

IMPLEMENTATION OF E-COHESION

General characteristics



No. of **targeted national/regional operational programmes** covering ERDF/CF: **29**



No. of **e-Cohesion systems**: **32**

At a glance:

e-Cohesion systems: 32 systems identified.

Introduction of the systems: Most systems operational since 2014 but 6 of them were launched in earlier programming periods.

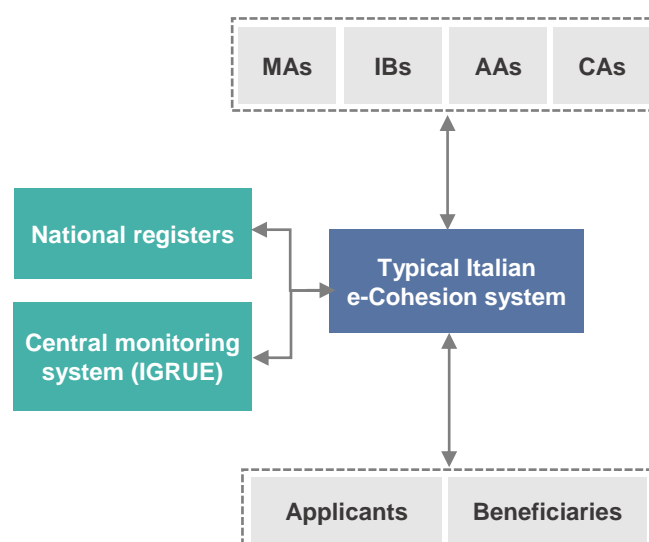
Types of systems: 10 national systems and 22 regional systems.

Implementation mode: Highly decentralised. Most systems cover one OP. Two systems cover more than one OP and four systems also cover Interreg programmes. There are two national and two regional OPs which use two systems.

Use during 2021-2027: Overall continuity. Most of the systems in use in 2014-2020 will be updated, largely based on the current version.

Context and structure of e-Cohesion

- Italy's implementation of e-Cohesion is **highly decentralised** – 32 systems were identified, 10 national and 22 regional. Most cover one OP while some cover several OPs and not all OPs rely on a single system;
- Most systems are linked with the **central monitoring system for ESIF (IGRUE)** and several other governmental registers (e.g. enterprises register);
- Only 8 systems are integrated with the **European Commission's System for Fund Management (SFC2014)**;
- All major **authorities** and intermediate bodies access the data submitted by applicants and beneficiaries through the respective OP's e-Cohesion system;
- The degree of complexity and completeness of the Italian e-Cohesion systems varies from case to case but most of them support all the key processes related to implementation and also the application process - **ESIF applicants and beneficiaries** exchange information directly using their OP's respective e-Cohesion system.



Key principles of e-Cohesion: interoperability and once-only encoding



Principles: Extensive reuse of information and interoperability with national registers; limited interoperability with EU tools.

Most Italian e-Cohesion systems **support once-only encoding**. Data and documents provided by beneficiaries are shared with all relevant authorities.

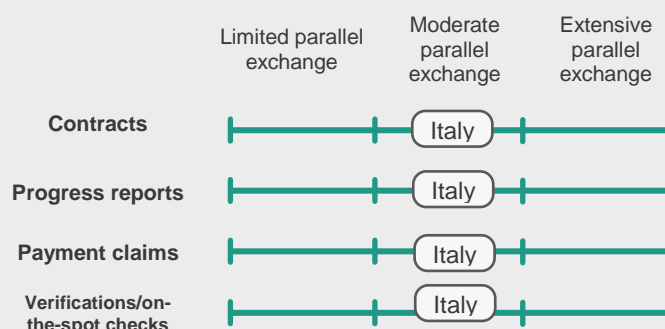
The systems **extensively support the pre-filling of information**:

- Information is pre-filled based on data entered during previous steps of the operation and from various external registers;
- The pre-filling of information is highly valued** – nearly all beneficiary respondents aware of this functionality perceived it as useful to their operations (resulting in efficiency gains and reducing the number of errors).



Parallel data exchanges: Moderate exchange of information outside the systems.

In most of the Italian OPs the **use of e-Cohesion systems is extensive** for all key processes, with moderate data exchanges taking place outside the system (e.g. through registered mail).



Implementation of e-Cohesion features



Key processes: Support of project cycle from start to finish.

- Most Italian e-Cohesion systems support all operations related to project application and implementation (progress reports, modification requests, payment claims and management verifications / on-the-spot checks);
- Documents related to the application process are commonly submitted through e-Cohesion systems – nearly all Italian beneficiary respondents indicate that they submitted all of their relevant data and documents only through the system.



Functionalities: Support for all required functionalities, including interactive forms.

- Existing e-Cohesion systems support all functionalities which ensure user-friendliness (interactive forms, automatic calculations, checks for incorrect/missing data, system-generated alerts, online status tracking, access to already processed data, e-signature);
- Nearly all beneficiary respondents aware of the functionalities provided by Italian e-Cohesion systems consider them as useful, meaning that they result in notable time gains and reduce the number of errors for their users.

Results of the introduction of e-Cohesion

Effectiveness – results and simplification

- The introduction of e-Cohesion systems in Italy has resulted in **extensive improvements and simplification**;
- Nearly all Italian respondents agree that the systems have led to significant improvements in various areas and have simplified the way they handle information compared with paper-based processes or email exchanges;
- **e-Cohesion systems have extensively improved information exchanges between authorities and beneficiaries** – most Italian respondents report that their use has reduced repeated transmission of the same information, indicating that once-only encoding is highly valued.



Efficiency – benefits vs costs

- The benefits of using e-Cohesion systems compared to their costs are **extensive** across beneficiaries' key processes;
- Most Italian respondents indicate that the benefits (reduced administrative burden, simplified procedures) of using e-Cohesion systems outweigh any associated costs (the time and effort required to use them).

User-friendliness

- Italian e-Cohesion systems overall show **moderate user-friendliness** – most beneficiaries perceive the systems as easy to navigate and operate, and consider them as clear and self-explanatory;
- Features that are particularly appreciated by beneficiaries include: The **helpdesk services**, which provide useful assistance, and the **e-signature** function which helps to save resources and increases security.

