



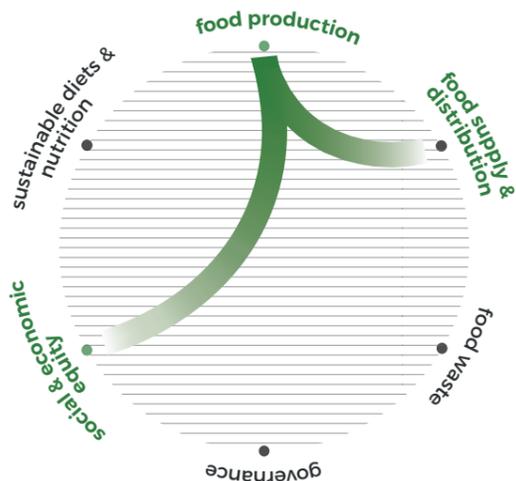
NANTES FRANCE

Title of Practice

NANTES: TURNING WASTELANDS INTO PRODUCTIVE LANDS

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category
FOOD PRODUCTION

Main impacts on other
MUFPP categories



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Context

The development of **wastelands** and brownfields in Nantes during the 1980s and 1990s was the result of the rising land prices (due to speculative practices combined with a major urban sprawl and a high population growth), which made the land too expensive for agricultural use. Furthermore, the specialization of agriculture at national level and its “deterritorialization” also contributed to the development of wastelands. In the 2000s, landowners – which were in demand for the expansion and installation of farms – expressed concern about the increasing number of wastelands in agricultural and natural areas.

In 2009, the Chamber of Agriculture decided to conduct an assessment in order to qualify and quantify the actual **land use** within areas covered by the Local Town Planning Plan. The result of the assessment was then shared with local municipalities and professional networks (farmers organizations, agricultural unions, agricultural collectives, etc.), identifying **155 sites on which agriculture could be relocated** without too much investment, fostering **local economic development** and increased production.

Overview of the food practice

The assessment identified a total of 1 500 to 2 000 hectares (ha) as **potential agricultural lands**. In order to enhance these previously untapped sites, several stakeholders first defined the resources needed to prepare the land and obtain necessary infrastructure. A double objective was set: to clear one site per commune in 2011 and to replant 500 ha by 2014. More than 300 **local meetings** were organized between 2011 and 2014, using a method based on three pillars:

1. The organization of a **local group** by the commune, involving representatives of the commune, the Nantes metropolitan government, the Chamber of Agriculture and other local actors according to the wishes and needs of the municipalities. This group has the authority to validate the choice of production sites to be cleared and to plan the projects.
2. A **joint coordination group** of Nantes Métropole and the Chamber of Agriculture, which ensures the transversality of the program and that the project is taken into account in different public policies of Nantes Métropole. External partners are also regularly associated according to the topics covered.
3. An **annual meeting** between each of these actors, with the aim of pooling and sharing experiences.

Since 2009, Nantes Métropole has implemented and updated various means, providing financial aid, technical support and information. Finally, between 2009 and 2014, 137 sites were appraised on 1 900 ha. Twelve **new farm facilities** have been finalized and nine

are underway or under study at cleared sites. Today, the process of supporting land clearing has continued thanks to a 2014 **follow-up assessment** that identified priority sectors of intervention and the evolution of agricultural land use by commune.

Results and lessons learned

As a progressive realization of its food policy, the Nantes Métropole objective is to **revitalize the former agricultural wasteland** through innovative approaches and projects. The methodological innovation aims to generate dynamic results to inform food policy. The actors involved share their priorities and project ideas within their respective areas of competence. At the Nantes Métropole scale, a specific action plan made it possible to bring coherence to public action and works in several dimensions:

- **regulatory protection of land** in urban planning documents;
- **intervention** in partnership with the operators “on the ground”; and
- development of collective approaches aiming at the emergence of **local projects**.

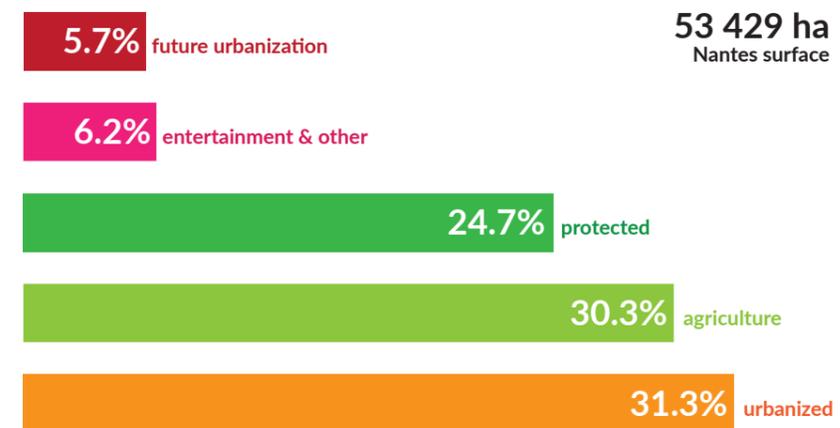
This approach has generated impressive results: **450 ha have been cleared and re-cultivated** on 51 different sites.

This action has directly benefited many farms that have diversified, been restructured by welcoming new partners, or have been newly created thanks to the significant reduction of the cost of clearing. There are also environmental, social and economic co-benefits to the territory, including:

- the creation and / or maintenance of **agricultural jobs**;
- the emergence of new sales networks in **short food chains**; and
- the increased **diversity** of landscapes as a result of the diversity of agricultural activities in the territory.

The revitalization and multiple benefits of such **territorial food system diversification** is a key feature of the project. This approach was taken after a thorough reflection on the process of urbanization and the need to **contain urban sprawl** which is essential for the preservation of agricultural and natural areas. This action is the foundation of the Territorial Food Project shared by public and private actors of the Nantes Métropole.

LAND USE IN NANTES METROPOLE



Source: AURAC



- Nantes Métropole. (n.d.). *Framework Deliberation to launch the program for combating brownfields and wastelands*. Nantes, France.
- Nantes Métropole. 2016. *General presentation report “Re-use of land in wasteland 2016”*. Nantes, France.