



CANAPA SATIVA ITALIA (CSI):

CSI members, Italian hemp entrepreneurs covering the whole stages of the supply chain, have **no doubts: hemp future is in** cosmetics, food ingredients and dietary supplements, novel food.

Where is this **Italian extractive sub-chain** about?

Stuck while nearby countries have eased their laws and industrial rules

A story from CSI bouquet of members:

q/a with CSI associate Vito Cannillo, under 40 businessman - tells about his extractive company founded in Jamaica and launch the idea of decontaminating Taranto's steel industry site with hemp

Green gold - industrial hemp - is suitable for multiple uses including food, cosmetics, officinal and horticultural if looking at the more mature economies of the sector in other countries of the European Single Market without flying to the States. Food, cosmetics and officinal uses are the ones with higher rewards and margins.

In Italy - unlike to what happens for example in Germany, France, Czech Republic, Portugal where different industrial regulations in force promote the extractive sector for food, supplements and cosmetics - our entrepreneurs dedicated to the extraction of the active ingredients of Cannabis Sativa L., must hold a pharmaceutical license whose costs, especially for the AIFA (*Italian Regulatory Agency for Drugs and Pharmaceutical*) drug master file application, are prohibitive for a small and medium-sized company and make the product out of the market because too pricy.

What does all this mean? Italian companies producing creams, food supplements, lotions or shampoos with active ingredients derived from hemp (now included in the Cos.Ing, the register of authorized raw materials for the cosmetic industry), will necessarily purchase the raw material abroad penalizing also the agricultural sector not only the processing one.

[Canapa Sativa Italia \(CSI\)](#), elected to participate to the triennial Technical Table on the Industrial Hemp Supply Chain within MIPAAF (Italian Agriculture Ministry) **suggests**: *'It is urgently necessary to think of a new licensing system that allows the first transformation of the whole industrial hemp plant and the extraction of CBD or of "cannabis extracts or tinctures or resins" for cosmetic or food purposes (novel food) or in chemical (cosmetic raw materials) or food (food raw materials and plant extracts) companies that may be authorized (pursuant 309/90 Law) to the possession within established limits of the narcotic substance THC for the purpose of first processing and subsequent purification of the extracts in order to place safe ingredients on the cosmetics and novel food market with active ingredients values within the limits set by international regulations. We, and other industry associations similar to ours, strongly ask for a change of pace.'*

The numerous 2020 judgments flanking the United Nations ruling that robs Cannabis Sativa L. from Table IV (harmful doping substances) to Table I (substances suitable for human use without psychotropic effects) - also establish that the **Synthetic CBD is equated to that natural one extracted from the plant**, one of the most neglected elements by investigators (who continue to convict entrepreneurs in court!) and by Italian political decision-makers: **this active ingredient** represents, instead, **the real driving force for the most innovative start-ups of our country**, forced indeed to close and fire employees with excellent scientific and technical skills.

The industrial hemp extraction sector is still borderline because victim of prejudice, not only due to ignorance of the laws in force on the subject. **Courts - as well as being guilty not up to date on the legislation - are often also slow in giving an answer**, causing serious entrepreneurial uncertainty that causes the decline of the economic sector that CSI deals with.

Thanks to the stories of entrepreneurs - members of Canapa Sativa Italia - we discover what important economic implications this branch of the composite world of Italian industrial hemp could have.

Today we meet **Vito Cannillo**, under 40 entrepreneur, who works in Corato (Bari province, Puglia Region) and tell us about his experience with Forza Vitale, a company founded by his father, and his new start-ups founded in Jamaica to participate in the expansion of the North American market.

Vito, you are primarily a businessman and today you combine millenary wisdom (the al-chemic one experimented and written by Paracelsus), the family passions and a great intuition in the officinal sector and in the food supplements market.

Although your company uses and process over 150 natural ingredients and plants, you have repeatedly stated in your interviews that the green gold of this millennium is hemp: what do you feel as an entrepreneur and as a citizen keen of sustainability, to operate between deficiencies in regulations and above all ignorance (often also conveyed by the media) that confuses industrial hemp, medical cannabis and marijuana?

First of all, thank you for the question and for the premise. Well, it is not only myself who defines hemp as the new "green gold" but fine international experts: economists and financial analysts who underline the enormous impact of the "hemp sector" on a new sustainable and lasting business and employment boom. As an entrepreneur and as a citizen I cannot understand how this opportunity is not taken into account in the name of prejudices, ignorance and who knows, **consolidated unclear interests to protect? The question arises spontaneously.** We are living in a phase of unprecedented economic depression and we do allow ourselves (!) the luxury of not changing our minds, of not opening up to a new way of thinking? Do add to this also the countless hurdles an Italian entrepreneur is subjected once under the stalemate of justice to which certain prohibitionist logics also contribute. Let me be a bit rhetorical: if I add the benefits on the welfare front of this sector the dismay, even, increases.

What did drive yourself to associate to the non profit hemp entrepreneurs CSI and what do you hope from the Technical Table on MIPAAF, of which CSI is part, as very first step to boost and sustain the Italian hemp supply chain?

Adhering to CSI is what everyone believing to this supply chain should do in order to exploit all the offered possibilities not just as a single businessman, producer, trader and technical officer but as a part of a bigger portrait and a wiser direction at which I was referring above. CSI role is paramount to shout with a single voice and lobbying (in the US sense of this world, I was born there and I see that America is proofing to be more advanced on advocacy!). We must be able to lobby in a transparent and authoritative way to ignite what can be called as a 'green' revolution.

