local institutional, spatial, and social conditions.

Scalability derives from the internal structure of the composition model, not from an external reference. Where transferability concerns movement across contexts, scalability concerns variation in magnitude within them. The distinction between fixed and flexible features is, in effect, a statement about scale. The fixed tier sets a minimum compositional threshold, the elements any initiative must exhibit to count as a multifunctional, convergent, and irradiating urban agriculture center. The flexible tier defines the room a center has to differ, in size, in complexity, and in emphasis, while remaining an instance of the same urban agriculture center model. A modest center operating on limited public land can satisfy the fixed tier and still be a center in the full sense; a larger and better-resourced initiative can extend deep into the flexible tier without becoming something else. The range of cultivation technologies, income streams, and target audiences sits in the flexible tier for this reason, since a center adopts one combination or another as its resources allow. The initiation model is scalable on a related ground: it describes a genesis in terms of conditions, actors, and sequence rather than specific organizations, budgets, or surface areas, so it reads across institutional landscapes of very different size and capacity.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

One boundary must be drawn clearly. The initiation model was derived from two cases, Orti Generali and the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center for Urban Agriculture, both of which operate on publicly owned land and were launched with public funding as their primary resource. The model therefore describes how a center starts when a public actor is involved. It has not yet been tested against a fully private start, where land is acquired commercially and the founding momentum comes from investment rather than from a policy opening or a community network. This limit does not extend to the composition model. That model was built from five international cases with very different land and funding arrangements: Seni Tani operates on mixed private and public land, Le Début des Haricots on privately held land. The composition model makes no assumption about how a center owns or accesses its site, and the boundary does not apply to it.

The boundary is specific to the initiation model: it holds for public or hybrid-public starts; testing it against privately initiated centers lies beyond the present research.

One further limit should be kept in view. Both models rest on a small number of cases, selected for what they reveal rather than for statistical representativeness, so they are offered as analytic references to be tested against further cases, not as statistically validated norms. Rather than undermining the models, this limitation defines their intended use. They should be read as analytic references rather than fixed norms: tools to be applied to further cases and progressively confirmed, refined, or extended through comparison.

One additional clarification concerns the nature of the result. Both models are organizational and programmatic: they describe what a center is composed of and how it comes into being, not how it should be arranged in space. The most direct extension of this work lies in its spatial and architectural translation: the moment in which the model's fixed and flexible features, together with the conditions through which the center comes into being, are interpreted in relation to a specific site and transformed into built form.

Within that scope, the two models offer what the research set out to provide: a structured, empirically grounded starting point for anyone seeking to understand or establish an urban agriculture center.

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CHAPTER 4

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CHAPTER 5

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APPENDIX A

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
INTERNATIONAL	UN Conference on Food and Agriculture (Hot Springs, Virginia)	Allied 'United Nations' (wartime alliance), not the UN organisation (UN was created in 1945)	1943	Food policy	General	Set up the set up an Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture which prepared the Constitution of FAO .	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City	FAO (UN-specialized agency)	1945	Food policy	General	Creation of FAO, the global body for food and agriculture: 44 nations came together with a common purpose: to build a world free from hunger and to support agricultural development .	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Stockholm Conference – UN Conference on the Human Environment	United Nations	1972	Environment	General	First major UN environmental conference . The Stockholm Declaration, which contained 26 principles, placed environmental issues at the forefront of international concerns.	Principle 15: "Planning must be applied to human settlements and urbanization with a view to avoiding adverse effects on the environment and obtaining maximum social, economic and environmental benefits for all."	X	INDIRECT
	Publication of 'Our Common Future' (Brundtland Report)	World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), UN-established	1987	Sustainability	General	It introduced and popularised the concept of sustainable development , framing it as the need to integrate environmental protection, economic development and social equity.	Chapter 9, <i>The Urban Challenge</i> , Section II, subsection 5, <i>Tapping More Resources</i> , paragraph No. 59: "Officially sanctioned and promoted urban agriculture could become an important component of urban development and make more food available to the urban poor. The primary purposes of such promotion should be to improve the nutritional and health standards of the poor, help their family budgets (50-70 per cent of which is usually spent on food), enable them to earn some additional income, and provide employment. Urban agriculture can also provide fresher and cheaper produce, more green space, the clearing of garbage dumps, and recycling of household waste."	✓	DIRECT
	Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro – UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)	United Nations	1992	Sustainability	General	The primary objective of the Rio 'Earth Summit' was to produce a broad agenda and a new blueprint for international action on environmental and development issues that would help guide international cooperation and development policy in the twenty-first century. One of the major results of the UNCED Conference was Agenda 21.	Chapter 7, <i>Promoting sustainable human settlement development</i> , section 7.19: "Therefore all countries should, as appropriate, conduct reviews of urbanization processes and policies in order to assess the environmental impacts of growth and apply urban planning and management approaches specifically suited to the needs, resource capabilities and characteristics of their growing intermediate-sized cities. As appropriate, they should also concentrate on activities aimed at facilitating the transition from rural to urban lifestyles and settlement patterns and at promoting the development of small-scale economic activities, particularly the production of food , to support local income generation and the production of intermediate goods and services for rural hinterlands."	X	INDIRECT
	World Food Summit - Food for all	FAO (UN)	1996	Food policy	General	International summit focused on global food security and the eradication of hunger. It adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, committing governments to ensure access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for all and to reduce the number of undernourished people by half by 2015.	Chapter <i>Feeding the Cities, the Role of Urban Agriculture</i> , section <i>The Importance of Urban Agriculture</i> : " Urban agriculture offers benefits that rural agriculture cannot provide. It takes place on rooftops, in backyards, in community vegetable and fruit gardens, and on unused or public spaces. Typical products include fruit, vegetables, fish, staples such as cassava, maize and beans, as well as berries, nuts, herbs and spices. Small livestock and the occasional cow are kept."	✓	DIRECT
	Foundation of RUAF (Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security)	Support Group on Urban Agriculture (SGUA); coordinated by ETC Foundation (Netherlands); core funders IDRC (Canada) and the Government of the Netherlands	1999	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	International network of regional resource centres on urban agriculture and food security, providing documentation, training, technical support and policy advice to local and national governments, producer organisations and NGOs. First international body dedicated specifically to urban agriculture (as opposed to agriculture in general).	RUAF's mission is to reduce urban poverty and improve food security by integrating urban agriculture into the policies and action programmes of local governments , civil-society organisations and private enterprises, with the active involvement of urban and peri-urban farmers.	✓	DIRECT
	World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg	United Nations	2002	Sustainability	General	Reaffirmed global commitments to sustainable development , focusing on poverty eradication, sustainable resource management, sustainable consumption and production, and environmental protection.	Chapter IV, <i>Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development</i> , No. 40, Section (m): " Increase brown-field redevelopment in developed countries and countries with economies in transition, with appropriate technical assistance where contamination is a serious problem"	X	INDIRECT
	Agenda 2030	United Nations	2015	Sustainability	General	A United Nations global action plan setting 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to guide international, national, and local action toward poverty eradication, social equity, environmental protection, and sustainable development by 2030.	Goal 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"	X	INDIRECT
						Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable "			

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
INTERNATIONAL	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)	City of Milan and signatory cities (100+)	2015	Food policy	Urban/peri-urban	International agreement among cities, launched as a legacy of Expo Milano 2015. It commits mayors and local governments to develop sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse urban food systems , ensuring access to healthy and affordable food, reducing food waste, protecting biodiversity, and integrating food policies into urban planning and governance.	First page of the 10 acknowledgments: "Acknowledging that urban and peri-urban agriculture offers opportunities to protect and integrate biodiversity into city region landscapes and food systems, thereby contributing to synergies across food and nutrition security, ecosystem services and human well-being." Recommended actions food production: " Promote and strengthen urban and peri-urban food production and processing based on sustainable approaches and integrate urban and peri-urban agriculture into city resilience plans."	✓	DIRECT
	The New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)	United Nations (adopted at Habitat III, Quito)	2016	Land use planning	Urban/peri-urban	Global urban policy framework, it sets out a shared vision for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable , providing principles and commitments for urban planning, governance, housing, infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.	Section Quito Implementation for the New Agenda, Effective Implementation, No. 95: "We will also support urban agriculture and farming, as well as responsible, local and sustainable consumption and production, and social interactions, through enabling and accessible networks of local markets and commerce as an option for contributing to sustainability and food security."	✓	DIRECT
	FAO Green Cities Initiative (GCI)	FAO (UN)	2020	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	The FAO Green Cities Initiative (GCI) envisions vibrant and inclusive cities where urban green and productive spaces act as catalysts for biodiversity, climate resilience, social cohesion, and economic prosperity. Its mission is pursued by integrating urban and peri-urban forestry, agriculture , and bioeconomy into urban life through a multifunctional green infrastructure approach, aimed at enhancing the environmental, social, and economic well-being of urban populations.	Chapter Metropolitan cities, Challenge 2: " Develop capacity-building programmes on innovative urban agriculture practices (e.g. community urban agro-parks, household rooftop and backyard gardens), identify spaces suitable for urban farming (indoor, vertical, community, aquaponics, etc.) and water availability and intensity." "Urban and peri-urban agriculture is presented through technical entry points for action not only at the metropolitan level but also for intermediate cities and small cities."	✓	DIRECT
	UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)	United Nations	2021	Food policy	General	The Summit aimed to launch actions to support progress on the SDGs through "healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems ."	The Coalition on Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Food Systems (UFS) emerged from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit in recognition of the importance of the urban food agenda at the local, national and international level.	X	INDIRECT

APPENDIX B

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
EUROPEAN	Treaty of Rome Establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC)	Six founding member states (EEC)	1957	Agriculture	General	Constitutional basis of EU agricultural policy (foundational legal basis for CAP).	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	European Economic Community (EEC)	1962	Agriculture	Rural	First unified EU system of farm subsidies and market rules .	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Aalborg Charter Charter of European Sustainable Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability	European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns (signatory local authorities)	1994	Sustainability	Urban/peri-urban	First major European local-government commitment to urban sustainability .	Indirect Urban Agriculture related themes from Part 1, <i>Consensus Declaration: European Cities & Towns Towards Sustainability</i> : "maintaining the natural capital, address the natural resource and environmental imbalances, expanding cultivated natural capital, balance the flows between city and countryside ".	X	INDIRECT
	EESC Opinion on Agriculture in peri-urban areas (NAT/204-EESC-2004-1209)	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)	2004	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	The policy sets out three main objectives: recognising peri-urban agricultural areas as rural areas facing specific constraints; protecting them from urban expansion through territorial, urban-planning, land-use and fiscal instruments; and supporting their sustainable development through participatory management bodies.	Chapter 2. Objectives for the conservation and development of peri-urban agriculture, section 2.1: In the EESC's view, peri-urban agriculture undoubtedly faces specific constraints stemming directly from characteristics that can be easily identified and defined. Specific measures must therefore be introduced for the conservation, planning and management of peri-urban areas with agricultural activity. To achieve this, the EESC proposes that mechanisms and instruments to conserve and develop peri-urban agricultural areas should be promoted.	✓	DIRECT
	Urban Agenda for the EU (Pact of Amsterdam)	EU Member States (intergovernmental)	2016	Land use planning	Urban/peri-urban	A framework for addressing major urban challenges and improving quality of life in European cities by strengthening the urban dimension of EU policy through Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge, implemented through Thematic Partnerships on 12 priority themes.	Priority theme No. 9, <i>Sustainable use of land and Nature-Based solutions</i> : "The objective is to ensure that the changes in Urban Areas (growing, shrinking and regeneration) are respectful of the environment improving quality of life. The focus will be on: urban sprawl, development of brownfields and on rewilding / greening Urban Areas."	X	INDIRECT
	EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (European Green Deal)	European Commission	2020	Environment	General	The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, part of the European Green Deal, is a long-term EU strategy aimed at protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems . Its central aim is to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030.	Nature Restoration Plan, section 2.2.8.: "To bring nature back to cities and reward community action, the Commission calls on European cities, at least 20,000 inhabitants to develop ambitious Urban Greening Plans by the end of 2021. These should include measures to create biodiverse and accessible urban forests, parks and gardens; urban farms ; green roofs and walls; tree-lined streets; urban meadows; and urban hedges."	X	INDIRECT
	Farm to Fork Strategy (European Green Deal)	European Commission	2020	Food policy	General	Aims at shorter supply chains and a lower environmental footprint of the food system ; identifies urban food systems as an R&I (Research and Innovation) priority.	Chapter 3, <i>Enabling the transition</i> , section 3.1. <i>Research, innovation, technology and investments</i> : "A key area of research will relate to microbiome, food from the oceans, urban food systems as well as increasing the availability and source of alternative proteins such as plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins and meat substitutes".	X	INDIRECT
	CAP 'Eco-schemes'	European Union (CAP 2023-2027)	2021	Agriculture	Rural	Direct payments for climate and environment friendly farming , a potential funding route for urban farms.	Regulation No. 23: A smarter, modernised and more sustainable CAP needs to embrace research and innovation in order to serve the multi-functionality of Union agriculture , forestry and food systems , investing in technological development and digitalisation, as well as improving the uptake and effective deployment of technologies, digital technologies in particular, and the access to, and increased sharing of, impartial, sound, relevant and new knowledge.	X	INDIRECT
	Nature Restoration Regulation 2024/1991	European Parliament and Council of the EU	2024	Environment	General	It requires Member States to implement restoration measures for: terrestrial, coastal, freshwater, marine, urban, agricultural, forest and river ecosystems , with the overall objective of covering at least 20% of EU land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.	Paragraph (47): "Urban ecosystems represent around 22 % of the land surface of the Union and constitute the area in which the majority of the citizens of the Union live. Urban green spaces include , inter alia, urban forests, parks and gardens, urban farms , tree-lined streets, urban meadows and urban hedges. Urban ecosystems, like the other ecosystems addressed in this Regulation, provide important habitats for biodiversity, in particular plants, birds and insects, including pollinators. They also provide many other vital ecosystem services, including natural disaster risk reduction and control such as for floods and heat island effects, cooling, recreation, water and air filtration, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Increasing urban green space is an important parameter for measuring the increase of the ability of urban ecosystems to provide those vital services[...]" Art. 8. Restoration of urban ecosystems, section 2: "From 1 January 2031, Member States shall achieve an increasing trend in the total national area of urban green space , including through the integration of urban green space into buildings and infrastructure, in urban ecosystem areas, [...]"	X	INDIRECT

