



**Expert evaluation network
delivering policy analysis on the
performance of Cohesion policy 2007-2013
Year 2 – 2012**

**Task 2: Country Report on Achievements of
Cohesion policy**

Italy

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Ismeri Europa

**A report to the European Commission
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List of abbreviations

- AIR Annual Implementation Report
- CBC Cross Border Cooperation
- CSL Local employment service centres
- DPS Dipartimento per lo sviluppo e la coesione economica (Department of development policy and cohesion, Ministry of Economic Development)
- EC European Commission
- FEI Financial Engineering Instrument
- FSC Fondo Sviluppo e Coesione (Fund for development and cohesion; previously FAS – Fondo aree sottoutilizzate)
- IT-AT Italy-Austria
- IT-FR Italy-France
- IT-MT Italy-Malta
- IT-SI Italy-Slovenia
- ITPs Integrated Territorial Pacts/Plans
- M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
- NE North East
- NOP National Operational Programme
- NSRF National Strategic Reference Framework
- NW North West
- OP Operational Programme
- PAC Piano d’Azione Coesione (Action Plan for Cohesion)
- RES Renewable Energy Sources
- ROP Regional Operational Programme
- RTDI Research, technological development and innovation
- SPD Single Programming Document
- S&T Science & Technology
- UVAL The Public Investment Evaluation Unit of DPS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The wide and persistent social, economic and territorial disparities between North-Central and Southern regions, which are caused by long-term and still unresolved structural problems, further deteriorated during the last few years due to the financial and economic crisis and the fiscal consolidation measures introduced.

So far, the implementation of programmes financed by EU Cohesion policy was hindered by several delays which prevented regions, especially those that need more support, to effectively use these resources. This situation and the worsening disparities led the new Government to start a new strategic approach to management and implementation of funds. The Action Plan for Cohesion policy (or PAC – Piano d’Azione Coesione) is the most important tool used to pull together available funds (sourced from a reduction of national co-financing and programme re-shuffling) and redirect them towards a limited number of specific priorities: education, employment, information society and railways. The main features of this approach are: more limited role of regions, concentration, conditionality, focus on services for citizens and transparency. In addition to the PAC, other initiatives were undertaken to accelerate implementation such as the introduction of periodical financial targets and the creation of a national fund intended to mitigate the constraints of the internal stability pact which often prevents local administrations from co-financing national/regional projects.

As a result of these national initiatives and of managing authorities’ decisions aimed at pruning unattractive initiatives and meeting demand for the most successful interventions, some important shifts in the allocation of EU funding took place between 2011 and 2012. In Convergence, there was an increase in the resources allocated to human capital, environment and transport policy areas, balanced by reductions in the resources devoted to tourism as well as to certain measures intended to improve access to the labour market. In Competitiveness, the main increases concerned research, technological development and entrepreneurship while the largest reductions have been registered in transport. At the end of 2011, EUR 11,648 million of ERDF were committed, equal to 55.4% of the total allocated resources. Therefore there was a considerable acceleration during 2011 given that the commitment rate was equal to 33.3% at the end of 2010. Overall the expenditure increased in both Convergence, where previously it was particularly low (apart from education initiatives), and Competitiveness, where the performance was more satisfactory. The most relevant increases concern enterprise support and RTDI, territorial development, environment and energy. In RTDI the expenditure rate grew from approximately 9% in 2010 to 26% in 2011 in Convergence programmes, and from 27% to 37% in Competitiveness programmes. In relation to territorial development, it increased from 6% to 22% in Convergence and from 8% to 14% in Competitiveness. In relation to environment and energy, the increase with respect to last year was from 10% to 25% in Convergence and from 11% to 23% in Competitiveness.

There was a growth in the achievements of the enterprise support and RTDI policies co-financed by ERDF, in line with the acceleration in the level of expenditure. In Convergence, a significant number of RTD and collaborative research projects were implemented so far (nearly 1,350), SME projects supported and jobs created as a result of these (5,654 additional jobs). Some good results linked to the reduction of digital divide have been also obtained thanks to the

initiatives carried out on the information society. In Competitiveness, a sizeable number of RTDI projects were carried out (over 4,400) and the involvement of research organisations (particularly University departments) in collaborative projects with the private sector is considered one of the most important achievements of the programmes so far. Significant achievements are also related to ICT diffusion and the elimination of digital divide in several areas. Several significant achievements have been recorded in human resource development, especially in relation to the improvement of school infrastructure in Convergence regions (11,448 education projects in total; nearly 10 million benefiting students). The achievements of transport policy co-financed by ERDF are very limited, apart from a few major projects on urban mobility. In this policy area, implementation was constrained by procedural delays of various kinds and by the internal stability pact; 56 projects were implemented so far and a negligible length of roads were built or reconstructed in Convergence. In Competitiveness, despite the small amount of resources available, intervention was more focused (104 projects carried out to strengthen infrastructure and improve mobility). The achievements of environment and energy policies co-financed by ERDF are scattered and overall scarce. As in the case of transport, delays and the internal stability pact constrained the outcomes especially in Convergence. Nonetheless, ERDF funding is still crucial in some fields linked to environmental protection (improve or repair the water and sewage infrastructure, install depurators, consolidate side street banks and improve flood protection etc.). Even if these are mainly small interventions, they are wide spread and the contribution to safeguard the environment seems tangible. In Competitiveness regions, the focus is on renewable energy or energy efficiency and most concluded initiatives achievements concern these objectives. The territorial development projects co-financed are mostly fragmented and, as a consequence, the achievements are weak (e.g. in the case of tourism); some satisfactory results have been obtained only in circumscribed areas where the ERDF contribution to improve social infrastructures was tangible.

Despite the programme acceleration and the achievements recorded, the accumulated delay still prevents the interventions from unleashing their full potential in terms of positive impact on socio-economic and territorial cohesion. The new strategic approach to implementation (increasing focus on concentration and on services for citizens), if continued, is expected to reduce disparities significantly in the years to come but at the moment it is early to assess its results. So far, the most significant effects of programmes are limited to policy areas where intervention is characterised by critical mass (RTDI and Education in Convergence) or it is focused on specific objectives (e.g. cancellation of digital divide in Competitiveness). Positive effects can be also observed in cases where ERDF is used to experiment new approaches (e.g. focus on university-industry networking, pre-commercial procurement as a tool to boost innovation). Other relevant effects certainly emerge when there is *de facto* dependency on EU funds due to lack of resources of local administrations (e.g. the case of environmental risk protection). Interviews and available evaluation in part confirm these claims but there are still relevant gaps of evaluation based evidence.

There was an increase in the number of evaluations and studies completed in the last couple of years. Approximately half of these are programme evaluations (interim evaluations of Regional OPs (ROP) and National OPs (NOP)) and the remaining half focus on specific policy areas, notably RTDI and territorial development. Among the latter, ex-post evaluations of 2000-2006 interventions prevail. The approaches used are quite various, in line with international practice,

and range from counter-factual techniques to qualitative methods. There are some gaps in relation to certain types of interventions which are not covered (e.g. innovation clusters and poles; financial engineering) but also in relation to some applied methodologies which are still weak. There is little evidence on actual mechanisms put in place to integrate the evaluation findings in the policy making process. In most cases evaluations are still not considered a tool for results based management which ensures transparency and accountability.

Several policy challenges emerge from the analysis. It would be unacceptable that the major implementation delays which affected the EU Cohesion policy so far are experienced again in the next programming period. Therefore, a challenge is to minimise this risk; the continuation of the PAC experience would be an important step in this direction. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system in place should be strengthened so that policy makers and administrators at all levels have a clear understanding of the results and possibly of the effects of the interventions. Setting up ad hoc dashboards (e.g. completion and extension of the *Open Coesione* initiative) and especially a systematic endeavour aimed at synthesising, analysing and interpreting the available information are of critical importance to be able to govern policy effectively.

1. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Main points from previous country report:

- In the last few years of strong recession, the scale of regional disparities seems to have increased. In particular, in 2010, the North-South socio-economic disparities worsened especially as far as the labour market is concerned. This was mainly due to a reduction in employment opportunities in the Convergence regions.
- In 2011, the more dynamic North-Centre showed some signs of recovery after two years of negative growth. In contrast, Southern regions experienced null or barely positive rates of growth and the fall in employment continued; this reduction was double the national average figure, indicating a general worsening of socio-economic conditions.
- At the same time, fiscal austerity and the reform of public expenditure have reduced public resources available to boost development and mitigate socio-economic disparities.
- In the Convergence regions, EU funds have actually become the most important investment source.

During the last year, Italy has been strongly affected by international financial instability which contributed to exacerbate the economic crisis. In this generally negative context, Southern regions and Convergence areas in particular are suffering more than the others due to their weak economy, a limited export capacity, a large public sector and the dependence from public transfers.

The signs of recovery, registered in the most dynamic regions last year, soon came across as deceitful: the annual GDP growth rate slowed down from 1.8% in 2010 to 0.4% in 2011. GDP decreased in the last quarter of 2011 (-0.7% in real terms) and in the first quarter of 2012 (-0.8% compared to the previous quarter) due to the sovereign debt crisis of the Euro zone¹.

In 2011, the GDP growth rate was null in the South and close to zero in the Centre (0.1%), while the performance of the North was far from promising but significantly better (0.6% in North West (NW) and 0.9% in North East (NE)). The unfavourable future economic outlook indicates that, also due to the reliance of Southern regions on the economic drive of the North-Centre, we cannot expect significant reductions in regional economic disparities over the next few years.

The better growth performance of Competitiveness areas, and in particular of the North, is mostly due to the greater degree of openness of these regions to international trade and to the contribution of exports to value added². Investments, both private and public, are very low and declining. In 2011, fixed capital formation decreased in all regions except for the Centre (+4.3%) and the 2012 outlook is very negative (-15.6% in NE, -11.9 in the South, -9.1% in the Centre, -3.0 in NW).

The credit market is less developed within the Southern regions and this exacerbates the gap between the two macro-areas of the country. The second part of the year showed a lower

¹ Bank of Italy, *Economie regionali - l'economia delle regioni italiane*, June 2012.

² In Central-Northern regions, 39% of medium enterprises turnover is generated by exports while this figure is 22% in the Southern regions - DPS - Department for Development and Cohesion of the Ministry of Economic Development, annual report 2011.

demand for loans due to a lower business investment propensity, a growing request of collaterals, worsening credit conditions both in terms of applied interest rates and amounts of resources made available by the banks³.

The increase in total employment was on average 0.4% in 2011 (+95,000 labour units), +0.5% in the North and +0.2% in the South⁴. This increase at the national level is mostly due to a rise in employment of immigrants and the permanence of 55+ years old people in the labour market; it mostly benefited women while the youth employment deteriorated. There are significant asymmetries in the total employment variation in the triennium 2009-2011 across Italian regions, with the most positive dynamics concentrated in the North and Centre, while a reduction of total employment can be observed in the South from the last quarter of 2011.

The employment rate of working age population differs greatly across the country with large differences between the North-Centre (64%) and the South (44%). Gender differences are also macroscopic: the female employment rate is 46.5% and the male is 67.5%. Therefore, despite the increase in the number of women employed during the last year, much needs to be done to increase their participation.

The average 2011 unemployment rate was 8.4% and did not change since 2010. There was a slight decrease in the North (from 5.9% to 5.8%) and a small increase in the South (from 13.4% to 13.6%) while it did not change in the Centre (7.6%)⁵. North-South unemployment disparities are particularly sharp in the case of young people (15-24 years old). The youth unemployment rate was equal to 40.4% (44.4% for females) in the South, compared to a national average which is itself high and increasing (from 26.8% in 2010 to 29.1% in 2011).

The above summary on the nature, scale and evolution of Italian regional disparities in the last few years suggests that lagging regions such as the Convergence areas, characterized by a much thinner industrial fabric, a lower growth performance and a higher unemployment, and those territories specialized in traditional low-tech manufacturing are being affected more than others by the crisis. In the Centre and Northern regions, the productive sector is significantly thicker and the areas that host export oriented clusters and innovation intensive SMEs are much less affected by the recession. This is reflected in better growth and employment performance of these areas.

Austerity measures introduced to comply with the European Stability and Growth Pact and more recently to address the sovereign debt crisis obviously have a bigger impact on weak regions, traditionally more dependent on national public transfers. There, the Cohesion resources became *de facto* the most important source of financing for regional development initiatives. The reduction of the national resources allocated to regional development in 2007-2013 (FSC-FAS⁶), in addition to the reduction of the national co-financing of EU programmes, contributed considerably to this condition.

³ Bank of Italy, 2012 (op. cit.)

⁴ DPS annual report 2011, April 2012.

⁵ DPS, 2012, (op. cit.)

⁶ The fund for Development and Cohesion - FSC (Fondo per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione) was previous to 2011 called FAS (Fondo per le Aree Sottoutilizzate). FSC-FAS resources have been cut from EUR 60,261 million -initial allocation- to approximately EUR 52,000 million due to executive choices to financially cover other policy initiatives (e.g. a tax cut on the first houses - ICI), balance public accounts and deal with

In conclusion, the recession is further aggravating the Italian general lack of competitiveness and it is sharpening internal disparities. However, the underlying problems are long-term and were known long before the crisis' outbreak: persistent differences in the rate of entrepreneurship and density of business activities, in the scale and efficiency of infrastructure, in human resources development and administrative capacities. These perpetuate income, productivity, employment and social gaps. The existing divides cannot be mitigated without a substantial structural change leading towards smart specialisation, greater international openness, increasing efficiency and effectiveness of public resource management, and a reduction of economic dependency in the regions lagging behind.

At the moment, in a context characterised by the urge to pursue fiscal consolidation, despite few mild initiatives, there is an actual lack of reforms aiming at facilitating such changes which are also cultural and should involve politics and society at large. A much more considerable effort is necessary on this front in the years to come, in order to effectively address the competitiveness crisis of industry and services as well as the employment problems which are reflected in pronounced productivity gaps in comparison with other advanced countries.

2. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED, THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO THIS AND POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PERIOD

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED

Main points from previous country report:

- A strategic plan for boosting the development of the South -"Piano per il Sud"- was introduced in 2011 but did not modify the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)'s priorities. Even allocation by axis has remained essentially unchanged.
- The main innovations introduced consisted of: a) a push towards greater concentration of resources on major infrastructural works/objectives; b) the creation of a public bank for the south in order to improve access to credit for enterprises; c) a national funds' review aimed at identifying available resources and a national mechanism for de-committing unspent resources were launched to increase efficiency and use all available resources.
- In the current programming period, the implementation of programmes co-financed by EU Cohesion policy has been slowed down by several difficulties including: expenditure delays due to procedural issues and problems with decentralized management, the weakening of the award system⁷ as well as other initiatives for capacity building and the general incapacity to concentrate resources on pre-established priorities.

the crisis. The negative effects of the reduction in the amount of resources available were aggravated by several procedural delays which caused the FSC-FAS initiatives to be still in a launch phase in 2011.