If you could use an ancient alphabet to define the virtues of the hemp flower, what would you think of?

Many symbolic references have been connected to hemp for centuries, in many languages and "alphabets" and in many religions in the world, almost all and almost always positive. The first references coming to my mind are the sense of relaxation, lightness, well-being, fecundity. But the most important one that I would like to underline is linked to the recovery of the value of spirituality, tolerance and openness, ideas that have always been close to religions and philosophies linked in various ways to this plant. There is a hidden meaning that we should eventually grasp in this age of great selfishness and intolerance. I end saying that only those in bad faith associate this plant exclusively with negative terms or concepts.

The Forza Vitale experience and position in the 'spagyric' and extractive market allowed you to start and support many projects, including [CITIVA](#), which brings your know-how overseas (in Jamaica) where together with universities, local farmers, toxicologists and other community partners, you have started a production and processing project extraction of cannabis inflorescences with THC or CBD content.

The most profitable markets, USA and Canada, are upon you: Jamaica is, in this perspective, almost irreplaceable but the passion leads us to think if it could be one Italian region,

if it would be another in the South if not your Puglia where Forza Vitale has taken root. South Italy microclimates give high quality of outdoor cultivation and researchers and scientists - with whom you draw up projects every day - abound...

I would not like to pass as a parochialist because I really am not but I **feel I can nominate Puglia as the ideal place to seriously start the genesis of this sector**. We live in the age of globalization and everything and everyone is interconnected. Once again in this regard I wonder how our country can be deaf to what the rest of the world is doing on the side of liberalization which, mind you, I will reiterate it to the point of boredom, it does not mean simplistically "free high" but much more: business, research, work, well-being, environmental sustainability, economy.

CITIVA, your Jamaican joint venture covers all products that are (legally) consumed in a mature market such as the North American one, using the four-chamber extraction which is one of the newest frontiers of cannabis use, ensuring low material waste and the purest results. What Italy lacks to cover at least this sector not only in the THC field but above all with CBD, since in Jamaica you produce a line of CBD oils and creams?

As told above, we are devoid of vision, I would add "secular and strategic vision" which is then preparatory to the legislative *ratio*. We are still stuck in old categories that actually keep Italy in plaster. Yet I would like to be optimistic because we lack nothing: research centers, excellent minds, entrepreneurial skills in our DNA! In Italy we do not even lack a vast and significant experience in the herbal sector made up of talented professionals. We could take a superb advantage of this know-how and (if had) a wise regulatory framework in order not to waste any more time and quickly stabilize some uses allowed for hemp by streamlining procedures and mechanisms. From this point of view, CITIVA, with its technical and practical experience from overseas, is a great reservoir of resources to be treasured.

What future do you see for hemp cosmetics?

The prospects are interesting even if speaking of Italy, as always, we come last. Hollywood stars, to return to my beloved America, have been using CBD-based cosmetic products for years and I believe they do so because they are well advised by people who understand the enormous pluses (doctors, pharmacists, cosmetologists). The benefits are proven on many levels (contrasting skin oxidation, anti-inflammatory, soothing properties). Now you just have to be good at communicating well and convincing those sitting in the control room that this is another area full of opportunities. Some positive signs are already there, I say that in order to never lose the path of optimism. **I am thinking of the recent possibility of using cannabidiol extracted from inflorescence in the formulation of cosmetics and not only that obtained from synthetic procedures.**

What other research projects do your companies support both on nutraceuticals and extractives and on phytoremediation? Industrial Hemp has broad-spectrum depolluting powers including heavy metals which, for example, at the Ex-ILVA steel company site in Taranto....

We'd worked in recent months on a research related to nanotechnologies in the nutraceutical field. We can boast inside a well-equipped independent laboratory that enjoys the daily contribution of many very valid university students who come to Puglia for their thesis in pharmacy, biology or herbal techniques. **Nanotechnologies are an irreplaceable vector for the industry of tomorrow: winning, competitive, sustainable.** And if you talk to me about Ilva steel plant (located in Taranto) and the possible reconversion of the area on the hemp front, well, let's get married, first of all for the depolluting power of this plant and then for a new economic supply chain that could be created.

As a young entrepreneur not yet forty I sometimes wonder, and I repeat it, how it is possible not even to start a serious and reasoned discussion on these possibilities. I don't stop believing it.

With [KANA Consulting](#), on the other hand, you help companies to produce industrial hemp used for over 3000 years as a curative remedy, textile fiber and food (and increasingly as a legal recreational substance), as well as de-listed. from harmful substances according to the United Nations Table of Narcotic Drugs. Who are your typical customers?

Exact. My company participates with me and a large part of my technical staff in the consulting projects of Kana Science which is already at the forefront in more than one area: the Kana Regulatory division offers assistance in the regulatory field, the Kana Labs division accompanies companies in the development and design of systems up to the product (see the case of CITIVA), the Kana Strategy division deals with consultancy in the marketing and communication fields. My hope is that these skills will soon find fertile ground in Italy and give opportunities for development and well-being, in the broad sense of the word, to everyone, new and old entrepreneurs, new and old consumers.

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