

## **Institutional change towards the diffusion of agroecology in traditional winegrowing areas. The case of Chianti, Italy**

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### **Abstract**

In Chianti, systematic income-maximisation choices by winegrowers, mainly agricultural specialisation, have led to severe environmental issues that need to be urgently addressed, to avoid negative effects on the resilience of winegrowing. The diffusion of agroecology among winegrowers can help addressing those issues while keeping sector profitability, by combining scientific evidence, with the improvement of agricultural practices and agriculture-society relationships.

This study aims at generating knowledge about an example of effective institutional change to promote the diffusion of agroecology in Chianti. The study adopts a systems perspective and uses a participatory approach to bring together information about system components (farms, value chains, stakeholders, policies) and their interactions. The study reports the findings of an exploratory case study research, carried out during the period 2019-2020 under the UNISECO project (EU-funded Horizon 2020 project, grant agreement N° 773901), that develops towards multiple participatory activities (interviews, workshops) and analytical methods (social network analysis, multicriteria analysis, qualitative data analysis).

Preliminary study findings suggest that participatory planning, greater involvement of local institutions, and a more conscious involvement of the local community are needed to promote the diffusion of agroecology among winegrowers, especially by reducing risk aversion towards agricultural diversification. The promotion of an innovative governance model, based on the development of a Biodistrict, makes this study an interesting example of the potential ability of the agroecological redesign of food systems to increase the provision of ecosystem services by market-oriented rural areas.