APPENDIX C

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
ITALIAN	Associazione coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane	Coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane (association)	1999	Sustainability	General	The Association plays a central role in supporting, promoting, and monitoring Local Agenda 21 initiatives , as well as in strengthening cooperation and information exchange among local authorities. Among its most effective instruments is the distribution of the Italian translation of the European Sustainable Cities Campaign Newsletter to municipalities, provinces, and regions.	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Orientamento e modernizzazione del settore agricolo (D.Lgs. 18 maggio 2001 n. 228)	Italian Government	2001	Agriculture	General	Introduced agricultural "multifunctionality" , allowing farms to provide social and peri-urban services. (Enabling base for UA)	Art. 2135 Civil Code: "E' imprenditore agricolo chi esercita una delle seguenti attività: coltivazione del fondo, selvicoltura, allevamento di animali e attività connesse." "Si intendono comunque comprese le attività, esercitate dal medesimo imprenditore agricolo, dirette alla manipolazione, conservazione, trasformazione, commercializzazione e valorizzazione che abbiano ad oggetto prodotti ottenuti prevalentemente dalla coltivazione del fondo o del bosco o dall'allevamento di animali , nonché le attività dirette alla fornitura di beni o servizi mediante l'utilizzazione prevalente di attrezzature o risorse dell'azienda normalmente impiegate nell'attività agricola esercitata, ivi comprese le attività di valorizzazione del territorio e del patrimonio rurale e forestale, ovvero di ricezione ed ospitalità come definite dalla legge".	X	INDIRECT
	Carta di Matera (Festa nazionale dell'agricoltura, Matera)	Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori (CIA)	2010	Agriculture	General	Programmatic manifesto asking local authorities to support agriculture , limit soil consumption and value the city-countryside link.	Section 2.1: "Le Amministrazioni locali si impegnano a sostenere e difendere in tutte le sedi i benefici economici, sociali e territoriali che l'agricoltura porta con sé. Riconoscendo questo ruolo, si impegnano a valorizzarlo, e a raggiungere precisi obiettivi programmatici di relazione e di servizio: il consenso nazionale dell'agricoltura è la prima occasione per verificare tali impegni."	X	INDIRECT
	Norme per lo sviluppo degli spazi verdi urbani (legge 14 gennaio 2013, n. 10)	Italian Government	2013	Green infrastructure	Urban/peri-urban	Italian law aimed at promoting and protecting urban green spaces . It establishes National Tree Day, amends the regulations regarding the requirement to plant a tree for every newborn or adopted child in municipalities with more than 15,000 residents, provides for mechanisms to monitor urban green spaces, and promotes local initiatives for the development of urban green spaces.	Art. 3, section c: "proporre un piano nazionale che [...] fissi criteri e linee guida per la realizzazione di aree verdi permanenti intorno alle maggiori conurbazioni e di filari alberati lungo le strade, per consentire un adeguamento dell'edilizia e delle infrastrutture pubbliche e scolastiche che garantisca la riqualificazione degli edifici, in coerenza con quanto previsto dagli articoli 5 e 6 della presente legge, anche attraverso il rinverdimento delle pareti e dei lastrici solari, la creazione di giardini e orti e il miglioramento degli spazi."	✓	DIRECT
	Contenimento del consumo di suolo e riuso del suolo edificato (Disegno di legge n. 2383)	Italian Parliament (bill introduced, not adopted as law)	2016	Urban regeneration	Urban/peri-urban	Includes urban agriculture within the legal definition of urban regeneration .	Art. 8, paragraph 1: "Ai comuni iscritti nel registro di cui all'articolo 9 è attribuita priorità nella concessione di finanziamenti statali e regionali per gli interventi di rigenerazione urbana e di bonifica dei siti contaminati a tal fine necessari, nel rispetto della disciplina di settore, e per gli interventi volti a favorire l'insediamento di attività di agricoltura urbana e il ripristino delle culture nei terreni agricoli incolti, abbandonati, inutilizzati o non più sfruttati a fini agricoli."	✓	DIRECT
	1. Misure per il contenimento del consumo di suolo e il riuso del suolo edificato (Disegno di legge n. 86) 2. Misure per il contenimento del consumo di suolo e il riuso del suolo edificato (Disegno di legge n. 164) 3. Misure per il contenimento del consumo di suolo e il riuso del suolo edificato (Disegno di legge n. 193)	Italian Parliament (bill introduced, not adopted as law)	2018	Urban regeneration	Urban/peri-urban	Includes urban agriculture within the legal definition of urban regeneration .	d.d.l.n. 86 & 193, Art. 6, paragraph 2, letter b: "preveda la realizzazione o il completamento di corridoi ecologici, aree destinate all'agricoltura urbana e periurbana , aree pedonali, piste ciclabili, percorsi per disabili e il soddisfacimento degli standard urbanistici comunali e sovracomunali" d.d.l.n. 164, Art. 5, paragraph 1, lettera: "garantire forme di intervento volte alla rigenerazione delle aree urbanizzate degradate attraverso progetti e strumenti organici relativi a edifici e spazi pubblici e privati, basati sulla bonifica, sul riuso, nonché sulla rigenerazione delle funzioni ecologiche del suolo, sulla riqualificazione, demolizione, ricostruzione e sostituzione degli edifici esistenti, sulla creazione di aree verdi pedonalizzate, di percorsi ciclabili, di aree naturalistiche, di aree per agricoltura e forestazione urbana e sull'insediamento di funzioni pubbliche e private diversificate volta al miglioramento della qualità della vita dei residenti e della vivibilità e salubrità degli spazi urbani pubblici;"	✓	DIRECT
	Contenimento del consumo di suolo, riuso del suolo edificato e rigenerazione delle aree urbane degradate (Disegno di legge n. 51)	Italian Parliament (bill introduced, not adopted as law)	2022	Urban regeneration	Urban/peri-urban	Includes urban agriculture within the legal definition of urban regeneration .	Art. 6, paragraph 2, letter b: "preveda la realizzazione o il completamento di corridoi ecologici, aree destinate all'agricoltura urbana e periurbana , aree pedonali, piste ciclabili, percorsi per disabili e il soddisfacimento degli standard urbanistici comunali e sovracomunali".	✓	DIRECT

APPENDIX D

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
JAPANESE	Agricultural Land Development Act (Law No. 65 of 1941) / 農地開発法	Government of Japan	1941	Agriculture	Rural	Wartime policy to expand agricultural land and increase food production.	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Agricultural land reform: 1. Agricultural Land Adjustment Law (No. 64 of 1945) / 農地調整法中改正法律 2. Law concerning Special Measures for the Establishment of Owner-Farmers (Law No. 43 of 1946) / 自作農創設特別措置法	Government of Japan	1945-46	Agriculture	Rural	Post-war legislation authorized the government to purchase land from absentee and large-scale landlords to redistribute it to tenants, effectively executing the Japanese agricultural land reform to eliminate feudal landownership, increase agricultural productivity and to democratize farmers.	X	X	NON-RELATED
	Cropland Act (Act No. 229 of 1952) / 農地法	Government of Japan	1952	Farmland conservation	Rural	Core Japanese farmland law regulating ownership, transfer of rights, leasing and conversion of agricultural land. It aims to stabilize the status of cultivators, promote efficient agricultural use of farmland, regulate land-use relations, and restrict the conversion of cropland into non-agricultural land.	Art. 2-2: "persons who have ownership of or the right of lease of cropland, or any other right to use and derive profit from cropland must ensure that cropland is used in an agriculturally-appropriate and efficient manner " Art. 4 (1): "a person who converts cropland to non-cropland must obtain permission from the prefectural governor."	X	INDIRECT
	City Planning Act (Act No. 100 of 1968) / 都市計画法	Government of Japan	1968	Land use planning	Urban/per-urban	National urban planning law establishing Japan's framework for city planning areas, zoning, development control and urban planning projects. Although not an agricultural law, it explicitly requires city planning to maintain a balance with agriculture, forestry and fisheries.	Art. 2: "city plans are to be established based on the fundamental principle that healthy, cultural urban lifestyles and functional urban activities should be secured while maintaining a healthy balance with the agriculture, forestry and fishery industries. "	X	INDIRECT
	Act on the Development of Agricultural Promotion Areas (Law No. 58 of 1969) / 農業振興地域の整備に関する法律	Government of Japan	1969	Farmland conservation	Rural	National law establishing a planning system for the designation and development of Agricultural Promotion Areas , where agriculture should be comprehensively promoted. It aims to support the sound development of agriculture and the rational use of national land by coordinating agricultural land use with other land uses, preserving and forming agricultural areas suitable for modern agriculture, and promoting planned public investment and agricultural development measures.	Art. 2: "The designation of agricultural development areas and the formulation of agricultural development area development plans under this Act shall be carried out with the aim of preserving and forming agricultural areas that have the necessary conditions for the modernization of agriculture, taking into consideration the natural conditions of the land, trends in land use, future projections of the local population and industry, and paying attention to the coordination of agricultural use and other uses of land from the standpoint of the rational use of national land resources, in order to promote the sound development of agriculture, and to systematically promote public investment in agriculture and other measures related to agricultural development in said agricultural areas."	X	INDIRECT
	Productive Green Land Act (Law No. 68 of 1974) / 生産緑地法	Government of Japan	1974	Farmland conservation	Urban/per-urban	National law establishing the system of Productive Green Land Districts within city planning. It regulates the designation and protection of agricultural, forestry and fishery land in urban areas , aiming to contribute to a good urban environment while maintaining coordination with agriculture, forestry and fisheries.	Art. 1: "This law aims to contribute to the formation of a good urban environment while coordinating with agriculture, forestry, and fisheries by establishing necessary matters concerning urban planning for Type 1 and Type 2 agricultural land preservation zones ." *Type 1 and Type 2 are urban agricultural land designated for preservation	✓	DIRECT
	Act for Partial Amendment of the Productive Green Land Act (Law Act No. 39 of 1991) / 生産緑地法のの一部を改正する法律	Government of Japan	1991	Farmland conservation	Urban/per-urban	The 1991 reform strengthened the system by removing the former first/second-class distinction and introducing a 30-year farming/land-use restriction linked to tax relief for designated urban farmland.	"In Article 10, the phrase 'ten years in the case of first-class productive green land districts , and five years in the case of second-class productive green land districts' shall be amended to 'thirty years' ."	✓	DIRECT
	Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (Act No. 106 of 1999) / 食料・農業・農村基本法	Government of Japan	1999	Agriculture	General	Japan's framework law for food, agriculture, and rural policy. Enacted in 1999, it replaced the former Agricultural Basic Act of 1961 and established the basic principles for national agricultural policy, including stable food supply , the multifunctional roles of agriculture , sustainable agricultural development, and rural development.	Art. 36: "(1) The State shall take necessary measures such as encouraging exchanges between urban and rural areas, and promoting improvement of allotment gardens , in order to enhance public understanding and awareness of agriculture and rural areas and to contribute to healthy and comfortable life. (2) The State shall take necessary measures so that agriculture in and around urban areas can operate production activities that meet the demand of urban residents , making use of advantages of proximity to the consumers."	X	INDIRECT

