A STRATEGY FOR ‘INNER AREAS’ IN ITALY

Fostering growth through Inner Areas development

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The Italian spatial model

The Italian territory is characterized by:

- **A polycentric system where a dense and varied network of urban centers**
  offer a wide range of essential services like healthcare, education, and transport. These centers represent a 'point of convergence' for people living in remote areas;

- **The distance from these urban networks/“service poles” affects people’s quality of life**
  preventing them to benefit of these essential services

- **Relations between urban and rural centers are context dependent**
  and may vary substantially depending on territorial specificities
Inner Areas: what does it mean?

Inner Areas are those territories characterised by:

- a **NOT adequate** offer of/ access to essential services to assure a certain level of citizenship among population;
- being **rich in natural assets** (water resources, agricultural systems, forests, natural landscapes) and **cultural resources** (archaeological settlements, abbeys, small museums, craft centres);
- having a **complex territory** shaped by diverse natural phenomena and human settlement processes.

In Italy inner areas covers almost the 60% of the whole national territory embracing about the 23% of its total population and more than 4000 municipalities.
Methodology to identify Inner Areas

‘Service Centers’ have been defined as those municipalities that offer

- an exhaustive range of secondary schools;
- at least a 1st level DEA (highly specialized) hospital;
- at least a ‘Silver - type’ railway station ($RFI$).

**NO DEMOGRAPHIC CRITERIA HAVE BEEN APPLIED**

Areas have been mapped according to the distance (travel-time) from these ‘Service Centers’ as:

- ‘Belt’ areas – up to 20 minutes far from the centers;
- ‘Intermediate’ areas – from 20 to 40 minutes;
- ‘Remote’ areas – from 40 to 75 minutes;
- ‘Ultra – remote’ areas – over 75 minutes far

Inner Areas
Italy’s Inner Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Municipalities</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average elevation</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>KM²</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Municipality Service Center</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>20.983.786</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>28.948</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Municipality Service Center</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2.986.161</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.606</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belt areas</td>
<td>3568</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>22.135.047</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>83.982</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate areas</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>8.832.422</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>88.187</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote areas</td>
<td>1522</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>3.812.271</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>72.829</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultra-remote areas</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>684.057</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>19.521</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8092</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>59.433.744</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>302.073</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DPS elaboration on Istat - Census 2011

Source: UVAL-UVER-ISTAT elaboration on data from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and RFI (Italian Railway Network)
Aims of the strategy (long-term)

- **Reverse** the demographic decline that is embodying these areas;
- **Improve** the quality of life and wellbeing of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas of the country;
- **Reduce** the social cost due to the progressive depopulation trend characterizing these areas (hydro-geological risk, cultural heritage losses and landscape degradation)

Aims of the strategy (mid-term)

- **Increase** local employment and work opportunities
- **Recover** un-valorized natural resources and territorial capital
- **Strengthen** local development factors
The Strategy pursues its aims through two related ad-hoc actions / mutually reinforcing:

- **Supporting Inner Areas inhabitants’ access to basic services through innovative delivery mechanisms.** Education, Health and Transport are conceived as pre-conditions for any further development of such areas.

- **Fostering Local Development.** Development projects aim to increase local job opportunities and profit from available local capital.

  Area-based projects will concentrate on a number of particular fields (development factors) recognized as critical for these areas.
Mutually reinforcing actions: Action n. 1

And on Specific Basic Services Improvements

- **Transport**: implementation of smart networks to foster efficiency and connection between strategic communication spot (both people and goods);

- **Health services**: improving territorial healthcare network; doctors associations and “Tele-Health Services”;

- **Education**: re-organising schooling around well balances “main poles”; avoiding excessive professors mobility and ensuring schools networking.
Area based projects will concentrate on a number of selected fields:

- land management and forests;
- local food products;
- renewable energy;
- natural and cultural heritage;
- traditional handicraft and SMEs (*Saperi Locali*)
5 main innovation

- **National dimension and multilevel governance** (State – Regions – municipalities and inter municipal partnership) to foster a **participatory approach** to local development;

- It operates through **two interrelated classes of actions** (access improvements to basic services and local development actions);

- It is a **step-by-step process**. Just one prototype area per Region is firstly selected to evaluate the potential success of the Strategy and trigger a positive learning mechanism (**Territorial Concentration**);

- Prototype areas are selected through a “Open” **public proceeding**;

- **Multifund attitude** (EAFRD, ERDF, ESF and National Funds) to support integrated actions.
A multilevel governance in depth

The Central Level

- Fosters and Monitors the Strategy’s Application
- Encompass main elements of the Strategy into the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020
- Assist the Region in selecting prototype areas
- Manages the Federation of Projects

The Regions

- Financial Allocation for Inner Areas in the Programs (ITI, Territorial Axis?);
- Selection of Specific Areas / Projects; Political Support;

Associated Municipalities

- Application of the Strategy at territorial level; Participate in the Framework Agreement selecting projects; manage services ...
Inner Areas investments are funded by:

- **Stability Law 2014 (Art. 1(13)-(17) National Funds** allocated to enhancing Inner Areas’ inhabitants access to essential services;

- **2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds** available for regional investments aimed at supporting local development projects;
Main Political Achievements

Italy is developing a **National Strategy in favor of Inner Areas** since Sept. 2012

**Working through**

- Political Agreement Between Precedency of the Council; Ministry of Agriculture; Health; Transports; School and Labor ...(last three Governments)
- Agreement with All Italian Regions, the European Commission and selected associations of municipalities
- Strong Technical Support (Department for Development Policies, Central Bank; Institute of National Statistics / **Committee for Inner Areas**);
One year after*

Source: UVAL; period of reference: September 2013 to September 2014
Conclusion

- Italian Inner Areas Strategy is giving «true content» to the EU Territorial Cohesion Objective;
- Areas faraway from «Basic Services» do need special attention, regardless from their rural or urban nature; European Union should expressly address these challenges;
- Many years of «fragmented» policies in Inner Areas do show that investments intervention – together with cuts on basic services, do not bring desired results;
- Multi funding (still so difficult in practice!), together with a spatial place approach are crucial;
- RURBAN: municipalities associations and common functions
- Integrated Territorial Investments: strengths and limits
- Thematic Concentration versus Territorial Concentration: not enough flexible tools can weaken effective territorial concentration
Thank you for your attention

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