⁷ An outcome-based financing scheme, "Obiettivi di servizio", was adopted for the programming period 2007-2013, to reward local governments on the basis of the results obtained in education, child and elderly care, waste disposal, water provision. The incentive scheme is based on 11 quantitative indicators. For more information on the scheme see: http://www.dps.tesoro.it/obiettivi_servizio/ml.asp

- The persistence of these issues led the Italian government to introduce the PAC in November 2011. The PAC anticipates the general approach of the proposed new Regulations 2014-2020.

An important strategic change was introduced in December 2011, when the Italian government approved the so called “Action Plan for Cohesion policy” (or PAC). The PAC aims at reprogramming interventions within Convergence regions which experienced substantial implementation delays. The new approach started by the Plan anticipates – and is grounded on – the key principles of the new programming 2014-2020: integration between regional and national development policies; reduction in the level of uncertainty as regards public finance; concentration of interventions on few priorities; raise awareness on the need for providing citizens with information⁸ on public investments in order to increase their involvement in related public debates; boost result-oriented interventions and not only process-oriented ones.

The PAC is financed mainly by domestic resources. It pulls together funds coming from a reduction of national co-financing and re-programming of EU resources. In order to reduce fragmentation, foster result-oriented interventions, and enhance steering capacity of the central Government, the PAC concentrates on four main objectives: digital agenda, education, employment and railways. The implementation of the PAC is characterised by three reprogramming stages. The first two stages took place in December 2011 and May 2012 (EUR 4.3 billion in total) and were targeted to structural objectives such as reducing regional disparities, mainly between Convergence and the rest of the country, in relation to education and school infrastructure, railways and broadband, services of care etc. The last reprogramming, in December 2012 (EUR 5.7 billion), is focused on anti-cyclical measures to aid firms and workers affected by the crisis and on financing individual projects in delay but worthy of support⁹. Most of the projects launched by the PAC will be completed well beyond the current programming period.

The implementation of the PAC involves cooperation of actors at different levels of government. At the national level, the Ministry for Cohesion coordinates the interventions, and works in agreement with the local governments¹⁰. The ministry is also responsible for making sure that the timing of the planned expenditure is met and for the interventions’ quality. As regards the European level, the Commission participates directly in the Action Group created to speed-up implementation. The PAC de facto reduced the role of regions and somehow implies a softening of the federal plan which was so resolutely pursued in the previous years.

Following the initiatives taken by the central and regional government to boost implementation, there were several **shifts in the allocation of EU funding** in 2011. Overall there was an EUR 850 million net increase in the resources made available. Most of this increase took place in Convergence in relation to human capital development, environment and transport (+ EUR 1,334 million). The increases in these areas were balanced by reductions in the resources devoted to tourism as well as to specific measures aimed at improving access to the labour market (- EUR 606 million). In Competitiveness regions, the main increases concerned research,

⁸ Open Coesione: <http://opencoesione.gov.it/>

⁹ For more information on PAC progress and the three implementation stages, please see: “Piano Azione Coesione: terza e ultima riprogrammazione, Misure anticicliche e salvaguardia di progetti avviati”, December 2012; and “Allegato 2. Stato di attuazione del Piano Azione Coesione”.

¹⁰ Ad hoc task forces were created.

technological development and entrepreneurship (+ EUR 358 million) while the largest reductions have been registered in the transport policy area (- EUR 236 million).

Enterprise support and RTDI, including ICT, represents the most important policy area for the 2007-2013 programming period. It absorbs approximately 37% of the available resources: EUR 7,834.6 million (about EUR 13,000 million if we include the national co-financing). The NOP "Research and Competitiveness" is the most important funding source in Convergence but beside this programme, all ROPs heavily invest in this policy area.

The resources allocated to RTDI and linked activities – which include collaborative research projects involving both firms as well as universities and research institutes – are equal to about EUR 4,064 million (EUR 3,431 million in Convergence regions) and represent nearly 20% of the total ERDF. In addition to RTDI, 9% of total ERDF available resources are allocated to innovation support and other investment in SMEs (approx. EUR 2,582 million in total, EUR 1,791 million in Convergence). Finally, approximately EUR 1,189 million or 4% of total ERDF are allocated to ICT and related services (mostly in Convergence: EUR 1,050 million).

At the end of 2011, this policy area registered a total net increase of EUR 188 million compared to the initial allocation. This rise was the result of a EUR 170 million reduction in resources available in Convergence regions (in particular within the ROP Sicily) and a EUR 358 million increase in Competitiveness, especially within the ROP Sardinia (additional EUR 280 million) and Tuscany (additional EUR 74 million).

The resources allocated by OPs to ICT and related services showed a 3% reduction compared to the original allocation. However, this is going to be more than offset by the PAC which, in line with the objectives of the European digital agenda, heavily intervenes on broadband with a 23% increase of resources (EUR 321.2 million) to develop this infrastructures in the South (cf. the following paragraph).

The **transport** policy area gathers approximately 19% of total allocated ERDF or EUR 3,906 million (concentrated in Convergence: EUR 3,780.9 million). EUR 858.0 million are devoted to roads, EUR 1,949.7 million to rail and EUR 1,098.4 million to other transport infrastructure and projects. As part of this policy area, 41 Major Projects are financed (39 in Convergence); 26 of these concern rail transport, 8 focus on roads, 4 on maritime transport, 2 on intermodal and 1 on air transport. The NOP *Transport Networks* is an important programme which intervenes on this sector but whose implementation is suffering from significant delays. Some noteworthy initiatives financed by this programme include the intermodal rail networks of Taranto and Gioia Tauro's ports as well as the Bari-Lamasinata inter-port. Other important transport interventions which are being financed by the ROPs include, for example, the metropolitan transport systems in Naples, Bari, Catania, Palermo, Sassari and Florence.

The resources available in Convergence experienced a 4.1% increase whilst the allocation of the funds to transport in Competitiveness was substantially reduced (-42%). Furthermore, the PAC allocated additional EUR 1,445 million to rail transport within Convergence regions.

The **environment and energy** policy area collects approximately 21% of total ERDF allocation or EUR 4,333.4 million (EUR 3,511.5 million in Convergence). In total EUR 2,383.2 million are allocated to environmental and 1,950.2 million to energy infrastructure. The majority of resources devoted to the environment actually address water service issues and, to a lesser

extent, waste management which is only admissible in Convergence and phasing out regions (Sardinia).

In total there was an EUR 342 million net increase in resources available for environmental protection and risk prevention. An EUR 428 million increase took place in Convergence while there was an EUR 85.9 million reduction in Competitiveness (70 million originally allocated to risk prevention). The energy sector as a whole was experienced a more moderate increase in resources available: EUR 100 million (60% of this took place in Convergence).

The **territorial development** policy area pulls together 20% of total allocated ERDF or EUR 4,127.8 million. EUR 1,473.1 million are devoted to tourism and culture, EUR 1,388.7 million to planning and rehabilitation, and EUR 1,266 million to social infrastructure.

Within this area, the *tourist* sector suffered from a substantial reduction of allocated resources in the Convergence (EUR 336 million -21.3%). Moreover, in 2011 there was a decrease in resources allocated to *rural and urban regeneration* in the South (- EUR 109 million) and an increase in the North (+ EUR 55.5 million).

The **human resources** policy area in part overlaps with RTDI, as far as human capital development is concerned. The NOP Research and Competitiveness and the NOP Education are the most important programmes which intervene in this area. The most significant shift in this policy consists of additional EUR 610 million made available for education in Convergence, a 16.2% increase compared to the initial allocation.

The **main reasons for the shifts** in the allocation of funding are related to implementation delays of specific programmes or measures and to public finance constraints, exacerbated by the crisis. Both implementation problems and the changes in economic circumstances pushed for an increasing concentration of resources on the most successful and/or strategically important goals (e.g. education).

Implementation delays have been mainly caused by: the overlapping between programming period which prevented a prompt start of 2007-2013 initiatives; low capacity of regional administrations, especially in Convergence areas, to quickly adapt to the EU procedures and the changes introduced with the new programming period; a lack of political continuity both at national and regional level which created uncertainty in available resources (e.g. in the case of FSC-FAS) and in the priorities to be pursued.

Increasingly tight austerity measures have been introduced at the national level to deal with the risks and the negative consequence of the financial and economic crisis. These reduced the amount of resources available for regional development. In December 2011, the Italian Government introduced another austerity program (the so called “Decreto Salva Italia”, D.L. 201/2011) which represented the third cutback implemented during the year. In addition to the spending cuts, this decree attempted to mitigate the negative effects of the so called internal stability pacts on the financial capacity of regional and local authorities to invest and co-fund development initiatives¹¹.

¹¹ The cut in public expenditure due to Italy’s commitments on fiscal consolidation has triggered delays in the implementation of OPs because of lack of national matching funds. In fact, the internal stability pact imposes sanctions to Regions and Local Authorities which do not respect the European Stability and Growth Pact. Due to the difficulties generated by such financial constraints, the “Decreto Salva Italia”

The 2007-2013 Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) programmes¹² all intervene on enterprise support and RTDI, environment, territorial development and in some cases on transport, accessibility and logistics (e.g. CBC Italy-France (IT-FR) Maritime, CBC IT-Switzerland).

In relation to enterprise support, the most common initiatives are aimed at supporting innovation and competitiveness of cross-border production systems by means of collaborative research projects, tourist services and events, territorial marketing etc. The environmental initiatives range from monitoring projects and installations in cross-border areas, to assessment and mitigation of risk, as well as safeguarding of biodiversity and natural assets. Territorial development initiatives include support for development of urban and rural system, social inclusion, cooperation in health care, cultural services, and other interventions to improve quality of life, public services and access to them.

The only programmes which experienced a shift in the allocation of resources are the CBC IT-FR Maritime and IT-Switzerland. In both cases the reasons is the difficulty to implement transport projects. In the first case the AIR highlights that the available resources were insufficient to carry out any significant transport initiative and the MA requested the authorization to reduce the funds allocated to the 1st axis. In the second case, the resources initially allotted to an integrated cross-border initiative on transport were shifted to ordinary projects, because at the end the transport initiative was not submitted and, in general, all integrated projects are suffering from excessively long procedures and problems of coordination between the cooperating administrations.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION¹³

Main points from previous country report:

- Significant delays in the implementation of programmes have constrained the effectiveness of EU Cohesion policy and prevented the achievements of the expected results so far. This is particularly relevant in the Southern regions and in Convergence in particular where EU Funds represent an important source for regional development policy.
- Delays are the consequence of a combination of: overlapping of programming periods, political discontinuity which causes uncertainty/reductions in available resources and changes of priorities and, above all, limited administrative capacity.
- Administrations are still resistant to introduce meritocratic incentives, evaluation of performance as well as transparency and clear separation of responsibilities.
- To make up for the delays, in 2011 the Italian government introduced an additional regulation to prevent automatic de-commitment established by the “n+2” rule. This had

established the possibility of not counting the national co-funding up to EUR 1,000 million per each year 2012, 2013, 2014 and to put such resources within a special reserve fund.

¹² There are six CBC OPs: IT-FR Maritime, IT-FR ALCOTRA (Alpi latine cooperazione transfrontaliera), IT-Switzerland, IT-Slovenia (IT-SI), IT-Malta (IT-MT) and IT-FR.

¹³ The indicators used in this section come from the AIR for 2011, which relate to the situation up to the end of 2011. A more up-to-date view of the aggregate position (though not of the situation in the different policy areas) is presented in the Synthesis Report for 2012 of the Expert evaluation network delivering policy analysis on the performance of Cohesion policy 2007-2013 which is based on data for payments from the ERDF and Cohesion Fund up to the end of 2012, i.e. after the present report was completed.

a positive effects in the first part of the year even if it seems to have not induced any structural change in political and administrative behaviour.

- In order to prevent de-commitments, managing authorities largely resorted to Major Projects as well as the set-up of FEIs (especially guarantee funds) but such strategies might be just postponing problems without solving them.
- Finally, the central government PAC was in a launching phase.

The next paragraphs provide a discussion of the improvements registered since last year report and of **how far the implementation of programmes is in line with what was planned**.

At the end of 2011, EUR 11,648 million of ERDF were committed, equal to 55.4% of the total allocated resources. Therefore there was a considerable acceleration during 2011 given that the commitment rate was equal to 33.3% at the end of 2010. In Convergence there was an increase from 29.4% to 52.5% while in Competitiveness there was an increase from 56% to 71.39%.

The expenditure also accelerated significantly and both expenditure and commitment levels differ greatly across EU objectives and policy areas.

In relation to **enterprise support and RTDI**, in Convergence, there was an acceleration in commitments from 21.7% (end of 2010) to 47.6% (end of 2011). The speeding up of commitments was particularly strong as regards RDTI and other investment aids. The certified expenditure also increased significantly from nearly 9% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 25.8% of allocated ERDF at the end of 2011 corresponding to EUR 1,619.8 million (source: Open Coesione).

In Competitiveness, there was an increase in commitments from 62.9% to 77.5% of allocated resources (end of 2011). The expenditure increased from 27% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 37% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 1,034.7 million (end of 2011).

In the area of **human resource development**, the expenditure increased from 36.2% to 37.8% of allocated ERDF at the end of 2011 in Convergence, corresponding to EUR 187.2 million (source: Open Coesione). In Competitiveness, there was an increase in commitments from zero to 5.1% of allocated resources (end of 2011). The expenditure is also approximately equal to 6% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 10.4 million (end of 2011).

In the **transport** policy area, there was an increase in commitments from 60.6% to 74.5% of allocated resources in Convergence (end of 2011). The expenditure slightly increased from 11.2% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 16% of allocated ERDF at the end of 2011 corresponding to additional EUR 439.1 million (source: Open Coesione). In Competitiveness, there was an increase in commitments from 31.3% to 53.6% of allocated resources (end of 2011). The expenditure increased from 14.5% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 17.7% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 119 million (end of 2011).

As regards **environment and energy**, in Convergence there was an increase in commitments from 23.4% (end of 2010) to 43.4% of allocated resources (end of 2011). The expenditure increased from 10.2% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 24.7% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 397.8 million (source: Open Coesione). In Competitiveness, there was an increase in commitments from 48.6% to 57.2% of allocated

resources (end of 2011). The expenditure increased from 11.1% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 22.8% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 294.6 million (end of 2011).

In the area of **territorial development**, there was a significant increase in commitments from 15.7% (end of 2010) to 47.5% of allocated resources in Convergence (end of 2011), and an increase of expenditure from 5.8% to 21.9% of allocated resources corresponding to EUR 479.1 million (source: Open Coesione based on the sum of tourism, culture and safety). In Competitiveness, there was an increase in commitments from 59.6% to 86.6.7% of allocated resources (end of 2011). The expenditure increased from 7.8% (EEN Report 2011; situation as of May 2011) to approximately 13.8% of allocated ERDF corresponding to EUR 1,034.7 million (end of 2011).