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	SCALE OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION	RELATION WITH URBAN AGRICULTURE	EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO UA	TYPE OF RELATION
JAPANESE	Basic Act on the Promotion of Urban Agriculture (Act No. 14 of 2015) / 都市農業振興基本法	Government of Japan	2015	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	Japanese national framework law that formally defines urban agriculture as agriculture carried out in urban areas and surrounding areas, and establishes basic principles, national/local government responsibilities, and planning measures to promote the stable continuation of urban agriculture.	Art 1: "This law aims to promote urban agriculture comprehensively and systematically by establishing basic principles and fundamental matters for realizing them, as well as clarifying the responsibilities of the national and local governments, thereby ensuring the stable continuation of urban agriculture and contributing to the formation of a good urban environment through the appropriate and full utilization of the functions of urban agriculture."	✓	DIRECT
	Basic Plan for the Promotion of Urban Agriculture / 都市農業振興基本計画	Government of Japan	2016	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	National basic plan established under Article 9 of the Urban Agriculture Promotion Basic Act, setting the government's basic direction and measures for promoting urban agriculture , conserving urban farmland, and re-evaluating urban agriculture from both agricultural-policy and urban-policy perspectives.	Introduction: "The positioning of urban farmland , which until now had been regarded as land intended for housing or public facilities, must be greatly shifted toward something "that is natural to have," and further, something "that should exist" ; farmland must be understood as playing an important role in forming environmentally symbiotic cities. [...] In addition to the function of supplying agricultural products that urban agriculture has performed, there is growing appreciation of its diverse functions, such as disaster prevention, landscape formation, environmental conservation, places for agricultural experience and learning, and fostering understanding of agriculture and agricultural policy."	✓	DIRECT
	Act to Amend Part of the Urban Green Space Act, etc. (Law No. 26 of 2017) / 都市緑地法等の一部を改正する法律	Government of Japan	2017	Farmland conservation	Urban/peri-urban	Omnibus amendment law reforming the Urban Green Space Act and related legislation, including the Productive Green Land Act and the City Planning Act (adding the Rural Residential Zone as 13th category). It introduced the Specific Productive Green Land system , allowing municipalities to extend the conservation of productive green lands beyond the 30-year purchase-request date when their preservation contributes to a good urban environment.	Article 10-2 paragraph 1: "The municipal mayor may designate as Specific Productive Green Land those productive green lands whose purchase-request reference date is approaching, when, taking into account the state of development of parks, green spaces and other public open spaces in the surrounding area, as well as land-use conditions, it is considered particularly effective for forming a good urban environment to ensure their conservation even after that reference date."	X	INDIRECT
	Act on Facilitation of Leasing of Urban Farmland (Act No. 68 of 2018) / 都市農地の賃借の円滑化に関する法律	Government of Japan	2018	Urban agriculture	Urban/peri-urban	Japanese national law facilitating the lease of urban farmland , particularly productive green land in urbanization areas, in order to promote the effective use of urban farmland, support the sound development of urban agriculture, and maintain the multiple urban functions of farmland, including food supply, green space, and disaster-prevention space.	Art 1: "This law aims to promote the effective use of urban farmland by taking measures to facilitate the leasing of urban farmland , thereby contributing to the sound development of urban agriculture and improving the lives of urban residents through the realization of the functions of urban agriculture."	✓	DIRECT

APPENDIX E

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION
TURIN	Assegnazione e gestione degli orti urbani (regolamento Comunale n. 1.64)	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	1986	Urban agriculture	The first municipal regulation for the allocation and management of urban gardens in Turin, introduced to regularize previously informal or unauthorized cultivation practices and to structure citizens' access to allotment plots.
	Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG) di Torino	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	1995	Land use planning	The municipal master plan that structured Turin's land-use framework and designated many remaining cultivated areas within the city as park areas or urban/livial parks.
	Regolamento del verde pubblico e privato della Città di Torino (regolamento n.317)	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2006	Green infrastructure	A municipal regulation governing the protection, planning, maintenance and management of public and private green areas in Turin. It frames urban green space as an environmental, social, urbanistic and educational asset , and includes rules for biodiversity, ecological networks, riverbanks, agricultural areas, trees, parks and gardens.
	Progetto "Cascine nei Parchi"	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2007	Urban regeneration	A municipal project for the recovery and reuse of historic rural buildings located inside Turin's major parks. The aim was to restore degraded municipal farmhouses and assign them new public-oriented functions through concessions to non-profit entities, associations or cooperatives.
	MiraOrti	Cooperativa Blioba	2010	Urban agriculture	Miraorti was a participatory urban-agriculture and urban-regeneration project launched in Mirafiori Sud, Turin, in 2010. It aimed to support the environmental and urban regeneration of the area between the Sangone stream and the Mirafiori Sud neighbourhood by transforming and reorganising existing informal gardens into a large urban-garden park, that later became Orti Generali.
	Torino sottoscrive la Carta di Matera	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2011	Agriculture	A commitment linked to the recognition of agriculture as an economic, social, environmental and territorial resource . The Carta di Matera emphasizes agriculture's role in landscape protection, environmental stewardship, rural-territorial identity and cooperation between local administrations and farmers.
	Fondazione Torino Smart City per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2011	Sustainability	Institutional body responsible for coordinating and managing Turin's Smart City strategy. The Foundation supported the city's participation in national and European funding opportunities related to sustainable urban development, technological innovation, energy efficiency and quality of life. This framework later allowed Turin to obtain a major result in the 2013 MIUR "Smart Cities and Communities and Social Innovation" call, with 11 municipally supported projects admitted to funding for around €183 million, plus further Social Innovation projects.
	Orti urbani: "L'arte di coltivare dentro le città"	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2011	Urban agriculture	Initiative connected to sustainability goals, reduction of abusive cultivation , educational activities, biodiversity, efficient water use and the broader objectives of Local Agenda 21 and the Aalborg Charter.
	Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale (PTC2)	Provincia di Torino (Province of Turin)	2011	Land use planning	A provincial coordination plan that addresses land-use governance at metropolitan scale, with specific relevance for the protection of open land and peri-urban agricultural areas . In the Turin deliberation, PTC2 is cited for its directives on limiting soil consumption, reducing landscape fragmentation, recovering the multifunctional role of agriculture, improving environmental quality and strengthening greenways.
	Progetto Torino Città da Coltivare (TOCCI)	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2012	Urban agriculture	A municipal project designed to introduce multifunctional urban agriculture and urban forestry in Turin. It includes short supply chains, horticulture, education, training, agritourism, soil protection and social inclusion, through partnerships with private farmers and concessions of municipal land and buildings within the city's green system.
	Protocollo di intesa Città di Torino – Comitato 'Progetto Agriturismo'	Comune di Torino, Comitato Agriturismo	2013	Urban agriculture	An agreement between the City of Turin and the Progetto Agriturismo committee to explore the cultivation of abandoned land through training and the socio-occupational inclusion of disadvantaged people.
	Regolamento per l'assegnazione e la gestione degli orti urbani (regolamento comunale 363)	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2013	Urban agriculture	The regulation followed the 2012 citizen-initiative deliberation "Protection of peri-urban agricultural areas and new directions for the creation of urban gardens in the City of Turin", which had brought public attention to the need to protect Turin's remaining peri-urban agricultural land and to expand forms of community-managed urban gardening. The updated municipal regulation governs the allocation and management of urban gardens in Turin, assigning municipal plots through district-level calls to adult residents, defines plot size, cultivation rules, obligations, prohibitions, duration, fees and revocation procedures, and establishes the formal administrative framework for Turin's urban allotments.
	Firma del Milan Urban Food Policy Pact da parte della Città di Torino	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2015	Food policy	The City of Turin has always been committed to developing food policies that promote the Right to Food , as set forth in the Statute of the City of Turin (Art. 2: "implementation of the right to adequate food, understood as the right to have regular, permanent, and unrestricted access to food that is of good quality, sufficient, nutritious, healthy, and acceptable from a cultural and religious standpoint, and that ensures the mental and physical well-being, both individual and collective necessary to lead a dignified life.") This commitment was reaffirmed with the signing of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in 2015.
	Agrobarriera	RETE Ong ETS (Turin-based non-governmental and third-sector organization)	2015	Urban agriculture	AgroBarriera is an urban and social agriculture programme developed by RETE Ong ETS in Turin, particularly in the Barriera di Milano neighbourhood. The programme uses social agriculture as a tool for community development , focusing on psychophysical well-being, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyles and the reduction of different forms of poverty, especially educational poverty.

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION
TURIN	Agrobarriera	RETE. Ong ETS (Turin-based non-governmental and third-sector organization)	2015	Urban agriculture	AgroBarriera is an urban and social agriculture programme developed by RE.TE. Ong ETS in Turin, particularly in the Barriera di Milano neighbourhood. The programme uses social agriculture as a tool for community development , focusing on psychophysical well-being, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyles and the reduction of different forms of poverty, especially educational poverty.
	Atlante del Cibo di Torino Metropolitana	Università di Torino, Politecnico di Torino, Università di Scienze Gastronomiche, Camera di Commercio di Torino	2017	Food policy	The Atlante del Cibo di Torino Metropolitana is a participatory research and knowledge platform launched in 2017 to map, analyse and communicate the food system of the Turin metropolitan area. It collects and makes accessible data, projects, actors, policies and good practices connected to food, including urban agriculture, food poverty, alternative distribution systems, circular economy and food governance .
	Progetto ProGireg	Horizon 2020 Program, European Commission	2018	Green infrastructure	Its aim was to use nature-based solutions (NBS) as tools for the inclusive urban regeneration of post-industrial areas . In Turin, as in Dortmund, Zagreb and Ningbo, the project worked through living labs, where green infrastructure and nature-based solutions were developed, tested and implemented directly in real urban contexts.
	Piano Strategico dell'Infrastruttura Verde della Città di Torino	Comune di Torino (City of Turin)	2021	Green infrastructure	The Strategic Plan for Green Infrastructure is Turin's municipal planning instrument for the medium and long term development of the urban green system. It positions green infrastructure as a structural component of the city , aiming to enhance ecosystem services, ecological connectivity, climate adaptation, environmental quality and the social value of urban green spaces . It includes a specific focus on urban gardens and urban agriculture , particularly through the "Atlas of Urban Gardens" annex where urban gardens are framed as a growing component of Turin's green infrastructure, highlighting their recreational, social and educational functions within the wider urban green system.
	Progetto Fusilli	Horizon 2020 Program, European Commission	2021	Food policy	FUSILLI is a European Horizon 2020 project aimed at supporting the transition toward sustainable urban, peri-urban and rural food systems through urban living labs. The project connects 12 European cities, including Turin, to develop and test innovative urban food policies and actions across the food value chain: production and processing, distribution and logistics, consumption, food waste and governance.
	ClimaGEN	Horizon Europe Program, European Commission	2025	Green infrastructure	Project that brings together nine European cities, including Turin, to improve climate resilience and support the transition toward low-carbon, cohesive and climate-neutral cities and regions. The project uses a social innovation approach, involving municipalities, civil society, businesses, cultural and academic institutions, and local stakeholders to transform vulnerable urban neighbourhoods into regenerated, resilient and climate-neutral public spaces. In Turin, the main demonstration area is the post-industrial neighbourhood of Mirafiori, especially the living lab around Parco Piemonte and the Sangone stream (site of Orti Generali).