The **main reasons for delays** in implementation are substantially the same indicated in the 2011 report: Overlapping of programming periods, political discontinuity and reduction of national funds available, internal stability pacts, and administrative weaknesses. In addition to these, a further problem raised is related to the over ambitious of national co-funding in Convergence regions (50%) which is much higher than in other European areas (e.g. 25% within German Convergence regions). This led to a reduction in national co-financing rate, with the resources resulting from this contributing to finance the PAC.

Because of the various implementation difficulties and delays, Italy did not meet the level of commitments required to fulfil the so-called *additionality* principle. Therefore there are currently on-going negotiations with the EC in order to change the levels.

Three main initiatives were undertaken to accelerate implementation: the introduction of periodical targets; the PAC; the creation of a national fund which is intended to mitigate the constraints of the internal stability pact.

The following periodical financial targets were jointly introduced by the Italian regions and the central Government:

- 31 May 2011: commitments equal to 100% of the n+2 target of 31 December 2011.
- 31 October 2011: expenditures to be certified to the EC equal to 70% of the n+2 target set for 31 December 2011.
- 31 December 2011: commitments equal to 80% of the n+2 target set for 31 December 2012.

In case these targets are not achieved, corrective measures consisting of re-programming (within the same objective area) are introduced. The Interregional OP "Attrattori" did not meet the periodical targets and underwent an EUR 15 million cut to the benefit of the NOP Education. In the case of the ROP Sardinia, which is the only phasing out programme in Competitiveness, there was not a shift of resources to other programmes but an internal re-shuffling concerning EUR 49 million. The mechanism showed a satisfactory performance, hence it was replicated in 2012 and will be also applied in 2013.

The first phase of PAC mobilized over EUR 2,800 million: EUR 320 million allocated to the digital agenda, 974 million to education, 142 million to employment and EUR 1,445 million to rail transport. The *digital agenda* priority aims at eliminating the digital divide through the development/strengthening of broadband infrastructure. The *education* priority aims at

improving young students' competences and reducing school drop-out. The employment priority aims at increasing the number of employed people through a special tax credit¹⁴. Finally, the *rail transport priority* aims at upgrading the rail infrastructures of Southern regions.

In May 2011, a second phase of PAC was launched. It concerns EUR 2,300 million managed by Central administrations (National and interregional OPs). This phase is focused on: increasing childcare facilities (EUR 400 million) and facilities for not self-sufficient elderlies (EUR 300 million), additional interventions to reduce school drop-out, support to social projects and youth entrepreneurship (more than EUR 200 million), support to innovative enterprises support (EUR 900 million), enhancing the cultural resources within Southern regions through the establishment of 20 museum areas in Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily (more than EUR 300 million). It is worth noting that the PAC allowed to implement the Major Project Pompeii (EUR 105 million including national funding). The Plan includes also the introduction of electronic civil trials in 23 legal offices. This measure aims at decreasing the sluggishness which characterizes the Italian civil justice.

At the end of 2011, the national Government decided to exclude the expenditure of national co-financing of EU funds from the calculation of the spending limits to be observed in order to comply with the internal stability pact (Legislative Decree no. 201, 6 December 2011). As part of the decree, a national fund¹⁵ was created to meet the financial needs and compensate the effects of the public debts of administrations. A March 2011 decree determines the distribution of resources among regions and the exclusion procedure from the internal stability pact.

Other initiatives taken by the regions to accelerate expenditure and mentioned in last year report include: the use of major projects and of guarantee funds. The former was important to safeguard resources (e.g. in Campania and Sicily); the latter seems to have just postponed problems, if we consider the extremely low effectiveness of FEIs in terms of actual financing operations carried out in support of SMEs¹⁶.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMMES SO FAR

Main points from previous country report:

- Convergence regions' achievements were unsatisfactory in most policy areas; few achievements have been recorded especially in transport, environment and energy while some modest achievements occurred in enterprise support, RTDI and territorial development. Education infrastructure showed a satisfactory performance due to the good planning and implementing capacity of the NOP education.
- Competitiveness regions did not have major implementation problems. Satisfactory outcomes were recorded in RTDI and territorial development interventions. On the

¹⁴ On the basis of the art.2. of the decree 12/07/2011, n.106

¹⁵ "Fondo di compensazione per gli interventi volti a favorire lo sviluppo"; the fund is endowed with EUR 1,000 million, coming from the reduction of national co-financing of EU funds, for each of the years 2012-2014.

¹⁶ See the policy paper on FEIs, EEN 2012, Policy Paper:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/expert_innovation/2012_synt_rep_it.pdf

contrary, the internal stability pact has delayed implementation in the areas of transport, energy and environment.

- The performance of cross border cooperation programme is mixed: satisfactory in the cases of the IT-Austria (IT-AT) and IT-FR ALCOTRA and lagging behind in the remaining cases.

Last year it was pointed out that all AIRs, regardless of the objective (Convergence, Regional Employment and Competitiveness as well as the CBC), contained inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the calculation and reporting of performance indicators. For instance it is rarely clear if the recorded outputs refer to approved, on-going or completed projects (with few exceptions such as the AIR of the NOP Education and several Competitiveness objective AIRs). This made the interpretation of the indicators difficult and did not allow to establish clear and meaningful links between inputs, outputs, results and effects. The problem remains since there was no significant improvement in the information included in the AIRs for 2011 as compared with the previous versions.

The next paragraphs summarise the most important achievements recorded and highlight the progress in comparison with the situation as described in last year report. The discussion is organised by Cohesion objective and policy area.

Convergence objective

Enterprise support and RTDI (including ICT and access of SMEs to finance)

This policy area includes: RTDI initiatives, support for innovation in SMEs and investment in firms, ICT and related services. As indicated in the paragraph on the Cohesion policy pursued, research and innovation represent the strategic focus of the current programming period and the majority of resources are devoted to these priorities.

Last year report highlighted that there was a general lack of achievements until the end of 2010: relatively few initiatives compared to what was initially planned were completed while many actions were still in a launch phase. All this was confirmed by a very low expenditure level. In RTDI, delays in implementation were concentrated especially in regional programmes while in relation to the other measures of enterprise support, delays in achieving outcomes affected both national and regional programmes. The main reasons of delay were the internal stability pact and administrative problems of various kinds.

There is no direct evidence based on evaluation and studies that the expenditure is having the intended effect (apart from indirect evidence on the impact of R&D incentives on business performance which can be in part extended to EU funded projects), however, the AIRs and the officials highlight numerous achievements which are in part captured by the ERDF core indicators.

The number of projects carried out in 2011 more than doubled compared to 2010. Additional 900 RTD and cooperative research projects have been financed during the last year (% increase >100%). The number of SME investment projects financed (2,446; +70%) and of start-ups supported (1,389; >+100%) had a quick acceleration. This increase in output is in part reflected by the indicators on jobs created (e.g. +5,500 additional jobs created in SMEs as result of the projects financed) while there is no information on the investment induced.

As regards ICT and the information society, there was an increase in the number of projects (+187) but no information is recorded on results (e.g. number of additional population covered).

The NOP Research and Competitiveness is the largest programme of this policy area. It supports structural change towards a knowledge economy and innovation diffusion in Convergence regions¹⁷. The most important 2011 achievements are expressed in terms of output: additional 145 R&D projects financed, 210 pre-competitive development projects (sustainable development, energy efficiency and ICT) carried out and 81 research infrastructures strengthened or equipped in 2011. A relevant number of apprenticeships (3,789) and training courses (192) was also financed (application of the flexibility principle of art. 34 of EC regulation 1083/2006).

In response to a call for the support of high tech districts as well as public-private labs, in early 2011, 75 projects and 193 feasibility study have been submitted. Approximately EUR 1,441 million are devoted to these initiatives which are expected to boost Science & Technology (S&T) networking and the development of the knowledge economy in the Italian convergence. No specific evaluation exists of what was done so far in this respect. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Economy and Finance has recently promoted the development of guidelines on how to evaluate the performance of these clusters/networks.

An additional effort was made in 2011 to strengthen the existing Financial Engineering Instruments (FEIs) set up within the NOP Research and Competitiveness and the Interregional OP Renewable energies and energy efficiency. Approximately, additional EUR 871 million have been allocated by these OP to FEIs (mostly guarantee funds) to mitigate the credit crunch. However, as highlighted in the 2012 Policy Paper on FEIs, despite the fact that allocation to a fund is accounted as certified expenditure, there are still serious delays in the actual operations: a small amount of resources reached final beneficiaries so far¹⁸.

Regional programmes focus on financing industrial and collaborative research projects as well as innovation in firms. Enterprise support, not exclusively linked to innovation, is important in the Convergence areas (approx. EUR 2,000 million allocated). Networking initiatives and innovation/technology poles are also financed (e.g. in Apulia and Calabria).

A generalised improvement in the performance of ROPs was recorded in 2011. 241 additional R&D and collaborative research projects were carried out in Sicily, 208 in Campania and 139 in Apulia. Other relevant achievements, mostly measured in terms of output include: 1,200 investment support projects carried out in Sicily, 805 in Apulia and 35 in Basilicata. Considering the difficult economic situation, the positive response of firms in terms of investments propensity in these regions can be positively assessed. In relation to ICT, 35 new information society projects were implemented in Campania.

¹⁷ The initiatives to promote structural change include: support to industrial and collaborative research projects, strengthening of networking through high tech districts and public-private labs, strengthening of research equipment and infrastructure, S&T international cooperation. The innovation support consists of initiatives to: strengthen competitiveness of firms and attract investments, improve access to credit, promote sustainable development and information society.

¹⁸ See EEN 2012 Policy Paper on FEIs (op. cit.)

Convergence regions have set up an ERDF based FEI consisting of either guarantee or loan funds while no venture capital initiative was implemented. The effectiveness of these funds seems very low when we consider the small number of actual operations financed (this is relevant also for the Energy policy area). According to the officials, the regional initiatives are crowded out by the national instruments (e.g. Fondo Centrale di Garanzia) which run more smoothly and offer better terms.

It is difficult to measure results and impacts of research and innovation, at least in the short term. Moreover the quality of most outcome indicators used by the programmes is poor. Results indicators often fail to record change and their link with the intervention objectives is weak. Impact indicators used by MAs on the other hand consist mainly of macro-economic variables whose variation cannot be attributed to the interventions.

As regards outputs, it is not possible to monitor the state of progress of RTDI projects with the available data, given that project completion does not necessarily imply that something relevant has been achieved; therefore, the distinction between completed and on-going RTDI projects is not always useful. Nonetheless, the *monit* database provides some information¹⁹ on initiatives that have been concluded.

In relation to the NOP Research, if we exclude initiatives that have been launched and are on-going, so far 116 pre-competitive development projects were concluded as well as approximately 60 R&D and cooperative research projects involving both public and private actors.

At a regional level, in Apulia over 2,750 enterprises have already benefited from a selective investment support scheme and over 1,130 in Sicily. Nearly 2,600 projects of advanced information society services were completed in Sicily and 1,600 in Apulia.

Human resource development and youth unemployment

This policy area includes: education and training as well as labour market policies. Last year report focused on the NOP Education - Environments for learning, pointing out that the performance of this programme was by and large satisfactory²⁰. The few core indicators which can be linked to this policy area show that additional 3,295 education projects (training/education infrastructure) were implemented (+40%) in 2011 and these have benefited nearly two million of additional students.

The NOP Education recorded most of these achievements: 3,131 projects in 2011. It also supports the development of information and knowledge society by developing and strengthening school equipment and laboratories. 73% of all schools in the region have been covered so far by interventions of technological upgrading and 91% of all schools have strengthened laboratories aimed at improving learning of key competences such as reading, mathematics and sciences. Moreover, the NOP aims at improving the quality of school

¹⁹ Even if incomplete and limited.

²⁰ In particular, the centralisation of all the functions within a single administration with a good planning and implementing capacity reduced delays and increased efficiency. It is also argued that, despite the lack of evidence on the effectiveness of the initiatives implemented, education is the area where territorial disparities have been markedly reduced over the years; hence, even though the specific impact of Cohesion policy contribution is not known, it is a shared opinion that more than two decades of interventions funded by ERDF and ESF have contributed to reduce the gap of lagging regions.

environment and students well-being (safety, eco-sustainability and accessibility of buildings; improvement of infrastructure for training of teachers etc.).

In addition, in 2011, 278 new projects concerning school equipment and multi-media labs were approved. Furthermore during the year, 983 previously launched projects of improvement of school networks and technological equipment and 2,214 interventions on laboratories for learning of key competences (maths, natural sciences and languages), were completed. Finally, interventions on 2,062 schools concerning energy efficiency, safety, accessibility, sports and recreational activities etc. were approved.

The NOP Safety for development is to some extent relevant for this policy area, as far as labour market policies are concerned. In 2011, 187 new projects to increase migrants' participation to employment, promote regular employment etc. have been approved but are still in a launch phase. At a regional level, a few satisfactory achievements related to the improvement of school infrastructure have been recorded in 2011 in Basilicata (108 education projects) and Calabria (58 projects and 42,816 benefiting students). No specific measure has been taken to assist young people who are unemployed but relevant initiatives, planned at the beginning of the period, are being implemented to boost self-employment and start-ups (see enterprise support and RTDI).

Transport

The initiatives taken into account here are those aimed at improving rail, road and other transport infrastructures. Most ROPs finance transport infrastructure; moreover, the NOP transport networks and mobility intervenes specifically on this area²¹. Last year report highlighted that apart from Campania, the regional North-South disparities in terms of railways and highways are large. Moreover, existing infrastructures in the south are not adequately interconnected. Apart from the insufficient endowment, Convergence regions also suffer from the inefficiencies which make the realization of transport infrastructure slower and more expensive than in the North and in other European Convergence regions.

The achievements recorded last year were still poor and the available data confined to output indicators which makes it difficult to give account of the results and effects.

The available core indicators show a moderate increase in the number of transport projects (21 new projects, 12 financed by the ROP Apulia and 9 by the ROP Campania) and a small increase in the length of new roads and reconstructed roads.

The progress of the initiatives financed by the NOP networks and mobility is severely affected by delays for different administrative reasons mainly relating to muddled regulations of public contracts. For instance, when there is a tenderer appeal against the decision to award a contract, this often causes long implementation delays. Only 3 transport projects have been launched by the NOP in 2011, consisting in 276 km of TEN railways²².

²¹ The "division of labour" between central and regional interventions assigns to the NOP mainly the interregional and TEN initiatives and to the ROPs the support of local transport and regional infrastructures.

²² These output indicators are taken from the AIR. Despite they are core indicators, they are missing in the database of core indicators provided by the Commission and extracted on 25 July 2012.

The available information on completed initiatives in this policy area shows that the number of concluded projects is negligible. It is worth noting that available indicators of output underestimate the actual realisations since an infrastructure (and most initiatives are alike) is counted only when it is 100% completed; however, in the case of transport infrastructure a partial completion does not mean that nothing has been achieved.