APPENDIX F

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION
TOKYO / NISHII-TOKYO	Tokyo Agricultural Promotion Plan / 東京農業振興プラン	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	1984	Agriculture	General agricultural promotion plan for Tokyo , aiming to develop Tokyo agriculture together with citizens and to support a comfortable urban environment with agriculture.
	1st Nishi-Tokyo City Agricultural Promotion Plan / 西東京市農業振興計画	Nishi-Tokyo City	2004	Agriculture	First municipal agricultural promotion plan of Nishi-Tokyo City , addressing farmland conservation , attractive agricultural management, development of diverse actors, local production-processing-distribution systems, and exchanges between farmers and citizens [later editions 2014, 2019].
	Guidelines for Community Planning Utilizing Agriculture and Farmland / 農業・農地を活かしたまちづくりガイドライン	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2008	Urban agriculture	Guidelines promoting community planning based on the coexistence of urban areas, agriculture and farmland, emphasizing the multifunctional role of urban farmland in food supply, environmental conservation, green space, citizen interaction, and disaster-prevention open space.
	Tokyo Agricultural Promotion Plan / 東京農業振興プラン	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2012	Agriculture	Plan setting the direction for Tokyo agriculture as an industry closely connected to citizens' lives , addressing agricultural management, farmland conservation, local production and consumption, citizen cooperation, and institutional reforms concerning urban agriculture and farmland.
	Implementation Plan for Community Planning where City and Agriculture Coexist / 西東京市都市と農業が共生するまちづくり事業実施計画	Nishi-Tokyo City	2013	Urban agriculture	The plan promotes community planning based on the coexistence of urban areas and agriculture in Nishi-Tokyo City, using local farmland and agricultural activities for area-based projects, local food sales, local consumption, experiential learning, and walking-routes development.
	2nd Nishi-Tokyo City Agricultural Promotion Plan / 第2次西東京市農業振興計画	Nishi-Tokyo City	2014	Agriculture	The 2nd Nishi-Tokyo City Agricultural Promotion Plan updates the city's agricultural policy, maintaining the aim of promoting agriculture rooted in citizens' daily life while giving stronger attention to urban-agriculture policy changes, farmland conservation, the multifunctional role of farmland, and coordination with broader municipal and Tokyo Metropolitan agricultural strategies.
	Tokyo Agricultural Promotion Plan / 東京農業振興プラン	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2017	Agriculture	A Tokyo Metropolitan Government agricultural promotion plan that updates Tokyo's strategy after the 2015 Urban Agriculture Promotion Basic Act, framing Tokyo agriculture as an activity that should coexist with the city and contribute to citizens' lives . It addresses urban agriculture and farmland through sections on institutional reform, farmland conservation, agricultural management, local production/local consumption, and citizen engagement.
	Special Subcommittee on Productive Green Land established within the Nishi-Tokyo City Planning Council / 生産緑地に関する専門部会 (西東京市都市計画審議会)	Nishi-Tokyo City Planning Council	2017	Farmland conservation	Following a March 2017 revision of the City Planning Council ordinance, which empowered the Council to make formal recommendations to the mayor and to establish specialist subcommittees, a Special Subcommittee on Productive Green Land was set up to draft proposals on the conservation of urban farmland . Its work led to the February 2019 report and the Council's July 2019 recommendation to the mayor, "Proposal on the Conservation and Value Creation of Urban Farmland".
	Tokyo Metropolitan Government Basic Policy for the Development of Agricultural Promotion Areas / 東京都農業振興地域整備基本方針	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2018	Agriculture	A Tokyo Metropolitan Government basic policy defining how agricultural promotion areas are designated, maintained, and managed in Tokyo , with the aim of securing agricultural land, promoting planned agricultural development, and supporting the long-term use of land for agriculture.
	Nishi-Tokyo City Internal Project Team for the Conservation of Urban Farmland / 都市農地の保全等検討庁内プロジェクトチーム	Nishi-Tokyo City (cross-departmental team chaired by the Deputy Mayor)	2019	Farmland conservation	Cross-departmental internal project team established in November 2019 in response to the City Planning Council's July 2019 recommendation. It organized the city's urban-farmland conservation measures and informed the subsequent farmland conservation also through value-creation workshops in 2021 (with participation of University of Tokyo students, JA, farmers and citizens).
	New "Green Agriculture, Housing, and Community" Urban Development Project / 新しい「緑農住」まちづくり事業	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) (Based on the results of the university-proposed project)	2022	Land use planning	Model project under the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's "Green-agriculture-residential" community-planning framework, which integrates greenery, urban farmland and housing within the future urban structure. With the aim to promote " green agricultural and residential " urban development (urban development that integrates agricultural land use such as farmland, rural landscapes, and residential groves with residential areas).
	Tokyo Agricultural Promotion Plan / 東京農業振興プラン	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2023	Agriculture	A Tokyo Metropolitan Government agricultural strategy for 2023–2032, updating the previous 2017 plan and setting the direction for sustainable Tokyo agriculture . It addresses production, farm management, farmland conservation, local food systems, citizen engagement, and the role of agriculture in urban life.
	Basic Policy for the Development of Agricultural Promotion Areas / 東京都農業振興地域整備基本方針	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2023	Farmland conservation	The 2023 revision defines the agricultural land to be secured by FY2030 and outlines measures for farmland preservation, effective agricultural land use, agricultural infrastructure improvement, coordination with non-agricultural land-use demand, and regional agricultural land-use planning.
	Tokyo Metropolitan Government Basic Policy on Agricultural Promotion / 東京都農業振興基本方針	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2023	Agriculture	A Tokyo Metropolitan Government basic policy, revised in June 2023, setting the basic direction for strengthening agricultural management foundations in Tokyo. It addresses the development and support of agricultural business entities, farmland use, agricultural management improvement, and institutional measures for sustaining Tokyo agriculture.

CONTEXT	POLICY INITIATIVE	PROMOTING INSTITUTION	YEAR	FIELD OF POLICY	DESCRIPTION
NISHI-TOKYO/TOKYO	3rd Nishi-Tokyo City Agricultural Promotion Plan / 第3次西東京市農業振興計画	Nishi-Tokyo City	2024	Agriculture	The 3rd Nishi-Tokyo City Agricultural Promotion Plan updates the city's agricultural policy after the 2015–2017 national reforms on urban agriculture and productive green land, and after the end of the 2014–2023 planning period. It places stronger emphasis on farmland conservation and use , diverse agricultural actors, cooperation with the local community, and implementation mechanisms.
	Nishi-Tokyo City Urban Planning Master Plan / 西東京市都市計画マスタープラン	Nishi-Tokyo City	2024	Land use planning	Compared with the previous master plan, the 2024 version integrates the Location Optimization Plan, a compact-city planning tool used to guide where residential areas and key urban functions should be concentrated. This makes the plan more strategic and implementation-oriented, addressing long-term urban structure, disaster prevention , mobility, greenery , land use, and quality of the living environment .
	Tokyo Metropolitan Government "Support Project for Developing Diverse Stakeholders" / 多様な担い手育成支援事業	Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG)	2024	Agriculture	Project aimed at securing and training a broader range of actors involved in Tokyo agriculture . The project defines "diverse actors" not only as professional farmers, but also as side-job farmers, companies, organizations, municipalities, researchers, farmland owners and urban residents interested in agriculture, farmland use, agricultural business, social innovation and "agricultural lifestyles" in the city.

APPENDIX G

Intervista ad Orti Generali

Sopralluogo e intervista a Matteo Baldo (consigliere di Orti Generali SRL)

Data: 2 Febbraio 2026

Intervistatrice: Studentessa Giulia Carmen Paese

Intervistato: Matteo Baldo

Relatrice: Prof.ssa Cassatella; correlatore: Prof. Akito Murayama

Università: Politecnico di Torino | The University of Tokyo

Premessa

1. Presentazione della tesi, incentrata sul confronto tra Orti Generali e un centro di innovazione per l'agricoltura urbana a Nishi-Tokyo, concepito come polo direttivo capace di fornire indirizzi e stimoli ad altre iniziative. Il progetto giapponese è un'associazione no-profit ancora in fase di costruzione. Il contesto di Nishi-Tokyo è caratterizzato dalla permanenza di numerosi lotti agricoli, conservati anche grazie a misure fiscali introdotte negli anni Settanta a favore del mantenimento dei terreni agricoli.
2. Inquadramento della collaborazione tra Politecnico di Torino e Università di Tokyo, sviluppata attraverso pubblicazioni congiunte sull'agricoltura urbana e attività di ricerca legate al riconoscimento normativo del tema.
3. Definizione dello scopo della visita: approfondire il funzionamento di Orti Generali e raccogliere elementi utili al confronto con il caso di Nishi-Tokyo. È prevista una successiva fase di osservazione sul campo, anche attraverso documentazione fotografica e possibili interviste agli ortolani.

Intervista

1. Com'è nato Orti Generali e in quale contesto si è sviluppato il progetto?

Orti Generali. A Torino non esiste un piano regolatore agricolo. Intorno al 2012, durante un assessorato all'ambiente particolarmente attento, fu promosso un **censimento di tutti i terreni agricoli urbani** allo scopo di preservarli, anche all'interno dei parchi pubblici, a prescindere dalla destinazione d'uso. Secondo i dati del progetto **"Torino, città da coltivare" (TOC)**¹, in una prima fase fu avviata un'analisi delle aree verdi a uso agricolo esistenti, con un censimento dei fabbricati, delle concessioni in essere o in scadenza e delle superfici: circa due milioni di metri quadri di proprietà comunale e sette terreni di proprietà privata. La città disponeva quindi, e dispone probabilmente ancora, di circa due milioni di metri quadri di aree verdi a uso agricolo.

¹ Con il progetto **"Torino Città da Coltivare"**, avviato a marzo 2012, l'Amministrazione comunale ha promosso lo sviluppo dell'agricoltura nel territorio urbano attraverso coltivazioni sostenibili indirizzate al concetto di "catena corta" che integra una serie di attività quali l'agricoltura sociale, l'orticoltura individuale o collettiva, le pratiche d'agriturismo, e infine la forestazione urbana.

Nel 2013 fu approvato un **nuovo regolamento comunale per l'assegnazione e la gestione degli orti urbani**². Il regolamento precedente, gestito tramite le circoscrizioni, privilegiava requisiti tipici dell'edilizia popolare (basso reddito, anzianità, nuclei monofamiliari). La riforma del 2013 introdusse invece una logica di **mixité**, considerando non solo dati strutturali rigidi ma anche fattori culturali e di interesse, e aprendo l'assegnazione anche a enti e associazioni per diversificare il portafoglio di orti comunali. Quella riforma nacque in collaborazione con i soggetti che sarebbero poi diventati Orti Generali: all'epoca operavano come **Cooperativa Biloba**³ e poi come **Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla**⁴, svolgendo animazione territoriale soprattutto a Mirafiori Sud e accompagnando l'ufficio del verde pubblico, tra l'altro proprio sulla riforma delle assegnazioni.

Nel 2012 risultavano circa 400 orti assegnati dalle circoscrizioni della città, con l'obiettivo di arrivare a 2.000 entro il 2020. In quel quadro iniziarono i primi ragionamenti sulle **compartecipazioni pubblico-private** per la concessione di terreni a uso agricolo-sociale: poiché la città faticava a gestire direttamente queste aree, una direzione possibile fu affidarne la riqualificazione e gestione, in concessione, a soggetti del privato sociale e del terzo settore, fino a circa sette ettari di parco pubblico per ente.

Il **bando di concessione** relativo a questo parco uscì nel **2014**: inizialmente per circa tre ettari, poi estesi a cinque negli anni successivi. Fu il **primo progetto pilota di questo tipo**, con uno strumento ancora "verticale" (non esistevano ancora i patti di collaborazione): la trasformazione e gestione, per quindici anni, di alcuni ettari di parco pubblico. Il progetto fu consegnato a dicembre 2014; l'aggiudicazione arrivò intorno ad agosto 2015. Seguirono però circa **tre anni di ricorsi** da parte di altri concorrenti. Le chiavi furono consegnate solo a maggio 2018. Da lì sono partite la **bonifica e la riqualificazione**: a inizio 2019 sono stati realizzati gli orti nella parte alta, aperti a marzo, con i primi **160 orti** tutti assegnati entro giugno. Si è quindi formata una **lista d'attesa** che oggi conta diverse centinaia di persone. A luglio 2020 è stato aperto il chiosco, ricavato da un fabbricato in precedenza abusivo.

L'area era in parte un'ex **cava di sabbia** di fine anni Cinquanta/Sessanta. La ditta che cavava aveva costruito abusivamente diversi manufatti; esaurita la cava, il fabbricato fu occupato a più riprese: da un pastore con le capre, da attività illecite di vario tipo e da alcuni orti abusivi. Era, di fatto, "terra di nessuno", priva di presidio.

Il "patto" della concessione fu sostanzialmente questo: la città concedeva circa **due ettari** di buona terra agricola (un prato irriguo storicamente fertile, dove ora sorgono gli orti) a fronte dell'obbligo di farsi carico anche di circa **un ettaro degradato**, residuo delle cave e degli abusi, da bonificare, con l'accatastamento a proprie spese del fabbricato abusivo e delle relative utenze. La disciplina di concessione richiedeva inoltre un progetto capace di **coinvolgere il maggior numero possibile di persone**. Da qui la scelta della scala dell'orto: **non un'agricoltura sociale su grande campo, ma il ritaglio in 160 orti di piccola dimensione**, per coinvolgere quante più persone possibile e aprire il parco al quartiere. L'idea di fondo: una periferia come Mirafiori Sud non deve caratterizzarsi solo

² Regolamento approvato con la Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale n. 363 del 25 marzo 2013 (Mecc. 2013 00113/002).

³ Cooperativa torinese attiva nell'accompagnamento sociale alla rigenerazione urbana responsabile per aver promosso il progetto **Miraorti**: progetto nato nell'ottobre del 2010 in occasione della riqualificazione urbanistico-ambientale dell'area compresa tra il torrente Sangone e il quartiere di Mirafiori sud attraverso un percorso di progettazione partecipata.

⁴ L'**Associazione Coefficiente Clorofilla** è un'organizzazione no profit promotrice di Orti Generali.

per l'edilizia popolare e per fattori strutturali (popolazione anziana, basso reddito), ma anche per la possibilità di fruire di un verde che esisteva ma era appannaggio di pochi occupanti abusivi.

Venne stipulato anche un patto con i 10 ortolani informali già presenti sul sito: poter restare e diventare soci dell'associazione, a condizione di aiutare a smaltire i materiali accumulati negli anni e di rendere i propri appezzamenti più permeabili ai nuovi fruitori (scuole, turisti, ecc.). Dai dieci, due si sono "autoregolarizzati" salendo nella nuova area, due sono diventati "autonomi solidali" (categoria specifica, utile anche per assegnare aiuti) e gli altri hanno via via lasciato. I dieci ortolani informali si trovavano nella parte bassa; la parte alta era solo prato irriguo, non occupato.

2. Quali sono gli obiettivi del progetto di Orti Generali?

Giulia. Da quello che mi hai raccontato, l'obiettivo, o la mission, è sempre stato arrivare a più persone possibili, quindi lavorare su una scala ampia. Esistono altri obiettivi rappresentativi di Orti Generali?

Orti Generali. L'obiettivo (quasi un meta-obiettivo) è quello dichiarato sul sito: creare un **modello di impresa sociale** per la trasformazione e rigenerazione di aree verdi marginali e degradate nelle periferie. "Modello" significa qualcosa di sostenibile, replicabile e scalabile: un'ambizione ancora lontana essendo economicamente non sostenibili. Trattandosi del primo progetto pilota, era anche una sperimentazione.