So far among the most relevant interventions which Cohesion policy provided an essential boost to, we can mention the Naples metropolitan transport infrastructure.

Environment and energy

This policy area includes: initiatives concerning the development of the energy infrastructure, interventions for improving the environment, and for risk prevention. Convergence regions are characterized by significant disparities especially in relation to waste and waste water treatment.

Last year report highlighted that the most relevant improvements can be observed in water distribution and in the production of electricity from Renewable Energy Sources (RES): since 2000, renewable production in percentage of the total electricity consumption increased 5 times, mostly as a consequence of the generous national incentives for renewables rather than structural fund interventions which were not utilized on energy in the 2000-2006 period. At present, ERDF mainly finances investments in energy saving: public building efficiency, efficiency in production processes, and support to the energy value chain for matching the growing demand of RES²³. In 2010, there was no significant effect from energy related investments, due to limited investment in this field, while some environmental achievements have been recorded by ROPs in terms of waste projects, risk-prevention initiatives, water networks and sewer systems created or improved, additional population served by water and waste water projects, reclaimed land.

The most relevant achievements of 2011 showed by the core indicators include: 168 waste water initiatives (ROP Calabria and ROP Sicily) and over 246,000 additional population served, 30 renewable energy projects (co-financed by the ROP Campania and the NOP Research), additional 2,000 people benefiting from flood protection initiatives undertaken in Apulia.

The interregional OP on renewable energies supports production of energy from RES and energy efficiency in firms, buildings etc. The OP is characterized by a 24% expenditure rate but its progress is particularly slow and few noteworthy achievements have materialized so far. In 2011 the implementation of several activities previously launched was continued. The most relevant achievements include: launch of a tender for the development of biomass value chains, selection of business investment projects for RES production (including a large project notified to the EC for the production of photovoltaic panels in Catania), starting of 54 projects of acquisition/installation of RES fuelled systems in public buildings, few other innovative initiatives concerning generation from RES. In relation to energy efficiency, the most relevant progress consist of: the progress of energy efficiency interventions carried out by local public actors on public building and infrastructure, the implementation of 4 smart grid projects and of 4 initiatives of strengthening medium voltage electricity networks.

²³ See EEN 2011 Policy Paper on energy efficiency and RES (Italian report 2011).

Governance shortcomings have affected the implementation so far and a relevant change occurred in 2011 when the Ministry of regional affair became the new MA of the programme. The shortcomings which hindered the OP include: failure to abide by several EU organizational and audit requirements, inefficient planning of initiatives, excessively long procedures for preliminary studies and authorization of carrying out works on the territory, internal stability pact which constrains the participation of local public administrations, involvement of a wide and heterogeneous set of implementing partners (municipalities, local public health organisations) etc. Following the results of a DG REGIO audit, the Commission interrupted payments in the period July-October 2011 until appropriate action was taken. In 2011, the approval and implementation of several initiatives previously planned continued but there is no particularly relevant achievement.

If we look at projects recorded as completed in the *monit* database, it is worth noting that 63 initiatives were concluded so far in Apulia. These consisted mainly of works to: improve or repair the water and sewage infrastructure, install depurators, consolidate side street banks and improve flood protection etc. Even if they are mainly small interventions, these projects are wide spread across the entire territory, the contribution of the ROP to safeguard the environment in this case seems tangible.

Very few initiatives concerning bio-diversity or classified as such have been carried out so far in Convergence which is certainly an area which deserves greater effort. 3 projects aiming at improving the sustainable use of natural reserves and park were completed so far in Sicily.

Territorial development

This policy area includes: initiatives aiming at strengthening social infrastructure (child care, health, housing etc.), promotion of citizens' safety, tourism and culture (e.g. natural and cultural assets, tourist services), urban and rural regeneration.

According to the main territorial and socio-economic indicators related to tourism, public services, quality of life, poverty etc., there are large disparities between North-Central and Southern regions. Public services such as health care, child care, elderly assistance, services related to cultural and natural heritage are much less performing in Convergence areas. Poverty in Southern Italy is three times more widespread than in the North-Centre and affects almost a third of the population; moreover, in the last few years there is no evidence of a significant improvement in Convergence regions. Last year report highlighted that the performance in this policy field was poor as showed by the few available (output) indicators and the extremely low level of expenditure: 5.8%.

All ROPs as well as the NOP Safety and in part the NOP Research and Competitiveness finance interventions supporting territorial development. The core indicators which can be linked to this policy area show that 674 tourist projects were completed in 2011 (313 financed by the ROP Campania, 256 by the ROP Sicily and the rest by ROP Apulia, ROP Calabria and NOP Research); the AIR of the NOP research also reports the creation of 659 jobs in tourism in 2011 as consequences of the initiatives taken. Other recorded new activities include: 304 new health projects carried out (160 in Sicily, 88 in Basilicata and 56 in Apulia), 113 projects improving the attractiveness of towns and cities and 17 new projects offering services to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion.

The majority of the projects aiming at improving the attractiveness of towns and cities were carried out in Sicily, Calabria and Apulia. 12 projects offering services to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion have been implemented in Apulia, 4 in Calabria and one was financed by the NOP safety for development. The latter is relevant for this policy area insofar it finances projects for territorial monitoring and control in tourist areas or with a tourist potential (e.g. video surveillance systems) and initiatives aiming at rehabilitating lands and properties confiscated to organized crime which are also meant to produce a positive impact attractiveness of territories and on tourism.

If we look at completed projects, the most interesting achievements are recorded by the ROPs. For instance, in Campania, 2,803 multi-purpose centres (multimedia labs with interactive whiteboards, language and e-learning centres etc.) were created while in Apulia, 136 interventions of restructuring, upgrading of public buildings and hospitals, acquisition and installation of health equipment etc. were concluded; these involved over 146 municipalities and local public actors. In this region, 86 interventions aiming at improving national and cultural attractiveness were also completed thanks to Cohesion policy. In Sicily, over 100 interventions to improve tourist projects were carried out ranging from the organisation of sport and cultural events to participation to international exhibition.

Table 1 - Main physical indicators and achievements (core) – Convergence objective (data extracted on 25 July 2012)

Policy area	Main indicators	Outcomes and results	
Enterprise support and RTDI	No. of RTD projects	868	Projects mainly include: industrial research and pre-competitive development; strengthening of research infrastructure. 61% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of cooperation projects enterprises-research institutions	471	Collaborative research endeavours involving a public private partnership and boosting S&T networking and the development of the knowledge economy. 48% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of jobs created in SMEs as direct result of finished projects (gross, full time equivalent)	5,654	Investment projects implemented by SMEs using financial aid from Structural Funds, (whose form may vary: refundable, non-refundable, guarantee, etc.), may result in the creation of new jobs. 64% of target set has been achieved.
Human Resources (ERDF only)	No. of education projects	11,448	Projects include: strengthening school infrastructure, equipment and laboratories (learning, multimedia, sports and recreational activities); improving the quality of school environment and students well-being (safety, eco-sustainability and accessibility of buildings; improving infrastructure for training of teachers. The interventions of technological upgrading of ICT equipment and laboratories cover 73% of all schools in the regions. 91% of all schools in the regions have strengthened laboratories aimed at improving learning of key competences such as reading, mathematics and sciences.
Transport	Km of new and reconstructed roads	58	Length of new roads constructed or existing roads whose quality or capacity have been improved. Target achievements vary greatly, ranging from 49% in case of new roads to 2% in the case of reconstructed roads.
Environment and energy	Additional population served by waste water projects	640,926	Number of persons, previously not connected, benefiting from waste treatment/increase in transportation capacity built by the projects. 18% of target has been achieved.
	No. of people benefiting from flood protection measures	24,000	People exposed to flood risk and whose vulnerability decreased as a direct result of a Structural Funds project. 8% of target set has been achieved.
Territorial development	No. of tourism projects	1,195	Projects of various nature, directly or indirectly aimed to attract tourism (e.g. organisation of and participation in trade fairs, festivals, cultural and sports events). 32% of target has been achieved.
	No. of projects ensuring sustainability and improving the attractiveness of towns and cities	111	Projects of various nature aiming at improving the attractiveness of towns and cities (e.g. initiatives aiming at rehabilitate lands and properties confiscated to organized crime). 12% of target has been achieved.

Competitiveness objective

Enterprise support and RTDI

As in Convergence regions, this policy area includes RTDI initiatives, support for innovation and other investment in SMEs, diffusion of ICT and related services. Given that the regions belonging to the Competitiveness objective are on average more advanced in policy making and can interact with a thick fabric of dynamic firms as well as knowledge producers, and given that the resources made available are very limited as compared to the potential demand, the interventions progress relatively more quickly and are often more sophisticated than in Convergence. During the current period, the focus was on few priorities such as strengthening of poles and cluster, business R&D and diffusion of innovation.

Last year report highlighted that the performance of ROPs was satisfactory while the main problems hindering implementation are of bureaucratic nature. Furthermore, the effects of the economic crisis slowed the implementation while the internal stability pact hinders the payment by local entities.

727 RTD projects were carried out in 2011; these are mostly concentrated in Piedmont (380), Umbria (167) and Tuscany (113). 501 new research jobs were recorded, 314 in Emilia-Romagna, 54 in Marche, 81 in Tuscany, 24 in Umbria and 19 in Piedmont.

A significant number of direct investment aid projects, 6,745, were financed (2,499 in Veneto, 2,086 in Piedmont, 1,083 in Tuscany, 585 in Umbria 421 in Liguria), and 164 start-ups supported (mostly in Veneto and Molise). 650 jobs were created in SMEs, in full time equivalents, as a direct result of finished projects (mainly recorded in Liguria and Umbria).

As regards information society, 584 projects were carried out (415 in Umbria and 157 in Veneto) and 283,259 additional people were covered by broadband access, mostly concentrated in Lombardy (260,000).

As in the Convergence case, we do not know how many of the mentioned projects were completed or produced the expected results. The *monit* database provides some information on this but it is incomplete meaning that it does not cover all measures and all regions in a reliable way.

If we consider only initiatives classified as completed, overall these include nearly 150 R&D projects financed so far in Umbria, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria and Lazio. A small number of cooperative research projects (24) involving both public and private organisation seem to have been completed. However, it is worth noting that these projects and other forms of collaborative research agreements between research institutions and firms are typically of larger scale than industrial research and are capable of producing relevant impacts on the regional innovation systems as well as on the RTDI culture of the key stakeholders. This is true regardless of the state of advancement of projects (on-going vs. completed).

For example, Lombardy officials highlight that the increasing involvement of research organisations (particularly University departments) and their participation in collaborative projects with the private sector can be considered one of the most important achievements of the programme so far, and in particular of the 1st axis which supports industrial research and innovation in key thematic areas. The competitiveness of both categories of agents benefits

from these co-operations, thanks to cross-fertilisation and exchange of competences. This enables the growth of influential partnerships within specific value chains which boost innovation and the role of Lombardy players in international RTDI networks.

Relevant completed achievements also include: 564 innovation projects carried out in Liguria and 281 projects of ICT diffusion in firms in Umbria. Monitoring data also record 64 product/process innovation projects concluded in Abruzzi, a territory whose interior was strongly hit by the 2009 earthquake while its coastal areas face several challenges related to structural change and loss of competitiveness in manufacturing as well as in the poorly organised service sector. Certainly the ROP financed a small number of initiatives which benefited mainly small manufacturing and service firms; despite such limited scale, these initiatives may be essential to give an additional impulse to the diffusion of innovation friendly culture in the region.

Finally it is worth noting that, in Veneto, 114 initiatives supporting female entrepreneurship and 71 supporting young enterprises were completed and 80 access points to data transmission networks installed.

Human resource development

This policy area includes: education and training as well as labour market policies. We highlighted that in the Convergence area most initiatives relevant for this area are financed by the NOP education rather than by regional programmes. Due to the lack of a specific national programme, there are very few ERDF achievements in Competitiveness regions, while ESF represents the most important source of funding.

Only the ROP Sardinia and ROP Tuscany record progress in the core indicators in this policy area. In 2011, 10 education projects were carried out in the former and some projects to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion have been financed in the latter. In this as well as in other policy area the most important contribution given by Cohesion policy is sometimes related to experimentation of innovative initiatives, unusual for certain territories.

Transport

Transport interventions do not have a strategic role in the Competitiveness OPs given the minor share of resources allocated to this policy area but in some cases may be relevant to integrate national and local interventions and contribute to territorial reorganization.

As last year report pointed out, projects were still on-going and recorded achievements were poor. This is partly due to the multi-annual nature of infrastructural projects which require long and complex work planning and contracting procedures. Moreover, core indicators underestimate realisations since outputs are recorded only when projects are completed and this does not allow to monitor the work progress. Beside these features of transport projects, also in this case the progress was delayed by various bureaucratic bottlenecks and constrained by the internal stability pact.

The only core indicator which recorded a progress is the number of transport projects: 51 new initiatives were completed in 2011. 40 projects have been co-financed by the ROP Marche, 8 by Bolzano, 2 by Tuscany and one by Sardinia.

According to the *monit* data on completed projects, we can mention a EUR 10 million worth multi-modal transport system implemented in Veneto.

Environment and energy

All Competitiveness objective ROPs intervene in this policy area which receives a relevant share of the allocated resources. As regards the environment, the initiatives are mainly aimed at protecting territories highly congested by human activities through interventions which prevent natural risks, preserve natural sites, monitor air and water, reclaim polluted or abandoned sites. As regards energy, the initiatives undertaken as part of the ROPs complement national incentives for the use of RES, and support energy efficiency in public buildings or in the productive cycle of private firms. Some interventions also support energy research and innovation or RES value chains.

Last year report highlighted that, thanks to the relative small size of the projects, a significant number of outputs was already available in almost all the regions in terms of projects for RES and energy efficiency promotion and interventions to safeguard the environment. The analysis also pointed out how difficult it is to distinguish between completed and on-going projects in this area. No major obstacle to implementation is mentioned apart from some regions where the implementation rates were close to zero (Abruzzi, Molise, Lombardy and Sardinia). The internal stability pact, constraining the participation of local public administrations, coupled with a weak regional strategy, which sometimes delays the identification of priorities, are among the limiting factors.

If we look at the core indicators, 218 energy projects were carried out in 2011. The majority of these have been implemented as part of the ROP Sardinia, Marche, Trento and Liguria.

In relation to the environment, 79 risk prevention projects were carried out in 2011. In terms of results, it was estimated that 40,726 people benefited from flood protection measures, mostly in Veneto, Alto-Adige and Friuli Venezia Giulia, and 7,447 from forest fire protection measures in Tuscany.

In Competitiveness regions, the focus is on renewable energy or energy efficiency and most concluded initiatives achievements concern these objectives rather than risk prevention as in Convergence. Over 300 projects have been completed altogether in Abruzzi, Liguria, Trento and Lazio. These consist of initiatives supporting development of RES or energy efficiency in buildings.

There are also relevant examples of environment related achievements. 132 "Natura 2000" sites were treated in Liguria, a coastal region particularly vulnerable to erosion and climate change, and 10 air quality monitoring stations were installed in Umbria.

Territorial development

This policy area absorbs less than 1/6 of allocated ERDF resources. In Competitiveness, interventions mainly consist of promotion of tourism, cultural and natural assets valorisation, improvement of urban attractiveness and enhancement of social infrastructure.

These regions have better urban infrastructures and public services than Convergence areas; also the tourism sector is in most cases more developed. Therefore, regions tend to use EU

resources for softer initiatives which focus on supporting and upgrading the existing facilities or reinforcing endowments of marginal areas.

Last year report showed a moderate number of achievements. In 2011, the core indicators have recorded a significant progress in the number of tourist project (98 new projects carried out mainly in Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany in 2011) and in the projects ensuring sustainability and improving the attractiveness of towns and cities (70 new projects, mostly implemented in Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany and Umbria).

Given the few interventions carried out as part of this policy area in Competitiveness regions we cannot expect significant achievements. Some projects for urban regeneration and to improve tourism have been completed in Sardinia (41 projects), Liguria (5) and Tuscany where over 44,500 sq. m. of urban surface have been recuperated. In Abruzzi a particular effort was done to intervene on business infrastructure damaged or destroyed by the earthquake (over 250 initiatives) and to implement promotional initiatives for tourist attraction (39 projects). Also in Sardinia, 6 pilot projects supporting culture and legality have been completed.

Table 2 - Main physical indicators and achievements (core) – Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective (data extracted on 25 July 2012)

Policy area	Main indicators	Outcomes and results	
Enterprise support and RTDI including ICT	No. of cooperation project enterprises-research institutions	1,206	Collaborative research endeavours boosting university-industry cooperation and the development of the knowledge economy. >100% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of jobs created in SMEs (gross, full time equivalent)	1,455	Investment projects implemented by SMEs using financial aid from Structural Funds, (whose form may vary: refundable, non-refundable, guarantee, etc.), may result in the creation of new jobs. 17% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of additional population covered by broadband access	652,535	Persons who can access to the internet with a download speed of at least 256 Kbit/sec and who did not have access before or only had limited access.
Human Resources (ERDF only)	No. of education projects	81	Education and training infrastructure and equipment and laboratories (ROP Sardinia). 100% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of projects offering services to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion	39	Projects to improve equal opportunities and inclusion (ROP Tuscany). 100% of target set has been achieved.
Transport	No. of transport projects	104	Total number of projects implemented to improve mobility, strengthen infrastructures and transport networks. 94% of target set has been achieved.
	Km of new railways	13	Length of railways constructed by the project where no railway existed before (ROP Marche). 100% of target set has been achieved.
Environment and energy	No. of people benefiting from flood protection measures	51,096	People exposed to flood risk and whose vulnerability decreased as a direct result of a Structural Funds project. >100% of target set has been achieved.
	No. of people benefiting from forest fire protection and other protection measures	9,024	Number of people exposed to a forest fire risk and whose vulnerability decreased as a direct result of a Structural Funds project (ROP Tuscany). 41% of target set has been achieved.
Territorial development	No. of tourism projects	204	Projects of various nature, directly or indirectly aimed to attract tourism or to develop tourist industry. 25% of target has been achieved.
	No. of projects ensuring sustainability and improving the attractiveness of towns and cities	164	Projects of various nature aiming at improving the attractiveness of towns and cities. 54% of target has been achieved.

Cross-border cooperation objective

Last year report divided the CBC programmes in two groups: those progressing relatively well (IT-FR, IT-Switzerland and IT-AT)) and those in considerable delay (IT- SI and IT- MT). The expenditure rate of the former was ranging from 10 to 14% at the end of 2010, while the implementation rate of the second group was null. At the end of 2011, there was a further increase in expenditure in the first group, ranging from 24.3% of ALCOTRA, to 25.8% of IT-AT, 26.1% of IT-FR Maritime, and 26.7% of IT-Switzerland. On the contrary, the implementation rate of IT-MT and IT-SI did not accelerate significantly (it is slightly above 5% if technical assistance is disregarded). 2011 was the actual starting year of IT-MT operations; at the same time the impasse which prevented IT-SI from moving ahead was finally overcome.

It was highlighted that meaningful available indicators are limited (mostly confined to number of projects) which does not allow to understand CBC achievements fully. Furthermore, the IT-MT and IT-SI OPs did not register any realisation at all, according to last year report, due to the

implementation delays. The following paragraphs provide some concise information on the progress of these programmes as at the end of 2011.

Already during 2010, the *IT-FR Maritime OP* experienced an acceleration in the number of projects launched (15 new projects and 5 new “strategic” projects). These mostly focused on natural and cultural resources (networks of natural and marine parks, technical solutions to prevent fire risk and preservation of cultural heritage areas). The evaluation report of June 2010 highlighted the difficulties in generating effective partnerships and the limited participation of Universities and private actors.

In 2011, only two additional projects were financed, as part of the 1st axis – accessibility and networks (interregional info-mobility platform) and the 4th axis – access to public services (ACCESSIT strategic project); the increase observed in the implementation rate is due to the progress of previously selected and launched initiatives.

Within the *ItT-AT CBC* programme, 12 interventions of cooperation between enterprises and research centres were financed within the 1st axis - competitiveness and economic relations - last year. As part of the 2nd axis - territory and sustainability - 7 projects of environmental protection were completed.

In 2011, 12 new projects concerning research and competitiveness (1st axis) were launched and 10 projects focusing on environmental protection, water, waste and energy efficiency were carried out (2nd axis).

The *IT-FT ALCOTRA* programme funded 109 cooperation projects as at the end of 2010; 370 trans-border institutions have been involved in the programme activities. Moreover, four integrated trans-border plans were defined for the development of sustainable tourism and the valorisation of natural and cultural heritage; the plans include 22 projects in total. Finally, 35 projects promoting the cooperation in the public service sector were financed.

In 2011, as part of the 1st axis – development and innovation - 3 new research and competitiveness initiatives and 7 rural development projects were financed. 4 risk prevention interventions were carried out as part of the 2nd axis – territorial protection and management. As part of the 3rd axis - quality of life – 5 new health and social cooperation initiatives were carried out, and 4 new transport projects launched.

As pointed out last year, the *IT-Switzerland OP* financed 107 projects at the end of 2010 focused on public services, enhancement of transport, ICT etc. Despite this relatively high number of initiatives undertaken, the level of expenditure was quite low. The evaluation report on the 2009 implementation underlined that, although the transnational partnership records a good participation, the capacity of involving new actors in cooperation is limited.

In 2011, 54 additional projects were funded as part of the 1st axis - environment and territory, 89 projects were carried out within the 2nd axis – competitiveness, and 70 additional initiatives implemented in relation to the 3rd axis – quality of life.

3. EFFECTS OF INTERVENTION

The purpose of this paragraph is to give an indication of how far the measures supported and the projects funded are having positive effects on the ultimate objectives of policy:

strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion. The discussion draws on the available evidence which includes: commentary in the AIRs, results of evaluations, findings of research studies, information from interviews, own judgement and experience.

Main points from previous country report

- The programme implementation delays hindered the achievement of results and effects, which can be visible only at the end of the programming period, and negatively affected the overall NSRF initial strategy, whose fulfilment became very difficult if not impossible.
- In a context of economic crisis and diminishing national resources for development, the relative importance of ERDF increased. However, due to the mentioned delays, ERDF was not effectively used to mitigate the effects of the crisis but seems to have become just a partial substitute of national funding. This was a missed opportunity while EU Funds could be used more effectively to support investments and to stabilise income and employment, in particular in the Convergence regions. Despite the mentioned problems, the EU interventions were relevant in some sectors to address the increasing Convergence-Competitiveness disparities. This is true for RTDI, renewable energy policy, waste and waste water treatment interventions which are very much dependent on EU funds, as well as for security and, to a limited extent, transport.
- Despite the major amount of resources allocated to enterprise support and RTDI, some of the main challenges of the Convergence regions, crucial for catching up, such as attraction of external investments, value chains “upgrading” and smart specialisation have not been addressed yet to any significant extent.
- Education is the policy area where delays and obstacles did not represent a major problem. Funding of school infrastructure has been effective and EU investments are crucial to maintain the education system and compensate the drastic national budget cuts.
- In general, the relatively few relevant evaluations available do not yet provide sufficient evidence on initial effects of Cohesion policy, nor they clarify the problems encountered in the planning phases (from this point of view it is worth noting that some progress was registered since last year and more evidence is now available).

These conclusions remain by and large valid. Several initiatives have been taken to accelerate interventions but overall these are still behind schedule and it is unlikely that all the expected impacts on disparities will materialise anytime soon. Moreover, the inadequacy of the monitoring systems and the lack of robust impact evaluations do not help shedding light on what happens. Nonetheless, the information included in the AIRs, the analysis of achievements, the interviews and the available studies allow to point out some of the main effects which are materialising in the regions.

Effects related to critical mass. The EU Cohesion policy is likely to have the most important effects where there is a critical mass of interventions. This mainly means in Convergence areas, especially in relation to RTDI and Education.

Achievements and available evaluations provide some insight on this point. As highlighted in the previous section, significant RTDI achievements have been recorded in Convergence in terms of industrial and collaborative research effort, S&T infrastructure, SMEs’ investment

projects. These led to relevant effects, sometimes measured (e.g. number of additional jobs in SMEs resulting from the projects financed, reduction/elimination of digital divide), sometimes perceived by stakeholders (e.g. increased research networking and frequency of successful research cooperation partnerships).

Evaluations of this policy area are frequent but incomplete: they tend to focus almost only on aid schemes and not at all on other forms of intervention whose weight is increasing (e.g. cluster and poles, financial engineering, services for innovation diffusion etc.), within the sets of measures commonly used to support regional innovation systems. The evidence available is hence limited to the effects of RTDI incentives while much more analytical work is needed to understand the impacts of other types of intervention, especially when the recorded achievements are clearly unsatisfactory (e.g. financial engineering).

Significant achievements were also recorded in the area of human resources, especially as regards education infrastructure development. This is relevant primarily for Convergence regions where the majority of interventions took place. In this case, indicators mostly focus on outputs and results rather than effects. However, there are studies (see section 4 on evaluation) which highlight the positive impacts of interventions on literacy and numeracy levels, reduction of school drop-outs in certain regions etc.

Positive effects linked to experimentation. In Competitiveness, the effects can be only relatively small given the limited amount of resources. However, there is evidence (interviews and studies available) on the positive impact of EU funds on improvement of research cooperation, diffusion of innovation and experimentation of new approaches (university-industry research networks and poles, pre-commercial procurement as a tool to boost innovation).

In Competitiveness territories, there are also measurable positive effects when the funds have been used efficiently to achieve specific and circumscribed objectives (e.g. cancellation of digital divide, awareness raising in relation to RES and energy efficiency, diffusion of energy saving street lighting, improvement of citizens' well-being thanks to the introduction of novel/improved e-health/e-government services).

Sizeable impact in policy areas where there is a *de facto* dependency on EU funds. As it was highlighted last year, the effects are also significant in the policy areas where, for various reasons (common practice, accumulated knowledge, tradition/history) the regional intervention has become dependent on EU funds. This is the case of environmental protection (e.g. waste water infrastructure, flood risk protection) where ERDF shows significant achievements in both Convergence and Competitiveness.

There are relevant evaluation gaps in relation to these areas, hence the empirical evidence on impacts is scarce or null. There are no specific evaluations on the impact of environmental protection initiatives, however, the indirect evidence available (interviews with officials and stakeholders, recorded achievements) indicate important effects on quality of life and positive demonstration effects on future challenges (e.g. climate change and energy security).

Lack of effects when there is too much fragmentation. The territorial development policy area is by definition not very focused and includes a large variety of different interventions. However, the problem of limited effects of initiatives financed within this area depends not so

much on the definition given but rather on the extreme fragmentation of the projects put in place. This affects mostly Convergence regions.

For instance, a large number of tourism projects are being implemented. They are episodic (e.g. from participation to trade shows to organisation of local festivals and sports events), not conceived as part of a strategy and lack a critical mass which is necessary to produce significant positive effects on the development of the tourist industry and to structurally reduce disparities. Despite the lack of specific evidence based on evaluations, it is unlikely that in this area relevant effects on development and well-being are being generated.

The evidence on the effects of Integrated Territorial Plans (ITP), also classified within this area, is mixed (see also section 4). Most studies seem to highlight that the positive impacts concerns institutional learning, enhancement of cooperation among administrative levels etc. while the actual effects on cohesion in areas where they were carried out and on quality of life remain very limited due to delays and the limited number of achievements.

4. EVALUATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION

This section provides a list of the evaluations which have been carried out in the present programming period and comment on the main features of them. Furthermore the evaluation strategy is outlined. **The following evaluations²⁴ were covered by the previous reports:**

- Integrated Territorial Projects in the 2000-2006 Objective 1 Community Support Framework - Theories, facts and views on local development policy.
- On-going evaluation of the NOP “Networks and Mobility” 2007-2013.
- On-going evaluation of the NOP “Security” 2007-2013.
- On-going evaluation of ROP Lombardy ERDF 2007-2013.
- Technological assessment of the High-tech Regional Network of industrial research laboratories in Emilia-Romagna”
- Ex post evaluation of ITP “Sulmona Alto-Sangro”, ROP Abruzzi 2000-2006 (study financed by the NOP Governance and Technical Assistance).
- Ex post evaluation “Città di Napoli” ROP Campania 2000-2006 (study financed by the NOP Governance and Technical Assistance).
- Ex post evaluation of ITP “Salentino-Leccese”, ROP Apulia 2000-2006 (study financed by the NOP Governance and Technical Assistance).
- Ex post evaluation of ITPs, ROP Campania 2000-2006.
- Ex post evaluation of the measure 2.2 on energy, Single Programming Document (SPD) Trento 2000-2006.
- Ex post evaluation of the measure 1.1 of SPD on mountain areas, SPD Trento 2000-2006.
- Ex post evaluation of the measure 1.4 research and innovation/ICT, SPD Trento 2000-2006.
- Ex post evaluation of transport support policy co-financed by the ROP Sicily 2000-2006.
- On-going evaluation of CBC OP Italy-Switzerland 2007-2013.
- On-going evaluation of “Maritime” CBC OP IT –FR 2007-2013.

²⁴ These studies are either completed or have already produced at least an output.