Una sfida costante è l'equilibrio tra **partecipazione e competenze**: si co-progetta e si allarga il più possibile il coinvolgimento, ma senza rinunciare a guidare e facilitare con competenze frutto di studi e ricerca, valorizzando al tempo stesso il sapere specifico del singolo ortolano. Si lavora molto con l'università per avere dati il più possibile scientifici, travasando da un lato le ricerche universitarie verso attività di divulgazione, e facilitando dall'altro la raccolta dati e le consultazioni. Il bacino è ampio: circa **270 famiglie** di ortolani, più scuole e altri fruitori, per un ordine di grandezza di circa **un milione di passaggi all'anno**, un campione potenzialmente molto interessante per le collaborazioni con i dipartimenti di agraria, veterinaria e biologia.

3. Come funziona l'assegnazione degli orti?

Giulia. Qual è il processo per ottenere un orto? Avete ancora persone in lista d'attesa? Una volta assegnato, per quanto tempo si tiene un orto?

Orti Generali. In lista ci sono ancora molte persone: l'elenco contava circa **1.670 richieste**. Le richieste vengono selezionate per capire chi è davvero **in linea con le specifiche del progetto**, sia nella gestione degli appezzamenti sia nello spirito generale. Chi entra in lista compila un **questionario** (provenienza, spostamenti, tempo che potrà dedicare, dati utili anche a suggerire buone pratiche sui trasporti) e una **preadesione al regolamento**: coltivazione biologica, cura anche di piante già esistenti, condivisione di un approccio ecologico e di attenzione all'inclusione e alla solidarietà sociale. Si entra così in una comunità che si autoregola, non si prende semplicemente un pezzo di terra.

I tempi dipendono dalla metratura: per l'orto più piccolo 50 l'attesa è maggiore (anche tre anni), mentre per quello da 100 mq è minore. Nella prima area le metrature erano miste (50, 75, 100 mq); col tempo si è capito che la più richiesta era quella da 75 mq. **I nuovi orti seguono però un modello diverso, l'orto con food forest**: 75 mq di cui 50 di orto e 25, sul retro, di food forest (una fascia più

“selvatica”, stratificata (erbacee, arbustive, arboree), utile alla biodiversità e capace di ospitare piccola fauna e produrre anche frutti, in un contesto più vicino a quello naturale che a quello “addomesticato” dell’orto). Ogni assegnazione richiede spiegazione e momenti di formazione comune sulle potature e sulla gestione degli sfalci.

Per quanto riguarda il periodo di assegnazione, non c’è una scadenza: a differenza degli orti circoscrizionali (che duravano, ad esempio, quattro anni), qui l’unico limite è la durata della concessione da parte del Comune di Torino, ancora circa otto anni. Si può tenere l’orto finché si versa il contributo e, soprattutto, finché lo si mantiene curato e coltivato: una regola nata dall’esperienza di chi pagava l’orto senza frequentarlo, privando altri di una risorsa scarsa in città. Anche il regolamento è cresciuto con l’esperienza: dalle iniziali “dieci regole” alle attuali quattro pagine, con divieti aggiunti via via che emergevano pratiche in contrasto con la convivenza ecologica.

4. Quali sono le attività che si svolgono qui ad Orti Generali?

Giulia. Oltre alla produzione di cibo e alle attività sociali e didattiche (come le scuole in visita), quali altre attività si svolgono qui?

Orti Generali. C’è un capitolo di **corsi di formazione per adulti**: dall’apicoltura alla formazione per insegnanti della scuola primaria, dalla permacultura all’orticoltura di base, dalla coltivazione di fiori da taglio al riconoscimento delle erbe selvatiche. Ci sono poi gli **eventi di comunità**, circa uno al mese: tra i più emblematici, la “social passata” (una giornata di passata di pomodoro con molte postazioni e un tutor) e il “gran galà degli orti” (serata di beneficenza in cui una ventina di ortolani diventano cuochi e propongono un piatto della tradizione con almeno un ingrediente del proprio orto, con gare tra piatti e per l’orto più fiorito).

5. Qual è il rapporto con la città in termini di progettazione dei confini?

Giulia. Ho notato che non c’è una separazione netta con la città: solo recinzioni trasparenti. Mi pare molto permeabile, e immagino sia voluto. C’è un’intenzione precisa del progetto in questo senso?

Orti Generali. Sì. Trattandosi di un **parco pubblico**, lo sguardo deve poter attraversare l’area: più è visibile, più è percepita come spazio pubblico e non privato, e ciascuno decide poi se entrare. Anche gli accessi sono pensati per i non addetti ai lavori, non solo per gli ortolani. La progettazione dei **confini** è nata da uno studio condotto con **Stefano Olivari**⁵ su come spontaneamente gli orticoltori abusivi territorializzavano e delimitavano gli appezzamenti; su quella base sono stati ridisegnati i nuovi confini. La proporzione di spazi pubblici (vie, piazzette) è molto maggiore rispetto agli orti circoscrizionali, dove ci si muove tra corridoi e cancelletti; qui si è cercato lo scambio tra più categorie di fruitori.

Tutto questo deve però fare i conti con **vincoli edilizi e urbanistici** stringenti: oltre il piccolo manufatto, qualsiasi costruzione (serra, container, qualsiasi volumetria) o piantumazione richiede autorizzazioni. Ciò comporta **costi elevati**: si rinuncia a risorse che potrebbero andare, ad esempio, in attività didattiche. Nel 2025 sono stati spesi circa **10.000 euro** solo per smontare e rimontare container e serre per ragioni procedurali e perché, in alcuni casi, la città di Torino approva ma l’ente parco regionale no, costringendo a riformulare continuamente.

⁵ Ideatore del progetto **Miraorti**, curatore del progetto **Orti Generali** e presidente di Orti Generali SRL.

6. Come si sostiene economicamente il progetto?

Giulia. Dal punto di vista economico, come vi reggete? Immagino non sia una domanda facile.

Orti Generali. Non ci reggiamo, non siamo ancora autosufficienti. Sul piano operativo i capitoli di ricavo principali sono i **contributi degli orti**, il **chiosco** e la **didattica**; più piccoli i **corsi di formazione** e la **vendita di piantine e piccoli servizi**. Essendo però un'impresa sociale e un ente no-profit, possiamo richiedere finanziamenti pubblici e privati e lo facciamo con una certa costanza.

Il finanziamento iniziale più consistente venne dal bando **MIUR "Smart Cities Communities and Social Innovation"**⁶ (governo Monti, intorno al 2010–2012), nato più o meno in contemporanea con il bando di concessione: fu la risorsa che permise tutta la progettazione di Orti Generali e le prime opere. In seguito, ci hanno sostenuto la **Compagnia di San Paolo**⁷ e numerosi enti del terzo settore torinesi, oltre a un'attività costante di **fundraising**.

7. Descrizione durante la visita del sito

Orti Generali. Le strutture coperte sono **serre multifunzionali** (didattica, corsi per adulti, eventi, feste). Il sito ospita più collaborazioni esterne, perché non tutte le competenze sono interne: ad esempio un'apicoltrice professionista gestisce l'apiario e il corso di apicoltura. Tra le **sperimentazioni**, questa è una prima aiuola di suolo rigenerato con il Dipartimento di Agraria con lo scopo di produrre nuovo suolo in città a partire da scarti inerti e organici, evitando di consumare suolo agricolo di campagna. Creazione di bancali di aromatiche, piante **impollinatrici e fiori eduli** con il Dipartimento di Biologia, che ha contribuito a progettare l'"albergo degli insetti".

Sul fronte sociale: il primo orto bonificato è nato in collaborazione con il **servizio dipendenze dell'ASL** (si è dentro il piano locale delle dipendenze), con percorsi per il reinserimento sociale e lavorativo dei beneficiari; è poi diventato **orto sinergico** e sede dei corsi di permacultura. Ci sono inoltre un **orto didattico** per le scuole, il "giardino delle capanne", gli **orti solidali** (circa 15, per chi ha difficoltà socioeconomiche e contribuisce con una banca del tempo⁸ anziché in denaro) e l'**orto collettivo**, aperto al quartiere due mattine a settimana a volontari, persone in servizio civile, tirocinanti e persone in messa alla prova⁹; la sua produzione va in parte al chiosco e in parte a un circuito di beneficenza per famiglie in difficoltà. Altri orti sono assegnati a enti con utenze fragili (centro diurno, cooperative: La testarda e Valdocco).

Verso il limite della concessione si arriva all'alveo del fiume Sangone: da qualche anno il progetto **"Torino non volta più le spalle al fiume"**¹⁰, occupandosi dell'ambiente fluviale anche con cantieri

⁶ **Smart Cities and Communities and Social Innovation**: bando del MIUR (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca) lanciato nel 2012 per finanziare progetti urbani innovativi.

⁷ Compagnia di San Paolo: una delle maggiori fondazioni di origine bancaria italiane, con sede a Torino, che finanzia progetti sociali, culturali e ambientali.

⁸ Banca del tempo: forma di scambio in cui i partecipanti contribuiscono con ore di lavoro o competenze anziché con denaro.

⁹ Messa alla prova: misura penale italiana alternativa alla detenzione, che prevede lo svolgimento di lavori di pubblica utilità o percorsi di reinserimento.

¹⁰ Il progetto **"Torino non volta più le spalle al fiume"** è una strategia di rigenerazione urbana del Comune di Torino volta a reintegrare i quattro fiumi cittadini (Po, Dora Riparia, Stura di Lanzo e Sangone) nel tessuto sociale ed economico della città.

partecipati (ad esempio la piantumazione di salici contro l'erosione delle sponde). Resta visibile un "museo dell'abusivismo", testimonianza dei manufatti e degli allevamenti informali preesistenti.

Infine, il **pascolo residente** con mucche di razza Highland: una sperimentazione di **gestione del verde pubblico**, in cui gli animali "fanno le giardiniere" (concimano e gestiscono il prato). Così un costo per la città (sfalci, potature) può diventare addirittura un'entrata, grazie al **canone di concessione** che il progetto versa. L'idea è che diventi un modello nel tempo, pur con limiti emersi (con la siccità estiva e il cambiamento climatico occorre integrare il foraggio): si tratta di capire se un pascolo stabile in città abbia senso.

8. Quali sono gli stakeholder coinvolti ad Orti Generali?

Giulia. Nella mia tesi sarebbe necessario approfondire sull'analisi degli attori e degli stakeholder. Oltre agli ortolani, ai gestori, alle università e ai finanziatori (come la Compagnia di San Paolo), ci sono altri soggetti di cui dovrei tenere conto?

Orti Generali. Le categorie sono sostanzialmente: gli **enti istituzionali** e i relativi uffici con cui si lavora quasi ogni settimana (Ufficio Patrimonio, Ufficio Progettazione Europea, assessorati, ecc.) e i numerosi soggetti del **privato sociale e del terzo settore**. Alcuni collaborano su questo parco, altri su progetti di scala più ampia: ad esempio, con la Compagnia di San Paolo, il progetto **Simbiosi** sperimenta modelli di **agroforestazione** sostenibile in aree periferiche dotate di verde. Posso comunque inviarti via e-mail un elenco preciso di tutti gli attori coinvolti.

APPENDIX H

Interview to Project Team of Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Urban Agriculture Center

Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Urban Agriculture Center

Date: 22 May 2026

Interviewer: Student Giulia Carmen Paese

Moderator: Professor Akito Murayama

Respondents: Project team of the Nishi-Tokyo Innovation Center (Tokyo Metropolitan Government TMG, The University of Tokyo, NPO Birth and Project Advisor).

Thesis supervisors: Professors Akito Murayama and Claudia Cassatella

University: Politecnico di Torino | The University of Tokyo

Background

1. The thesis is introduced by explaining that the following questions were originally formulated in English, later translated into Japanese, and edited by the moderator.
2. The comparison between the Tokyo case and Orti Generali is framed around two urban-agriculture hubs that support agriculture-related activities within the city, while differing substantially in their nature.
3. Since the Tokyo project is still in the preparatory stage, the information is drawn from the NPO project proposal, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government webpage on the “Support Project for Developing Diverse Stakeholders”, and the materials produced during the tripartite meetings held so far.

Interview

1. Are there any additional activities envisioned for the Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center, beyond the following?

1. Educational activities for schools, students and community members
2. Hands-on exchange activities for visitors and local residents
3. Experimental farming linked with university research
4. Network-building through the Open Lab
5. Project-formation support through the Open Lab
6. Consultation and advisory support

Interviewer. The Lab is already planning the activities listed above, which appear in the various documents. Are any additional activities planned beyond these?

Project team. The main addition is a promotion and public-awareness function along the lines of **raising global awareness of urban agriculture**. Drawing on case studies, the actual state of urban agriculture and the Lab’s own activities, the team would like to **promote and publicize the value of urban farmland and such initiatives**, framed by the keyword “**think tank**”. This may be slightly premature, since the website has not yet launched, but the intention is for the Lab to handle PR for **future urban-agriculture projects and initiatives** and to treat this as one of its themes. The budget for this is reportedly covered, according to the meetings.

2. Are there any additional events envisioned for the Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center beyond the following?