A number of **evaluations were announced upcoming in the 2011 report**, in addition to the above list:

- On-going evaluation of ROP ERDF Abruzzi 2007-2013
- On-going evaluation of ROP ERDF Emilia-Romagna 2007-2013
- On-going evaluation of ROP ERDF Friuli-Venezia-Giulia 2007-2013
- On-going evaluation of ROP ERDF Piedmont 2007-2013
- On-going evaluation of ROP ERDF Veneto 2007-2013
 - During 2010, several thematic evaluations were launched as part of the ROPs ERDF:
 - Ex post evaluation of research and innovation initiatives co-financed by the ROP 2000-2006 in Apulia and Sicily
 - Ex post evaluation of industrial policy initiatives co-financed by the ROP 2000-2006 in Sicily
 - Evaluation of research and innovation initiatives 2007-2013 in Marche
 - Evaluation of energy policy 2007-2013 in Marche
- At the end of 2010, two CBC evaluations were launched:
 - On-going evaluations of the CBC OP IT-MT
 - On-going evaluations of the CBC OP IT-SI

Some of these have been actually launched in the meantime, others still remain announcements. The **main features of the strategy in place for evaluating the effects of intervention** co-financed by the ERDF are summarised in the following points:

- There is no common and unitary strategy set in place to evaluate achievements and results of the intervention co-financed by the OPs. Each and every MA decides autonomously. The only common feature is that they focus on ex-post evaluations of 2000-2006 in the first phase of programme implementation and then, at a later stage, they carry out separately operational and strategic evaluations.
- The available operational evaluations are often generic and based on existing monitoring data and make limited use of field analysis. Thematic evaluations are less generic, closer to the needs of the policy makers and provide some useful evidence.
- Qualitative methods prevail in the on-going evaluations of 2007-2013, while the ex post evaluations of aid schemes co-financed in 2000-2006 often use counterfactual approaches.
- Among the MAs and administrative officials, evaluation is still not considered an added value in terms of accountability, transparency, democracy, moral obligation towards the taxpayers. On the contrary it is often perceived as an obligation or an intrusive form of control. This prevents evaluation to fully become an integral part of the policy making process and that specific mechanisms are put in place to ensure that evaluation findings feed into on-going and future policy decisions.
- The delay in programme implementation has produced delays in evaluation activities too. This constrained both the democratic debate on the utility of evaluations and the learning process stemming from them.

36 evaluations and relevant studies, both new and not discussed in previous reports because there was no available information, are listed in Table 3. In total, pulling together this list and

the evaluations covered by the previous reports, we have a set of approximately 50 works available. Despite the name they are not all real evaluations, they include various types of analyses and study aiming at mapping and understanding the socio-economic context, assisting the MAs in selecting projects etc.

Approximately 40% of the listed evaluations can be classified as multi-field, meaning that they are not focused on a specific policy area. This group includes programme evaluations (e.g. interim evaluations of ROPs in both Competitiveness and Convergence, CBC programme evaluations, ex post evaluation of 2000-2006 programmes), evaluations of implementation process, adequacy of the systems of indicators, of intervention selection criteria etc. Programme evaluations are mostly focused on providing additional monitoring information and insights on the overall effectiveness of the set of initiatives implemented. In terms of approach, when applicable, they can be mainly classified as theory-based; the actual used methods generally consist of review of documents, processing of monitoring information, data from secondary sources and, sometimes, collection of primary data through field work (e.g. survey, interviews etc.).

The remaining evaluations (60% of the total) are focused on specific policy areas. Most of them concern enterprise support, RDTI and territorial development issues as well as; a more limited number concentrate on human resources, environment and energy.

Evaluations of RTDI and enterprise support (including ICT) were carried out both in Competitiveness and Convergence regions but, unlike territorial development, mostly in the former. The applied approaches are more various and include counterfactual evaluation methods. All these evaluations focus on the analysis of R&D aid schemes while little or nothing is done in relation to other instruments (e.g. support to technology clusters and poles, FEIs). The findings of these works generally indicate positive effects on the performance of beneficiary firms, in terms of returns, productivity, employment, participation in research networks etc. The Community value added is more uncertain, ranging from positive to evidence of crowding out. Only one evaluation (Province of Trento) specifically concentrates on ICT diffusion initiatives (2000-2006) and highlighted the positive effects of services on the well-being of citizens and society at large.

Evaluations of territorial development policy were carried out mainly in Convergence regions and focused on 2000-2006; a few studies focused on Competitiveness. The great majority of these concentrate on the effectiveness of the ITPs applied in slightly different forms by several regions. The evaluation approach is mostly theory based and the findings are mixed. In general ITP initiatives seem to have positive impacts on boosting cooperation between different levels of government and the participations of local administrations in designing and implementing development policy, tailor made with respect to the needs of a specific territory. At the same time, the actual results and effects of the initiatives on territorial development and quality of life are, in the majority of cases, assessed as neutral or uncertain. IPTs often led to excessive fragmentation of initiatives whose implementation generally suffered from a lack of coordination, also due to inadequate monitoring systems.

Few evaluations (4) concern human capital development. The studies carried out in relation to the NOP Education focus: (1) on mapping literacy and numeracy level in the adult population to identify their education and training needs; (2) on the effects of the NOP on school drop-out.

This latter analysis provides information on financial performance of measures rather than true insights on actual achievements and on the effectiveness of policy. In the case of Sardinia, two evaluations relevant for the human resources policy area have been carried out. One, based on desk analysis and interviews, points out the weaknesses of the local public employment agencies and that they did not truly contribute to match labour demand and supply, and hence to increase employment. Another is concentrated on the impact of educational laboratories on reduction of drop-out. The results of the latter seem to be mixed.

The rare evaluations of environmental and energy policy (3) concern the effects of the initiatives supporting energy efficiency and diffusion of RES (Competitiveness) or issues related to waste management (only one study based on desk analysis in Calabria). The evaluations of the effects of policies supporting energy efficiency and RES highlights positive results in terms of awareness raising as well as of actual increase in power capacity from RES and energy savings driven by the introduction of new technologies (e.g. LED street lighting in Marche).

It is not straightforward to understand what use has been or is being made of the results of the evaluations and their recommendations. According to the AIRs and the interviews with MAs and regional officials the evaluation results feed into the policies to steer them during or before implementation. In fact, there is little evidence on actual mechanisms set in place to actually integrate the evaluation findings in the policy making process. Most policy makers still consider evaluation an obligation rather than a tool for results based management which ensures accountability. For this reason, evaluators are often asked to provide technical assistance services (e.g. definition of intervention selection criteria, organisation of focus groups) rather than evidence of achievements. In many cases the extent to which results of evaluations feed into the policy making process depend on the sensitivity, capacity and willingness of the specific client or MA. Often this happens but there are also cases in which an intervention keeps on being implemented, even for a rather long time and across programming periods, despite the negative conclusions of evaluation.

On the basis of the information available in the AIRs and the interviews, there will not be much more developments in terms of evaluations over the remainder of the programming period, apart from the launch of some programme evaluations which were initially planned but not yet implemented (e.g. Evaluation of NOP Research and Competitiveness).

The most important policy areas are covered. There is very little available on environment and energy as well as on transport but the implementation programmes and measures falling within these areas is late and has produced so far a limited number of achievements. Even though enterprise support and RTDI initiatives are frequently evaluated, as already mentioned, there are some evaluation gaps concerning specific instruments which are used to implement RTDI policy. For instance while business aid schemes are well covered, there is very little available on technology clusters and poles as well as on FEIs (e.g. venture capital funds).

Table 3 - List of evaluations and summary details (new studies and studies not discussed in previous reports due to lack of information)

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
Convergence objective						
1	2011. Le condizioni e gli ostacoli allo sviluppo delle filiere tecnologiche (POIN Energie rinnovabili e risparmio energetico).	6	2	The evaluation is focused on the development of technological chains which represents the 2007-13 one of NSF's central objectives. The analysis shows that traditional incentives have a quite weak additional impact (22.5%). Financial constraints are always mentioned as the main implementation's obstacle. The estimated renewable energies' production shows an increase of about 512 GWh by 2020. The estimated energy conservation is expected to be equal to 1.2 TWh by 2020.	n.a.	n.a.
2	2011. Costruire un percorso tra natura e prodotti tipici: una valutazione ex post del Progetto Integrato Territoriale Alto Belice Corleonese 2000-2006 (PON Governance e Assistenza Tecnica).	7	3	The evaluation aims at analysing the project's effectiveness as well as its actual sustainability in the long term. Most interventions have been implemented within the tourist sector which absorbed 70% of payments (EUR 36.25 million out the total of EUR 52.6 million allocated to 53 interventions). Training activities absorbed 11.4% of payments (EUR 6.26 million for 15 interventions). All together the remaining sectors of activity (agriculture, industry and other services) absorbed 13.5% of payments (EUR 7.4 million for 97 interventions). Data confirm a high level of fragmentation of interventions.	4	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/ual/materiali_ual/MUVAL_26_PIT_SICILIA.pdf
3	2011. Autovalutazione del PON Governance e Assistenza Tecnica	9	2+3	The evaluation aimed at analysing the NOP's progress, the main problems encountered, and the results achieved. Notwithstanding the procedural and financial progress, the NOP suffers from some important implementation problems with respect to the specific operational objectives (delays, low spending capacity which hindered several technical assistance projects etc.)	4	http://forges.forum.pa.it/assets/Speeches/4200/03_pa_10_marchesi_giampiero.pdf
4	2011. Indagine valutativa sulla popolazione adulta "EDALAB/SAPA" (PON Ambienti per l'Apprendimento).	3	2	The project aims at analysing the level of literacy of resident adults in three Convergence regions (Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia). The objective is to point out their main education/training needs. The analysis includes the evaluation of literacy, numeracy, and problem solving capability of adults (18-70 years) at the regional level. It provides a detailed profile of their educational and training background, the use they make of new technologies, and their cultural habits to help steering policy appropriately.	4	n.a.
5	2011. Valutazione delle misure attivate dalle singole scuole per la riduzione della	3	3	The evaluation's objective is to describe the implemented interventions and to analyse their impacts on beneficiaries as well as on the local context in general. The analysis confirms the multi-dimensional nature of the school abandon process. The	3+4	n.a.

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
	dispersione scolastica (PON Ambienti per l'Apprendimento).			phenomenon is indeed due to several reasons - both exogenous and endogenous. This means that an in-depth analysis is needed in order to actually reduce the problem. Furthermore the analysis identifies the more disadvantaged territorial areas as well as the more problematic student communities (depredated territories; weak and poor socio-economic resources of the students' families; students' educational background).		
6	2011. L'efficacia e l'efficienza dei progetti di videosorveglianza mobile (PON "Sicurezza per lo Sviluppo - Obiettivo Convergenza").	7	3	The evaluation aims at verifying the projects' effectiveness and efficiency. The interventions allow to control the territory and thus they have a strong deterrent function with positive results in terms of crimes reduction and security improvement. One particular remarkable result is the integration of moving and fixed devices which contribute to increase prevention and repression capacities.	n.a.	n.a.
7	2012. Valutazione in itinere sulle operazioni avviate nell'ambito del POR Calabria 2007-2013 nell'ambito delle politiche per la gestione dei rifiuti.	5	2	The analysis highlights the following points: - In Calabria there is still a weak waste management organization which is not able to provide effective services to local citizens despite the huge public financial contribution; - Main reasons for ineffectiveness are: the bankrupt of most of the public-private enterprises which operate in the sector; the great disequilibrium concerning the territorial installations' distribution; weak managerial and organizational performances of the local public institutions as well as the weak results achieved in terms of waste separation; - due to the mentioned problems, interventions do not achieve effective and sustainable results; - most of the interventions have been implemented in a fragmented way which prevents a systemic managerial approach to the whole waste cycle.	4	http://www.regionec Calabria.it/calabrieuropa/allegati/program_2007_2013/porfesr/cdsorveglianza/5_riunione_cds/Punto%209%20dG.%20Informativa%20sulle%20valutazioni%20effettuate.pdf
8	2011. Valutazione ex post dei regimi di aiuto alle imprese 2000-2006 (POR FESR Campania).	2	3	With respect to the programme's objective of boosting the regional industrial development, achievements have been quite unsatisfactory. The envisaged strategies aimed at increasing competitiveness among industrial districts have not been implemented. As a consequence, investments have been made within weak and structurally poor industrial sectors. One of the main reasons for the programme's failure is that aids had been given without any selective criteria and thus they did not contribute to the creation of competitive industrial clusters.	n.a.	n.a.
9	2011. Valutazione ex	7	3	The evaluation is focused on the project's achievements, on the	3+4	www.sito.regione.c

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
	post del progetto integrato Pompei-Ercolano nell'ambito della programmazione 2000-2006 (POR FESR Campania).			coherence of interventions with local needs and on short-term impacts. The analysis showed how the protection/valorisation dichotomy is an obstacle to the management of cultural heritage. More cooperation and synergies between the regional and local authorities (responsible for the valorisation measures) and those who are responsible for the protection measures are necessary.		ampania.it/documenti/2011/valutazione_NVVIP_Pompei.pdf
10	2011. Analisi valutative ex post del POR Campania 2000-2006	9	3	The analysis focuses on: the programme's general effects and impacts on the regional context; the results achieved within different policy areas. Data show that the programme has not been able to successfully address Campania's socio-economic difficulties; its implementation coincided with a relevant worsening of the regional context in comparison with the national and European cases. The evaluation highlighted the structural weakness of the programme: objectives are neither consistent nor sustainable; regional policies are not suitable; structural interventions as well as operational instruments do not match actual local socio-economic needs.	3+4	www.sito.regione.campania.it/documenti/2011/NVIP/VEXP_%20POR_NVVIP.pdf
11	2011. L'attuazione dei Progetti Intergati Territoriali (PIT) in Sicilia – Una valutazione finale dell'esperienza (POR FESR Sicilia).	7	3	This ex post evaluation aims at highlighting the project's results as well as the main reasons for success and the limits. The objective is to learn from previous experiences in order to improve future planning within the local development policy area. The analysis shows that this PIT contributed to the improvement of the local governance system by supporting institutional cooperation both at the regional and local level. The analysis highlights good quantitative results related to the implementation of public works. Qualitative results are less satisfying in terms of support to the local productive system as well to human capital and labour market in general. Good results have been achieved within the <i>Cultural Amenities preservation</i> sector. It is worth noting that PIT's results are mainly linked to local immaterial factors such as the strengthening of social capital able to support actual processes of territorial development.	Theory-based 3+4	http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/snv/piani_valutazione/sicilia/Valutazione_PIT_Rapporto_Finale.pdf
12	2011. Valutazione sull'azione di sostegno regionale al settore Ricerca e Sviluppo e alla Società dell'Informazione (POR FESR Sicilia).	1	2+3	The analysis aims at evaluating the effects of the regional R&D support. Furthermore, it evaluates the increase of public digital services as well as their actual use by Sicilian residents. With respect to the research "supply side", the regional system includes universities and research institutes with strong competencies in education and training. However, the systemic integration between producers of research is weak and there is limited attention to	3+4	http://www.euroinfo Sicilia.it/Default.aspx?tabid=361

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
				demand. Technological districts need to be strengthened and made sustainable since they are still too dependent on the public sector. Problems related to the credit crunch as well as the weak presence of private financial intermediaries have been highlighted. Banks and financial institutes are risk averse and still not interested and capable to invest in research and innovation projects. With respect to the Information Society, monitoring was inadequate and the available information do not allow to draw conclusions on effectiveness.		
13	2012. Valutazione sull'azione di incentivazione alle imprese (POR FESR Sicilia).	2	3.	The analysis aims at evaluating the efficiency and the effectiveness of the regional policies which supported local enterprises during the 2000-2006 programming period. Almost all the FEIs aimed at supporting enterprises showed a very low expenditure capacity. The main reasons for expenditure lagging behind planned objectives include: poor design of FEIs and calls for tenders; procedural delays; administrative and institutional inefficiencies. These led to the de-commitment of a large chunk of the resources. The implementation difficulties have been aggravated by the economic and financial crisis which began in 2008. Despite the problems, business aid schemes provided an important impulse to private investment which would have not been possible otherwise. Furthermore, these instruments contributed to increase the local employment rate.	3+4	http://www.euroinfocilia.it/Default.aspx?tabid=361
Competitiveness objective						
14	2011. Valutazione del POR FESR Abruzzo 2007-2013 (1° RAPPORTO + approfondimento terremoto).	9	2	The evaluation aims at analysing the programme's results with respect to both operational and strategic objectives. Even if the ROP was modified several times, the evaluation shows that such modifications are coherent with the local context and the emerging issues. The 1 st report highlights that the axis related to the recent earthquake showed the greatest expenditure capacity while the other Axes did not achieve much progress.	3+4	http://www.dps.mef.gov.it/documentazione/snv/piani_valutazione/abruzzo/RV%20POR%20FESR%20Abruzzo.pdf
15	2011. Analisi e valutazione del sistema di indicatori di programma (POR FESR Emilia Romagna).	9	1	The objective is to verify the indicators' coherence with respect to both the programme's monitoring and evaluation activities and to the set targets. The evaluation shows that the programme's indicators: Cover the OP's priorities (apart from one operational objective) with respect to implementation as well as results and impacts; Are equilibrated; Are selective and relevant. Some minor adjustments in the indicators system are proposed.	4.	http://fesr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/allegati/cds/comitato-di-sorveglianza-del-6-dicembre-2011/analisi-e-valutazione-del-

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
						sistema-di-indicatori-del-programma
16	2011. Analisi e valutazione dei criteri di selezione delle operazioni (POR FESR Emilia Romagna).	9	1	The analysis aims at verifying the pertinence of the ROP's selection criteria. Furthermore, it evaluates the match between the ROP's criteria and those included in the public calls. Finally, the analysis includes an ex post evaluation of the general criteria effectiveness. The objective is to verify their capacity to select projects which are able to contribute to the programme's achievements. The analysis shows that the selection criteria are coherent with the programme's objectives. Better performances have been registered with respect to the admissibility requirements as well as to the evaluating criteria. On the contrary, relevance criteria are satisfactory but can be improved.	4	http://fesr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/allegati/cds/comitato-di-sorveglianza-del-6-dicembre-2011/analisi-e-valutazione-dei-criteri-di-selezione-delle-operazioni
17	2011. Valutazione tematica n°7, "Risultati e impatti del DOCUP Ob. 2 – 2000-2006 (POR FESR FVG).	Multi-field	3	The objectives of axis 1 of the SPD Friuli Venezia Giulia (or DOCUP FVG) has been achieved both with respect to the infrastructures' improvement and to the spatial and economic integration. With respect to the axis 2, performances were positive both in terms of increase in entrepreneurship and of general territorial development. Indicators related to the <i>regional productive system</i> are less satisfactory even if they should be analysed considering the economic crisis which has affected the region in the last 10 years. Good results have been achieved with respect to the <i>territory and environment preservation</i> sector with remarkable impacts on the mountain areas. The objective of the Axis 4 has not been entirely achieved even if there has been remarkable progress in terms socio-economic development of the mountain areas. Finally, the support to <i>commercial, tourist and handcraft</i> sectors showed good performances.	4	http://www.regionefvg.it/rafvge/exports/sites/default/RAVFVG/fondi-europei-fvg-internazionale/por-fesr/allegati/Risultati ed impatti del DOCUP Ob.2 2000 - 2006.pdf
18	2011. Valutazione indipendente degli interventi nel settore energetico del POR FESR MARCHE 2007/2013	6	3	The aim is to evaluate the impacts, in terms of CO ₂ emissions' reduction, of the energy interventions financed by the ROP. The evaluation highlights the following main points: - with respect to co-generation, the ROP contributed to an increase in power capacity (+6% compared to 2008); - local institutions/operators became more aware and involved in relation to wind power opportunities and issues; - LED technology became wide spread in public lighting; - ERDF co-funding was the most important financial support to the development of photovoltaic, geothermic, sun thermal, and	n.a.	http://www.europa.marche.it/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ZMeg3yOy5sc%3d&tAbid=321

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
				biomass energy sources.		
19	2011. Valutazione operativa e strategica degli interventi attuati a favore della ricerca e dell'innovazione nell'ambito del POR FESR Marche 2007-2013	1	3	The evaluation aims at analysing the impacts of the interventions in terms of local enterprises' innovation and research performance. Furthermore, it verifies if the interventions contributed to increase regional research cooperation. Finally, it aims at verifying if the ROP - which was modified during the implementation - is still coherent with the objectives of Europe 2020. Data show that the initiatives financed many virtuous projects which generated a high quality output and/or productive process. The reasons for success include: good commercial strategies; quality of human resources ; involvement of local networks where universities play an important role. The evaluation also highlights that the ROPs' strategy is still coherent with the Europe 2020 objectives.	3+4	
20	2011. Domanda Valutativa sulle politiche economiche regionali adottate nel periodo 2000-2010 (POR FESR Molise).	9	2+3	This is an explorative study aimed at: improving the understanding of Molise competitiveness positioning in the Italian context. It also estimates the effects of the reduction in public transfers from the central government on regional growth and disparities.	3+4	n.a.
21	2011. Ricerca, sviluppo e innovazione nel sistema delle piccole e medie imprese altoatesine (in relazione agli incentivi offerti dal POR FESR P.A. Bolzano).	1+2	2	The evaluation aims at answering the following questions: - Why do enterprises not invest in R&D and Innovation? - How much is the ERDF co-funding attractive for enterprises willing to invest? - What kind of effects has the crisis on the programme? Data show a provincial rate of expenditures in R&D lower than the national one. This is partly due to the very small dimension of the local enterprises. Furthermore, local enterprises have very few information about opportunities offered by the ERDF co-funding. Only 22% of the interviewed enterprises know something about the ROP. Enterprises point out the difficulties they encounter to obtain financial aid, such as: too much bureaucracy, need for external consulting, need for more information and support, etc. The evaluation highlights that the programme is too small anyway to produce any sizeable mitigating effect with respect to the crisis. Nonetheless, ERDF provides a useful support to enterprises which experienced a sharp reduction in available funding sources as a consequence of the crisis itself. The interviews also highlight that there is an increasing orientation of firms towards innovation and	3+4	http://www.provincia.bz.it/europa/download/Fesr_Blz_Rapporto_RS_def.pdf

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
				export which should be taken into account and nurtured in the next programming.		
22	2011. Valutazione degli interventi a regia regionale a sostegno della conservazione, della riqualificazione e dello sviluppo sostenibile delle aree montane (POR FESR Piemonte).	10	2	<p>The evaluation's goal is to analyse the implemented interventions in order to identify the most effective initiatives. The analysis concluded that in order to guarantee a sustainable development of mountain areas, it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elaborate a development strategy which involves regional and local actors - both public and private; the strategy must be sustainable not only from an environmental point of view but also in social and financial terms; the strategy should be based on the conclusions and knowledge gathered from research studies and evaluations. - adopt a selective approach which respects the local territory and preserves local basic services. - integrate and coordinate different public policies and support the centre-periphery dialogue and cooperation. - reorganize local public administrations in order to face specific need of mountain areas. - develop local social capital and support local knowledge. - improve monitoring and evaluating systems. 	3+4	http://www.regionepiemonte.it/programmazione/vevtrina/media/files/Valmont%20Sintesi%20Definitiva%282%29.pdf
23	2011. Servizio di valutazione dei fenomeni di collaborazione e aggregazione tra imprese (POR FESR Toscana).	2	3	The evaluation aims at analysing virtuous mechanisms as well as constraints to local networks' development. Furthermore, it evaluates the impact of regional initiatives in terms of enterprises' networking and aggregation. Local networks have been able to use public resources well to increase local entrepreneurial cooperation and to avoid competitive and collusive behaviours. "Network contracts" were used to support cooperation and the study highlighted the positive results of these	n.a.	n.a.
24	2011. Servizio di valutazione on going finalizzato ad accompagnare la proposta di revisione del POR Toscana	9	1	The evaluation aims at analysing the reasons which underlie the regional administration's decision to modify the ROP. Furthermore, it aims at verifying the coherence of such modifications with the changing local socio-economic context. With respect to coherence, the conclusions of the evaluation are positive.	n.a.	n.a.
25	2012. La distanza dell'Umbria dagli obiettivi di Europa 2020	9	2	The analysis aims at measuring how far Umbria is from Europe 2020 objectives in comparison with the other Italian regions. Furthermore, it aims at analysing how much the Cohesion policy and European funds in general could contribute to the achievement	n.a.	http://www.fesrregione.umbria.it/mediacentro/FE/articoli/la-distanza-

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
				of these objectives. Umbria is ahead of other regions in terms of employment rate, renewable energies and school drop -out. Umbria is also ahead of the national average with respect to education attainment and social inclusion. On the contrary, Umbria shows worse performance in terms of R&D expenditures, CO ₂ emissions and total energy's consumptions. This is partly due to the presence of very energy-intensive industrial activities in the regional territory. The current economic crisis is strongly affecting the region and it is necessary to design and implement policy tools able to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis on Umbria's strengths.		dellumbria-dagli-obiettivi-di-europa20.html
26	2011. 3° Rapporto di valutazione della politica regionale di sviluppo, per l'anno 2011 (POR FESR V.d.A.).	9	2	The report evaluates the strategy underlying the regional development policy pursued. Data show good progresses in terms of both project approval and resources' commitments. Effectiveness of on-going activities is considered positive. At the same time, there is some concern about financial delays register during the last two semesters. This is partly due to the economic crisis.	4	http://www.regione.vda.it/europa/nuova_programmazione_2007_2013/valutazione/rapporti_di_valutazione_i.asp
27	2012. Rapporto annuale di valutazione del POR FESR Veneto.	9	2	The analysis assesses the programme's capacity of achieving the set objectives; the coherence of the programme's strategy with respect to the local regional development; the effectiveness of the support to enterprises' development; the digital divide reduction; the effectiveness of renewable energy policy; the environmental sustainability. The evaluation highlights a weak performance of the initiatives carried out. Many actions have not been implemented; a lot of projects suffer from delays (only 10% of the interventions have been concluded); the financial performance is also weak. This depends largely on the performance of FEIs which represent about 40% of the programme's commitments. Overall the ROP has supported 3,022 regional enterprises so far.	1+3+4	http://www.regione.veneto.it/NR/rdo_nlyres/8B324AD1-A04C-43B9-A3B5-73DA058F1D8F/0/PrimoRapportodivalutazione_PORVeneto2012_5ver.pdf
28	2011. Il Sistema pubblico dei Servizi per il Lavoro della Regione Sardegna	3	3	The evaluation aims at analysing how the local employment service centres (CSL) contribute to facilitate employment. The performance of CSL was unsatisfactory. The employment service centres need to improve and specialize their educational and training capacities. The matching between labour demand and supply is still far from being achieved. However, this analysis highlights the importance of such kind of evaluations in order to understand actual problems and thus improve regional policies.	4	http://www.sardegnaprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120531095755.pdf
29	2011. Ricerca valutativa	7	3	The study aims at assessing the efficiency, effectiveness, utility and	1	http://www.sardeg

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
	sulle politiche di Sviluppo Urbano (POR FESR Sardegna).			the first impacts of the urban development policies implemented during the 2000-2006 programming period. The evaluation highlights a rather unsatisfactory performance. Local regional policies did not produce a significant increase in the public services available and did not have a remarkable impact in terms of well-being and reduction of social disadvantages.		naprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120531092803.pdf
30	2011. Ricerca valutativa sull'impatto delle politiche regionali contro la dispersione scolastica: l'impatto dei laboratori didattici (POR FESR Sardegna).	3	3	This research aims at evaluating the effects of the initiatives implemented in order to increase organizational autonomy as well as to reduce school's drop-out rate. Interviewed teachers, managers and students consider the implemented educational laboratories as a positive experience which should be replicated within regional schools. Focus groups show that extracurricular laboratories received the greatest interest. Indeed, they have been able to involve also those students which had worse scores. Managers claim that the projects should include also teachers' training activities aimed at facilitating "learning by doing". Students claim that the regional educational system is still averse to innovative changes but these kinds of initiatives are important to reverse such a trend.	1+3+4.	http://www.sardegnaprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120201110942.pdf
31	2011. Politiche per la ricerca scientifica e l'innovazione tecnologica (POR FESR Sardegna).	1	3	The objective is to assess the effects of the regional policies aimed at supporting scientific research and technological innovation during the period 1994-2006. The evaluation shows that no detailed analysis of the context was carried out before the implementation of regional policies. This had negative consequences on the identification of objectives as well as on the implementation of activities. Universities and research institutes are generally too little involved in the projects. Initiatives aimed at technology scouting are too little developed and actors are generally not enough coordinated. Expenditure of available resources always suffered from long delays and accelerated only during the last part of the programming periods.	3+4	http://www.sardegnaprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120309091043.zip
32	La cooperazione decentrata in Sardegna: Ricerca valutativa sull'azione regionale dal 1996 al 2010	9	1	The evaluation aims at diffusing knowledge on the initiatives implemented by the Sardinia region in order to improve the quality and the effectiveness of regional planning in cooperation. The analysis pointed out two main problems: there are not homogeneous and comprehensive data related to the financed projects; the policy objectives have been vague and inaccurate. With respect to the first problem, data have been systematized and integrated within a database including 673 projects financed	3+4	www.sardegnaprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120615134026.zip