- Open Lab meetings
- Agriculture and Town Exchange Day (hands-on experiences, exhibitions, sales, talks, etc.)
- Advisory Meetings (experts, research institutions, agriculture-related organizations, public actors, intermediaries)
- Training-result presentation events
- Agri Challenge Day (participants present business plans and receive feedback and support guidance)
- Hands-on exchange events
- Tastings, cooking events, food-education workshops, mini-seminars and exhibitions (Phase 2)

Interviewer. Everything that has appeared in the documents so far is listed here. Are any further events planned?

Project team. The official stance is to proceed with the activities set out on the relevant page of the **May 15th management-meeting materials**, which list everything planned for this fiscal year and the next. The various open events listed in English, such as the “Challenge Day,” have not been finalized yet, so for now the team will proceed with what is outlined in those recent management-meeting materials.

3. Regarding the theme of biodiversity contribution of the project, are there any other actions that Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center is going to pursue beyond crop diversity considering the following examples?

- Pollinator support
- Vegetation diversity (other than crops)
- Habitat creation
- Native species promotion

Interviewer. When compared with the Italian case study, biodiversity appears to be a significant theme. Beyond crop diversity, are there plans to support pollinators, promote vegetation diversity and create habitats, essentially spaces where various organisms can thrive, focusing primarily on native species?

Project team. For site development, the team plans to **incorporate these perspectives** with input from Professor Sato, although for the Lab itself this had not really been anticipated. A scoping question was raised — whether the question concerns only the site or all urban farmland in Tokyo. The discussion touched on **Satoyama**¹ areas: there has been some talk of restoring Tokyo’s neglected Satoyama, though it has not featured in the project’s own discussions. A key point was raised: simply **maintaining the fields as farmland** and preserving the open grassland and open environments that are now decreasing itself contributes to biodiversity. As a tentative, personal idea, **planting fruit trees** (beyond the roughly six-month harvest cycle) might improve biodiversity,

¹ **Satoyama** refers to a traditional Japanese socio-ecological landscape based on the harmonious coexistence between human communities and nature, where villages, farmland, secondary forests, and water systems are integrated through long-standing agricultural and resource-management practices.

but this is not settled. For landscaping in the architectural and site plans, the team decided to use only **tree species native to the Tokyo area**.

4. Describe how the Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center expects to address resource management. How will water, energy and waste be managed?

Interviewer. How are water resources managed within the project and what about energy use and waste management?

Project team. The team has decided to install **solar panels on the roof** and make it a **zero-energy building**. Rainwater falling on the roof is stored in **underground tanks** and used for irrigation, and also for air conditioning; the used water then returns to the fields. This water cycle has been planned out. Regarding the waste, little waste has been generated yet, but **composting** is being discussed with Professor Iida as part of the cycle. Coffee grounds are already used in the fields: the team buys this compost resource from a place called “Compost-san” in Kokubunji and currently uses it to grow potatoes. Grass clippings could also be recycled where space allows, and such space is needed. Overall, a resource-cycle plan exists.

5. Regarding green contribution, beyond the creation of crop plots, is there an intention to create other green spaces considering the beyond examples?

- Orchard areas
- Forestry and agroforestry areas
- Garden/park area for recreation and cohesion activities

Interviewer. Beyond areas for crop cultivation, are there plans to create other green spaces?

Project team. The team would like to **plant fruit trees**, though not a full orchard, a full-scale forest would be difficult. Some existing trees are being **retained from the outset**, particularly those that provide shade; trees in the way were cut, and some pruning is still needed. As for a garden/park area for recreation and socializing, the space in front of the building is a possibility. This will be assessed on site once the building design is finalized; potted plants at the entrance are seen as feasible, and a green curtain (e.g. a bitter-melon screen) would be welcome.

6. Regarding the productive dimension, beyond vegetable production, is there an intention to produce other products considering the beyond examples?

- Flowers and plants
- Seedling
- Fruits
- Value added products

Interviewer. Regarding the productive dimension, beyond vegetables, are other products envisioned?

Project team. What will be grown is not yet decided and depends on what the people using the training site, and the individual projects, want to do. Beyond vegetables, the team is considering **flowers** and **herbs**; if there is demand, a space for **fruit trees** could be created. The greenhouses

make **seedling** production feasible and well-equipped. Processed products are not yet defined, but since a **kitchen** has been built, some processing is assumed.

6. Will there be other production modes beyond in-ground and greenhouse cultivation?

Interviewer. Are any production methods envisioned other than field and greenhouse cultivation, for instance factory-type indoor production?

Project team. Factory-type (indoor) production is not being considered for this site at present. Using vacant urban spaces, such as empty rooms elsewhere in the city, could be considered as a separate project not realizable on this property. Other methods such as planters, raised cultivation or vertical farms are known but not specified; greenhouse cultivation remains an option. On composting as a productive activity: setting up a composting site from waste materials and using the compost **to generate sales** was raised, but “selling” is a stretch, “**not so much selling as distributing**”; it could nonetheless work as a composting training ground and is something to consider.

7. What is the envisioned product destination? In the meetings it emerged that the products from cultivation could be destined to the participants of the Open Lab meetings, are there other product destinations considering the beyond examples?

- Members of the initiative
- Surrounding community
- Local businesses
- Schools
- Participants of activities and events
- Tokyo citizens

Interviewer. Where will the various products be distributed, beyond Open Lab meeting participants, to local communities, schools, or the general Tokyo public?

Project team. Distribution to **Open Lab meeting participants** was mentioned; other destinations (local communities, schools, Tokyo citizens are under consideration. It is largely settled that the team **does not plan to engage in sales**, since it **cannot conduct for-profit activities**. How far to expand distribution is the key open issue, and the team feels it is still at an early, from-scratch stage.

8. Which activities are expected to generate income for the Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center? In the proposal, participation fees and usage fees are mentioned, while courses, sales of harvested produce, and consultation/project support activities also appear as possible income-related activities. Could you clarify which of these will function as revenue sources, and whether any additional income-generating activities are envisioned?

- Courses
- Sales of harvested produce
- Seedling sales
- Value-added product sales
- Agricultural equipment sales
- Fertilizer/compost sales
- Membership subscription
- Group visits

- Rental of the space for private events
- Consultation, mentoring, project support

Interviewer. Regarding finances, which of the various activities are expected to generate income?

Project team. The team may charge **participation or usage fees** for training sessions. However, it is not allowed to sell things, which constrains revenue from crop sales. A business plan has nonetheless been proposed involving **vending machines**, with the revenue used for activities. For events, **providing space and bringing in food trucks** could allow charging a **venue fee or stall fee**. Selling compost made from harvests, and similar sales, are difficult. Membership fees for training, fees for hosting group visits and renting out space for events are seen as possible; charging a **consultation fee** is uncertain but not excluded. On selling goods unrelated to agricultural products under the Tokyo Metropolitan Government project (for example selling pamphlets, given reduced paper use) this could contribute to the project budget, though it is closer to **merchandise sales**, and whether it is permissible remains an open question.

9. Regarding the health and wellbeing dimension, does Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center envision to provide healthy food access to the neighborhood? If yes, which would be the distribution model considering the beyond examples?

- Direct sales
- Markets
- Participants of activities/events
- Free access for vulnerable groups

Interviewer. Regarding health and wellbeing, you plan to provide access to healthy food — how would that be distributed?

Project team. There will be no direct sales; rather, a **market-style event in collaboration with JA²**. Distribution to **participants in activities or events** is also possible. Distributing vegetables to low-income households is a more European/Western model that has not yet been discussed. Given a high likelihood of surplus or under-utilized crops, especially in the first phase, one option could be **donating them to local children's community kitchens**, though this would require considerable consultation with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

10. Is Nishi-Tokyo Innovative Center promoting well-being practices considering the beyond examples?

- Employment support
- Rehabilitations programs
- Mental restoration activities
- Sensory engagement activities
- Social and belonging activities
- Promotion of healthy food production practices
- Promotion of active living

²JA (Japan Agricultural Cooperatives): Japan's nationwide network of agricultural cooperatives, providing farmers with marketing, supply and financial services.

Interviewer. And regarding wellbeing practices such as employment support, rehabilitation, mental recovery, sensory engagement, social connection?

Project team. One participant noted having visited the Turin site (Orti Generali), where people with mental-health conditions use agriculture, specifically by working the soil by hand, to aid recovery. Such aspect has not previously considered in depth but if people wish to run such a project, it is a possibility. In the social-welfare field there is the concept of “**comprehensive collaboration**”; if such a project launches there is real potential for example creating **collaboration with a hospital**, work for the elderly, and local residents volunteering, forming a management-side network. On job creation specifically: it was emphasized as a clear focus of the project: **creating new jobs through urban agriculture** by training new people to take on these roles. Moreover, as the hub is established, **hub operations themselves could generate employment**: as new projects become more active, more funding becomes available, which in turn allows for hiring new staff.

APPENDIX I

Intervista al Comune di Torino

Orti Generali e il concetto di “centro di agricoltura urbana”

Data: 12 giugno 2026

Intervistatrice: Studentessa Giulia Carmen Paese

Intervistata: Laura Ribotta, Ufficio Transizione Ecologica e Fondi Europei del Comune di Torino

Relatrice: Prof.ssa Claudia Cassatella; correlatore: Prof. Akito Murayama

Università: Politecnico di Torino | The University of Tokyo

Premessa

1. Introduzione della tesi e descrizione del caso studio di Tokyo
2. Presentazione del confronto tra Orti Generali e il caso di Tokyo
3. Presentazione delle dimensioni opposte di propensione verso l'esterno emerse nei due casi studio: *replicator* e *generator*

Comune. Hanno costruito qualcosa che non sembrava possibile. Devo dirti che non sembrava possibile neanche a me. Quando ho iniziato a lavorare con loro, nel 2016, abbiamo scritto il primo progetto europeo; prima ancora di sapere se l'avessimo vinto — era un progetto in due fasi — siamo arrivati all'inizio del 2018, e in contemporanea, a inizio 2018, loro hanno ottenuto la concessione, dopo quasi dieci anni dall'inizio del processo. Quando ho visto il posto, all'inizio del 2018, ho pensato: “Va bene, adesso diamo loro questi due euro che arrivano dal progetto europeo, ma non ce la potranno fare mai”, perché il posto era messo davvero male. La casetta che gli abbiamo dato aveva preso fuoco tre volte: una cosa disastrosa. C'erano solo rifiuti tutt'intorno e orti abusivi ormai ridotti ad accumuli di rifiuti. Era una cosa senza senso, ti giuro. Un posto in cui nessuno osava andare perché, essendo così abbandonato, era diventato rifugio di attività illecite. Io ero nuova dei progetti europei, arrivavo da un altro ufficio e da altre esperienze e — glielo dico ancora ogni tanto — avevo pensato: “Questi non ce la possono fare”.

La differenza grande è che, da quello che mi racconti tu, a Tokyo stanno facendo riunioni una volta al mese, molto precise, con tutti gli attori, e partono dall'alto. È una volontà amministrativa, pubblica, di mettere insieme tutti gli attori e di coinvolgerli con un co-design approfondito: un processo molto interessante. Orti Generali, invece, è stato anarchico.

Giulia. Sì, infatti non ho enfatizzato questo aspetto, ma sono assolutamente a conoscenza di questa differenza sostanziale, che porta poi a una diversa evoluzione del progetto. Quello che volevo mettere in luce è che, insieme alla professoressa Cassatella, abbiamo individuato due categorie di propensione verso l'esterno: una generativa, come nel caso di Tokyo, che vuole generare iniziative che vanno oltre sé stessa e che possono anche essere diverse dall'iniziativa originaria; e quella di Orti Generali, che invece, si presenta e si propone come un modello di social enterprise replicabile e di ispirazione per altri luoghi di Torino. È quindi un po' la logica del replicator. Da una parte, dunque, il caso di Tokyo che vuole generare con un vasto range, iniziative; dall'altra, un caso in cui questo modello ha funzionato effettivamente a Torino e potrebbe funzionare altrove. Questo è sostanzialmente il quadro in cui vogliamo collocare i due progetti.

Intervista

1. Il Comune dispone di una strategia o di un documento di indirizzo dedicato all'agricoltura urbana?

Giulia. La prima domanda è se il Comune dispone di una strategia o di un documento di indirizzo dedicato all'agricoltura urbana. Ho fatto ricerca e ho visto che l'agricoltura urbana viene citata nel Piano Strategico Infrastruttura Verde del 2020–2021, ma volevo essere certa che non esistesse un documento di indirizzo più specifico.

Comune. Quello, assolutamente. Un'altra cosa che puoi citare è che abbiamo un regolamento sugli orti, un regolamento del verde, fatto dai colleghi del verde e approvato dal consiglio comunale. Il Comune può darsi delle norme, e queste norme si chiamano regolamenti: è il livello normativo che compete alla città. In questo momento il regolamento orti è in revisione, anche in dialogo con **ORME**, l'associazione di secondo livello di tutte le associazioni che si occupano di orticoltura urbana a Torino. Il sito probabilmente l'hai già individuato. Trovo interessante da citare il fatto che il nuovo regolamento riguarda le aree pubbliche della città di Torino gestite direttamente dalla città: un regolamento che, ad esempio, non verrà attuato a Orti Generali, perché Orti Generali è un'area pubblica in concessione e chi ha la concessione la gestisce secondo le proprie regole. Il nuovo regolamento sarà invece attuato negli orti circoscrizionali: se guardi l'albo degli orti urbani del Piano Infrastruttura Verde, trovi tutti quelli circoscrizionali, che si differenziano da quelli gestiti dalle associazioni.

Giulia. Sì, c'erano due elenchi, li ho visti in una tabella.

Comune. Esatto. La cosa che ritengo interessante come processo di governance è che, per rifare il regolamento degli orti circoscrizionali, abbiamo sentito la necessità di dialogare con le associazioni che gestiscono le aree associative. È un riconoscimento, da parte della città, del fatto che per certi aspetti le aree associative gestite dalle associazioni funzionano a volte meglio degli orti circoscrizionali, e che si vuole in qualche modo introdurre innovazione ispirandosi a questi modelli associativi.

Giulia. Questa cosa è molto interessante.

Comune. Trovi qualche **articolo pubblicato**, è l'unica cosa che posso darti, perché è un processo interno ancora in corso. Hanno già fatto una consultazione preventiva di tutte le circoscrizioni, che sono i nostri governi locali dei quartieri; le circoscrizioni hanno presentato osservazioni, a cui si sta rispondendo, e penso che in autunno si andrà in consiglio comunale per l'approvazione definitiva. È un processo ancora in corso, per cui non ho documenti ufficiali da condividere, ma se cerchi trovi qualcosa negli articoli di giornale: quello è pubblico ed è citabile.

2. Come vengono finanziate le iniziative dedicate all'agricoltura urbana?

Giulia. La seconda domanda è: come vengono finanziate le iniziative dedicate all'agricoltura urbana? C'è effettivamente un fondo dedicato all'agricoltura urbana?

Comune. No. Storicamente sono stati i **fondi del verde**, quelli delle nuove opere a verde, a finanziare le realizzazioni. L'origine di questi fondi non saprei citartela con precisione, perché hanno iniziato a operare all'inizio degli anni Novanta: non ho traccia esatta di dove arrivassero, se fossero fondi della città iscritti a bilancio per quello scopo. In alcuni casi sono stati usati anche **oneri di**

urbanizzazione da privati, che hanno realizzato questi orti come opere di urbanizzazione. Questo per la realizzazione. In teoria, poi, gli orti realizzati dalla città, quelli circoscrizionali dell'elenco circoscrizionale, vengono affidati alle circoscrizioni, che dovrebbero occuparsi della manutenzione. Le circoscrizioni, però, nel tempo sono state depauperate sia di personale sia di fondi, e stanno messe peggio degli enti centrali della città. Quindi, onestamente, non ci sono stati grandi interventi sugli orti. So che nei prossimi anni, a partire credo dal prossimo, ci sarà un intervento straordinario dei colleghi della Direzione Verde sugli orti, ma devono ancora definire quali opere e dove; di sicuro si parla di quelli circoscrizionali. Sono fondi strutturali che derivano dal **programma PON Metro**¹ (Programma Operativo Nazionale Città Metropolitane), fondi che arrivano dall'Europa ai ministeri e dai ministeri alle città metropolitane; la città di Torino, però, li gestisce direttamente, ed è proprio una parte del mio ufficio, che si chiama Transizione Ecologica e Fondi Europei. Tra le varie cose, ci occupiamo anche della gestione dei fondi PON Metro.

Un'altra fonte di finanziamento, storicamente, sono i **fondi diretti dei progetti europei**. È quello che ho gestito io negli anni, a partire dal 2018, quando abbiamo vinto il primo progetto su questo tema, che si chiamava **ProGireg**². Quel progetto ha portato i primi ottantamila euro a Orti Generali per realizzare e suddividere gli orti della parte superiore.

Giulia. Sì, inizialmente hanno realizzato tutta la parte superiore e poi sono scesi nella parte sottostante.

Comune. Esatto, perché quel progetto finanziava la realizzazione degli orti. Era un progetto sulle **Nature Based Solutions**, e gli orti urbani erano individuati come Nature Based Solution; con quei fondi siamo riusciti a finanziare la realizzazione degli orti superiori, da cui sono partiti. Negli anni abbiamo avuto altri progetti europei sugli stessi temi. Sempre a Mirafiori, con Orti Generali, abbiamo vinto anche **FUSILLI**³, più incentrato sul cibo e sull'economia circolare, e quindi anche sull'utilizzo degli ortaggi nel bar-ristorante che nel frattempo stavano aprendo. Il terzo progetto, tuttora in corso, si chiama **ClimaGEN**⁴.

Come azioni finanziate esternamente al progetto, c'è stata l'estensione di altri cento orti, finanziata dalla **Compagnia di San Paolo** attraverso il bando "**Simbiosi. Insieme alla natura per il futuro del Pianeta**"⁵. All'interno del progetto, oltre a questo ampliamento, dovevamo dimostrare finanziamenti esterni aggiuntivi rispetto al progetto europeo: per questo cito anche il pezzo finanziato dalla Compagnia. Inoltre, dentro il progetto, loro hanno il ruolo di aiutare la **Fondazione**

¹ Il Programma Operativo Nazionale Città Metropolitane 2014-2020 (**PON Metro**) è un programma, adottato dalla Commissione Europea, volto a migliorare la qualità dei servizi e a promuovere l'inclusione sociale in 14 Città Metropolitane, tra cui Torino.

² **ProGireg** è stato un progetto finanziato dalla Commissione Europea, nell'ambito del programma Horizon 2020, che ha utilizzato la natura per la rigenerazione urbana di aree post-industriali

³ Il progetto **FUSILLI** intende superare gli ostacoli attualmente presenti per lo sviluppo e l'attuazione di politiche alimentari integrate e sistemiche in modo da permettere la transizione verso sistemi alimentari sostenibili nelle aree urbane, periurbane e rurali.

⁴ **ClimaGEN** è un progetto europeo finanziato dal programma Horizon2020 con l'obiettivo di rafforzare la resilienza climatica urbana e sostenere la transizione verso città a basse emissioni di carbonio.

⁵ Il bando **Simbiosi** ha l'obiettivo di tutelare e conservare il capitale naturale, contrastare il cambiamento climatico e il rischio idrogeologico e infine promuovere una consapevolezza pubblica e individuale sui temi di natura ambientale, nei territori del Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta.

Mirafiori⁶ nella realizzazione del **Festival del Paesaggio Fluviale**⁷, la cui prima edizione sarà a settembre 2026. All'interno del progetto il Festival del Paesaggio Fluviale ci sarà due volte, e realizzeremo anche una Nature Based Solution artistica. Entro settembre 2026 ne verrà realizzata una ed entro settembre 2028, altre due, sempre lungo le sponde del Sangone. In questo caso si esce un po' dal tema dell'orticoltura (pur restando presente) per andare verso una fruizione più generale delle sponde del Sangone, anche dal punto di vista culturale: stiamo facendo tutta una ricerca e ricostruzione storica dei luoghi, anche con realtà aumentata e virtuale, oltre a una parte sul cibo. Abbiamo fatto co-design anche con i cittadini per capire quali spazi e quali Nature Based Solutions realizzare.

C'era poi un altro progetto europeo, finito a marzo. I tre che ti ho citato sono progetti **Horizon**⁸. Quello finito a marzo, invece, è un **Interreg Central Europe**⁹ e si chiama **CoFarm4Cities**¹⁰. Prevedeva la realizzazione di orti a **Cascina Falchera**, di nuovo un'area con molti edifici di questa antica cascina, poi rifatta negli anni Ottanta dalla città di Torino e oggi data in concessione a un consorzio di ONG che si chiama **Kairos**¹¹. Dentro CoFarm4Cities hanno preso un campo coltivato con agricoltura intensiva e lo hanno trasformato in orticoltura urbana, grazie ai fondi europei. Di nuovo, quindi, orticoltura e fondi europei.

Inoltre, ho un altro progetto, sempre Horizon, in corso, che si occupa della qualità dei suoli negli orti urbani e si chiama **URSOILL**¹². Il mio scopo sarebbe riaprire due orti chiusi a seguito di analisi di suolo effettuata in maniera poco accurata, che sono stati chiusi per precauzione. Con questo progetto vorremmo capire se, con analisi migliori, possano essere riaperti, con quali modalità e quali funzioni. Un vulnus di tutta questa politica di orticoltura urbana è la qualità dei suoli: in città non è mai ottimale, anche solo per la ricaduta dell'inquinamento atmosferico, pure dove l'area ha sempre avuto vocazione agricola. Uno dei motivi per cui negli ultimi anni non c'è stato un forte posizionamento politico e amministrativo nei confronti dell'orticoltura urbana è proprio per la problematica della qualità dei suoli. Non so a Tokyo come sia.

Giulia. Nel caso studio di Tokyo, le riunioni a cui ho partecipato hanno evidenziato due criticità distinte relative al suolo: da un lato, la presenza di consistenti sedimenti pietrosi; dall'altro, la

⁶ La **Fondazione della Comunità di Mirafiori** Ente Filantropico E.T.S. è nata su iniziativa di un insieme di realtà del terzo settore e da Compagnia di San Paolo che raccoglie fondi pubblici e privati per contribuire a migliorare dal punto di vista ambientale e sociale il quartiere di Mirafiori, prediligendo modalità di intervento che coinvolgono attivamente i destinatari.

⁷ Il **Festival del Paesaggio Fluviale** nasce nell'ambito del progetto europeo Horizon2020 'ClimaGen Climate, Imagination, Engagement'. Il Festival offrirà l'opportunità di comprendere le potenzialità e il valore del paesaggio fluviale attraverso azioni concrete di trasformazione (NbS) e momenti di divulgazione e indagine per esplorare nuovi modelli di coesistenza ecologica e culturale.

⁸ **Horizon 2020** e **Horizon Europe** sono i programmi quadro consecutivi dell'Unione Europea per il finanziamento di ricerca e innovazione. Il loro obiettivo comune è rafforzare l'eccellenza scientifica, guidare la transizione ecologica e digitale e potenziare la competitività industriale europea attraverso progetti collaborativi internazionali.

⁹ **Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE** è un programma di finanziamento dell'Unione Europea volto a finanziare progetti congiunti tra enti pubblici e privati per promuovere l'innovazione, la transizione verde, la mobilità sostenibile e una migliore governance territoriale.

¹⁰ Il progetto europeo **CoFarm4Cities** ha come obiettivo quello di creare un modello sostenibile per l'agricoltura nelle aree periferiche urbane dell'Europa centrale, quale strumento efficace per prevenire l'espansione urbana incontrollata.

¹¹ Il **Consorzio Kairos di Torino** è un consorzio di cooperative sociali attivo in servizi e progetti in ambito socio-assistenziale, welfare territoriale e inserimento lavorativo.

¹² Il progetto **URSOILL** (Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Urban Soil Restoration through Urban Living Labs) è un'iniziativa europea finanziata dal programma Horizon Europe che mira a rigenerare e proteggere i suoli urbani degradati.

necessità di migliorarne la qualità agronomica, in particolare in termini di disponibilità di nutrienti, per renderlo idoneo alla coltivazione.

3. Secondo l'allegato 2 del Piano Strategico Infrastruttura Verde di Torino, il Comune ha favorito numerose iniziative di agricoltura urbana in città. Tra queste, esistono esperienze di portata e rilevanza paragonabili a Orti Generali?

Giulia. La terza domanda riguarda l'esistenza, a Torino, di un'iniziativa rilevante quanto Orti Generali: oltre a tutte quelle esistenti, ce n'è una di portata paragonabile?

Comune. Uguale a Orti Generali non c'è niente. Sulla replicabilità bisogna sempre capire anche cosa vogliamo replicare, perché dovresti avere gli stessi luoghi e le stesse persone; alcuni fattori, secondo me, sono replicabili. Ti cito tre posti, uno è proprio Orti Generali, che di solito uso per le visite quando qualcuno mi chiede di vedere gli orti urbani a Torino. Oltre a Orti Generali ti cito **Cascina Falchera**¹³, che ti ho già nominato: è un posto molto diverso. Era una cascina didattica della città di Torino, con quaranta dipendenti, una cosa enorme. A cosa serviva? A fare le gite delle scuole e didattica sulla natura, l'agricoltura, gli animali. Era stata realizzata in tempi in cui la città di Torino aveva evidentemente risorse, sia per assumere persone sia per mantenere le strutture. Nel tempo non è sopravvissuta: è stata chiusa a lungo, sono stati fatti bandi di concessione andati deserti, poi un soggetto è stato individuato ma è durato solo un anno. Adesso c'è il **Consorzio Kairos**. Nasce soprattutto, per come è strutturato il bando a cui hanno risposto, come luogo didattico. Per sopravvivere, però si occupano di fornire anche molta attività sociale: accoglienza di richiedenti asilo senza casa, con una parte della cascina dedicata agli alloggi (ricevendo fondi sociali dedicati); un laboratorio di falegnameria sociale per l'inserimento lavorativo (ricevendo di nuovo fondi sociali); e stanno per aprire un ostello della gioventù. Parte dei terreni intorno (hanno un'estensione molto più grande di Orti Generali, oltre a molti più edifici) è ancora data in agricoltura ai contadini. Hanno aperto un bar, un ristorante e una gelateria, e ogni fine settimana sono aperti, con eventi e attività per tutta la città. Sono un modello diverso, ma con caratteristiche che si avvicinano alla volontà di Orti Generali. Insieme hanno realizzato un progetto che hanno chiamato Agroforestazione urbana che ha previsto interventi sia a Orti Generali sia a Cascina Falchera, con la piantumazione, in corrispondenza degli orti, di alberi e arbusti da frutto, con l'idea di costruire una food forest, aumentare la biodiversità dei luoghi e diversificare il modo di fare orticoltura urbana. Un altro posto, molto più piccolo ma interessante per il modello sociale e per il quartiere in cui si inserisce, è **Agro Barriera**¹⁴. Qui c'è **Rete ONG**¹⁵, che ha una convenzione con la circoscrizione e gestisce una piccola area; sempre Rete ONG gestisce anche gli orti sul tetto del Lidl in Corso Giulio Cesare. Anche questo è un caso particolare, perché è il tetto di un supermercato (un luogo privato) gestito però da un'associazione a scopi sociali. Questi di Rete ONG sono interessanti e fanno parte di **ORME**¹⁶; il riferimento è Giuseppe De Plano. Hanno vinto di recente la seconda edizione di **Simbiosi della Compagnia di San Paolo**; quindi, è previsto un ampliamento delle loro aree e faranno

¹³ **Cascina Falchera** è un hub di innovazione sociale e ambientale legato alle tematiche della sostenibilità ambientale e dell'educazione alimentare.

¹⁴ **Agrobarriera** è il programma di agricoltura urbana e sociale che RETE Ong ETS sviluppa sul territorio torinese, in particolare nel quartiere Barriera di Milano.

¹⁵ **RE.TE. ONG** è un'organizzazione non governativa torinese impegnata nella cooperazione internazionale e nella promozione di iniziative sociali, ambientali ed educative.

¹⁶ **ORME ETS – Orti Metropolitani** è una rete torinese di organizzazioni e soggetti attivi nell'agricoltura urbana, nata per connettere, valorizzare e supportare esperienze di orticoltura, apicoltura e cura del verde urbano nell'area metropolitana di Torino, con finalità sociali, ambientali, educative e di inclusione.

attività anche nelle aree pubbliche limitrofe, soprattutto piantumazione di alberi da frutto ampliando anche la parte degli orti. Di fianco a loro c'erano dei campi atletici abbandonati, dati in concessione ma non più utilizzati da un'associazione sportiva: c'è stato un accordo con l'associazione e con la circoscrizione, sono arrivati i fondi della Compagnia e lo stanno realizzando. Si chiama **Progetto BUM!**¹⁷, mi pare. Per me, quindi, le tre realtà di riferimento a Torino che si stanno muovendo in maniera innovativa sono queste.

C'è poi un altro modello, se posso aggiungerlo (poi valuta tu se ha senso) che nasce dalla riflessione interna alla città di Torino sul fatto che, per certe cose, gli orti associativi funzionano meglio di quelli circoscrizionali: abbiamo sempre meno personale che possa occuparsene, gli orti circoscrizionali vengono assegnati ma non seguiti e sono più un problema che una soluzione. In due casi che mi vengono in mente, la città si appoggia ad alcune associazioni per aiutare a gestire gli orti circoscrizionali. Così le due "colonne" del Piano Infrastruttura Verde, orti circoscrizionali e orti associativi, in questo modello misto si mescolano un po'. I due esempi sono: gli **Orti dell'Arrivore** con Rete ONG, che lavora in quella direzione da più tempo, e gli **Orti di Via Petrella di Agro Barriera**. Quelli di Rete ONG hanno iniziato con un piccolo esperimento di compostaggio con lombricoltura dentro gli Orti dell'Arrivore, ed è stato il pretesto per aiutare a costruire comunità: in un gruppo di ortolani piuttosto litigiosi, difficili da gestire anche per la circoscrizione, con questa scusa hanno cominciato a fare comunità. Li ho inseriti in un progetto del Politecnico, in chiusura credo a giugno, che si chiama **GREEN-INC**¹⁸, un **Driving Urban Transition (DUT)**¹⁹, in cui la città non prende fondi e fa solo da partner senza portafoglio: partecipiamo agli stakeholder meeting, ma abbiamo fatto arrivare dei fondi all'associazione per proseguire questa attività comunitaria di lombricoltura e compostaggio. Da settembre riceveranno un altro finanziamento su una call che hanno vinto; quindi, hanno in qualche modo una continuità. Un altro esempio simile, che dovrebbe partire e che, mi sembra, ha ricevuto un finanziamento dalla Compagnia di San Paolo, è quello degli **Orti della Falchera**, che è diverso da Cascina Falchera: sono due posti distinti. Sono orti circoscrizionali di Falchera, e lì c'è **FiëscaVerd**²⁰, un'altra delle associazioni che fanno parte di ORME, che ha un accordo con la circoscrizione (in modo simile a Rete ONG) per fare attività e dare consistenza alla comunità degli ortolani, che di nuovo è un po' da seguire. Perché la cosa che la città non riesce a fare è proprio stare dietro alla comunità, alle persone, ai loro bisogni: la gente non va lì solo per coltivare e avere il pomodoro, ma cerca soprattutto un posto dove stare bene e fare attività. La città non riesce a garantirlo, l'associazione sì.

A Mirafiori ci sono Orti Generali da una parte e gli orti circoscrizionali dall'altra: il bando degli orti circoscrizionali va in parte deserto, mentre Orti Generali ha una lista d'attesa di oltre due anni.

¹⁷ **BUM!** – **Bosco Urbano Multifunzionale** è un progetto di agroforestazione urbana a Barriera di Milano, Torino, finalizzato a trasformare spazi verdi fragili in un'infrastruttura verde multifunzionale.

¹⁸ Il progetto **GREEN-INC** (Growing Effective & Equitable Nature-based Solutions through INclusive Climate Actions) è un'iniziativa di ricerca europea (finanziata dal bando DUT) che coinvolge attivamente il Politecnico di Torino. L'obiettivo principale è studiare, pianificare e valutare l'efficacia delle Soluzioni Basate sulla Natura (NbS) nelle città europee.

¹⁹ La partnership **DUT** finanzia progetti di ricerca e innovazione trasformativi volti ad accelerare la transizione urbana verso un futuro climaticamente neutro e resiliente per tutti.

²⁰ **FiëscaVerd** nasce nel 2020, con l'obiettivo di promuovere la rigenerazione urbana e l'inclusione sociale attraverso il recupero di aree verdi marginali, e l'attivazione di percorsi di agricoltura urbana al loro interno.

4. Le iniziative di agricoltura urbana a Torino sono concepite principalmente come strumenti di riqualificazione urbana o perseguono anche altre finalità?

Giulia. La quarta domanda riguarda le finalità delle iniziative di agricoltura urbana. Considerando Orti Generali, l’iniziativa è stata vista un po’ come strumento di riqualificazione urbana; Tokyo, invece, nasce per preservare il terreno agricolo e promuovere la formazione di nuovi contadini, quindi con uno scopo del tutto diverso. A Torino, generalmente, qual è l’obiettivo primario di questi orti: più una questione di comunità, come mi diceva per le altre iniziative, o più legato alla riqualificazione urbana?

Comune. Secondo me sia **riqualificazione urbana** sia “**coesione sociale**”. Le due cose spesso vanno insieme. Quello era davvero un luogo dove la gente aveva paura ad andare; oggi, invece, tutti ci vanno, anche solo a fare una passeggiata col cane, e nel weekend è pieno di famiglie con bambini. È diventato un luogo davvero fruito, mentre era abbandonato e ricoperto di rifiuti.

5. Esistono a Torino iniziative di agricoltura urbana che possono essere considerate veri e propri "centri di agricoltura urbana", e non solo esperienze diffuse o puntuali?

Giulia. La domanda successiva è se esistano iniziative che possano essere considerate veri “centri di agricoltura urbana”, cioè focalizzate a creare altre esperienze oltre a sé stesse a Torino.

Comune. Secondo me **Orti Generali** e ancora di più **Cascina Falchera**, che fa anche sperimentazioni, per esempio sui grani antichi e attività più propriamente agricole, perché ha anche più spazio.

6. Come immagina l'amministrazione il ruolo dell'agricoltura urbana nei prossimi anni? È previsto un ampliamento, una messa a sistema o una maggiore integrazione nella pianificazione ordinaria?

Giulia. Come immagina l’amministrazione il ruolo dell’agricoltura urbana nei prossimi anni? In parte mi ha già risposto, con il nuovo regolamento a cui sta lavorando, ha qualcos’altro da aggiungere?

Comune. Devo dire che non abbiamo grandi spazi fisici di ampliamento: questo è un limite. L’altro limite è la qualità del suolo. Quindi non vedo grandi prospettive di ampliamento.

7. Il Comune ritiene utile la creazione di un centro di agricoltura urbana capace di generare e accompagnare la nascita di nuovi progetti sul territorio, assumendo un ruolo di riferimento e di coordinamento nel loro sviluppo?

Giulia. La domanda successiva è se il Comune ritiene utile la creazione, sul territorio torinese, di un centro di agricoltura urbana come quello che si sta sviluppando a Tokyo, quindi con un ruolo di riferimento e coordinamento nello sviluppo di nuovi progetti.

Comune. Nuovamente è difficile valutare ad oggi, per i problemi precedentemente già citati: la limitazione di spazio.

8. Come è nato il progetto e quale ruolo ha avuto il Comune nella fase di avvio?

Giulia. Le domande da ora in poi riguarderanno più Orti Generali. Che ruolo ha avuto il comune durante la nascita di Orti Generali?

Comune. Come ho esposto nelle precedenti domande, il ruolo del comune è stato quello di individuare dei progetti europei e di conseguenza trovare fondi esterni per sostenere il progetto.

9. Oltre alla riduzione del canone di concessione del terreno e al contributo economico che il Comune eroga annualmente al progetto, quali altri elementi regolano il rapporto tra il Comune e Orti Generali? A quali finalità è destinato il finanziamento annuale?

Giulia. Qual è il rapporto del Comune con Orti Generali, oltre alla riduzione del canone di concessione del terreno? Il Comune prende anche delle decisioni insieme a Orti Generali riguardo a ciò che vi viene fatto, oppure non c'è questo tipo di rapporto nella parte decisionale?

Comune. C'è. Per esempio, loro volevano espandersi e realizzare altre attrezzature, e in questo sono in dialogo con la città di Torino. C'è però un problema: si trovano in area parco, quindi non sono riusciti a farlo. In generale funziona così: se vogliono fare cose nuove, c'è un dialogo approfondito con tutti i servizi della città: urbanistica, edilizia privata, dipartimento del Verde e il nostro dipartimento per quanto riguarda i fondi europei.

Giulia. Quindi siete attivamente attori decisionali?

Comune. La proposta arriva da loro, non da noi: per noi è un'area data in concessione, quindi qualcosa di cui, "non dobbiamo preoccuparci", dato che la manutenzione non è a nostro carico. Però loro, anche per sopravvivere, devono sempre inventarsi qualcosa di nuovo e cercare nuovi fondi, e ogni volta che hanno un'idea nuova devono confrontarsi con noi per i permessi e per tutto il resto. Si apre quindi un confronto sia a livello tecnico sia a livello politico.

10. Il Comune considera Orti Generali un'esperienza di successo?

Giulia. Che il Comune consideri Orti Generali un'esperienza di successo lo deduco dal fatto che è uno dei tre esempi che cita quando si parla di orticoltura urbana a Torino, però le chiedo per conferma se è di fatto così.

Comune. Sì, è considerato un valore sia a livello tecnico sia a livello politico. Assolutamente sì.

10. Orti Generali è considerato un modello di riferimento per nuovi progetti di agricoltura urbana a Torino?

Giulia. Orti Generali può essere effettivamente considerato un modello di riferimento per nuovi progetti di agricoltura urbana in luoghi simili?

Comune. Ha aspetti molto **site specific**, per come è fatto il sito. In generale, però, ti dico che, quando abbiamo dovuto fare il progetto di Cascina Falchera, dove gli orti andavano creati da zero, abbiamo preso Orti Generali come **modello di riferimento**: per esempio, per il regolamento interno con gli ortolani siamo partiti dalle loro regole, dalle loro esperienze e da ciò che per loro aveva funzionato.

12. Sono nate altre iniziative che possono considerarsi “replicators” di Orti Generali?

Giulia. La domanda è se ci sono iniziative che possano considerarsi “replicators” di Orti Generali. In parte mi ha già risposto adesso con la precedente domanda.

Comune. Puoi citare gli orti di Cascina Falchera.

13. Esiste l'intenzione, da parte del Comune, di sostenere e promuovere esperienze analoghe a Orti Generali?

Giulia. Le chiedo ancora se esiste l'intenzione di sostenere e promuovere esperienze analoghe a Orti Generali.

Comune. C'è sempre il limite che ti dicevo: lo spazio e la qualità dei suoli. Per questo, in questo momento, la città è un po' bloccata, non perché la cosa non ci piaccia, anzi: i cittadini la desiderano molto, come dimostra la lista d'attesa di due anni di Orti Generali. Semplicemente, in questo momento, non si sa bene dove e come realizzare queste iniziative.