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
				between 1996 and 2010. This allowed to carry out relevant statistical analyses. With respect to the second problem, interventions have been classified and linked to cooperation objectives not explicitly identified but often implicitly taken into account by the local actors and beneficiaries of support.		
33	2011. Rapporto di valutazione strategica del programma di cooperazione transfrontaliera (CBC) Italia-Svizzera	9	2	The report aims at assessing the coherence of the programme's strategy and the effectiveness of the initiatives. The main findings include: 1. Projects contributed to increase local actors' attitude to cooperate, particularly within the following sectors: innovation, cultural resources, labour market and health services. 2. The CBC OP contributed also to pursue the following objectives: environment protection, risk prevention, smart growth and research. Achievements in terms of territorial inclusion have been higher than expected. 3. Interventions are generally in line with the Goteborg strategy but less concerned with the Europe 2020 environmental objectives. 4. Positive results have been achieved with respect to the equal opportunities sector even if there are few active policy actions. 5. The relationship between Italy and Switzerland improved with respect to both institutions and beneficiaries.	n.a.	n.a.
34	2011. Rapporto di valutazione operativa del programma di cooperazione transfrontaliera (CBC) Italia-Svizzera	9	2	The evaluation measures the financial progress of the programme. Furthermore, it looks at the implementation mechanisms, the monitoring system, and the partnership's contribution to implementation. Finally, it evaluates the effectiveness of the OP's. Data show a remarkable increase in commitments but a sluggish progress of expenditure. The best performance was registered in relation to R&D, preservation of cultural amenities and cooperation while transport, education and labour market lag behind. The monitoring system improved in 2010 thanks to new advanced features. CBC remarkably improved and contributed to the OP implementation. On the negative side, interviews with beneficiaries highlight that procedures required for financial reporting are considered too expensive.	4	http://www.interreg-italiasvizzera.it/upload/doc_Gestione/Rapporto_Valutazione_Operativa_anno_2010.pdf

	Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope (*)	Main objective and focus (*)	Main findings	Method used (*)	Full reference or link to publication
35	2011. Primo rapporto di valutazione operativa (secondo rapporto di valutazione intermedia) del programma di cooperazione transfrontaliera (CBC) IT-AT	9	2	The analysis aims at evaluating both the quality and the relevance of the programme's objectives. Despite the limited financial resources, the programme is well suited to the local needs. However, it would be desirable to improve the local planning tools. Commitments are another weak point. One-third of the implemented projects achieved positive results such as an increase in the frequency of partnerships and new partnerships' creation.	3+4	n.a.
36	2012. Valutazione di impatto delle politiche regionali di sostegno alla R&S per le piccole e medie imprese in Toscana (2002-2004)	1	3	The evaluation provides an analysis of the impacts of two measures implemented in Tuscany in 2002-2004 to support pre-competitive development and product innovation in SMEs. The study measures the intervention additionality on enterprise performance with respect to the innovation process, its outputs and the firms strategy. Positive effects are highlighted on R&D staff and investment. Firms new to research and relatively weak from an innovation are those which seem to have benefited most from the support. This shows how the intervention encourages risk taking and behavioural change.	1	http://www.irpet.it/storage/pubblicazioni/allegato/372_ebook%2010_2012.pdf

Note: (*) Legend:

Policy area and scope: 1. RTDI; 2. Enterprise support and ICT; 3. Human Resources (ERDF only); 4. Transport; 5. Environment; 6. Energy; 7. Territorial development (urban areas, tourism, rural development, cultural heritage, health, public security, local development); 8. Capacity and institution building; 9. Multi-area (e.g. evaluations of programmes, mid-term evaluations); 10. Transversal aspects (e.g. gender or equal opportunities, sustainable development, employment);

Main objective and focus: 1. assess the arrangements and procedures for managing or administering programmes; 2. support monitoring, or check the progress made in implementing programmes, such as many mid-term evaluations; 3. assess the outcome or effects of programmes in terms of the results achieved and their contribution to attaining socio-economic policy objectives.

Method used: 1. Counterfactual; 2. Cost-benefit analysis; 3. Other quantitative; 4. Qualitative.

5. FURTHER REMARKS - NEW CHALLENGES FOR POLICY

Main points from previous country report:

- The introduction of the reform on fiscal federalism and the substantial reduction of resources for lagging areas affected the development policy and the welfare state in the regions with lower fiscal capacity. This change requires a far reaching adaptation of the regional development strategies and of the decision making mechanisms; a clearer identification of competitiveness and social cohesion objectives is needed to avoid a dispersion of resources. In this respect, a higher concentration of the interventions and an increased capacity of planning are urgent. This does not simply mean a priority for large projects, but more focused actions on fewer priorities.
- In Convergence, institutional and administrative capacity is inadequate with respect the current economic and social challenges, and it is often also lower compared to the previous programming period. Specific targets regarding the efficiency of the procedures, definite and explicit workloads for the departments, individual responsibilities and mobilisation of additional personnel are necessary. In Competitiveness, the implementation problems are less relevant. The on-going transformations in this area are vast and the EU policy can only contribute to facilitate some of them but, especially in the RTDI field, its role is decisive. The main issues are related to the coordination of many similar interventions in contiguous areas and the integration of structural adjustments with social needs in a period of increasing unemployment.
- The evaluation of structural interventions activity carried out by the administration is weak in respect of the broad implementation difficulties and the vast economic challenges that they have to face. Even if good examples in some OPs and a good analytical capacity emerge in a few cases, on the whole evaluation does not operate as an integrated programming tool.

In the light of the findings of this report, the following policy challenges can be highlighted:

- The major implementation delays which prevent the EU Cohesion policy to unleash their potential, especially in the area where they are needed most, are being addressed by the National government. It would be unacceptable that similar problems arise again in the next period but at the moment, considering that negotiations are still in progress, that the regional administrations are focused on catching up rather than on preparing for the next phase etc., there is a concrete risk that in a few years' time no significant advancement will be made in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The effort put in place with the introduction of the PAC must be continued and even extended to ensure a prompt policy take off, continuity of action across programming periods, and concentration of resources on key priorities. The PAC shows also a change in the approach to Cohesion policy: a greater focus on the central administration, whose capacity is used as a leverage to increase overall efficiency.
- The existing monitoring systems generate a large mass of useful data, even though some of these are sometimes incomplete or unreliable. In addition to improving the quality of the system it is crucial that the information are gathered in a way that can be effectively

consulted and processed by the policy maker through ad hoc dashboards which can be used at national and regional level. The “Open Coesione” initiative is an important step forward, consisting in a database that provides information on all the individual projects which are being funded. What is still missing is a systematic endeavour aimed at analysing, aggregating and interpreting the available information so that the policy makers and the administrators, at all levels, have a clear understanding of the results and effects of intervention. Without this further step ahead, Cohesion policy would increasingly look like a coach travelling without a coachman.

- In order to govern policy effectively, it is also necessary to fill the existing gaps in the evidence provided by independent evaluation. These are both methodological and thematic (existing studies do not cover all typologies of instruments). It is important that binding guidelines on these issues become an integral part of the future strategy.

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INTERVIEWS

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Mauro Terzoni, Managing Authority of the ROP ERDF Marche

Olivia Postorino, Managing Authority of the ROP ERDF Lombardy

Massimo Sabatini, Confindustria, main organisation representing Italian manufacturing and services companies.

ANNEX 1 - EVALUATION GRID FOR EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION

Evaluation Grid A - "Evaluation on policies for urban development"

BASIC INFORMATION	
Country: Italy	
Policy area: Territorial Development	
Title of evaluation and full reference: "Ricerca valutativa sulle politiche di sviluppo urbano" (Evaluation on policies for urban development) http://www.sardegnaprogrammazione.it/documenti/35_84_20120531092803.pdf	
Intervention period covered: 2000-2006	
Timing of the evaluation: 2011	
Budget: unknown	
Evaluator: Internal Evaluation Unit of the Region Sardinia "Nucleo di Valutazione e Verifica degli Investimenti Pubblici della Regione Autonoma della Sardegna" (NVVIP)	
Method: Counter-factual analysis other quantitative (e.g. input-output analysis, principal components).	
Main objectives and main findings: The study aims at assessing the efficiency, effectiveness, utility and the first impacts of the urban development policies implemented during the 2000-2006 programming period in Sardinia. The evaluation highlights a rather unsatisfactory performance of the policies. Most of the initiatives implemented consisted in restructuring works and in extraordinary maintenance of infrastructure with low additionality and no increase in the services provided to the public. Therefore the disparities with more advanced regions remained unchanged. Nonetheless, the policies had a positive employment impact: 4,442 additional jobs (1,436 outside the construction sector) are estimated.	
Appraisal: The evaluation includes a detailed territorial analysis and uses a mix of wide variety of methodological instruments to answer the evaluation questions. This allows to integrate quantitative and qualitative data and to ensure greater reliability of results. Despite the variety of the data used and the large number of elaborations presented in the evaluation report, the study is weak in relation to conclusions which could have been developed more clearly.	
CHECK LIST	
Score each item listed below from 0 to 2 as follows: 0: No; 1: Yes, but not fully; 2: Yes	
Report	
Are the objectives, methods and findings of the evaluation clearly set out?	1
Are the findings and recommendations clearly supported by the analysis?	1
Are the methods used suitable given the objectives of the valuation and have they been well applied?	2
Are the quantitative and qualitative data used reliable and suitable for the purpose of the evaluation?	1
Are the potential effects of other factors (e.g. the economic situation) on the outcome fully taken into account?	1
Is a serious attempt made to distinguish the effects of the intervention from these other factors?	1

Evaluation Grid B - "Impact evaluation of the regional policy for R&D support in SMEs"

BASIC INFORMATION	
Country: Italy	
Policy area: RTDI	
Title of evaluation and full reference: "Valutazione di impatto delle politiche regionali di sostegno alla R&S per le piccole e medie imprese" (impact evaluation of the regional policy for R&D support in SMEs), by Maria Luisa Maitino, Marco Mariani and Fabrizia Mealli, IRPET Toscana, e-book 10/12. http://www.irpet.it/storage/pubblicazioneallegato/372_ebook%2010_2012.pdf	
Intervention period covered: 2002-2004	
Timing of the evaluation: 2012	
Budget: unknown	
Evaluator: IRPET – Istituto Regionale Programmazione Economica Toscana – is a regional public research institute.	
Method: Counterfactual and other quantitative; propensity score matching.	
Main objectives and main findings: The main objective is to assess the outcome or effects of programmes in terms of the results achieved and their contribution to attaining socio-economic policy objectives. The evaluation provides an analysis of the impacts of two measures implemented in Tuscany in 2002-2004 to support industrial research and pre-competitive development in enterprises, mostly SMEs. The study measures the intervention additionality on enterprise performance with respect to the innovation process, its outputs and the firms strategy. Positive effects are highlighted on R&D staff and investment. Firms new to research and relatively weak from an innovation point of view are those which seem to have benefited most from the support. This shows how the intervention encourages risk taking and behavioural change.	
Appraisal: The analysis is clearly and very concisely presented. The evaluation applies state of the art analytical tools and provides a clear rationale for the chosen methodological approach. One of the most novel features of the matching technique is the use of a large number of treatment covariates, to take account of both static and dynamic features of the firms. Conclusions and policy recommendations are not sufficiently developed.	
CHECK LIST	
Score each item listed below from 0 to 2 as follows: 0: No; 1: Yes, but not fully; 2: Yes	
Report	
Are the objectives, methods and findings of the evaluation clearly set out?	1
Are the findings and recommendations clearly supported by the analysis?	1
Are the methods used suitable given the objectives of the valuation and have they been well applied?	2
Are the quantitative and qualitative data used reliable and suitable for the purpose of the evaluation?	2
Are the potential effects of other factors (e.g. the economic situation) on the outcome fully taken into account?	1
Is a serious attempt made to distinguish the effects of the intervention from these other factors?	1

ANNEX 2 – TABLES

See Excel Tables 1 -4:

Excel Table 1 – Regional disparities and trends

Excel Table 2 – Macro-economic developments

Excel Table 3 - Financial allocation by main policy area

Excel Table 3cbc - Financial allocation by main policy area – cross border cooperation

Excel Table 4 - Commitments by main policy area (by end-2011)

Excel Table 4cbc - Commitments by main policy area (by end-2011) – cross border cooperation

Annex Table A - Broad policy areas and correspondence with fields of intervention (FOI)

Policy area		Code	Priority themes	
1. Enterprise environment	RTDI and linked activities	01	R&TD activities in research centres	
		02	R&TD infrastructure and centres of competence in a specific technology	
		05	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms	
		07	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation (...)	
		74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies ...	
	Innovation support for SMEs	03	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks ...	
		04	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs (including access to R&TD services in research centres)	
		06	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes (...)	
		09	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs	
		14	Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc.)	
		15	Other measures for improving access to and efficient use of ICT by SMEs	
	ICT and related services	11	Information and communication technologies (...)	
		12	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)	
		13	Services and applications for citizens (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)	
	Other investment in firms	08	Other investment in firms	
	2. Human resources	Education and training	62	Development of life-long learning systems and strategies in firms; training and services for employees ...
			63	Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work
64			Development of special services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors ...	

Policy area		Code	Priority themes
	Labour market policies	72	Design, introduction and implementing of reforms in education and training systems ...
		73	Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle ...
		65	Modernisation and strengthening labour market institutions
		66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market
		67	Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives
		68	Support for self-employment and business start-up
		69	Measures to improve access to employment and increase sustainable participation and progress of women ...
		70	Specific action to increase migrants' participation in employment ...
		71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people ...
		80	Promoting the partnerships, pacts and initiatives through the networking of relevant stakeholders
3. Transport	Rail	16	Railways
		17	Railways (TEN-T)
		18	Mobile rail assets
		19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)
	Road	20	Motorways
		21	Motorways (TEN-T)
		22	National roads
		23	Regional/local roads
	Other transport	24	Cycle tracks
		25	Urban transport
		26	Multimodal transport
		27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)
		28	Intelligent transport systems
		29	Airports
30		Ports	
31		Inland waterways (regional and local)	
32	Inland waterways (TEN-T)		
4. Environment and energy	Energy infrastructure	33	Electricity
		34	Electricity (TEN-E)
		35	Natural gas
		36	Natural gas (TEN-E)
		37	Petroleum products
		38	Petroleum products (TEN-E)
		39	Renewable energy: wind
		40	Renewable energy: solar
		41	Renewable energy: biomass
		42	Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal and other
		43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management
	Environment and risk prevention	44	Management of household and industrial waste
		45	Management and distribution of water (drink water)

Policy area		Code	Priority themes
		46	Water treatment (waste water)
		47	Air quality
		48	Integrated prevention and pollution control
		49	Mitigation and adaption to climate change
		50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
		51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000)
		52	Promotion of clean urban transport
		53	Risk prevention (...)
		54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks
5. Territorial development	Social Infrastructure	10	Telephone infrastructure (including broadband networks)
		75	Education infrastructure
		76	Health infrastructure
		77	Childcare infrastructure
		78	Housing infrastructure
		79	Other social infrastructure
	Tourism and culture	55	Promotion of natural assets
		56	Protection and development of natural heritage
		57	Other assistance to improve tourist services
		58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage
		59	Development of cultural infrastructure
		60	Other assistance to improve cultural services
	Planning and rehabilitation	61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
	Other	82	Compensation of any additional costs due to accessibility deficit and territorial fragmentation
		83	Specific action addressed to compensate additional costs due to size market factors
6. Technical assistance		84	Support to compensate additional costs due to climate conditions and relief difficulties
		81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation ...
		85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection
		86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication